

Great Ryrie Primary School
5478

**2008 Annual Report to the
School Community**



School Overview

Great Ryrie Primary School is centrally located in the suburb of Heathmont, some 20 kilometres east of Melbourne.

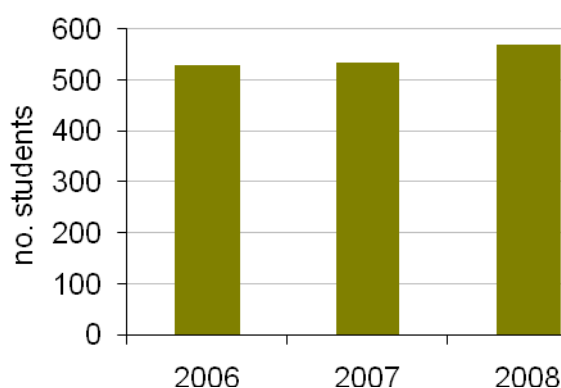
The school enrolment for 2008 was 576. It is expected to remain relatively stable for the next few years.

The equivalent full time teaching staff was 31 including specialists in Visual and Performing Arts, Physical Education, LOTE (Indonesian), Reading Recovery and ESL.

Students had weekly access to a well-resourced library and a fully networked computer lab of 30 desktop computers. Two banks of 12 laptops are utilised by the students at Level 4.

The school has a mixed social demographic, with 37% of students entitled to receive the Education Maintenance Allowance. The school also caters for a significant number of single parent families and families where one or both parents are relatively high-income professionals or business owners. The number of refugee students has increased and funding was gained to support their learning.

Total students enrolled in school



There is a strong sense of community involvement with an active Parents and Friends Association, which works hard to maintain this characteristic through community events such as student discos, trivia nights and the school fete biannually. In 2008 Great Ryrie celebrated its 10th birthday with a number of community celebrations including a bush dance and fireworks.

Whilst these events also act as fundraisers the primary aim is community involvement.

The School Council and its subcommittees form a productive and harmonious group with a commitment to education. Parent support is provided in many ways including working bees, classroom helpers, uniform shop, newsletter production, excursions and sporting activities.

Due to the efforts of the school community in accomplishing goals including being proactive in its efforts to apply for grants, the school has seen many positive outcomes in the past year such as –

- Purchase of water tanks, funded through the Federal Government Green Voucher program, to enhance sustainability levels.
- Purchase of an additional bank of 12 laptop computers for student use through locally raised funds.

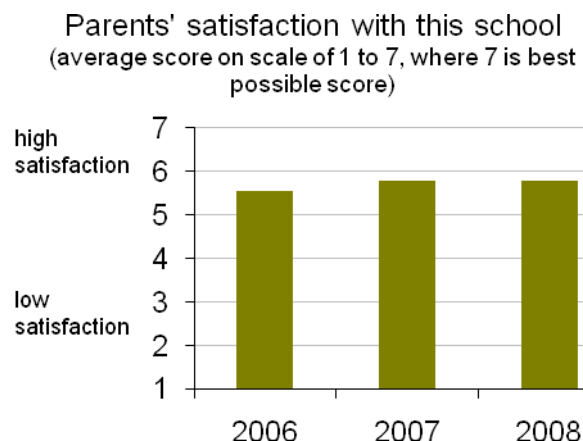
Our mission statement, is to provide a supportive and engaging environment which enables students to develop the emotional, social, physical and academic skills to adapt to and contribute positively to, an ever changing world.

The school has identified three key goals which we have aimed to achieve over the last four years of our Strategic Plan in order to enhance Student Learning Outcomes, Student Engagement & Wellbeing and Student Pathways and Transitions.

1. To challenge students to apply relevant skills, knowledge and understandings to real-world situations within a 'sustainable schools' framework.
2. To improve student self responsibility in developing, managing and monitoring a range of strategies to increase personal learning.
3. To continue to ensure positive student transitions and learning opportunities from home/preschool to the school, throughout the school levels and from primary to secondary school, with a specific focus on those students to be considered 'at risk' or 'highly able'.

Parent Satisfaction –

Parent satisfaction with the school and its programs remains high with some minor fluctuation over the past few years.



The average score for parent satisfaction with this school is 5.78 on a scale from 1 to 7, where 7 is the best possible score. This shows that the school has sustained improved results over the past three years.

Teacher Satisfaction -

The average score for teacher satisfaction (morale) at this school was 75.5 on a scale from 0 to 100 where 100 is the best possible score. There has been sustained improvement since 2006.

Teacher Absence –

The average number of days absent per teacher was 12.8 days in 2007 as data for 2008 was not available. The figures for 2007 were inflated due to long term illnesses affecting two members of staff. We expect a similar result for 2008 for the same reasons.

Teacher Retention -

Of the 33 teaching service staff at June 2007 (including those on Leave Without Pay), 31 or 94% were still at the school at June 2008. This figure across all Government schools was 84%.

Teacher Participation in Professional Learning –

All teaching staff have participated in professional learning throughout the year, such as the Teacher Professional Leave Program, Australian Government Quality Teacher Program and the Induction/Mentoring program for Beginning Teachers. As well as this there were Professional Development activities offered to address school identified areas of need on a fortnightly basis. All staff have personal Professional Development Plans that are monitored and assessed at the end of each year.

Teacher Qualifications –

All teachers in Victorian Government schools are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. The requirements for registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching can be found at; http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document_ID=241

Principal's Report

2008 was the 10th Anniversary of Great Ryrie Primary School and was celebrated with a number of very successful events.

Our students have excelled themselves in various academic competitions and sports. They have represented the school at several functions, including one Level 4 student, being awarded a gold medal for Spelling in the International Competition and Assessments for Schools Awards. A Prep student won the Victorian Indonesian Language Association Award for Public Speaking. Several students achieved State level representation in a variety of sporting activities.

The Green Team and Junior School Council have again worked to enhance our school activities, support charities and improve our environment. Our Year Six students continue to make us proud, as they move on to secondary education, knowing that they have been given a sound basis for their future learning.

Parents and staff on School Council continue to volunteer a great deal of time and effort, through school sub-committees, to develop and improve a range of programs which enhance what we have to offer. The Parents and Friends Association has worked hard, along with staff, local community businesses and friends of the school, to raise money for special programs and improvements in facilities and equipment across the school.

Our staff worked hard on writing INTEL units of work that complemented our school Scope and Sequence plan and integrated higher order Thinking Skills along with the use of Information and Communication Technologies into the curriculum. VELs Level Teams produced common work program proformas that incorporate learning focuses for activities along with learning tasks designed to accommodate students working at all levels of ability.

Restorative Practices became a major focus of our Student Wellbeing program. All staff were trained in this program to enable a consistent approach to be implemented across the school. We have also been proactive in catering for the wellbeing needs of both boys and girls by introducing the “M Power’N Girlz”, “Fab Friends” and “Un Mask’N Boyz” programs in our upper school. We are currently looking at developing these to meet the needs of younger students. The wellbeing of our students is always a high priority with our staff.

Doug Elliott (Principal)

School Council President's Report

2008 saw the tenth anniversary of the opening of Great Ryrie Primary School, with a variety of events marking this milestone. This was capped off with the Tenth Birthday Celebration in November. This event replaced our usual fund raising fete held at this time of year and was a great way to recognise the establishment of Great Ryrie with this community celebration.

As a school we were very fortunate to have received funding from Government over the last few years for a number of projects (the Annex and laptop computer program in Level 4 in recent years). The school has again been successful with its Sustainability program throughout 2008 and this has not only had an educational benefit for the students but it will also lead to significant water saving throughout the school particularly with the installation of two water tanks with a capacity of 90,000 litres.

Whilst these grants are of great benefit to the school, we do face increasing maintenance and funding pressures to undertake a number of initiatives across the school. There is no doubt that we will need further funding from government, if we are to avoid significant expense in the coming years. This is a common problem throughout the state education system and both the State and Federal Governments have made various announcements about funding that will be available in 2009.

All of these activities and programs do not just happen. I particularly acknowledge the efforts of Doug and Barb in the incredible work they do around the school. Not only do the grants take significant work to get submitted, they also need an underlying vision to support them. They are supported by a dedicated team of teachers and support staff, which we are lucky to have at Great Ryrie.

The end of 2008 saw the departure from School Council of two long standing and inaugural members of the School Council when the school commenced operation in 1999. Lisette Pine (School Council from 2003 – 2008 and School Council President 2006 - 2008) and Bruce Anderson (School Council 1999 – 2008, Vice President 2000 –2006 and Treasurer 2008) have concluded their time with Great Ryrie. Both Lisette and Bruce have made a significant contribution to the school and we are very grateful for their efforts over this period of time. Also leaving School Council in 2008 is Maureen Firth (DEECD member) and Kerryn Gosbell (parent member) who have both made a significant contribution to School Council. Kerryn has been particularly involved with the Active to Schools Program over the last couple of years. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of my fellow School Councillors who all generously volunteer their time.

Thanks also go to all those school community members (parents and teachers) who participated in the various sub-committees. All of these bodies make a huge contribution to the school and the efforts of these people, often quietly and without public acknowledgement is the key to the success of Great Ryrie. The ongoing efforts of Council, its sub-committees and various volunteers make a tremendous impact on the school.

Great Ryrie enjoys a good reputation in our community and I particularly acknowledge the efforts of our students. They are all a credit to the school and their families and always present a great face to anyone who encounters them.

Simon Friend
(School Council President)

Student Progress & Achievements

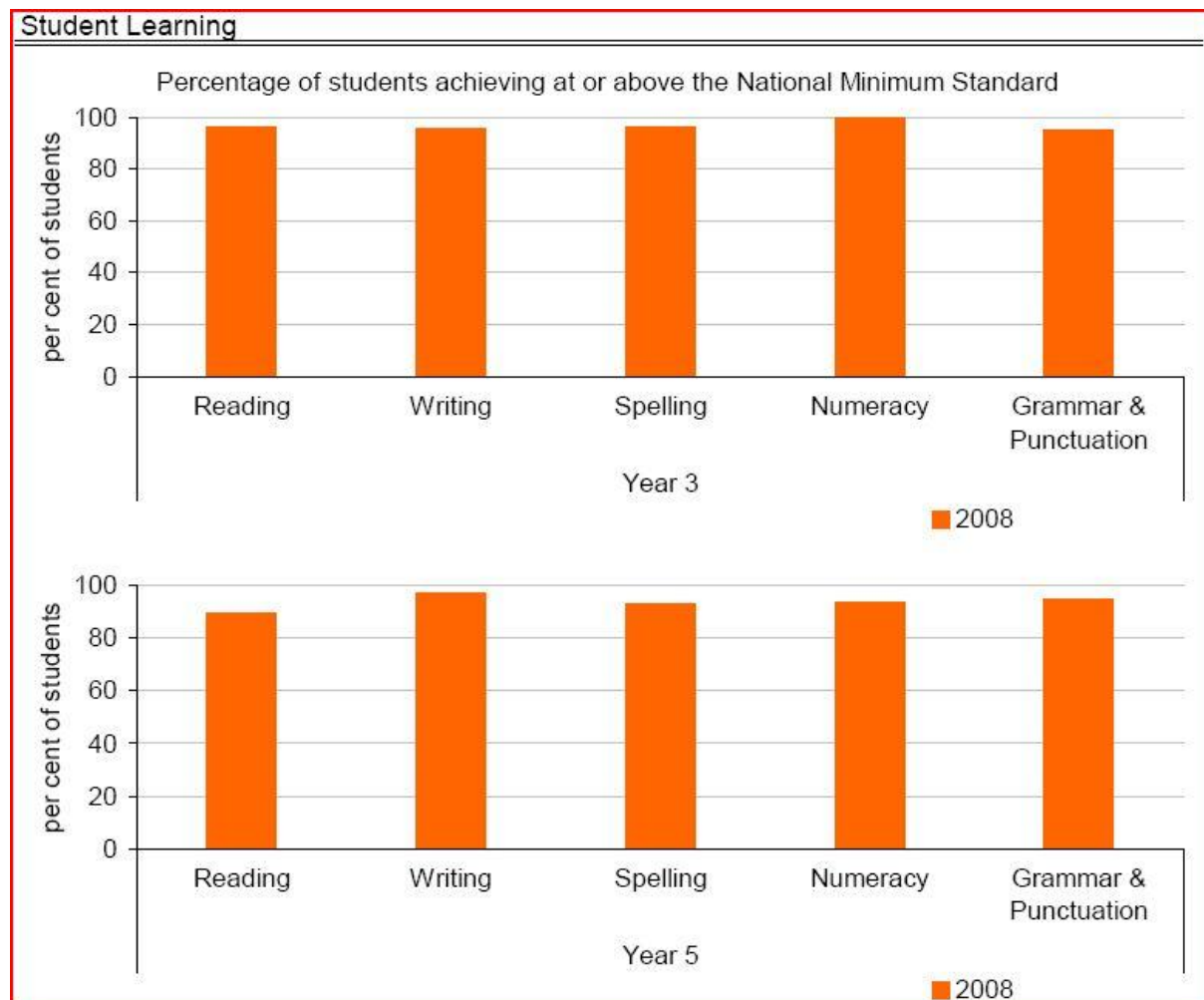
Student Learning

In 2008 our focus was on meeting the individual needs of all students through the refinement of Individual Learning Plans and work program documentation. The differentiation of the curriculum remained a priority for all teachers. A school-wide, P-6 Assessment Schedule was developed and implemented to assist teachers in ascertaining what students have achieved, the growth in their learning and directions for future learning. Staff continues to refine and implement;

- 3 Way Conferences
- Individual Learning Plans for each student that personalised their learning
- Portfolios of work samples and
- Databases to monitor student progress in Reading.

NAPLAN

The National Assessment Program Literacy And Numeracy data for students in Year 3 and 5 gives us one indication of how students are progressing, against national standards on a set day.



The graph above indicates that between 90 and 100% of students in Year 3 and 5 are achieving at or above the National Minimum Standards in all areas.

Assessment of Reading P-2

The school has continued to implement a Reading Recovery program at Year 1 and last year additional support programs were implemented in Term 4 for students in Year 2. These combined with a quality literacy program based around the Early Years model incorporating explicit teaching in Guided Reading groups has led to pleasing results.

96% of students in Prep achieved reading text at Level 1 with 90% to 100% accuracy, which is above the state level of 94.5%.

92% of students in Prep achieved reading text at Level 5 with 90% to 100% accuracy, which is above the state level of 81.3%.

100% of students in Year 1 achieved reading text at Level 1 and 5 with 90% to 100% accuracy, which is above the state level of 99.4 % and 97.9% respectively.

95.8% of students in Year 1 achieved reading text at Level 15 with 90% to 100% accuracy, which is above the state level of 86.4%.

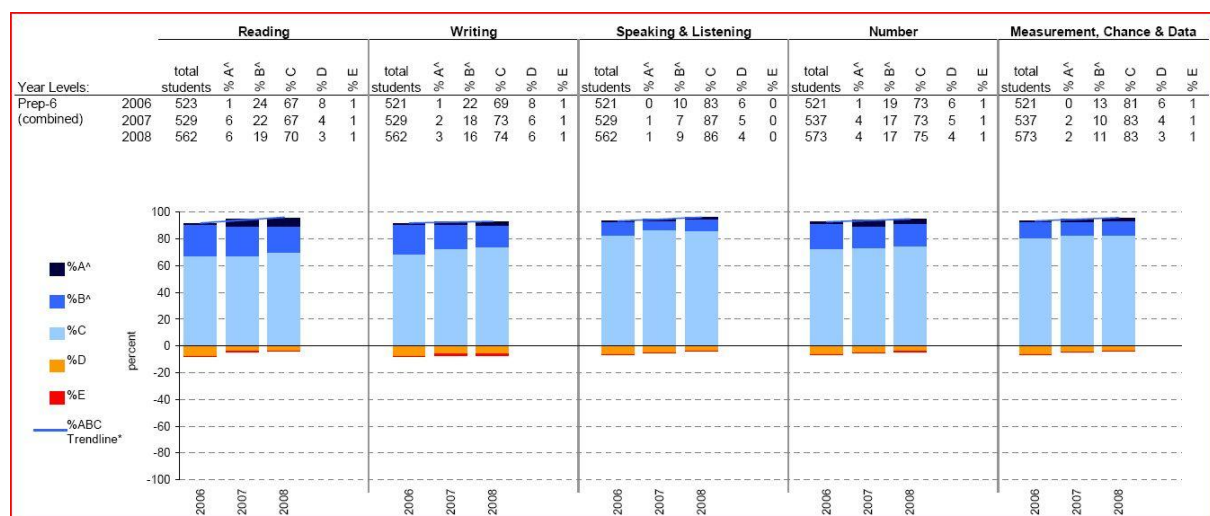
100% of students in Year 2 achieved reading text at Level 5 and 15 with 90% to 100% accuracy, which is above the state Level of 99.2% and 96.1% respectively.

98.9% of students in Year 2 achieved reading text at Level 20 with 90% to 100% accuracy, which is above the state level of 94.5%.

The percentage of students reading with 50% or below accuracy decreases from Prep to Year 2 and the number achieving above the expected level has increased.

Teacher Judgements Against VELS

The Prep - 6 data for teachers making judgements of students against VELS shows an increase in the number of students achieving A and B scores and only a small number of students achieving at D and E scores, with the number of students at this lower level decreasing.



The school provides an extensive range of co-curricular and extra-curricular programs including the 'Buddies' program, Family Life, Sun Smart, Prep Transition, Instrumental Music Tuition, Junior and Senior Bands and Choirs, Swimming, Interschool Sport, University of NSW Maths, English, Science and Computer Competitions, a Performing Arts Production (biennial), fete, House competitions, approved Religious Education, Social Service, Garden Club, Junior School Council and the Green Team. At Level 4 many opportunities exist for students to develop leadership skills and formal training is provided for the students in these positions. We also offer wider learning opportunities through excursions and incursions.

Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Great Ryrie Primary school strives to ensure a safe, secure and harmonious school environment which facilitates children's effective learning and encourages staff, student and parental pride in the school.

To enhance student engagement and wellbeing and meet our goal "To improve student self responsibility in developing, managing and monitoring a range of strategies to increase personal learning", we have continued student portfolios in Levels 1-4 which contain student set goals and self-reflections. Three Way Conferences were held twice during the year to enable students to take greater responsibility for their personal learning. PoLT surveys were implemented at Level Prep - 4. These provided data that will enable us to set annual targets for improvement in Student Engagement and Wellbeing.

2008 figures reflect an increase in student absences across the school. It needs to be noted that we are concerned with the high level of absences in Preps over the past three years. Student absences have been addressed by heightening staff awareness and the inclusion of the number of absences on the half year and end of year reports. Classroom teachers also contact parents after a student has been absent without notification for 2 or 3 consecutive days. Notices are also sent home reminding parents that a note is required after a student is absent. The Principal and Assistant Principal follow up with parents whose children are constantly absent to try and remedy the situation.

The school focuses on living the values of the school community. The Norms of "How We Want To Be Treated" are negotiated with students at the beginning of the year. Norms are used in all year levels and in Specialist lessons.

A Restorative Practices approach, which looks at building and maintaining relationships, was introduced across the school. Classes conduct daily Community Circles to help students connect with classmates and discuss issues that may arise. Restorative Chats are used to resolve the breakdown of relationships. These have proved to be a very powerful method of improving relationships and resolving conflict

Average number of absent days per student –

The average number of absent days per student headcount across the school was 14.5 as compared to state means of 13.4 with Year 3 and 6 being the lowest and Prep being the highest. We have students that we have followed up and made many efforts but they still continue to be late or absent from school.

Students' school connectedness –

The school connectedness data from the Student Attitudes to School Survey, completed by Level 4 students shows the average mean for all Year 5 and 6 students was 4.06 on a scale where 5 is the highest. The scores were higher with the Year 6 students and boys scored higher than girls at both year levels. Year 6 boys showed the greatest connectedness to school.

Student Pathways and Transitions

At Great Ryrie our aim is to ensure positive student transitions and learning opportunities from home/preschool, the school, throughout the school levels and from primary to secondary school, with a specific focus on those students to be considered 'at risk' or 'highly able'.

Transition programs operated from pre-school (kindergarten/crèche/day care) to Level 1 and from Years 6 to Year 7. We also continued an orientation program between VELs levels to help ease student anxiety as they move through the school.

For pre-school students there were 2 orientation sessions held in Term 4. An information session was held for parents before the orientation sessions so that parents had the opportunity to meet the teacher and spend time in their child's new classroom. At this meeting parents were informed of the expectations and procedures for starting school and their teacher for the next year. A letter was sent home through the holiday period from the class teacher to the students, welcoming them to the school and their class. At the commencement of the school year, the students and parents attended timetabled interview sessions on Wednesdays where there was also feedback about the level of their child's knowledge. Another Parent Information evening was held early in the term to discuss expectations of both the class teacher and the parents. This session was curriculum focused.

With transition from Year 6 to Year 7, local secondary colleges visited the school and talked to students about secondary school life. An Orientation Day was held early in December for Year 6 students to spend the day at their chosen secondary college. Our Year 6 staff facilitated a transition program throughout the year, discussing issues that students raised and providing them with strategies to cope with the first few weeks in their new environment.

An orientation session for all year levels at Great Ryrie was conducted in order to familiarise children, moving between levels, with their new peers, teachers and classrooms. New students to the school were also offered a ½ day or 1 day orientation if they wished.

Students that needed specialised educational opportunities were catered for by implementing individualised programs within the classroom and supported by our SSO (Student Support Officer) staff. Level Teams completed a common work program that included activities which catered for the learning needs of students requiring support or extension.

Individual Learning Plans were completed for all students in Level 2- 4. These plans were negotiated twice in the year, at the end of Term 1 and Term 3 in the 3 Way Conferences.

An Assessment Schedule P-6 was followed to monitor and to ascertain the learning needs of all students as well as identifying the 'at risk' or 'highly able' students.

Future Directions

2009 is the year of review for our current Strategic Plan. In Semester 2 the Strategic Plan for the next 4 years will be developed.

Future Directions for 2009 are -

1. Collaboration, which will be a major focus across the school. This has three areas of focus.
 - a. Firstly, teachers working as collaborative teams utilising the strengths of each team member to plan curriculum.
 - b. Secondly, through the introduction of Peer Coaching and continued use of Peer Observation. Teachers will collaboratively reflect and work on their own practice.
 - c. Thirdly, teachers will plan to engage students in a greater number of collaborative tasks to encourage harmony and shared learning, including restorative practices to help students in transition across levels.
2. Developmental Curriculum will be explored at the Prep level to foster a smoother transition from kindergarten and enhance learning by meeting the needs of students and their interests.
3. Student engagement is an important factor that needs to be addressed and Project Based Learning is to be explored for use at Levels 3 and 4. We feel that this will assist in making learning more purposeful. Students at Level 2 will have some negotiation of unit tasks so as to prepare them for Project Based Learning at Level 3.
4. Sustainable practices, activities and programs including the establishment of kitchen and Level gardens throughout the school will continue. Use of our water from our rainwater tanks will supplement our yearly needs.
5. Enhancement and further development of the integration of ICT throughout the curriculum through initiatives such as expansion of the student laptop program and the installation of interactive whiteboards across the school.
6. Distributive leadership across the school including expansion of the role of team leaders as instructional leaders and the appointment of Curriculum Leaders for Literacy, Numeracy and Integrated Curriculum, to lead the school in promoting best practice.
7. Implementation of Thinking Skills as part of our curriculum will be promoted by the presentation of ideas for classroom activities at fortnightly staff meetings.
8. Implementation of testing that meets the requirements of the Assessment Schedule at all levels and use of data to guide curriculum planning.
9. Identification of gifted and talented students and classroom programs to cater for their needs.
10. Delivery of wellbeing programs such as 'M Power N Girlz', 'Fab Friends' and 'Unmask N Boyz' and the development of programs to cater for the needs of younger students.
11. As part of the Wellbeing program a sub-committee has been formed to address Boy's Education.
12. Promotion of the performing arts program through our biennial whole school production.

Financial Performance and Position

Financial Performance – Operating Statement Summary for the year ending 31st December, 2008	
Revenue	2008 Actual
DE&T Grants	\$380,311
Commonwealth Government Grants	\$101,883
State Government Grants	\$0
Other	\$84,475
Locally Raised Funds	\$360,191
Total Operating Revenue	\$926,860
Expenditure	
Salaries and Allowances	\$116,531
Bank Charges	\$2,979
Consumables	\$137,746
Books and Publications	\$24,046
Communication Costs	\$18,388
Furniture and Equipment	\$55,742
Utilities	\$27,034
Property Services	\$236,836
Travel and Subsistence	\$0
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$31
Administration	\$3,741
Health and Personal Development	\$928
Professional Development	\$19,744
Trading and Fundraising	\$80,013
Support/Service	\$57,842
Miscellaneous	\$122,693
Total Operating Expenditure	\$904,295
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$22,565
Capital Expenditure	\$44,125
Please note that the above amounts do not include any credit revenue or expenditure allocated or spent by the school through its Student Resource Package	

Financial Position as at 31st December, 2008	
Funds Available	2008 Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$244,475.38
Official Account	\$4,766.58
Other Bank Accounts (Library Fund)	\$6,051.27
Total Funds Available	\$255,293.23
Financial Commitments	2008 Actual
School Operating Reserve	\$126,221.97
Co-operative Bank Account	\$0.00
Assets or Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$20,000.00
Revenue Received in Advance	\$34,119.00
Building/Grounds including SMS < 12 months	\$34,952.26
Region /Clusters Funds/School Based Programs < 12 months	\$0.00
Provision Accounts < 12 months	\$0.00
Repayable to DEECD	\$0.00
Other Recurrent Expenditure (Accounts Payable)	\$0.00
Assets or Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$40,000.00
Building/Grounds including SMS > 12 months	\$0.00
Region /Clusters Funds/School Based Programs > 12 months	\$0.00
Provision Accounts > 12 months	\$0.00
Co-operative loan >12 months	\$0.00
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0.00
Total Financial Commitments	\$255,293.23

Great Ryrie Primary School draws on significant cash funds each year, which reflects our high enrolment levels. Parents support the school's fee structure and meet the bulk of the voluntary contributions as well as approximately 90% of the set fees for materials and requisites.

Our active PFA (Parents and Friends Association) and the JSC (Junior School Council) raised significant funds through special events. (The PFA clearing close to \$15,000 and JSC raising in the order of \$2,600 for charity.)

The school was able to source additional government funds for capital works supporting the cash grant of over \$250,000 provided by the government for day to day operations. Significantly the school accessed locally raised funds to extend the Level 4 notebook computer program.

The school is beginning to expend its base of cash reserves, raised in recent years through local fundraising activities and the conversion of reconciliation surpluses (made possible through a temporary shift in the staffing profile). These funds have been targeted to support program developments with a view to address the needs of the students and improve facilities across the school.

During 2008, the school has again undergone a highly successful audit of its finances for 2007 and due credit should be made to the members of the Finance committee, who monitor our processes and to Diana Jacobs, our newly appointed Business Manager, whose thorough record keeping and budgetary management is of the highest order.

School Contact Information

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This report contains summary data extracted from the School Level Report. If you would like to access the School Level Report, please contact (Doug Elliott on 03 9870 6098).