Nicholson St Public School
Annual School Report 2013
School context

Nicholson Street Public School’s aim is to provide a challenging and creative education within a secure learning environment that will develop each child’s intellectual, emotional, physical and social needs to their fullest potential.

Principal’s message

In 2013 students, teachers and parents continued life’s learning journey together. This document celebrates some of the highlights of this journey. Our students have been given opportunities to wonder and be amazed by the world and to ask really good questions. Some questions have been answered. Some still remain a mystery. Whether small or large gains were made, it is the continual travelling on the journey that matters.

So why is this learning important?

Learning is important because it helps us realize how amazing the world is. Learning also helps us understand each other and understand ourselves. When we do that we can make change in the world.

Reading a blog post prompted by the passing of Mr Nelson Mandela encapsulates the purpose of education and the goal of education for each and every student at Nicholson St Public School.

The blog post reads:

*For those that seek to make a change in the world, whether global or local, one lesson of Nelson Mandela’s life is this:*

*You can.*

*You can make a difference.*

*You can stand up to insurmountable forces.*

*You can put up with far more than you think you can.*

*Your lever is far longer than you imagine it is, if you choose to use it.*

*If you don’t require the journey to be easy or comfortable or safe, you can change the world.*

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Georgia Constanti

P & C message

This year we had another amazing Halloween Festival. The Festival is a lot of fun for our children and community. It also provides funds for our children’s education, experiences and opportunities while they are at Nicho St!

The Festival raised an amazing profit of approximately $33,485! This is fantastic result. Thank you to everyone who helped and supported this event!

There is no doubt a direct correlation between what we put in and what we get back. I am proud to be a part of this enthusiastic community.

Among other things funds will go towards the following items:

- $500 towards getting a drama props basket together for performances that happen throughout the year at Nicho;
- $9156 towards Learning Support for all of our children – in 2013 the P&C funded additional days for Sue Francis and Helen Primerano;
- $300 per class as a budget wish list for our teachers and their kids next year ($2100);
- Continuing on with the Artist in Residence Program $1000 per term in 2014 ($4000);
- $5000 earmarked for additional library shelving and furniture;
- $1200 estimated for installing the ceramic wall from this term’s Artist in Residence
- $450 for music tutors on the whole school Try An Instrument Afternoon
- $500 estimated for framing and hanging the weaving from last year’s Artist in Residence
- $350 for a gelato bar at the end of year concert
- We also approved $3000 spend in conjunction with BESC on a new security gate which will be installed this term (total cost $6000).

We look forward to continuing to work together with our principal, school executive and teachers to make Nicholson St Public School an amazing learning environment.

Nicole Sorby, P&C President
Student representative’s message

Education is a very important gift. A lot of us here take it for granted. But I know that in some other countries, kids our age don’t know how to read or write, and don’t have access to education, don’t have a school. Instead they might have to spend the day walking for hours to the nearest water pump to provide water for the family.

As school captains we have gained so many great skills while helping to lead this fantastic school.

At Nicholson Street Public School we are all extremely lucky to have all these amazing teachers who lead us and look over us as we grow and develop through primary school.

2013 has most definitely been one of our most successful years! We have:

• Had almost 6 mufﬁ or fundraising days, over 20 excursions and incursions, many successful sport and academic achievements and have raised almost $200 dollars for Room to Read.
• The year 6’s have added some new seats to the playground and the year 5’s are tackling the rubbish problem.
• The 3/4s have made video games with Kodu and represented Nicho at a regional Kodu competition!
• Both 3/4 and 5/6 went on camp this year!
• And did you know in the past year we have had over 300 lines and morning messages? Probably more than 1000 ‘borrows’ from the sport shed and maybe 2500 goals scored on the bottom playground!

I can guarantee next year will be even bigger.

Though we are sad to be leaving Nicho we will never forget our time here.

N ICHO
I nvaluable
C hildhood memories
H andball central
O bserve the friendships
L ots of fun
S occer lovers
O lympians of the future
N etball players

Highlights from end of year speeches by Jack Reynolds and Perri Carmichael, Captains and Jasmine Alexander and Gil Kerr, Vice Captains.

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
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<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parent experts mentor students in preparation for the end of year theatrical production.
### Student attendance profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>95.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management of non-attendance

A process for managing non-attendance when it occurs has been put in place to support improvement in attendance school wide.

### Class sizes

Primary class sizes are included in the annual school report in order to provide parents with as much local information as possible. The following table shows our class sizes as reported at the 2013 Class Size Audit conducted in March 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total in class</th>
<th>Total per year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KK</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2G</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2P</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4C</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6H</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Workforce information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

### Workforce composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Assistance &amp; Support Teacher</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFF Teachers – Music/Drama &amp; Mandarin Teacher</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Australian Education Regulation, 2013 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce. There are no teachers identifying as Aboriginal working at Nicholson St Public School.

### Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Institute of Teachers Accreditation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mixed media art work.
Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary</th>
<th>30/11/2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>43110.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>99832.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>87285.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>97773.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>10701.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>37350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>376054.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**            |            |
| Teaching & learning        |            |
| Key learning areas         | 49656.66   |
| Excursions                 | 31181.29   |
| Extracurricular dissections| 20240.36   |
| Library                    | 2996.97    |
| Training & development     | 3305.71    |
| Tied funds                 | 92830.18   |
| Casual relief teachers     | 18213.52   |
| Administration & office    | 59020.04   |
| School-operated canteen    | 0.00       |
| Utilities                  | 29532.74   |
| Maintenance                | 5844.62    |
| Trust accounts             | 27955.20   |
| Capital programs           | 0.00       |
| **Total expenditure**      | 340777.29  |
| **Balance carried forward**| 35277.38   |

A full copy of the school’s 2013 financial statement is tabled annually at the P&C meetings. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2013

Academic achievements

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

- Year 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest)
- Year 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest)

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link [http://www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au) and enter the school name in the Find a school and select GO to access the school data.

Some highlights to note include:

- All students in year 3 and 5, across all aspects assessed by NAPLAN, Writing, Reading, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy, are achieving at or above minimum standard.
- In 2013 the average progress of students, between year 3 and year 5, across all aspects assessed by NAPLAN is consistently above the State and Similar School Group averages.

Other achievements

Number Crunchers.

In semester 2, Year 6 took part in the Number Crunchers Competition for Year 6 and 7 students from throughout the State. After an in-class competitions 5 students made it through to the district finals.

One student, Nemo Gage, also entered the Rubic’s Cube competition. He was the only student of the district schools who was able to complete the Rubic’s cube correctly. This student then represented the Balmain district at the state Number Crunchers competition.
International Competition and Assessment for Schools (ICAS)

This year Nicholson St students from years 3-6 had the opportunity to participate in the Maths and English ICAS competitions. These competitions are off level tests and assess slightly above year level understandings.

There were 21 students entering the English Competition. Students are tested across five domains: Reading Literary; Reading Factual; Textual Devices; Syntax; and Vocabulary.

Nicholson St students achieved well, with 4 students gaining distinctions and 4 gaining credits.

There were 23 students entering the Maths Competition. Students are tested across five domains: Number and Arithmetic; Algebra and Patterns; Measures and Units; Space and Geometry; and Chance and Data.

Nicholson St students achieved well, with 2 students gaining distinctions and 5 gaining credits.

Public Speaking

Students from K-6 represented Nicholson St Public School at the Sydney East (Port Jackson Division) Public Speaking competition. A local school comp determined stage winners who then went on to represent our school.

Jacqueline Lee won her division comp and moved to compete at Region.

The Premier's Reading Challenge (PRC)

Each year Nicholson St students participate in the PRC. The PRC is a State Government run initiative that aims to encourage a love of reading for leisure and pleasure in students, and to enable them to experience quality literature. It is not a competition but a challenge to each student to read, to read more and to read more widely.

This year we had a record 71 students completing the challenge from K-6.

Sport

Carnivals

Our swimming carnival, held at Cabarita Swimming Pool, resulted in a win to the Johnston house. Our junior champions for 2013 are Oban Cottier and Ally Peacocke. The 11 years champions are Emlyn Watterson and Ruby Guthrie and the senior champions are Gil Kerr and Jasmine Alexander.

Twenty-four children qualified for the Balmain District Swimming Carnival but there were no students who progressed to the Zone Carnival.

The Nicholson Street Public School Cross Country Carnival was held at the beautiful Peacock Point again this year, which has been a great venue to select our cross country team. Kindergarten and Year 1 students took part in the fourth annual one kilometre fun run as a curtain raiser to the main event. Students from Years 2 to Year 6 took part in the full length cross country event and with the help of a large band of parents and teachers the carnival was a roaring success.

Thirty students represented our school at the Balmain District Carnival but unfortunately we did not have any representatives attend the Balmain Zone Carnival.

The beginning of Term 3 saw our annual Athletics Carnival held at King George’s Oval in Rozelle. Competitive events were run in conjunction with a tabloids program and the winning house was Johnston. Junior athletics champions are Max Donnellan and Lia Al-Soufi, 11 Years champions are Emlyn Watterson and Ruby Guthrie and senior champions are Charlie Oley and Jacqui Lee.

In early Term 3 a large group of thirty-seven students represented Nicholson Street Public School at the District Carnival and again, we did not have any students compete at the Zone level.

Students K-6 participate in the district public speaking competition.
PSSA Weekly Sport

It has been an amazing year for Nicholson Street Public School students in Years 4 to 6. For the first time in many years our students were involved in a regular team sport competition with schools from our PSSA district. The completion took place at Tempe Reserve, in Tempe. Our students were involved in a range of sports including Soccer, Netball, Oz Tag, Softball and T-ball. As a result of a more regular commitment to these competitive sports the students’ skills have improved greatly, and in some cases we won the competition in the sport students were involved in.

A continued consistent approach to Physical Education in the future will further help to develop student’s skills in a range of sports.

Extra-curricular Sports Programs

The federally funded Active After School Communities is in its third year of operation at Nicholson Street Public School. The Active After School Community program includes a healthy afternoon tea, organised by parents, and a one hour coaching clinic, all funded by the federal government. Parent involvement is crucial to the running of the program and there has been an amazing amount of support again this year. The coaching clinics included Athletics, Rugby League, Touch Football, T-ball, Fencing, Cricket and Basketball. We are looking forward to continuing with the program next year.

PDHPE

In 2013 Personal Development, Health and Physical Education lessons at Nicholson Street Public School have continued to be taught well. Our PDHPE program is being taught now using the scope and continuum developed by the teaching staff. This document is in it third year of use. Teachers have also endeavoured to update the school community on the resources available to the school in PE lessons and the type of lessons students are taking part in each semester.

This year we also had a visit from the Healthy Harold Life Education Van. This is the first time in many years that Healthy Harold has visited our school and the students loved it. All students, from Kindergarten through to Year 6, loved meeting Harold and enjoyed talking about a range of issues including the safe use of medicines, personal safety, quality decision making and the effects of drugs and alcohol on the human body. Students always remember their time in the Life Education Van and this program is one we hope to continue at Nicholson Street Public School on a bi-annual basis.

Students at Nicholson Street Public School were also lucky enough to take part in other initiatives and programs including a visit from the NRL team, the West Tigers, where players from the club came and talked about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. Students from Kindergarten to 6 were involved in an 8 week Gymnastics program where they were taught and given the opportunity to fine tune their gross motor skills including balancing, jumping and rolling. The whole school also took part in Jump Rope for Heart this year. We were able to raise a lot of money for charity as well as enjoy skipping in class time, lunchtime and recess.
**Significant programs and initiatives**

**Aboriginal education**

2013 saw a whole school move towards a more holistic and consistent approach to teaching Aboriginal Education to students at Nicholson Street Public School. A plan of action for Aboriginal Education was developed.

Nicholson Street Public School is focused to teach Aboriginal Education authentically and integrate Aboriginal perspectives into teaching and learning programs wherever possible. This has been achieved through collaborative planning days and discussed with teachers and executive staff. All staff will continue to approach Aboriginal Education in this way as we move forward into the future.

**Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into teaching and learning**

In 2013 teachers looked to authentically integrate Aboriginal Education into learning. We have had visits from the Talli Gallery, a local Aboriginal art gallery, where the owner, Di Stevens, came to the school and taught students Aboriginal art appreciation. We have also spent time in professional learning at the Talli Gallery in order to gain awareness of indigenous artists in our local area and appreciation of Aboriginal art. We have invited local Aboriginal people into the school to tell their life stories. One person is Deb Thomas, who works for Leichardt council who became part of the Stolen Generations when she was taken from her family by the government at the age of 5. She was able to add to the students knowledge of past Australian policies which have affected Indigenous Australians.

Students from Stage 3 at Nicholson Street Public School also participated in a school camp which was in the remote Aboriginal community of Goodooga where they lived for a week and took part in the Indigenous Games. Students were able to spend quality time in an authentic manner with other students from a very different community to the Nicholson Street community.

Nicholson Street Public School has also bought a new flag pole for the school, which now carries the Australian flag, Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Islander flag, so that we are acknowledging the inhabitants of this land. We invited a local Aboriginal Elder, Aunty Fay, to the school for the flag raising ceremony and made a promise to her to continue to include her, and other local Indigenous people, in the teaching and learning programs at school.

Our focus as we move into 2014 is to:

- Deepen the understandings and build authentic relationships between our students and Aboriginal students.

We hope to do this through:

- Maintaining the link created when Stage 3 visited a country school and built real relationships with Aboriginal students
- Artist in residence program
- Units of work with Aboriginal perspectives explicitly embedded.

Aunty Faye joined us for a flag raising ceremony after we installed a new flagpole to accommodate, the Australian, Aboriginal & Torres Straight flags.
Multicultural education
Harmony Day 2013 was once again a successful day where students and teachers celebrated diversity in our community. Students moved around the school in mixed age groups visiting different countries. Countries represented included Thailand and Wales where we were fortunate enough to have parents come in to share their cultural heritage with personal stories and artifacts.

Arts - Music
Nicholson Street P.S. offers a rich and varied extra-curricular Music Program with the aim of providing an opportunity for every child in the school to participate. We encourage our children to join our school-based ensembles to learn, perform and have fun while also providing opportunities for children to extend and enrich their musical experience in concerts and workshops run by Sydney Region Arts and the DEC Performing Arts Unit. In 2013, 94 students were enrolled in the Music Program. Many of these students participated in more than one ensemble.

The Concert Band is the senior performing arts group and is open to Yrs 2-6 by audition. The 2013 Concert Band was ably supported by very experienced Year 5 and 6 musicians who were wonderful mentors to their younger band peers. The Band took on some challenging new repertoire under their new conductor, Josh Salter.

Training Band is open to Yrs 2-6 starting on their first instrument or learning a second instrument. The 2013 Training Band was our biggest ever beginner band and all members were successful in their auditions for the 2014 Concert Band – a testament to their hard work and the efforts of their conductor, Freddie Hill.

We ran Junior recorder groups for Kindergarten to Year 3 as well as a Senior group for more experienced players. Wendy Thorvaldson ably guides our Junior musicians through their very first lessons and songs while also putting in an amazing effort with the seniors.

The Choir for Years 3-6 continues to attract new members under the energetic direction of Maddie Cowell for weekly rehearsals full of song and dance with a great variety of musical styles.

Glee Club was well attended by students from K-6 and was run by our teachers, Mr Paul Cullen and Mrs Suzanne Payne. Students in Glee Club mixed music and theatre to perform interesting pieces at school assemblies and end of year celebrations.

The Junior and Senior Guitar Ensembles were again full in 2013 under the tuition of David Brinsmead. These small group rehearsals encourage our young guitarists to extend their individual skill and technique while also introducing group dynamics and playing in parts.

Trash Percussion is a fun and loud group that makes amazing music out of…..trash. Their leader, Ian Watson, encourages improvisation while giving his students sound rhythmic and drumming skills.

The Music Program is a successful partnership between the school executive, teachers and parents. Rehearsals and tutorials are rigorous and we expect our students to work and practice well but we also make it fun with Open Rehearsals, morning teas and music parties.

Performing Arts Concerts are held at the school every semester to showcase and celebrate the hard work and talent of our students and their dedicated conductors. In 2013, we were able to provide our students with exciting performance and workshop opportunities.

The Concert Band and Training Band participated in the Big Band Workshop at the school. The band members enjoyed intensive small group tutorials and combined rehearsals with guest conductors introducing them to a new repertoire, learnt and performed in one day.

Training Band again took part in the Sydney Region Training Band Blow In – “Bandemonium” at Carlton Public School. Our training band kids
joined with over a hundred students from other schools in our region for a full-day workshop, bravely dividing into instrument based tutorials before coming together to entertain parents with a concert.

Our Senior recorders were invited to take part in a massed recorder ensemble of over 600 players in the Festival of Instrumental Music at the Sydney Opera House in August, a wonderful display of the rich and varied performing arts culture in Sydney Region Public Schools.

Senior choir members were also selected to take part in the Sydney Region Expanding Horizons Concert at the Opera House, an exciting performing arts collaboration between Sydney Public Schools and Schools from China.

In 2014, we aim to extend the music program to capture the interests and experience of as many of the students as possible. We will be starting our String Ensemble. We are also planning to send our choir out into the community to perform at hospitals, nursing homes and the wharf for morning commuters.

Arts – Drama

Our drama programs involved teaching performance skills to develop social and communication skills and enhance imaginative thinking. Drama was programmed for and developed in classroom teaching programs. Additionally all students were involved in the end of year concert ‘Jack and the Multi-Coloured Beastalk’. Students, teachers and the parent community were involved in preparing for this performance, including writing and learning scripts, making props and sets, and learning songs.

Arts – Dance

The official Dance group, lead by Ms Carson, draws students, both boys and girls from K-6, was also very active in 2013. They worked hard to produce some very entertaining dance performances for the school and wider community throughout the year. Dance was also programmed for in classroom teaching and learning programs.

Chinese Language Program

In 2013 a Chinese (Mandarin) Language program was introduced to Nicholson St Public School. Students, K-6, attend lessons in school time once a week. Our expert teacher Mr Scott Smith has taught students, Mandarin through rhymes, songs and games. Students have also learnt about Chinese culture and customs.
**Book Week**

All the children participated in Book Week with the theme ‘Read Across the Universe’. Each class completed an activity based on one of the shortlisted books and were involved in a book parade. The Library Student Leadership team prepared some ‘out of this world’ displays for all students to enjoy in the library.

![Students dress up for the Book Parade.](image)

**Science Week**

Students celebrated National Science Week with a day dedicated to science. The theme was 100 years of Australian Science. Students participated in hands-on science investigations coordinated by their teachers, including experimenting with levers, looking at the science of indigenous cultures and the science of hearing.

![Students experiment with levers.](image)

**Artist in Residence**

The Artist in Residence program continued in 2012. In Semester 1, Jeremy Waters, an actor and director of theatre, worked with all students on a weekly basis, exposing students, K-6, to Shakespeare and mentoring them in performance techniques.

In Semester 2, Kris from Ceramics in Schools worked with all students K-6, teaching techniques in ceramics. Students K-6 produced a mural which now adorns the outside of our Library.

Year 6 students worked on a project, which transformed the frog pond into a magical fairy garden.

This program will continue into 2014 with a range of artists from a range of fields being engaged.

![Students creating with clay.](image)

**Nicho Flicko, BYOD & Cybersafety**

In 2013 there has been an even greater integration of technology into classroom practice across the school. The focus of technology integration has been on developing students’ skills in using technology as an enabler to create and not consume content. For example, students used technology to create movies for the Nicho Flicko Community Film event held at Nicholson St Public School. Nicho Flicko provided an authentic opportunity for students to use technology.

![Students use technology as a tool to complement traditional learning techniques.](image)
Students also used technology as a learning tool to gain feedback on their reading and oratory skills. They created e-books and movies, musical composition and soundscapes and even dabbled with augmented reality.

2013 also saw the introduction of the school’s Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy. Under this policy students were able to bring their own devices, ipod, tablets, ipads, to school for directed use during learning time. This provided the opportunity for students to make the link between home and school. A number of parents have commented that students are using their devices in more creative ways since the introduction of BYOD.

In 2013 there has also been a strong focus on Cybersafety. Students in years 3-6 attended a number of workshops with Cybersafety experts. We also accessed the Federal Governments, Cybersmart workshops, for students, teachers and parents. This will continue again in 2014.

Environmental Education

The school has continued to support and promote sustainability through a variety of initiatives, workshops, class activities and events.

Students in years 1-4 participated in Grow Plus. Grow Plus is an environmental education program focusing on outdoor learning, sustainability and healthy lifestyles. The program is run in schools by the Environmental Education Office and links local government, local high schools and primary schools, as it aims to educate our students on the benefits of growing and buying local produce. As part of Grow Plus, years 1-4 were involved in a day of tree planting, bird spotting, food preparing and lots of eating as students learnt about the importance of keeping our environment and strategies of how to do this.

Our Environment team leaders guided our practices through advertising events creatively and being enthusiastic role-models.

Our garden this year has been very busy with many enthusiastic students from all grades. For many students, our school garden provides their first connection to the natural world. Working in the garden increases awareness of what we eat and where it comes from. Maintaining the vegetable and flower gardens around our school teaches valuable lessons in caring for our school environment.

This year we have successfully planted and harvested carrots, parsley, lemon grass cucumbers tomatoes, broad beans, snow peas and beetroot. Our big success story was a fantastic crop of potatoes. Money raised from a number of Friday harvest sales provided seedlings and materials for further plantings. In 2014 we look forward to continue to develop our garden, and with our school kitchen demonstrate preparing and sharing delicious and healthy food.

A poster at Circular Quay Station highlights Nicho Flicko as part of the DEC’s World’s Biggest Classroom.

Students enjoy locally grown, picked and self made food as part of the Grow Plus project.
Room to Read

Through student leadership, the Nicholson St Public School community has adopted Room to Read as their fundraising focus. Room to Read builds libraries and publishes books in developing countries in the local languages. It also supports girls’ education. Students are focused on raising $5000 to build a library in a developing country. They are doing this through in-school fundraiser. For example, Pyjama Day and Video Game Day.

School planning and evaluation 2012—2014

School evaluation processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used include:

- Surveys
- NAPLAN data
- School Based Assessment Data

School planning 2012—2014: progress in 2013

School priority 1

Increased levels of overall literacy achievement for every student

Outcomes from 2012–2014

- Increase the percentage of Year 3 students achieving proficiency in Reading from 45% in 2011 to 80% in 2014.
- Increase the percentage of Year 5 students achieving proficiency in Reading from 40% in 2011 to 65% in 2014.
- Establish school based baseline data for student spelling.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- 86% of the Year 3 cohort achieved proficiency level in the NAPLAN Reading assessment in 2013.
- 27% of the Year 5 cohort achieved proficiency level in the NAPLAN Reading assessment in 2013.
- In 2013 the average progress of students, between year 3 and year 5, across all Literacy aspects assessed by NAPLAN is consistently above the State and Similar School Group averages.

- Initial research conducted on best practice in teaching spelling. Words their Way approach to spelling purchased and initial professional learning conducted.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014

- Literacy session further developed across K-6 to ensure explicit teaching is occurring using the modeled, guided and independent format. Ensure consistency across K-6.
- K-2 Reading Parent volunteer program established to complement classroom literacy session.
- 3-6 Reading Resource room established.

School priority 2

Increased levels of overall numeracy achievement for every student

Outcomes from 2012–2014

- Increase the percentage of Year 3 students achieving proficiency in Numeracy from 18% in 2011 to 85% in 2014.
- Increase the percentage of Year 5 students achieving proficiency in Numeracy from 53% in 2011 to 60% in 2014.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- 69% of the Year 3 cohort achieved proficiency level in the NAPLAN Reading assessment in 2013.
- 6% of the Year 5 cohort achieved proficiency level in the NAPLAN Reading assessment in 2013.
- In 2013 the average progress of students, between year 3 and year 5, across all Numeracy aspects assessed by NAPLAN is consistently above the State and Similar School Group averages.

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Continue with the two week cycle and scope and sequence ensuring all concepts are covered and covered well.
• Continue to ensure a tight teaching and learning cycle, tracking students against key concepts and subsequently explicitly teaching of concepts as needed.
• Stocktake maths resources and stock as required.
• Plan for the implementation of the new NSW BOS Maths syllabus in 2015.

Practical learning in Maths.

Professional learning

Teacher professional learning in 2013 included:
• Participation of all teachers in staff development days.
• Stage 2 teachers participated in Learning Literacy through programming – Kodu project.
• Computer Co-ordinator days.
• Weekly professional learning that included focus on learning support, curriculum differentiation, technology integration, teacher personal interest projects, project based learning, teaching with emotional intelligence and integrating music into literacy learning.
• Collaborative planning days focused on developing capacity in teaching literacy and implementing the new English Syllabus.
• All teachers participated in phase 1 Focus on Reading which will continue into 2014. Focus on Reading considers strategies and teaching methods, which improve student comprehension, particularly in years 3-6.
• Increasing cultural awareness by participating in an excursion to the Tali Gallery for a workshop in Indigenous cultures and artwork.
• Executive development through participation in Growth Coaching.

Total expenditure on professional learning in 2013 was $24,010.28 an average of $2181.75 per teacher (includes classroom, RFF, executive, library).

In 2013 there were 3 new scheme teachers working towards accreditation and 1 teacher maintaining their accreditation at Professional Competence at the school.

Teachers learning together.

Parent/caregiver, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2013, the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

Program evaluations

Aboriginal Education

Background

Aboriginal Education was established as an area of evaluation for 2013.

In 2013 there was a greater focus on integrating Aboriginal Education in to learning. Furthermore teachers looked for ways for students to create authentic and personal links with Aboriginal communities.
Parent perceptions were evaluated using a survey. The response to the survey was moderate with 38 families participating.

Feedback from teachers and students was anecdotal as well as being collected through surveys.

**Findings and conclusions**

The major findings from the data analysis show:

- 97% of respondents agree that Aboriginal Education is important.
- 89% of parents strongly agree that Aboriginal Education is treated as an important subject at Nicholson St Public School.
- 81% of respondents believe that their child has developed new knowledge, perspectives and attitudes of Aboriginal people.
- A number of parents commented on the authenticity of the learning experiences provided, with particular reference to the stage 3 trip to Goodooga. A number of parents commented that they hope these experiences are repeated for future students.
- Teachers felt more could be done to provide authentic opportunities for students in learning in Aboriginal Education.
- Students overwhelmingly felt that Aboriginal Education was important and that they learn a lot about Aboriginal culture in their classrooms.

It can therefore be concluded that improvement in teaching Aboriginal Education has been made.

**Future directions**

It is recommended that:

- Teachers continue to dedicate planning time to Aboriginal Education.
- Greater links are established with local experts e.g. Tali Gallery.
- Continue the bi-annual camp visiting with real Aboriginal communities.
- Consider establishing a bush tucker garden bed.
- Continue links with local elders.
- Invite the Goodooga students to Nicholson St Public School.

Students make authentic connections while on camp in Goodooga.

**Science and Technology**

**Background**

Science and Technology was established as a second area of evaluation for 2013.

2014 will see the beginning of the implementation of the new BOS Science syllabus and current perceptions and understandings were evaluated to determine an initial baseline.

Parent perceptions were evaluated using a survey. The response to the survey was moderate with 38 families participating.

Feedback from teachers and students was anecdotal as well as being collected through surveys.

Student feedback was gathered through surveys.

**Findings and conclusions**

The major findings from the data analysis show:

- 100% of respondents agree that learning in Science and Technology is important.
- 91% of parents strongly agree that Science and Technology is treated as an important subject at Nicholson St Public School.
- 82% of respondents believe that their child has developed new scientific and technology skills, knowledge, perspectives and attitudes.
- 66% of parents feel well informed about their child’s learning in science and technology – with 69% believing their child has a good understanding of the investigative process and 61% believing their child has a good understanding of the design process.
- 2 of the respondents commented on the extent of the use of digital technology.
• Teachers felt they could adequately teach Science and Technology. They also overwhelmingly identified this as an area they would like further professional learning.
• Students identified science and technology as a subject they enjoyed and would like to do more of.

It can therefore be concluded that Science and Technology is an area that is taught well at Nicholson St Public School. Even so there is always room for further development.

Future directions
It is recommended that:

• Provide further professional learning to teachers to further deepen their understandings in Science and Technology teaching and learning.
• Engage a real scientist to work with students through the CSIRO Scientist in Schools program.
• Parent workshops on the teaching of Science and Technology should be organized to give parents a better understanding of what is taught. And that Technology refers to mainly to the design and make process and not simply digital technology.
• Continue to resource the Science and Technology KLA.

‘Management’ was used to gain the opinions of parents and teachers. A year 6 focus group was established to determine student perspectives.

38 families responded to the survey. Over 80% of parents felt that the school was always looking for ways to improve its performance and was continually or almost always making minor changes to plans to improve its performance. Furthermore over 80% of parents surveyed believed their child’s educational needs are met by the school and an overwhelming 96% believe their child’s welfare needs are met. Parents believed that staff and teachers are valued and supported and continually undertake professional learning to improve their practice. Over 90% of respondents believe the school is well managed and that resources are allocated effectively.

The student focus group consisted of year 6 students. They identified that they feel their teachers value them and that their teachers are well equipped to teach them. Students felt they had the resources they need to learn. They noted that generally they were satisfied with the schools direction.

Teachers noted they believe the school is managed well with a cohesive executive team. They feel valued and supported in the classroom and their learning needs are met.

Future direction
It is recommended that:

• Continue to be transparent in school management.
• Continued use of Class Parents to inform parents.
• Further involve students in school decision making and re-establish student leadership teams.

About this report
In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school’s practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school’s future development.

Georgia Constanti Principal
Lucy Norrish Assistant Principal

Students participate in a UNSW Robotics Workshop.

School Evaluation
In 2013 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Their responses are presented below.

The focus area of evaluation was school management. The School Map survey
Bianca Carson  Classroom Teacher
Robert Haigh  Classroom Teacher
Nicole Sorby  P&C President
Kathryn Reynolds  Parent Extra-Curricular Music Program Coordinator

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Parents can find more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the report and have the opportunity to provide feedback about the report at: