

Submission form

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE ARTS
2005 SHOWCASE AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOLS

Title of Submission: Strong Partnerships + Prepared Students = Quality Learning

School: Millmerran State P-10 School

District: Darling Downs

Area: South-western Queensland

Key contact person:

Name: Vince Burke, Principal

Phone number: 4695 1333 (school), 0429 951333 (school mobile)

Email address: vburk1@eq.edu.au



Showcase Award for Excellence in the Early Phase of Learning

Multimedia items:



PowerPoint presentation

SUBMISSION OVERVIEW

Strong Partnerships + Prepared Students = Quality Learning

In 2000, Millmerran State P-10 School and community discussion focussed on the lack of readiness of many early phase children for school. We had a belief that we should aim to achieve excellence in teaching and learning. We wanted to be innovative. Our program sought to increase local family involvement and make our classrooms intellectually challenging and relevant to the 21st century. The achievements are measurably significant:-

- Improvement in literacy, writing and numeracy skills
- Increase in family involvement
- International student success

DESCRIPTION OF SUBMISSION INCLUDING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO QUALITY OUTCOMES AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS FOR STUDENTS

Our School is characterised and influenced by:-

- a rural, low socio-economic community
- the modern reality of single parent families, higher transience (10-15% per term) and busy lifestyle
- two-thirds of our students travelling to school by bus
- the recent construction of the Millmerran Power Station and adjoining mine

After community consultation, our vision was firstly to increase the readiness of our students in Preschool and Year 1 for formal education. This was nurtured by the following: -

- A neurosensory program was established. Children were encouraged and supported in the area of motor and sensory development on four mornings a week.
- A new, health and physical education program was developed.
- A whole school focus on improving student nutrition included a breakfast program to support the children who were coming to school without having had breakfast. These were often bus children.

Secondly, we aimed to build on this so that students have an increased readiness for formal learning and develop their literacy and numeracy skills. We believed a successful program should recognise individual stages and styles for learning. A successful program would see children excited to expand their knowledge and skill base. Our developments included:-

- providing a pre metalinguistics program in Preschool providing activities, which focus on perception and discrimination skills to lead the children to be aware of concepts such as sounds, syllables, rhyme and the written word before Year 1
- introducing a Lem Phonics Program
- encouraging families to understand that literacy and numeracy are important in children's daily lives – established parent library, open days
- exposing the children to a wide range of oral, visual, written and electronic texts to encourage interest in literacy
- allowing the children to explore activities involving patterns, problem solving, the use of number and spatial language in a variety of contexts
- encouraging parental/volunteer support and providing in-service and training eg Positive Parenting Program and trained Reading Assistance Tutors
- ensuring the full range of student abilities are catered for by providing for children with learning difficulties or giftedness. We have a teacher-aide trained for speech/ OT support. A weekly G&T group targeted three to four students per class.
- training older students to support early phase students with reading
- advancing Preschool assessment in 2005 to include Pips assessment and mapping of Phase A.

CONNECTION TO QSE – 2010, DESTINATION 2010

Learning

Millmerran State P-10 School implemented a learning framework to prepare students for living in a complex, multi-cultural, networked society-LE 2.4. LE 1.1 and LE 1.5 specifically relate to Year 2 Diagnostic Net reading, writing and number and intervention strategies. We have introduced a gifted and talented program with a dramatic success story of International success (Evidence 9).

Our learning framework in early phase integrating curriculum and pedagogy supports LE 2.4. Assessment and reporting is a developing area. We have focussed on Pre-3 area of the school to develop dialogue with families and to allow our students to see the appreciation of lifelong learning by their families and members of the Millmerran Community (LE2.1). ICT has been a major part of our resourcing and teacher development for four years (LE2.2).

Schools

Millmerran State P-10 School through this program successfully aimed to respond to community needs (SC1.1) and parent/caregiver satisfaction (SC3).

Workforce

Our teachers were involved in professional development (WO 1.1) eg LEM Phonics, Neurosensory program, Literate Futures. Teachers are encouraged to and supported in improving their skills (WO1.4).

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

Shared P-3 Philosophy

Children are able to make a smooth transition from Preschool to Year 1 as strategies exist to link their prior learning to their future learning:-

- visits to the school during the preschool year allow the children to discover that they will be entering an environment with a similar sympathetic understanding of their individual needs to that which exists in preschool

- a developmental checklist and verbal discussions between the Year 1 and Preschool teacher at the beginning of each year allows for the passing of information about each child's individual learning and needs
- philosophy of De Bono and Multiple intelligences nurtured.

Improved student outcomes were achieved by

1.Lem Phonics Program (2001 introduced Year 1, 2002 introduced Years 2-4). Lem is a thorough, sequenced program which has brought continuity across year levels and a consistent/common language for teachers and which:

- equips students with greater skills and knowledge to decode/construct text earlier in the year
- develops confident readers with excellent comprehension skills', high student motivation with reading is evident
- causes a beginning sentence structure to happen far earlier which therefore allows for consolidation and extension for the remainder of Year 1
- provides a consistent approach for P-7 students and allows time to grasp all aspects as it is reinforced in a scaffolded manner

From 2004, a Lem Phonics group for mid-year enrolments was established.

2.Reading Assistance Program

- Trained tutors are implementing this program three times per week.
- Older peers are trained in Support-A-Reader strategies to assist younger readers (Buddy Reading).

3.Neuropsychological Program

Children are supported in the area of Motor and Sensory Development by:-

- the provision of more challenging obstacle courses and the introduction of perceptual motor activities to the music and movement program prepares the children for their participation in the Neuropsychological Program in Year 1, before formal learning begins
- early identification of difficulties in this area which allows for programs to assist the child to improve their skills be established by specialists
- recognition of varied sensory experiences, neurological functions resulting in students being alert, settled in class and more organised for learning
- ensuring auditory skills have improved by always being 'cued in' and the need to reinforce instruction in class has lessened
- being more able to problem solve which has assisted mathematically and socially
- developing greater coordination which is evident due to the stimulation of the neurological pathways.

4.Intervention Program

- consistent approach and greater communication in the early phase years
- process of identifying learning difficulties is being processed in Preschool instead of waiting until late Year 1, as it was pre 2000. Personnel such as Guidance Officer, Speech language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, ST-LD are utilised
- individual intervention needs commence as early as Week 3 of Preschool Term 1
- quality programs – Lem Phonics, Neuropsychological and OT/Speech Therapy
- Gifted and Talented Program
- Computer Vision Screening from Year 1-10
- Screening for Westwood Spelling occurs for Year 1 to 7 annually
- PM Benchmarking is set from Year 1 to Year 3
- Waddington Reading is administered from Year 1 to 7
- Neale Reading Analysis administered to Gifted & Talented students in Year 3.

5. Forming Partnerships to Prepare Students for Learning

Parents/caregivers are supportive of their child's learning when positive partnerships are fostered and nurtured by: -

- regular discussions between home and school regarding the child's emotional, social, physical and intellectual development
- involving families in supporting their child's learning through information sharing such as: -
 - parent meetings, weekly newsletters and Keep in Touch books for Year 1
 - pictorial documentation of preschool projects and explanations of the learning outcomes, which have taken place
 - collation of the child's work with an added Statement of the objectives achieved is examined during regular parent interviews.
 - integrated Learning Centres are daily supported by parents, caregivers and grandparents
- parent/caregiver training opportunities – videos/books of pre-reading and reading strategies are circulated amongst preschool and Year 1 parents (Resource Appendix)
- “Literate Futures” goal enabled guest speakers to discuss the importance that nutrition plays in children's learning
- consistent parental and caregiver involvement in classroom activities. It is evident that parents' confidence and their ability to enjoy the learning experience have increased.

6.Greater Professional Development Programs

- Our School ensures ease of access and opportunity to attend professional development – 13% of school grant in 2001
- Teachers empowered to implement programs and share knowledge
- Staff members are more confident to address socio-economic and educational changes eg multi-intelligence and preparation for Prep Year
- Millmerran initiated an annual P-10 Professional Development for the Darling Downs District that includes net working with teachers from other schools.

7.Increased Access to Resources

- Individual class budget allows specific class/student needs to be met
- Increased teacher aide support maximized in class for P-3
- Technology: Prior to 1997 – 1 computer in Years 1 to 3. 2004 – 4 networked computers and a printer per class and Internet connection.

8.Greater Confidence and Use of Information Computer Technology

- Staff in-service leads to professional confidence. School Opinion survey indicates 90.9% of teachers in 2004 “have access to the resources I need to do my job well”. As such, greater use in classroom of ICT to support teaching and learning is evident.
- Secondary ICT teacher annually runs two five-week evening programs for parents. Not only does this increase computer education (only 29% of our families have a PC at home), we see an increase in the acceptance of formal education in the community
- Introduction of Typequick Program in Year 1.

Evidence

Quantitative Evidence

Quality improved outcomes for our students are evident and measurable. Detailed data is available in Appendix 1 for the following results: -

1. Year 1 PM Benchmarks – Median doubled
2. Year 2 Diagnostic Net Results – Students needing additional support are down 6% for reading, 11% for writing and 8% for number. Boys needing additional support are down 7% for reading, 22% for writing and 16% for number
3. Year 3 Test results show Literacy flagged above State in 2004. (a) Students identified as being in the bottom 15% decreased from 25% in 2001-2002 to 8.6% in 2003-2004 (b) Males identified dropped from 25% to 10% for the same periods
4. Year 3 Waddington Reading Test Summary 2004 – Only 13% of students scored below average in reading. 19% scored above average
5. Years 1 to 3 Westwood Spelling Test - In year 2001, Year 1 students were spelling 3 months above their age. In 2003 the same students in year 3 are spelling 12 months above their age. In 2002, Year 1 students were spelling 2 months above their age. In 2004 the same students in year 3 are spelling 8 months above their age.
6. Significant evidence of early phase success growing into middle phase

Adult response to curriculum development has been great: -

7. 2004 School Opinion Survey Results for very satisfied parents/caregivers and teachers are available in Appendix 2
8. Our goal to increase family involvement has been successful. Primary classroom volunteer list for Christmas break-up is now lengthy, about 100 adults annually
9. Self-confidence has increased in both classroom and playground in transitional children - see comments in Appendix 3.

Outside recognition has been warmly received: -

10. In 2003, 5 of our Year 4/5 students, who were in Year 2/3 when this program began and had been initial members of our new gifted and talented program, were involved in six months of mathematical challenges via the net. Over 200 schools from Australia, the Pacific and China were competing. We won!
11. South-western Queensland Area *Showcase* winner 2004 and 2005.

Evidence of our initiative's sustainability

After four years, we see continued commitment and involvement from all staff who are encouraged to improve and supported in improving their skills. Our teachers were involved in professional development eg LEM Phonics, Neurosensory program, Literate Futures, ICT. We have seen enthusiasm shown by incoming staff when they see the results for students and professionalism shown by present staff. They donate their Saturdays to complete the required training and this has led to visits from Toowoomba schools to see our program in action. Our teacher-aides are now part of the training schedule.

Our success in early phase education has embedded the philosophy of our approach in our School. The success of Lems in the Pre to 3 Phase has led to the establishment of a spelling mastery program in the upper classes. We have developed agreed benchmarks for years 3, 5 and 7 against which all children's achievement in these years can be measured.

To ensure there is a continuity of performance, we encourage leadership to be based around our two learning support teachers. Each semester, the program is reviewed with teachers, teacher-aides and parents invited to contribute. Teachers each semester adjust student groups to meet individual needs. For example, students may join the neurosensory program for emotional needs or may graduate from program because they perfected exercises or formal testing has shown improvement. We have created extra LEM's groups to meet specific needs and a larger Neurosensory group.

Our program has had to remain dynamic due to significant enrolment increases (60 new students in 4 months).

A plan for the future

- A contract with USQ is seeing professional development in the areas of science and technology from 2004-2007-*Science for Life Project*
- Increased preparedness for fulltime preparatory year in 2007
- Strengthening of the continuum of learning across our Pre-10 School
- 2005 focus on Numeracy – external facilitators booked and Eduss installation through the middle phase classes
- Involvement in *Active Australia After Schools Care Program*
- Plans for community awareness programs eg go to the local halls and run programs rather than at School.

Personnel involved in the project

Vince Burke, Principal

Sue Johnson, Teacher

Pam Thornton, Teacher

Kellie McLoughlin, Teacher

Tanya Van Bruinessen, Teacher

Mary Antonio, Learning Support Teacher

Barry Mugeli, Guidance Officer

Joanne Dines, Teacher

Tracey Ogilvie, Teacher

Contributions by Parents/caregivers, past students, Speech Language Pathologists, Community Health Nurses

Appendix 1

No1-Number of Students on PM Benchmarks by the end of Term 4 for Year 1 (Shading indicates middle 75% of cohort)

Benchmark	LEMS began		Neuro-Sens began		2004	
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
1			1	1		2
2	1	3				1 five of these
3		2				students arrived
4	5	1				1 in Semester 2
5		2	1	1	1	1
6	5	1	2			1
7			1		3	1
8	2		2		3	
9						2
10		1	3	6	8	9
11		4	3	4		2
12	2	1	2	1	2	3
13				2		2
14	4	1	3	2	2	
15		1	1			
16	1	2	2	4	1	
17						
18					3	
19			2	1		
20					1	2
21		1				
22					1	
23				1		
24					1	
25						
26						
27						
28						
29						
30				1		

Summary- Median doubled. Student reading benchmarks are skewed to higher levels as LEMS and Neurosensory program introduced.

No. 2 - Year 2 Net Results 1997 – 2004

	Reading		Writing		Number	
	Us	State	Us	State	Us	State
Students needing additional support 1997-2000	30.3%	29.8%	17.2%	19.1%	27.9%	26.5%
2001-2004	24.6%	26.2%	5.9%	16.5%	19.5%	21.8%
Boys needing additional support 1997-2000	36.5%	34.7%	27.0%	23.4%	33.3%	27.9%
2001-2004	29.3%	30.3%	5.2%	20.4%	17.2%	22.7%

Summary - From being at or above State levels for needing support before the program, we are seeing significant improvement. Students needing additional support are down 6% for reading, 11% for writing and 8% for number. Boys needing additional support are down 7% for reading, 22% for writing and 16% for number.

No. 3 - (a) –Proportion of Year 3 Students identified (via QSA Year 3 test) in the bottom 15% of Literacy

Year	Millmerran	State
2001	20.0%	15.5%
2002	30.0%	17.3%
2003	14.3%	16.7%
2004	3.3%	15.9%

(b) Proportion of Year 3 male students identified (via QSA Year 3 test) in the bottom 15% of Literacy

Year	Millmerran	State
2001	11.1%	20.3%
2002	20.0%	21.7%
2003	23.1%	21.2%
2004	0.0%	20.5%

Summary-From being below State average for Literacy overall, Millmerran is now flagged as measurably higher than State benchmarks. Proportion of Year 3 students identified in the bottom 15% of Literacy is significantly decreased. Males identified dropped from 25% to 10% for the same period.

No. 4 -Waddington Diagnostic Reading & Pat Reading Tests

2004 – Only 13% of students scored below average range in reading. 19% scored above average range.

No. 5- Westwood Spelling

Year 1

	Av. Chronological Age	Av. Spelling Age
2001	6.52	6.78
2002	6.50	6.70
2003	6.34	6.38
2004	6.52	6.71

Year 2

2001	7.44	8.09
2002	7.58	8.64
2003	7.50	8.30
2004	7.40	8.20

Year 3

2001	Nil	Nil
2002	8.47	9.40
2003	8.55	9.51
2004	8.40	9.04

Summary- In year 2001, Year 1 students were spelling 3 months above their age. In 2003 the same students in year 3 are spelling 12 months above their age.

In 2002, Year 1 students were spelling 2 months above their age. In 2004 the same students in year 3 are spelling 8 months above their age

No. 6- Annual standardized testing shows by Year 5

- 67% of our students are reading above their age (Waddington)
- 60% of our students are spelling above their age (Westwood)
- 80% of our students are achieving at average or above in numeracy (Pat)

APPENDIX 2

School Survey Results 2004 – Relevant Questions

		Satisfied & Very Satisfied
<u>Parents</u>		
S106	that the school is developing your child's numeracy skills	81.4%
S107	that the school is developing your child's literacy skills	86.0%
S111	that the school is developing your child's computer technology skills	81.4%
S100	that this is a good school	88.4%
<u>Teachers</u>		
S024	the school gives me opportunities to improve my skills (teachers)	86.4%
S019	I am happy working in this School	96.4%
S006	Staff and community relations in this School are good	100%

Summary- Parents/caregivers, students and teachers are very satisfied with the targeted outcomes

APPENDIX 3

Comment by our Year 2 Teacher

The parents of my current class are amazing. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays I have 4 rotation groups in Learning Centre. All year I've only had 1 group without an adult helper! The parents look out for all the children in the class. You often see them helping someone else's child pack their bag. They bring a sense of caring/community with them - cooperation rather than competition.

Comment by our Year 1 Teacher

I'm finding fewer children arriving with difficulties eg 2004 – 4 students – very minor learning difficulties, 2001 – 11 students – some severe difficulties. The majority of parents are more involved in their children's education and are supporting their learning at home.

Comment by our Preschool teacher

We have a greater feeling of worth and confidence in our ability to contribute towards our community.

Comment by Teacher Aide

At Millmerran State P-10 School, students experience learning delivered by teachers, teacher aides and volunteers in a positive and caring environment. The staff are familiar with the families of our students and as a result solid working relationships are formed which enable students to feel comfortable receiving extra assistance in the form of one-on-one intervention lessons such as RAP, Speech-language and Occupational Therapy, Number and Writing Intervention. The teachers give 110% and more to be sure that all students are given opportunities to perform to the best of their potential.

Comment by Parent

Millmerran State School P-3 provides a stimulating learning environment in which children can excel. I believe the strength of the early years education is that the teaching team strives to cater for the individual needs of each child. They achieve this by providing challenges appropriate to each individual, across the whole spectrum of learning abilities.

APPENDIX 4 – Data Timelines

Standardized testing and data gathering is carried out annually according to the following timetable. New students are tested as appropriate.

TEST	Year Level/s	Annual Timeline
Pat Reading	5 - 10	February
Waddington Reading	1 – 7	February
Pips Assessment	Preschool	February
Year 2 Net	2	May
State Testing	3, 5, 7	August
Pat Maths	4 – 9	September
Diagnostic Net	Pre, 1, 2, 3	November
Westwood Spelling	1 - 9	November

APPENDIX 5 – Resources

Videos

1. The Gift of Reading - Young Listeners – Lifelong Learners. Edplus Pty Ltd, 2002
2. Pausing to Praise - Parenting techniques to encourage children’s problem solving. Dept of Ed. Qld, 1989
3. Support-A-Reader. Access Ed, Queensland Govt Education Queensland 1991

Books

1. Fox. Mem, (2001) Reading Magic, Sydney, Pan Macmillan
2. Light Educational Ministries, (2002) LEM Phonics, ACT, Light Educational Enterprises

Software

1. Thomson Software Solutions, (2003) Life Vision Screener for Schools. City University London.

APPENDIX 6-Glossary

Graphophonics and Sound Symbol Relationship

Graphophonics (or phonics) are particularly important in understanding how print works and the meaning of symbols on the paper. How this information is presented to young learners is important. The term ‘graphophonics’ takes account of the sounds (phone=sound) and the written symbols (graphics=I write). It refers to the relationship between sounds and written symbols (letters). The term ‘phonics’ is less precise but refers to the two components.

LEM Phonics teaches writing, reading and spelling simultaneously. It is a multisensory approach that sees as many of the five senses as possible are used to consolidate what is being learnt. The student is given a wide range of opportunities to retain their learning so that all learning styles can benefit.

PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools) is designed to assess students entering the first year of schooling. It involves assessing the attainment and progress of students in literacy, numeracy and phonological awareness, diagnosing individual student’s strengths and weaknesses and predicting future performance with emphasis on identifying students who might benefit from early intervention.

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SHOWCASE NOMINATION BY P&C PRESIDENT

Millmerran State P-10 School P&C recognises the development in education for our students over the past four years.

Especially in the Preschool to Year 3, the teachers have supported our students with Special Needs and Gifted and Talented Program. The School has increased the number of opportunities the parents have to be involved in the classroom. There have also been increased opportunities to meet with the teachers to understand the changes in schooling.

The parents are very supportive and involved in the School. We congratulate the teachers, principal and the families for getting the best out of Millmerran students.

Don Hall
A/President
Millmerran State P-10 School P&C Association

24 May 2005

+++++

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SHOWCASE NOMINATION BY PRINCIPAL

Millmerran State P-10 School is a great State School with a supportive community. We have undergone rural decline and family lifestyle changes as well as major changes with the recent construction of the Millmerran Power Station. We have high transience of families.

Our teachers in Preschool to Year 3 recognised a decline in readiness of children for formal schooling. Our program, *Strong Partnerships + Prepared Students = Quality Learning* made a great difference. This submission is an opportunity to proclaim the goals and subsequent improved outcomes. The results are significant. The teachers are excited and the community proud.

Vince Burke
Principal
24 May 2005

+++++

I support this submission and its entry in the Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools 2005. This submission meets the requirements set out in the Executive Director's checklist.

Jan D'arcy
Executive Director Schools
Darling Downs
24 May 2005