Specimen Hill Primary School
School No.1316

2008 Annual Report to the School Community

Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development
School Overview

The original Specimen Hill Primary School was established in 1874 on the current site in Inglewood Street (Golden Square) in the provincial city of Bendigo. In 2004 – 2005 a new school was constructed on the existing site. Situated on a hill in a quiet, pleasant locality our spacious and picturesque grounds provide a country atmosphere in a city locality.

Specimen Hill Primary School has a current student population of 290. The school provides a comprehensive seven year sequential learning program contained in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). An integrated curriculum based on the inquiry learning model is used and this involves extensive team planning. The school seeks to prepare our students for future pathways by developing creative thinkers and independent, motivated learners. We promote student leadership and offer a range of extra curricular activities. Specimen Hill Primary School also offers an Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) program. The school community emphasises the safety and wellbeing of every child by providing an environment which is safe, secure and supportive. We actively encourage children to develop to their full potential by recognising, encouraging and rewarding achievement. Specimen Hill promotes positive self-image, respect for others, self discipline, community participation, problem solving, creativity, life skills such as responsibility and independence, good communication skills and inquiring minds. We have a commitment to assertive discipline procedures – with an emphasis on positive recognition.

VISION:
Specimen Hill Primary School will provide a safe and caring environment where students are happy, responsible and motivated.

Our school will be community orientated. We seek to forge strong links between students, parents and staff which will result in a shared responsibility for student learning, growth and development. In this environment, a climate will be established which values excellence (achievement and effort), resilience and creativity, and promotes life-long learning.

In addition, a professional culture will prevail where collegiate support (through professional development, coaching and mentoring) is the norm (custom / usual practice) and where professional growth is supported through the delegation of responsibility.

Shared decision making will be the preferred management style at Specimen Hill, while succession planning will remain a serious consideration when responsibilities are delegated and/or new staffing appointments are made.

Success in the above will result in students, staff and parents achieving a feeling of satisfaction in their school/workplace, and a sense of pride at being part of the Specimen Hill school community.

VALUES:
The school ethos, culture and expectations are summed up in the following statements:

- Our caring and supportive environment actively encourages children to be cooperative, self-reliant and to develop a respect for themselves and others.
- We have a whole school approach to all aspects of decision-making.
- Our school policies are progressively reviewed and revised, with our aim being to reflect the expectations of our community by providing "traditional values" whilst keeping abreast of the latest educational & social developments.
- The staff maintain high expectations for themselves, their colleagues and their students.
- We respect and appreciate the contribution that diversity can bring to our school community.

Our actions are underpinned by the school’s Wellbeing Program which incorporates the Solving the Jigsaw program. We aim to develop in students the positive feelings and behaviours that communicate school connectedness and harmony, individual resilience, safety, security, compassion, integrity and honesty.
Teacher Satisfaction - The average score for teacher satisfaction (morale) at this school was 86.7 on a scale from 0 to 100 where 100 is the best possible score.

Teacher Absence - This data is not yet available to schools for 2008. (2007 – Average number of days absent per teacher was 4.87).

Teacher Retention - Of the 20 teaching staff at Specimen Hill P.S. at June 2007 (including those on leave without pay), 19 or 95% were still at the school at June 2008. This figure across all Government schools was 87%.

Teacher participation in professional learning – All teaching staff have participated in professional learning throughout the year, such as the Teacher Professional Leave Program (ICT focus), Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (Leading for Student Learning focus), developing electronic unit plans (eUP), in school coaching, mentoring & modelling from critical friends as well as the Induction / Mentoring for Beginning teachers.

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
It is with great pleasure that I report the school’s achievements for 2008. Staff and the school community have worked industriously & passionately again this year to further improve our school in the areas of, Student Learning, Student Wellbeing & Transition and the Physical Environment. As well as the classroom program, many extracurricular activities were offered and enjoyed.

Some of the highlights included:
- The Official launch of our new Strategic Plan and the review of our School Council subcommittees to reflect each area in the Strategic plan.
- All students & staff contributing to the development of a magnificent Wall Mural (Kim D – Artist / See pictures in this report!)
- We continued to implement information communication technology into teaching practice throughout the school through a program called – Teacher Professional Leave. An extra 6 Interactive White Boards were installed. (Allan S & Craig B)
- Super Clubs Plus (Web 2 application) was introduced (Katrina B)
- The continued development of contemporary Unit plans using an electronic unit planner (eUP) (Lee M, school teams and the support of critical friend Amanda Dressing)
- Development of numeracy resources and support of numeracy teaching (Jenny B & consultant Michael Ymer)
• Student Leadership, Wellbeing programs strengthened. A successful application gave us - *Free Fruit Friday* (Di C)
• The establishment / completion of our vegetable garden and chicken run. (Mandy P)
• Solar Power application submitted to the Federal Government
• Further repairs to the school oval irrigation system. It is now functioning correctly (Mandy P)
• Development of a Memory Garden at the front of the school (Trevor M).

Successful *Kids Congress* conducted for Regional schools (Year 5/6 classes & staff – esp. Lee M & Sally B)
• Tournament of the Minds groups & School Choir (Lee M – who was supported by many staff)
• Performing Arts introduced (Two school productions). Also students participated in *Joining the Chorus* (State production) – (Julian R)
• Many sporting opportunities for students, including local netball/basketball teams, Zone & State representation in other sports (Corey W)
• Celebration of 35 years service by Allan Sing
• Murals painted on the garden shed & Canteen.
• A new amphitheatre constructed at the end of the basketball court.
• New cleaners appointed – WR Cleaning
• Two winning entries – Regional LOTE film festival. (Helen T)

The school continues to provide quality teaching and learning, giving students a wide range of experiences. The teaching and education support staff are to be congratulated on the enormous amount of time they have put into our students to foster the development of many skills and interests during 2008. Staff discussion and professional learning during the year helped to further develop and to strengthen our approaches to teaching, learning & assessment.

I would like to thank Ms Di Craig (Assistant Principal (Wellbeing)), Mr Julian Regan (Early Years coordinator) & Mrs Lorraine Campbell (Senior School & Student Learning coordinator) for their Educational Leadership and support throughout the year. Special thanks to our Bursar, Mrs Kaye Blackley who has continued manage the day to day demands of the school office in such an outstanding fashion.

In 2008 we appointed Ms Kate Fogarty & Ms Katrina Butcher to teaching positions. They quickly established positive places in our school. During the year we also appointed Mandy Pickering, Trevor Meehan, Ruth East, Louise Smith, Adele Lowry, Jeremy Holt on fixed term contracts to fill education support staff positions. Unfortunately we said goodbye to Ms Kate Fogarty & Ms Katrina Butcher (both gaining ongoing employment at Kangaroo Flat P.S.) at the end of the year. Jeremy and Adele also finished during the year. We will certainly miss their talents.

The Parent Opinion Survey results again indicated that parents are aware of how hard staff work to support their children at Specimen Hill P.S. Parents have also contributed a great deal towards supporting students & staff at Specimen Hill P.S. They have been involved with various sporting events, canteen, parent managed head lice program, our school playgroup, fundraising, as parent helpers in classrooms (especially with literacy & in the Art room), camps, excursions and formally through Parent & Friends and School Council. I would like to thank all of you for your contributions and for making a difference to the lives of children at Specimen Hill Primary School.

Thank you to School Council President, Mrs Mandy Pickering who continues to do an exceptional job in her role as President, as well as taking a personal interest in facilities. She has again provided leadership for our School Council and has been a great support to myself as Principal. Thank you to Marie Cox who has again provided leadership for our school Parent & Friends. This group of parents has ably supported and participated in a range of fundraising activities, the running of the school canteen, parent managed head lice program & our school play group.

I would like to thank the staff, parents and community on their achievements in Student Learning, Wellbeing, the Physical Environment & Management in 2008. They can be proud of the progress we have made, as documented in this Annual Report. We will continue to build on this superb foundation, challenging our common beliefs & understandings to improve outcomes for children at Specimen Hill Primary School.

*Doug Jones*
Principal
School Council President's Report

Another year has come and gone. It was great to see a number of grounds projects completed this year. Our vegetable garden area came together with the construction of four raised beds, a shed to work and store things in and a chook pen. The students were very happy to finally see some chooks in the pen for the last few weeks of the year, with more to come next year. We had an amphitheatre/grandstand built at the end of the basketball court in December and a sliding gate that allows easy access from the court to the grandstand. The oval irrigation system was finally fixed in November and by the end of the year it was starting to look very green. Now all we need is some more rain. Over the last few years the school has introduced a Junior School Council and School Captains. The roles that these students were given have changed greatly over this time. This year one of the roles of the School Captains was to run the Monday Assemblies. It was amazing to watch their confidence grow each week. For the last 3 years I have been President, but due to increased work commitments next year, 2008 will be my last. It has been an honour to represent the school community and I would like to thank all the staff, fellow councillors and parents for their support during this time.

Mandy Pickering
President

Core School Performance Indicators

- Parent opinion of the school environment – general environment, customer responsiveness and general satisfaction variables
- Total school enrolments and total Prep enrolments.

Interpretation

- Enrolments have continued to remain at similar level from 2006 to 2008.
- The total number of boys fell below the girls in 2008. (Boys – 137 & Girls 143)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Interpretation

- Parent satisfaction with the school remained at consistently high levels in 2008.
Student Progress & Achievements

Student Learning

During 2008, staff continued to provide high quality teaching and learning programs for the students in our care. Student achievement in the NAPLAN Tests was excellent, with a very high proportion of students achieving above the National benchmarks in both Literacy and Numeracy. (see graph). Teacher judgments in Literacy showed moderate improvements in student achievement across the school and in year 6 (only) in 2008, while mathematics was only slightly below the 2007 levels. (see graphs comparing 2007 to 2008)

Professional development continued to support our curriculum programs. The Teacher Professional Leave team provided expert leadership in the development of ICT skills, particularly in the use of Interactive Whiteboards and Tablets, Skype and Digital Portfolios. The Leading for Student Learning team (Literacy) and the Numeracy team strengthened the literacy and numeracy programs, with additional professional development and the further evolution of shared understandings and common practices. The documentation of our integrated units continued, using the Electronic Unit Planner (eUP). Amanda Dressing acted as a “critical friend” and facilitated increased input of our students in the planning/development of the units.

A wide range of extracurricular programs were offered across the school. Students participated in film making in LOTE, Tournament of Minds, the school choir, circus and instrumental music programs, the State Schools’ Spectacular, a wide variety of sport clinics and the BluEarth health and fitness program. All students were involved in painting the courtyard mural with artist Kim Donaldson. A major ICT initiative, “Kids Congress,” involving 153 participating students, 28 schools and over 20 presenters was capably organised and managed by our Grade 5/6 staff and students.

Lorraine Campbell
(Lee MacDonald Acting – Term 1 2009)
Student Learning Coordinators

ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH

The graph below indicates the percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in Reading, Writing & Speaking & Listening.

1. Across the school Prep to Year 6
2. At the end of Year 6 only

2007 compared to 2008

Note: Sp&Listen = Speaking & Listening
ASSESSMENT OF MATHEMATICS

The graph below indicates the percentage of children who were at or above the expected level in Number & Measurement

1. Across the school Prep to Year 6
2. At the end of Year 6 only

NAPLAN DATA (2008)

The graph below indicates the percentage of children in Year 5 who were at or above the National Benchmark in the areas of: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Numeracy, Grammar & Punctuation (2008)

NAPLAN DATA (2008)

The graph below indicates the percentage of children in Year 3 who were at or above the National Benchmark in the areas of: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Numeracy, Grammar & Punctuation (2008)

Performing Arts concert (Dec. 2008)
**Student Pathways and Transitions**

The school Play Group is now providing a transition for preschool children and their families. The Play Group is conducted once a week in our multipurpose room and allows parents and their children from our community to experience a taste of school life at Specimen Hill P.S. Our Year Prep transition starts with an information session for parents to explain how to get their child ready for school life by the start of the following year. We also provide parents with a booklet containing support information on how to prepare their child for school. The students start coming to school early in November of the previous year for blocks of one hour in the morning. They are also exposed to activities which help them become comfortable with our school. During this time they are introduced to their Buddy for the following year. Time is spent developing this relationship. The Buddy relationship is strengthened when the children begin school life the following year. The children and their parents have individual interviews at the very beginning of the year which enables staff to get to know both students and parents on a more personal level.

We started a formal transition program for Years Prep to five students in November / December 2008. This was to prepare them for movement into new areas/rooms at the start of the 2009 school year. Students moved to the new areas and we combined this with an opportunity for staff to get student feedback about the new units of work for the following year.

The old ‘Innovations & Excellence’ Cluster of schools (Kangaroo Flat cluster) continued to operate as a strong collegiate unit in 2008 even though this program had concluded in 2007. We continued to strengthen the student leadership of each school by sending senior students to the Nation Student Leadership Conference in Melbourne. These groups got together again at the end of the year at Marong, to share and celebrate their progress towards goals they had set at the start of the year.

We continued to support our year 6 students’ transition to secondary college through activities in the classroom and via the Jigsaw program conducted by Bernadette Wright. Representatives from each college came out twice to talk with students and staff. Students attending the Special schools of, Kalianna & Bendigo SDS had extended transition programs which involved 5-6 visits to their new schools in the last couple of months of the year. All students had the State-wide transition day at their new school in December. The majority of our students leaving Year 6 are attending **Crusoe College (Crusoe C)** (25) as illustrated by the graph.

Destinations of other Year 6 students were to:

**Other Colleges (Other C’s)** – They are; Eaglehawk SC, Bendigo South East College formally (Flora Hill SC), Weeroona SC Catholic College & Girton Grammar.

**Special Schools (Special S)** - Kalianna Special School & Bendigo SDS.

![Destination of Year 6 students](image)
Student Engagement and Wellbeing

It is pleasing to reflect on the past 12 months and to realise the huge growth and success achieved through the Wellbeing programs at Specimen Hill in 2008. Wellbeing underpins all areas of student engagement, outcomes and achievement at school and it is the link which keeps the school community happy, safe, healthy and successful. It is the contribution of a wide range of initiatives, resources and programs which promotes this success. These programs include:

- Student Leadership which encompasses the selection and Investiture of the school captains and the Junior School Council (JSC) representatives from across the school. Involvement included Student Leaders running the Monday morning assemblies and other significant occasions, fundraising, improved community involvement, attendance at the Global Leadership Forum in Melbourne and a cluster leadership day, as well as increased decision making across the school.

- School canteen. This has been capably coordinated by Trish Ryan. She has been responsible for promoting and enhancing the selection of healthy eating choices in the canteen, as well as including more parent and student involvement.

- Playgroup which was successfully coordinated by Kym Ronchieri, with assistance from other parents. This program focuses on families of birth to pre-school children and supporting the smooth and successful transition to school.

- Read It program which provided books and instruction to the Playgroup families encouraging healthy reading habits during the formative years.

- Healthy Breakfast Program promoting the importance of healthy breakfasts.

- Fruit Friday which provided a wide selection of fruit each Friday to children across the whole school. A special thank you to Trevor Meehan for his huge contribution to this program.

- Speci Relay for Life which strengthened community awareness and provided financial support to the Radiation Unit at the Bendigo Base Hospital.

- Haylee’s Special Day which focused on fun activities and a child organised concert for the whole school.

- Drought Relief Christmas donations supporting families in need at Christmas time.

- Seasons Program which assists children dealing with grief or loss. A special thank you to Jenny Ball and Kylie Gould for conducting this program.

- Solving the Jigsaw and Little Jigs Program which was run across the school by the school Wellbeing Officers Bernadette Wright (2 days) and Robyn Grubb (1 day). A huge thank you to Bernadette and Robyn who have provided ongoing support to the staff, students and families at Speci.

All of these programs are reflected in the school data indicating positive behaviour, attitudes, health and achievement of our staff and students. It is pleasing to see that student attendance remains well below the state mean for the average days a child is absent per year. In relation to student engagement at school the Parent Opinion data remains above the state mean and staff opinion has continued to improve. Data from the Student Attitude to School Survey indicates that Student Connectedness to school continues to improve.

Sincere thanks to everyone involved for their continued support in valuing wellbeing at Speci.

Di Craig
Assistant Principal (Wellbeing coordinator)

![Average number of absent days per student](chart)

![Student connectedness to school](chart)
Future Directions

In 2009 the following areas have been identified in our Annual Implementation Plan:

- Continue work on contemporary Units of work using the electronic unit planner (eUP) in Years 1 to 6. Continue to enlist support of Amanda Dressing (critical friend).
- Continue to strengthen our professional learning and interaction in relation to the ICT, Literacy & Numeracy through the use of staff as coaches and external support of critical friends.
- Streamline work started in 2006-2007 in relation to the further implementation of Information Communication Technology (ICT). This will include the introduction of the Netbook trial for Year 6 and our year 5 students.
- Continue to review and strengthen our Wellbeing practices. Strengthening staff common beliefs & understandings as well as student engagement & connectedness. This includes additional support for our indigenous students.
- We will upgrade our ICT mobile technology via the use of more notebooks for each classroom and Personal Digital Assistants (PDA’s) for staff.
- Continue to support our Student Leadership teams (School Captains & Junior Council)
- Continue to embed a culture of continuous improvement.
Financial Performance
School expenditure matches budget allocations and has been used effectively to target school priority areas. Programs have been conducted within budgets with some variations which have been noted by the School Council Management committee during the year.

Comments
- Our school has targeted school priorities contained in the Strategic Plan and more specifically contained in our Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2008. School Council approved extra spending of our bank surplus again this year to support these programs and other school initiatives in the area of buildings & grounds. This explains the deficit in the school Financial Performance column. We were again successful with grant applications during the year and converted credit to cash in the School Resource Package (SRP). This ensured that many projects identified for extra spending were funded through these initiatives & extra cash available to the school. Therefore we finished the year ahead of our predicted financial position but having achieved our goals to support learning & facility projects. Further spending of our surplus has been identified in 2009 to achieve the goals we have set in our Strategic Plan and AIP for 2009. The school has an ongoing commitment to ensure the SRP (credit allocation of funds) remains in surplus each year. This was achieved again in 2008 with some credit to cash transactions possible (as mentioned).
- Commonwealth Government Grants (CGG) were for programs such as the Out Of School Hours Care program

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<tr>
<th>Financial Performance for the year ending 31st December, 2008</th>
<th>Financial Position as at 31st December, 2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue 2008 Actual</td>
<td>Funds Available 2008 Actual</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEECD Grants $249 600.00</td>
<td>High Yield Investment Account $133 490.21</td>
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<td>Commonwealth Government Grants 70 524.00</td>
<td>Official Account 8 959.34</td>
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<td>Other 16 301.00</td>
<td>Total Funds Available 142 449.55</td>
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<td>Locally Raised Funds 171 017.00</td>
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<td>Total Operating Revenue 507 442.00</td>
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<td>Expenditure 2008 Expenditure</td>
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<td>Salaries and Allowances $165 420.00</td>
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<td>Bank Charges 654.00</td>
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<td>Consumables 43 888.00</td>
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<td>Total Operating Expenditure $535 128.00</td>
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<td>Net Operating Deficit -27 686.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Expenditure (includes Books &amp; Publications $28 402) 39 177.00</td>
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<td>Note: DEECD = Department of Education &amp; Early Childhood Development</td>
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School Details

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<tr>
<th>Address:</th>
<th>Inglewood St. Golden Square 3555</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principal:</td>
<td>Doug Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Council President:</td>
<td>Mandy Pickering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>03 54 435 353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:specimen.hill.P.S.@edumail.vic.gov.au">specimen.hill.P.S.@edumail.vic.gov.au</a></td>
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Further information can be obtained on request from the School Level Report (SLR) 2008.