




**Thornlands State School  
Annual Report  
2009**

# QUEENSLAND STATE SCHOOL REPORTING - 2009

## Thornlands State School (1240)

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## Principal's foreword

### Introduction

2009 has been a successful year at Thornlands State School. Our vision of *Growing the Whole Child* is reflected in our curriculum design. There has been a major focus on literacy and numeracy, a cross-curricula approach to ICTs and team planning which delivers rigour, accountability and quality control.

Considerable investment in the Professional Training of staff has been a high priority. A focus on High Yield Strategies for the classroom has resulted in very pleasing literacy and numeracy outcomes for students and high levels of staff satisfaction with the workplace and morale.

There is a strong extra-curricular program, a Gifted and Talented program and many structured opportunities for learning. Key highlights for the year have been the Young Masters Art Show, ANZAC ceremony, *Growing the Whole Child* Celebration evening featuring staff and students items, Cultural Evening, Education Week and school presentations to the twenty-two New Zealand principals and a group of Wide Bay small school principals.

The value-addedness of the Thornlands educational experience is seen in very strong academic performance in reading, writing, numeracy, spelling, punctuation and grammar of year seven students completing their primary education.

### School progress towards its goals in 2009

Our efforts to Grow the Whole Child and have high expectations of student performance have seen many positive results.

#### **Maximising the achievement of students in Literacy and Numeracy**

The year 3 and 5 results were at the state mean in all areas. The percentage of students in the upper two bands increased in all areas from 2008. The percentage of students at or above the National Minimum Standards improved from 2008 and were above 90% in all areas.

The year 7 results were above the state mean in all areas. The percentage of students in the upper two bands increased in all areas from 2008. The percentage of students at or above the National Minimum Standards improved from 2008 and were above 90% in all areas. Performance in Writing and Numeracy were above the national average.

#### **Continuing to strengthen the Writing Program**

In 2009, the SPARKS writing program was a state finalist in the *Excellence for Academic Performance* section for Showcase. Thornlands presented its writing program at a district in-service for school leaders and provided assistance for a framework for developing a writing program.

#### **Building Teacher Expertise and Skills in the area of ICTs**

In 2009, Thornlands improved its ICT Index from A to AA. This was particularly relevant in the areas of Developing Professionals and Supporting Learners. A teacher also gained an Orange Card which has really assisted other staff in

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the management of their ICT programs and in developing in-service activities.

### ***Focus on Reading Performance***

In 2009, there has been a very strong focus on Guided Reading Programs following an intensive in-service delivery on First Steps Reading. The curriculum timetable has facilitated the common release of teacher aides for the implementation of Guided Reading and a very resource-rich program for teaching comprehension skills.

The staff has continued to deliver evidence-based team planning designed around student needs, interest, prior knowledge, experience and readiness.

### Future outlook

In 2009, Thornlands undertook a very comprehensive review of school operations, programs and management. In 2010, Thornlands has five key priority areas: NUMERACY, LITERACY, SCIENCE / ECO CITIZENSHIP, SCHOOL SURROUNDS AND AESTHETICS, COMMUNITY WELLBEING and PARTNERSHIPS.

In Numeracy, the goal is a strongly Numerate community with embedded ICTs and the further development of classroom Differentiation plans which will facilitate improved student numeracy outcomes. Eighteen hours of First Steps Number professional development for staff will be a key strategy along with the implementation of New Wave Mentals for years 3 – 7. With the Literacy program, the key focus is explicit teaching of reading including guided reading and inferential comprehension. Further development of the Thornlands Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation Guides will provide valuable resources for teachers. There will be continued implementation of the school's very successful writing program SPARKS, with an emphasis on feedback.

The Science program will be strengthened by connecting the school science kits to the Primary Connections Strands. Production of a new school Science Program Guide will greatly assist staff confidence in teaching science.

The continuation of the covered walkway program and improving the aesthetics of the gardens are other key goals. A new play area for students is planned and the CATS social skills program will continue to encourage school pride and respect for the environment from students.

Improving Community Well Being will be accomplished through the implementation of a new uniform, crest, school song, logos and a newsletter format. It is envisaged that the Thornlands' Centenary Celebrations will continue to build a strong, cohesive and active community.

## Our school at a glance

### School Profile

Coeducational

Year levels offered: Preparatory Year to Year 7

Total student enrolments for this school:

Total Enrolment	Girls	Boys	Enrolment Continuity (Feb 2009 – Nov 2009)
787	374	413	86%

### Characteristics of the student body:

The mix of students is mainly Australian and European but there are also families from New Zealand, Asia, South Africa and India. Twenty-four students identify themselves as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent. The school provides a support program for children in care.

The school has an extensive Special Education Program which caters for a variety of students with such diagnoses as Autism, Asperges Syndrome, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Intellectual Impairment.

Data on our Prep students has revealed that around 40 – 45% have speech language deficits. This has resulted in a variety of prep programs which focus heavily on intervention, oral language development and speech language support.

Our students are actively involved in sport, a variety of clubs (Nippers, Scouts, Aerobics), computer games and pop culture.

### Class sizes – Proportion of school classes achieving class size targets in 2009

Phase	Average Class Size	Percentage of classes in the school			
		On or under target	Under Target	On Target	Over Target
Prep – Year 3	23	81%	56%	25%	19%
Year 4 – Year 10	23	100%	88%	13%	0%
All Classes	23	91%	72%	19%	9%

### School Disciplinary Absences

Disciplinary Absences	Count of Incidents
Short Suspensions - 1 to 5 days	28
Long Suspensions - 6 to 20 days	0
Exclusions	0
Cancellations of Enrolment	0

## Our school at a glance

### Curriculum offerings

#### Our distinctive curriculum offerings

All Key Learning Areas

HOC (Head of Curriculum) and Year Level joint Curriculum Planning to ensure program rigour and engagement across all year levels

Environmental Focus in Year Level Unit Plans

Three Gifted and Talented Mentors to assist in the development of program enrichment activities for capable students and teacher professional development

Award-winning *SPARKS* writing program

Maths Extension with Problem-solving and Number (Years 2 to 7)

CREST Science program for Years 4 and 5

Invention Convention – Middle Years Science and Technology Program with real life application

Development of Australian Identity through History (SOSE and literacy studies)

Catch the Reading Bug Early Years reading intervention and support program

Big Buddy reading support mentors involving Year 6 and Year 2 students

Whole School Reading Program with three identified Guided Reading Lessons each week and FIRST STEPS in-service for all staff

Premier's Reading Challenge to improve reading skills

CATS (Children At Thornlands School) Values and Social Skills Program supporting all Key Learning Areas

Whole school Mental Maths and Dictation program (involving explicit teaching and weekly feedback to administration)

Indigenous Cultural Focus

P – 3 personal maths kits for skill development and numeracy concepts

School-produced Grammar and Punctuation Guide to assist explicit teaching in these areas and student literacy development

Democracy and Civics in Action (Middle School Program)

Camping program to support Health and Physical Education curriculum and Environmental Education

The Canberra – Snowy trip for children in Year 7 to learn more about the federal level of government

Literacy Notebook for parents keeping them updated on curriculum

#### Extra curricula activities

Senior and Junior Choirs with an emphasis on enjoyment, fun and participation (includes several public performances)

Senior and Junior Bands in addition to the Instrumental Program

Boys' Singing Group – strictly for boys under guidance of music teacher

Guitar lessons and group performances conducted by Sound Shed personnel

Strings program (Years 3 – 7) with training and performances

Graft group funded by Student Council and open to all year levels organized by parents and deputy

Movie Club for all interested students (1 – 7) organized by teacher aide

## Our school at a glance

Chess Club organized by Teacher Librarian with chess sets purchased by student council

Rugby League after school tournament program involving coaching and competitive games

Cross Country Club with daily training and occasional weekend activities such as beach fitness followed by a family barbeque

Lunchtime Disco – for all students and organized by the Student Council

Fun and Fitness – Term 1 program of early morning walking or running involving goal-setting and record-keeping (hundreds involved)

Thornlands Idol – opportunities for students to perform (dancing, singing, juggling, skipping) to an audience of students and finally a public performance

Inter-school sport – (Touch, Cricket, Softball, Netball, Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball)

Peacekeeper and Big Buddy leadership program involving year 6 and 7 students in organized activities at lunchtime

Environmental Rangers - students who undertake activities with a focus on recycling, planting and preservation

Computer Club – operates from the school computer lab

Writing Group is open to students from 3 – 7 to have fun with writing and build their writing skills. A key focus is to enter writing and poetry competitions.

School Musical – involving many students and staff in singing and dancing

Four staff involved as regional coaches and managers for basketball, rugby league, cycling and soccer.

Aerobics and Dance run weekly from the school hall for interested students

### How Information and Communication Technologies are used to assist learning

The use of computers to assist learning has improved with the completion of the computer *lab*. Each child has their own computer in the *lab* and the teacher can direct and teach using the central screen. This has allowed the computer to be more of a teaching tool. Classrooms also have a computer hub. Programs loaded on the computer allow students to develop and test skills in literacy and numeracy. Software such as *Numbers Up* and *Spellforce* allow children to work at their own levels in a fun and exciting way. Students are able to prepare their own PowerPoints on current topics. Construction and use of spreadsheets is evidenced in middle school classrooms. With the emphasis on writing development, children publish their writing using Microsoft Word. ICTs are integrated across the curriculum.

All teachers have their own laptop and these are used for a variety of purposes - e-mail; communication, assessment, internet support and accessing school programs on the server. In 2009, many staff members have attended PD on the use of interactive whiteboards ready for their installation in classrooms.

The Special Education Program students use the digital camera to take photographs and these are then loaded onto the computer. They are used at a later time to create a recount.

Many students are able to conduct research on the internet and this has been an invaluable tool in the preparation of brochures and presentations for assessment topics. E-mail is used to learn another way to write to others. Classes also use the video camera to make and edit films on topics such as Gold Mining (Year 5) as an assessment piece.

Software such as Boardmaker is used to produce pictures and charts which are used as visual aids for students needing modified worksheets. For some non-verbal students, an alternative keyboard allows them to have text as a speech option.

Each year for graduation, the year seven students present a slideshow, complete with titles, music, photographs and historical features of their years at the school. This is extremely well received by their peers and the public.

The addition of a staff member with an orange card has greatly assisted the development of ICTs in the school.

### Social climate

The staff, parents and students of Thornlands work together to build a school climate which is safe, supportive and

## Our school at a glance

engaging and one which aims to deliver development of the whole child. The CATS (staff-designed) whole-school Values and Social Skills program underpins all curriculum offerings. The school Special Needs committee works with staff, students and parents to support children with learning difficulties or personal issues. Chappie Cathy and the Chaplaincy Committee provide another layer of support. In addition to other groups, staff members have a Staff Well Being Committee and parents have Thornlands Friends. Parents and staff work together on many joint activities such as the school musical, Fitness and Fun, school fête, hall committee, Smart Choices committee and plans for school improvement. A Breakfast Club operates every Monday as part of the chaplaincy support team. The school recognises the importance of the promotion of Indigenous self-identity and the relevance of Indigenous issues for the school curriculum. A positive sense of self-identity for all young people is promoted through Being Aussie, NAIDOC Week, Harmony Day, ANZAC Day and Sorry Day.

### Parent, student and teacher satisfaction with the school

Staff Satisfaction overall was significantly above the state benchmark. There were many areas above the mean and these included *well organized, well informed, team spirit, enthusiasm for work, access to professional development and staff and community relations*. An area identified for improvement was feedback on performance while an outstanding performance area was morale at 89%.

Parent Satisfaction with behaviour, school discipline, safe environment and the teaching of literacy and numeracy were at the state mean. 87% of parents were satisfied that Thornlands is a good school and 72% believe their child is receiving a good education. These align with the state benchmark. An area for improvement is satisfaction with school grounds. An area for celebration is School Community Relations which is significantly above the average result in Queensland schools.

Students were very pleased with teacher interest, teacher assistance and teacher efforts to help them improve. 85% of students were satisfied that they were getting a good education at Thornlands. Students were exceptionally pleased with computer access for class learning but believed more emphasis should be placed on daily physical activity. The priority at Thornlands remains the learning of students in a safe, supportive and motivational environment.

Performance measure	Result 2009
Percentage of parents/caregivers satisfied that their child is getting a good education at school	72%
Percentage of students satisfied that they are getting a good education at school	85%
Percentage of parents/caregivers satisfied with their child's school	88%
Percentage of school workforce satisfied with access to professional development opportunities that relate to school and systemic initiatives	95%
Percentage of staff members satisfied with morale in the school	89%

### Involving parents in their child's education.

Very early in the year, the school hosts a series of Parent-Teacher Evenings where parents have the opportunity to meet the teachers, find out about the curriculum and educational trends, look at resources and learn about teaching strategies. The school has two designated face-to-face reporting events but parents are encouraged at all times, through an open-door policy, to discuss issues of concern with staff.

Communication is of vital importance and in addition to parent communication letters which are sent twice a term, the school newsletter, website, parent workshops, noticeboard and P&C newsletters provide interesting and relevant updates and information. Parents are invited to be on a wide range of committees and many assist in classrooms, on excursions, on camps, with PE programs and with special projects. Some also assist with lunchtime activities and leadership programs. Many parents connect with their child's teacher via e-mail.

In 2009, some parents were involved in the Thornlands Triennial School Review and undertook some of the data

## Our school at a glance

gathering and analysis. They were also invited to be part of the discussion with the District Director on the school's plan for 2010 to 2012. Several parents also joined with staff at the Showcase Gala evening to celebrate the school's success as a state finalist.

At the end of year celebratory event for students completing their primary education, parents and extended families come together for an evening which highlights cohort and individual achievements. Children entertain their families through a variety of genre and then demonstrate their impressive social skills with a light supper and dancing. It is a most enjoyable community celebration of an educational journey.

Parents are also warmly welcomed and are part of special events such as Anzac Day, Cultural Evening, Prep Fairy Tale Ball, Education Week Celebrations, Easter Hat Parade, Queensland Day, Graduation, Celebrating Thornlands, Leadership Ceremonies, Art Show.

Parents have also been interested and supportive of their children's performances. There were very impressive numbers of parents at Stocklands, Cleveland for Education Week, at the Wellington Point Cross Country Fun Run and barbeque breakfast and at performances by class and musical groups at the Victoria Point Shopping Complex.

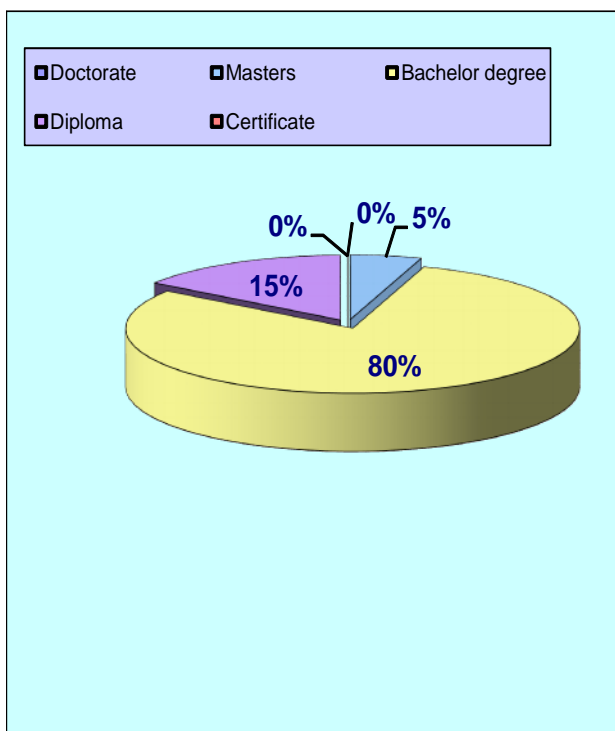
## Our staff profile

### Staff composition, including Indigenous Staff

Workforce Composition	Teaching Staff	Non-teaching Staff	Indigenous Staff
Headcounts	63	35	0
Full-time equivalents	54	19	0

### Qualifications of all teachers.

Highest level of attainment	Number of classroom teachers and school leaders at the school
Doctorate	0
Masters	3
Bachelor degree	47
Diploma	9
Certificate	0



## Our staff profile

### Expenditure on and teacher participation in professional development.

The total funds expended on teacher professional development in 2009 was \$26 010

The major professional development initiatives were as follows:

- GEMS training for Gifted and Talented Mentors
- Stepping Stones Series of Workshops on Leadership and Curriculum Development
- Stepping Stones Reading Development
- Stepping Stones Writing Development
- Workplace Health and Safety
- Manual Handling
- Fire Safety
- Fire Extinguisher Training
- Senior First Aid Qualifications and CPR updates
- Techniques for Narrative Writing
- ALEA Literacy Conference 2009
- QCAR and its Implementation
- Neil Dempster's Leadership and School Improvement
- Beginners Interactive Whiteboard Training (Direct National)
- Advanced Interactive Whiteboard Training (Direct National)
- Improving Science Delivery with Primary Connections
- Words Their Way – Spelling
- One School Live (Hands On Workshop)
- Literacy 5 day training 4 - 7
- Mater Twilight Series of Workshops for Mental Health and Well Being
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention
- Professional Standards for Staff
- Support-A-Reader Workshop for Teacher Aides
- Early Years Record Keeping and Updating Continuas

The involvement of the teaching staff in professional development activities during 2009 was 97%.

### Average staff attendance

For permanent and temporary staff and school leaders, the staff attendance rate was 96% in 2009.

### Proportion of staff retained from the previous school year.

From the end of the 2009 school year, 96% of staff were retained by the school for the entire 2009 school year.

## Performance of our students

### Key student outcomes

#### Attendance

##### Student attendance - 2009

The average attendance rate for the whole school as a percentage in 2009 was 94%.

##### Student attendance for each year level

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
94%	94%	93%	94%	94%	93%	93%

##### Description of how non-attendance is managed by the school

Non-attendance is managed in state schools in line with the DET policies, SMS-PR-029: Managing Student Absences and SMS-PR-036: Roll Marking in State Schools, which outline processes for managing and recording student attendance and absenteeism.

- Parents are expected to contact the school by 'phone or in writing. The Absence Line is prominently displayed in the newsletter.
- Rolls are marked by class teachers twice per day; at the start of the day and after the second break.
- Attendance data is checked and entered by administration staff on to the system.
- Teachers maintain regular contact with parents around student absences.
- If, after three days, there has been no contact relating to the absence, the parents / caregivers are contacted.
- Formal letters from the school are sent once students have repeated, unexplained absences.
- School attendance information is regularly published in the school newsletter.
- Meetings with parents of poor attending students are supported by Guidance Officer, Chaplain, Head of Special Education Services and other administration staff.
- Working co-operatively with parents supports the school to maximise student attendance, thus impacting on learning.

#### Achievement – Years 3, 5 and 7

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results – our reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy results for the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

Domain	Measures	Yr 3	Yr 5	Yr 7	
Reading	Average score for the school in 2009	382	484	540	
	Average score for Australia in 2009	410.8	493.9	541.1	
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	88%	91%	97%
		2009	92%	84%	88%
	For the school the percentage of students in	2008	25%	26%	19%

## Performance of our students

Domain	Measures	Yr 3	Yr 5	Yr 7	
	the upper two bands	2009	30%	31%	26%
Writing	Average score for the school in 2009		403	493	574
	Average score for Australia in 2009		414.5	484.7	532.4
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	94%	92%	96%
		2009	92%	89%	89%
	For the school the percentage of students in the upper two bands	2008	42%	33%	49%
		2009	47%	21%	48%
Spelling	Average score for the school in 2009		372	482	547
	Average score for Australia in 2009		404.8	487.2	540.0
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	88%	89%	89%
		2009	95%	90%	88%
	For the school the percentage of students in the upper two bands	2008	17%	23%	28%
		2009	19%	20%	29%
Grammar and Punctuation	Average score for the school in 2009		399	502	546
	Average score for Australia in 2009		419.7	499.7	539.5
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	92%	90%	92%
		2009	91%	90%	91%
	For the school the percentage of students in the upper two bands	2008	12%	24%	35%
		2009	40%	32%	25%
Numeracy	Average score for the school in 2009		387	478	564
	Average score for Australia in 2009		393.9	486.8	543.6
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	93%	94%	97%
		2009	96%	92%	92%
	For the school the percentage of students in the upper two bands	2008	13%	13%	42%
		2009	23%	17%	38%