

Mount Cotton State School



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Principal's foreword

Introduction

Mt Cotton State School is unique as it offers students a casual rural lifestyle whilst still in close proximity to Brisbane and the Gold Coast. The school is located in Redland City and is part of Education Queensland's South East District in the Greater Brisbane Region. It has been established since 1876, with descendants of the original families still attending the school and active in the community. The school prides itself on keeping up with the times while still maintaining an appreciation of the school's history and its values. The school has traditionally been the hub of a small, well defined and close knit rural community.

Our school is a co-educational state school which aims to continually improve our operations so that our students learn in an educational environment of care and support. To assist our students to have a positive future, and to contribute to that future, we provide professional development for our staff, academic, sporting, cultural and social opportunities for our students, and we foster sharing relationships with parents as partners in their child's education.

Staff work hard to ensure our curriculum meets the needs of the students and is engaging and relevant. The staff work towards continuing to improve the lives of our students through caring for them academically, physically, culturally and emotionally.

Our Key School Planning Priorities for 2008 were:

- Review and refine the Year 4-7 Mathematics Block
- Develop Teachers' Knowledge of QCAR Framework, Essential Learnings and Standards
- Improve quality of Assessment Tasks and Practices
- Implement ICT/ Smart Classrooms initiatives
- Participate in Year 4 QCAT trial

Future outlook

Mt Cotton State School continues to experience unprecedented growth as a result of new housing development over the past few years. Each year the growth trend requires an additional one or two classes from the end of the previous school year. There is little or no transience amongst enrolments which adds to the steady increase in enrolment population.

With this enrolment trend, has come a real demand for additional facilities. 2008 saw the construction of a new eight classroom teaching block, an additional Prep classroom, along with a number of other facilities to cater for growth.

Mt Cotton school enjoys a good reputation across the community which is often confirmed by parents during the enrolment process.

The challenge for our school is to match the capacity of growth in facilities and amenities with the corresponding growth in demand by both students and families. There is a concern in the local community that the nature of a medium size school may change with the increasing number of students. However, families are also seeing the improvements that the school is generating and effort is made to ensure additional facilities are made available for community use. Staff members also ensure that positive relationship building is embedded in our school culture.

Improving literacy and numeracy standards for all our students remains the highest priority of all staff members of Mt Cotton State School.

Aims for the 2009 school year include:

- Continuing to enhance literacy and numeracy programs for students of all ability levels
- Further embedding Information Communication Technology into all curriculum areas
- Strengthening students' social skills
- Further developing a school based Gifted Education Framework and plan which both challenges and supports students
- Continuing implementation of the QCAR Framework with a focus on embedding moderation practices to further refine consistency of teacher judgement
- Further refining Intervention Program to provide additional support for identified students.

Our school at a glance

School Profile

Mt Cotton SS is a coeducational school offering education for students in Prep – Year 7.

Total student enrolments for this school:

YEAR LEVEL	ENROLMENT
Prep	67
1	46
2	63
3	56
4	78
5	49
6	43
7	45
TOTAL	447

These enrolments are as at the end of 2008

Curriculum offerings

Our distinctive curriculum offerings

Mt Cotton State School's curriculum incorporates the QCAR Framework as the cornerstone of learning experiences for students. A 'hands-on' approach to learning is engaged whenever possible. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) of English, Maths, Science, SOSE, HPE and The Arts are offered across all year levels. The KLA of LOTE (German) is offered in Years 6 and 7. In terms of the Maths curriculum, students across the years 4 to 7 are streamed into ability groups.

Our core curriculum is complimented by a range of extra curricular activities.

Students in years Prep to Year 3 identified as requiring further support work are targeted through our Early Years Intervention Program.

There is strong support from students and parents for the school Music and Instrumental Music programs.

Mt Cotton offers a range of specialist services including:

Instrumental Music

Music Program- Junior, Senior and combined choir

Physical Education Specialist

The 2008 School Opinion Survey showed that parent's satisfaction levels with curriculum was considerably higher than that of the State Mean.

Our school at a glance

Extra curricular activities

Extra Curricular Activities in 2008 included:

Participation in choirs and Eisteddfods

Sporting representatives to Metropolitan and State Championships

Excursions and camps

Under Eights Week

Education Week

Class unit Celebrations of Learning

Numeracy Block

Peer Tutoring

Maths Extension Programs – Maths Team Challenge, Maths Olympiad

Readers' Cup

Premier's Reading Challenge

University of NSW Competitions

Enrichment Days

Intervention Program

Kilometre Club

Discos

Excursions

Perceptual Motor Program

Cotton Hoppers Skipping Team

Leadership Program

Environmental Education/Camping Program

Interschool sports program (Carnival Days)

External Providers:

Science on the Go

Aus Kick

- In the School Opinion Survey, students reported a level of satisfaction with a variety of school activities offered at this school as being above that of the State.

Our school at a glance

How computers are used to assist learning

At Mt Cotton SS we are committed to providing opportunities for students to access a range of ICT devices and programs to enhance their learning. Teachers plan specific learning activities integrating ICTs within their units of work. All students have access to the internet, and many students have also learnt about the use of email.

A range of software programs, such as KidPix, Powerpoint and Publisher, are used by students across the school on a daily basis.

2008 saw the successful application for an "Investing in Our Schools" grant, totalling \$50 000. This was used to purchase computers, purpose built furniture, digital cameras, a portable interactive whiteboard device and upgrade of a network switch to improve infrastructure.

In 2008, our school underwent the changeover to Education Queensland's Managed Operating Environment (MOE), which has enhanced our school's network functionality.

Provision of laptops for teachers has driven Professional Development and enhanced the integration of effective digital pedagogies in the delivery of the curriculum across the school.

Two teachers are currently working towards attaining their ICT Pedagogical Licence.

Mt Cotton SS continues to engage a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with a computer company, proving the school with first class hardware and network technical support.

The use of ICTs in our school has raised students' interest and confidence in learning, and we will continue to develop teachers' skills and further upgrade ICT resources in the coming years.

The rapid enrolment growth presents a challenge in relation to provision of ICT hardware, and careful planning is required to ensure we keep up with demand.

Social climate

Healthy communication lines exist between the school and home. Staff are regularly reminded to maintain a high standard in this area and are successful in doing so. Parent results in the 2008 School Opinion Survey- 'school-community relations' were above that of the state average.

An 'Open Door' policy is promoted amongst students, parents and staff at all times which has been successful in creating an open non threatening environment across the school campus. This is supported by both parent and student levels of satisfaction in the 2008 School Opinion Survey for the area of 'School Climate' achieving above the State Average in all questions surveyed.

The school runs a Peer Support program that involves all students from Prep to Year 7. The program aims to provide an environment for developing the understandings, attitudes and skills needed to live safe and healthy lives, realise potential and contribute to society.

Our School is serviced by a number of support personnel, including a Guidance Officer,

Our school at a glance

Support Teacher Learning Difficulties, Speech Language Pathologist, Behaviour Management Teacher and various AVTs to help support identified students.

Parents and wider community are always welcome into our school and many volunteers work tirelessly to further enhance the curriculum and the environment we offer the school. The school enjoys a very high attendance from the community in all school functions.

Our Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students outlines the programs and steps where students are rewarded and acknowledged for positive behaviour and logical consequences are implemented for inappropriate behaviour.

Whole School Awards Systems 2008

At Mt Cotton SS we have developed a Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students that acts as a framework to provide a safe, supportive and disciplined learning environment for all members of our school community. An integral part of this plan is the promotion and acknowledgement of positive student behaviour.

The following outlines our whole school student awards systems that support this approach:

Virtues Program

At Mount Cotton State School we value 'virtues of character' that contribute to a positive school climate. A poster outlining these virtues is displayed in each classroom and in the office. A student from each class is recognised at our weekly assemblies for their consistent outstanding display of behaviour of one of the specific virtues. A list of the weekly recipients is displayed in the office and published in the newsletter. Students also have their photo taken after parade and this is displayed as part of the weekly multimedia presentation in the office.

Student of the Week

This award is chosen by the class teacher on a weekly basis and awarded to the recipient in class. This award could be given for social skills, work and study habits, improvement in skills and behaviour or recognition for achievement in class work. The recipient receives a certificate and has their photo displayed on the 'Student of the Week' chart in their classroom for the week.

Postcards

Last year we introduced an additional whole school awards program called "Postcards". These postcards are designed to acknowledge and reward *outstanding* behaviour and/or achievement by our students. At the end of each month, classroom teachers choose a student in their class to receive a postcard from the Principal or Deputy Principal. Students can be nominated for high level achievement, outstanding effort or excellent behaviour. Postcards are sent home via the mail to parents.

Our whole school approach is designed to be proactive and supports the creation a school culture that values and recognises high standards of behaviour and achievement.

Our school at a glance

Involving parents in their child's education.

Participation of parents in all areas of our school is encouraged and welcomed. Our Parents and Citizens Association gives all parents an opportunity to participate in decision making processes and support their children through school management and fundraising.

Parents volunteer in a wide range of capacities, including assisting in classrooms, student banking, excursions and tuckshop.

Many parents have taken the opportunity to access training programs offered by the school, such as Support-a-Reader.

A school and P&C newsletter are sent home on alternate weeks to advise parents of school activities, information, policies, procedures and celebrations of student and school successes. These newsletters also contain community news items that may be of interest to parents.

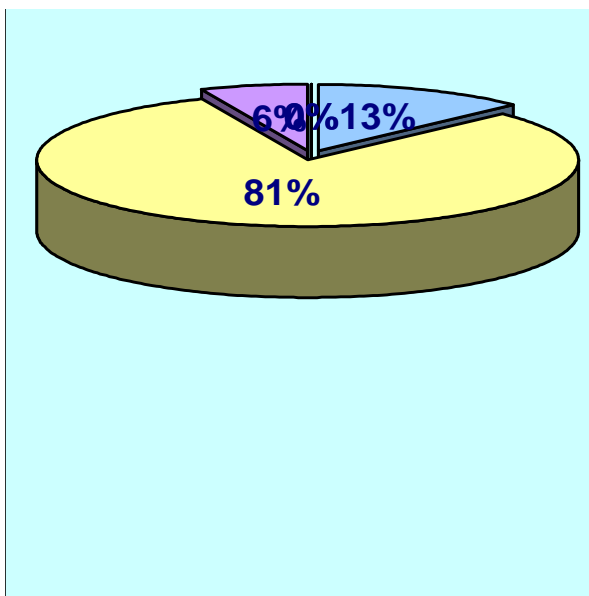
All whole school activities are actively promoted throughout the community to encourage community involvement in all of the activities. All of these activities are very well attended by the wider school community.

At the end of each term every class presents a "Celebration of Learning" activity, where parents are invited to visit their child's class to view the learning outcomes in which the students were involved throughout the unit of work just completed.

Our staff profile

Qualifications of all teachers.

Doctorate	0
Masters	4
Bachelor degree	25
Diploma	2
Certificate	0



Expenditure on and teacher participation in professional development.

The total funds expended on teacher professional development in 2008 was \$8143 .

The major professional development initiatives undertaken in 2008 included:

- Mathematics/ Numeracy (Year 4-7)
- Literacy Training (Yr 1-3)
- Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Reporting (QCAR) Framework
- Information Communication Technologies
- One School
- Gifted Education
- First Aid/ CPR

The involvement of the teaching staff in professional development activities during 2008 was 94%

Average staff attendance

- For permanent and temporary staff and school leaders the staff attendance rate was 96% in 2008.

Proportion of staff retained from the previous school year.

- From the end of the 2007 school year, 98 % of staff were retained by the school for the entire 2008 school year.

Performance of our students

Student attendance

The average attendance rate as a percentage in 2008 was 94 %.

Key outcomes

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	407	475	540
	Average score for Queensland	371.1	466.1	528.1
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	92%	89%
Writing	Average score for the school	411	476	545
	Average score for Queensland	391.8	468.9	522.7
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	93%	91%
Spelling	Average score for the school	382	463	539
	Average score for Queensland	366.7	462.0	528.0
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	98%	89%
Grammar and Punctuation	Average score for the school	391	480	529
	Average score for Queensland	370.4	476.6	518.0
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	94%	89%
Numeracy	Average score for the school	383	453	545
	Average score for Queensland	367.9	458.2	539.0
	For the school the percentage of students at or above the national minimum standard.	2008	96%	91%

Performance of our students

Results in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net	
	Percentage of students not requiring additional support
Reading	88.5%
Writing	88.1%
Number	96.2%

Value added

The implementation of the Prep Year continued to be highly successful at our school. In 2008 our Prep enrolments grew from one and a half to three cohorts. The excellent grounding and quality learning opportunities our Prep students experience sets them up for a successful transition into the compulsory years of schooling.

Our Year 2 Net data shows that our school's percentage of students **not** requiring additional support is above both the State and Like Schools Means.

Mt Cotton State School's Year 3, 5 & 7 National Testing (NAPLAN) results were above the State in all aspects of Literacy. In Numeracy, Year 3 and Year 7 were above the State, with Year 5 only slightly below. In Year 7, 100% of our students were at or above the National Minimum Standard for Numeracy.

Our Year 4-7 students are involved in a streaming process for their Mathematics program. Students are organised across these year levels into ability groupings. Throughout 2008, we have reviewed and refined the Maths Block structures, identification processes and provided teachers with focused professional development to enhance pedagogical practices in this area.

As part of our Middle Phase of Learning initiatives, our Year 6 & 7 students are involved in a rotation system for the Key Learning Areas of Science, SOSE, Technology, Health and The Arts. This allows students to experience a model of operation similar to that in which they will participate in when they enter their High School years.

Performance of our students

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction with the school

Parent Satisfaction

The 2008 School Opinion Survey data indicated that the overall satisfaction rate was above the State and Like School Means. Mt Cotton SS was particularly strong in the areas of Pedagogy and Learning Climate. Furthermore, parental satisfaction that Mt Cotton SS is a good school was above both the State and Like Schools Mean.

Student Satisfaction

The 2008 School Opinion Survey data indicated that the overall satisfaction rate was above the State and Like School Means. Mt Cotton SS was particularly strong in the areas of Learning Climate and Student Outcomes.

Staff Satisfaction

Staff satisfaction levels continue to be very high and were well above the State and Like School Means. In 2008, Mt Cotton SS had the 2nd highest overall results for Staff Satisfaction in the South East Brisbane District.