Specimen Hill Primary School
School No.1316

Annual Report to the
School Community
School Overview

Established in 1874, Specimen Hill Primary School is located in Inglewood Street (Golden Square) in the provincial city of Bendigo. Situated on a hill in a quiet, pleasant locality our spacious grounds and pleasant, landscaped gardens provide a country atmosphere in a city locality.

Specimen Hill Primary School has a current student population of 286. Our enrolment has doubled in the past twelve years and further growth is anticipated over the next few years.

Our school 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 self-image, respect for others, self discipline and life skills such as responsibility, independence, communication skills, inquiring minds, problem solving and creativity. We have a commitment to assertive discipline procedures – with an emphasis on positive recognition.

We are currently occupying a new school which has recently been built on the existing site. The final Stage achieved practical completion on 30th January 2006. The school now has outstanding facilities to match the outstanding teaching & learning taking place. Our motto is: “Our children’s future in the very best of hands”.

VISION:
To create a school which provides a safe and caring environment where students are happy, responsible and motivated.
This will be a school which is community orientated, where parent participation is valued and both teachers and parents agree that they have 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 and where professional growth is supported through the delegation of responsibility (and the judicious provision of authority).
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.
Our school acts as a focus for the school community and we seek to forge strong links between students, parents and staff.
We believe the success of each child depends upon a cooperative partnership between students, staff and parents.
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 developments.
Staff maintain high expectations for themselves, their colleagues and their students.
This school respects and appreciates the contribution that diversity can bring to our school community.
Principal's Report

I have the pleasure of reporting the school's achievements for 2006. Staff and the school community have worked diligently & enthusiastically to improve our school environment, facilities and curriculum to enhance learning. Some of the highlights included;

- The Official Opening of our new school
- New sealed areas for ball games & new fitness stations
- New shade for one of the playground complexes
- New soft fall for the playground complexes & fitness stations
- New garden beds and other landscape works
- Exploring the use of the “Thinking Curriculum” (Lorraine C, Lisa M & Wendy J)
- Successful literacy intervention & reflective programs. (Julian R) & extra Reading Recovery teacher (thanks, Judy B)
- ‘Positive Parenting Program’ (Di & EASE)
- Introduction of the family science nights through the SIT program (Lee M)
- Healthy community breakfast (Di C)
- School Choir (Lee M & Lauren H)
- Tournament of the Minds (Lee M)
- Many sporting opportunities (Corey W)

All these activities took place over and above the many regular planned classroom and extra curricular activities.

The school has continued to provide quality teaching and learning, giving students a wide range of experiences. The teaching and support staff are to be congratulated on the enormous amount of time and energy they have put into our students to foster the development of many skills and interests during 2006. Staff discussion and professional development during the year helped to further develop common beliefs & understandings and to strengthen our approaches to teaching, learning & assessment. Highlights of reflecting on practice came with school visits to Torrensville (Adelaide) to observe they way they have embedded the Thinking Curriculum into their teaching practice. Also the work done in literacy with Kerrie McMillin & Christine Clarke at school & externally with Deb Sukarna.

A very special thanks to our teaching and support staff for their valuable and valued contributions to the school throughout the year. Special thanks to our Bursar, Mrs Kaye Blackley who has managed the day to day demands of the school office in such an outstanding fashion. In 2006 we appointed Ms Katie Heard & Mr Nick Patten, who quickly established positive places in our school. I would like to thank Mr Julian Regan & Ms Di Craig (who shared the role of Assistant Principal (Wellbeing) & Early Years coordinators) & Mrs Lorraine Campbell (who coordinated the senior part of the school & Curriculum) for their Educational Leadership & support throughout the year. Unfortunately we said goodbye to Lauren Hateley (working overseas) & Nick Patten (new school) at the end of the year. We will certainly miss their talents at Speci.

The Parent Opinion Survey results indicate that parents are aware of how hard staff work to support children at Specimen Hill P.S.

Parents have contributed a great deal towards supporting students at Speci. They have been involved with various sporting events, canteen, fundraising, as parent helpers in classrooms (especially literacy & in the Art room), camps, excursions and formally through Parent Club and School Council. I would like to thank all for your contributions and for making a difference to the lives of children at Speci.

Thanks to School Council President, Mrs Mandy Pickering who has done an outstanding job in her role as President, as well as taking a personal interest in facilities. She has provided leadership for our School Council and has been a great support to myself as Principal. Special thanks to Marie Cox who has provided leadership for our school Parent Club who have so ably supported and participated in a range of fundraising activities, especially the running of the school canteen.

The staff, parents and community can be proud of our achievements in Curriculum, Environment, Management & Resources, detailed in this report. We will continue to build on this excellent foundation, challenging our common beliefs to improve outcomes for our children.

Doug Jones
Principal
School Council President's Report

In a year that seemed to be constantly stopping and starting because of the rearrangement of term lengths for the Commonwealth Games, it was great to start with all the building works completed. No more areas fenced off or cramped classrooms.

To complement our new school a number of grounds projects were carried out during the year:
- Second half of front boundary fence
- 12 fitness stations
- new garden beds
- retaining walls
- seating
- rubberised soft fall for both playgrounds
- new shade sail for oval playground
- new asphalt area
- new paths – paved and concrete
- security fence around oval
- section of embankment planted out

The majority of these projects were completed early in the year, which meant that Speci was looking beautiful for our Official Opening, held on the 28th of July. The day was a great success thanks to the effort put in by all the staff, students and parent helpers.

It was an honour to be involved in the School Opening and our School Captains, Maddison and Lauchlan, did a fantastic job representing their fellow students.

Congratulations to the staff at Speci for another great year. Not only were they able to keep the year flowing smoothly, but found time to successfully apply for a number of grants and attend numerous professional development sessions.

Thank you to all the parent volunteers who helped throughout the year. Our school could not function as well as it does without this extra support.

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.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Total students enrolled in school

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no. students</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>250</td>
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</table>

Interpretation

- Enrolments have continued to remain at similar level from 2004 to 2006.
- The total number of girls is still more than boys (Boys – 134 & Girls 152).

GENERAL INFORMATION

Parents' satisfaction with this school
(average score on scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is best possible score)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high satisfaction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low satisfaction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation

- Parent satisfaction with the school remains at high levels in 2006.
Student Progress & Achievements

Student Learning

The school continues to provide the best possible learning environment for our students. We endeavour to value-add to our teaching and learning programs through participating extensively in, and transferring the skills learned from, Professional Development programs. Programs such as; Literacy with coaching models such as Kerrie McMillin, Christine Clark, Lorraine Marwood and Deb Sukarna and Numeracy with Michael Redden. Our Integrated Studies units and Thinking Curriculum were further enhanced through visiting Torrensville in South Australia and through staff teams completing courses such as Intel and Harvard Online.

The school adopted the New Reporting System across all curriculum areas during 2006. It has been pleasing that the number of students achieving at or above the expected level has been gradually improving, although students achieving below expected level at the milestones of Grade 4 and Grade 6 are more than we would like. We will closely monitor these students, particularly 2006 cohort of Year 4. Staff have been coming to terms with the new Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) levels, particularly the number of Dimensions at Level 3 and Level 4, and we may have been conservative in our assessment. Additional moderation of students’ work will need to be undertaken to address this. The support provided at Grade 3/4 will be extended in 2007 to include Literacy as well as Numeracy.

Our Prep – 2 data indicates that we have very high percentages of students at or above the expected levels, with only an extremely small percentage of students achieving below expected level. We believe the intensive Professional Development Programs undertaken at these levels are beginning to have a positive effect. An additional Reading Recovery teacher was also in place in 2006 and the literacy support programs were maintained.

Our Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM) results continued the upward trend at Year 3 level in 2006. The Year 5 results displayed a turnaround from 2005 which was pleasing.

The school continues to work steadily towards the priorities and goals of the previous Charter, with emphasis being placed upon assessment and reporting using VELS and the new report form during 2006.

Lorraine Campbell
Curriculum Coordinator

ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH

The graph below indicates the percentage of children at each milestone (Year Prep, 2, 4 & 6) who were at or above the expected level in Reading, Writing & Speaking & Listening

![Graph of English assessment]

Note: Sp&Listen = Speaking & Listening

ASSESSMENT OF MATHEMATICS

The graph below indicates the percentage of children at each milestone (Year Prep, 2, 4 & 6) who were at or above the expected level in Number & Measurement

![Graph of Mathematics assessment]
**AIM DATA (2004 – 2006)**
The graph below indicates the percentage of children in Year 3 who were at or above the expected level in Reading & Mathematics (2004-2006)

![Graph showing percentage of students achieving at or above expected standards for Year 3 in Reading and Mathematics from 2004 to 2006.](image)

**AIM DATA (2004 – 2006)**
The graph below indicates the percentage of children in Year 5 who were at or above the expected level in Reading & Mathematics (2004-2006)

![Graph showing percentage of students achieving at or above expected standards for Year 5 in Reading and Mathematics from 2004 to 2006.](image)

**AIM DATA (2006)**
The graph below indicates the percentage of students achieving at or above National Benchmarks in Reading, Writing, and Maths for Year 3 in 2006.

![Graph showing percentage of students achieving at or above National Benchmarks for Year 3 Reading, Writing, and Maths in 2006.](image)

**AIM DATA (2006)**
The graph below indicates the percentage of students achieving at or above National Benchmarks in Reading, Writing, and Maths for Year 5 in 2006.

![Graph showing percentage of students achieving at or above National Benchmarks for Year 5 Reading, Writing, and Maths in 2006.](image)
Student Pathways and Transitions

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 October 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.

The ‘Innovations & Excellence’ Cluster of schools (Kangaroo Flat cluster) provided learning programs which supported the transition of our ‘Middle Years’ students (Year 5/6). Often these activities had benefit for all our students. Our educator Angie Bysouth together with the management & middle years coordinators, organised many programs which enabled our students to mix with other students in the cluster, including secondary students from Kangaroo Flat Secondary College (KFSC). A highlight of this interaction was the Cluster Environment day.

The Cluster has also worked on ensuring our data is consistent by having a common assessment task in Literacy & Numeracy. All schools use the Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) in Reading & Mathematics. We now have data flowing from the feeder primary schools to KFSC. The majority of our students attend KFSC as illustrated by the graph. KFSC also has Come & Try days, the State Wide Orientation Day and an extended orientation programs for students deemed At Risk. Also communication diaries, called Passports, are used for students and their families to write information about themself (or their child). This helps their respective secondary colleges understand the new Year 7s starting in the following year.

Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Specimen Hill P.S. prides itself in providing a caring, safe and stimulating learning environment for all students. This is a major strength and accomplishment of the school and is achieved through the dedication, commitment and cooperation of staff, combined with the provision of an effective Wellbeing Framework. Wellbeing underpins all other programs in the school, and is a key contributor in improving student learning outcomes.

The Wellbeing Framework and its many supporting structures provide constructive and relevant resources, staff, programs and involvement. It is inclusive of students, staff, parents and the wider community. The outstanding success of this framework is reflected in the 2006 collection of school data.
and in the overall feel and dynamics of the school.

We aim to improve student engagement and connectedness to school by offering a range of programs. These programs included - *It's Not Okay to be Away* (certificates awarded for 97% attendance) the *Buddy Program*, *Solving the Jigsaw* (Grades 5/6) with the contribution of Bernadette Wright the program facilitator and the *Wellbeing Program* (Prep to 4) conducted by Robyn Grubb. An additional program was the *Police Adopt a School Program* (Mark Snell). We continued the reward and recognition certificates, the *Peace Month* and the many programs and leadership provided by the *Junior School Council*. These initiatives all contribute to the promotion of a strong and real sense of belonging, participation and connectedness to school.

The core school performance indicators such as the Student Attitudes to school data indicate that a high number of students have a very positive attitude and feel towards school (*see graph*). This is also ably supported by the 2006 DEEM (Drug Education) survey results which indicate overwhelmingly that students have low stress levels at school and feel that they are extremely well supported in the area of welfare. The average number of days absent by students has fallen below 12 days per student in 2006 (*see graph*). The data is verification of the effectiveness of the Wellbeing program and whole staff commitment to fair and consistent student discipline practices.

Some major highlights of the year in the area of Wellbeing were the *Peace Month* focussing on living without violence and building strong relationships, *healthy breakfasts* focussing on getting a healthy kick-start to the day & *Men & Children’s Night* connecting children with significant male in their lives. Also we featured community awareness projects such as The Speci for Life, the 20 Christmas Hampers donated to the Farmers Drought Relief Appeal and the many *parent information sessions* focussing on the sharing of information and improving parenting skills.

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*Di Craig & Julian Regan*  
*Assistant Principals 2006*
Future Directions

In 2007 the following areas have been identified in our Annual Implementation Plan:

- Develop new Units of work (Year Prep to Year 6) based on contemporary educational thinking (Harvard University, Intel teach to the Future & other local expertise)
- Review our Wellbeing policies and procedures, strengthening staff common beliefs & understandings as well as student engagement & connectedness.
- Continue to strengthen our professional learning and interaction in relation to the Thinking Curriculum, literacy & numeracy.
- Continue to provide an additional Reading Recovery teacher to support Year 1 students and the Junior Professional Learning Team.
- Continue work started in 2006 in relation to developing a Thinking curriculum & a continuum from Prep to Year 6. We will start to fully implement this in classrooms in 2007.
- Whole school approach to the further implementation of Information Communication Technology (ICT) as well as upgrading our hardware such as the use of notebooks and ceiling mounted data projectors. Extend our professional knowledge of the electronic whiteboards.
- Provide extra support for our Student Leadership teams (School Captains & Junior Council)
- Review our previous charter and develop our new Strategic Plan.
- Continue to embed a culture of continuous improvement.
- Continue linking to our community via land adjoining the school and working with Parks Victoria (or other organisations such as Land Care) to develop the area using local native plants grown & planted by students.
- The Official Opening of our 'Investing in our schools' projects.
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 School Charter and now contained in our Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2006. School Council approved extra spending of our bank surplus to support these programs and other school initiatives in the area of buildings & grounds. We were fortunate in being successful with many submissions during the year which ensured that many projects identified for extra spending were funded through these initiatives. 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 2007 to achieve the goals we have set in our AIP.
- Commonwealth Government Grants (CGG) were for the 'Investing in Our Schools' program. Extra expenditure in Property Services was related to these CGG.
- ‘Other’ revenue relates to funding for Out of School Hours care (OSHC).
- The school has a strong commitment to remain in surplus each year and has remained in a surplus position by careful monitoring and budget planning. Extra funds were transferred down to fund school programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Performance for the year ending 31st December, 2006</th>
<th>Financial Position as at 31st December, 2006</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>Funds Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE&amp;T Grants</td>
<td>2006 Actual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Government Grants</td>
<td>High Yield Investment Account</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>Official Account</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salaries and Allowances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank Charges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books and Publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Costs</td>
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<td>Furniture and Equipment</td>
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<td>Utilities</td>
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<td>Trading and Fundraising</td>
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<td>Support/Service</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>4 995.00</td>
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<td>Total Operating Expenditure</td>
<td>446 027.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit</td>
<td>150 773.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Expenditure (Cases 21 Finance Only)</td>
<td>85 444.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Please note that the above amounts do not include any credit revenue or expenditure allocated or spent by the school through its Student Resource Package</td>
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Note: DE&T = Department of Education & Training
## School Details

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Address:</strong></th>
<th>Inglewood St. Golden Square 3555</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal:</strong></td>
<td>Doug Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Council President:</strong></td>
<td>Mandy Pickering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telephone:</strong></td>
<td>03 54 435 353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email:</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:specimen.hill.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au">specimen.hill.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au</a></td>
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Further information can be obtained on request from the School Level Report (SLR) 2006.