

2009 ANNUAL REPORT OF GERALDTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

This report addresses the national school performance information for Geraldton Grammar School. As with all that we do, it is underpinned by the vision of the school:

Geraldton Grammar School will provide an outstanding education and a strong sense of community, cultivating people of integrity, independence of mind and a love of learning.

The ongoing areas of development of the school continue to be:

- Increasing enrolments
- Retaining enrolments
- Debt servicing
- Maintaining a firm financial base
- Attraction and retention of quality staff
- Communication
- Development of technology
- Development of Gifted and Talented programs
- Provision of facilities
- Maintaining a sense of community

We would like to acknowledge the very generous support from the Federal Government through the Building the Education Revolution program.

School Details:

School sector: Independent
School's address: 134 George Rd, Geraldton WA 6530

Total enrolments: 630

Year levels offered: Kindergarten to Year 12
Co-educational or single sex: Co-educational

Curriculum offerings:

Geraldton Grammar School offers a broad range of subjects, with the majority of year 12s taking up tertiary places. Our subject offerings in the **senior school** follow a traditional academic path and we are the only school in the district to offer some of the new courses of study such as Philosophy and Ethics and Psychology.

The primary school also offers a broad curriculum with specialist teachers in Italian, PE, Music and Art. There is a high level of learning support and a High Achieving and Talented Students (HATS) program. Enquiry based learning is a feature of the primary school which follows a multi-aged class grouping philosophy.

Some features of the primary curriculum are:

- Authentic assessment – portfolios, rubrics, criteria
- Social skills
- Thinking Skills
- Differentiating curriculum
- Student centred classrooms
- Primary Research Project 5-6
- Bounce Back – Resiliency
- Daily Fitness

Middle school commences in year 7 which is a transition year and offers this year level a wide range of opportunities. The year 7 students have a secondary timetable where subject area specialists take all subjects. The one concession is that one teacher has core responsibility for each class and will take this class for at least 50% of the timetable.

Parent curriculum information nights were successful once again with parents seeing elements of the curriculum from a student's point of view. All subject offerings are covered in a three year cycle. It is also the opportunity for the parents to be addressed on relevant areas such as bullying, misuse of technology etc. Supper ends the evening on a friendly note and it is always an opportunity for parents and teachers to catch up.

The electives program is running well and students have engaged in cross age learning experiences in a variety of activities that they select. Staff offered a range of activities covering such things as Textiles, Painting, Technical Graphics, Getting (and staying) Fit, Horticulture, Fishing for the Future, Applied Technology, Mind Games, Sports Frenzy, Food Glorious Food, Rock Music and Craft and Hobbies.

In the middle school we offer a full range of subjects other than the core subjects – Art, Drama, Music, PE, Outdoor Education, Design and Technology, Computing, Italian

Co-curricular activities:

We offer a range of co-curricular opportunities in sporting, cultural and service pursuits. Most sport at school is done through the House system as there is a very limited interschool competition. Most of our students get their sporting involvement externally through the club system. We regularly field teams in hockey, netball, cricket, soccer and then for specialist competitions such as surfing, tennis, badminton, Auskick, equestrian, golf. We belong to the secondary ACC competition where we send teams to Perth for swimming, and our students participate in the annual Country Week competition held in Perth. At a local level we compete in interschool swimming, cross country and athletics.

Music, drama and dance make up our co-curricular cultural activities. Students in the primary and middle schools can take a dance elective; there are primary and secondary choirs, and a school instrumental ensemble. Our primary students have a number of tuned percussion groups. We enter a large number of items each year in the annual Music Festival.

The school has a strong service imperative, which is part of its Round Square involvement. Students take part in the Compass Program in the primary school, and then move to their bronze and silver Duke of Edinburgh medals in secondary. Each year level has a local and an international focus in terms of service

Pastoral Care:

The school believes in the fundamental principles of:

- the right to learn/teach without disruption;
- care and consideration for each other;
- care of the environment and property; and
- the right to feel happy and safe at all times.

In promoting these principles the **primary school** took part in:

- Goodwill Account and days of good standing
- Increased leadership activities
- Big Days Out and In
- Junior Representative Council activities
- Increased support time
- Kidsmatter resiliency program
- World Vision Leadership Conference
- Sleepover for 12 Hour Famine
- Students did service work for various community organisations.

Secondary Pastoral Care programs look at many of the social issues faced by our students and deal with them in a sequential manner.

Pastoral Care in the **middle school** aims to provide a program that supports our students so that they are able to reach their potential within their academic and co-curricular endeavours. Students are placed into vertical Home Groups and the Home Group teacher is a vital link between school and home. Students have a Personal Development Program lesson once a week in which the sequential Pastoral Care program is taught.

In the **senior school** the Pastoral Care program builds upon the programs of the primary and middle schools.

Year 10 a significant year during which the Gateway program unfolds. This program involves guiding the students through information that will enable them to make well informed career choices. The Personal Development Program (PDP) focuses on such goals but also supports the academic pursuits by promoting study skills. A week long camp to Perth is a highlight for the year 10 students. The camp has a single goal of stimulating the student's interest in their future. An opportunity to experience the workforce is given at the end of term 2 when all students are sent on a week long work experience.

Year 11 is a developing year for students. All students are required to choose six subjects. It can be a difficult year for those students who have not applied themselves in year 10. Students get to choose from range of subjects which caters

for students whether they wish to go on to tertiary studies, go into the workforce, take on an apprenticeship and so on. A focus of year 11 is the leadership program.

Year 12 is a significant year for many social, pastoral and academic reasons. From the year 12 cohort come the school leaders – School Captains, Vice Captains, House Captains and Chapel Captain. Their input to the student life at GGS is significant and they make up the major proportion of the Student Representative Council. Use of a common room and the year 12 badge and leavers' jumpers are some of the ways year 12s are recognised as our leaders. The graduating class has a very big year academically. Final exams in November are always a significant goal and milestone. Students receive significant help from teachers through specific subject area tutorials.

Parental involvement:

At GGS we value the relationship with the home, and the shared responsibility of educating our young students. We welcome the active involvement of parents both in the education process and the overall life of the school including our comprehensive camping program.

Parents have an open invitation to attend assemblies and church services.

Information evenings across all year levels are hosted for parents to learn more about the education process.

We have a variety of forms of communication such as newsletters, email postings, internet etc aimed at keeping parents well informed.

The P&F is a great body of parents who have a significant role in the school both from a fund raising point of view and from a social perspective.

Staffing Information:

Staff composition:

Teaching, full-time - 45

Teaching, part-time 14

Total = 59

Non-Teaching, full-time - 23

Non-Teaching, part-time - 11

Total = 34

Qualifications of all teachers:

All teachers have relevant tertiary qualifications and current WACOT registration.

Staff Retention:

Staff retention is high although the staff profile changes significantly each year because of growth and the fact that we are a new and developing school. We are also getting to a stage where teachers are eligible for long service leave, and we have a number of teachers on maternity leave. We are fortunate to be able to attract high quality staff for all positions advertised.

Professional Development:

The total funds expended on teacher professional development in 2009 were \$60000. These funds are managed by the Head of Curriculum.

The major professional development initiatives were Integration of ICT into the Curriculum with a heavy focus on the use of Interactive Whiteboard technology in the classroom; Differentiated Curriculum; Numeracy and Literacy; Mental Health of Students; Behaviour Management; Mandatory Reporting; WACOT requirements; Re-registration processes.

General staff meetings are held on Monday afternoons across the campus for both teaching and non-teaching staff at GGS. These meetings have had a professional development focus and all staff are required to attend. These PD sessions are facilitated by staff and make use of skills and expertise of the current staff as well as maximizing the value of external in-service activities undertaken by staff as they pass on knowledge and skills developed through attendance at such activities. Primary staff also have a meeting every Wednesday afternoon.

The involvement of the teaching staff in professional development activities during 2009 was 100%.

Student Retention:

This measure reflects the fact that we are still a developing school with limited subject offering in the senior years. We lose those students at the end of year 10 who are looking for greater vocational choices than our more traditional academic lines offer.

Student Daily Attendance:

The student attendance rate is 95.2% based on attendance records from pre-primary to year 12.

How non-attendance is managed by the school:

Class rolls are marked daily in the morning in Home Group for the secondary and in classes for primary. All rolls are returned to the front office where student absences are entered into the school's student database. Parents of students with unexplained absences are contacted to provide a reason for this absence and the database updated accordingly. Instances of continued unexplained absence are brought to the attention of the appropriate Head of School for further investigation.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction:

At the end of each year parents and students who are leaving the school are asked to fill in an exit survey, and families new to the school fill in a new families survey. Responses are overwhelmingly positive with particular attention paid to the beautiful physical environment of the school, the quality of the teaching staff, the excellent pastoral care program, opportunities for travel and exchanges, programs such as Compass, Duke of Edinburgh, Outward Bound and Round Square, excellent

graduation rate and tertiary entrance results. Criticisms are usually to do with subject offerings in the senior school, a situation that we acknowledge and can address as the student numbers continue to grow. The greatest measure of teacher satisfaction is the fact that we have a very small staff turnover, and in a time of great staffing difficulties in regional WA we have prospective teachers actively seeking employment here. We conduct an exit meeting with all staff who are leaving.

Value Added:

- small class sizes
- nationally recognised pastoral programs
- experiential and expeditionary learning opportunities under the banner of Compass, Duke of Edinburgh, Outward Bound, Round Squar
- strong ties with the Anglican Church
- strong K to 12 community focus
- very active P&F
- strong community service focus
- only AHISA (Association of Heads of Independent School of Australia) school north of Perth (and 1 of only 3 outside Perth in WA)
- excellent community partnerships
- innovative projects such as Wetlands Sanctuary project
- committed staff with strong personal investment in GGS
- out of school hours programs such as Clubs and Societies program, tutorials
- HATS program (High Achieving and Talented Students)
- travel and exchange opportunities
- exciting camps program from year 6 to year 12