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Village School continues to provide an alternative choice for primary school students, which encompasses ‘experiential learning’ and an acknowledgement of individual differences both academically and socially. The school continues to make good use of the surrounding grounds; studying flora and fauna in the wetlands, maintaining a small animal farm and also growing produce for the weekly market. Most importantly the teachers continue to uphold the original purpose of the school, which was taken from a quote from educationalist Jerome Bruner; “…any subject can be taught in any intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development.” The wide choice of options that occurred weekly from parents and other community members is a good example of this.

FORWORD FROM CHAIR OF THE BOARD

It is hard to believe that a year has passed, so much has been achieved. 2013 was an excellent year for Village School in many ways.

With a change of Principal and changes on the Board the focus for the school has shifted and now there is a clear delineation of responsibilities between the management team, who are responsible for the day to day operation of Village School, including setting the curriculum and delivering excellence in education for the children at Village School, and The Board who are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the school and ensuring financial and risk governance.

As you will recall our strategy lies in 2 areas, Transformation and Growth. These 2 elements create a partnership whereby our desire to increase enrolments is supported by a Transformation agenda that will encourage and inspire families to join our community.
During 2013 we welcomed many pre-school communities into Village School and visited several others and I am pleased to report that at the start of the 2014 school year our enrolments were at 67, a 24% increase on enrolments at the start of the 2013 school year. We undertook a renovation for our kitchen block and now have a wonderful space for our community activities and our grant application for the next phase of Village School renewal has been submitted.

During 2013 we farewelled our Treasurer, Richard Groom, and I am pleased to report that the improvement in our financial position that Richard was a part of has continued. Our new challenge in Finance is to create a strategic approach to our spending and investment. An increasing level of maintenance spend has led us to appoint a Maintenance Officer to the management team which will allow a responsive and cost effective way to keep our community safe.

We have invested in creating a curriculum that responds to our philosophy and our student needs and welcomed many new teaching staff.

Our fundraising strategy focusses us on opening as many avenues of revenue into Village School as possible through initiatives large and small.

In 2013 our marketing team focussed on raising our profile through regular marketing activities in recognised publications and we have worked to leverage social media. Our Facebook page at the AGM last year showed Village School had 68 friends. Today we have 229 friends and a recent post reached over 20,000 people. A small investment of time is helping to place Village School in the running for families making education decisions. You may also have noticed our wonderful signs in Chirnside Park and Eastland Shopping Centre.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Tanya and the whole Village School team for their hard work which is delivered with energy and endless enthusiasm, and the Board for their support over the last 12 months. I would also like to thank you, the Village School community, for your participation in the many committees and events we organise, your trust and for being a part of Village School.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD IN 2013

Chair: Kay Newton
Vice Chair: Andrew Yen
Treasurer: Richard Groom (to 31 May)
Business Manager: Vanessa Yates
Parent Rep: Meredith MaCrae
Staff Rep: Edith West
Principal: Tanya Heine
STUDENT ENROLMENT

There was a steady increase in enrolments across the year starting at 54 children in February and rising to 64 children on the books by the end of term 4 and 6 more students in the school on trial. The enrolled students for December 2013 were distributed accordingly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Prep</td>
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<td>Grade 1</td>
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<td>Grade 4</td>
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<td>Grade 5</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The home school program increased in numbers over this year with two students in year 4 and two in year 2. There have been no issues accommodating part-time students for the staff or the children. The school has also been accommodating other students who have requested a four day week.

Our graduates all went to the state system this year, one to Yarra Hills Secondary College; one to Norwood Secondary College and three to Templestowe College. Apart from the graduates we lost 6 other students across the year, one for financial reasons, three for behavioural issues and two siblings, one of whom needed a different school and distance precluded the other one continuing.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The school maintained the policy of ringing students who were absent after 9:30 each morning if there was no notification of an absence. Most parents contacted the school and gave reasons for student absences. Any prolonged absences that were not explained were followed up with contact from the principal and in some cases an interview between parents, child and teacher. Our overall attendance average was 94.06%. There was no significant difference across the grade levels with attendance, the percentages ranged from 91.37% for year 3 to 96.62% in year 2. An average of 94% attendance has been the case for the last two years as well. Attendances tend to be down mid-year around end of May, June and July and relate to the usual winter ailments.
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Income was lower than last year when we received the balance owed for the sale of the land on the northern edge of the property. This year’s income dropped to $845,548 and mostly reflects the incoming tuition fees and government grants. Expenditure was $1,001,990 in 2013 and this imbalance was due to the following factors: salaries and on-costs rose, leasing of equipment was higher and more was spent on teaching expenses, music, farm, water rates, security, provision for doubtful debts, professional development, LOTE, insurance, fundraising expenses and the audit. Also there was no increase in tuition fees this year and that will need to be remedied in future years. The term ‘other income’ refers to sales of school equipment such as hats, jackets and bags and other miscellaneous income.
EXPENDITURE  $1,001,990

- Accountancy and Audit
- Bank Charges
- Camp Costs
- Computer and Software Costs
- Depreciation and Amortisation
- Farm Expenses
- Fundraising Expenses
- Insurance
- Lease of Equipment
- Light and Power
- Music
- Postage
- Provision for Doubtful Debts
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Security
- Teaching (recurrent) Expenses
- Waste Disposal
- Advertising and Promotion
- Borrowing Costs
- Cleaning
- Debt Collection
- Donations
- Fee Discounts
- General Expenses
- Interest
- Library Expenses
- LOTE Expenses
- Office Expenses
- Professional Development
- Recruitment Costs
- Salaries and On-costs
- Subscriptions
- Telephone
- Water Rates
MARKETING

Regular monthly open days were held over ten months and other private tours were also provided upon request. The internet site, regular advertising and a return to using the Melbourne Child magazine helped to raise our profile. A new initiative this year was to advertise at shopping centres and by the end of the year we had two lit advertising boards, one inside Chirnside Park shopping centre and the other at an entrance of Eastland shopping Centre. While most of our students come from the outer eastern corridor we still attract people from the wider Melbourne community because of the unique nature of our program. One home schooler from 2012 converted to a four day week and continues to drive from Pakenham to be part of Village School. We also held two “Kinderfests” as a new initiative. The one held early in the year was a resounding success, the other held the same day as the Steiner Fair was poorly attended.

CURRICULUM UPDATE

In keeping with the requests that came out of the VRQA inspection of the school in 2012, the Village School Curriculum was completely rewritten. Although the school still upholds the practice of teaching children at their individual levels rather than at grade expectations, the curriculum document now reinforces that the school is fully aware of grade expectations and is striving for children to achieve these benchmarks and beyond where appropriate. The school also made adjustments and inclusions to the website according to VRQA requests.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

The teachers continued to use a thematic approach to the key learning areas which meant that some key learning areas were addressed in a concentrated block of time (such as science or humanities) whereas maths and language were constantly addressed both through the class themes but also as regular skills practice at the level of the individual. During terms 1, 2 and 4 the prep group looked at “Explore and Discover”, Nursery Rhymes and a theme on Toy Production; year 1-2 studied ‘Chains’, Circus, Seasons, Passion Projects and Xmas themes; year 3-4 did Mechanical Technology, Planet Earth and Energy; and the years 5 & 6 did Law and Order, Colour Matters and Products. In term 3 there was a whole school focus on Australian history which started with an enactment of the First Fleet and culminated in a whole school performance which covered Convicts, European Settlement, introduction of the merino sheep, the Rum Rebellion, explorers, the discovery of gold and the Eureka Stockade, bushrangers and modern multi-cultural Australia. The specialist subjects taught on the days that the home-schoolers attended were Library, Auslan, Performing Arts and Environment. The sporting program continued to be Games and Skills, Gymnastics, Freeform and Horse Riding.

Excursions included a trip to Ceres, the National Institute of Circus Arts, Scienceworks, the Botanic Gardens, Parliament House, the Treasury Building, the Preston Shopping Area (multi-culturalism) and the Melbourne Zoo. There was one incursion, an African dance and drumming group on Harmony Day and two author visits; Liliane Grace visited Tanya’s and Portia’s group twice as they were reading her book as a class novel and Karla Strambini, who shared the process of writing a book with the
children two years ago, when she was working here as learning support also visited all the groups to share her published book, “Mr Qwerty”.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

There were two outside singing performances at Coles in Lilydale. The whole school performed in first term and a group of older students went back to perform in term 4.

Some students and teachers also worked in conjunction with Ruccis, a circus skills group to prepare a workshop which was taken to the Maroondah Festival. The cost of this was shared between a council grant and the school.

We had a visit from the Maharishi School as we shared the common link of studying Auslan. The children had some really good interactions using sign language only.

Tanya’s and Portia’s group hosted three different kinder visits from local childcare and kindergartens.

**SCHOOL EVENTS**

Harmony Day was celebrated by the whole school at the end of Term 1 and many parents played an active part by either running cooking activities or other cultural activities such as stories, yoga, dancing and drumming. There was a Whole School Sleepover in Term 2 and the children continued to run their discos and the Village Idol. Edith’s group produced their own circus and created their own Big Top in the hall for the occasion. The Whole School Performance was held over two nights to packed houses and in the last week of term 3 we also had a Skipathon. Tanya’s and Portia’s group organised a very successful Dog Day.

**PARENTS AND FRIENDS AND FUNDRAISING**

The Parents and Friends organised some social occasions and one of the highlights of the year was the Bollywood Night which was very well attended.

The Parents and Friends also organised a Mother’s Day stall, a pie drive, a whole school fundraising tea towel and a Xmas wrapping stall at Chirnside Park.

**SLEEPOVER AND CAMPS**

In term 3 the school went on the usual three day Performance Camp at Camp Oasis in Mt Evelyn. This camp provides some interesting activities, such as candle making, visiting the reptiles, the rope course, the flying fox, the games room and the gymnasium which all provide a nice balance with the intensive rehearsals that also take place. The end of year whole school camp was down at Wilson’s Prom and we also used this time to do an intensive swimming program so that the children could practice their water safety.

**TESTING AND ASSESSMENT**

Staff continued with the parent/teacher interviews during terms one and three and the formal testing and report writing in terms two and four. The ACER PAT testing series which covers vocabulary recognition, comprehension, mathematics and science; the Schleiger Diagnostic Maths Tests, the Neale Reading analysis and the new Australian National Spelling tests were all available for teachers.
to select for formal testing. As well formative ongoing assessment was used and reported on with the written reports.

**NAPLAN**

Only four of our students sat for the NAPLAN tests as many parents took the option of withdrawing their child from formal testing. The one year five student who sat achieved above average in all tests, scoring in the top band 8 for reading, grammar and punctuation and the second top band seven for spelling, persuasive writing and numeracy. Of the three year threes who sat the test one scored above average, one way above average and one scored average for reading, with persuasive writing there was one above average, one average and one below average. With Spelling there were two averages and one below average, grammar and punctuation one top of the range, one high average and one below average, and with numeracy there was one top of the range and two average results. One of those students has pronounced dyslexia so the below averages were definitely expected. Neither of the grade levels were fully represented which meant that the Naplan scores were not a true reflection of those year levels at the school.

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

We had two guest speaker evenings this year, one with Jo Freitag who talked about the special needs of gifted children and one with Dr Shona Bass from the Early Years Foundation. Despite the same advertising coverage, attendance numbers were down with both these events compared to last year.

**ADMINISTRATION STAFF**

Vanessa Yates  
Business Manager/Reception

Michelle Newstead  
Reception

We started the year with just one staff member in charge of the office. As it became clear that Vanessa needed more time to perform all the duties of a Business Manager, Financial Administrator and Reception we employed Michelle Newstead to provide Reception support.

**TEACHING STAFF**

- Tanya Heine (Principal)  
  Master of Education

- Edith West  
  Diploma of Primary Teaching

- Laura Fraser  
  Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Education and ESL

- Max Yardy  
  Diploma of Primary Teaching, Graduate Diploma

- Portia Chiminello  
  Master of Education

- Kari O’Gorman  
  Graduate Diploma of Education (Primary)

- Sally Boyd  
  Bachelor of Education (Primary)

Tanya Heine taught the year 5/6 group in the mornings and worked as a Principal in the afternoons. Portia Chiminello started the year initially as an intern teacher in term 1 and was able to take the year
5/6 group for the remainder of the time. The school employed Portia for an extra internship for term 2 and finally as a fully qualified teacher in terms 3 and 4. Max Yardy taught the year 3/4 group, Edith West taught the 1/2 group and Laura Fraser taught the Preps. Kari O’Gorman was employed on Fridays as a relief teacher in order for the other teachers to have some regular time release, or to take the role of casual relief teacher whenever needed. Sally Boyd worked two days a week in the library.

**LEARNING SUPPORT STAFF**
- Leanne Browney
- Meredith Macrae
- Lyndall Levy

It was with great sorrow that we said goodbye to Bronwyn Gilmour who had been on indefinite leave and who finally lost her fight with ovarian cancer.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
All staff participated in an ongoing review of our assessment practices, particularly with regard to formative assessment. This was a comprehensive study group which lasted across the whole year and was supported by Ann Bennet from ISV. Two staff members, Leanne Browney and Tanya Heine also attended extra workshops at the ISV as part of this study. Edith also updated her swimming qualifications with the Community Surf Lifesaver Course. All staff members were updated with First Aid qualifications. Tanya attended 6 days of professional training for first time principals and also another 4 day course on Strategic Planning for Principals run by the Australian Institute of Management. Vanessa attended a two day Business Management course at ISV as well as doing her Certificate in Governance Practise with the Governance Institute of Australia.

**ANIMAL PROGRAM**
The presence of horses for the purpose of riding lessons, the existence of two goats, one sheep, chickens and ducks means there is an ongoing animal care program at the school. The horses spend two or three days on average at Village School and the children are supervised as they tend to their daily food and water needs, which in the case of the horses, goats and sheep means that they are put out on tether at the beginning of the day and brought back to their home paddocks at the end of the day. The school also appreciates the ongoing efforts of the parents who are rostered on to weekend animal feeding.

**FIRE SAFETY**
Regular fire drills are conducted and the school has complied with the fire safety regulations regarding the presence of buckets and mops in the appropriate places around the school. We continue to be in a high risk area and are aware that we would need to close the school on a Code Red day.
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
The school continues to have an OHS committee comprised of two teachers; Max Yardy and Edith West and also a parent and Board Chairperson, Kay Newton.

PARENT SATISFACTION
A parent survey was conducted that asked questions about communication, specialist subjects, academic program content, social mix of students, teaching staff, administration, the principal as well as a space for individual comments and feedback.
The questions all had a score of 1-6, 6 being the most satisfied and 1 meaning the least satisfied. The results were very positive overall, most questions scoring an average of 5 or 6. Three statements scored a 4 which was worth noting although they were still at the positive end of the range.
The three statements that received an average of 4 per respondent were:

- I am happy with the academic content of my child's/children's curriculum.
- I am happy with the social mix of the peer group(s) for my child/children.
- I am happy with the equestrian program run for one term each year for every child.

Further analysis of these statements revealed that the lower rating for academic content came from the middle primary area, whereas the lower rating with the equestrian program was mostly from the upper primary. The lower ratings for the social mix of the students came from both the lower and middle primary. This is valuable information as it identifies three areas that the staff and board need to monitor and perhaps investigate further during the following year.

STUDENT SATISFACTION
Student satisfaction continues to be noted through the daily individual homegroup meetings, shared group meetings and whole school meetings where the children are given a voice to raise issues. Children also share in developing classroom activities through homegroup brainstorms at the end of a term, or the beginning of the next one. Areas of concern with the children are more often to do with their social interactions, use of the school grounds related to building cubbies or grazing the animals. The high attendance rate and the children's reluctance to leave the school in a hurry at the end of the school day are a good indicator that there is a high level of satisfaction amongst the student body.

STAFF SATISFACTION
The staff are also given a weekly voice within staff meetings and feedback is ongoing and acted upon, through a consensual approach.