

VILLAGE SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2019



"Our aim is to delight and inspire young children to become resourceful and independent learners."

WORD FROM THE CHAIR – Ray Yates

To develop a greater sense of connection to our school community takes time for contemplation, time for reflection and a sense of commitment.

This 38th year of the school should be a time of reflection, contemplation and of a re-establishment of commitment.

We need to remind ourselves, through that reflection, of the ingenuity of the founders of the school. Our educational model takes us on a journey of uplifting, towards a sojourn of intellectual growth. This is also a time to become aware of the marvel of the creation of the Village's own evolution and how the landscape of this educational model has reshaped the lives of its students.

We can come aware of the past and know that it is with us now and will remain with us, ever changing us, ever evolving us, and ever inspiring us.

In a time where many have lost sight of how crucial it is to live in harmony and with purpose we reflect on the desire of those early pioneers of the Village to develop such a precious heritage and this should be a transcendental inspiration. We should pause and reflect on their single-minded quest and abundantly celebrate that legacy they have given us, and trust that the current trailblazers can hand on the same successes to those who will follow

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do." Mark Twain

In this year and the next, in my view, there has to be a review of the adherence to the school's philosophy in all our actions so that an increase in confidence and trust of parents and the community is maintained. A reassessment of this can be achieved in the framework of the present climate.

The content of the school's philosophy is, in no doubt, well appreciated but what about the context?

And with that confidence and trust to do a review, I think comes authority. I think there is now the greatest opportunity with that authority to shape the school as a progressive educational model.

Has the confidence and trust generated over the years been brought into question by the virus and has it been eroded by frustration and in some cases, a questioning of our values?

However, with that ambiguity and uncertainty caused by the virus the flip of that is opportunity. Always I say, never miss a good opportunity

My view is that this year and next year has to be a time of renewal and commitment and a restating of the thinking that started the school.

It has to be a process that revives an action plan to take the school beyond the immediate years. It has to be an inclusive process – parents, staff, Board and even students.

Your school is a strong community organization, it is sophisticated in serving the children and the parents with a wide range of educational and social benefit.

The staff provides a vehicle of social integration. So, it is not just a school in a narrow sense but a broad educational organization, it goes beyond the local context as the benefits extend and bridge across its community. It needs to be a true model of community building and social intermixing. Researchers* provide the evidence and philosophers* articulate the rationale for building community connections and the key to education and community development. (* Susan Pinker and Aristotle). They propose the most important factors for a long and fulfilling life are our close relationships and social integration. Teaching, in my view, has always been about establishing relationships with the students.

This means we need people who communicate with us and, for us to interact with people as we move through our day. The face to face contact releases neurotransmitters which increases our level of trust and lowers our stress.

Being part of a school community creates activities and groups where people's interactions can be naturally created and are built, this helps us live longer and live a more enriched and connected life and makes for a better school. It is often the unrecognized key initiative and outcome of our work.

It is the innovative nature of our activities and projects and our school should open up ideas and issues. Aristotle believed listening reverently to others for the common good is the true ethic of a community. Our staff and the Board believe this is a key role it plays in school development and leadership.

Aristotle argues that injustice stands in the way of the common good. Injustice is motivated by both over grasping for scarce external goods, such as money, honour, and power, and by excessive desires. In essence, he promotes sharing living in a balanced way, and our school does sharing so well. There were complexities and challenging times in this new learning delivery in the virus period.

The Board's decisions are always predicated on what direct benefits they deliver to our children. The Royal Commission into the Financial Services Industry highlighted what happens when organizations lose sight of their own people and their purpose.

Your Board needs to be a rarity in educational circles. They need to walk the talk in maintaining trust with the parents and children. They must build up a reservoir of trust knowing that credibility is vital. They must do exactly the same for the smaller issues, as for big issues-the same principles apply.

We must create a narrative of the dynamic organization as the very essence of an educational development and leadership in action.

But we must be cognisant of the financial challenges, these create the severe hurdle to climb in the next year and beyond.

The staff lead by Tanya is the key to our success, and staff connect well with her by not only their engaging and professional service but their commitment to the students.

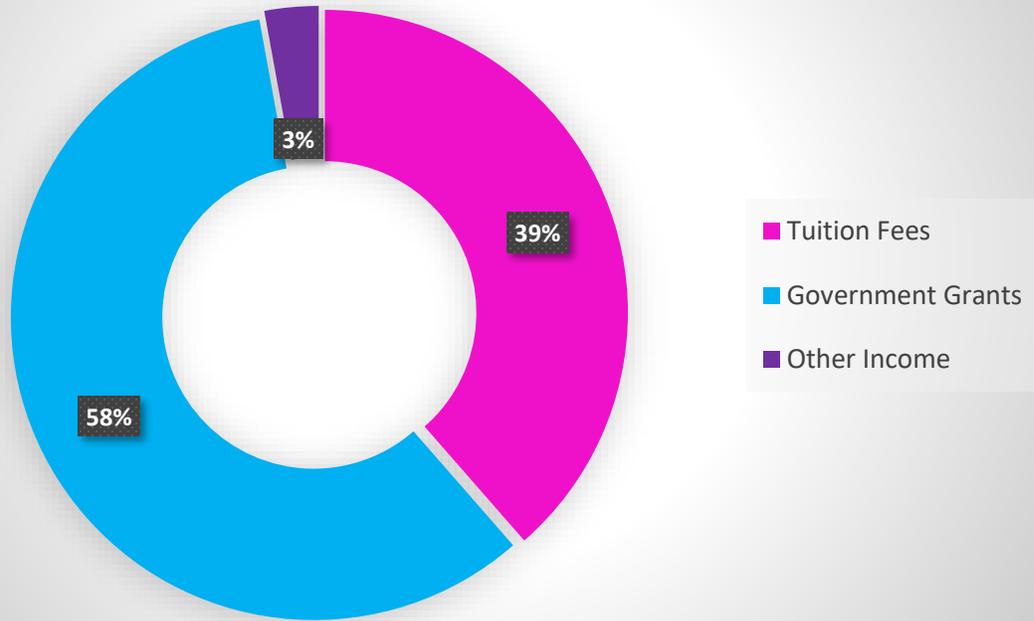
Are we an organization beyond the norm? - are we with a sophistication beyond the schooling? - a dynamic vehicle for student good? Are we the beacon of different education?

Do we demonstrate the 5 R's and the 3Rs in the manner of our charter? Do we succeed in demonstrating that each Child is Unique? Are **Individual differences celebrated** and children encouraged to develop an awareness of their place in Australian society and the global community? **The school philosophy demands that we should be.**

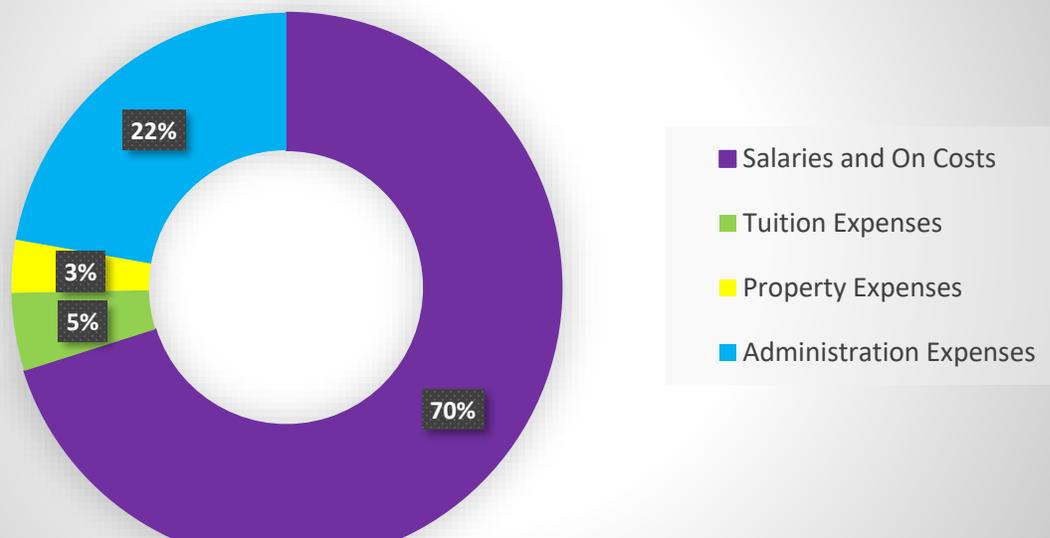
MEMBERS OF THE BOARD IN 2019

Chair:	Ray Yates- Retired principal and municipal mayor
Vice Chair:	Andrew Guthrie - Parent
Treasurer:	Keith James – Accountant and Lawyer
Principal:	Tanya Heine – Master of Education
Business Manager	Vanessa Yates (until June) Accountant
Bursar:	Trish Lamb (After June) Accountant
Co-opted Education Consultant:	Ian Bentley lecturer La Trobe Uni.
Parent Rep:	Sophie Whitwell - parent
Staff Rep:	Melissa Langford – current teacher

2019 Income



2019 Expenses



PRINCIPAL – Tanya Heine

The face of education has changed substantially in the last few years. Many schools have increased the focus on computers, laptops and tablets for learning and in some schools, it is now common for children, even in prep to be working on their own personal tablet for at least some of the day.

In light of our philosophy which focusses on ‘real life’ learning, learning through play and interacting with the environment, we have been cautious in this regard and have limited the amount of screen time, particularly in the younger groups. This means you will continue to see our children making models out of cardboard boxes, mixing potions in STEAM, measuring the distance they can jump and the time it takes to run around the oval as part of their maths activities and being empowered to run their own group and whole school meetings. As well, they are spreading mulch, leading the horses to water, weeding and planting in the gardens and making cubbies, climbing trees or even having extra horse-riding during break times. We want our children to have busy days, with a good balance of indoor and outdoor learning. In other words we want to maintain that “village local school” image which was the inspiration of the founding principal of our school, modelling her school on the local village schools in rural England, which was where she grew up.

We started the year with a new administration block which provided the school with a much more functional first aid room and a board room which has been used for one on one teaching, small group meetings and piano lessons. There is also plenty of extra storage and up to date facilities for the staff. We have also gained some extra space to focus on STEAM activities in the revamped old admin building which has been well-used over the past year.

2019 was also unusual in that instead of maintaining our student population trend which grew from 54 in 2013 to peak at 87 in 2016 and 2017. In 2018 numbers were 85 but last year we started at 80 and then dropped by 10 students over the year to just 70 in the last few weeks of the year. The beginning of 2020 has started with a small increase of 4 and then 1 more, but those figures mean we really need to focus much more on marketing and try different approaches on-line rather than sticking to what worked in the past.

Often in our community you may hear the terms “typical Village kid” or “that’s not Village!”. I concur with Ray’s comments this year, that this is the time to review what *is* Village, and what is not. It is also timely as I will be retiring at the end of 2021. We need to choose a successor who will share the philosophy and the vision of our school as well as bringing something new. Village School has been many things to many different

people and every person who joins our community brings a part of them to the general mix and that's how communities evolve. It's important we don't lose sight of who we are and who we want to be, to continue to be a relevant alternative in this changing world.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

The classroom programs continued to be based around themes which addressed the key learning areas, and there was always an element of fun and games as part of those themes.

One classroom had an almost life-sized plane in first term, followed by a Melbourne tram in term two, a spaceship in term three and the Hogwart's Express in term 4 (same basic structure just modified accordingly). These provided a physical stimulus for themes such as world geography, Australian geography, the Universe and Harry Potter respectively.

Australian Geography was a whole school theme and this included a whole school Sydney to Hobart yacht race where teams of children created their own 'dry land yacht' and participated in various learning events at the different ports of call.

We celebrated Chinese New Year as part of our introduction to Mandarin, our new LOTE which our new teacher Yonny was qualified to teach.

The Cretan maze became a big focus and led by Sandy, the children studied the maths associated with this and it culminated in an Amazing Maths Night which included parents and children working together on maths/science/technology activities.

Another group had a theme entitled "Little People Big Things" and this led to some of the students visiting Melbourne zoo to meet Jane Goodall in person. A trip to the Chinese Museum by one group and the Melbourne Library with another happened to be booked on the same day as the student demonstrations concerning the environment and Greta Thunberg became a subject of discussion back in the classroom, which serendipitously fitted into this theme as well.

There were multiple themes in the whole school performance, ranging from the universe, robotics, climate change and sustainability. Different groups chose these different aspects during performance term.

Two groups finished the year with a Harry Potter theme which made all the humdrum school room tasks become exciting as they earned points for their houses; not the usual practice at our school, but as a novelty it worked really well! It culminated in them having a Hogwarts Christmas Party.

We continued with the streamed maths groups in the first two terms and then the class teachers decided it was preferable to do their own groups within their classes so that it was easier to track their own students for report writing. STEAM lessons were still run by Sandy, Sally took library, Laura and Leanne worked together on the environment program, Yonny taught Mandarin, Vikki took 5Rs and Tanya taught the performing arts. The school also provided a free space for all visiting instrumental teachers, (piano, violin, guitar, drums and voice) and other professionals such as OTs or various therapists who dealt directly with individual parents. These services are provided during the school day. The school also employed Kathy, to work with individuals throughout the school day for remedial maths or language.

We started the year with the same sports activities as the year before, which were horse-riding, gymnastics, tennis and Freeform. In the second half of the year we replaced Freeform with Movement Matters and have had good feedback from the children about the new program. We also ran an intensive swimming program at King Swim at the start of term 2.

SCHOOL EVENTS

Family Barbecues

We started the year with a family barbecue to welcome new families and encourage community involvement. Another family barbecue was held in second and fourth term, and the latter included a “Meet the Grads” session where last year’s year sixes returned to share their experiences and other ex-students attended to share their experiences in secondary schooling and beyond. We were pleased to welcome and congratulate an ex-student Kate Hutchinson who had just won a “Victorian Apprentice of the Year” award.

Formal Opening

Our federal member, Michael Sukkar formally opened the new administration building and the revamped portable.

A.G.M.

We had a slightly improved turn out for last year’s annual AGM which we held straight after school in order to gain a good attendance.

Whole School Performance

We put on three performances of the play entitled “Across the Universe” drawing on the expertise of parents and a past student to make a performance ‘orchestra’ and other parents to help with the technical aspects of the performance. Term three is always set

aside for this event and the children do a lot of learning about the related themes, and are also involved in set painting, prop making and costume designing or making.

Excursions

At the start of the year there were quite a few students visiting Officeworks, practising value for money and purchasing various stationary items. These were mini-excursions in Tanya's car.

We took advantage of having the Bendigo bus for Wednesday afternoon sport by arranging morning visits to the Healesville Cretan Maze.

Yonny's and Melissa's group visited the Chinese Museum and the State Library and both groups ended up taking part in the March for the Environment outside Parliament House.

Big Friends and Little Friends visited the Woori Yallock Farm School and Water Park and the youngest group also visited Healesville Sanctuary as part of their Australian Animals theme.

Camps

We had a sleepover camp at school on the second last day of Term Two. In term 3 we attended Camp Oasis in Mount Evelyn for three days and two nights. At the end of October we had almost all the school go to Wilson's Promontory while the preps attended a camp in a house at Phillip Island. There was an improvement this year in the amount of children who attended the main camp, and also a significant drop in the number of parents who came and collected their children before the end of the camp.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Leanne attended a Dyslexia and Dyscalculia PD early in the year.

The whole staff took part in a three phased professional development course called "Changing Challenging Behaviours" run by David Vinegrad at ISV headquarters. This included some of teachers attending an initial workshop, from which they set goals to be addressed. Then having David Vinegrad visit the school on two separate occasions. There was then another stage where some of the teachers attended another day workshop at ISV sharing what was worked on and achieved throughout the year.

The teachers, learning supports and admin staff, all attended 6 hours of First Aid over two consecutive weeks.

Some teachers attended “Story of Earth” at IMAX to check its suitability for a student visit however that has been deferred for later.

TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

Formative rather than summative is the preferred approach to assessment. Village School also treats every child as an individual rather than a subset of an age cohort. Although benchmarks are acknowledged we do not compare one student with another and instead, measure how far each child has come. We acknowledge that those students who sit for the NAPLAN are actually compared to their age/grade cohort as do some of the results of the ACER tests. The former is a parent choice, the latter is done in isolation with different students if the teacher feels it is relevant to do so.

Teachers started to move away from some of the ACER testing in favour of formative assessment and recording on continuums in 2019. These were used for both literacy and numeracy. Assessment of other key learning areas was still verbal, taking into account set criteria, individual progress and creative skills. Some teachers used the Schleiger Diagnostic Maths tests and some of the ACER Progressive Achievement Tests on an individual basis only. The literacy and numeracy continuums contained the benchmarks used by the Victorian Curriculum, so that teachers were able to assess with reference to these benchmarks. Formal assessments took place in terms two and four. In terms one and three there were parent/teacher/child meetings to discuss teaching goals.

NAPLAN

Out of 8 year three students, 4 sat for the tests and 4 were withdrawn by their parents for philosophical reasons. Numbers 1-4 represent each child who sat the year 3 tests. Numbers in the top row represented a score that was higher than expected for that age group.

Most students were achieving in the expected average range with two scoring exceptionally in Reading

YEAR 3	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Gram/Punc.	Numeracy
Above Average	1 2			1	
High Average	4	1	2	2	1
Average					2
Low Average		2 3	1 3 4	3 4	4
Below Average	3	4			

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Out of 16 year five students 3 were withdrawn for philosophical reasons, leaving 13 to sit for the tests. The numbers 1-13 represent each child who sat the tests. Numbers in the top row represent scores that are higher than expected for that age.

YEAR 5	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Gram/Punc.	Numeracy
Above Average	3 11 4 12 10	11 10	11	3 11 4	4
High Average	1 2 8	2 3 7 12 4	3 12 4	10 12 1	3 11 12
Average		1 13	1 2 6 10 13	2 7	1 9
Low Average	6	5	7 8	5 8 9	10
Below Average	5 7 9 13	6 8 9	9 5	6 13	2 5 6 7 8 13

Numbers which are consistently low average or below average reflect learning difficulties for those students. While most scores fell in the average range there was a different result in the spread of scores for mathematics showing almost no students above average and five students scoring below average, showing the area that most needs remedial help.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Mathematics continued to be a main focus and we hired an extra teacher again this year for either small group lessons or whole group STEAM activities. The teachers spent many staff meetings redoing curriculum documents and creating maths and literacy continuums which facilitated the way mathematics was recorded and evaluated. The school also revised the sport program, adding tennis and a fitness program called Movement Matters. We continued with horse riding and gymnastics, so that each class had four choices across the year. The preps swapped tennis for organised games for first term due to the transition process which meant they only came half days for the first month.

TEACHING REVIEWS

Teachers continued to use their weekly staff meetings as a time for reviewing their approaches to delivering the curriculum and managing the children’s behaviour. Teachers all shared their classroom management ideas with each other as well as their approaches to their term topics. They also worked collaboratively to assist each other and share their individual skills. Constructive criticism was taken on board in this arena, and the teachers were open to trying different methods when expected aims were not met. Behaviour management was a main focus last year supported by David Vinegrad’s professional development sessions across the year on “challenging behaviours”.

PARENT SURVEY

As always it was a struggle to get parents to do a questionnaire and then return it. After frequent prompting and waiting until the end of the year we took the answers from the 20% of the population who replied and have drawn our conclusions from that. The parents who gave feedback, gave it honestly and constructively and there was no actual criticism of the format of the survey, so we can only surmise that there was a majority who felt their needs were being met and did not bother to reply.

They were given a six-point scale to rate various questions, where 1 was low and 6 high. No question was below a 4.0 as an average and these lower responses were for the upkeep of the grounds, size of peer groups for the children and some of the social interactions. The first can be responded to very easily, the second and third relate to the size of the student body which is something the board is also working on. Some of the things that the parents responded favourably about were the freedoms and respect given to the children, small class sizes and exceptional teaching staff. There were some complaints about lack of communication, specifically about some of the extra subjects like 5Rs and “STEAM” activities. One parent also felt we needed to advertise more, especially re open days etc., another that we needed more sport courts, another thought there should be more organised lunchtime activities. While the survey was not a good representation of the whole community, it was a good communication and feedback exercise and where possible the school will address the issues raised.

STUDENT ENROLMENT TERM FOUR 2019

YEAR LEVEL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
PART-TIME PREP	2	4	6
PREP	4	4	8
YEAR ONE	6	4	10
YEAR TWO	3	1	4

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YEAR THREE	4	4	8
YEAR FOUR	4	5	9
YEAR FIVE	9	7	16
YEAR SIX	3	6	9
TOTAL STUDENTS	35	35	70

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

YEAR LEVEL	ATTENDANCE %
PART TIME PREP	96.5
PREP	94.9
YEAR ONE	93.7
YEAR TWO	96.6
YEAR THREE	96.7
YEAR FOUR	90.7
YEAR FIVE	86.2
YEAR SIX	94.5
TOTAL AVERAGE	93.7

The lower attendance rate in year five reflects the fact that there was one student enrolled who was a school refuser.

MARKETING

We had an open morning 26 October which was a mild success with interest shown with one set of parents and a follow up tour. However, that didn't result in an enrolment. We set up a table in a primary school expo run by a Childcare Centre in Maroondah. We set up a display at the Lilydale Show with marketing material for the taking. We continued with advertising in some local papers, but our main print source (Melbourne's Child) has closed down. We also maintained a sign at Eastland, at Exeter Road shops and at Chirnside Park. We decided to focus more on online advertising and have drawn on the services of one parent who works in this field. The aim being to frequent the Facebook Page more often, increase the number of posts and also keep the website more up to date as well as to target our audience through Google Ads. We started up the initiative to re vamp the web page which was done sometime in the nineties. This is now in progress.

PnF/SOCIAL COMMITTEE/FUNDRAISING

The Parents and Friends group took on a lot of fundraising last year, as well as fostering parent get togethers at a local coffee shop and some organising of events for the school, such as the Mother's Day dinner, the roller skating evening and providing labour for the Parent BBQs and other school events such as the Whole School Performance.

They raised money from the following activities:

Easter Raffle	\$198
Mother's Day Raffle	\$300
Father's Day Raffle	\$283
Silent Auction at the Performance	\$4,469.59
Mango Drive	\$615.95
Christmas Wrapping Stall	\$237
Extra monies from wines sales	\$100
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>\$6,203.54</u>

Expenses incurred:

Roller Skating Expense -	\$445
Open Day BBQ Expenses	\$29
Family BBQ Expenses	\$144.50
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$618.50</u>
<u>TOTAL NET MONEY RAISED</u>	<u>\$5,585</u>

PnF also hosted a Village Community Facebook for current parents only.

They also set up a Village PayPal Account and in order to make paying for fundraising easier they procured a square device for easier payments

PnF also monitored families in crisis and helped with food drops and picking up children as needed.

Village School is very grateful for the outstanding work from this small committee led by Kathie Marsan.

STAFFING

The teachers were:

Carmel Arnold	Bachelor of Education	Preps	
Laura Fraser	Graduate Diploma	Years 1/2 All years	Enviro/Garden
Melissa Langford	Bachelor of Education	Years 2/3/4	
Yonny Chang	Graduate Diploma Beijing Language and Culture University - intermediate Bachelor of Law UK	Years 4/5 All years	Mandarin
Leanne Fitch	Graduate Diploma Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology Graduate Diploma in Social Psychology	Years 5/6 All years	Enviro/Garden
Vikki Pickering	Bachelor of Education	All years	Mindfulness/5Rs
Sandra Barnes	Bachelor of Education	All years	Science/Maths
Sally Boyd	Bachelor of Education	All years	Library
Tanya Heine	Master of Education Diploma of School Music	Principal All years	Performing Arts

Learning support staff were:

Kim Thomson	Certificate 4 Education Support
Meredith Macrae	Certificate 3 Education Support -pending
Angela Heine	Certificate 3 Education Support -pending
Kath McCann	Certificate 3 Education Support
Rachelle Senior	Bachelor of Education
Samantha Assender	Last year of teacher training
Ella Barreiro	Mid years of teacher training
Sam Fox	Mid years of teacher training

Contractors

Glitz Academy	Gym instruction
King Swim	Intensive swimming program
Freeform	Exercise/Resilience program (2 terms)
Movement Matters	Exercise/Resilience program (2 terms)
Georgia Appleton	Pony riding

Administration

Vanessa Yates	Business Manager until June
Trish Lamb	Bursar – started in June
Sally Boyd	Reception/Records
Maia Cruz	Reception/ Newsletter

Cleaning/Maintenance

Shining Knight- Facilities Services

OH&S

OH&S was a permanent agenda item at the Village Board meetings. A designated board member and staff member liaised with contractors to ensure safety issues were addressed. Both the staff and the students addressed OHS during their regular meetings and a register is kept to ensure follow up with issues..

THANK YOU

Thank you to the teaching staff who work very hard on and off the campus to deliver an exciting and relevant curriculum for our children. Small schools provide extra duties for staff members who take a janitor's role at the end of each day, making sure all areas are locked and the various animals on site are safe. Our mutual respect policy means that teachers don't get a real break from the children except during some time release. They are all on call at breaks and lunchtimes as the children always have access to any member of staff at any time.

Thank you to the Board members who have volunteered their time to ensure that Village School runs as a viable business, while at the same time respecting and upholding our philosophy.

Thank you to the parents, all of whom help in various ways, with the weekend animal feeding, helping out in the classrooms, helping with pony riding, going on excursions, cooking special lunches, sewing costumes or making props.

Thank you to the children for being the delightful people they are and providing us with the reason for being here and doing all of the above.