

Nowra Christian School

2014 Annual Report



INTRODUCTION

Nowra Christian School is a co-educational K-12 school, established in 1980. It has a student population of, around 325 students at the end of 2014. While we are a ministry of Nowra Baptist Church, we provide excellent education in a non-denominational context. Our school accepts enrolments from up to 40% of families who do not attend church. The school is not a selective school and draws students from a wide range of socio-economic and academic backgrounds. NCS draws students from rural, urban and coastal towns and villages in the northern Shoalhaven area.

The mission of Nowra Christian School is to provide a Christian educational community as a centre of teaching and learning excellence, founded on Biblically based beliefs, values and behaviour.

In pursuing our goals, the School encourages the development of Biblically based values within the individuals who make up the School community. The values that we are focusing on are:

Love Integrity Service Compassion Commitment Excellence

Our school focuses on relationships, not just structures. Each and every student is seen as made in the image of God. We are well renowned in our community for being a caring, supportive and nurturing school that has a heavy emphasis on catering for each individual student.

We are continually striving to meet the changing needs of our students. To ensure that we provide appropriate educational programs for all our students, we support and implement ongoing professional development for all our teachers. This takes place in the form of visiting consultants, external courses, online courses and internal providers. We are also committed to providing best practice resources and technology to support the teachers in their teaching and the students in their learning.

An important goal is to encourage and equip our students to be independent learners. Providing them with best practice educational programs, and individual attention, helps them to actively engage in their own skill development. We offer a wide range of co-curricular and leadership development programs to foster the unique gifts and talents of our students.

As part of the Shoalhaven community, our School values the important partnerships we have with our parents and carers, as well as with our community churches. We aim to be an authentic Christian School. We want to equip our students for success, we want them to serve others and we want them to know who it is they are serving; their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our School seeks to encourage and assist Christian parents in their God given responsibility of bringing up their children in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our School seeks to be Christ focused, recognizing that our authority, derived ultimately from God is delegated to us from the Home, the Church, and the State.

Our School is a learning community with Christ as its Head, where relationships are more important than structures.

Our School recognizes that we are created for God's glory, and under His authority to be His witnesses in the world

REGISTERED OFFICE

194 Old Southern Road
SOUTH NOWRA NSW 2541

COMPANY STRUCTURE

Nowra Christian School is a ministry of Nowra Baptist Church Christian School Limited (NBCCS Ltd). NBCCS Ltd appoints a governing Board of Directors in its Annual General Meeting in May each year. This Board is responsible for establishing and monitoring the School's Budget and Operational Policies. While the Board is appointed from different groups within the School community, their role and legal responsibility, is to always act in the best interests of the whole School, rather than the group of people they are representing.

Under the authority and guidance of the Board, the Principal is responsible for the day to day running of the School.

The Board meets once a month from February to November.

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD'S REPORT

The year 2014 was the beginning of a new "era" for our school as it marked the first year following the retirement of Dr Gannell as our Principal.

It is fair to say it was a year of challenges. We welcomed Mr Marks as our new Principal but unfortunately he resigned his position mid- way through the year. This was something the Board did not seek but we are thankful to Mr Phil Smith for agreeing to step up as Principal, initially until the end of 2015, but at the time of writing (June 2015) this has been extended to the end of 2016.

When Mr Marks commenced he, with the Board, looked at what things the School values and there were 6 particular values that were highlighted. They were: Love, Integrity, Service, Commitment, Compassion and Excellence. These were seen as an outworking of the central purpose and reason for being of our School – "Nowra Christian School is a community providing quality Christ centered teaching and learning to the glory of God."

Our existence as an educational institution will always be grounded in God as our Creator, who has entered into His creation in the person of Jesus.

We are a School and therefore we will constantly be looking at how that works out in the context of an educational institution. We will never be satisfied that there isn't more we could do or that we have "arrived". Rather we will always constantly be striving to improve and better the already excellent education we are giving to our Community's children. To that end the Board, Principal and staff, continue to look at and review what we do as a School and how we do it. For the Board that means, in management jargon, to develop, monitor and alter as necessary our Strategic Plan.

Looking forward we will be seeking to lift the profile of our School and to put an emphasis on excellence in all we do.

We were pleased to see an increase in enrolments at the end of the year and have seen great improvements being made in the Junior School in Literacy and Numeracy through the use of special funding we received for that purpose.

Our School is unique in its location, sitting as it does on 20 acres (8.1 ha) of land, which is shared with Nowra Baptist Church. We are thankful for the wonderful classrooms, computer systems, gym/multi-purpose centre, music and drama facilities, playgrounds and sporting fields, that make up the "tools" our staff are able to use in the education of our children.

On behalf of myself and the Board I wish to express thanks to Mr Smith and the staff for their commitment to our School and its students. I commend the rest of this report to you as it outlines just how much is done within our School.

Mr Ross Dixon

Chairman NCS Ltd School Board

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Nowra Christian School - a Christian community

Early in the year, our new Principal Mr Marks, introduced to us as a school community, the importance of our School values as a Christian school. Throughout this year, many of our assemblies, Chronicles (school newsletter) and devotions have considered the essential values that should underpin the Christian focus on a school like ours. The values we considered included love, compassion, commitment and serving. We have tried to use these words as our priorities and to expand on them by sharing their biblical background.

It is such a great blessing to lead a Christian School that is not only passionate about delivering a quality education in a safe and supportive environment, but also about teaching from a Christian worldview.

There have been the many traditional activities that NCS commits to such as Relay for Life, 40 Hour Famine, Slum Survivor, Jump Rope for Heart, Operation Christmas Child, Supporting the Disabled Surfers events, the Shoalhaven River Festival, giving gifts to Compassion at Christmas, plus our regular involvement in visiting the folk from Chesalon Nursing Home, and through serving at the Nowra East Public School Breakfast Club. Another Homestay visit with a new group of friends from Japan was a highlight during Term Three.

Under the guidance of our committed Chaplains, students have led Bible studies, fellowship groups and mentoring junior leaders. Students from our Secondary Department attended SECET's inaugural 'My School, My Responsibility', and students from Primary attended both of Crusader's training days, 'Followers in Training'.

Academically, we continue to work hard on building those essential skills, as well as encouraging students to develop higher order skills and to apply these skills in a wide range of contexts. The academic performance of the students is an important aspect of what we do at NCS. We continue to be rightly proud of the achievements of our students.

The School continues to be involved in the NSW Government Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan. The funding is a blessing for the professional development of our staff and for the equipping of our K-6 classes in terms of resources and programs. Most importantly, however, the students are benefiting greatly in the essential learning of literacy and numeracy skills.

During our July Conference Week the whole staff was involved in a full day workshop centred on positive classroom management, anxiety and mood disorders. This began our move towards becoming a Kids Matter and Mind Matter School. By the year end teams were formed and we intend to implement the plan in 2015.

Learning extends to outside the classroom. Our whole Secondary Department once again enjoyed the three day School Camp at Port Hacking in Sydney. The Anglican Youthwork's program is tailor made for our students and involves physical challenges, team challenges and spiritual input. Our Year 5 to 6 students made their bi-annual excursion to Mogo Zoo.

This year our students have participated in Eisteddfod groups; Drama, Choral singing and individual categories. There were the Showcase and Celebrate Creativity Nights, the internal Music Tuition program, our K-6 Dance and Gymnastics program, and our Reading Activity Day. A highlight on the calendar each year is the Kindergarten Art Exhibition.

Once again, our students have enjoyed a vast array of opportunities and experiences in the sporting field. Sporting events this year have included Gymnastics, Dance, Touch Football, AFL, Oztag, Soccer, Rugby Union, Volleyball and Netball, snow trip and Surf Camp. A number of individual students have excelled in their respective sports again this year, namely volleyball, rugby, swimming and cross country.

Other important programs in our school include the Active After Schools Communities program for our K-6 students. A good number of Secondary students have continued this year to benefit from the after school STEPS program led by Mrs Hetherington and her team of senior student mentors.

Our School could not operate effectively without the wonderful support of many, many volunteers. There are those involved with the canteen, our school grounds, music tuition, voluntary teacher aides, teaching Dance, Library support, and the "Different Like Me" group, supporting the families who have children with specific learning difficulties.

NCS has a very special record in terms of long serving staff. At the end of the year at our Thanksgiving Night, we acknowledged the following staff members who have served our School for in excess of 20 years; Mrs Keene, Mrs Dallimore, Mrs Brown, Mrs White and Mr Vidler. We thank God for each one of you.

At Nowra Christian School, we are constantly looking to more effectively engage our children and young people in learning in a way that equips them to live in the 21st Century world and, more importantly, that gives them the opportunity to become citizens of God's glorious Kingdom.

It is a joy and privilege to work with our students and their supportive parents in this Christian School community. 2014 had its many challenges and trials, as well as many successes and joys. I am so thankful to God for the wonderful executive staff with whom I work closely. I am also very thankful for the teaching, the administration and the support staff members.

I also thank Mr Ross Dixon, our Chairman, and the Board members, for their hard work and commitment to our School.

Mr Phil Smith
Principal

STUDENT LEADERS' REPORT

This report highlights some comments made by our senior students in their presentation to the school community at the 2014 Thanksgiving Evening.

During our time here at NCS, we have had the pleasure of being led by three Principals who have, instilled in us strong Christian values. The commitment, hard work and encouragement that they have offered these past thirteen years has been greatly appreciated and cherished. It has been important to us to see them frequently throughout the school and to know that they were approachable. Dr. Gannell, Mr. Marks and Mr. Smith, you have all made the extra effort to know us as students and this has not gone unnoticed. On behalf of everyone here, Maddie and I would like to thank you for your contribution to the school community.

We would like to especially thank our parents who have supported us from the beginning by being involved during our time in Primary School by attending Sporting Carnivals as well as assisting the teachers in class times. As our workloads in High School became substantially larger, your support and encouragement made all the difference. The support you gave us during our School years has not gone unappreciated as your words and actions continued to shape us into the young men and women we are today.

To the wonderful Infant and Primary School teachers. You nurtured and cared for us during our early years of school, building a foundation for us to further our learning and fostering our unique and individual identities. You taught us and guided us in our relationship with God. We cannot thank you enough.

Of course, we cannot go without thanking the number of Secondary teachers we have had over the past six years. As the transition from Primary School to High School was made, we would not have made it without the support you gave us. You have guided us, led us by example and, at times, disciplined us, which has assisted in shaping us into the young adults we are now. We admire the input you have in our lives, not only educationally, but also in our walk with God. Even though we may make teaching difficult at times, we genuinely respect and appreciate all the input you have put into our lives.

Maddie and I would like to make a special mention to all our Year Advisors and AM Teachers who have organised devotions, small excursions and put in extra effort to help us grow spiritually and educationally. A big thank you Mr. Vidler for organising career opportunities and helping to prepare us for the future.

To the amazing ladies in the front office whose servant hearts and willingness to help each and every student has been a blessing.

We would like to thank the Senior Class of 2013 who made the transition and our first year of Senior School an enjoyable one. As we moved to our last year of school, we were joined by Year 11. We want to thank you for your friendship. You have been a great class and we will remember all the memories we have made with you. On behalf of Year 12, Jarred and I would like to wish you all the best in your last year of school.

To our fellow Year 12 friends. What a journey it has been! Thirteen years is over! Every single one of you has made our Year Group what it is. The friendships that have been made over our school lives as been an integral part of our lives and has made our schooling that much more enjoyable. While each of us is individual and unique, together we have shared so many great experiences and created memories that we will not easily forget. Maddie and I would like to wish you all God's greatest blessings for your futures. May you grow in your journeys with God.

Lastly, we would like to thank God who has been a constant presence throughout our lives. We would like to share Isaiah 41:10 with you tonight which says, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." God has blessed us in so many ways and we would like to encourage everyone to continue in your walk with God in strength, knowing that He is for you.

Maddie and I feel truly blessed to have been School Captains for 2014 and on behalf of Year 12, we truly thank everyone who has been such an important part to our lives here at Nowra Christian School. We wish you all God's greatest blessings.

Jarred Donovan and Maddison Jeffery – 2014 School Captains

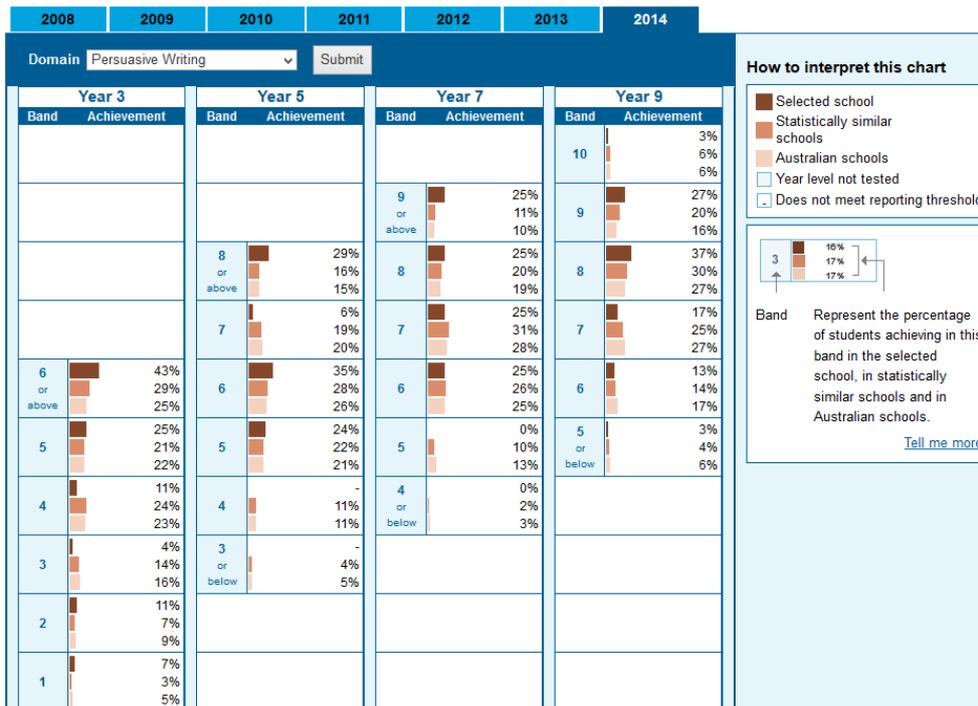
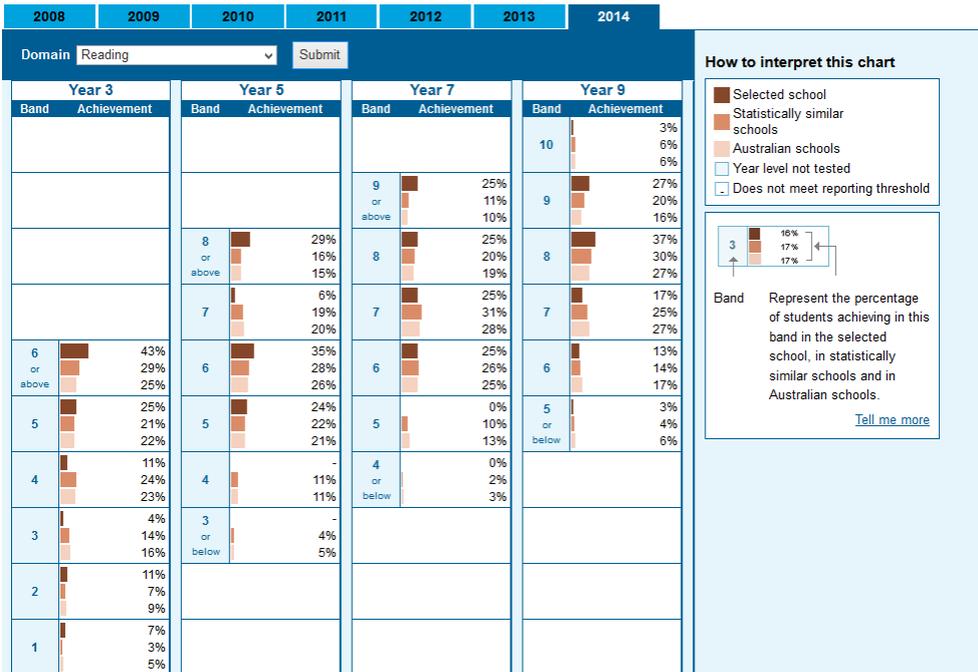
STUDENT PERFORMANCE

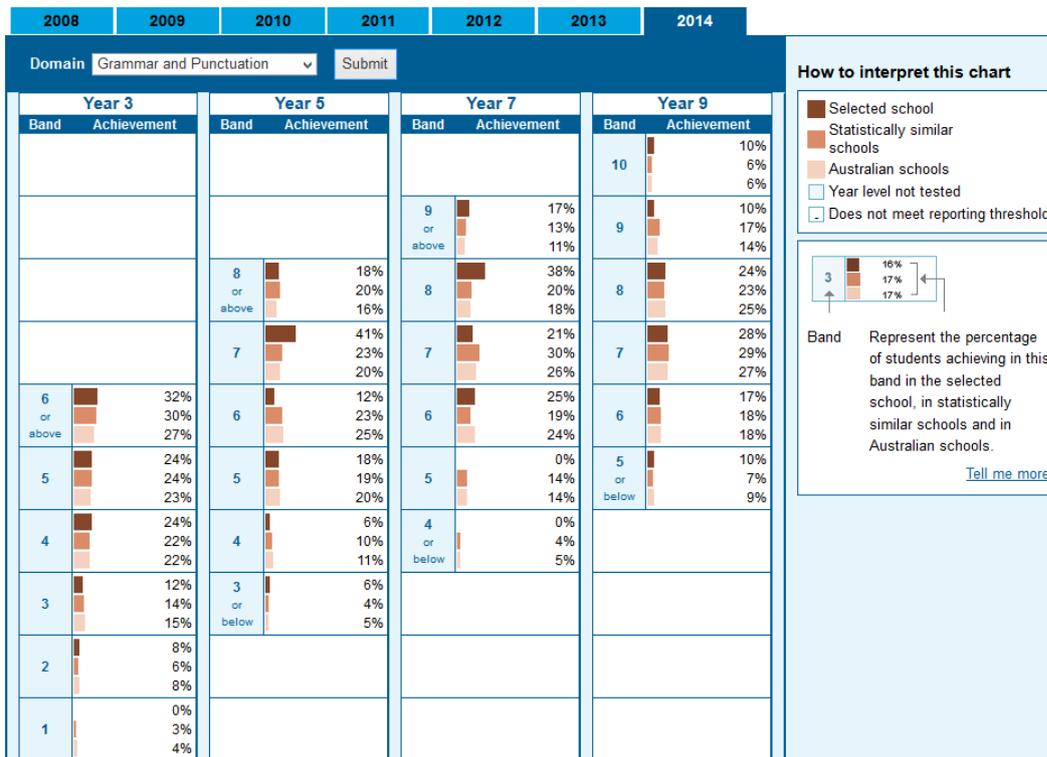
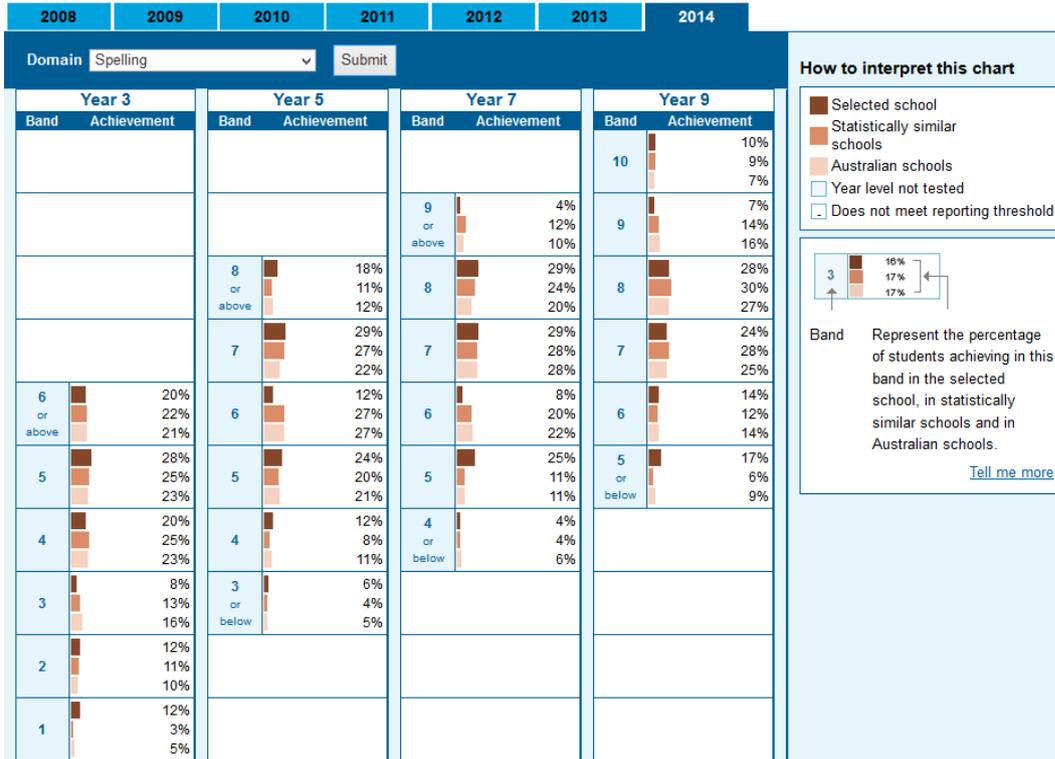
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN EXTERNAL EXAMS

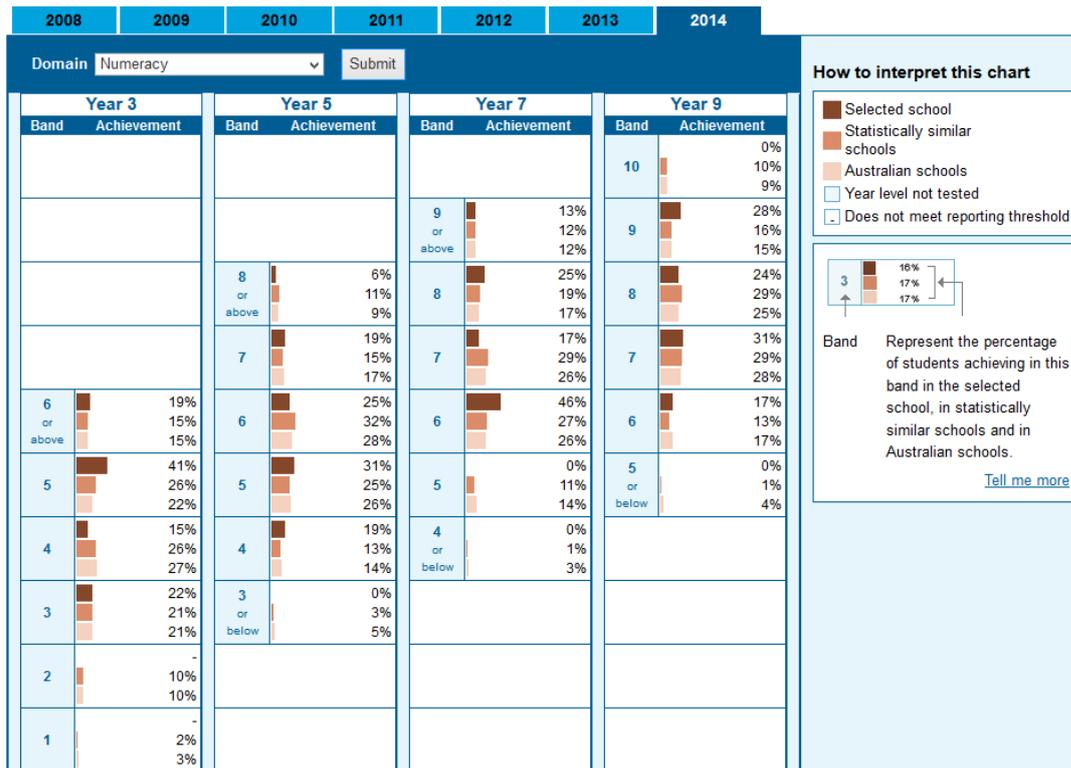
In 2014, the students of Nowra Christian School participated in the NAPLAN Tests (Years 3, 5, 7 and 9). The School also presented candidates for the Higher School Certificate (Seniors).

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY (NAPLAN)

In 2014, students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 participated in the national testing program. These graphs are also available on the My School's website; <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>







In 2013 the K-2 Department began the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan. This State funded program has enabled the school to implement a greater level of professional development for teachers, provide evidence-based programs that will further enhance our students' learning, purchase a greater array of resources to supplement their learning and provide a more effective learning support program.

Two years earlier our K-6 Department implemented the Spelling Mastery program as this strand of English was deemed as an area that required further attention and a direct teaching approach was adopted. Further to this the strand of Writing was also targeted. Extensive professional development has, and continues to be, a priority for our teachers.

In looking at the Year Three results, there is a minimum of 68% of all students in the top three bands in all areas tested.

In Reading and Numeracy, the school is below the state levels for the number of students who are below the Minimum National Standards, except in Year 3 Spelling, Year 5 Writing and Year 9 Spelling.

RECORD OF SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT (ROSA)

Almost all Year 10 students continued on to study for the HSC. Any students who were eligible for a RoSA failed to apply before leaving NCS.

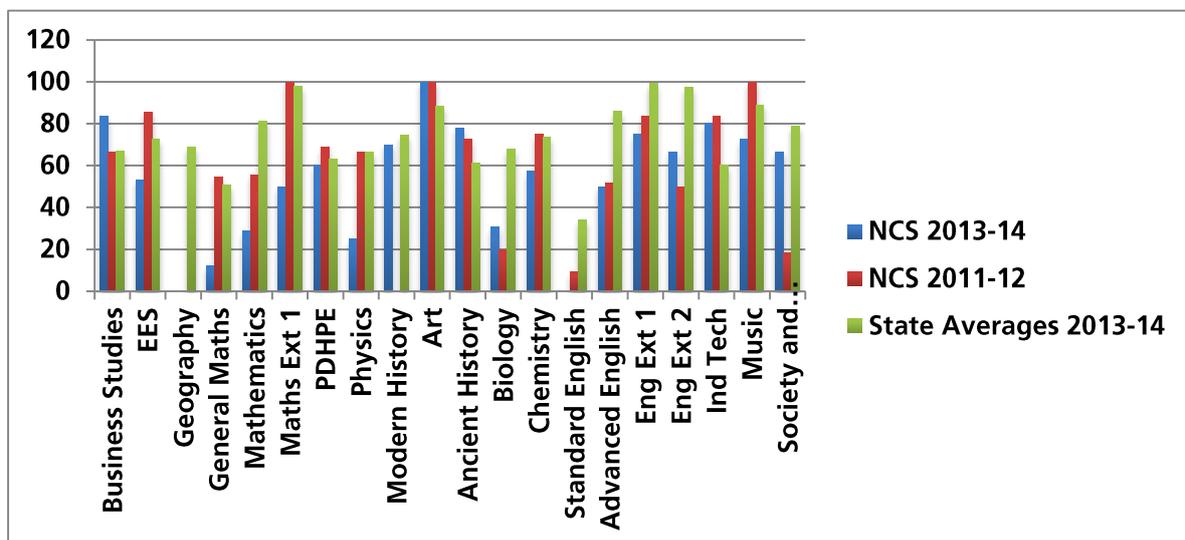
HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE COMMENTARY AND GRADES

We continue to be very pleased that the overwhelming majority of our Senior Students achieved their goals for employment or further studies. Our 2014 cohort performed within the School's expectations, based on the students' abilities, commitment levels to study and aspirations in terms of further tertiary education.

The following graph provide data on the Higher School Certificate results in subjects delivered on site at NCS in 2014 and preceding years. This data refers to the percentage number of students who achieved a Band 3 or higher. More than 60% of our students achieved this across the wide range of subjects.

In viewing this data, we ask the reader to remember that with the focused approach, we offer different subjects on a two year cycle. Some subjects have a candidature in our school of 10 or fewer students, meaning that 1 strongly or poorly performing student can skew the graph significantly.

Of the 2014 graduating Year 12 class, 100% gained a Higher School Certificate, 2.25% of students (1 student) participated in two years of vocational trade training.



STUDENT GROWTH

By tracking the performance of students in the 2014 tests relative to their scores in 2012, the results can show how student's scaled scores in the various tests have changed since previous tests. The School uses this data to target assistance and resources to specific students in specific areas. We are not at liberty to release an individual student's results or growth, but the tables below show the average growth for students at NCS, across the nation and for schools that the government has placed in what it calls the NSW AIS group. Where the growth in NCS students' average performance is greater than the group shown, we have tagged the data with a green box (■). Where the growth in NCS students' average performance is less than the group shown, we have tagged the data with a red box (■).

<i>Comparative average growth in scaled scores (Reading)</i>			
	Nowra Christian School	State	School Education Group
Growth Year 3 to 5	93.3	78.4 ■	77.1 ■
Growth Year 5 to 7	46.8	49.1 ■	48.3 ■
Growth Year 7 to 9	38.9	40.4 ■	39.1 ■
<i>Comparative average growth in scaled scores (Spelling)</i>			
Growth Year 3 to 5	94.5	79.4 ■	74.7 ■
Growth Year 5 to 7	51.5	45.3 ■	46.0 ■
Growth Year 7 to 9	30.9	34.7 ■	36.4 ■
<i>Comparative average growth in scaled scores (Writing)</i>			
Growth Year 3 to 5	41.6	49.8 ■	50.7 ■
Growth Year 5 to 7	66.4	26.8 ■	33.8 ■
Growth Year 7 to 9	70.1	27.2 ■	35.8 ■
<i>Comparative average growth in scaled scores (Grammar & Punctuation)</i>			
Growth Year 3 to 5	86.2	78.2 ■	76.0 ■
Growth Year 5 to 7	61.0	45.8 ■	44.9 ■
Growth Year 7 to 9	32.0	25.1 ■	26.5 ■
<i>Comparative average growth in scaled scores (Overall Numeracy)</i>			
Growth Year 3 to 5	77.1	88.8 ■	87.0 ■
Growth Year 5 to 7	52.3	53.1 ■	56.9 ■
Growth Year 7 to 9	43.7	50.1 ■	51.1 ■
Table 3			

The above table is, however, potentially misleading. In considering improvement, one must consider, among other things, the starting point (first measurement) as it can be difficult to improve significantly if the starting point is well above average.

The "My School" website provides "Student Gain" graphs that show improvement of matched students from NCS compared with all schools. For the 2014 NAPLAN results, the "My School" website provides these graphs for Reading, Persuasive Writing, Narrative Writing and Numeracy.

TEACHER STANDARDS

All of the teaching staff of Nowra Christian School (34 teachers) have teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or are recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (Category (i) under NSW Institute of Teachers regulations).

The 34 teachers noted above include three K-6 Co-ordinators, a Head of Secondary, three 7-12 Co-ordinators, and the Principal.

The number of teaching staff was equivalent to 26.6 (FTE).

The average length of employment per teacher is currently 8.9 years with the average step of employment being Step 13 (7 or more years teaching experience).

Overall, these changes have led to a Teaching Staff retention rate for 2013-2014 of 89.1%.

At the end of 2014 5 Nowra Christian School staff members were presented with special long service awards from Christian Schools Australia. They had each served the School for 20 years or more.

Professional development is an important aspect of education and the staff is given opportunity and encouragement to participate in a vast array of in-service courses, in the areas of Christian thinking, specific faculty expertise and areas such as Mental Health. A number of teachers also participated in Higher School Certificate marking. Some staff have also undertaken further study including participation in a Masters of Education program.

In addition to the professional development organised by the school, the Primary Department undertook additional professional development, funded by the Federal Government's Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan for Low SES communities. Details of the program are available on the school website.

The teacher attendance rate for 2014 was 98%. This rate does not include maternity leave or in-service days and equates to an average of 6.4 days absent per teacher per year.

ENROLMENT POLICY AND PROFILE

RATIONALE

The Enrolment Policy has remained unchanged since 2010.

We welcome applications from families who desire the type of education that our school offers.

Nowra Christian School was initially set up to cater primarily for children from Christian families.

The school now accepts a percentage of children into the school whose families are not in fellowship with a local church. The maximum percentage of children in this category is 40%.

The best way to find out more about our School is to visit us! We regularly have tours of the School and we encourage you to contact us - 02 4422 1199 so that we can arrange a tour at a time that suits you.

ENROLMENT PROFILE

In December 2014, the School's enrolment was 323 (161 in K-6, 162 in 7-12) and was within the bounds set by the School Board. In some grades there was room for extra students. We continue to encourage our parents to pray that the School would enjoy full enrolments, which, in the long run, would allow us to implement some more initiatives.

Parents who elect to become a part of the School community agree to support the School's ethos, educational, discipline and uniform standards. This agreement is an ongoing one, and parents need to continue to support these standards. Similarly, it is important that students remain positive community members, as evidenced in their attitude towards others and the School's expectations.

ENROLMENT PROCEDURE

The Principal interviews every family who has applied for enrolment to determine suitability of student/family at Nowra Christian School. This is followed by an interview with the Accountant to discuss fees. If necessary, the Accountant will make recommendations to the Finance Committee.

Students applying for K – Year 6 undertake an assessment with a teacher which is also organised for during the time of interview. Current school reports and other supporting documentation are used to assess students in Years 7 – 11.

The following priority criteria is also taken into consideration when determining applications:

1. Existing students of NCS (i.e. for progression in Years 6 to 7 and 10 to 11)
2. Siblings of students of NCS
3. Children of staff
4. Children from Nowra Baptist Church
5. Children transferring from Jervis Bay Christian Community School (Years 6 into 7)
6. Children transferring from other Christian schools
7. Children of families from other churches
8. Children from families supportive of the School's ethos but not in fellowship in a church

The final decision of enrolment is at the Principal's discretion. This is determined after the interview has been conducted, consultation with the Accountant re finance, and review of assessment report and/or student reports.

PROMOTING RESPECT & RESPONSIBILITY

Nowra Christian School's biblical foundation continues to provide a firm and unchangeable platform on which Christian character can be built. Christian character starts with the acknowledgement of the saving work and ongoing Lordship of Jesus Christ, and from this flows actions and attitudes and values that reflect biblical teaching.

These values continue to be presented frequently in the day to day teaching of the school. Two of these key values, Respect and Responsibility, are integral to the School's community in action. Once again in 2014, these aspects were especially focussed on as we participated in a range of activities including Slum Survivor, Relay for Life, World Vision's 40 Hour Famine, working with disabled surfers, Operation Christmas Child, and raising funds for Compassion, supporting two children in South America.

Service to others is an integral part of life at Nowra Christian School.

Posters are clearly displayed on the entrance area to the school with information about values for Australian schooling and the National safe schools framework.

Respect is an integral part of our Biblical Studies programs

1. Respect for God
2. Respect for others
3. Respect for self.

In the K-2 Department this focus is simply yet effectively implemented with the words; Love God, Love others.

Responsibility is taught in biblical studies, and other subject areas, in terms of godly citizenship, the respect of the community, respect for government and stewardship of the resources given to us by God.

Our School Assembly program places a significant emphasis on relationship, respect and responsibility.

Numerous other programs and activities at our school assist us to promote respect and responsibility. They include; the Primary buddy class program, the Student Representative Council, our House based activities, the active after-school program, Secondary Prefects running morning devotions for younger students, serving breakfast at the local Public Primary School and visiting the elderly at the Aged Care Home adjacent to the School.

KEY POLICIES

Below is a summary of some of the key Policies. Changes made to any of these Policies is mentioned under the relevant headings.

BULLYING & HARRASSMENT

Our first role as individuals at Nowra Christian School is to recognise that every individual, as made in God's image, is to be treated with dignity and respect. Our school has had a Policy on relationships in place for many years, and our Anti-Bullying Policy is simply an extension of this in that it provides further detail on how we can and should treat each other in our different roles and the responsibilities that these roles entail.

At NCS we have worked hard to develop a “culture” whereby the students are more likely to know that if they report any bullying or harassing type behaviour they know that:

1. They will be heard
2. It is a caring thing to speak up
3. The person who is doing the bullying needs our help
4. They will not be victimized
5. That they must feel safe here at school
6. We all want NCS to be a safe place

One of the ways that we constantly try to grow this “culture” is by encouraging the children to hear and practise these words: **Love God, love others.**

Apart from the teaching of specific PDH units about relationships, which include the heading of Bullying, there is constant and ongoing classroom talk and discussions that centre on encouraging our students to relate better with each other.

We also talk about this frequently as a staff. At regular staff meetings there is a time of pastoral care when we have the opportunity to discuss children who are struggling with relationships and who perhaps remain a possible “target”. The teachers work together on strategies to help those children who are being bullied and those who are doing the bullying.

K-6 In our experience, concerns about bullying tend to be raised more frequently in the Primary Department. To monitor this, the strategy playground is that each teacher has a folder for each class when on duty. In those folders are class lists of children in Kinder to Year Six. When poor behaviours are reported, we investigate and we will add a mark against the child's name with the appropriate code that will help us to keep track of that child's behaviour.

With this collection of data each week one of our Primary Coordinators is able to check the behaviour of individual children over time. If repeated incidents are recorded we can follow up with detentions, discussions with the student, and if need be discussions with the children or child who is being affected most by these behaviours.

7-12 Consistent with our desire to allow students to have greater control over how they might manage playground issues in a wise and Godly way, Secondary students are encouraged to talk constructively to teachers if bullying issues are of a concern. Should they feel uncomfortable in this, the School provides a “semi confidential” mode of reporting issues. This can be done from any computer in the world using a link on the School's website. Using this method, students can express their concern and choose to remain confidential.

While the School has the ability to trace the log in details of students making reports from school computers (which is where the majority of reports originate), we choose not to unless the reports are clearly malicious or otherwise inappropriate.

The School does not immediately act on anonymous reports, but monitors for patterns and intervenes as it deems in the manner as outlined above for K-6.

Other aspects of how the School seeks to deal with bullying are contained in the School's Bullying Policy, available on the School's website.

STUDENT WELFARE & DISCIPLINE

The Student Welfare and Discipline Policy has remained unchanged since 2010.

Nowra Christian School is a community of people – students, parents and staff, who are working together in the task of providing and receiving quality Christian education.

The School's motto is that students will "Grow up into Christ" and its mandate from the church (whose ministry the School is) is to reflect Christian principles in every facet of its being.

We believe that the Bible teaches that God is the Supreme Authority (Romans 13:1) and that He has charged parents with the responsibility to bring up their children in a Christian manner (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). The School supports parents by providing school education in light of these imperatives. The provision of this education requires that adults, and especially teachers, provide modelling and opportunities for all students to identify, develop and use their gifts. Students likewise are to make the most of the opportunities given to them and to make learning a priority – for learning is a key component of why their parents have enrolled them at the School. Parents are urged to remain vigilant in monitoring and encouraging the education of their children, for this is ultimately their responsibility.

The Bible writes of the importance of living in a community where each part plays an important role in the support and nurture of the whole "body" (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12). We believe that in the School community, this means that each and every individual needs to look at his or her actions with the view of seeking out what is best for the "whole", and not simply for them. In such a community, no individual is greater than another, although each holds an "office" which brings with it responsibilities that need to be fulfilled. The office of teacher, for example, has, as part of its responsibility:

- To love the students and their parents;
- To provide a stimulating, valuable and ordered learning environment for the benefit of all students;
- To deliver clear and grace filled instruction pertaining to the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required by the School and broader community;
- To consistently give of one's best in their teaching;
- To provide guidance to assist the student to develop Christian character.
- The office of student has, as part of its responsibility:
 - To love and honour their parents and to honour their teachers;
 - To comply with the directives given by the teacher so that the learning environment remains ordered;
 - To complete the work set by the teacher so that they might develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes;
 - To consistently give of one's best in their learning;
 - To respond positively to the guidance of their teachers;
- The parents hold an important office in our School, even though they might have limited opportunities to be physically present. The responsibilities of the office of parent includes:
 - To love their children and to honour the teachers;

- To take an active interest in the learning and character development of their children;
- To allow their children to take proper responsibility for their learning and behaviour;
- To support the authority of the teachers and of the School;
- To promptly and appropriately communicate with the School should they have concerns about the learning or behaviour of their son/daughter.

The School recognises that in dealing predominantly with children and young people, there will be a need for differing levels of explicitness in how our behaviours need to be considered and modified if we are to be positive members of the School community.

We also recognise the sinful nature of each member of the School community and that there will be times when correction will need to be implemented. This is done in a way that is for the student's benefit because of our and God's love for the students (Hebrews 12:6ff) and with a view to restoration (2 Corinthians 2:5-11). Consistent with this, the School will use the authority that has been delegated to it by the parents to assist children to live a life of increasing self-discipline within the context of our community.

The Bible clearly teaches that we do not live compartmentalised lives. It is therefore important that the School should take an active interest in the lives of the students beyond the boundary of the School. Without usurping the dominant responsibility of the parents, the School does see that there may be times when it has a legitimate role and interest in the actions of the students beyond the confines of the school day.

Goals

At NCS, discipline standards are enforced to assist in the achievement of a number of goals:

- Discipline standards are enforced so that each community member can be reminded of his or her sinfulness and need for repentance, forgiveness and salvation, and the reality that these are readily found in Christ;
- Discipline standards are enforced so that NCS can provide an environment where all community members are free to pursue their learning, gift and character development and ministry;
- Discipline standards are enforced with a view to, over time, developing proper self-discipline in the individual through accepting responsibility for one's actions.

Use of Corporal Discipline

Under current legislative requirements, it is illegal in NSW for a school to use, or encourage the use of corporal discipline for breaches of the behaviour code. NCS complies with this requirement.

Access to the full text of the School's Welfare and Discipline Policy can be found at the School's Website.

COMPLAINTS AND STAFF GRIEVANCE

We recognise that the principles of Matthew 18 are specifically for issues of a Christian being sinned against by another Christian, but we believe that they should also be applied in most cases where one Christian has concerns about a situation.

In seeking to resolve difficult issues, staff are encouraged to follow the [Peacewise principles](#) that the school has adopted.

This Policy should be read in light of the school's recognition of the need to look for different ways of bringing mediation into play to help resolve issues, and our need to do so in a humble and forgiving spirit.

STAFF CORRECTIVE COUNSELLING

Nowra Christian School's Mission Statement talks of the fact that relationships are more important than structures. As a Christian School, we wish to see every aspect of practice being grounded in biblical principles. This practice is sometimes assumed, but it is helpful to have this spelt out in a formal sense when a policy or practice is also required to closely comply with the world's legal requirements. Policies which require such compliance must be read in light of the fact that as a school we all need to display the fruit of the Spirit which is outlined in Galatians 5:22 - 23:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

All School employees, other than those working on probationary contracts and casual employees.

This Policy is framed to ensure that the biblical principles of reconciliation, justice and grace are present, while at the same time seeking to meet the relevant legislative requirements as they School understands them. The School acknowledges its duty to care for the well-being of every individual staff member as well as the staff community. The school also recognises that its higher duty is to the well-being of the students who make up the School community and to the School's standing in the wider community. While the School will seek to work towards acting graciously and bringing reconciliation, there might be occasions when the school is faced with a situation where the above process does not bring about the necessary change, and thus fails to bring about reconciliation. At this point the formal relationship between the school and the staff member may need to be severed.

This Policy is written in the hope that the strategies will allow for this to be avoided.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

This Policy has been improved in 2014, especially in regard to monitoring and managing non-attendance. When a student is marked absent and no parental notification has been given, parents are notified via SMS or email and a request is made for official notification. Only preregistered SMS or email contacts are used and parents are required to ensure that these communication channels are quarantined from student access. If no response is received from the School, subsequent communication with the parents is instigated, including letters posted home.

Student unapproved absence for 2014 is shown below:

Kinder	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5-6
2.89%	1.86%	2.74%	1.22%	1.21%	1.28%

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
1.66%	2.08%	4.35%	2.68%	2.90%	5.12%

Total School
2.50%

Non-Attendance

The School continues to monitor student absences to minimise unnecessary days absent from school. The majority of students have satisfactory attendance but there are individuals in some year groups who, for a number of health reasons, miss large quantities of time. Senior school students miss, on average, more school days because of the significantly increased pressure and stress associated with the Higher School Certificate.

Absences are monitored in the following ways:

At 9am, once the rolls are marked, Reception Staff are to:

- record late arrivals/early departures in First Class (Data Base System),
- record absence notes received by teachers and file in student files once recorded in First Class,
- ensure that all absences are recorded in First Class using the approved NSW Attendance Register Codes,
- confirm student absence by sending an SMS message to parents,
- record reason for absence in First Class,
- unacceptable reasons are to be brought to the attention of the Head of Department.
- email the Principal and teachers with a daily report on absentees and partial absentees for confirmation,
- Email Principal and Heads of Department with weekly summary of absentees for follow up.

RETENTION RATES

The Secondary Department's retention rates (percentage change in number of students at two points of time) is measured by comparing the number of students enrolled in Year 10 in 2012 with those who commenced Year 12 in 2014. This retention rate, prior to the introduction of RoSA, is 70%.

POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

With regard to the students who completed Year 12 in 2014, as at June 2015, 58% progressed immediately to tertiary including the ADFA and the Defence Force in other areas, 42% are either employed or working as they undertake a gap year before taking up further education.

OTHER SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Commonwealth Government regulations stipulate that the School provide the following information to parents:

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Teachers at NCS continue to participate in two weeks of in School conferences in January and July.

We also attended two ATICS (Association of Teachers in Illawarra Christian Schools) meetings. Teachers also have access to AIS (Association of Independent Schools), CSA (Christian Schools Association), CEN (Christian Education National) and DEC (Department Education & Communities) in-service courses, as well as courses run by a wide range of Professional Associations.

The School continues to encourage teachers to complete their Preliminary Theological Certificate as part of the ongoing training.

In 2014, excluding salaries for in-house training, the School spent approximately \$14,323. Through the LNAP Program a further \$116,116 was spent.

COMMUNITY SENTIMENT OVERVIEW

PARENTS

Parents were asked to respond to a number of open ended questions. Here is a summary of some of those responses:

How effective is the school in communicating in general?

- This is the area I feel is in need of biggest improvement!
- No complaint at all about communication in general.
- Very good
- Had no problem, if I didn't really understand there was someone who could help me. Front Office, teachers or Principal.

How effective is our teachers' communication with you?

- Direct email addresses would be helpful and would save having to try and "catch" the teacher to get answers.
- Clearly the teachers know their students and so there is no problem with communication. Contacting Teachers has always been easy and the teachers are always pleased and willing to communicate.
- I would like informal updates on my child more regularly.
- Have only had teacher communication at Parent/Teacher night.
- It's great. Always happy to talk and listen to you when you have concerns about anything.
- I would prefer to have all teachers direct email address on the website. I don't like having to go through the office email.
- I have appreciated being able to email questions/concerns to relevant high school teachers and receive their responses. I found there has sometimes been confusion about assessment details such as due dates, specific tasks.

How would you describe your school to your friends?

- A great school. Loving and working hard to give the very best to the students.
- Excellent teaching in core learning areas, (Maths /English) great Christian environment.
- Great place to send your kids. The best. The most supportive school in the region.
- A Christian school where the teachers are caring, approachable and loving.
- Family feel, Christ centred. Teachers have a genuine love for kids.
- A Christian community school who care about children's welfare as well as their education.
- Small size, therefore more personal.
- I really like the school. The staff walk their talk. My experience to date has been only positive.
- My children have both thrived at the school.
- Brilliant. So happy that our children attend NCS. Best decision for our family.
- It's a school where there child will not get 'overlooked' where each child is seen as their own person, being encouraged to grow and develop into a kind functioning member of society.
- Great Christian school excellent education.
- Fantastic, caring, supportive, Jesus centred, friendly, a great blessing to our kids and family.
- One on One with Teacher and Pupil as Classes are small. Communication with the Teacher, Principal and Staff is great.
- Fantastic for our kids. Not without issues, but each school will have problems and I have found that teachers listen and help to find solutions. The teachers are dedicated and caring.

Name two things that you would not change about our school.

- The teachers. Praying/singing worship songs in assembly. Christian focus - Its Christian worldview! Care of those who struggle. Bible based teaching. Learning centre (TLC). Focus on key learning areas. Godly teaching - Christ centred nature of staff.
- The interaction between school Staff and Parents.
- Teachers that have the time and inclination to get to know and be interested in our child as an individual. Even though we haven't experienced it, doing HSC over two years.
- Its community connection and its connection between primary and high school. Focus on gospel
- Staff work so hard. Christian based teaching/learning.
- The hiring of all Christian staff, this is key to the school.
- The praying together that happens every day.
- Discipline and rules. The general size of the school.
- The sense of community and the Christian focus. Attitude of serving others.
- Attitude - everything is positive.
- Friendliness - staff and students are always friendly and well mannered.
- Caring, nurturing community environment. The drama and singing
- Primary Dept way of teaching, works on the kinaesthetic, visual and auditory learners.
- The closeness of staff and their interaction with students
- Small classes allowing each child to be known personally
- Integration of High school with infants and primary (teachers for RFF and the buddy of year1 & 7)

**The school is looking at reintroducing a Parents & Friends group at the start of 2015.
How would this move be a positive thing for our school?**

- Have only had 1 year of interaction with the school system in past 18 years, therefore not sure what a Parents & Friend group entails.
- I'm not really sure what the group entails. I guess it could only be good thing with more parent involvement.
- Think it would be very beneficial if parents would attend.
- Time and money could be better spent on other initiatives!
- I think it's a great idea if it's on at night so that parents who work full time have an opportunity to be involved.
- Maybe it will help more parents to get to know one another better, and to have more parents helping at school.
- More communication and transparency of correct information.
- Parents can be actively involved and network with each other.
- Connect with other parents support each other.
- Good for "owning" things happening at school, initiating ideas & possibly fundraising, and for having input on areas to Improve eg uniform review.
- Yes, it was good when we did have it as Parents could see at another angle what the school needed. Also help with fundraising ideas.

The School needs to consider the negative comments and seek to effectively address areas of weakness, while not resting on its laurels in those areas where this survey has been affirming.

STUDENTS

Each of the 26 Year 12 students for 2014 had an exit interview with the Principal in Term Three.

Below is a summary of some of the responses from our Senior Students, when asked about their NCS experience and their teacher memories:

I KNOW THE TEACHERS.

- It is the community aspect that I appreciate.
- My experience here runs deeper than just school. It has been a lifestyle and a journey.
- So many of my memories centre around NCS.
- It has been my home from home.
- The richness and the different denominations.
- Mr Sargent (Kinder teacher) is the reason why I am going to be a teacher.
- The kindness and generosity of both the teachers and the kids.
- I've never had a day when I don't want to be here.
- Everyone knows everyone.
- I've appreciated my teachers, especially in the senior years – they have become my friends.
- Better than great – close knit, kids and teachers care.
- Always an adventure.
- Plenty of great discussions and debates.
- The attitudes of the teachers – mutual respect.
- I'll kinda miss the place.
- It's lovely, really lovely.
- All staff do what is in the best interest for us.
- Close community – positive experience.
- Pathways – helps so many students.
- One circle that connects with each other.
- Greater acceptance after being at other schools.
- I liked Pathways approach to the HSC.

Completed the implementation of the New Board of Studies curriculum;

- Kindergarten to Year 6 - English
- Years 7 and 9 - English, Mathematics, Science, History

Prepared for the implementation of other subject areas for 2015;

- Kindergarten to Year 6 - Mathematics, Science & Technology & History
- Years 8 and 10 - English, Mathematics, Science, History

The 'Nationally Consistent Collection of Data' - data was collected and submitted refers to 'adjustments' made to all aspects of student learning in order for them to access the curriculum.

The review and implementation of recommendations in all areas of the School's communication continued to be an ongoing process. Streamlining of and implementing new procedures included emails to parent's capacity for all staff.

To continue to review policies on a rotational basis. This was undertaken towards the end of the year in readiness for the Accreditation and Registration process the School would undergo Term 1 2015.

DIRECTION & GOALS FOR 2015

Theme for the year: **"Every Story Whispers His name"**.

This theme is based on The Jesus Storybook Bible. It was chosen as an excellent resource that would help both teachers and parents teach their children how the whole Bible points to the Lord Jesus. All the stories and events are not stand alone. They are in fact part of God's Rescue Plan – to save His people through His Son, Jesus.

Goals:

- Keep NCS an authentic Christian school, as a ministry of Nowra Baptist Church.
- Learning how to love our students and each other even better.
- Implement Kids Matter and Mind Matters structures in both Departments.
- Through ongoing professional development focus on Better teachers, Better learners
- Greater focus on Stage 6 improvements and outcomes.
- Assessment of and for and as learning in the Secondary Department
- BOSTES Registration and Accreditation. To be compliant for another five years.
- Commence Five Year Strategic Plan that involves all stakeholders.
- Personal and professional goals in light of Professional Standards
- Complete fencing of entire property.
- Re-establish a Parents & Friends Committee.
- Streamlining processes in all aspects of the school campus.
- Complete the Leadership restructure, ie; Head of Secondary and Head of Primary in place by the start of 2016.
- Reassess and restructure our IT programs and equipment to better accommodate the needs of our staff and students.

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

A summary of the sources of the School's income and how this was expended is shown below.

