



**BIALA SPECIAL
SCHOOL
ANNUAL REPORT**

2008

Biala Special School

"Our School at a Glance"

Biala Special School is an independent non-fee paying school for students with moderate to severe intellectual and physical disabilities or have been diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Biala Special School has been a major service provider for students with special needs on the Far North Coast since it was established in 1969. The school aims to offer specialised support to students with disabilities in order to enhance their educational experience.

The school is situated in Ballina and provides a comprehensive curriculum and a range of specialist services for students from Pre – Kindergarten (4 years of age) through to school exit into the Post School Options Program. The student population is drawn from the Brunswick Heads/Mullumbimby, Byron Bay, Lismore, Alstonville, Woodburn, Evans Head and Ballina areas.

Specialist teaching staff, therapists and support personnel combine to offer a wide range of programs which are specifically developed to suit the needs of the individual student. It is the aim of these programs to maximise the potential of the individual recognising that all students have a varied capacity for learning but all have a capacity to develop within a pleasant, supportive, caring and friendly environment.

When developing Individual Educational Programs (IEPs), close liaison with parent/carers and the school support team ensure the optimal individual curriculum for each student.

Biala Special School offers a unique learning environment based on the NSW Board of Studies K-10 Syllabuses, extra-curricular activities and Individual Educational Programmes that best suit the student.

The learning has been divided into individual Sensory and exercise programmes, Language and communication and functional Life Skills adapted from the Years K-6 and 7-10 Life Skills Curriculum. Included is Riding for the Disabled, Swimming activities, Hydrotherapy, Bowling, Library visits, Community Access, shopping and cooking lessons.

Finally, all Post School Options are explored by the school staff, the student and their parents/carers to help make the transition from school to life after school as supportive as possible. This includes a Work experience and work skills program as well as a transitioning program with time spent at the various post school service providers of the family's choice for the final year students.

Principal's Message

Biala Special School's main aim and focus are to provide the best educational experience and schooling life as possible with an 'open-door policy' for parents, families, carers and friends to feel as welcome as possible. It is important that good communication is prevalent between all members of the school community to ensure the students are at the forefront of every decision.

The school has been functioning in this manner since its foundation and we thrive to maintain the positive reputation we have in the local community as well as developing further professional development for staff, technologies and educational pedagogy.

I am very proud of our school and feel that we are moving forward in a productive and caring way. However this could not be achievable without the dedication and amazing efforts of the school staff, Biala Support Services Inc., Board of Management, our volunteers and lastly the parents and carers. I am honoured to know this amazing group of people and be involved with their children.

This report focuses on our achievements as well as providing direction for the year ahead. I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school's achievements and areas of development.

Bhavni Stewart

BIALA SUPPORT SERVICES INC MANAGER'S MESSAGE

The school over the 2008 school year has continued to see many positive changes with an increase in enrolments the inclusion of an Honour Board and the continued strive for excellence. My thanks must go to the School Principal, Bhavni Stewart and her committed team. Your endeavours to make our school a school of excellence by providing quality programs and support is making a difference to the lives of our students and their families and is a credit to you all.

The school's successful BGA & BER applications during 2008 and 2009 will provide new and vibrant additions to our school allowing teaching and support staff the opportunity to initiate further innovative programs for the continued betterment of our students.

The construction of the new classroom, hydrotherapy pool, sensory room, library and further administrative space will certainly provide the school with facilities next to none. With the inclusion of a third classroom the school will have the capacity for 25 students. We believe that this will be the maximum amount of students that we will accept in the facility. 25 Students will allow us to have 3 full time teachers and 6 aids. I believe that with the additions to the school our enrolment level will increase and that we will have to commence a wait list to enrol.

**Wendylee Playford
(Manager)**

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE MESSAGE

Biala Special School has been very successful in our fundraising endeavours throughout 2008. Our fundraising committee is called The Friends of Biala, which is made up from voluntary members from the Board of Management, parents and school staff members. Throughout 2008, Biala Special School participated in a range of fundraising directed towards the school.

Throughout this year we were successful in raising enough funds through the help of Variety Children's Charity and local supporters to be able to purchase a new Sunshine air-conditioned coach which will be ready to collect in 2009. We were also able to finance the building of a new small room off the Life Skills classroom for intensive 1:1 teaching and therapy.

Our means of fundraising included the Biala Support Services Inc and Sunrise Cycles Annual Charity Bike Ride, 2LM Children's Christmas Appeal which incorporated the annual school Garage sale, Thomas George Walk, a Night at the Lismore Greyhounds Races and "Shake a can" Donation Collections at various community centres such as McDonalds and the local Ballina Fair Shopping Centre. Other events include the Musical Theatre Night at the local Players Theatre, selling of raffle tickets at Farmer Charlies in Ballina and Lismore, A Christmas raffle, a Country Hoe-Down, the Cookie Dough and Chocolates fundraiser, our annual Charity Golf Day and East Ballina Ladies Golf Day, as well as the Pimlico Ladies Auxiliary and Quota International Luncheons and lastly, the continued collection of Norco's Collect-a-cap.

The Friends of Biala would like to thank the school community, the Biala Support Services Inc Board of Management and the local community and businesses for the continued support and financial assistance we have received over the year.

Carol Milne
(School Fundraising Officer)

INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Biala Special School has always taken initiative in promoting respectful behaviour in the school and outside of school. We have high expectations on our students to behave appropriately and show responsibility for their own actions.

We teach social skills in specific class-based activities from the earliest years, which focus on Co-operation, Respect, Listening and Generosity, to name a few. The teaching of these skills remains continuous and repetitive due to the learning difficulties of our disabled students. Our senior students participate in Community access programs which reinforce respect and responsibility in the broader society.

An annual review of our teaching of values in the school was undertaken during a staff development day in 2008. We focussed on Positive Behaviour Support strategies and how it is going for the whole school with a review of the school rules, student expectations and consequences of their behaviours. This has been an on-going whole school initiative with positive results in student behaviour and staff support.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Enrolments

We had 19 students enrolled by the end of the school year with children in Kindergarten, Years 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and Year 10, encompassing ages from 5 years to 19 years of age.

Year:	2005	2006	2007	2008
Students Numbers:	9	13	16	19

Biala Special School is registered Under Part 7 of the Education Act, 1990 as a School for Students with Special Needs. Students remain at school until the age of 18 years or beyond. The trend is that students remain enrolled at Biala Special School until they are eligible to enter the Post Schools Options Program in either Transition to Work or Community Participation.

We had 10 students in high school and 9 students in primary school all attending full time. Our student attendance had been reasonably good throughout the year with some absence due to illness and poor health in a number of our students owing to their disability. We also had two students who graduated at the end of 2008 as they were in their final year of school. Both were accepted into a local Community Participation Program.

Classrooms Structure

We have structured the classrooms around the K-6 Syllabus in one room with focus on Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 outcomes and the Years 7-10 Life Skills Syllabus in the other room. Some students from each room access the Sensory Room with focus on their individual Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech Pathology programs.

Programs

Each classroom's programs have been created to best suit the needs and abilities of each student as determined by their Individual Education Program and is constantly revised by the Teachers with opportunities for review by all staff at our regular staff meetings and parents at the twice yearly parent/teacher interviews. Each staff member uses the combination of Boardmaker and photographs for visual aids and sign language to help communication with each student throughout the school.

The School's weekly program remained stable throughout the year with regular Shopping, Cooking, Riding for the Disabled, Bowling, Swimming, Hydrotherapy, Library Visits, Community Access and transitioning for the older students into the local Post-school service provider.

Staffing

TEACHER STANDARDS

In 2008, the number of teachers in each category is reported below as:

Category	Teacher Numbers – Full Time & Part Time
Teachers who have teaching qualifications from a high education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines, or	3
Teachers who have teaching qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications, or	0
Teachers who do not have qualifications as described in (a) and (b) but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context.	0

Due to our continued increase in student enrolments during the year, we were able to maintain employment of two fulltime Teachers with three Teachers job sharing the two full-time positions.

Our teaching staff prides themselves on offering a unique quality of education to cater for the individual needs of each student.

Our Teaching staff consists of:

Position	Number
Teaching Principal (full-time)	1
Classroom Teachers (part-time)	2
Teachers Aides (FTE)	2
Teachers Aides (part-time)	3
Administration (part-time)	1

Professional Learning

In 2008 Biala's teaching and support staff all participated in a variety of staff development days programmed for the first day of each school term as well as some In-service days, courses and seminars throughout the year.

The professional learning opportunities developed on these days included Managing Challenging Behaviours, Teaching Sexual Health, Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention for Young Children with Autism: ABA at the Crossroads, Volunteer Management Essentials, Red Cross: First Aid course, individual Student Risk Assessments, Occupational Health and Safety course, Using Interactive Whiteboard technology, Literacy and Numeracy and Positive Behaviour Support.

These targets were achieved through the services of specific workshops and seminars as well as Consultants and visiting therapists. All providing further knowledge, tutoring and resources in areas relevant to the Key Learning Areas.

These initiatives improved teacher effectiveness and classroom learning environments and have shown an improvement in teaching strategies and staff confidence and skills. This has resulted in improved educational outcomes for all students and enabled better access to communication, information and knowledge of the Key Learning Areas.

Staff Attendance

Our teacher attendance and retention rate has been good throughout 2008, with minimal sick leave and other leave entitlement taken except for one staff member accessing her Long Service Leave. The school has been able to retain all our staff from the previous year, as well as take on an additional part-time Teachers Aide.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

In 2008 the school sought the opinions of parents, carers and staff about the school through various communication means. These included daily communication in the student communication books, regular parent/teacher interviews, staff meetings and parent and staff evaluations including a send-home questionnaire.

We received good feedback and satisfaction from the parents, carers, students and teachers about the school throughout the year. 22.22% of parents responded to the parent/carer school questionnaire which was an increase from 12.5% of last year.

The data collected from these sources has been used to guide our directions in 2009 and beyond.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN STATEWIDE TESTS

In 2008 students of Biala Special School did not participate in any form of external testing due to the nature of their intellectual disabilities.

Literacy & Numeracy Assessments in Years 3, 5, 7 & 9

BST and PWA

In 2008, our students were exempt from the Basic Skills Test (BST) and Primary Writing Assessment (PWA).

LANNA, ELLA and SNAP

In 2008, our students were exempt from the LANNA ELLA and SNAP tests.

Each student has an individual education program and is assessed against curriculum outcomes in Stages ES1, 1, 2 and 3 and against the Life Skills outcomes in Stages 4 and 5.

GUIDELINES and PROCEDURES

During August 2004, Biala Special School met all requirements of the Education Act 1990 (NSW) to be registered as follows:

Under Part 7 of the Education Act, 1990 as a School for Students with Special Needs from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2009 and Under Part 7 of the Education Act, 1990 for Kindergarten to Year 10 from 1 Jan 2005 to 31 December 2009.

As part of this Registration process all Guidelines, Procedures and Policies were reviewed, developed and implemented. These are reviewed by the Board of Management of Biala Support Services Inc. each year.

A copy of the organisations Guidelines, Procedures and Policies is found in the Policy, Procedures and Guidelines Manual for Biala Special School and is available to parents on request and is displayed in the entry foyer of the school.

Included below are a summary of the related policies as requested in this Annual Report. The full text of each policy has not been included due to its size.

Enrolment Guidelines

Purpose:

Biala Special School is a special school providing individual educational programs for students with moderate to severe disabilities. The school upholds strong community values and operates within the policies of the New South Wales Board of Studies.

Year:

2008

Aims:

31.1 Biala Special School recognised that children with intellectual disabilities have the right to access services regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, religion or language. The school will respond sensitively to the needs of applicants, including people from indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with the school's resources.

31.2 The maximum capacity and projection for students is currently 25. The students come from a wide range of backgrounds. The school is registered to enrol male and female students aged 4 to 18 years with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder. Students may present with additional disabilities of mobility, speech, communication, visual impairment and challenging behaviours.

In the education of students with special needs, the criteria used to ascertain the eligibility for services and resources is dependent on a variety of factors. To be deemed eligible for enrolment, the following requirements are mandatory:

- The student must have an intellectual disability, autism, or a multiple disability/impairment that satisfies the stated requirement of NSW Department of Education and Training funding, AND
- The student must have been formally assessed as having the disability/ impairment by a person with relevant qualifications such as psychologists AND medical practitioners/specialists. The specialist's qualifications must be relevant to the particular disability/impairment being assessed.

Student Welfare: Discipline Guidelines

Purpose: To promote and foster the development of self esteem and self discipline.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF ANY KIND DOES NOT FORM PART OF THE STUDENT WELFARE GUIDELINES OF BIALA SPECIAL SCHOOL

Year: 2008

Aims:

- 18.1 To establish a framework for discipline and communicate this structure to the school community including parents, carers and the Board of Management.
- 18.2 Teacher/s should maintain classroom procedures and practices, understood by staff and students.
- 18.3 For children to assist in the development of their own school rules, rights and responsibilities and to enhance their knowledge, understanding and concern for those rules.
- 18.4 To encourage the children in their understanding of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- 18.5 To ensure that recognition is given to those with acceptable, positive behaviour and general good manners.
- 18.6 To ensure that children are aware that continuing unacceptable, inappropriate behaviour is their choice and will result in specific consequences.

Complaints & Grievances Resolution Procedure - Summary

Where there is some disagreement or dissatisfaction with the way that a matter has been dealt with, the school complies with the grievance process of Biala Support Services Incorporated which is the overseeing body of Biala Special School.

In general terms, this grievance procedure means that initial contact for the school is with the teacher or staff member involved, and, if required, to the Principal or the Manager of Biala Support Services Inc. and ultimately to the Board of Management of Biala Support Services Incorporated.

The details of this procedure are available from the office of Biala Support Services Incorporated in the Guidelines & Procedures Manual.

A copy of the organisations guideline for complaints and grievances is also found in the Policy, Procedures and Guidelines Manual for Biala Special School and is available to parents upon request.

SCHOOL - DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

In 2007 Biala Special School recognised some target areas that needed improvement. These included:

Providing all Staff with relevant and ongoing Professional Development:

In 2008, Biala's teaching and support staff all participated in a variety of Professional Development opportunities. These included Managing Challenging Behaviours, Teaching Sexual Health, Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention for Young Children with Autism: ABA at the Crossroads, Volunteer Management Essentials, Red Cross: First Aid course, individual Student Risk Assessments, Occupational Health and Safety course, Using Interactive Whiteboard technology, Literacy and Numeracy and Positive Behaviour Support.

These targets were achieved through the services of specific workshops and seminars as well as Consultants and visiting therapists. These professional development opportunities improved teacher effectiveness and classroom learning environments and have shown an improvement in teaching strategies and staff confidence and skills.

This has resulted in improved educational outcomes for all students and enabled better access to communication, information and knowledge of the Key Learning Areas. Especially with the use of suitable classroom technology such as an Interactive Whiteboard which has been implemented into the classroom teaching.

Enhance Work Experience Opportunities for the Students in Year 9 and Year 10:

In 2008, the school continued to implement a Work experience and transitioning program designed for students in their final year of school. This program is designed to open all communication and provide information between parents, the school and the local Post School Service Providers.

Furthermore, the school had investigated a variety of work places in the surrounding area that are suitable and willing to offer work experience for students which will help expand their work skills to become work ready.

In 2008 our two school leavers began an extensive transitioning program throughout the year which proved to be an important evolution process for the students and their families and by the last term had regularly accessed a Post School Community Participation Program.

Improve Literacy and Numeracy outcomes:

In 2008 our teachers and teaching support staff have worked hard to ensure that communication is a priority for all verbal and non-verbal students. As well as focussing on achievable and functional Literacy and Numeracy goals and better use of technologies within the classrooms that assist with communication and learning outcomes.

Improvement in student behaviour:

In 2008 Positive Behaviour Support strategies have been successfully implemented into the whole school with the help of professional Consultants in Positive Behaviour Support .

Biala Special School recognises the need to continually evaluate programs and establish new goals to achieve improvements in targeted areas, as identified through the schools strategic planning/review/evaluation process. We will be continuing to enhance the improvements of 2008 into our targets for 2009.

In 2009 we aim to further:

Provide all Staff with relevant and ongoing Professional Development:

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Continue structured professional staff development days each term which provide access to different, relevant learning opportunities.
- Access additional funding to invite certain guest speakers for repeated presentations to help implement specialised Key Learning Area programs.
- Access additional funding through fundraising to be able to send staff on Professional Development courses and seminars.
- Utilise the expertise of the visiting Therapists and Consultants for tutoring and support.
- Investigate other suitable technologies which may be implemented into the classroom teaching such as Assistive Communication Technologies.
- This target follows on from our 2005 aim to provide improved resources and staff confidence in the use of technology in the classroom and for better teaching strategies.
- The Principal to attend the Train the Trainer PART course (Predict, Assess & Respond to Aggressive/Challenging Behaviour) and train all staff within the organisation.

Our success will be measured by:

- Staff professionalism and satisfaction.
- Outcome based achievements in language, communication, literacy and numeracy.
- The level of staff confidence in using a wide range of technology applications in the classroom.
- All staff developing skills required to access a wide range of resources which enable better understanding of the Key Learning Areas.

Enhance Work Experience Opportunities and Transitioning for the Students in Years 9 and 10:

- Continue the development and implementation of the work experience and transitioning program for final year students.
- Continue the investigation of local businesses that are suitable work places for students to access work experience in Years 9 and 10.

- Provide all information to students, parents and carers of the post school options available and help liaise between Transition to Work and Community Participation Service Providers.
- Network regularly with the local Community Participation and Transition to Work Providers.
- Offer a supported transition for school leavers into their Post School Provider of choice.

Improve Literacy and Numeracy outcomes:

- All Teachers to use RFF time to revise their classroom programs to ensure outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy are achievable and functional.
- Ensure communication is a priority and teachers are assessing and reporting student progress.
- Utilise Professional consultancy in areas of Literacy and Numeracy development and effective communication aides.
- Implement the PECS system for communication with certain non-verbal students.
- Reflect the Quality Teaching Framework
- Train all teaching staff in the use of technology and communication aides in the classroom.

Improvement in student behaviour:

- Utilise the expertise of consultants and therapists in Positive Behaviour Support and better practical strategies that work with individual behaviours.

Child Protection :

- In 2009, all staff within the organisation will participate in a 4 hour Child Protection- Awareness Training course as facilitated by AISNSW.
- All staff will learn about their responsibilities around child protection, safety and welfare as well as Mandatory reporting.

Biala Support Services Inc

BIALA SPECIAL SCHOOL

WEBSITE

Information on Biala Special School is now available to be viewed on the Biala Support Services Inc Website.

Information provided on the web site is inclusive of programs, fundraising, special events and all the happenings of the school and the organisation.

The site also provides current photo's or happenings at the school.

www.biala.org.au

SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

BIALA SPECIAL SCHOOL

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

1 January, 2008 to 31 December, 2008

Retained Earnings / (Accumulated Losses) (\$39,324.00)

INCOME

Other Private Income	\$40,288.00
State Government Recurrent Grants	\$194,864.00
Commonwealth Government Recurrent Grants:	
General Recurrent Grants Programme	\$115,478.00
Strategic Assistance for Improving Student Outcomes Programme	\$151,267.00
Other Commonwealth Grants	
- AIS Investing In Our Schools Additional	\$25,500.00

TOTAL INCOME \$527,397.00

EXPENDITURE

Salaries & Wages – Teaching Staff	\$167,253.00
Salaries & Wages – Other (incl. support staff, administration)	\$173,473.00
Insurance – Workers Comp	\$5,724.00
Superannuation	\$29,717.00
Teaching expenses (incl. office supplies and sundry)	\$92,534.00
Building & grounds operations/Repairs to building & maintenance	\$17,716.00
Other Operating Expenses	\$26,220.00
Development Application – New Intensive Teaching Room	\$390.00
Purchase of Furniture & Equipment	\$28,575.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE \$541,602.00

BALANCE as at 31 December, 2008 (Accumulated Losses) (\$53,529.00)

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