School context

Black Mountain Public School is a small rural school with a population of 29 students. It provides a high quality education, with a curriculum designed to engage and challenge each and every student.

The school is situated eleven kilometres from Guyra on the Black Mountain Road, or four kilometres from the New England Highway. The student population is drawn from farms as well as rural, residential and rented properties in the Black Mountain and Guyra area.

Our state-of-the-art technology ensures students have all the opportunities today’s world provides. This technology supports and enhances the strong literacy and numeracy programs at Black Mountain Public School.

The school is a part of the Highland Learning Network, which works cooperatively together to provide many opportunities for students in the areas of Creative and Practical Arts, Sports and Personal Development.

Black Mountain Public School has a talented staff, with strong commitments to providing quality teaching and learning.

The school has an active P&C Association and promotes cohesive partnerships between the families, community and the school.

Students

The students attending Black Mountain Public School enjoy engaging teaching and learning experiences in all Key Learning Areas.

The students achieved many successes throughout 2013, across all learning areas.

Parents are encouraged to participate in their children’s education and to be involved in the school. Students, teachers and parents have regular contact, to ensure that lines of communication remain strong, to support students. During Three-Way Interviews, which occur twice a year, learning goals are set which map out a pathway of individual achievement for each student.

Staff

The committed and dedicated staff of Black Mountain Public School work cooperatively to provide learning for students that is at the ‘cutting edge’. Each staff member seeks professional learning that will enhance their skills, supporting the goals of the Whole School Plan.

In 2013, there were two classes at Black Mountain Public School. The students in the K–2 class were taught by Miss Gemma Blayney throughout Semester One and Miss Emma Lindeman during Semester Two. Students in Years 3–6 were taught by Mrs. Belinda Baker. Mrs. Carole O’Hara continued to work in a permanent part-time role in our school. Mrs. O’Hara carried out the role of Learning and Support Teacher (LAST) and taught some of our Relief from Face to Face (RFF). The remainder of our Relief from Face to Face teaching (RFF) was taught by Mrs. Peta Bale. Mrs. Bale taught Library and Music to each of the classes at Black Mountain.

Mrs. Barbara O’Neill was the school’s School Administration Manager, working seven days a fortnight in 2013. Mr. Robert Norman performed the role of the General Assistant for Term 1, at which time he retired. Mr. Barry Wilson took on the role from the beginning of Term 2, working one day a week in the school. Mrs. Jessica Newberry continued on in her role as the school cleaner for the duration of 2013.
Principal’s message

Black Mountain Public School has had a great 2013 with many outstanding achievements in the academic, social, citizenship, creative arts, sporting, technology and cultural areas. The school has strong literacy and numeracy programs, which ensure every student engages in high quality teaching and learning experiences and achieve their personal best. The high quality teaching and learning programs are enhanced through the supportive and caring learning environment in which they are presented at the school.

*Fellowship In Learning* is our school motto and is evident in all aspects of school life at Black Mountain Public School. The welfare and wellbeing of all students is ensured through outstanding Personal Development programs. Strategies relating to the skills of Resilience, Confidence, Getting Along, Persistence and Organisation are taught explicitly to students through the You Can Do It Program, which has a strong presence in our school.

We have an outstanding Transition to Kindergarten program, designed to familiarise children with the school and to introduce early literacy and numeracy skills, which children will further develop in Kindergarten. This program allows children and their families to be heavily involved in all school events, ensuring they feel comfortable and confident when beginning their Kindergarten year at school.

Small class sizes at Black Mountain promote learning with more teacher time being available to each and every student. The outstanding technology provided in each classroom brings the world into the safe and caring learning environment promoted at Black Mountain. Student engagement and achievement across all key learning areas is at the center of all decision making.

Student achievement is heavily supported by the professional and dedicated teaching staff of Black Mountain Public School. There is a strong commitment by staff towards providing students with a safe and secure learning environment, where high quality learning is at the core. I congratulate all staff members on their work at Black Mountain Public School, which has resulted in every student demonstrating individual personal growth, maturity and achievement of goals in 2013.

I would also like to thank the administrative and support staff of Black Mountain for their work in 2013. A school cannot operate without efficient administrative and support staff.

I would like to thank the Parents and Citizens Association for their work throughout the year in raising funds to support the many programs and initiatives of the school. Your support of student learning, staff growth and school improvement is invaluable towards ensuring the successful future of the school.

Mr. Robert Norman retired at the end of Term One after fifteen and a half years as the General Assistant at Black Mountain Public School. He enjoyed his role and always carried out his duties with pride. Mr. Norman ensured that Black Mountain Public School looked fantastic. He took great pleasure in ensuring the gardens were well maintained and could tell the history of every tree planted and who planted it. I would like to thank him for his dedication and commitment to our school and wish him well in his retirement.

I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding career of Mrs. Peta Bale, who retired at the end of 2013. Mrs. Bale’s teaching at Black Mountain Public School spanned twenty-two years. There are so many children who have been privileged to be involved in her classes. Her high quality music program ensured each and every student developed outstanding musical skills. Any student, staff member or parent who has worked closely with Peta would appreciate her total commitment and dedication to her students. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Bale and wish her a very happy and healthy retirement, which she so well deserves.

I thank the students for their keenness to learn and congratulate them on their achievements in 2013. It is wonderful to work
in a school that has such a dynamic atmosphere where everyone is excited about learning. It takes every component of a school to be working beautifully together to create such a wonderful learning atmosphere. I thank the staff, parents and community members involved with the school for modelling an enthusiasm for learning and look forward to this continuing in 2014.

Black Mountain Public School grows successful individuals. It has been a privilege to lead such an innovative school with a wonderfully dynamic staff and enthusiastic student body and I look forward to continuing on in the role of Acting Principal in 2014.

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 for development.

Belinda Baker, Acting Principal

Student representative’s message

Throughout our time at Black Mountain Public School we have each grown and improved in all areas of learning.

Many of us have been at Black Mountain since transition and treasure our time at the school. We have each had many opportunities to achieve. Some of us have learnt to play the guitar through the music program offered at Black Mountain. We have performed in eisteddfods, achieved art prizes in competitions, places in sporting events and achieved goals in literacy and numeracy.

We really enjoyed our excursions and will remember our time in Sydney and Dubbo fondly.

We would like to thank our teachers for supporting us and helping us to learn new things. We have made many good friends and will miss them as we move onto high school.

The increased teaching and learning about cultural awareness has been fantastic.

We are excited about starting high school, but will miss Black Mountain. We have really enjoyed being school leaders and the many responsibilities that came with this role. We have enjoyed working together and supporting each other and our peers and have many memories that we will take with us as we move on.

Kiaja Hooper Jerrard, Ty Patterson, Tara Wells, Dylan Howey

P & C Message

This year has been another busy year for the Black mountain Public School P and C. I would personally like to thank the office bearers for 2013: Chrissy Bourke, Emma Pattison, Darryl Savage and Marie Lawson for all their hard work.

This year the P and C held a number of events, including 2 Clearance sales, Pie Drive, Wood Raffles, Catering for several school functions and a Garden Express bulb drive. In total the P and C rose over $300 per child at the school. As a result of these funds the school has purchased the Jolly Phonics literacy programme and a Camera, and the parents have enjoyed a number of subsidised excursions throughout the year. It has been wonderful to get to know the many parents who have helped at the P and C events and I would like to thank everyone for their support of the P and C and the school.

Again I would like to thank the teachers at Black Mountain Mrs Belinda Baker, Emma Lindeman and Gemma Blayney. Throughout the year, they have attended all the P and C events and have provided invaluable support. This teacher support is really the Small School advantage. Their dedication to the education of the children is obvious in the many successes that the children have achieved throughout the year, as well as the sense of community they develop within the school.

Jenny Friend, P & C President
Student information

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

Student enrolment profile

In 2013 there were 29 students enrolled at Black Mountain Public School. 19 students were male and 10 were female. There were two classes, with 16 students in the K-2 class and 13 students in the 3-6 class.

Black Mountain Public School has maintained its enrolments over the last seven years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student attendance profile

This year the school continued to follow the “Guidelines for Exemption from School”, which allow students to be exempt from school to attend family holidays and events during the school term, as approved by the Principal.

The overall attendance rate has been on an upward trend for the past two years, which is outstanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>98.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>86.1</td>
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<td>94.0</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>95.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management of non-attendance

Student attendance is recorded daily. Absent and partially absent students are required to provide notes from parents or guardians, with reasonable explanations for absences. Phone calls and notes are utilised to follow up student attendance concerns, as per the DEC policy. Students arriving late and leaving early are required to be signed in or out of school by a parent or guardian, to ensure accurate record keeping.

Attendance certificates are presented to students at the conclusion of each term for excellent and outstanding attendance. These awards have increased the awareness of the importance of attending school and have provided an opportunity to recognise and acknowledge those students with outstanding and excellent attendance.

Four prizes are awarded on Presentation Night to two Indigenous students with the best yearly attendance, and two students with the overall best attendance results.

Information promoting the importance of regular attendance at school is regularly provided in newsletters and other correspondence the school produces.

Structure of classes

Students are divided into two classes at Black Mountain Public School. The junior class is made up of students in K–2 and the senior class is comprised of students in Years 3–6.

Class Sizes

Primary class sizes are included in the Annual School Report in order to provide parents with as much information as possible. The following table shows our class sizes as reported at the 2013 Class Size Audit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total in Year</th>
<th>Total in Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Workforce information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent
Mrs. Belinda Baker continued in the role of Relieving and then Acting Principal in 2013. Miss Gemma Blayney continued working as the K–2 classroom teacher for the entirety of Semester One, employed on a temporary contract. Miss Emma Lindeman took on the role of K–2 teacher in Semester Two and was employed on a temporary contract. Mr. Robert Norman retired from his role as the General Assistant at Black Mountain Public School and Mr. Barry Wilson took on the role. Mrs. Peta Bale retired from her role as the Librarian and Music Teacher at the end of 2013. All other staffing arrangements remained the same as in 2012.

**Workforce composition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Teaching Principal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Part-Time Teacher</td>
<td>0.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Teacher RFF</td>
<td>0.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Learning Assistance Support Teacher</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Teacher Entitlement</strong></td>
<td>2.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>0.696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary General Assistant District Scheme</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Non-Teacher Entitlement</strong></td>
<td>0.886</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Australian Education Regulation, 2013 requires schools to report on Aboriginal composition of their workforce.

In 2013 there were no teachers who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander at Black Mountain Public School.

**Teacher qualifications**

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Institute of Teachers</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Financial summary**

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.
School performance 2013

Academic achievements

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

- Year 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)
- Year 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest for Year 5)
- Year 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
- Year 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link [http://www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au) and enter the school name in the Find a school and select GO to access the school data.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3

The student population for Year 3 was less than 10. Therefore this report is not included, as it may identify individual students.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

The student population for Year 3 was less than 10. Therefore this report is not included, as it may identify individual students.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

The student population for Year 5 was less than 10. Therefore this report is not included, as it may identify individual students.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

The student population for Year 5 was less than 10. Therefore this report is not included, as it may identify individual students.

Achievements

Creative and Practical Arts

- Patrick Faint was selected as a finalist in the New England Regional Art Museum UNESAP competition. He also received a Highly Commended certificate in the Infants Division of the competition. Patrick’s artwork was displayed in the ‘Let’s Hang It’ exhibition for all to see.

- A String Quartet from the New England Conservatorium of Music visited Black Mountain to perform. A Duo from the Conservatorium, playing the electric piano and saxophone, also played for the students at the Small Schools’ Creative Arts Day.

- Students participated in the Armidale Eisteddfod, performing in a number of categories. The students placed first for their choral performances and second for their percussion and recorder items.

- The students participated in two Musica Viva programs in 2013 and attended two performances, titled Tigramuna and Zeeko.

- A Creative Arts Day was held for the first time this year. Small schools in the Highland Learning Network attended the event. Students participated in workshops covering the four strands of the Creative and Practical Arts Syllabus.
document; Drama, Dance, Music and Visual Arts.

- All students at Black Mountain enjoy appreciating art and spent time at NERAM viewing the Margaret Olley exhibition.

- The school participated in the Count Us In Music Program and sang Keep On. Black Mountain’s students sang with students from across the country, whilst watching the event live on the Smart board.

- All students participated in the Guyra Show, with many students receiving prizes for their efforts.

- Tara Wells and Ty Patterson attended Colour the Earth; New England’s Regional Arts Camp, at Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre.

- Guitar lessons with Mrs. Peta Bale continued to run weekly for all senior students wishing to learn to play the guitar. Students performed at school assemblies, Celebration of Learning, Presentation Night and other school events.

- Artist of the Fortnight continued at Black Mountain Public School. A student’s artwork was selected from artworks completed over the fortnight and hung in the school foyer. Being hung on the wall in the foyer of our school is a wonderful achievement and always puts a very big smile on the faces of the students.

**Sport**

Students participated in many sporting events in 2013, including:

- Daily fitness – Students participated in morning fitness together as a whole school. The program was aimed at improving students’ fitness, whilst providing them opportunities to practice their fundamental movement skills, balance and sportsmanship. The school leaders ran the program for two mornings a week in Term four, demonstrating developing leadership, organisational and motivational skills.

- Finlayson Cup/Athletics Carnival – Junior students won the Junior Ball Games. Lachlan Savage achieved Junior Boys’ Champion.

- School Swimming Scheme – This program operates in Term 4. It was once again a great success. Students’ water confidence and swimming skills improved. Ben Lomond Public School joined us for this program.


- Armidale Zone Cross Country Carnival held at Sport UNE – Tara Wells, Muriel Hooper Jerrard, Laurence Kuchlmayr and William Lee attended the carnival, representing Black Mountain Public School with pride.

- Small School’s Swimming Carnival – Ty Patterson achieved overall Senior Boys’ Champion and Kiaja Hooper Jerrard was Runner Up Boys’ Champion. All students participated and had a great day.
• Guyra Athletics Carnival – The senior students from Black Mountain enjoyed participating in all areas of competition and supported each other throughout the event.

• Sports afternoons with Ben Lomond Public School, held at Black Mountain Public School – These afternoons were a great opportunity for students to practice their skills and form new friendships.

• Gymnastics Sessions at the Armidale Gymnastics Club in Term 3 – Students’ body awareness, balance and movement skills improved as a result of this outstanding program, which was funded by the Active After School Communities Program.

• Premier’s Sporting Challenge (PSC) – The students at Black Mountain participated in a wide range of activities that promoted healthy living in 2013. Participating in the PSC brought funds into the school. A new basketball hoop was purchased with the funds from the PSC among other sporting resources, which are utilised by all students at the school.

• NSW Rugby League Session – The students gained a great deal of skills from sessions provided.

• Rugby Union Skills Day – Students learnt new rugby skills with other small schools in the network.

Key Learning Areas

There are many learning opportunities the students from Black Mountain participate in during the year that complement and enhance all teaching and learning programs. In 2013 these opportunities included:

• Youth Online – Students participated in a series of workshops, provided by various children’s authors and illustrators, delivered via video conference.

• Health and Wellbeing excursion – Students completed a variety of activities in Armidale promoting student health and fitness.

• Excursions – The senior class went on an overnight excursion to Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre. The students participated in Kids Verses Wild and Plant to Plate units of work.

• Ear Health Talk – Heather Russell presented a talk to students about ear health and emphasised the importance of looking after your hearing.

• The Buddy Reading Program – Students buddy with a partner to read every Friday for twenty minutes.

• Harmony Day – Students investigated China, Japan, Timor, New Zealand and Spain, participating in activities from these countries and tasting their traditional foods.
• Highland Fling Science Show – Matthew McKenzie from Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre presented a fantastic science show as part of our Highland Fling Celebration.

• FAR Out Treasures to the Bush – This was attended by students, who were able to investigate artefacts from British Colonisation times.

• Life Education – The healthy living programs taught as part of the PDHPE program at Black Mountain were enhanced by the Life Education van lessons and resources.

• NSW State Library Art Video Conferences – The senior students participated in a series of video conferences with the NSW State Library. The students were able to view famous artworks in the library’s collection and complete artworks of their own, using various techniques.

• ANZAC Day March and Service in Guyra – Students represented the school with pride. Caitlin Bell and Jacinta Alt placed the wreathe on behalf of the school.

• Scripture – Mr. Steven Holt presented scripture sessions to each of the two classes each week.

• School Banking – School banking occurred every Thursday morning.

• GRIP Leadership – Year 6 school leaders attended a GRIP Leadership Conference in Tamworth. This program promotes leadership and stimulates motivation in students to lead.

• Coordinating Fundraisers – The senior students fundraised for Ronald McDonald House, which was important to everyone at Black Mountain because it assisted people close to our school.

• The National Simultaneous Story time – Mrs. Carole O’Hara read ‘The Wrong Book’ by Nick Bland to students at the same time that this story was being read right across the nation.

• Folk Museum Excursion – Students participated in a guided tour covering many aspects of life in early Armidale.

• Science in the Bush – Students in Stage Three attended the University of New England for a day, to engage in science activities.

• Book Week Parade and Fair – It was hard to locate staff and students on this day, as all one could find were fictional and non-fictional characters from the wonderful world of books. The Book parade, once again, received a great deal of support.

• Author Talk – Students attended an Author Talk by Sophie Masson at the Guyra Shire Library.

• Senior Science Fair – In Term 4, senior students brought science to life, demonstrating investigations they had conducted for their peers and sharing their findings with the junior students.
• **Grandparents Book Sharing** – Grandparents joined us during our Book Week Celebrations to share their favourite stories with the students.

• **Integrated Curriculum Project** – Black Mountain is part of an Integrated Curriculum Design Project. Students participated in a workshop run by ABC Open.

• **Primary leadership Luncheon** – Year 6 attended the Primary Leadership Luncheon with leaders from the schools part of the Highland Learning Network, to celebrate their year of leadership. Mr. Adam Marshall presented a talk to the students about leadership and his journey of leadership.

• **Celebration of Learning** – Students performed many items, covering many areas of the curriculum, throughout this event and were outstanding.

• **Pet Education Program** – This program taught students about responsible pet ownership and about safety around unknown pets.

• **Highland Learning Network Education Week Awards** – Black Mountain Public School recognised the contribution to school of Peta Bale, Chrissie Bourke and Margaret Reeve, in addition to the academic achievements of Ty Patterson, at this special event.

• **Highland Fling** – Education Week ends every year with Black Mountain Public School’s Highland Fling. The small schools in the Highland Learning Network participated in the event and joined the students of Black Mountain in learning about a range of topics, covering many areas of the curriculum. A bagpipe player opened the event before students rotated around the activities in groups.

• **Easter Celebration** – Parents and community members joined us to make Easter baskets and to dance. The Easter Egg Hunt was left to the experts.

• **Preschool Experience Morning** – The children from the Guyra Preschool joined the school for a morning of learning and fun. The children participated in a variety of activities based on the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and then enjoyed morning tea, provided by the school.

• **A visit to Stewart House** – A student attended Stewart House in 2013 at the end of the year. The student thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

• **Presentation Night** – This was an outstanding event, held in Term 4, where students’ achievements were recognised and their musical talents showcased.
• School Assemblies and Newsletters – Student achievements are showcased, acknowledged and recognised at monthly assemblies, where all families and friends are invited to attend, and in fortnightly newsletters.

• Adobe Connect Multi Lit Sessions – Students requiring extra reading support were provided the opportunity to participate in a trial reading program delivered via Adobe Connect.

• The Guyra Rotary Street Parade – In December of 2013 the students of Black Mountain Public School entered a float in the parade. Black Mountain’s theme for the float in 2013 was ‘Once Upon A Time’, and students dressed as book characters.

Significant programs and initiatives

Black Mountain Public School offers a range of programs which all students benefit from throughout the year.

Video Conferencing

Video conferencing facilities at Black Mountain allow access to many programs that enhance teaching and learning programs within the school.

Students are able to interact with various experts in their fields and learn from them. In 2013, students participated in two series of workshops, as listed below.

Youth Online – Writing Workshops
NSW State Library – Visual Arts Workshops

Youth Online was a literacy based program and focused on developing students’ writing skills. Various authors and illustrators worked with the students to further develop their skills.

NSW State Library workshops were aimed at developing students’ visual arts skills. The students were able to view original artworks held by the library and then create their own artworks with guidance, using the techniques the artists used to create their artworks. The students focused on a different artist and artwork during each session.

Leadership Program

Every Year 6 student is provided with the opportunity to take on the role of school leader. The students participate in GRIP Leadership, which is a conference held annually that promotes the importance of leadership and teaches leadership skills.

The role of a school leader is a role of responsibility in the school. In 2013, the Year 6 school leaders coordinated and ran school assemblies and played a role in daily assemblies. The students ran a fundraiser to raise funds for Ronald McDonald House. Each of the school leaders proudly represented our school when special guests came to visit, and when showing gratitude to those who hosted us for various events and activities. The school leaders attended the annual Primary Leadership Luncheon with the leaders from the schools in the Highland Learning Network. The students ran fitness sessions in Term 4, which involved them using all of their You Can Do It skills and strategies.

Being a leader is not something that someone is, it is something that someone does and this message is one that the
students received throughout 2013 and worked hard to develop their skills to be a leader to their peers. All students at Black Mountain learn about the importance of leadership and graduate with the skills to lead, help and support others to achieve.

Active After School Communities (AASC)
The Active After School Communities program is a nationally funded program that provides Australian primary school-aged children with access to free, structured physical activity programs after school.

In 2013, funding from this program enabled students to participate in free sessions at the Armidale Gymnastics Centre, Black Mountain Tennis Courts, Guyra Bowling Club and Guyra Swimming Pool. Students participated in a sport off the school site on Mondays, outside of normal school hours, for two hours. This program is focused on engaging students in sport, promoting healthy living and further developing students’ skills. All students participated in sports, including swimming, gymnastics, tennis, cricket, dance, lawn bowls and athletics.

Transition to Kindergarten
Black Mountain Public School offered, once again, an outstanding ‘Transition to Kindergarten’ program. The program began at the beginning of Term 2 and ran every Friday for the remainder of the year.

This program provides children and their families time to get to know the school and to prepare for the Kindergarten year at school. Children involved become familiar with the school and school routines, are introduced to early literacy and numeracy skills, which they will further develop in their Kindergarten year at school, and make many friends, ensuring that their first day of Kindergarten is ‘the best day ever’. The children participate in many whole school events during their transition year, including ‘Buddy Reading’, carnivals and other organised events.

This program ensures all Kindergarten children starting school at Black Mountain experience a settled, positive start to school.

Music Program
Mrs. Peta Bale ran weekly guitar lessons during lunch time breaks for students interested in playing the guitar. This program has operated for many years and the students have shown excellent skill development in this time. In 2013, students played the school song on guitar for all formal occasions. Students also play the guitar to accompany many other school musical performances, including the playing of Christmas Carols for Presentation Night in Term 4. This program has been a very valued part of the curriculum offered at Black Mountain Public School.

Multicultural education
Assembly discussions are frequently devoted to topics such as acceptance and tolerance. Students and staff value Black Mountain Public School’s inclusive community.

The students study different countries, religions and cultures from around the world each year.

Students celebrated Harmony Day by sharing a variety of foods and participating in a
variety of games and activities originating in many countries around the world. In 2013 students learnt more about China, Japan, Timor, New Zealand and Spain.

Aboriginal education

In 2013, the students of Black Mountain Public School studied Aboriginal Perspectives throughout all Key Learning Areas.

The school was successful in its application for a $1500 Aboriginal Learning and Engagement Project grant. This funding was used to access:

- Daphne Wallace, a local Indigenous resident, to run an Indigenous Art Workshop for students at the Highland Fling, celebrated in Education Week.
- A visit to Wattle Ridge; a local Indigenous property, where students participated in a variety of activities.

Students produced a number of Aboriginal artworks to accompany units of work throughout the year.

‘Welcome to Country’ was read before beginning any formal assemblies and Ty Patterson played the didgeridoo at the beginning of all formal assemblies and occasions.

The Aboriginal Flag was flown every day and was erected by the senior students.

Attendance Awards were presented to two Indigenous students with the best yearly attendance at Presentation Night in Term 4.

Funding - School Promotions

Black Mountain Public School holds the funds for the Highland Learning Network school promotions initiatives. This funding has been utilised to financially support the Creative Arts Day, celebrated by the small schools, and funding was provided to each school to purchase promotional materials for their school.

School planning and evaluation 2012—2014

School evaluation processes

NSW public schools conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. The processes used include:

- Discussions held with staff, students and parents.
- Surveys completed by staff, students and parents.

School planning 2012—2014: progress in 2013

School priority 1

Outcomes from 2012–2014

Improve Literacy performance in the school, so that every student achieves greater than or equal to their expected growth.

2013 Target to achieve this outcome includes:

All Year 5 students achieve expected growth that is equal to or above state average growth, in Spelling and Reading.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- Target achieved

2014 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

All Year 5 students achieve expected growth that is equal to or above state average growth in Writing and Spelling.
Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Reading Recovery strategies incorporated into teaching and learning programs for students in Kindergarten to Year 2.

- Two full time teachers participating in the second and final session of Best Start training. All staff recording student progress into PLAN to monitor student progress from K-6.

- Computer and technology use is implemented where possible to access online/outside programs and initiatives to complement teaching and learning programs and to support LD and GAT students at their appropriate level of learning.

- Full implementation and consistent evaluation of the Sound Waves spelling program. Conduct whole school assessments to monitor spelling progress of students. Consistently observe spelling in writing samples and discuss student progress at staff meetings.

- Complete Follow Up to NAPLAN sessions for students requiring extra support in all areas of literacy.

- Access Professional Learning in teaching writing for all staff members.

All Year 5 students achieve expected growth that is equal to or above state average growth in Numeracy.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- Target achieved

Strategies to achieve these outcomes in 2014:

- Staff participating in TEN and TOWN training to support explicit teaching of Numeracy.

- Computer and technology use is implemented where possible to access online/outside programs and initiatives to complement teaching and learning programs and to support LD and GAT students at their appropriate level of learning.

- Two full time teachers participating in the second and final session of Best Start training. All staff recording student progress into PLAN to monitor student progress from K-6.

- Participating in online Adobe Connect courses focused on the new Mathematics Syllabus documents, to prepare for full implementation in 2015.

School priority 3

Outcomes from 2012–2014

To improve staff, student and parent knowledge and understanding of the histories, cultures and experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia, through improved involvement of the Indigenous Community in the school.

2014 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Improved attendance of the Indigenous Community at school events.

Evidence of progress towards outcomes in 2013:

- Established lines of communication with the local Banbai organisation.

- Visited locally owned Indigenous property Wattle Ridge. All students participated in a variety of traditional indigenous activities throughout the day, which were led by local Indigenous community
members who work with the Lands Council and the Banbai organisation.

- Accessed a $1500 Aboriginal Learning and Engagement Project grant to support the implementation of initiatives that would enhance the relationship of the school with the wider Indigenous community and increase the cultural awareness of students.

- Increased involvement of our Indigenous Community in the school, utilising the expertise of Elders and Regional Personnel.

- Incorporated an Indigenous symbols activity, led by a local Indigenous community member, into our Highland Fling (Education Week Celebration).

- A student led many discussions around Indigenous culture in the school. This student made a speech at Presentation Night acknowledging the increased presence of cultural awareness around Indigenous culture in the school and spoke of how proud he was of this.

**Strategies to achieve these targets include in 2014:**

- Continue to have the oldest Indigenous student present an ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ at all formal occasions.

- Utilise online programs to support students learning of the histories, cultures and experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

- Access professional learning for staff to increase knowledge and understanding of the histories, cultures and experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia.

- Continue to strengthen communication between local Indigenous organisations and Elders in the community to bring expertise into the school and classrooms for students.

- Continue to implement the Aboriginal Education Policy and ensure that Aboriginal perspectives are evident in teaching and learning programs across Key Learning Areas.

**Professional learning**

It is crucial that staff continue to update their knowledge and understanding in this fast moving world.

All staff members participated in:

- Non- Violent Crisis Intervention Training.

- ITEC Training – Connect Collaborate Create

- Disability Standards for Education Training

- Your School and the New English Syllabus

- Spelling Program evaluation and professional learning.

- Small School’s Conference. Staff were able to select courses of interest to them, whilst also completing mandatory training.

- Completed all mandatory training, throughout the year, at weekly staff meetings.

**Staff Development of individual staff -**

- Mrs. Baker completed First Aid training.

- Mrs. Baker attended Primary Principal Association Meetings, Regional
Conference and School Education Group Meetings, to ensure that the school was operating with the most current information and practices available.

- Miss Lindeman and Mrs. Baker completed Best Start Assessment and Report training.
- Miss Blayney completed training in L3.
- Mrs. Bale attended a Kodaly workshop to support the teaching of music.

Program evaluations

- Spelling
- Reporting to Parents on Student Progress

Spelling

Background

Based on data analysis, the teaching of spelling and the resources used to teach spelling were identified as a curriculum area requiring further investigation. It was decided by all teaching staff that a program to streamline the teaching of spelling across the school was required. It was decided that the school would take a whole school approach to the programming and teaching of spelling.

Findings and conclusions

The school purchased the Sound Waves Spelling program after careful investigation into the program. The program focuses on identify different phonemes used to represent different sounds, which is the area that staff identified the students were having difficulty with.

Staff conducted an analysis of the program, with the support of Janette McFarland who fulfils the role of Assistant Principal Learning and Support. The program was analysed and components of it were matched with the new NSW English Syllabus document. Areas that were not strong in the program were listed and staff were to make sure these were added as additions to programs developed for spelling.

The staff took part in professional learning provided by a Sound Waves consultant to learn how to best utilise the program and how to use the online component of the program. Staff also participated in professional learning provided by Janette McFarland on the new NSW English Syllabus document, with a focus on spelling.

Staff have ensured that their planning and teaching of spelling, utilising the program as a resource, is explicit and systematic. Staff are focused on teaching the phonemes needed to spell words.

Staff members utilised components of the program in 2013 and are prepared for full implementation in 2014. Spelling will be explicitly and systematically taught, as it has been in the past, but the weekly focus will now be streamlined across the school. The teaching program will:

- Focus on teaching appropriate words related to the students’ current levels of performance and needs.
- Explicitly teach spelling patterns.
- Provide opportunities for sufficient practice and feedback.
- Emphasise the importance of correct spelling across all learning areas.
- Include dictionary skills.

Future Directions

Staff will continue to evaluate the program as it is implemented in 2014. Whole school spelling assessments will be conducted to measure student achievement in spelling, and in turn, the effectiveness of the new spelling program approach.

Reporting to Parents on Student Progress

Background

The school had been conducting Three-Way Interviews in Terms 1 and 3 and reporting to parents using written reports in Terms 2 and 4 for a number of years. Staff were consistently providing oral feedback to parents about student progress in informal meetings throughout the year also.
It was felt by staff that reporting to parents was operating well in the school, but that it was important to ask parents if they felt that the information they were being provided was regular enough and of a high quality. It was also discussed that it was important to find out if parents felt they could speak to staff if they needed to.

Findings and conclusions
A survey was sent home to parents to seek this information. Most families returned a survey to the school and the results were as follows.

- An average rating of 9 out of 10 was given in relation to both written and oral feedback being seen as quality feedback on student progress.
- Written reports were viewed as detailed, with an average rating of 9 out of 10.
- Oral reporting was also viewed as detailed, with an average rating of 8 out of 10.
- Parents and guardians felt that the levels of feedback were adequate, with this area of the survey showing an average rating of 9 out of 10.
- Teachers were seen as approachable and easy to organise a meeting with, with the average of these two components being 9 out of 10.

Overall the feedback was very positive.

Future directions
Parents will continue to be encouraged to see the staff at the school should they have any questions or concerns about student progress.

Information provided to parents about student progress will continue to be of high quality, evidence based and detailed.

About this report
In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

Belinda Baker Acting Principal
Emma Lindeman Classroom Teacher
Barbara O’Neill School Administration Manager
Carole O’Hara LAST/RFF
Peta Bale Library/Music/RFF
Jenny Friend P&C President

School contact information
Black Mountain Public School,
815 Black Mountain Road,
Black Mountain NSW 2365
Ph: (02) 6775 0192
Fax: (02) 6775 0228
Email: blackmtn-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 1249

Parents can find more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the report and have the opportunity to provide feedback about the report at: