

# 2009 Annual School Report Maitland High School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way



## Our school at a glance

### Messages

#### Principal's message

Maitland High School (MHS), established 1884, is a comprehensive high school that caters for students from diverse social backgrounds and a partly-rural drawing area. It successfully marries traditions from over 125 years as one of the original three boys' high schools of NSW, with skills to meet the needs of tomorrow. The school community strives to ensure students live by its motto "En Avant" ("Go forward"), evidenced by:

- the acknowledgement of excellence by students, staff and programs with major awards;
- a strong emphasis on peer-based support programs, relating to tutoring in literacy and numeracy, welfare, mediation and leadership;
- high level outcomes from information technology programs;
- strong links with associations of former students, as well as active school-community organisations; and
- the broad range of quality student achievements.

Maitland High commenced 2009 with a student enrolment of 785, generating a teaching staff of 57.1.

I certify that 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.

**David Hingston**

#### P&C message

The P & C executive for 2009 was: President, Robyn Scott; Secretary, Joan Sneesby; Treasurer, Kerrie Alcorn; Vice Presidents, Debbie Slade and Jo Barden; Canteen President and Fundraising Co-ordinator, Sherrie White; Canteen Treasurer, Julie Pilton; Canteen Book-keeper, Neryl Baker; and Uniform Co-ordinator, Judy James. Our P&C Canteen continued as the main fundraiser, thanks to the efforts of parents and former parents. In 2009 P&C has raised money through uniform sales, entertainment books, and an overnight bus trip to Sydney.

This year the funds have provided: interactive electronic whiteboards with digital projectors; sports equipment; industrial arts and cookery equipment; HSC and junior course textbooks; and end-of-year prize awards for students. Overall, approximately \$40,000 was donated by the Canteen and P & C to the school.

It has been a pleasure to continue our involvement and support of Maitland High School during the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school. Thank you to everyone for supporting P&C in 2009.

**Robyn Scott, President**

#### Student representative's message

The Students' Representative Council (SRC) is a terrific school organisation which involves students ranging from Year 7 to Year 11. SRC is committed to raise the profile of worthy causes, and also to present our school in a positive light.

SRC was very active in 2009. It was involved in fundraisers for many charities, which included:

- "40 Hour Famine" (raising \$1906 to help children living in terrible conditions overseas);
- SIDS (raising \$259 in support of research into sudden infant death syndrome);
- National Bandanna Day – "CanTeen" (raising \$771 to help teenagers with cancer through the sale of bandanas with colourful designs); and
- Ronald McDonald House (raising over \$277).

Three discos were organised by SRC for the whole student body, and we thank all teachers who supervised on these nights.

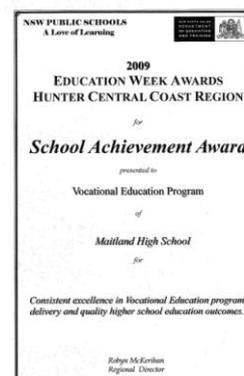
Finally, we would like to thank all SRC members for their hard work and effort in 2009.

**Josh Morrison & Zac Deal, SRC leaders**

## Our achievements 2009

### General

- The school was recognised with a Department of Education and Training School Achievement Award for "Consistent excellence in Vocational educational program delivery and quality Higher School Certificate educational outcomes".
- Year 12 Industrial Technology/Multimedia student Keiren Jolley had his major HSC work (a satirical computer-based animation) selected by markers for inclusion in the showcase state "InTech" exhibition of outstanding quality HSC projects.
- The school's independent learning program (managed by Art teachers Yvonne Ryan and Leanne Cox) provided opportunities for 41 identified students, from Years 7 to 10, to pursue personalised learning through ten



week enrichment projects, culminating in public presentations to parents and school community members.

- A visit by popular children's author Andy Griffith generated lots of enthusiasm amongst both Maitland High and partner primary students.

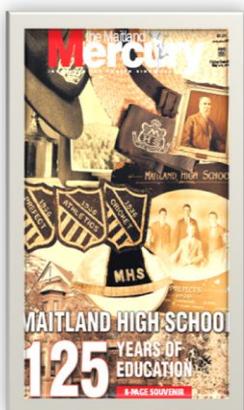


- Careers Quest, a work education initiative conducted with local community partner *Hunter Youth Express*, provided Year 9 with insight into a fantastic array of careers, as students worked in seminars conducted by industry and training representatives.

- Cameron Waite, a member of the MHS school newspaper team, was awarded a major prize in the Newcastle Herald school newspaper competition for his creativity in advertisement design.



- Our school marked the 125th year of service to the Hunter with a series of ceremonies and special learning projects. Highlights included a formal dinner (staged in conjunction with the Old Boys' and Ex-students' Union); a commemorative pathway and wall built by HSC Construction students; an eight page newspaper supplement in the *Maitland Mercury*, and an oral history DVD of former students' and teachers' reminiscences.



- The school's strong commitment to the values of social responsibility and sense of community was also evident through:

- Year 12 leading the school in a Victorian bushfire ("Black Saturday") fundraiser that resulted in a donation of \$5568 (the largest contribution of any local school);
- Year 12's farewell fundraising "gifts" (totalling \$3378) in support of the 125<sup>th</sup> commemorative pathway, adolescent mental health facility, Nexus, and the breakfast program *Café Club*;
- co-ordination of student blood donors, Red Cross collectors, World Vision fundraising, Legacy and Red Shield Appeal student helpers;
- school captain and prefect participation in community ANZAC and Remembrance Day ceremonies.



## Culture and the arts

Our students have a variety of opportunities to pursue keen interests in culture and the arts, as the following highlights illustrate.

- Once again Maitland High made a major contribution to the Hunter schools' performing arts extravaganza, *Starstruck*. In all, MHS was represented by two student production team members (Kaitlind Cromack and Sarah McPhee), one backing vocalist (Danica Robinson), two band members, a group of tappers, 27 dancers, singers, and two backstage crew members. Additionally, Mrs Hudson served as backing vocals supervisor, and recently retired teacher Mr Faulkner continued his role as props manager.
- In support of the school, "sense of place" plan priority, Year 7 and Year 8 students participated in a beautification project, producing a number of brightly coloured garbage bins. The bins featured magpie designs to reflect the school's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Year 10 Art students also worked very successfully with partner primary Year 5 people on enrichment activities over two weeks.
- In addition to *Starstruck*, two groups of Maitland High dancers performed impressively at the Hunter Dance Festival and school assemblies. The jazz group performed

to the music "Lose My Breath" and the contemporary group's routine featured "Halo".



- The school's Music Art Drama Dance (MADD) Night was a very successful talent showcase for creative and performing arts students. Guests enjoyed vocal, rock and band musical items, as well as individual and group drama performances, and a fine art exhibition.
- Drama students (Rebecca Lackey, Keelan Patten, Katie Moshage and Mitch Gilbert) worked as the film production team on a TV episode of "The Crew", shown on SBS. Their segment featured the CD launch of local rock group, "Powerage" which includes one Maitland High student, Nick Minnett.



- Our musicians performed publicly in a range of school ceremonies and local contexts. (including an Maitland City Council's Local Government Breakfast, and Stockland Greenhills' Education Week performances), displaying their skills through small ensemble work, rock groups or the school's vocal group. Notable examples were: rock group "Masonite" (Tom Taylor, Jacob Moshage, Zac Deal and Lachlan Goodhew-Cook) with recordings of various original songs; Jason Baker performing on flute with the regional wind ensemble; and two vocalists (Ruby Makinson-Michalek and Danica Robinson) excelling with Hunter Singers. Ruby also toured Germany and Austria with Hunter Singers.
- At a special public performance and exhibition evening, Year 12 students performed their

music and drama projects, and senior artists exhibited HSC works while explaining artistic practice.



## Sport

The school supports students to develop to their fullest capacity in sport, with great success.

- There were many outstanding 2009 sporting performances resulting in three Coalfields Zone age champions, nine Hunter Region representatives from seven different sports, and nearly half of the student body representing our school in a variety of teams.
- Outstanding results were achieved in Rugby League with the Under 18 Boys' reaching the Regional semi-finals in arguably the toughest CHS competition. The Under 16 team reached the Knights Knock-Out semi-finals and were runners up in the Newcastle University All-Schools' seven-a-side competition. Mr Lawson's Under 13 team dominated opposition in the Coalfields Cup.
- In team events, more than 30 MHS teams entered into the state knock-out competitions. Notable results included Hunter Region finalists – the Boys' Table Tennis coached by Mr Green.
- Other successful teams included: the Open Boys' Cricketers (regional semi-finals against Wingham); and Under 15 Girls' Basketball team (regional semi-finalists for the third successive year), coached by Mr Mauro.



- At the Zone Carnival, 70 students represented Maitland High in athletics. Charlotte McLeish-Kinch (new MHS 100m record holder) easily won her sprint events, and Blake Palmer was again crowned zone age champion. Many of these athletes also competed at the regional

carnival, with Charlotte, Jocelyn Hickey and Joshua Morrison selected to proceed to the state Combined High Schools (CHS) carnival at Homebush. At the Zone Cross Country Carnival, 40 students competed, with Matthew Gabriel as our only zone age champions.



- In swimming, 40 students competed against five other schools at the Zone Carnival, with many fine achievements. Twelve of these students then competed admirably at the regional carnival with strong performances.
- There were two outstanding individual sports performers of 2009. Blake Palmer was recognised as “MHS Sports Star of the Year”, after a successful year with rugby league, golf, athletics, cricket, touch and basketball. Nicholas Gulliver received “The Proctor Family” scholarship for his outstanding golfing potential and results. Nicholas represented the Hunter Region at the NSW All School’s Stroke Championships at Tamworth.
- Other fine individual regional representatives included: Joshua Morrison (open touch); Megan Holgate (softball); Kate Seinor (diving); Gemma Dorn (tennis); and Alana Bellamy (netball).

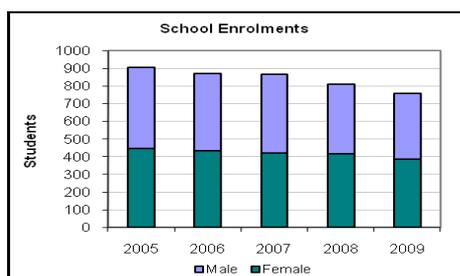
## School context

### Student information

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

### Student enrolment profile

A smaller 2009 Year 7 intake contributed to reduced total enrolments. The graph reflects enrolment figures at the mid-year census point, compiled after some post-compulsory students typically exit to take up employment.

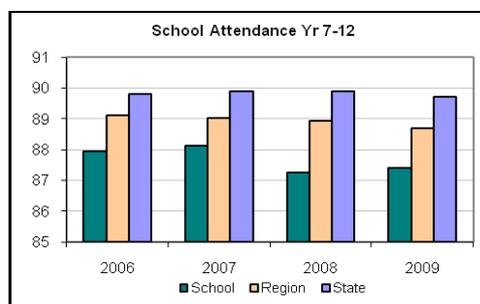


At the start of 2009 the school enrolment was 785 students (55 aboriginal students and 21 students from a language background other than English).

### Student attendance profile

In 2009 the school continued an initiative, the *Good Guys Attendance Award*, to reinforce good levels of attendance, with prizes provided via generous local business sponsorship (East Maitland’s *The Good Guys*). On average, 263 students with outstanding attendance (33%) were represented in the end-of-term prize draws.

However, attendance has continued to be adversely affected by the habitual absenteeism of a few individuals who were referred to the Home School Liaison Officer. In 2010 student attendance will continue to be targeted as a key component to improving the learning culture of the school.



### Available courses

For Years 7-10 the compulsory curriculum is supplemented by 17 elective course choices.

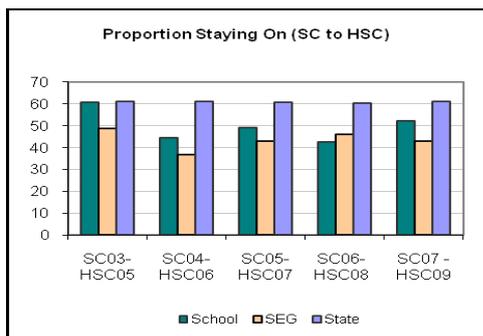
In addition to English, the only compulsory subject for Years 11-12, Higher School Certificate (HSC) students in 2009 had access to an extensive suite of Board developed examinable courses. Students could also pursue Board endorsed courses, and a range of school-based and/or TAFE-based vocational education and training (VET) courses. Such courses have industry accreditation and can be studied in conjunction with traineeships. School-delivered VET courses included: Business Services; Construction; Hospitality; Information Processes & Technology; and Retail Operations.

In 2009, 109 students from Years 11 and 12 students (including 44% of all Year 12) successfully completed one or more VET course, with 30 Year 12 people achieving a school VET course to at least Certificate II level.

### Retention to Year 12

In 2009 Maitland High’s retention of students from Year 10 to HSC increased by 10%. During the year the school worked to consolidate improving senior student retention through stronger learning support processes, and plans to extend vocational

education course options in 2010 to Year 10 students.



### Post-school destinations

The school has gathered data on post-compulsory student leavers of 2009.

**Year 10** - Nine students left during the year, and 25 graduated after achieving their School Certificates. Destination data, available for 79% of these students, indicates that 13 are employed (full-time); eight are learning at TAFE; and three are unemployed. Three students are undertaking HSC studies elsewhere.

**Year 11** - Destination data was available for all but one of the 23 student leavers: nine employed (full-time and/or part-time); six learning at TAFE or another training organisation; five gaining apprenticeships or traineeships; and two attending other schools.

**Year 12** - There were 90 students in Year 12 in February 2009. 88 students completed their studies. The school has data for most students with 21 employed (full-time and/or part-time); 34 pursuing university studies; 12 learning at TAFE or another training organisation; 7 obtaining apprenticeships or traineeships; and 7 unemployed.

As in previous years, eligible graduating HSC students received offers for a range of university degree programs, including: Arts; Business; Design (Architecture); Education (Early Childhood); Engineering (chemical); Engineering (civil); Engineering (combined); Environmental Science/Management; Exercise & Sport Science; Justice Studies; Medical Radiology Science; Music; Nursing; Science; Teaching/Arts; Teaching/Early Childhood; Teaching/Health & PE; and Teaching/Science.

### Special Education

In 2009 special education continued as a key aspect of MHS curriculum delivery. Supplementing classroom learning, cultural projects and excursions, the *Down-*



*Under Cafe* operating in Terms 2 and 3 promoted excellent customer service and food preparation skills for students whilst providing tasty treats for visitors, staff and seniors.

One student graduated with his HSC (Living Skills) and another with a School Certificate. Our school also prepared for future growth, with a second class to be established in 2010.

### Staff establishment

The school has a skilled teaching staff, with a strong core of experience, as well as some fine young and energetic educators. A significant proportion of teachers regularly participate in HSC marking and/or Board of Studies committees. It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Our students were supported in 2009 by 57.1 teachers (the Principal, two Deputy Principals, ten Head Teachers, 46 full-time and part-time classroom teachers, one librarian, one support teacher, two part-time counsellors), one permanent learning support officer, and an administrative staff of 11. In 2009 the school had two Aboriginal staff members.

### Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools. 10% of MHS teachers have a postgraduate degree, and the remaining 90% have a first degree (82%) or diploma (8%).

### Professional learning

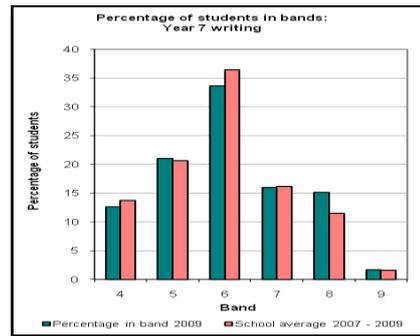
In 2009 the school spent \$40,270 on general professional learning, and an additional \$3800 for vocational education course teachers. All teachers participated in professional learning activities scheduled across work days and/or out-of-school time. The funds supported training in: quality teaching; student welfare programs; career development programs, including leadership skills; implementing new syllabi; classroom information technology skills; literacy programs; beginning teaching. The funds expended represent an average of \$760, or approximately 2.5 training days, per teacher.

### Financial summary

The table following covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance. A full copy of the school's 2009 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Date of financial summary:	30/11/2009
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$</b>
Balance brought forward	287 037.44
Global funds	489 584.40
Tied funds	271 828.41
School & community sources	232 914.44
Interest	17 495.27
Trust receipts	71 180.11
Canteen	0.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1 370 040.07</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	118 407.04
Excursions	62 516.18
Extracurricular dissections	70 931.39
Library	16 494.06
Training & development	1 415.65
Tied funds	264 278.44
Casual relief teachers	116 892.37
Administration & office	94 529.12
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	103 263.70
Maintenance	77 259.63
Trust accounts	71 730.29
Capital programs	35 912.00
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>1 033 629.87</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>336 410.20</b>

School-based literacy support during 2009 resulted in a average improvement of 2.1 reading levels for program participants (see also page 11).



In addition to “reading” and “writing” (see graphs above) NAPLAN literacy involves assessments in “spelling” and “grammar and punctuation”. Percentages in the different skill bands for those assessments are detailed in the following table.

	Skill Band					
	4	5	6	7	8	9
Spelling	4.2	20.3	32.2	22	12.7	8.5
Grammar & Punct.	11.9	27.1	24.6	19.5	5.1	11.9

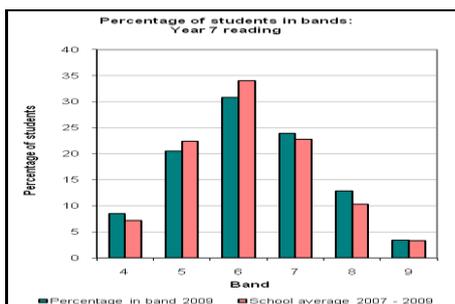
## School performance 2009

### Academic

Early in 2009 Year 7 and Year 9 students participated In the second National Assessment Program (NAPLAN). In NAPLAN results assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest), representing increasing levels of skills demonstrated in the assessments. The achievement scale for Year 7 ranges from Band 4 to Band 9, and for Year 9 extends from Band 5 to Band 10.

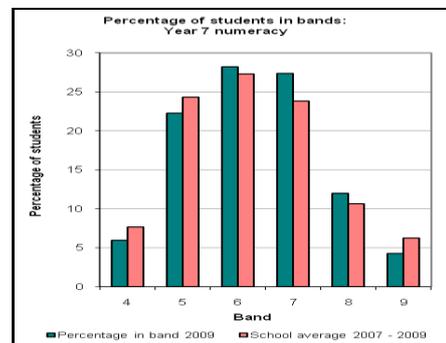
### Literacy – NAPLAN Year 7

The graphs following compare Maitland High’s newly-arrived 2009 Year 7 group with previous MHS averages over time. It is apparent that Year 7 2009 commenced secondary schooling with slightly lower than usual skill levels in reading, and similar skills levels in writing.



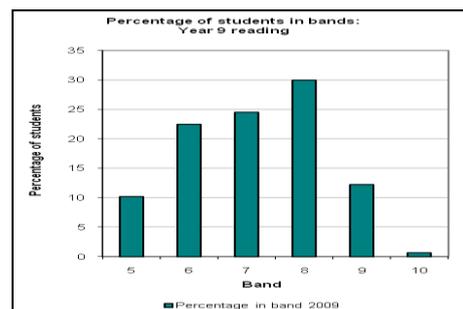
### Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7

NAPLAN numeracy outcomes, illustrated in the graph following, indicate that Year 7 2009 started school with mainly better skill levels than is usually the case.

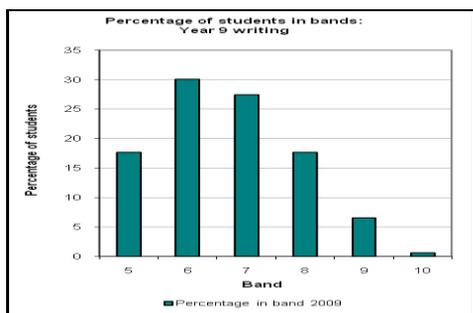


### Literacy – NAPLAN Year 9

It is evident from the graphs that students’ skills in reading exceeded their skills in writing, grammar and punctuation.



These components of literacy had already been identified as concerns by other school diagnostic assessments and an improvement plan developed (see **Key evaluations**, page 11).

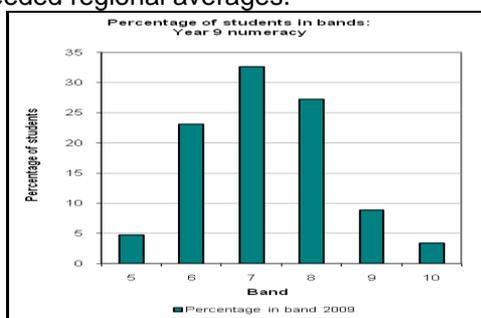


In addition to “reading” and “writing” (see graphs above) NAPLAN literacy involves assessments in “spelling” and “grammar and punctuation”. Percentages in the different skill bands for those assessments are detailed in the following table.

	Skill Band					
	4	5	6	7	8	9
Spelling	15.7	17.0	26.8	24.2	13.1	3.3
Grammar & Punct.	20.9	17.0	36.0	16.3	9.8	0.0

### Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9

Students in Year 9 performed more strongly in the numeracy component of NAPLAN. The school was pleased when advised that the rate of skill growth in numeracy from Year 7 to Year 9 exceeded regional averages.



### School Certificate

In 2009, 126 students from Maitland High sat for the School Certificate (SC). Student achievement was assessed on the school level and through state-wide external examinations, including an online test in Computing. Examination achievement was reported upon in performance bands ranging from Performance Band 1 (lowest) to Performance Band 6 (highest). Test outcomes are detailed in the tables following.

**English - literacy** – The table following indicates that average performance in 2009 was lower than the state average, though slightly better, in terms of band 4, 5 and 6 percentages, than the school

average over time. 83 students achieved a mark in excess of 70.

Average mark 2009	72.6	School			75.9	State	
Performance bands	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Number in band 2009	2	11	30	54	26	3	
% in band 2009	1.6	8.7	23.8	42.9	20.6	2.4	
School % Average 2005 - 9	1.8	9.1	20.0	43.1	18.3	1.9	

**Mathematics** - The table following indicates that the average performance in 2009 was below the state average, although four students achieved a mark in excess of 90, and no student scored below 50.

Average mark 2009	65.1	School			69	State	
Performance bands	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Number in band 2009	0	42	50	20	9	4	
% in band 2009	0.0	33.6	40.0	16.0	7.2	3.2	
School % Average 2005-9	1.4	26.1	39.2	21.1	10.3	1.9	

**Science** – The table following indicates that the school average performance in 2009 was less than state average. Three students achieved a mark in excess of 90.

Average mark 2009	69.3	School			73.3	State	
Performance bands	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Number in band 2009	2	26	30	49	16	3	
% in band 2009	1.6	20.6	23.8	38.9	12.7	2.4	
School % Average 2005 - 9	0.8	12.4	26.4	37.0	15.0	1.5	

### Australian History, Civics and Citizenship

The table following indicates that the average performance in 2009 was below the state average. One student achieved a mark in excess of 90.

Average mark 2009	66.0 School			69.5 State		
Performance bands	1	2	3	4	5	6
Number in band 2009	3	32	44	35	10	1
% in band 2009	2.4	25.6	35.2	28.0	8.0	0.8
School % Average 2005 - 9	2.0	20.0	41.5	27.1	8.3	1.1

### Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship

The table following indicates that the average performance was close to the state average. It was pleasing that four students achieved marks in excess of 90.

Average mark 2009	68.7 School			70.3 State		
Performance bands	1	2	3	4	5	6
Number in band 2009	1	26	43	34	17	4
% in band 2009	0.8	20.8	34.4	27.2	13.6	3.2
School % Average 2005 - 9	0.7	12.7	37.6	35.0	12.2	1.9

### Computing Skills

Computing skills test performances were pleasing, with 60 students achieving marks of 80 or above, and marks ranging up to 98.

Average mark 2009	78.5 School	80.0 State	
Performance bands	Competence not demonstrated	Competent	Highly Competent
Number in band 2009	0	65	60
% in band 2009	0.0	52.0	48.0
School % Average 2006 - 9	0.2	49.2	50.7

### School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)

The table below indicates that in 2009 greater progress than is usual was achieved in Australian History, Australian Geography, and Computers.

Course	School 2009	School Average 2005-9
English	-1.7	-1.2
Mathematics	-1.4	-0.7
Science	-1.9	-1.2
Australian History, Civics and Citizenship	-1.7	-2.4
Australian Geography, Civics and Citizenship	0.3	-1.2
Computer Skills	0.3	0.3
Note: By definition, the State average relative performance is zero		

### Higher School Certificate

In 2009, 87 students achieved a Higher School Certificate (HSC) and one gained a record of achievement. One or more Band 6 outcomes were achieved in the following courses: Design and Technology; Industrial Arts Multimedia; and Music. The table following compares the average marks achieved in the 2009 HSC with course averages over time, for those courses with a candidature of 10 or more students.

Course	School 2009	School 2005 - 2009
Ancient History	65.2	65.8
Biology	71.3	70.6
Chemistry	65.3	66.3
Community and Family Studies	70.2	74.6
Drama	63.0	66.6
Engineering Studies	71.1	74.3
English (Standard)	57.6	59.7
English (Advanced)	69.8	70.3
Geography	72.4	68.2
Industrial Technology	73.0	74.4
Legal Studies	66.9	67.4
General Mathematics	66.6	67.9
Mathematics	70.8	66.4
Mathematics Ext. 1	68.0	71.1
Personal Development, Health and Physical Education	68.4	69.5
Physics	67.5	70.9
Senior Science	69.9	71.6
Hospitality Examination	69.2	69.6
Retail Services Exam	76.4	76.4

Outstanding results in smaller candidature 2009 HSC courses included: Design & Technology

(MHS average 9.65 above state); Software Design (MHS average 6.91 marks above state).

In addition to Life Skills programs and non-examinable endorsed studies, Maitland High provided 30 HSC courses of study, including five vocational education courses, as well as TAFE-delivered vocational courses.

### Higher School Certificate relative performance comparison to School Certificate (value-adding)

The table below relates performance in the HSC to School Certificate outcomes, of the particular school group.

Performance band	Low	Middle	High
School 2009	-3.5	-4.3	-9.0
School average 2005-2009	-3.1	-2.8	-5.8

### Minimum standards

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for years 7 and 9. The performance of our students in NAPLAN is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.

#### Percentage of Year 7 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009

Reading	89.9
Writing	86.0
Spelling	94.2
Punctuation and grammar	86.7
Numeracy	92.4

#### Percentage of Year 9 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009

Reading	88.6
Writing	81.3
Spelling	83.2
Punctuation and grammar	78.1
Numeracy	94.0

### Significant programs and initiatives

#### Aboriginal education

About 5.4% of our students are of Aboriginal background. Our 2009 focus on improved learning outcomes of Aboriginal students included:

- Teacher training in the new Aboriginal Education policy, working across two

development days, (one with Aboriginal academic staff at Newcastle University).

- An Aboriginal learning support officer employed to assist indigenous students, and the development of personalised learning plans were established for Aboriginal students to enhance student engagement.
- MHS Aboriginal students led NAIDOC celebrations with partner primary school Tenambit, by running workshops in Aboriginal games and dance.



#### Multicultural education

About 2.6% of the school community are students who come from a background other than English, with no particular language group being prominent. The school promoted an understanding of cultural diversity and racial tolerance through:

- Multi-cultural perspectives programmed into learning activities across the curriculum;
- Students, parents and community members from diverse cultural backgrounds have been encouraged to be involved in school leadership, and decision-making.

#### Respect and responsibility

Maitland High implemented a number of programs in 2009 designed to support students, to strengthen civic responsibility, and to promote high standards of behaviour. They included:

- promoting core school values, and providing school diaries for all students to foster responsible learning and organisational skills;
- consolidating the *Enough!* Anti-bullying Program through seminars led by seniors;
- quality student support processes (senior study mentors; Youth Pathways; SRC);
- fostering a positive learning culture through the presentation of 445 junior and senior achievement awards across two merit celebration assemblies (in addition to end-of-year academic presentation ceremonies);
- fostering student leadership skills with: 42 Year 10 people providing literacy or numeracy tutoring for 38 Year 7 pupils; 14 Year 10

people serving as peer mediators (after first completing the eight hour training program); and 14 Year 11 students providing 30 hours of individualised reading instruction for Year 5/6 students through a TAFE-accredited Program.

## Progress on 2009 targets

### Target 1

**To improve student outcomes and Year 12 completion rates through focus on writing, information technology, assessment and aboriginal education.**

Our achievements include:

- In literacy (writing) - ongoing professional learning with the regional literacy consultant; faculty writing program development; and commencing a “middle years writing focus” with partner primary schools.
- Faculties redesigned teaching units to reflect the new Aboriginal Education Policy (see **Aboriginal education**, page 10).

### Target 2

**To improve student outcomes through a quality learning environment – a strengthened “sense of place” across the school community.**

Our achievements include:

- Students enhanced “their place” through relevant 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary learning projects, and Art projects in school beautification (see **Achievements**, page 3).
- Enhanced learning spaces – a refurbished, industry-standard commercial kitchen; and three modernised science laboratories.

### Target 3

**To improve students’ outcomes and learning environment through strengthened staff capacity and school systems.**

Our achievements include:

- Phased changes in the school’s executive structure were implemented.
- Preparations for the establishment of a second special education class in 2010.

## Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2009, our school carried out evaluations of Safety and Literacy Support.

## Educational and management practice – School Safety

### Background

In accordance with legislative requirements, the school’s Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Committee met regularly to ensure a safe working environment for all school community members. In 2009 this group conducted a review and developed an action plan.

### Findings and conclusions

- New staff needed to be better informed of OHS processes, via improved staff induction programs with more detailed OHS policy information.
- A “safe work practices” file for contractors should be established.
- Records of staff training in safe practices or emergency care needed to be centralised.

### Future directions

These improvements have been implemented. Annual committee reviews will be staged to ensure safe practices at our school.

## Curriculum – Literacy Support

### Background

Generally 30% to 40% of new MHS Year 7 students commenced their secondary education with “significantly below average” literacy skills. Despite good growth in reading, other aspects of literacy, particularly writing, required strengthening. In support of a key 2009 school plan priority, the *Soundway* literacy intervention program, involving a kinaesthetic approach to the explicit teaching of language, was trialled with one mixed ability Year 7 class. The trial involved one hour’s instruction each day for three months.

### Findings and conclusions

- The trial class registered an average improvement of 15 months in reading level, and almost 10 months in spelling level.
- The greatest gains were made by the “below average” group of students, with one registering growth of three years in reading level and another of 16 months in spelling.
- More capable students also registered literacy gains, but levels were not so significant and students found the program less engaging.

### Future directions

The *Soundway* program has significant value as a literacy intervention for “below average” students, on a group withdrawal basis.

## Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2009 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. In addition to staff, 90 parents were randomly sampled via telephone survey, and 20% of randomly-selected students completed surveys. Views were sought on: *teaching and learning; extra-curricula; student support; school-home links; leadership & organisation; and resources.*

- Parents expressed strong satisfaction on all areas (76% was the average for “excellent” or “good” ratings), with extra-curricula, home-school links and leadership rated above 80%.
- Most students expressed positive levels of satisfaction. Resources achieved the strongest disapproval rating (29%), with extra-curricula and student support receiving the strongest approval ratings.
- Staff also identified resources as requiring improvement, with a 15% dissatisfaction rating, although an average of 70% for “excellent” and “good” indicates generally sound levels of satisfaction.

## School development 2009 – 2011

### Targets for 2010

#### Target 1

***To improve student outcomes and Year 12 completion rates through focus on writing, information technology, and assessment.***

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Consolidate explicit teaching of writing, 7-10.
- Implement effective classroom applications of the Year 9 and 10 laptop computers.
- Review “assess for success” strategies.

Our success will be measured by:

- Analysis of student outcomes data (NAPLAN, SC, HSC) for all, including indigenous students.
- Evaluation of laptop program.

#### Target 2

***To improve student outcomes through a quality learning environment – a strengthened “sense of place” across the school community.***

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Review developmental strategies relating student leadership.

- Strengthen transition and peer processes for Aboriginal students.

Our success will be measured by:

- Student learning outcome data comparisons.
- Stakeholder feedback data via evaluations.

#### Target 3

***To improve students’ outcomes and learning environment through strengthened staff capacity and school systems.***

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Implement new student welfare database.
- Extend staff training in new teaching technologies and student engagement.

Our success will be measured by:

- Staff satisfaction and training evaluation data.
- Analysis of student outcomes data (NAPLAN, SC, HSC) for all, including indigenous students.

## 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.

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Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr>