

Report on performance:

Learning



Central to learning is the relationship between students and teachers. The resources and services of Education Queensland must be focused to support this relationship. For students, schooling must be intellectually challenging so that they will develop the literacies, technical skills and motivation for learning needed for life in the information society.



Department of Education Strategic Plan 2001–2005, p. 12.

Performance

Learning

Learning is our core business – our reason for existing as an organisation. Our interest in students begins as early as possible in their lives and lasts as long as possible after they have left school.

What students learn, both academically and socially, is a key indicator of the success of schools and of the endeavours of the entire department. One indicator is student outcomes in literacy and numeracy. In recent years, the statewide testing program has provided an overview of performance in literacy and numeracy across Queensland. Schools can use this information as an additional tool to examine their literacy and numeracy teaching, change teaching practices and identify students needing extra assistance.

Year 2 Net results continued a positive downward trend in the area of number with only 20.8 per cent of students requiring additional support compared with 37.5 per cent in 1999. Teachers believe that the domino strategy used in preschool, Year 1 and Year 2 since May 1999 is largely responsible for this impressive result.

(Rockville State School)

In addition, statistics from similar schools assist each school to gauge how well it has performed. This helps schools to meet accountability requirements to report their students' academic progress in their annual reports.

Most parents – 79 per cent – were satisfied that their child was working well at the school he or she attended. Seventy-two per cent of students were satisfied with how well they were learning at school. These positive levels of satisfaction with student achievement have been maintained in recent years.

Improved literacy and numeracy

A Literacy Review completed in 2000–2001 analysed literacy programs, practices and resources with a view to establishing a futures-oriented literacy program for Queensland state schools. The report recommended strategies to address four priority areas for literacy in Queensland: student diversity, whole-school literacy programs and community partnerships, the teaching of reading, and future literacies. A result of the recommendations was the establishment of 20 Learning

and Development Centres: Literacy throughout Queensland to provide support in literacy for schools. Further responses to the recommendations were the development of school literacy planning guidelines and support materials, and professional development support in the area of reading.

Approximately three-quarters of all parents were satisfied that their school was developing their children's literacy and numeracy skills.

The Year 2 Diagnostic Net (see figure 7) indicated that the majority of students demonstrated appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy for their age. No additional support was required for 73 per cent of students in reading, 82 per cent in writing and 77 per cent in number. It is anticipated that, following the implementation of the initiatives developed from the literacy review conducted in 2000, these results will improve further.

Statewide literacy and numeracy testing was conducted for Years 3, 5 and 7 by the Queensland School Curriculum Council (see figure 8). The data obtained by the department indicates that there are quite wide variations in the performance of individual students, but that most students are achieving good literacy and numeracy outcomes.

The statewide literacy results for 2000 show that Year 3 students performed most strongly in spelling and

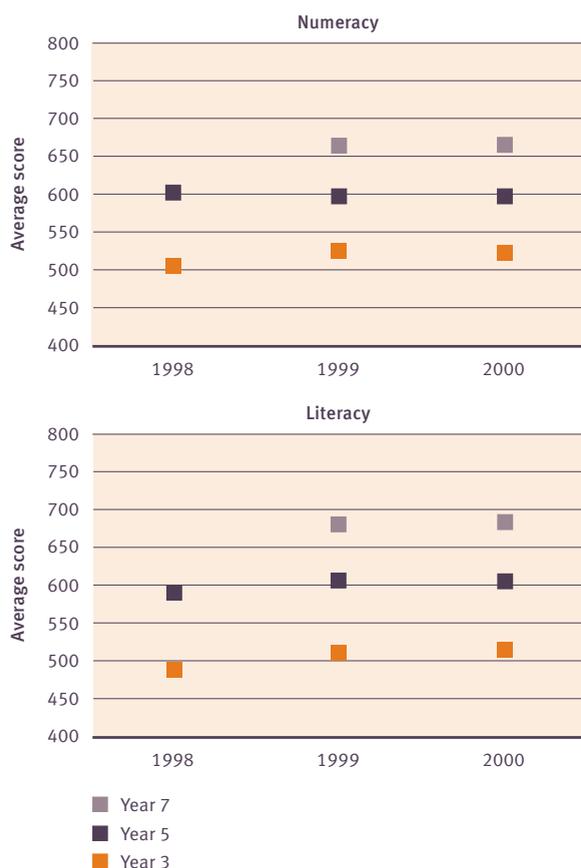
Figure 7: Year 2 students not requiring additional support



writing, whereas Year 5 students' strengths were in viewing and Year 7 students were strongest in spelling. Within each of the Year levels, overall performance standards were similar for the three numeracy aspects tested.

In general, the average performance levels in 2000 were similar to the good standards achieved in 1999. Overall results for Year 3 viewing, Year 5 space and Year 7 writing and spelling in 2000 were marginally better than those in 1999, whereas the 2000 performance in Year 5 spelling was marginally down in comparison with 1999.

Figure 8: Numeracy and literacy results, 1998–2000



National benchmark reporting protocols have been established for Year 3 and 5 reading. In 2000, between 89 and 96 per cent of all Queensland students exceeded the Year 3 national reading benchmark. The benchmark results in Year 5 reading for 2000 were comparable to those in 1999 with the benchmark exceeded by between 75 and 82 per cent of students.

The department has a strong commitment to equity and to ensuring that every student leaves school with good prospects.

At the primary school level, boys performed slightly below girls. In the Year 2 Net, girls generally performed better than boys in reading and writing and were at a comparable level to male students in number. Similar patterns were observed in Year 3, 5 and 7 test results. Two exceptions were that boys were slightly ahead of girls in Year 5 number and Year 7 data.

The literacy and numeracy performance of students from Indigenous backgrounds was, on average and across all the primary Year levels, lower than the performance of students from non-Indigenous backgrounds. Overall, the 2000 performance levels of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students were similar to the 1999 levels. In the Year 2 Net, the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has decreased slightly since 1997. Statewide test results indicate that overall performance in literacy and numeracy for Year 7 Indigenous students was similar to that of non-Indigenous students in Year 5.

The literacy and numeracy performance of students in urban schools was generally stronger than the performance of students in rural schools. The exceptions were in Year 3, where the performance of students in urban and rural schools was not measurably different. While there were minor differences in some curriculum areas, overall the 2000 performance levels of students in urban and rural schools were similar to those in 1999.

Developing social and sporting skills

About three-quarters of parents were satisfied that their school was developing their children's social skills. On the sporting field, Queensland students continued to dominate national competitions, winning 31 championships, coming second 27 times, third 22 times and unplaced 35 times and participating in three unranked competitions.

Queensland students participated in 99 ranked team events, 16 individual events and three unranked team events. In the teams' events, students gained 27 first places, 25 second places and 22 third places. Students gained four first places and two second places in individual championships.

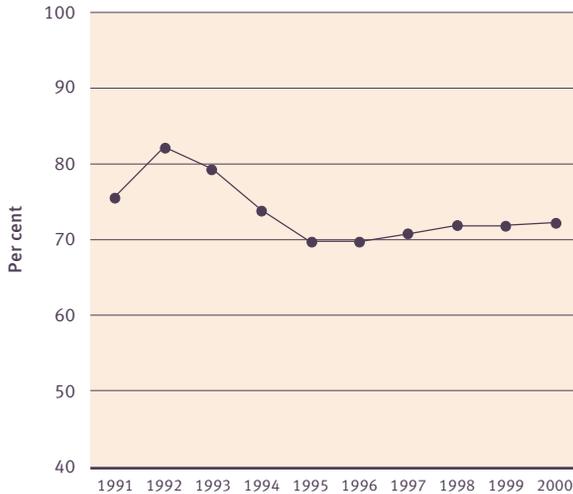
More students staying on at school

A key objective of QSE–2010 is to increase the proportion of students completing Year 12 by age 24 to 88 per cent by 2010. There is considerable evidence, both nationally and internationally, to suggest that early school-leavers (those young people who do not complete Year 12) are ill equipped to compete in the labour market and are more likely to be unemployed and have diminished life chances and opportunities. The proportion of students continuing to Year 12 was stable at 72 per cent.

Seventy-eight per cent of girls continued to Year 12, considerably more than the 67 per cent recorded for boys. In the past three years, the apparent retention rate for males has increased by about 1 per cent while the rate for females has been stable.

The apparent retention rate for Indigenous students remains at levels significantly lower than other students. The rate improved by more than 7 per cent in the past five years and the Partners for Success strategy will assist schools to achieve further improvements.

Figure 9: Year 8 students continuing to Year 12, Queensland, 1991–2000



The department will continue to strive to improve Year 12 completion rates so that the proportion of students staying on is commensurate with the best in the world.

Achievement in senior years

QSE–2010 identified the need to further develop the senior secondary years of schooling to ensure that all students have the opportunity to successfully complete Year 12 or equivalent, develop skills for lifelong learning and access pathways to productive further education, training and employment. To assist in this process, a project on New Pathways through School to Work was implemented. This project will recommend a suite of reforms to enhance students' opportunities to achieve in their senior years of schooling, including ensuring parity of esteem between academic subjects and vocational education and training (VET) subjects, reform to the Senior Certificate and additional supports for students at risk of leaving school early.

Year 12 results showed 76 per cent achieving Sound Level or above in Mathematics and 84 per cent in English, commensurate with school performance targets of 75 and 85 per cent respectively and a significant improvement in comparison with 1999 results.

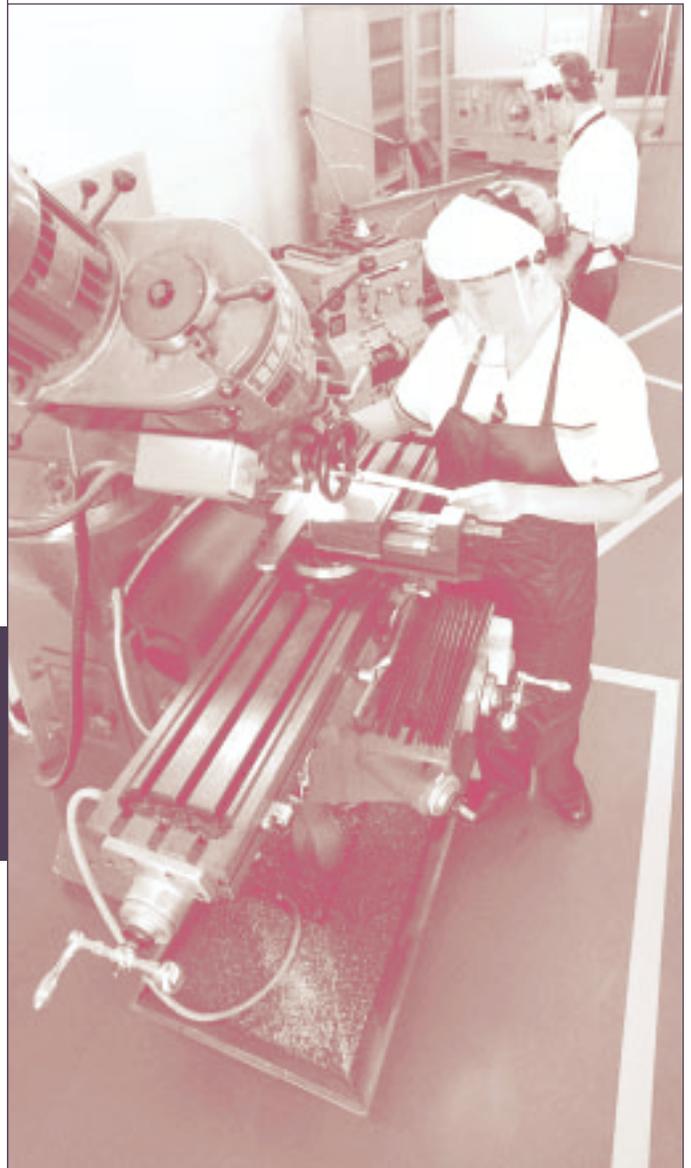
(Pimlico State High School)

The project has also identified a need to ensure better links between education and training opportunities offered by schools and by other providers such as TAFE. An external review of pathways through the senior years of schooling and into post-school education, training and labour market participation will commence in 2001–2002.

Year 12 results are crucial to students' futures. In 2000, performance levels for subjects commonly studied by Year 12 students were generally similar to 1999. Sixty-four per cent of students in Year 12 achieved sound or better in three or more Board subjects – that is, those subjects accepted for university entrance. This is slightly lower than the statistic in 1997 for Year 12 students in state schools. Over the same period there has been a slight decrease in the proportion of state school students undertaking three or more Board subjects. This is partly due to the proportion of students undertaking Study Area Specifications (SAS) and the rapid growth in enrolments in school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

More than 70 per cent of Year 10 students achieved sound or better in four or more subjects.

Twenty-four students won the Australian Students Prize, awarded to the top 500 students in the country. Students also took part in a number of national



competitions such as the University of New South Wales competitions in English, Maths, Science and Computing Studies, and the Australian Mathematics Trust competition. The performance of students in these competitions can provide valuable additional information on school performance.

Vocational education and training in schools

Queensland is leading the nation in school-based vocational training. More than 60 per cent of Year 11 and Year 12 students were engaged in one or more nationally recognised VET courses developed to integrate with other senior studies in accordance with the specifications of the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies. Of the 60 per cent of students undertaking these courses, 24 per cent achieved certificate level one or higher in one or more VET subjects.

Hospitality, Business, Information Technology and Engineering are the most popular of these courses.

Twenty school-based traineeships were entered into [by students] by the end of 2000. This is providing a wonderful alternative to 'all-school' subjects for students who wish to get started on their vocational careers.

(Aldridge State High School)

The number of enrolments in stand-alone VET courses continued to increase as schools adopted VET-accredited courses and training package qualifications to meet the particular needs of their students and the community. Certificates were awarded to Year 12 students for stand-alone VET courses, including certificates issued to students undertaking a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

More than 2500 students undertook school-based apprenticeships or traineeships where they received recognised training, participated in paid work and, at the same time, attained their Senior Certificate. This program enables students to gain a head start in achieving work-based qualifications in industry areas including rural, retail, business, building, hospitality, hairdressing, automotive and arts.

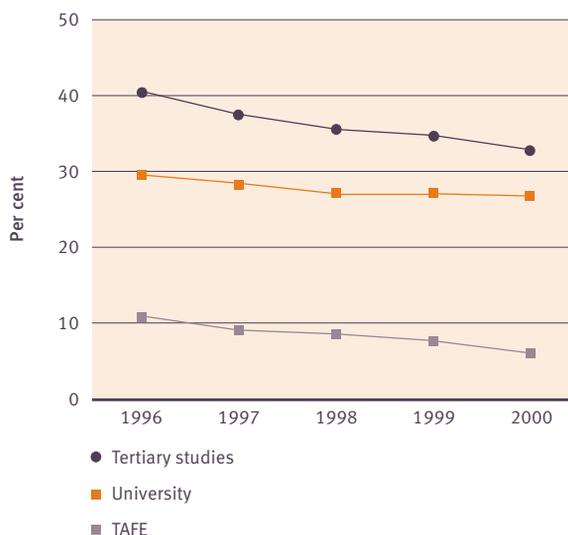
Going places after school

In 2000, 36 per cent of the previous year's Year 12 state school students progressed to tertiary study — 28 per cent to university and 8 per cent to technical and further education institutes (TAFE).

This was a decline of 1 per cent on the previous year. The proportion going on to university remained the same while TAFE enrolments declined.

The five-year trend, shown in figure 10, indicates a slight decline in tertiary enrolments.

Figure 10: Tertiary study by state school students, 1996–2000



These figures are drawn from QTAC Annual Reports and underestimate the proportion of students going on to further education as many enrol mid-year, in later years or independently of the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC).

The introduction of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships in 1997 has provided an alternate pathway into the workforce. This is a factor in the slight decline in tertiary enrolments.

Outlook

The department will:

- implement Literate Futures recommendations, as outlined in Education Queensland's response *The Literacy Roadmap*, supported by Learning and Development Centres for Literacy in 2002 — all schools will develop a literacy strategy for implementation by the end of 2003;
- develop a multi-mode, multimedia set of professional development materials in reading for all Queensland state schools;
- increase student participation levels in VET in schools, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships;
- conduct a major review of the impediments to students remaining at school and progressing to further study;
- support, in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Training, an external review of ways to improve students' pathways from school, through further education and training, to work.



New Basics

The 38 schools trialling the New Basics Framework continued to plan during 2000 to implement the framework in their classrooms in 2001. The framework is one of a number of initiatives developed as part of the implementation of QSE–2010. Funding was provided to appoint critical friends – professional colleagues or community members – to assist schools with their planning and to carry out research. Planning tools developed by the New Basics Branch were provided on CD-ROM to trial schools.

Work continued on completing the set of Rich Tasks that are at the core of the New Basics curriculum concept. Students will engage with these tasks in three-year spans ending in Years 3, 6 and 9. Through Rich Tasks, students will display their understanding, knowledge and skills, and perform activities that cross the boundaries between traditional disciplines. Panels of community experts reviewed the Rich Tasks and confirmed that the criteria used to evaluate student performance were relevant to the world beyond the classroom.

More information about the New Basics Framework can be found on the Internet at <http://www.education.qld.gov.au>.

Curriculum framework

Following intensive consultation during the year, the *Years 1–10 Curriculum Framework for Education Queensland Schools – Policy and Guidelines* was launched by the Minister for Education in June 2001.

The framework allows schools to build educational programs that optimise student opportunities to demonstrate important knowledge and skills that enable them to prepare for a changing future. It provides the structure that will allow schools to achieve the curriculum objectives of QSE–2010. The framework links system-wide requirements to syllabuses developed by the Queensland School Curriculum Council.

The framework indicated the establishment of an Assessment and Reporting Taskforce that would have expert and stakeholder representation. The taskforce would make recommendations about assessment strategies and devices, the tools necessary to translate the conceptual framework into practice, reporting methods, and appropriate professional development in assessment and reporting for teachers and administrators.

Syllabus implementation

Schools continued to implement syllabuses in Science, Health and Physical Education, and Languages other than English (LOTE) with the assistance of 73 education advisers working across 35 districts and three centrally located LOTE implementation officers.

In response to widespread community discussion, the department established an Independent Pedagogy Panel to consider the Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment Syllabus. The panel included representatives from James Cook University, the Queensland University of Technology, the Australian College of Education and the presidents of the Geography Teachers' Association and the Queensland History Teachers' Association. The panel found that the curriculum content was comprehensive and sound. It made recommendations regarding the implementation process.

The Director-General accepted the recommendations of the panel and a curriculum implementation reference group with similar representation was established. In the first half of 2001, action was taken on many of the recommendations of the panel.

Syllabus development

The department continued to be an active partner in the work of the Queensland School Curriculum Council (QSCC). The Years 1 to 10 Technology Syllabus, developed by the council, was finalised in preparation for endorsement in July 2001.

The Years 1 to 10 Syllabus for The Arts was endorsed in June 2001 by the council.

Draft syllabuses and guidelines for students in junior secondary (Years 8–10) were developed by the Queensland School Curriculum Council in: Agriculture Education, Business Education, Home Economics Education, Industrial Technology and Design Education, and Information and Communication Education. Drafts of these syllabuses are available on the Internet at <http://www.qscc.qld.edu.au>.

Curriculum delivery and support

During 2000–2001 the Virtual Schooling Service (VSS) continued to expand, taking students on to Year 12 and introducing a new range of Year 11 subjects. Using a mix of real-time voice and data sharing and web-based asynchronous resources, the program attracted considerable enthusiasm and support from schools and students, especially those in rural areas.

From January 2001, the VSS has offered the following services:

	Year 9	Year 11	Year 12
Number of students	8	211	101
Subjects offered	Japanese	Japanese	Japanese
		Modern History	Computer Studies
		Maths C	Maths C
		Economics	Economics
	IPT		

Teachers : 13 based at AccessEd; 5 based at 3 school locations
 Number of schools : 49

The Digital Resource Centre

The Digital Resource Centre provides online access to information through the Curriculum Exchange and Professional Exchange.

Use of the Curriculum Exchange site increased eight-fold during 2000–2001 making it one of the most popular pathways within the department’s online services. Its services include:

- MacquarieNet, which provided free access for Education Queensland schools and teachers to Australian and international reference works and AAP news.
- EduList, which provided links to more than 1700 reviewed websites evaluated by experienced Queensland teachers and teacher-librarians. There are no download charges incurred by Education Queensland schools when accessing these sites through the Managed Internet Service.
- Teaching Ideas and Practices (TIPS), which provided 3000 useful teaching ideas, strategies and activities submitted by teachers throughout Queensland.

- The Studies of Society and Environment gateway to resources, which provided support for the implementation of the SOSE syllabus.

The Professional Exchange is a complete desktop reference service developed by the Corporate Library to meet the governance and policy research needs of department personnel. Services include:

- customised professional topics with links to full text journal articles and Internet sites;
- online reference tools;
- databases such as the Australian Education Index and ERIC.

The site attracted more than 10 000 visits per month, 67 per cent from Australia and 33 per cent from overseas with a 15 per cent increase in usage per month.

Smithsonian–Queensland Museum

In March 2000, the Queensland Premier signed an agreement with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, the world’s foremost museum and research complex. This was the first time the prestigious Smithsonian Institution had entered into such a broad agreement with a government outside the United States. Over the next five years, Queensland Government agencies and the Smithsonian will collaborate on educational, research and cultural activities.

Eco Online was one collaborative initiative to emerge from this agreement during 2000–2001. It involves the joint development of online materials for use by teachers and students (lower secondary level). These are based on case studies, one each from Queensland and the USA, focusing on best practice environmental management. The initial Queensland case study features an ecotourism operation at Couran Cove, South Stradbroke Island.

Outlook

The department will:

- revise school curriculum plans in accordance with the Years 1 to 10 Curriculum Framework for Education Queensland Schools;
- increase participation in the trial of the New Basics Framework with the addition of 20 schools;
- involve Queensland students in trials of World Class Tests in Mathematics and Problem-Solving developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in England;
- in collaboration with the QSCC, publish on the QSCC website the Years 1 to 10 Technology Syllabus before the end of 2001 and distribute it to schools in January 2002;
- develop support material during the second half of 2001 for the new Years 1 to 10 The Arts Syllabus;
- distribute the new Years 1 to 10 The Arts Syllabus to schools in January 2002 for implementation;
- in collaboration with the QSCC, publish on the QSCC website in September 2001 the second draft of syllabuses and guidelines for junior secondary Agriculture Education, Business Education, Home Economics Education, Industrial Technology and Design Education, and Information and Communication Education;
- establish a task force to develop a world-class model for assessment and reporting.

Teaching

Teaching is our core competency. Through a focus on educational leadership and excellence in teaching, we deliver a quality service that results in learning outcomes for students.

Students' learning is enhanced by teaching practices that provide challenging learning experiences that enable them to acquire future-oriented knowledge and skills, embrace new technologies, and recognise and value difference. Teaching practices that successfully integrate curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting further enhance these experiences.

Enhancing teaching practices

During 2000–2001 teachers were able to engage in many learning and development activities to enhance their classroom practices. These included activities at Learning and Development Centres, localised activities through Staff Colleges, learning innovations as part of the Quality Teacher Program, New Basics initiatives and online learning modules. Participation in learning and development activities has led to the adoption of more effective teaching practices in classrooms across the State.

The Quality Teacher Program encourages teachers to share their best practices and ideas by submitting Learning Innovation proposals. Of 108 proposals submitted, 49 were approved for implementation in the term from May to July 2001. These innovative projects create networks of professional learning communities that provide leadership and innovation in teaching practices.

Teachers engaged in trials of the New Basics Framework undertook training in Student Learning Protocols. These are specific techniques that teachers can use when working together to examine student work to improve classroom practice. Within the New Basics trial, the protocols are a valuable tool for developing professional learning communities, engaging teachers to operate within teams and examining teaching and learning practices.

Teachers in trial schools were assisted in their planning to implement the New Basics. A facility for holding online conferences was established as a medium for sharing ideas. This was complemented by two online discussion lists, one reserved for trial schools and the other open to any interested parties. A statewide two-day colloquium was held in Brisbane in November 2000 for teachers, parents and administrators.



Teachers from trial schools also attended training sessions on Rich Tasks and the associated teaching methods.

Five teachers from Queensland state schools were amongst the 27 primary and secondary teachers from across Australia who received Commonwealth awards in the National Excellence in Teaching Awards.

Information on teacher quality can be found on page 42.

Teaching practices in the school reflect contemporary education theory with cross-age groupings and flexible curriculum delivery. The school continued to identify best practice through action research in learning and teaching. The school's involvement in the New Basics trial has encouraged teachers to focus more directly on pedagogy.

(The Willows State School)

Getting the foundations right

A draft framework for teaching reading, *Literate Classrooms: Reading*, and draft materials for the evaluation of commercial reading resources have been developed to assist teachers. Materials to assist schools to evaluate and select commercial spelling resources and to assess the overall suitability of secondary textbooks have been written, published and distributed to schools. Twenty Learning and Development Centres: Literacy have been established to address the priorities of whole-school literacy planning and the teaching of reading.

Teaching and technology

The integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into the curriculum continued during 2000–2001. The introduction of Learning and Development Centres – Technology and the Quality Teacher Program have provided opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills to meet the challenge posed by the use of technology in classrooms.

Four new centres for learning and development in technology were established at Woree State School (Cairns), Waraburra State School (Rockhampton), Kawungan State School (Hervey Bay) and Burleigh Heads State School (Gold Coast). These centres joined Woodcrest College (Springfield) to provide intensive programs to develop teachers' skills in the use of ICT in teaching and learning. More than 300 teachers attended practicums at these centres in 2000–2001.

Schools and clusters in districts without a Learning and Development Centre – Technology were provided with \$1 million to support innovative teacher learning and development through the use of technology. Through these activities, professional learning for teachers will be localised and sustained.

Professional standards for teachers

The department's Professional Standards for Teachers articulate and support the complex and varied nature of teachers' work and provide a guide to professional practice. The standards describe the knowledge, skills and abilities that teachers apply to provide relevant and worthwhile learning experiences for students.

During 2000–2001 a liaison group comprising representatives from the department and the Queensland Teachers' Union has considered issues related to the Professional Standards for Teachers and is exploring related issues of reward and recognition. Teachers will be involved in the development, revision and implementation of the standards.



Outlook

The department will:

- increase opportunities for teachers to participate in Staff College activities;
- increase support for Learning Innovations through the Quality Teacher Program and the development of a wide range of online learning modules for teachers;
- establish additional Learning and Development Centres – Technology to continue to support teachers' integration of technology;
- develop learning and development modules on the teaching of reading for all teachers from P–12;
- train teachers in Productive Pedagogies strategies.

Information

Thirty of the State's brightest information technology (IT) students were presented with the Minister's Awards for Students Excelling in Information and Communication Technology during 2000–2001.

This unique scholarship program gave high achieving students, from as far away as Atherton and Goondiwindi, unprecedented access to industry leaders such as Compaq, Boeing, Telstra, Microsoft and Data3.

Education Queensland worked in partnership with the IT industry to raise the profile of ICT in schools through an intensive student program that included a visit to Microsoft's Australasian Technology Centre, a hands-on workshop and a site visit to Boeing's operations at Amberley Air Force Base.

Nyanda High School teacher Colleen Stieler was awarded the International Society for Technology in Education Outstanding Educator of the Year Award and was the first ever non-US recipient.

The Corporate Library won the 2000 Premier's Award for Excellence in Public Sector Management in the Integrated Service Delivery category. The award recognised the Corporate Library's leadership in the State Government Libraries Consortium that negotiates special rates for the purchase of online information services.

Access to computers

The current student to computer ratio is 6.6:1. This ratio has been steadily improving over the past few years.

Fifty-three per cent of primary students were satisfied with how easy it was to gain access to a computer for learning and 55 per cent of secondary students were satisfied with their opportunities for using computers for learning. Of all parents, 61 per cent were satisfied with the availability of computers for their child at school. These satisfaction levels have been improving since 1998.

Quality software

The department continues to develop high quality software resources to support syllabus implementation with Languages other than English (LOTE) delivering 28 CD-ROMs in seven languages across four bands of schooling for the Queensland School Curriculum Council.

CD-ROM curriculum materials are now available for Years 1 to 10 Science and Years 1 to 10 Health and Physical Education syllabuses.



Outlook

The department will:

- through the VSS, increase the number of school-based curriculum delivery points and move towards providing services to students at home;
- establish Centres of Excellence in Maths, Science and Technology in schools and clusters throughout the State including Cairns, Mt Isa, Toowoomba, Townsville, Mackay, Brisbane, Murrumba Downs and on the Gold Coast;
- ensure that all schools will have some classrooms connected to the Internet by the end of 2001;
- enhance access to, and use of, ICT to improve students' learning outcomes.

Learning

Our purpose is to create a safe, tolerant and disciplined environment within which young people prepare to be active and reflective citizens with a disposition to lifelong learning.

Most parents (85 per cent) were satisfied that their child was happy to go to their school and most students (71 per cent) indicated that they were happy to go to their school. The department is striving to increase these satisfaction rates.

A number of initiatives were implemented in 2000–2001 to support the social and emotional wellbeing of students and to provide them with safe, tolerant and disciplined learning environments. These included the implementation of a framework for students at educational risk, more comprehensive methods for resourcing students with disabilities and a range of partnerships with other service agencies to deliver services in schools. Many of these activities were developed in partnership with other agencies.

Framework for students at educational risk

Students at educational risk are those whose experience of schooling, together with other factors in their lives, makes them vulnerable to not completing 12 years of schooling or an equivalent qualification, or not achieving to their potential. They are at risk of not acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for effective participation in work, relationships and families, and to function as active citizens in the community.

Under the Framework for Students at Educational Risk: Building Success Together, a range of statewide programs has been put in place. In addition to these, all state school principals identify students who are considered at risk and develop plans specific to their communities.

Initiatives developed within this framework during 2000–2001 included:

- the provision of a responsive and comprehensive teaching and learning program in detention centres;
- continued implementation of initiatives from the previous year, including five Alternative Education Provision sites;
- continuation of the Community Access Schools program, extending the number of schools involved to 11 across eight sites;

- implementation of the Partners for Success strategy.

Beneficiaries of these programs include students in rural and remote areas, in Indigenous or low socioeconomic communities, in areas of low literacy and numeracy, and students for whom English is a second language.

Educating students in youth detention centres

Changes to education provision in youth detention centres, as recommended by the Forde Commission of Inquiry into the Abuse of Children, were implemented during 2000–2001. Enhanced education programs and a normalised school day of up to six hours reflect a commitment to ensure these young people develop skills and competencies that are transportable to either continuing education or employment to improve their opportunities on release.

Supporting students with disabilities

Improvements were made in the provision of resources for students with disabilities as a result of the Independent Review of the Ascertainment and Resourcing Methodology for Students with Disabilities that reported in August 2000. A summary report was released in December 2000.

Recommendations being implemented include: meeting the needs of Indigenous students with disabilities by training guidance officers and moderators as specialists in this area, raising the awareness and skills of teachers, developing and trialling profiles that identify specific student needs to determine the allocation of funding and staff. More than two hundred additional teachers and teacher aides were employed in 2000–2001.

Student safety, social and emotional wellbeing

School staff have a duty of care to ensure the safety of their students. This is largely achieved through proactive behaviour management plans developed in consultation with parents and monitored by staff committees. Strategies such as peer mediation and human relationships education are used in many schools to minimise bullying, harassment and violence. Staff are also trained and supported in carrying out their duties in accordance with the department's Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy.

The Health and Physical Education Curriculum deals with issues of general health, wellbeing and safety, and includes community-supported Human Relationships Education programs in schools.

In 2000–2001, a program to employ school-based police officers was implemented to assist in maintaining a safe environment in some schools and to provide the opportunity for the young in our community to maintain friendly contact with police. The department coordinated the design and delivery of training for this program.

In conjunction with Queensland Health, the School-Based Health Nurse Program was expanded. By the end of 2000–2001, 97 full-time positions were made available to employ nurses in schools with secondary enrolments. Nurses collaborate closely with school guidance officers and counsellors to address students' social and emotional wellbeing.

Our award system was formalised. This included Student of the Week, 100 per cent attendance awards and Caught Being Good certificates distributed on parade.

(Wynnum West State School)

School–community partnerships

To achieve our aims, it is essential that strong relationships are developed at all levels with community organisations, businesses and individuals. The department has implemented a range of initiatives that enhance school–community partnerships.

In 2000–2001, these initiatives have included:

- trialling school–community compacts in 35 schools with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to progress the implementation of the Partners for Success strategy;
- supporting the work of the Indigenous Education Consultative Body in consulting with Indigenous peoples and engaging in independent research on issues affecting educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
- launching the draft State Charter for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education that sets out the principles for an agreement between the department and Indigenous communities;
- trialling models of school–community partnerships in 11 schools under the Community Access Schools (CAS) Pilot Project (a Queensland Housing-funded component of the Queensland Government Crime Prevention Strategy);
- engaging with the Queensland Government Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy.

These initiatives have been supported by State and Commonwealth funds. The department is engaged in a number of other school–community partnerships. These are discussed on page 34.



Outlook

The department will:

- develop a five-year action plan for the Partners for Success strategy;
- further enhance school–community partnerships;
- review the action plan for students with disabilities;
- assist school communities, teachers, students and districts with programs and strategies targeting bullying, harassment and aggressive behaviours;
- develop an evaluation report to promote effective school-based strategies for improving Indigenous student completion rates;
- develop a key project to strengthen organisational learning strategies, to bring the achievements of students at educational risk into line with international best practice.

Rural

In 2000, 57 per cent of Queensland students attended schools outside Brisbane and, of these, 29 per cent attended one of more than 700 schools located in a rural or remote community.

Rural locations are defined as those comprising fewer than 10 000 people. Rural and remote Queensland is demographically and culturally diverse and includes students in Indigenous communities, students with English as a Second Language (ESL), students of low socioeconomic status, special needs students, and those enrolled in schools of distance education. With some exceptions, the performance of students in primary schools in rural areas is generally lower than that of students in primary schools in urban areas. This pattern of performance is similar to that reported in 1999. There are no consistent differences between urban and rural school students' performance in secondary school subjects.

To improve these results and meet the diverse needs of this student cohort, the department is developing a range of strategies and has responded to a number of national rural and remote inquiries. For example, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) inquiry into rural and remote education has stimulated some major initiatives and the department has undertaken to support the HREOC recommendations in its planning and strategies.

Complementing these initiatives, a taskforce was established to develop a cohesive Queensland Rural and Remote Education Strategy. This strategy will be further developed over the coming year and will be aligned to the Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) National Rural and Remote Strategy.

A range of additional initiatives further supports education in rural and remote locations, including the Partners for Success strategy, the Virtual Schooling Service, the Framework for Students at Educational Risk, specific staffing scholarships/traineeships, area school alliances, differential school staffing and funding incentive schemes, and rural teacher education schemes. The department also provides assistance to tertiary education centres expanding into regional areas.

Positive Rural Futures Conference

The department supports a range of Commonwealth programs including the Priority Country Area Program (PCAP). PCAP is a community-based, Commonwealth-funded rural education program and is jointly administered by the Department of Education and the Catholic Education Commission, in partnership with the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland.

The Department of Education, in partnership with PCAP, the Department of Primary Industries, and the Office of Rural Communities, co-convened the Positive Rural Futures Conference to promote the advantages of living, working and learning in rural and remote communities. The conference led to the development of a rural and remote website to provide access to good practice activities and to promote rural education.

Students at educational risk

Implementing the Framework for Students at Educational Risk in rural areas has assisted state school principals to identify students who are at risk of not completing senior schooling, or an equivalent qualification, or of not achieving their potential.

The development of intervention plans specific to their communities will ensure that a greater number of students successfully complete senior schooling.

Partners for Success

Partners for Success is a strategy to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in all Queensland state schools. There is a high proportion of Indigenous students in rural and remote areas. Schools implemented a process for priority employment of local Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders for a range of school-based positions. A total of 35 schools with large numbers of Indigenous students are developing compacts between the department and their communities with flexible programs to improve learning outcomes for these students.

Providing on-site training to help existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees engaged in administration to advance their careers is also being investigated.

Access for rural and remote learners

The Learning Network Queensland program (formerly Queensland Open Learning Network) provides communication technologies and educational and

learning support services to 50 regional communities through Network Learning Centres. These centres assist higher education, technical and further education (TAFE) and adult learners in formal and informal learning situations, and work to build community involvement in lifelong learning.

Assistance was also provided to tertiary institutions to direct funds towards enhancing educational access and participation across the State – primarily through regional campuses – and upgrading facilities. University campuses were funded in Bundaberg, Cairns, Gladstone, Hervey Bay, Mackay and Townsville.

School alliances

Alliances between schools in regional areas provided a strategic and coordinated approach to service delivery aimed at increasing student outcomes. The Alliance of Charters Towers State Schools (ACTSS) is one example of many innovative practices occurring in rural areas. ACTSS, an alliance and business unit of the state schools in the Charters Towers area, focuses on developing a range of pathways for learning across schools and within the broader community. With a strong commitment to community and social capital development, this group of schools has extended the role of education into the broader community through accredited training for community members, interagency partnerships and leadership in a range of development activities with local businesses and authorities. Initial outcomes are very positive, including higher retention levels, reduced behaviour management intervention, enhanced learning outcomes and an increase in the commitment to public education within their communities.

Four schools in rural, regional and metropolitan areas formed a close association with the Queensland Museum. One element of the collaboration with the museum is the establishment of Queensland Museum Magnet Schools. These schools benefit from online links to expert staff in the Smithsonian Institution and the museum and to teachers and students in two Museum Magnet Schools in Washington DC.

Forty-five students from Goondiwindi State High School and the cross-border neighbouring community at Boggabilla Central participated in the School-Industry Links Outreach (SILO) program to increase the number of students undertaking rural work placements. The program highlighted the importance of

establishing and maintaining a local, trained rural workforce to guarantee the district's growth. The success of the project has resulted in a strategic alliance between educators, the community and industry to conduct a feasibility study for a rural skills training centre in the Goondiwindi community.

Learning and development

Eight of the 11 Learning and Development Centres established in 2000–2001 were located in regional Queensland. These provide localised and sustainable professional learning opportunities such as exemplars of classroom practice and networking opportunities for teachers in Technology or Gifted Education. Staff have also benefited from the formation of Staff Colleges, six of which are in regional Queensland. Staff Colleges assist in developing local solutions to learning needs.

The Department of Education also offers a number of scholarships and traineeships to support and encourage staff in regional areas. Five Bid O'Sullivan Scholarships were awarded to assist Year 12 students from rural and remote areas who have chosen primary teaching as their career. Each scholarship is valued at \$20 000. On successful completion, applicants are required to take up employment with the department for four years, to be served in any geographical location in Queensland. Staff in regional areas also benefited from the Working for You Traineeship Program and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teaching scholarships (see page 41).

Outlook

The department will:

- implement the Rural and Remote Education Strategy, aligned with the National Rural and Remote Strategy, to ensure that students in these locations have equitable access to quality curriculum and schooling;
- establish, in rural and regional areas, five Technology, Maths and Science Centres of Excellence;
- develop curriculum material aimed specifically at the learning needs of rural and remote students.

LEARNING

In this section, we have reported 2000–2001 progress towards the QSE–2010 **Learning objective** through:

- learning outcomes measured by student performance in literacy and numeracy, achievement and participation in senior years of schooling, and participation in vocational education and training and further education;
- developments in curriculum delivery and support and in teaching practices, including the integration of information and communication technologies;
- improvements in learning environments;
- specific initiatives for rural, regional and remote students.