St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School

Annual School Report

2012
MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

Message from the Board of Directors of the Assyrian Schools

The Assyrian Schools Limited Board comprises of the Chairman and Director of Assyrian Schools, His Eminence Archbishop Mar Meelis Zaia AM and a body of directors including parents and professionals from the local community. The Board is the governing body that oversees the operations of the St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School located at the site of the St. Hurmizd Cathedral, Greenfield Park; the Mar Narsai Assyrian College, Edensor Park; St. Hurmizd Early Learning Centre, Greenfield Park and Grace Early Learning Centre, Bossley Park.

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School operates under the auspices of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Assyrian Church of the East. The school was founded in 2002 to cater for the educational needs of the local Parks’ communities within Fairfield City. In 2012 the student population was capped at 600.

The School shares its location with the St. Hurmizd Cathedral and is named after the seventh century Christian saint, Rabban Hurmizd. St. Hurmizd is recognised as one of the major saints of the Assyrian Church of the East and his feast day is celebrated on September 1st each year.

Message from the Principal

The publication of the Annual School Report is a New South Wales Board of Studies requirement for non-government schools.

The Report is a school’s profile for public discloser and includes information and data about the school’s mission statement, policies and procedures, student achievements and performances in National tests, staffing and students, the curriculum, financial summary, goals and aspiration for the future.

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School is located in Sydney’s Metro South-West at Greenfield Park. The school has grown from 52 enrolments from its foundation year in 2002 to 600 students in 2012. It is a K – 6 Co-educational Christian-based independent school in the tradition of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Assyrian Church of the East.

The school draws its students from areas of low socio-economic status of Fairfield City NSW, and caters for the learning needs and cultural diversity of these local communities by providing a progressive, BOS-endorsed curriculum, based on high educational standards incorporating Australian values and attitudes.

In 2012 the school entered the Low SES School Communities National Partnership (NP). Under this Federal Government Partnership, the school was granted $560,000 every year for four years (up to 2015) to:
transform the way that schooling takes place in participating schools and to address the complex and interconnected challenges facing students in disadvantaged communities.

improve the educational outcomes of students, including literacy and numeracy outcomes, in targeted schools as well as to improve students’ transition rates to further education and employment.

A collaborative strategic plan was developed with all stakeholders after an intensive situation analysis of the School. Priority areas and targets were developed and strategised and planned to achieve them.

The priorities areas identified in line with the partnership reforms were:

- Literacy
- Teacher Quality
- Leadership and Management
- Parental Engagement

Sargis Makko

(Principal)
The School

School Profile

Our Vision

Lighting the way - Preserving Our Faith, Culture and Heritage

Our school is dedicated to educational excellence, encouraging students to reach their potential in a nurturing environment to become productive citizens, reflecting the faith of the Assyrian Church of the East, Assyrian language and Culture.

Our Mission:

Centre of Excellence

• To provide a continuum of education founded on a rich tradition of faith, family and community values.

• To strive for academic excellence embedded in a Christian faith-filled environment.

Curriculum

• To offer a broad and diverse curriculum endorsed by the NSW Board of Studies, based on progressive technology-enriched educational programs incorporating productive and coordinated planning.

• To continuously evaluate the quality of our courses to ensure their excellence is maintained, and enables holistic student development in spiritual, intellectual, physical and social aspects of being, reflecting the diverse needs of a life-long learning process.

• To provide a complete academic program in an environment that integrates learning, cultural heritage and religious instruction, Gospel values, and spiritual formation into all aspects of a comprehensive and challenging curriculum and the practice of faith lived out in the daily experience of our dedicated staff and students.
Student outcomes in standardised National Literacy & Numeracy testing

NAPLAN 2012

In 2012, 100 year-3 and 81 year-5 students at St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School sat for the NAPLAN Tests. The majority of students (96%) at St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School come from backgrounds where a language other than English is spoken at home (LBOTE).

Performances in NAPLAN 2012 are reported on the My School website:

http://www/myschool.edu.au

Professional Learning and Teaching Standards

Professional Learning

At St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School we are committed to providing an education that fully develops the talents and capacities of all students. Professional development is valued and recognised as a major contributing factor for improving the learning outcomes for students. Teachers at St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School have the responsibility to undertake ongoing professional development that develops skills, knowledge and understanding in support of this goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of the Professional Learning Activity</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implemented the <strong>School-Wide Early Language and Literacy program (SWELL)</strong> in Kinder; 1 and 2. Through SWELL the school developed the essential prerequisites to reading during the first three to six months of Kindergarten through the <strong>Emergent Literacy</strong> program. In the remaining months of Kindergarten and in most of Year 1, the <strong>Becoming Literate Program</strong> develops and extends children in literacy acquisition. When Becoming Literate ends toward the end of Year 1 and the <strong>Learning to Read stage</strong> has been reached, the third component of SWELL, <strong>Towards Literacy Competence</strong> is introduced. This focuses on listening and reading comprehension strategies as children reach the stage of <strong>Reading to Learn</strong>. The program is supported by Macquarie University.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$7,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Pedagogy</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>$23,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate, review and implement differentiated teaching programs for reading.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$4,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K to 2 teachers to participate in online professional learning</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
program – **Teaching Beginning Reading**– offering a systemic, research-based guide to teaching literacy in the first three years of school which is accredited with the NSW Institute of Teachers and provided by Macquarie University.

| Professional Learning for staff to implemented the **MULTILIT** program to improve targeted students in reading especially sight words and phonics acquisition. | 5 | $2,200 |
| Provide further professional Learning in the implementation of the spelling component of **Ants in the Apple Literacy Program for k to 6** | 33 | $1,000 |
| **School Leadership Team** participates in Professional Learning focusing in leading and managing change involving ISLC 3 day course. | 8 | $3,100 |
| **School Leadership Team** attends National Partnerships leadership 2 day course Term 3 ISLC to lead review and evaluation of the 2011 plan and the development of 2012 plan. | 5 | $2,650 |

The average expenditure per teacher on professional learning in 2012 was $1,243.

**New Scheme Teachers**

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School is committed to ongoing professional learning of staff. We recognise the significance of particular periods in the professional life of an individual, these include at the outset of employment as a beginning teacher and on return to the profession following periods of extended leave or absence. We aim to provide specific support and opportunities for professional development at these transition points to assist in a teacher’s accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers and for professional growth.

**Teaching Standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORICAL</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) Guidelines</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR Guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who do not have qualifications as described in (a) and (b) but relevant to the teaching context</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workforce composition

Staff at St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School is made up of diverse cultural backgrounds with a percentage being of Assyrian heritage.

Student Attendance Rates

2012 Student Attendance Rates as a percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Level</th>
<th>% Attendance Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>94.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>95.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>94.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>95.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>95.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>95.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 6</td>
<td>92.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School’s Average</td>
<td>94.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Managing student non-attendance

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School implements policy and procedures for the management of student non-attendance.

The Principal, Stage Advisor or Classroom Teacher will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.

Ongoing unexplained absences or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. Unresolved attendance issues may be reported by the Principal to the Assyrian Schools Board.

Student non-attendance is reported on student’s half year and end of year academic reports.

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School Enrolment policy

PREAMBLE

Consistent with its Mission Statement, Assyrian Schools Limited (ASL) attempts to provide the best possible education and has as its focus, the Assyrian Church of the East ethos. It is vital that Assyrian Christian beliefs and ethics are integrated into the whole life of the school. In this regard, Assyrian Schools are committed to educating its students in an environment which strives to be faithful to the Church of the East, its traditions and teachings.

It is the aim of our schools to provide the choice of schooling to all those seeking an education in an environment formed by the teachings and traditions of the Church of the East. Notwithstanding this, enrolment of a student into an Assyrian Schools Limited school cannot be guaranteed.

[1.0] Principles
1.1 Assyrian Schools Limited schools (ASL schools) are open to all parents and students who are prepared to support the philosophy, values and objectives of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East.

1.2 ASL schools will endeavour to be inclusive of all students, consistent with the belief that all are equal before God.

1.3 ASL schools recognise that every student has a right to a complete education and in this regard shall offer students a curriculum that is not restrictive in scope and which is in line with New South Wales Board of Studies guidelines and syllabuses.

1.4 Parents who choose an Assyrian Schools Limited school for their children undertake to support the religious principles, traditions and practices of the school and the parish/s they serve. This includes but is not limited to full participation of their children in Assyrian Schools Limited religious education programs.

1.5 Enrolment of students at an Assyrian Schools Limited school obligates parents/guardians to accept and meet the school’s fees and levies unless another agreement is reached with the Principal. Parents/guardians of those students who are marginalised and in most need shall not be refused enrolment merely because of an inability as opposed to unwillingness on their part to meet ASL schools financial requirements.

1.6 Enrolment applications will be determined by an Enrolments Committee which will consist of a Parish Priest of the Parish (or his representative), and a representative of the School Board. The Enrolment Committee will meet from time to time and shall be chaired by the Principal.

1.7 The Enrolment Committee shall review all enrolments from time to time, but no less frequently than once per term. Continuing enrolment shall be conditional on students meeting ASL schools requirements.

[2.0] Enrolment Policies

2.1 General Enrolments

2.1.1 All parents seeking to enroll their children in an ASL schools must complete the application for enrolment form and return it to the relevant school office by 31 May in the year prior to enrolment. However, this does not guarantee enrolment of their child in the school.

2.1.2 Application for enrolment forms will be available at ASL schools offices.

2.1.3 Completed application forms should be returned to the relevant school office together with copies of the following documents:

(a) Birth Certificate;
(b) Baptismal Certificate; and
(c) Immunisation Record

2.1.4 The completed Parish reference which forms part of the application for enrolment will be returned to the relevant school office by the Parish Priest.

2.1.5 The Principal will arrange for an interview with the parents/guardians and the prospective students.

2.1.6 Parents will then be notified in writing of the results of their application by June 30 in the year prior to enrolment.

2.1.7 Where the number of enrolments in any given year exceeds the number of places available, the priority for acceptance shall be as follows:
(a) Siblings of students presently enrolled in an ASL school whose parents/guardians have shown a commitment to meet their financial responsibilities to the school.
(b) Children from Grace Child Care and Early Learning Centre.
(c) Children from families affiliated with the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East.
(d) Children from families affiliated with other Assyrian Churches.
(e) Children from Christian families.
(f) Children from non-Christian families.

2.1.8 Enrolment application received after the cut-off enrolment date will be considered by the Enrolment Committee only if vacancies exist, regardless of where the application might be placed in the hierarchy of priority described in clause 2.1.7 above.

2.1.9 Parents must be prepared to meet the financial requirements for the ongoing enrolment of the child.

2.1.10 Parents acknowledge that acceptance of their children at the pre-school level does not confer an automatic entitlement to enrolment at the Primary School. Enrolment at St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School is a separate process which requires students to complete and submit the primary school’s enrolment application form.

2.1.11 Parents acknowledge that acceptance of their children at the primary school level does not confer an automatic entitlement to enrolment at the secondary level. Enrolment at Mar Narsai College is a separate process which requires students to complete and submit the College’s enrolment application form.

[3.0] Students with Disabilities
3.1 The Enrolment Committee shall follow the enrolment procedure detailed above when processing enrolment applications from parents/guardians of students with disabilities, within the context of Part 2, Division 2, Section 22 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, who seek to be enrolled into regular classes at St Hurmizd.

Evaluation
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s annual review cycle.

Characteristics of the student body

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School had 600 students enrolled in 2012. There were approximately equal numbers of boys and girls throughout the school. The school draws its students from the local communities of the City of Fairfield. This is an identified area with a low Socio-Economic Status. The majority of students are of an Assyrian heritage and so English is not their main language at home so contributing to the high ESL factor of the school. The school has a number of students that experience learning difficulties and are regarded as Special Needs. The school runs an Intensive Language Course of 12 months for New Arrival refugee students.
## School Policies

### Policies for Student Welfare

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- minimizes risk of harm and ensures students feel secure,
- supports the physical, social, academic, spiritual and emotional development of students,
- provides student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development.

To ensure that all aspects of the school’s mission for providing for a student’s welfare are implemented the following policies and procedures are in place:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Changes in 2012</th>
<th>Access to full text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection Policy</td>
<td>Review of policy and updating of procedures to inform staff of their obligations.</td>
<td>Issued to all staff and members of school Board. Full text available on the school’s network. Hard copy available in the school office which parents can request to examine at their convenience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Policy</td>
<td>Policy maintained and reviewed in 2012</td>
<td>Full text available on the school’s network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision Policy</td>
<td>Supervision levels for excursions revised and incorporated into the policy</td>
<td>Full text in Staff Handbook and on School network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes of Conduct Policy</td>
<td>Anti-bullying policy and strategies revised and included in code of conduct. Peer Support Program extended to include strategies for dealing with bullies.</td>
<td>Full text in Staff Handbook and on School network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Care Policy</td>
<td>Policy maintained and reviewed</td>
<td>Full text in Staff Handbook and on School network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
availability of and access to special services such as counselling
- Health care procedures
- Critical incident policy
- Homework policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Policy</th>
<th>Availability of special services such as counselling - Health care procedures - Critical incident policy - Homework policy</th>
<th>Page 11 of the School’s annual report on School network, Parent Handbook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Policies for Student Discipline**

Students at St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School are expected to abide by the school’s rules and to follow the directions of teachers and other staff with authority delegated by the school. Where disciplinary action is required penalties imposed vary according to the nature of the breach of discipline and a student’s prior behaviour.

All disciplinary action that may result in any sanction against the student including suspension, expulsion or exclusion provides processes based on procedural fairness. The full text of the school’s discipline policy and associated procedures is provided to all members of the school community through:

- The Staff Handbook
- The Parent Information Booklet

A soft copy is also contained on the school’s network.

*The school expressly prohibits corporal punishment and does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school.*

During 2012 the school’s discipline policies and procedures were reviewed as part of the review of Pastoral Care in the school. The discipline policy for implementation in 2012 contains revised processes for disciplinary action that are based on procedural fairness.

**Policies for Complaints and Grievances**

The school’s policy for dealing with complaints and grievances includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents and/or students. These processes incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness.

The full text of the school’s policy and processes for complaints and grievances resolution is provided in the Staff Handbook and the information booklet for the Board of Governors. An outline...
of the policy and processes is also provided in the Parent Information booklet and on the school’s network. This policy was revised during 2012 following staff and parent evaluation.

**School-determined improvement targets**

**Achievement of priorities in 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Capacity</td>
<td>Using the Situational Analysis in formulating the National Partnership Strategic Plan, the school recognises the need to develop its leadership capacity for the future.</td>
<td>The School Board through the recommendations of the Principal, appointed a deputy principal and seven new grade leaders through the assistance of the National Partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Reading</td>
<td>NAPLAN data points to a need to improve reading and comprehension at the school. While decoding is not the issue, reading for meaning and comprehension will be the focus for improvement in 2012.</td>
<td>Through the National Partnership Plan, the school targeted reading through professional development of staff and implementation of new reading programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Engagement</td>
<td>Parental engagement in the life of the school and in the education of children is seen as a priority for communities of Low SES such as ours. We will endeavour to seek ways of engaging parents in all aspects of school life to improve the learning outcomes for our students.</td>
<td>Opportunities were presented for our parents in engage in formal dialogue through Parent Focus Groups where ideas were sought for greater involvement in the life of the school and how this would benefit our students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2013 Priority areas for improvement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years 3 and 5 NAPLAN Targets</td>
<td>Aim to improve in Reading and Numeracy by at least 5-7% across both the years 3 and 5 cohorts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Engagement</td>
<td>Develop a School-Family Partnership that will seek to offer parents the opportunities to engage through a series of programs tailored to the needs of parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRC and Student Leadership</td>
<td>Extend the Student Leadership Program at the School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Wellbeing</td>
<td>Introduce the “I can do it” program at the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respect and Responsibility

Valued education permeates all aspects of school life at St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School and respect and responsibility are important aspects of valued education.

As part of the NSW Government’s action plan for values, respect and behaviour in schools, a number of school education initiatives were announced to promote the key community values of respect and responsibility.

Respect is having regard for yourself and others, lawful and just authority and diversity within Australian society and accepting the right of others to hold different or opposing views. Responsibility is being accountable for your individual and community’s actions towards yourself, others and the environment.

At St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School Gospel values lie at the very heart of our pastoral care and welfare policy. Both staff and students demonstrate respect and responsibility through role modeling in the every-day life of the school.

Formal Religious Education

The study of Religious Education is a compulsory subject at St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School. A team of Religion teachers form a committee whose role is to design and implement the Religious Education program at the school.

The content of the Religious Education program is based on the teachings of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Assyrian Church of the East. Prayer is a fundamental part of the program.

All units of study within the Religious Education program aim to develop each student’s knowledge and understanding of their faith including, beliefs, history, traditions and practices. The Christian values and commitment instilled in the students encourage them to demonstrate tolerance and treat all members of the community with dignity and respect.

Cultural Achievements

At St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School we have regular assemblies and combined assemblies with Mar Narsai Assyrian College. We often have special guests to address our assemblies especially our Archbishop His Beatitude Mar Meelis Zaia AM.

During each assembly, our school community will say the Lord’s Prayer in the Aramaic Language followed by the Australian National Anthem and the Assyrian National Anthem.

All students are encouraged to find and develop their individual, creative and musical talents. Students perform a drama and ethnic dances for the Assyrian New Year celebrations and school feast days.

To assist students with learning more about Australian history and society, day excursions are organised to local venues that demonstrate aspects of these important elements of what it means to be Australian. Students in year 5 spend a two-day stay at the Bathurst Gold Fields to learn about this important period in Australia’s modern history. Students in year 6 spend a three-day stay in our nation’s capital to learn about government and about Australia’s war effort during the world wars as displayed at the Australian War Memorial.

The school organises cultural activities to educate the students about the Assyrian culture and history. The Assyrian New Year is celebrated every year on the first of April as in ancient times. The Assyrian Martyrs’ Day is also commemorated to raise the awareness of the students about the sacrifices made by their forefathers for freedom and survival.
Parent, Student & Teacher satisfaction

The evaluation and development of Assyrian schools is an ongoing process. Through our regular communication and contact with parents we hear positive and constructive comments regarding our Schools. Modes of communication/contact include:
Newsletters on a fortnightly basis
Parent information Nights
Students school reports
Parent/teacher interviews
Parent survey
P&F fliers to parents
Local Parish announcements
Community radio announcements

The school has an open door policy with parent involvement welcomed and encouraged. The Parents and Friends Association meets on a monthly basis and provides one of a number of avenues for parents to express their level of satisfaction. Throughout 2012 the level of participation in the P & F was high and parent feedback indicates a pleasing level of satisfaction with the school.
All staff members are formally interviewed by the Principal as part of an annual self review to insure workplace efficiency and satisfaction are addressed.
Financial Summary

INCOME

**SOURCES OF INCOME 2012**

- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants: 70%
- State Recurrent Grants: 11%
- Fees & Private Income: 12%
- Other Capital Income: 7%

EXPENDITURE

**RECURRENT/CAPITAL EXPENDITURE 2012**

- Salaries, Allowances & Related Expenditure: 62%
- Non Salary Expenses: 15%
- Capital Expenditure: 23%
2013 and Beyond

In 2012 the school entered into the National Partnership for Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities. Through the Partnership the School receives $560,000 every year for the next four years. The St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School is grateful to the Australian Government for the assistance through the partnership and also to the NSW Association of Independent Schools for the administration of the funds and their guidance and coordination of the school’s NP Plan. The 2013 National Partnership Plan can be view on our website at www.shaps.nsw.edu.au.