Dalmain Primary School: Creating a Culture of Academic Excellence

Dalmain Primary School is a dynamic learning community which has been promoting academic excellence for more than 20 years. The school, located in the northern suburb of Kingsley, opened in 1990 and currently has a student population of around 290. A dedicated and professional education team teaches a diverse range of programs and fosters a supportive relationship with students. 

Dalmain Primary School provides a welcoming, inclusive environment where there is an expectation that everyone will:
- Work towards achieving their potential;
- Show respect for themselves and others;
- Have social, civic and environmental responsibility; and
- Take pride in their school.

INNOVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Dalmain’s teachers and support staff have high expectations of student achievement and work together to ensure classrooms reflect the standards expected by our school and the broader community. Teachers at Dalmain use a variety of innovative learning strategies and provide an engaging work environment for all students. In 2012, the Department of Education’s Expert Review Group formally recognised our school for its high student achievement levels.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Dalmain Primary School students are considerate and respectful, caring for themselves, others and the environment. They pursue knowledge diligently and aspire to achieve academic excellence. Our students learn to understand the world around them, their roles and responsibilities in helping shape the future and ways in which they can make a difference.

A close working relationship exists between the students, staff and school community. Our newly appointed School Board and the Parents and Citizens Association provide excellent support, assist with direction and perform active and significant roles within our school.

OUR VISION

Dalmain Primary School cultivates an environment of academic excellence where staff members, in partnership with the community, provide a challenging, inclusive, contemporary curriculum inspiring all students to be active participants in modern Australian society. Students are encouraged, and expected, to take risks with their learning and accept responsibility for their actions. They recognise that Dalmain Primary School is a supportive learning environment with a holistic focus on health and well-being.

OUR VALUES

Dalmain Primary School’s motto ‘Care, Strive, Achieve’ encapsulates the four core values outlined in the Department of Education’s Plan for Government Schools. The four core values guide everything we do. In stating these values, we acknowledge that words alone are not sufficient; it is actions, based on these values that are important.

LEARNING

We have a positive approach to learning and encourage it in others; we advance student learning based on our belief that all students have the capacity to learn.

EXCELLENCE

We have high expectations of our students and ourselves. We set standards of excellence and strive to achieve them. The standards and expectations challenge all of us to give our best.

EQUITY

We recognise the differing circumstances and needs of our students and are dedicated to achieving the best possible outcomes for all. We strive to create workplaces and learning environments that are free of discrimination, abuse or exploitation.

CARE

We treat all individuals with care. Our relationships are based on trust, mutual respect and the acceptance of responsibility. We recognise the value of working in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community in providing a quality education for our students.

We work in partnership with the community, delivering a contemporary curriculum and inspiring our students to be caring, responsible, active citizens.
Targets 2013 - 2015

READING
Reading achievement in Years 3, 5 and 7 will be the equivalent of, or better than, ‘like’ schools.

WRITING
Students in Years 3, 5 and 7 will continue to excel in this area achieving better than ‘like’ schools.

SPELLING
Students in Year 7 to match, or be better than, the performance of ‘like’ schools.

NUMERACY
Numeracy achievement in Years 3, 5 and 7 will be the equivalent of, or better than, ‘like’ schools.

SCIENCE, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT
Science and SOSE achievement in Years 5 and 7 will continue to remain high with students’ results being 10 per cent or better than students from ‘like’ schools.

ATTENDANCE
Maintain current high level of student attendance (94.5 per cent)

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING
Darling Primary School will create an environment of academic excellence where staff members provide a challenging, inclusive, contemporary curriculum inspiring all students to be active participants in a modern Australian society. Students are encouraged and expected to take risks with their learning and responsibility for their actions.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>BROAD STRATEGIES</th>
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| Enhance Rigour in Early Years of Education | Administer the on-entry assessment for pre-primary students and use the results along with on-going teacher assessment to inform learning programs.  
Raise the expectations of our students in the early years – implement the Australian Curriculum PP-Yr2 and the general capabilities for kindergarten.  
Guidance about pedagogies and practice about the early years – WA Primary Principals’ Association professional development, State-wide Speech and Language Services. |
| Implementation of Australian Curriculum | Full implementation of Phase One learning areas English, Mathematics, History and Science. Integrate the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities into other learning areas.  
Trial and consolidation of Phase Two and Three learning areas as they become available. Teachers to access online learning and teaching resources through Scootie and the Portal.  
Teachers to use whole school staff meetings to further understanding of curriculum areas and planning. |
| Professional Growth                    | Explore the use of peer classroom observation to strengthen teaching practices.  
Develop an understanding of the new National Professional Standards for Teachers and their link to performance management. Staff actively engages in professional development in identified areas of individual and school need. |
| Update ICT Plan and Implementation     | Source expertise within the Information Technology (IT) field at the Department of Education to facilitate an audit of current IT structure and provide focus for future direction.  
Develop a whole-school approach to the delivery of Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) in keeping with the direction provided by the Australian Curriculum ICT General Capabilities Learning Continuum. |
| Early Identification of SAER           | Use on-entry assessment, teacher judgements and observations to identify students who may be at risk in the early years of schooling. Learning support team in partnership with parents, outside agencies and using a case conference approach to address areas of student need. |
| Use 50% of every day in the teaching of English and Mathematics | Focus on essential literacy and numeracy skills and strengthen the teaching of phonics, grammar, persuasive writing and reading comprehension. |
| Use NAPLAN Planners                    | Teachers to use planners to further enhance learning programs, devised to support understanding of concepts required for NAPLAN within key learning areas. |
Self Assessment

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM
LITERACY AND NUMERACY
A major part of our data collection is via NAPLAN (National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy) where we focus on analysing student performance in numeracy, reading, writing, spelling and language conventions. Students participate in NAPLAN assessments in Years 3, 5 and 7.

In line with current Department of Education policies such as Classroom First and the Strategic Plan for Government Schools 2012-2015, the priorities at Dalmain Primary School remain firmly focussed on literacy and numeracy with 50 per cent of each school day K-7 being devoted to these key areas.

NAPLAN ANALYSIS | READING
During the past five years students at Dalmain Primary School have generally performed as well or better than other ‘like’ schools across Australia. Reading has been a school priority for the past three years and remains an area of whole-school focus.

NAPLAN ANALYSIS | WRITING
Dalmain Primary School students have excelled within this area, achieving well above expectation in comparison with ‘like’ schools. This has occurred through systematic and strategic whole-school planning and teaching. This is a trend we will strive to maintain.

NAPLAN ANALYSIS | SPELLING
Spelling has been an area of focus for the whole school (K-7) during the past three years and will continue to be so. While there has been improvement in results in Years 3 and 5 this trend has not continued through to Year 7.

NAPLAN ANALYSIS | NUMERACY
Since the inception of NAPLAN, students across all year levels have performed highly in this area of assessment. This has resulted from a whole-school approach and the implementation of appropriate teaching and learning strategies in line with Australian Curriculum expectations.

WAMSE | WA MONITORING STANDARDS IN EDUCATION

SCIENCE, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT
Students at Dalmain Primary School perform as well or better than statistically similar schools. On average over the past 3 years students’ results have been 10 per cent higher than those of ‘like’ schools.

ON ENTRY DATA
Pre-primary students, tested each year in the areas of literacy and numeracy, perform in line with expectations of students state-wide. Students performing below expectation are monitored and re-tested at the end of semester two.

ATTENDANCE
The attendance rate at Dalmain Primary School in 2011 and 2012 (94.5 per cent) was well above the WA average of 92.5 per cent.

SURVEY DATA
Dalmain Primary School staff members, stakeholders and the community are surveyed on a bi-annual basis to assist in determining areas of strength and areas for improvement. The results of these surveys are shared with the Dalmain school community, School Board, P and C Association and staff.
Strong, Sustainable Partnerships

Dalmain Primary School will forge strong and sustainable partnerships to enhance opportunities for all Dalmain students.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Community Satisfaction Survey</td>
<td>School survey run on a bi-annual basis. Survey results analysed and information used as a guide for school improvement and change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Teachers build respectful, trusting and friendly relationships with families of students in their classes. Communication with parents via newsletters, flyers, email and face-to-face interviews.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use Parent Expertise</td>
<td>Create a data base listing areas of parent expertise and available skills to assist our school and students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Diversity</td>
<td>Recognition of cultural diversity within our school community and the broader community through the arts program, You Can Do It! Program, incursions, Languages Other Than English (LOTE) and Japanese exchange students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Partnerships</td>
<td>Continue partnership with Edith Cowan University, mentoring teachers throughout their training. Mentoring education assistants through Central TAFE, West Coast TAFE and ECU. Placement of work experience students from local high schools. On-going partnership with Girrawheen SHS involving authentic work experience projects under the direction of Dean Cantwell.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent Groups</td>
<td>Formation of School Board to assist our school with key decisions about direction of the school. P and C Association provides an important link between parents and the school including management of our school canteen, uniform shop and fundraising.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care for Kids</td>
<td>On-site partnership with Care for Kids providing before school, after school and holiday care for students within our local community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networks</td>
<td>Share teachers’ expertise and advice with in schools and across networks. Greenwood College Transition program; Greenwood Cluster.</td>
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SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Dalmain will provide a safe, caring and supportive environment for all of its school community. A culture of empathy, resilience and tolerance will be nurtured and embedded through the values and beliefs held by our school community.

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<td>Year 7 Leadership</td>
<td>All Year 7 students involved in taking on a leadership role within our school. Students undergo a rigorous selection process.</td>
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<td>Values</td>
<td>Introduction of the You Can Do It! Program based around the 5 keys to success. Dalmain Dockets – Playground citizenship program; School Awards – Celebrate positive student contributions through awarding honour certificates and citizenship badges. Individual and staff successes acknowledged through the school newsletter; Buddy classes between upper primary and lower primary. Cyber bullying – Students, families and staff educated through workshops, explicit teaching and information published in the newsletter and online.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusivity</td>
<td>Recognition of students and families within our school community with special needs via fund raising initiatives through the Year 7 leadership program. Examples include cystic fibrosis, cerebral palsy and diabetes. Involvement in incursions and programs which promote cultural awareness such as NAIDOC Week, Greenwood College World Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restorative Practice</td>
<td>Whole school approach to dealing with conflict resolution through restorative practice.</td>
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<td>Chaplain</td>
<td>School chaplain provides counselling to students and families who may require additional support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Year 7 transition program run in partnership with Greenwood College. Special needs students provided with a targeted program as required. Early years’ students provided with a transition program in term four to assist with a smooth transition to the next year level.</td>
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School Song

At Dalmain Primary School
We all learn the golden rules
We are striving hard to grow and to succeed
   It's a caring kind of place
Where you'll find a friendly face
and a happy smile will greet you one and all.

   We are working as a team
   to attain our hopes and dreams
We're learning skills to use throughout our lives
   It's the school that we like best
Our home is in the west
Life's great for us at Dalmain Primary School.