Oak Valley Anangu School -- Annual Report 2011

Preface and Verification

This Annual Report will focus on the School’s achievements and identify areas for improvement and offer recommendations for 2012 and beyond. The report will relate closely to the School Context and Vision Statement as well as the School’s Diagnostic Review which took place in August 2011 and will include a summary of each focus area.

The Report provides the Community, The Chief Executive and Department of Education and Child Development and Anangu Education Services with important information on aspects of the operation of Oak Valley Anangu School in 2011.

Information presented will be based on:

- Available school data
- SPeRS data
- 2011 Diagnostic Review
- Projected targets and strategies within the 2011 Site Improvement Plan
- Financial and resource management related to Oak Valley and DECD Statement of Directions, DECD Priorities for Aboriginal Education
- Anecdotal information

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The report will be made available to the Chief Executive of DECS, Maralinga Tjarutja Council and the Oak Valley Anangu School Governing Council members through the District Director Far North and Aboriginal Lands.
School Context Summary

Oak Valley Anangu School is an integral part of the Oak Valley Community. It is located on the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands approximately 1320 kilometres from Adelaide, 520 road kilometres NW of Ceduna, 140 km North-West of Maralinga and situated between Yalata Community (320km south) in South Australia and Tjuntjuntjara Community (350km west) in Western Australia. There are close family and cultural connections between the three communities (Oak Valley, Yalata and Tjuntjuntjara) and also the APY Lands and there is regular movement of children and families between them. Oak Valley is part of The Far North and Aboriginal Lands District of Schools. Oak Valley itself is managed and operated by Maralinga Tjarutja Inc, whose General Manager is now located in Oak Valley Community.

Oak Valley Community has an average population of between 100 and 150 people. The population varies considerably according to seasons, tradition, cultural and family obligations. Funerals continue to have a major impact on School and indeed the Communities population with many families absent for an extended period. The school caters for children from 3 to 16 years or older, or from CPC to Year 12. All students speak Pitjantjatjara and are “English as a Second Language” speakers. We sometimes have students whose first language is English, usually the children of service providers who are working in Oak Valley. This has not occurred recently and hence our whole School enrolment is Anangu.

The community was established in the 1980’s. The present well appointed and resourced school building is quite new having opened only in 2003. Before this time the school operated as two separate sections, the CPC and Senior Class in the “Town” and the JP and MP classes down in the Caravans past the Oval. Then more recently in temporary buildings altogether on the “Town” site. Now all the School is accommodated in the one modern facility. The School has an “Open Door Policy” and many Parents, Caregivers, Relatives, Friends and Visitors come along regularly. This is welcomed as it provides a ready avenue to engage with a wide range of School Community members to talk about how we can all work together for the benefit of our Students.

Overview

The school has undergone substantial staff and class changes recently. Classes were reduced from three (CPC/JP, Primary & Secondary in 2009) to two (CPC/JP & Upper Primary/Secondary). This Class structure has continued in 2011. Substantial Staff change occurred with the only continuing member being the Principal.

Two Beginning Teachers were appointed early in 2010 for Permanent placements in 2011. These early appointments provided the Principal with the opportunity to get each of them to visit Oak Valley Anangu School in Term 4 2010 for a week. Both Teachers continue to make mention that they found this to be extremely beneficial and provided a “head start” to Teaching and living in a Remote Community.
The two CPC children were once again accommodated within the JP Class (CPC-YR.3). Although this increased the complexity of an already complex Class. The JP teacher has provided an excellent and engaging Learning Programme to which the Students have responded very positively.

The Upper Primary/Secondary Class also presents as a very complex one, with year levels from 4 – Secondary. Not only a very wide age range but also an extreme range of abilities.

The Upper Primary/Secondary Class Teacher has been able to adapt to cater for this. The result has been an excellent and thoughtful learning programme which has engaged this complex class.

In 2011 for the first time a State Wide PRT was based at Oak Valley to service both OVAS and Yalata AS. This proved to be very useful as access to TRTs is not possible and booking PRTs very difficult.

A new SSO began in 2011. He has taken on a wide range of duties and proved to be of great benefit to the School.

We are fortunate to have the continued services of a very diligent and professional Finance Officer. This person is employed between Oak Valley, Yalata & Koonibba Schools.

Employment of AEWs continues to be an ongoing challenge. AEWs are an extremely important part of the School and when present provide invaluable expertise. In 2011 we were able to employ two experienced AEWs for varying lengths of time. Due to a number of factors including Family, Funeral and Cultural obligations as well as the “lure” of Ceduna their presence was spasmodic. Every effort was made to attract and retain AEWs and this will continue. It is a priority to have an AEW in each class and this is even more important with Beginning Teachers.

**Literacy**

**NAPLAN:** This year 2 students sat the NAPLaN tests. One in Year 3 and one in Year 7. Many more Students were enrolled to do the Test but just prior to the date their was a mass exodus from the Community to attend a Sorry Camp for a pending Funeral. Results were well below State and National standards.

**ESL Scales:** There have been slight improvements in ESL Scale scores in most children, those who are ‘regular’ attendees. Also, few students were around for this scaling, most were away on Sorry Business.

**PM BENCHMARKS:**
All students have progressed, though not spectacular there is data to show increased achievement across all year levels.
Oxford Word List:
Since the introduction of the OWL as a result of consultation with our LLM there has been improvement in all students' scores. The OWL is used daily by way of drills, flashcards, and Word Walls. Regularly attending, students score better, more consistently in both PM Benchmarks and the OWL.

PALLIC

In 2011 the Principal began to be in serviced in PALLIC—Principals As Literacy Leaders in Indigenous Communities. This has proved to be a very worthwhile exercise for a variety of reasons.

- Provided an opportunity to meet and talk with Principals of Schools with significant Indigenous populations from all over Australia.
- Put in place a Literacy Leaders Mentor.
- Focused our SIP even more firmly with Reading as a priority.
- Provided tools and activities to stimulate Professional Discussion.
- Emphasised and strengthened the need for close co-operation and planning between Oak Valley and Yalata Schools.

ACCELERATED LITERACY:

Our mandated methodology for supporting Reading.

Both Beginning Teachers were given an introduction (Day 1&2) during their AES Induction then during the year they received Day3&4 and training in Accelerated Literacy by way of visits from and contact with the AES Literacy Consultant. To supplement this a Teacher from Yalata, trained in AL, made two visits per term to work closely with Oak Valley Staff. This proved both valuable and successful. Teachers also spent some time observing experienced Teachers at Yalata. This enabled them to network with these Teachers who often have the same clients as them for various periods throughout the year. In addition to this both Teachers accompanied the Principal on one occasion each when he went to Leaders meetings at Ernabella. One Observing at Indulkana the other at Mimili.

As confidence in teaching with AL grows, we see students’ skills improving. Most noticeably, we could see from the Oral Reading Record using the AL text—how students’ Reading scores were improving.
AL Reading texts utilised by both Yalata and Oak Valley were aligned so that whichever school students attended they could easily continue learning with minimal disruption. This approach should continue as the benefits are obvious.
It is anticipated that the same level and delivery of support from the AES Literacy Consultant and Yalata Teacher will occur in 2012 as happened in 2011.

**Student Attendance**

When Students are in the Community they generally attend School for all or part of the day. As a reward for coming to School early, breakfast is provided and the Students then have the opportunity to use the computers until lessons begin. This is an incentive that works particularly well with the younger students, not so well with the older ones. At 8:45 the Principal then drives to each house in the Community to wake and collect more students. Though a time consuming exercise it usually results in at least 50% more students attending School on that day. It also provides the Principal the opportunity to each day communicate directly with Students Caregivers. In this way reasons for absence and a Students where-abouts are generally known. It also provides a direct way of reinforcing the message that regular attendance means better Learning.

One obvious reason for lateness is the Store opening hours. As the Store doesn’t open till 10:00 AM most Community members tend to start their day around this time. Then Lunchtime becomes an issue as the Store closes at 1:00 PM just as school does for Lunch. This encourages Students to skip the last few minutes to get there before it closes. We have a Lunch Program at School but the lure of “Store Goodies” is very strong. The School has again made an approach to the Maralinga Tjarutja General Manager with a view to reviewing Store hours so that they support rather than hinder learning.

Lateness often results from Students staying up too late at night. The School has control of the lights on the Rage Cage. To try and get the Students, especially the very young ones to get to bed early the lights are timed to go off at 10:30PM Week Nights to give a visual reminder. On Weekends this extended to 11:30PM.

A major factor in poor attendance continues to be absence from the Community due to Funerals and the associated time at Sorry Camps in the lead up to the actual burial. The School realises and supports the need for people to fulfil their Customary obligations. However it needs to be mentioned that the time taken has a huge effect on attendance.

Consultation re poor attendance takes place through Governing Council as well as regular consultation with individual families. This consultation focuses on the importance and educational significance of regular full attendance. Initiatives and awards are given to well attending students. Good attendance is also a pre-requisite to attend camps and excursions as well as being invited to attend Wiltja.
Recommendations

- Collect and analyse data:
- Students with poor attendance are identified and discussed with families, community leaders and with Families SA.
- Information is exchanged constantly with Yalata and Tjuntjuntjara and other Anangu Schools.
- Attendance is included on each student’s report card.
- Continue Breakfast, Recess & Lunch Programs.
Continue to liaise with MT GM re Store hours review

Oak Valleys population and hence School enrolment has continued to increase as a result of actual and perceived benefits of mining on Maralinga Tjarutja Lands. This increase in population and hence students continues to be a factor to monitor.

Numeracy

At Oak Valley we use the SACSA Framework as the core structure for Numeracy and Maths curriculum and Maths300 as a supporting activity/materials. Maths300 and a range of activity-based resources are used to support student-learning in classrooms. Classes place an emphasis on everyday maths that relates directly with student experiences and needs.

Money in particular is a focus. As such each class is encouraged to set up a “Store” in which real life situations can be modelled. Along with this students are involved in the budgeting/purchasing process for some class activities.

Mathsletics was introduced in 2011 and while it has benefits, the very slow Internet Speed at OVAS hinders its use and therefore effectiveness.

Recommendations

- The new National Maths Curriculum will be released soon. Staff will need Professional Training and Development to implement this.
- DECD to be approached re possibility of increasing Internet speed.
- Get someone at another site to download Mathsletics resources.
**Student Health and Wellbeing**

We liaise closely with Oak Valley Clinic – Staff have been coming to the school and assisting/running/supporting with Health lessons ie. handwashing, ear cleaning, teeth and eye checks, paying particular attention to skin complaints. Teachers are programming regular BBC (Breathe Blow Cough) and nose-blowing to assist with ear-health.

Other initiatives we have been using -

Breakfast, Fruit and Lunch programs have been operating with increasing success
School staff have worked together to run regular Morning Fitness.
Shine SA have approached the Community and School with a view to offering some T&D to run programs. This has received Community support for approval.
Cooking lessons designed around healthy and easy meals continue.

**Recommendations**

- that an effort is made to ensure Learning is as enjoyable as possible, to build students’ self-esteem.
- we endeavour to include regular ‘Keeping Them Safe’ methodologies.
- Staff to receive SHINE Training in 2011.
- continue with Breakfast, Lunch, Fruit programs.
- AEWs trained in Mandatory Reporting.
- Improve working relationship with Families SA.

**Secondary Education**

In 2010 we had as many as 12 Secondary Students in Oak Valley. These students were part of the UP/Secondary class. Four other Oak Valley Secondary students attended Wiltja in 2011.

At present all SACE students attend Wiltja and this will continue in 2012 and beyond. The Wiltja Program provides us and our Students with much wider Secondary options. We continue to build strong ties with the Wiltja Residence and School for our students’ benefit. In 2011 Wiltja Staff came to Oak Valley to present their Roadshow, This was very well attended by Staff, Students and Community with 26 people in the UP/Secondary Class for the presentation.
A “Wiltja Bus” had just been contracted for the end of 2010 and has continued in 2011. This means that both Oak Valley and Yalata Wiltja students are picked up from and returned directly to their Communities. This is a marvellous new development which is fully supported by our School and Parents. We thank Wiltja for providing this service to our Community.

In 2011 no VET units have been delivered in Oak Valley, however some Oak Valley Students are now attending Windsor Gardens HS and accessing VET subjects. The Trade Training Centre at Umawa may provide an opportunity for those of our Secondary Students who remain Oak Valley based.

**Recommendations**
- Oak Valley Secondary Students are part of the UP/Secondary Class.
- That links with Yalata Secondary Class are continued and improved.
- Explore Umawa TTC as an option.
- We continue to send students to WILTJA and build on the relationship to provide wider Secondary options.
- Approach Taoundi College re bringing their Hospitality Caravan to Oak Valley.
- Canvas the idea of a School Based Trainee.

**Anangu Culture**

Customary obligations continue to mean that people move on mass to Yalata and other even more distant Communities to attend Sorry Camps and then the Funerals. Anangu families have expressed to me that it is their intention to return to their Country so that their children can “learn” in both a School sense but also a traditional one.

In order to involve Parents and Caregivers more in the decision making we have encouraged an open school policy where Parents and Caregivers are welcome. Governing Council continues to operate on a rather informal basis but decisions are always based on wide Parent/Community consultation. All parents have expressed a desire to work with the School to strengthen and promote Anangu Culture.

One of the highlights of 2011 was Oak Valley Anangu Schools’ attendance at the Ernabella Dance festival, Sports Day and MobFest. A total of 36 Staff, Students, Parents, Caregivers and Community Members as well as the Clinic Nurse and Arts Centre Coordinator made the 2 day journey in 6 vehicles to and from Pukatja. We were able to stay at Kenmore Park AS and travel into Ernabella each day.

The whole trip was very rewarding, not least of which was the number of Anangu who came up to us and said how “it made them very happy that Oak Valley had come so far to join in”. There was a real sense of reconnection and strengthening of Culture.
Recommendations
- Keep working on regular Governing Council meetings at least once per Term so that parents are talking, thinking and planning for their children’s future.
- As far as possible ensure each class has an AEW
to make the time for cultural excursions and activities
to encourage and facilitate the sharing of Culture.
- Involve School in the AW NRM Caring for Country Program.

Early Childhood
For most of the year there have been two CPC aged children in Oak Valley. For a variety of reasons they have been accommodated in the JP Class. This has enabled us to provide them with the required hours per day. Importantly, this has also encouraged consistent and regular attendance, hopefully establishing this pattern in them for many years to come. During part of their time at School each week their Parents/Caregivers sit with them joining in the Learning process. When numbers of 0-3 year olds are in the Community the CPC facility is made available for a Parent run Play Group.

Recommendations
- In 2012 there will be at least 6 CPC age children.
- There will be a vacancy advertised for a CPC/NIT teacher.
- Keep encouraging a Parent run Play Group for younger children.
- Engage the services of Professional Landscapers to extend and improve the CPC outside play area.
Audit present CPC Resources to ascertain what if any need replacing or purchasing. Begin process of accreditation.

Resource Management
All School Rainwater Tanks now have secure hatches to prevent access by children. All Rainwater for use within the School now passes through an ultra-violet filter. The Rainwater is sampled and sent to Adelaide for analysis every three months. If any contamination is detected the water is immediately treated.

Security to most external doors has been improved to make the School more secure during vacation periods. The CPC fence has been moved to make more room in readiness for landscaping upgrade. Gates at the rear of the School have been upgraded to prevent vehicular access during vacations but allow ease of access during term time for freight unloading. New Student Toilets were constructed to replace the very old and rusted Boys and Girls and placed next to the Staff Toilets to create a Toilet Block.
Recommendations:
- Security to be improved further, in particular outside doors.
- Use of grey water from shower block.
- Improvements to CPC outside Play Area.
- School and Community Consultation has resulted in an agreement to build a Shade Structure over the Rage cage.
- To plant more trees around School boundary.
- Investigate designs for an IT Teaching Resource in the DEMAC.
- Purchase another School vehicle because with the new FleetSA Policy of 8 seat Troop Carriers we are unable to cater for all our students on Excursions or Camps.

DECS Improvement and Accountability Framework

Once again in 2011 Staff participated in a shared review of some of the functions we perform in a school day, using the Level 4 Rubrics from DIAF self-review tool. We looked at the headings: Share Leadership, Focus on Learning, Attend to Culture, Think Systemically. We felt that as a new staff, with 2 New Graduate teachers, we were able to say for Focus on Learning, we all agreed we were ‘Functioning’. As for others we continue to develop. This is perhaps expected with large Staff turn-over.

Year’s Highlights

- Whole School and Community Trip to Ernabella.
- Very well supported Spinifex Sports at Oak Valley involving Oak Valley, Yalata and Tjuntjuntjara Schools and Communities.
- Wiltja Roadshow in Oak Valley.
- UP/Secondary Class visit to Wiltja.
- St Mary’s School visit.
- Aquatics Camp for whole School at Pt Sinclair, with Yalata, Koonibba and Penong Schools.
- SA Sport and Recreation visits for whole school sport and fun.
- Community Christmas Party at School with Anangu Santa
- Christmas Train at Watson, Jessica Mauboy.
- Diagnostic Review of OVAS 2011.

Staff Qualifications

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JP Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>UP/Secondary Teacher</td>
<td>Bachelor of Teaching, Bachelor of Arts Adelaide Uni.</td>
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