

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children
5214

2008 Annual Report to the
School Community

Furlong Park
School for Deaf Children



Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development

School Overview and Principal's Report.

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children provides educational programs for children with a hearing loss from the Northern and Western Regions of Metropolitan Melbourne and the rural fringe. Situated in Sunshine North, the school provides programs for children from age 3 years to 13 years. Whilst children are officially ungraded grouping does occur that follows the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's stages of learning including Early Education, Early Years and Middle Years. Enrolment is based on Departmental eligibility requirements and Regional approval and by the end of 2008 we had 56 students enrolled.

Our school motto is "Together We Learn and Grow" which describes the school's aspiration to engage all learners to be inspired, challenged and supported to achieve their very best. We strive to ensure the continued provision of a dynamic learning environment where all students can achieve their full potential.

2008 was the first year of the school's new Strategic Plan (2008 – 2011). Excellent progress was made in key improvement strategies and significant projects with most Annual Implementation Plan milestones achieved. Our focus will be to continue to build on this foundation and work towards achieving our stated improvement goals which are:

- To improve students' communication skills using Auslan and English.
- To improve student learning outcomes English Literacy and Mathematics.
- To improve the ability of students to be personal learners.
- To improve student transition throughout their school years.

Over the past seven years our language philosophy has developed into model that is based on a bilingual, bicultural approach where students are exposed to both Auslan and spoken English within their learning program. The two languages are valued by all staff and the language preference of both the parents and the child is respected. Whilst exposure to both languages occurs within each classroom, acquisition of Auslan is specifically supported by the Deaf members of our staff whilst additional support for the acquisition of spoken English is provided by our three Speech Therapists. English is a vital part of the literacy program and is presented through reading writing and speaking whilst deeper understanding of concepts is supported by the use of Auslan. Furlong Park also supports the development of Auslan skills through the provision of a formal Deaf studies and LOTE (Auslan) program. The aim of this program is to provide our students with vital skills with life-long implications; providing for the cultural and linguistic development of Auslan and access to and success with curriculum opportunities offered at the school.

Students and families have continued to access to a growing range of additional support services and programs which in 2008 included Speech Pathology, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Social Work support for families, Guidance / Psychological support, Auslan instruction for parents and other families members. In 2008 the six week communication program conducted by our speech pathologists gave parents the opportunity

to develop strategies appropriate for communicating with their deaf child regardless whether using Auslan or Spoken English. Once again, with the support of staff from Deaf Children Australia, the “Cool Parents Cool Kids’ program was offered and was attended by a small group of parents. The support networks that developed from participating in these programs have proved to be very worthwhile for those who participated. In addition parents were given the opportunity to be involved in a number of community events throughout the year including:

- Meet the Teachers BBQ
- Mothers’ Day Morning Tea
- Fathers’ Day Afternoon Tea
- Raising Happy Deaf Children Workshop
- Whole School Picnic to Werribee Park Zoo.

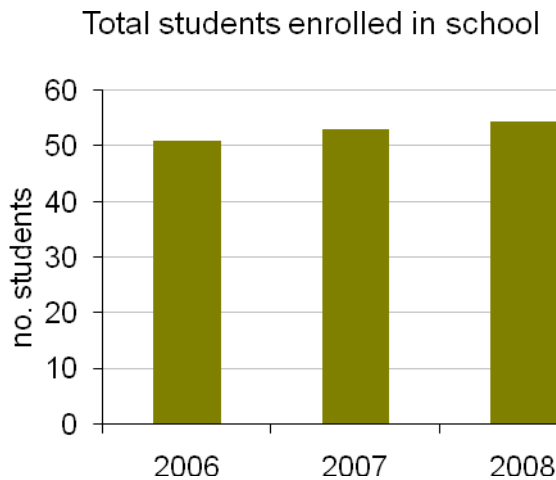
Students were transported to Furlong Park by Taxis (Arrow Taxis) and buses (Sita Coaches) with five bus runs and one taxi. All transport for students is funded by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. In 2008 we covered a wide geographical area across the western and northern regions of metropolitan Melbourne.

The decision to operate for 2008 without an Assistant Principal was maintained due to ongoing budget constraints. A Leading Teacher was appointed and a half time administration component was allocated to her role. Two teachers undertook acting Leading Teacher roles and with this leadership team and the added support of the School Council and the dedicated staff we were able to continue on track and implement the goals outlined in our 2008 Annual Implementation Plan.

Experiential learning assists us to address the language learning needs of the students at Furlong Park School for Deaf Children and the following are some of the additional programs that we offered in 2008. Many of these were kindly subsidised by School Council and the donations of community members (some anonymous) in an endeavour to keep costs as low as possible for parents. These include:

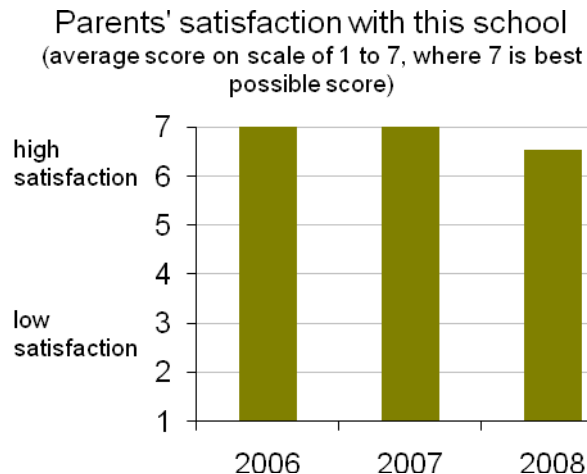
- Sporting programs: Tennis Program in partnership with Victoria University, Deaf Sports, Personal Training PE Program, Mini Olympics Day, Basketball and Football Clinics, Jump Rope for Heart and a Circus Skills Program.
- Excursions: Melbourne and Werribee Zoos, Life Skills Shopping Program Year 5/6 School Visits to VCD, Sunshine and Banksia Secondary Colleges, Geelong Wool Museum and Williamstown Beach.
- Whole school Activities: Variety Club Christmas Party, VCD Theatre Performance, School’s Annual Concert, Theatre of the Deaf Performance and Workshop, Reptile Encounters (donated by the Ferrier family)
- Deaf Schools’ Camp for Middle Years and School sleepover for Early Years students.

Student enrolments



Our enrolments for the past 3 years have been steadily increasing with the trend set to continue in 2009. By the end of 2008 our enrolment had peaked at 58. The Early Education Program within the Early Learning Centre, is continuing to meet a vital community need catering by the end of the year for 24 students in a variety of programs designed to meet the needs of three and four year olds including students with additional needs. The primary school program catered for 34 students from Prep to Year six with two classes catering for the specific needs of deaf children with additional needs.

Parent Satisfaction



Whilst parent satisfaction with the programs provided by Furlong Park continues to remain high, with a General Satisfaction result of 6.53 which is well above the state mean of 5.8, there was a slight decrease the area of student engagement. All areas surveyed (with the exception of Extra-curricular) remain well above the state averages. It is pleasing to see that there was marked improvement in the areas noted as a concern in 2007 –Therapy Services and Program Support Groups. Parent comments included- “Beautiful school, well done. I was quite worried about my daughter starting Kinder being Deaf but Furlong Park are amazing”. “My son loves going to Furlong Park – the teachers are great. They have a good program for my child”. In 2009 we will particularly concentrate our efforts on the areas of concern for parents - student motivation, connectedness to school and social skills.

Teacher Satisfaction

The average score for teacher satisfaction (Individual morale) at the school was 73.7 on a scale from 0 to 100 where 100 is the best possible score. This is an increase from the previous year's result of 72.3.

Teacher Absence

In 2008 the average number of days absent per Teacher was 8.75 whilst the average number of days absent for School Support Officers was 10.63.

Teacher Retention

Of the eighteen teaching service staff at Furlong Park School for Deaf Children at June 2007 (including those on leave without pay), thirteen or 72% were still at the school at June 2008. This figure across all Government schools was 84%. Of the thirteen ongoing teaching staff at the school at June 2007, eleven or 85% were still at the school at June 2008. The figure across all Government schools is 88%.

Teacher participation in professional learning

All teaching staff have participated in professional learning throughout the year. This included whole staff updating CPR training and a number of professional development programs centring on Principles of Learning and Teaching, Information Communication Technology including ePotential; the Induction / Mentoring program for Beginning for teachers; Coaching; Literacy and Numeracy; Auslan; Autism; Student Wellbeing; Physical Education and School Finance.

Teacher Qualifications

All teachers in Victorian Government schools are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. The requirements for registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching can be found at; http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document_ID=241.” Of the 17 teaching service staff at Furlong Park in 2008 (including those on Leave Without Pay) 15 hold Primary Teaching qualification and appropriate Teacher of the Deaf qualifications. The other two hold Primary Teaching qualification and university level qualifications in Auslan, including for one teacher, appropriate Language Other Than English / Auslan teaching qualifications. Both were undertaking, with one successfully completing, the appropriate Teacher of the Deaf Qualification in 2008.

Student Progress & Achievements

Student Learning

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children monitors goal achievement against the domains of the Victorian essential Learning Standards (VELS) and the students' Individual Learning Plans. The school results continue to be pleasing with a small percentage of students not achieving targets set for them. Factors leading to non-achievement of goals will be closely monitored in the future to ensure that where possible all students are achieving a positive learning result in each domain, particularly in the core learning and improvement areas outlined in our Strategic Plan, Literacy and Numeracy.

Intended Outcomes

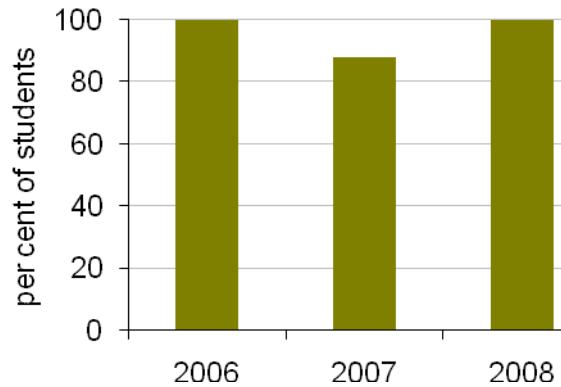
- Improved student achievement in all areas of the curriculum against goals outlined in Individual Education Plans with a particular focus on Literacy and Numeracy.
- Provision of resources including professional development for staff in support of the program
- Provision of more Deaf staff to support access to Auslan
- Improvement of students' language and conceptual understandings across the curriculum.
- Improve students overall communication skills in English and Auslan.

Report on progress:

- Access to Auslan has been supported through the employment of Deaf support staff and Deaf teachers.
- A communication approach has been developed based on bilingual- bicultural philosophies and is now operating across the school.
- All staff members have improved their ability in Auslan through individual tuition opportunities and collegiate support in class from Deaf Auslan workers.
- Ongoing opportunities to attend Auslan classes have been made for parents both during working hours and as a night education class.
- Ongoing access to the LOTE/ Deaf Studies program which focuses on developing understandings of Deaf history, identity and culture has provided cultural and linguistic opportunities for the students and has resulted in improved Auslan language skills of the students.
- The Auslan Assessment tool developed in 2005 to assess the students' Auslan linguistic skills and provide baseline data for Auslan skill development has been consistently applied over the past three years.
- An Oral Language assessment tool has been developed by the team of Speech Pathologists to provide baseline data and complement the Auslan assessment tool.
- Students have accepted the increase in the use of Auslan and an ability to "code switch" between Auslan and spoken English is common amongst our students.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of students making satisfactory or better progress against their individual goals in 2008. (See graph) This may be due to teachers reviewing both goal setting, assessment and moderation processes and having access to an hour a week during school to meet with team members to plan curriculum and to

moderate on student achievement. This translates into the goals in our newly developed Strategic Plan.

Percentage of students who made satisfactory or better progress in English



- The School Based Literacy Plan which was developed in 2005 to enable teachers to more consistently plan for and assess student learning in English was used more consistently across the whole school to drive ‘Teaching and Learning’ in English.
- Student assessments in the area of Numeracy for students in years prep to two was carried out bilingually using the Early Years Assessment Tool.
- All essential areas are being provided at Furlong Park either by class teachers through integrated learning or through the provision of specialist programs.
- Whole school professional Learning in the Principles of Learning and Teaching was provided.

Further action:

- Continue to support the access to Auslan as a LOTE for all students
- Provide ongoing data for students using the Auslan assessment tool.
- Provide ongoing data for students using the Oral Language assessment tool.
- Continue to develop the Auslan skills of all staff members and parents.
- Develop a consistent assessment tool in Literacy (English) at the Middle Years level.
- Develop a consistent assessment tool in Numeracy at the Middle Years level.
- Whole school planning and assessment in Literacy to be based on the school’s Literacy Plan and the Western Metropolitan Region Blueprint.
- Facilitate Literacy and Numeracy Coaching across the school.
- Review process for reporting on Individual Learning Plans to parents.
- Continue to improve techniques for moderating student progress by providing time for teachers to meet to discuss students’ progress during the school day.
- Foster the use of multiple sources of feedback, including student feedback.
(Performance and Development Culture)

Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Furlong Park School for Deaf Children is committed to providing a safe supportive and stimulating school environment that engages students and promotes positive wellbeing. Parent Opinion results for the category Student Engagement, specifically Student Motivation, Social skills and Connectedness to School are marginally lower than the previous year. The results are above the state mean however and we expect that our planned whole school approach to developing student social and emotional competencies will lift the results in this category.

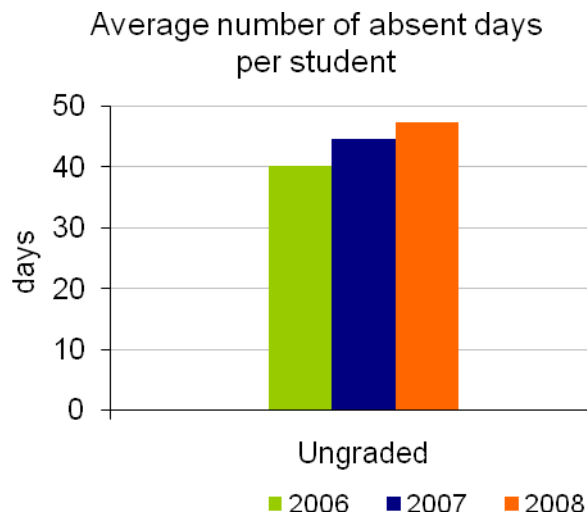
Intended Outcomes.

- Ensure student safety through the development of anti-bullying strategies.
- Empower students at risk of being bullied.
- Reduce number of incidents of playground dispute requiring the support of an adult.

Report on Progress.

- During the year the school focussed on implementing elements of the “Solving the Jigsaw” anti-bullying program using consistent language with the students and supporting them to use appropriate strategies to independently solve issues in the classroom and the school yard.
- A trial of the “Little Jigs” program which promotes and supports resilience was carried out with a group of students by the Student Welfare co-ordinator.
 - Student Code of Conduct consistently implemented.
 - Playground and classroom rules were reviewed at the beginning of the year and students regularly reminded of these rules at school assemblies through role play situations.
 - Playground supervision maintained at two staff members on duty at all times. The second staff member on duty consistently replaced when absent.
- Investing in Schools funding supported the upgrade of the school oval and Early Learning Centre playground.
- Sunsmart policy updated and adhered to by students applying sunscreen and wearing broad brimmed hats when involved in outdoor activity.
- Free Fruit Fridays was inconsistently implemented for Early Years students.
- Improvements to the school environment include the installation of ‘Ruberoc’ play surfaces in both the Early Learning Centre and the school’ basketball court.
- Meet the Teachers BBQ in February
- School Community picnic to Werribee Park Zoo in December
- Parent Programs implemented – Communicating With Your Deaf Child, Cool Parents Cool Kids, Raising Happy Deaf Children.

Absence Data remains high with an increase in the average number of absent days per student from 44.5 in 2007 to 47.3 in 2008. (See Graph) Absences remain high due, in part, to children attending medical appointments (for either their hearing loss or additional disability), being hospitalised (cochlear implants or high medical needs), travelling with families for extended periods of time and parent choice for pre-school students. In 2008 information was provided for parents on school reports in June and December relating to the number of absence days for individual students.



Further Action

- “Little Jigs” will be continued in 2009 and “Circle of Friends” will be introduced.
- A review of the Student Code of Conduct document will take into account the success and future directions of this program
- Behaviour Management Plan will be reviewed and implemented in 2008 to ensure consistency across the school.
- Student Welfare coordinator to lead the implementation of conflict resolution program.
- Ongoing improvements to the school environment to be carried out.
- Parents/ carers will continue to be encouraged to make medical and paramedical appointments outside school hours where possible to minimise absences.
- Continue to provide information for parents on school reports in June and December relating to the number of absence days for individual students.
- “Student of the Week” awards displayed in the school foyer.
- Free Fruit Friday to be consistently implemented.
- Whole school excursions, incursions and activities.
- Meet the Teachers BBQ in February.
- School Community picnic to Werribee Park Zoo in December

Student Pathways and Transitions

Considerable work has been undertaken in the area of Student Pathways and Transitions. Our school aims *“to provide support to ensure a smooth and efficient transition into and from the school and areas within the school* as we believe this assists students to make a successful transition to their new environment. A smooth start to the school year is testimony to the quality of the transition programs.

The key stages of transition to, from and within Furlong Park School for Deaf Children include;

- Early Learning Centre to a mainstream Pre-school program
- Early Learning Centre to prep at Furlong Park School for Deaf Children or mainstream schools
- Furlong Park School for Deaf Children to secondary college
- Mainstream primary to Furlong Park School for Deaf Children
- Student transfers to Furlong Park School for Deaf Children from other schools for deaf children.
- Transfer from class to class within Furlong Park School for Deaf Children.

Intended Outcomes.

- Students and their families to make informed decisions regarding options for secondary education.
- Information regarding options for students entering prep from our Early Learning Centre is provided to families.
- A structured transition program (weekly sessions) for students entering the Furlong Park prep program is to take place over term 4.
- The process for enrolling students in the Early Learning Centre clarified within the school and to feeder organisations.

Report on Progress

- Year 6 to 7 and prep transition coordinators were maintained.
- All students in years 5 and 6 were able to visit the Deaf facilities at Banksia Secondary College and Sunshine Secondary College and Victorian College for the Deaf.
- Information was provided to prospective families about options for the education of deaf students.
- Families were provided with up to date information about the transition process.
- Results from the Parent Opinion Survey indicate that 94% of parents agree that their child has been well supported in their transitions at school.
- Students participated in annual Orientation programs within Pre-schools, Primary Schools, Specialist schools and schools for the deaf. .
- Students at year six level made transitions to Victorian College for the Deaf and Concord School.

- Six students made the transition to our prep program, one to Bendigo's Kennington Deaf Facility and two to local primary schools. Four students transferred from the Primary school program to St. Albans East Deaf Facility, one at prep level, one at year two one at year three and one at year four.
- Furlong Park School for Deaf Children continued to support children enrolment in the Early Learning Centre at any stage through the year up to the beginning of term three.
- In light of our increasing enrolments in the Early Learning Centre, ongoing and persistent approaches have been made to DEECD endeavouring to renegotiate our current funding model. In 2008 the General Manager of the Funding Unit agreed to increase our funding to cater for the need within the western suburbs whilst the review into deaf education is undertaken.
- The Early Learning Centre continues to have a vital role in supporting families with student transitions. Teachers liaise with mainstream kindergartens and primary schools through the year to ensure smooth transitions.
- Transition policies at three stages were reviewed.
- Enrolment policy is yet to be reviewed.

Further action

- Maintain role(s) within the school to co-ordinate transition from the pre-school program, into the school based program and from Furlong Park School for Deaf Children to other organisations.
- Review the enrolment policy for students entering the Early Learning Centre.
- Review transition processes for students at Furlong Park School for Deaf Children from class to class.
- Continue to support families with student transitions through teachers liaising with mainstream kindergartens and primary schools through the year to ensure smooth transitions
- Survey families after the transition process to gain more in depth information about satisfaction with the support provided throughout the process of transition.

Future Directions

Our major focus for 2009 continues to be the implementation of our school's strategic direction for the next three years.

The process will include:

- Ensuring goal congruence relating to the school's core purpose and values
- Establishing consistent outcomes for students
- Implementing key improvement strategies
- Allocating resources to support school goals and key improvement strategies
- Whole school assessment of the implementation process
- Involving the school community

The focus for 2009 is outlined in our Annual Implementation Plan and will be supported through:

- Adherence to the school's communication policy when communicating with deaf students, aiming to expose students to English and Auslan equally whilst meeting the communication needs of each individual.
- Developing Assessment and Reporting policies.
- Teachers outlining explicit assessment tasks within their term planning document.
- Improved moderation of achievement progress through reflective practices.
- Development of a consistent approach to assessment and reporting particularly in Communication, Literacy and Numeracy
- Biannual implementation of agreed assessment tools (Auslan, Oral language, Early Years Literacy and Numeracy).
- Continuing to explore and trial assessment and reporting tools in Literacy and Numeracy for Middle Years students.
- Ongoing refinement of Individual Education Plans and goal setting processes.
- Enhance and strengthen our acknowledged strong professional learning program
- A continued focus on enhancing teaching and learning practices through ongoing implementation of Principles of Learning and Teaching and Coaching for Literacy program to support staff development.
- Linking staff professional learning to our Annual Implementation Plan and individual performance and development improvement focuses that reflect school, personal and career development goals.

- Enhancing student social and emotional competencies through the implementation of further elements of “Solving the Jigsaw”.
- Implementing the newly developed transition policies and practices to ensure students are successfully transitioned at each key stage of their schooling.
- Student pathways information will be shared with students and parents to support future planning through enhanced knowledge and understanding of available options.
- Extension of the parent information programs available to support parents.
- Continued upgrade of school facilities.
- Development of Ultramet Readiness Action Plan in the areas of School Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Workforce Capabilities, School Infrastructure, Data and Content, Community Involvement.

Financial Performance and Position

Students over 4 years and 8 months are funded through the Program for Students with Disabilities. Children aged between 3 years and 4 years, 8 months are funded through a Resource Agreement from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

After seven years of continued attempts to renegotiate the Early Education funding agreement without success a review into deaf education provision, including funding allocation, began in 2007. We were assured that in the event that our Early Learning Centre enrolments exceeding ten students, the funding unit would provide some additional interim funding. In 2007 and 2008 the Assistant Manager of the Student Wellbeing Unit responsible for funding agreed to provide additional funding to support the increasing number of students in the ELC. This additional funding has allowed us to reduce the deficit incurred over the years of inadequate funding levels such that we ended the 2008 school year in surplus.

In 2008 financial planning included a strong commitment to resourcing quality teaching and learning programs, providing an attractive and safe environment, funding on-going staff professional learning and supporting effective pathways for all students.

The rollout of significant additional funds gained through Federal and DEECD grants was continued which helped to broaden students' experiences and provide improvements to the environment.

Staffing is continually monitored and reviewed with a workforce plan that spans both ongoing and contract staff at each level of Educational Support Staff, Beginning Teacher, Accomplished Teacher, Expert Teacher, Leading Teacher and Principal Class which includes a mix of Deaf and hearing staff members to support students' acquisition of both English and Auslan

Professional learning expenditure for the year of \$8467 included funding staff learning in whole school priority areas. Staff replacement costs were additional and not accounted for in this budget.

Our single most expensive resource continues to be staffing and at the local level, Casual Relief Teachers. Although our pool of CRTs is small it is imperative to the well being of staff working to cater for the challenging needs of our students that they are confident that every endeavour will be made to replace them when ill or attending professional development.

All staff members were provided with access to free flu injections.

The School Council budget procedure ensured the sound and effective management of school monies. All variations to the 2008 budget model were approved by School Council.

Financial Performance – Operating Statement Summary for the year ending 31st December, 2008	
Revenue	2008 Actual
DE&T Grants	382,828
Commonwealth Government Grants	10,354
State Government Grants	
Other	27,119
Locally Raised Funds	23,279
Total Operating Revenue	443,580
Expenditure	
Salaries and Allowances	75,763
Bank Charges	
Consumables	16,659
Books and Publications	226
Communication Costs	7,722
Furniture and Equipment	27,169
Utilities	17,440
Property Services	134,984
Travel and Subsistence	52
Motor Vehicle Expenses	2,088
Administration	1,939
Health and Personal Development	487
Professional Development	17,511
Trading and Fundraising	5,503
Support/Service	38,098
Miscellaneous	30,330
Total Operating Expenditure	375,971
Net Operating Surplus/- Deficit	67,608
Capital Expenditure	16,397
Please note that the above amounts do not include any credit revenue or expenditure allocated or spent by the school through its Student Resource Package	

Financial Position as at 31st December, 2008	
Funds Available	2008 Actual
High Yield Investment Account	183,449.82
Official Account	23,003.61
Other Bank Accounts VTCU	151,664.51
<i>(insert)</i>	
<i>(insert)</i>	
Total Funds Available	359,710.94
Financial Commitments	
2008 Actual	
School Operating Reserve	45,465.22
Co-operative Bank Account	
Assets or Equipment Replacement < 12 months	
Revenue Received in Advance	100,000.00
Building/Grounds including SMS < 12 months	46,935.00
Region /Clusters Funds/School Based Programs < 12 months	
Provision Accounts < 12 months	
Repayable to DEECD	
Other Recurrent Expenditure (Accounts Payable)	24,902.72
Assets or Equipment Replacement > 12 months	80,000.00
Building/Grounds including SMS > 12 months	62,408.00
Region /Clusters Funds/School Based Programs > 12 months	
Provision Accounts > 12 months	
Co-operative loan >12 months	
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	
Total Financial Commitments	359,710.00

School Contact Information

Address:	Cnr Furlong Rd and Cooke Avenue, Sunshine North. 3020
Principal:	Robyn Lawrence
School Council President:	Audra Rooney
Telephone:	93123244
Email:	furlong.park.ds@edumail.vic.gov.au

This report contains summary data extracted from the School Level Report. If you would like to access the School Level Report, please contact Furlong Park School for Deaf Children on 93123244.