

Rissalah College: Annual School Report for 2005

Section 1: School Performance in Statewide Tests and Examinations

Basic Skills Test for Years 3 and 5

In 2005 all Year 3 and Year 5 students participated in the Basic Skills Test (BST) for literacy (which covered reading, language and writing) and numeracy (which covered number, measurement and space).

In Year 3, 96% of students achieved skill bands 2 or higher in literacy compared to 92% of the state and 96% achieved skills bands 2 or higher in numeracy compared to 91% of the state. Students performed consistently across all areas of numeracy and literacy.

In Year 5, 100% of students achieved skill bands 3 or higher in literacy as compared to 94% of the state and 97% achieved skill bands 3 or higher in numeracy compared to 94% of the state. Internal comparisons among the school aspect means showed the school's results were better in Reading than in Language, but there was little or no difference between Reading and Writing. There was also little or no difference between Number, Measurement and Space. A comparison of results between Year 3 and Year 5 scores for these students shows a significant improvement in their scores across all areas in literacy and numeracy.

Comparison of the 2005 results with those from previous years shows improvement in all areas, especially in numeracy. In particular, the Year 5 results for numeracy showed significant advances, with the school average being Band 5.

Table 1: BST Results – percentages above benchmark

2005 Basic Skills Test	Year 3 Percentage of students achieving Band 2 or higher	Year 5 Percentage of students achieving Band 3 or higher
Overall Literacy	96%	97%
Writing	100%	100%
Language	98%	97%
Reading	92%	94%
Overall Numeracy	96%	97%
Number	94%	100%
Measurement & Space	94%	97%

Section 2: Details of all teaching staff

In 2005 Rissalah College had 15 mainstream teachers, 1 Special Education teacher, a Deputy Principal and 3 Arabic/Islamic Studies teachers.

All our mainstream teachers, as well as our Special Education teacher and our Deputy Principal, have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines.

The Arabic teachers do not have qualifications as described above for the mainstream teachers, but have relevant successful teaching experience and appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context. They undertake professional development training each year and are under the direct, on-site supervision of the Deputy Principal.

Category	Number of Teachers
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	17
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	0
Teachers who do not have qualifications as described above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context	3

Section 3: Enrolment policies and profiles

Enrolment policy

Rissalah College is a comprehensive co-educational K-6 school providing education underpinned by Islamic values and operating within the policies of the NSW Board of Studies. All applications will be processed in order of receipt and consideration will be given to the applicant's support for the Islamic ethos, siblings already attending the school and other criteria determined by the school from time to time. All applicants are interviewed by the Deputy Principal and are given basic literacy and numeracy tests to determine the best placement for the student, and to identify any special learning needs which need to be addressed. The outcomes of the interviews are discussed with the Principal and final approval is made. Once enrolled, students are expected to support the school's ethos and comply with the school rules to maintain the enrolment.

Procedures

1. All applications should be processed within the school's enrolment policy.
2. Interview the applicant and parent/guardian and consider the applicant's responses regarding their ability and willingness to support the school's ethos.
3. Consider each applicant's educational needs. Applicants for Years 1-4 do a benchmark reading test to assess fluency and comprehension, and a text-type writing task, as well as some basic numeracy tasks. Previous school reports, Basic Skills Test results (where applicable) and the student's portfolio including work samples across all KLAs are also collected/sighted to gather as much information as possible. Applicants for Kindergarten are given an oral test to check for school readiness, and are asked to write their own name. The test covers oral language skills and basic knowledge of letters, numbers, shapes and colours.
4. Identify any strategies which need to be put into place to accommodate the applicant before a decision regarding the enrolment is made.
5. Discuss outcome with the Principal and seek endorsement.
6. Inform the applicant of the outcome.

Student population

Rissalah College is located at 291 Haldon Street, Lakemba and 2005 was our seventh year at this campus. The school commenced with an enrolment of 127 students in 1999. In 2005, 364 students were enrolled, 160 girls and 204 boys.

Rissalah College is a co-educational school, of whom 95% of students are NESB. The majority of students are of a Middle-Eastern background with a small number from Asian backgrounds. We have no students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent. As far as possible, we strive to have gender equity in each class.

The school's formal enrolment policy is as follows:

Rissalah College Student Enrolment Policy

Application for Enrolment

Parents must complete an Enrolment Form available from the school office. All student applicants must go through an interview and assessment process conducted by the Deputy Principal followed by approval from the Principal. This process is used to determine:

- a) for Kindergarten applicants, whether they are ready for school

b) for all other applicants, whether they have the appropriate skill levels so that students can be placed in the appropriate grade.

The assessment process is also used to determine whether the student has any special learning needs that need to be catered for. Our school has a Special Education teacher who designs specific programs to suit individual children's needs and fill in any gaps in the student's knowledge and skills. Early intervention is crucial in these circumstances.

Conditions of Entry

Parents are asked to sign a form indicating their consent to abide by the school's Discipline Policy, School Rules, Code of Conduct, Uniform Policy and School Attendance Rules.

School Fees

The school fees must be paid in the first week of each term. Any extension of times must be applied for in writing.

Privacy Act

All personal information collected regarding students and parents is kept in confidential files.

Excursions and Incursions

All excursions and incursions that are linked to the curriculum must be attended by students.

School attendance

Students must attend school during the prescribed school days and times. Students who are late must get a late note from the office stating the reason for being late. Late notes are to be handed in to the class teacher. If a student is late three times he or she will be sent home on the third offence.

Absence notes: Students are required to bring in a note explaining the reason for their absence on their return to school. Notes are to be handed in to the class teacher.

Early departure from school: Parents must come to the office and sign the early departure book before picking up their child.

Students must not arrive before 8:30 am and must leave by 3:30 p.m. as there is no teacher supervision outside of these times.

Holiday leave during term: Students who take holidays during term time must obtain permission from the Deputy Principal as directed by the Principal, who will assess the student's ability to cope with the absence from school and the possible consequences to the student's educational level.

Behaviour in Buses

Students must behave appropriately whenever they ride a bus to and from school during school excursions and everyday travel to school. They must always follow the School Code of Conduct and ensure they do not put themselves and others at risk by behaving inappropriately. Refer also to the 'Travelling Safely on School Bus' policy which is part of the school's Occupational Health and Safety Policy, for everyday travel to school by bus.

Section 4: Student welfare and discipline policies

The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- minimises 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:

Policy	Changes in 2005	Access to full text
Student Welfare and Discipline Policy	Nil	Full text in the School's website
Occupational Health and Safety Policy	Nil	Full text in the School's website
Uniform Policy	Nil	Full text in the School's website

Section 5: Discipline policies

As the school is founded on Islamic traditions, the values of social behaviour as set down in the Holy Qu'ran and practised by the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) are reflected in the **Student Welfare and Discipline Policy**. These are basically respect for self, respect for one another, respect for elders, respect for the environment and obedience. The policy is based on reward and punishment with the emphasis on reward.

Schools need to be places where every student can learn and grow with confidence. Students develop best in schools where teaching and learning occur in the context of student welfare.

Rissalah College's Student Discipline Policy ensures that no student is discriminated against on the grounds of his/her disability, sex or race. The school aims to create an inclusive environment which affirms diversity and respects difference.

Rissalah College does not have corporal punishment as part of its disciplinary processes. Corporal punishment is not permitted under any circumstances.

With the rights of students comes responsibility. Rissalah College operates in an environment of

Rights- Responsibilities-Behaviour-Consequences

Students are encouraged to own their own behaviour, respect the rights of others and build workable relationships with all. The Code of Behaviour provides clear guidelines for appropriate behaviour incorporating students' views and teacher's expectations and reflecting the values of the community.

The full text of the school's discipline policy is available on the school's website www.rissalah.nsw.edu.au.

Section 6: Reporting complaints and resolving grievances policies

Rissalah College Complaints and Grievances Resolution Policy

The school takes all complaints and grievances very seriously. The policy for dealing with complaints is as follows:

1. Complaints from parents regarding educational issues

Parents who have issues with what their child is learning in class can approach their child's class teacher first to try and resolve the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved, it is referred to the Deputy Principal.

In general, complaints regarding educational issues are dealt with by the Deputy Principal. The Deputy Principal discusses the complaint with the parent, investigates the issue with teachers concerned, and then develops an action plan to resolve it. This action plan is agreed to by the parent(s) and the teacher(s) concerned.

If parents are not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right to pursue the matter directly with the Principal. Upon referral to the Principal, the matter is then evaluated and a decision is made.

2. Complaints regarding student behaviour

Complaints regarding student behaviour are dealt with by the Deputy Principal. Student behaviour is addressed according to the school's Discipline Policy (refer to the school's Discipline Policy).

3. Bullying at School

Complaints regarding bullying behaviour are taken very seriously and dealt with on a case-by-case basis immediately by the Deputy Principal. Refer also to the Bullying Policy which is part of the school's Occupational Health and Safety Policy.

4. General complaints from the community about the school

These complaints are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of the complaint. Letters of complaint are responded to immediately, either by letter, phone or face-to-face interviews with the parties concerned. All complaints are thoroughly investigated and resolved. Any serious matters that cannot be resolved in the above manner are referred to and dealt with by the Principal. The Principal may raise the matter with the School Board if further guidance is desired.

5. Recording complaints

A written record is kept of all complaints in the form of either diary notes or copies of correspondence. This record is filed and kept for at least 3 years.

The full text of the above policy is provided on the school's website www.rissalah.nsw.edu.au.

Section 7: Priority areas for improvement

Our Mission Statement

Our vision is for Rissalah College to be the provider of the best, comprehensive education program in all the six Key Learning Areas stipulated by the Board of Studies NSW and linked with a strong Islamic school spirit for all who attend the school. Hence our mission is to be an active member of the community, committed to providing a supportive environment in which all members will attain their full potential through the provision of appropriate teaching and learning opportunities.

The College works in harmony with parents and the community, government and non-government educational institutions to produce students who are able to effectively function as responsible, compassionate and balanced individual citizens and to enhance their contribution to the development of this nation.

The word 'Rissalah' is an Arabic word meaning 'message'. The College strives to deliver the message of holistic education coupled with human values in order to create the best possible learning atmosphere for its students.

This year has seen the improvement targets assigned by the Deputy Principal across the curriculum achieved; especially in teaching literacy and numeracy. Rissalah College strives to provide a comprehensive education for all of its students. Once again 2005 has been a very successful year in terms of teachers' Teaching Learning programming in all the six Key Learning Areas.

Achievement of priorities for 2005

Literacy and Numeracy

For 2005, a major focus was on teaching strategies, evaluation including a 'Future Direction' for the changes implemented ensuring quality teaching is more directly linked to students achieving their learning outcomes, and assessment procedures, all of which are evaluated by the Deputy Principal during the second week of each term and further developed in teaching practices, including class time management and performance.

This assessment of teaching practices across the school ensures compliance of the Quality Teaching Model framework stipulated by the Board of Studies NSW:

- The teachers incorporated specific elements that improved the quality of the students' learning
- Reading, which includes guided reading and shared reading, forms the core of literacy at Rissalah College and over the past year has seen students' performance and achievements progress at a pace which is most commendable. Specific lessons in reading recovery programs ensured early intervention occurred as early as Terms 3 and 4 in Kindergarten, following on to Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3, where a major focus was on comprehension and reading for meaning/information gathering and including other higher order thinking skills.
- Staff Professional Development courses on a whole school basis throughout the year demonstrated that teachers gained a deeper understanding of the features of quality teaching which enabled them to improve their teaching practices and classroom time management.
- Ensured all mandatory outcomes for teaching (K-6 syllabuses) across all the KLAs are determined and incorporated into the teachers' programming resulting in some sound classroom practice and successful pedagogy.

The following Professional Development Courses were conducted this year, most of them by AIS consultants as well as other external agencies:

- Guided Reading – Stage 1 to Stage 3

- Grammar K-6
- Integration
- Time Management
- PDHPE In-service: Moving Ahead with Street Sense
- Targeting Maths in Numeracy
- Scope and Sequence for Space and Geometry
- Scope and Sequence for Measurement
- LIEN Numeracy Workshops

The above professional development in-service workshops helped teachers to challenge students with substantial class work who needed it and provide remediation to those who needed it in their lesson programming and featured more quality classroom teaching.

Special Education in literacy and numeracy is a main feature supporting students with learning difficulties. This is crucial, where specialist staff predominantly support students K-3 so that early intervention can occur at the earliest possible time. Strategies for parents to assist these students are offered, whilst the Deputy Principal has an active role in case conferencing with the class teachers, including the Special Ed Teacher on a weekly basis which is conducted throughout the year. A conscious effort is made to recognise the achievement of these students. To achieve the best possible outcomes effectively, opportunities are provided for all the teachers to participate in other training programs such as MULTILIT (Making Up for Lost Time in Literacy), Specific skills (comprehension) and Spelling Mastery.

Technology

Some resources and software have been purchased for use in the classroom computers to support literacy and numeracy programs.

Planning for the new computer lab is progressing and the lab will be in operation in 2006.

PDHPE - Inter-school Sports Competitions

The 2005 school year saw many new initiatives. One of these successes was the Islamic Schools Sports Competition. The aim of the competition was to bring together students from the various Islamic schools to compete in sports and build stronger ties with one another. Rissalah College was privileged to have designed, developed and organised the competition.

Over 90 students from years 4-6 were involved. These events were highly memorable; the sight of children shaking hands, playing fairly and laughing together.

Basic Skills Test (BST) Achievements in Literacy and Numeracy

To improve students' performance in mathematics, specific skills development classes with increased teaching strategies and teaching resources, has resulted in a major shift to excellent results overall in the various strands of Number, Measurement, Space and Chance and Data. This year has seen the Basic Skills results in Year 5 numeracy move beyond the state average, which was 60.4. The 2005 BST results in numeracy shows evidence of the greater number of students at Rissalah College achieving Band 6 (17%), Band 5 (49%), and Band 4 (29%). Since 1999 the trend data (means) between Years 3 and 5 demonstrates a progress rate of 4.32% in 2005. There were no students placed in Band 1 (the lowest skill band) in Year 5 in 2005.

Every school year, we endeavour to raise the literacy standards through the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of quality teaching/learning programs. This year as in numeracy, our

literacy achievements in the BST have improved at a commendable rate with 89% of students placed in bands 6, 5 and 4. There were no students achieving in Bands 2 and 1. The trend data (means) shows a progress performance improvement from 46.6 in 1999 to 50.4 in 2005 for Year 3.

Other KLAs and Core Subjects

Our school continues to maintain a focus on Aboriginal and Multicultural education in all areas of the curriculum by planning for specific programs which develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for a culturally diverse society.

- Teachers have developed specific integrated programs across the curricula
- In 2005 our school continued its participation in the very beneficial Goodness and Kindness program, which aims to support teachers and students in the achievement of better relationships and values related outcomes of the PDHPE syllabus particularly relating to acting on one's own values (such as kindness, etc.), being accepting of differences, inclusion, considering effects of actions and active listening. Students from Years 3-6 attended workshops in the school hall, presented by Rabbi Zalman Kastel, Sayfee Sayit, and Joe Sheridan (role models from Islamic, Jewish and Christian backgrounds). The workshops promoted acting on one's values, communication, cooperation and harmony across cultures and belief systems through discussion, story telling, role play, games and activities.
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures was further enhanced through the planned involvement in the Life Education Program K-6 in Term 1 and carried throughout the year. We endeavoured to consistently mentor student attitude and behaviour to ensure a safe environment for all students. Our 'sun smart' policy of 'No hat, no play' is an ongoing major focus which has seen an increase of students wearing their school hat at all times during breaks as well as during sports activities.

Improvement Targets for 2006

- To continue assessing/evaluating teaching/learning practices in all the KLAs across the school against the Board of Studies NSW Quality Teaching Model which is a framework and a guide that details the aspects of quality teaching and will therefore improve the quality of the students' learning.
- To continue staff development courses which will further increase and promote teachers' understanding of the features of quality teaching/learning programming and classroom practices. This will ensure that the students will have maximum opportunities to achieve the relevant stated outcomes across the curricula K-6.
- To continue written feedback and one-one consultation by the Deputy Principal on a case by case basis with teachers to assist them in the various components of programming in all the KLAs including a major focus on teaching strategies, evaluation and student assessment which will incorporate a future direction to address the need for changes to be implemented such as quality teaching to be more directly linked to students' learning and thus improving the achievements in their actual learning outcomes. This is then endorsed by the Principal.
- To continue improving students' growth, confidence and performance in both literacy and numeracy between Year 3 and Year 5.
- To continue improving in Reading which is the core of teaching across all the KLAs, focusing on further developing comprehension skills including higher order thinking skills.
- To teach students in Years 3-6 to learn ways to assess their own work
- Resources: With the exception of Mathematics and Foundation Handwriting textbooks, all other textbooks will be cancelled next year. Teachers at all levels have been instructed by me to use more teaching resources that they will have to design and develop themselves rather than commercial resources from textbooks. It is hoped that there will be a more successful achievement outcome between lesson content and the learning needs of individual students.

- HSIE: Introduce and implement a School Parliament as part of the Civics and Citizenship program for Stage 3 students based on understanding and outcomes in the HSIE K-6 syllabus. The structure will be as follows:
 - Prime Ministers – School Captains
 - Deputy Ministers – School Vice Captains
 - Ministers for the following portfolios: Grounds & Environment, Sport & Leisure, Fundraising, Student Welfare & Safety (Ministers will be Year 6 students voted by Year 6 and teachers)The parliament will sit once a fortnight. Before parliament sits, each class from Years 1 to 6 discusses issues to be raised by representatives from each grade.
- PDHPE: The Islamic Schools Sports Competition will continue in 2006 where the organisers hope to involve more schools and students in this competition. The competition will help students develop many new skills of social interaction with students of other schools.

Section 8: Summary financial information

Financial Summary for Rissalah College Ltd for the year ending 31st December 2005

Income

Bank interest Received	1,462
Government Grants	2,241,415
School and Community Sources	674,877
Total Income	2,917,754

Expenditure

Teaching and Learning	1,840,176
Excursions	17,137
Training and Development	9,638
Electricity and Gas	10,418
Books and Teaching Resources	25,110
Repairs and Maintenance	184,564
Rent and Rates	155,986
Administration and Office Expenses	947,792
Capital Programs	73,767
Total Expenditure	3,264,588