At Winters Flat Primary School we aim to provide a caring and dynamic learning environment that engages in students, parents and teachers working together to achieve the student’s full potential in the areas of Social, Physical, Academic, Creative and Emotional development.

At Winters Flat Primary School, we celebrate diversity, encouraging the utilisation of skills shown by students, parents and teachers as well as those in the wider community. We seek to embrace holistic ideals, to meet more fully the educational needs of our community, and to ensure that our students are treated as an individual and encouraged to develop their highest personal level of achievement in becoming a thinking, responsible caring person. A genuine partnership between teachers, pupils, parents and the wider community is seen as an integral aspect of effective education, and we confidently report that we are addressing the educational needs of our community. The employment of a part-time Primary Welfare Officer has supported the work we do with our families. The school was runner-up in the Australian Awards for Teaching Excellence in the category Excellence by a School in its Community. We were unsuccessful in our attempt to access funding for research into how chess develops mathematical concepts. Our Artists-in-schools submission was successful, for a program on visual media to run in 2010.

We believe that children should be encouraged to respond to high expectations and develop high expectations of themselves. We further believe they should be able to work effectively with others. To this end, each child is seen as a social individual and is encouraged to grow in confidence and self-worth, developing strategies to enhance their emotional intelligence and taking more responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. A high-quality, caring staff planned and delivered programs that recognise and cater to the differing capabilities and learning styles of students. The ongoing commitment to tracking the SPACE ‘value added’ to student achievements occurred through Reporting Journals, gathering of individual and group data, and the commitment to implementing the Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

Our academic focus in 2009 centred around improving literacy (particularly Writing and Spelling), and numeracy. We were fortunate to have the assistance of a regional learning and teaching coach for two days per week. Mandy Regan worked with literacy alongside five teachers in classrooms and skilled all teachers through team meetings. Karen Brooks worked in year 3-6 classrooms as an extra teacher, and to do some intervention work. Regional Office collected data from OnDemand testing four times a year to check on improvements. Overall, the improvement of our students was higher than the expected .3 VELS level. We continually gather data about our students from several sources – formal and informal – and use this to show growth and to inform our teaching. Our academic results were at or above state averages.

Students in all classes enjoyed specialist teaching for Performing Arts (Music, Dance and Drama), Visual Arts, LOTE (Indonesian), and Library. Reading Recovery supported additional literacy learning of students in Year 1, and EMU (Extending Mathematical Understanding) supported additional numeracy learning of students mainly in Year 2. Chess has become an integral part of our Maths program, with students from Years 2-6 enthusiastically developing spatial understanding, problem solving, strategic thinking, creative imagination and self-esteem through playing chess. In consultation with the chess tutor, the school has identified the areas of the National Benchmarks that we believe the Chess program addresses.

Additional programs included Swimming, Transition to Prep, and to Year 7, Perceptual Motor Program, You Can Do It! (Program Achieve), Religious Education (optional), House Athletic Sports and cross country, camps and excursions, Junior School Council, literacy and numeracy extension, social skills (Getting Along), Fruit and Vegetable, Out-of-school-hours programs.

Healthy living was also a major part of the curriculum, with healthy snacks and children being active at school encouraged through Healthy Eating, Physical Education and inter-school sporting activities. Our status as Kids-Go For Your Life school is proudly displayed at the school entrance. For the eighth year, we reached the State final of the Bike Ed challenge.

Building works were high on the list, with the negotiation of our new 6-classroom library resource and learning space to be ready mid-way through 2010. We also negotiated with the Out-of-school-hours committee, primarily with Winters Flat PS parent Jo Wedgwood, to accommodate their new building onsite. This facility was ready for the beginning of the 2010 school year. National Pride money was spent on upgrading the toilets, the riding track, and the front entrance (yet to be completed).

We would like to thank all members of our school community for a very good year.

Kevin Brown and Liz Grainger