



Gäwa Christian School – Gäwa – Elcho Island - NT

Vision Statement

The mission of Gäwa Christian School is to be a learning community where God is glorified in everything we do.

GÄWA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL: AIMS

- To inspire and equip this generation of children to express Christ together at school, home and abroad.
- To develop the intellectual potential of each student and help them to reach their full potential using their God given talents, skills and abilities.
- To develop self disciplined, wise, kind and happy students.
- To value and respect each student as a unique person gifted by God.
- To assist students to appreciate their rich cultural heritage.
- To develop and nurture students positive attitude towards themselves and others.
- To provide a supportive and nurturing environment for schooling that translates to enthusiastic students full of hope for their own futures.
- To encourage excellence in our students and in our teachers .
- Parents, grandparents and community:
 - To encourage a genuine fellowship between school and community.
 - To facilitate positive relationships amongst all members of the school community (staff, students, parents and community members and elders).
- To develop a school that meets the specific needs of the community and achieves genuine two way learning.
- To encourage Christian parent direction and involvement in the school.

Principal's Message

Gäwa Christian School is a remote Indigenous Christian school situated on the northern tip of Elcho Island. Our school offers education for Transition – Year 8 students. We have a Transition – Grade 4 class currently operating and a Grade 3 - Year 8 class. We also have a preschool program running three mornings a week with community helpers and a coordinator. The school is supported by the community who encourage mainstream schooling in conjunction with the teaching of traditional languages and indigenous culture. We have a fluctuating enrolment of approximately 40 students.

Enrolments have continued to fluctuate during each term depending on shifting communities, funeral commitments and the capacity to house everyone in the four houses that are in Gäwa. One homeland family has moved to Gove this year.

The Australian Government requires that every school address specific areas in a published report each year. This information is designed to ensure that parents and guardians of the students have an overall picture of the performance of their schools. In highlighting these specific areas we need to also be aware that this information doesn't provide us with a full understanding of the wonderful education offered in our school. For a complete picture of our school and community log onto our website <http://www.gcs.nt.edu.au>

Lara Hvala
Teaching Principal

School Profile

Our school is an Indigenous school in a remote homeland on Elcho Island. The information below is taken from our AUGUST 2010 CENSUS.

Mayawa Class: Transition – Grade 4

Boys: 16

Girls: 8

TOTAL STUDENTS: 24

Transition: 4 students

Grade 1: 7 students

Grade 2: 4 students

Grade 3: 3 students

Grade 4: 4 students

Grade 5: 1 student

Grade 6: 1 student

Damala Class: Grade 3 – Grade10

Boys: 8

Girls: 11

TOTAL STUDENTS: 19

Grade 3: 3 students

Grade 4: 3 students

Grade 5: 6 students

Grade 6: 3 students

Year 7: 1 student

Year 8: 3 students

Teaching and learning initiatives

Our students have a broad curriculum which is based on the NTCF and the students study English as a second language. We run the Accelerated Literacy Program in all our classes, we have Yolngu Matha classes each day and follow the Targeting Maths program for the Northern Territory. For devotions our teachers use the Over the Top – Kids at church program to support their teaching. Each term the children also study a different country around the world in our unit on Communities Around the World and they enjoy a different science unit, history, art and health unit each term.

Take-up of special funding programs

Additional Teacher funding

In 2010, Gäwa Christian School received Commonwealth funding to employ an additional teacher, taking the school from a 2 teacher school to a 3 teacher school. This funding has been instrumental in seeing students achieve gains in literacy and numeracy, has allowed for specialist reading classes to be conducted and has also funded visiting specialist teachers focused on increasing outcomes and improving practice in teaching literacy and numeracy.

Closing the Gap

In 2010, Gäwa Christian School has been the recipient of Closing the Gap funding from the Commonwealth Government. This funding has been targeted towards improving teacher quality by up skilling teachers and teacher aides in Accelerated Literacy strategies, allowing 2 teachers to participate in a week-long seminar course focused on education from a Christian perspective and intensive on-site cross cultural training for all staff members.

Engaging Remote Indigenous Students

As part of the Smarter Schools National Partnerships, GCS have undertaken activities to increase the engagement of students and community members with the school. Two community members have run a 'play group' program for pre-school aged children and their families members. This program is run in one of the school building and has provided a huge attraction and motivation for community members to connect with the school. Young children are introduced to school-like behaviours and routines and are modelled healthy eating and hygiene practices. An 'Artist in Residence' was also employed for several months to undertake mosaic projects with students and community members. School attendance was strong during this period. The Principal was supported in initiating whole-school reform through the development of a school improvement plan and a school self-audit in the areas of 'Teaching & Learning' and 'Community and Culture'.

School leadership and decision-making processes

Gäwa Christian School is part of the eight schools run by NT Christian Schools Association and governed by a board.

Once each term all principals from the eight schools meet at the System office in Darwin to discuss issues related to the leadership, decision making

processes and the direction of all our schools. Every meeting involves all principals and executive staff from NTCSA (including the CEO). On a local level our school aims to involve community (parents, guardians and elders) by encouraging Christian parent direction and involvement in the school and in the decision making processes. Informal community meetings and discussions are held with representatives of the community regularly. The Principal was also involved with; and supported in initiating a whole-school reform through the development of a school improvement plan. This was part of the Engaging Remote Indigenous Students strategy in 2010.

Current condition of school building and facilities

Gäwa Christian School has beautiful buildings, grounds and resources. The school buildings are 1 – 4 years old and are in extremely good condition. The classrooms are well maintained and provide an exceptional learning space for all the children. The resources are also well looked after. Books in the library and classrooms have been added to consistently throughout 2010 by donations from all over Australia. Similarly our class set of texts and AL books have been added to and are kept in very good condition.

The grounds of our school are landscaped and maintained. Our staff housing and community kitchen facilities have also been maintained to a high standard. A lot of care and time is taken to ensure that our buildings, facilities and grounds are kept to a high standard and looked after. Our students are integral in assisting us in our efforts and enjoy taking pride in their school.

Staffing information

Teaching Principal – Lara Hvala (full time) Bachelor of Theatre (Production) and BA (Teaching)
Teacher – Ben van Gelderen (full time) BA, LLB and Dip Ed.
Teacher – Jessica Whitby (Additional Teacher funding) BA (Teaching)
Teachers Aide – Basma Ganalarritji (full time)
Teachers Aide – Jaonne Dhamarrandji (part time)
Language Coordinator – Kathy Guthadjaka (casual – CTG funding)
Maintenance and Planning – Mark Hvala (full time)
Administration and art coordinator – Salome Moes (part time)
Kitchen/Chef – Kate van Gelderen (full time) BA (History) and Bachelor of Business (Accounting)
Attendance officers – Colin Baker and Banthay Bukulatjpi (casual – GERIS funding)

Additional Information about teachers

Two of our teachers have remained on staff for 2011. One teacher has left at the end of the 2010 school year to take up employment in Darwin.

Our teachers have had many fantastic opportunities to be involved in Professional development. During the 2010 school year 2 teachers and one teacher's aide were able to participate in Accelerated Literacy workshops in Darwin.

Teachers participated in the following professional development throughout 2010.

FOEL – Forum of Educational Leaders (held once a term)
Developing Leaders Conference
'Dare to Lead' conference
National Institute for Christian Education – 'Worldviews' workshops
Accelerated Literacy workshops
Over the Top conference – NTCSA conference in Darwin
Why Warriors Cultural workshop – Gäwa

All staff participated in the following professional development throughout 2010.

Over the Top conference – NTCSA conference in Darwin
Why Warriors Cultural workshop – Gäwa

Highlights

The students of Gäwa Christian School have participated in many activities during the year which have value add to their general schooling. In March/April 2010 a group of 20 students and staff were able to participate in an Interstate camp to Victoria.

In May 2010 the children were involved in the community/school mosaic project. An artist in residence was employed to run this month long project within the community.

The students have learnt many dances and songs that they have performed during our school library opening and other community events. Gäwa Christian School hosted a camp onsite for children from Nhulunbuy Christian School.

We have employed an artist who coordinates our art program and also art exhibitions of the children's works.

A duck farm and vegetable gardens have been established in Gäwa. The children are active participants in the running of these areas of the school. Students continue to participate in junior sea ranger activities. Sailing, boating and fishing continue to be part of everyday life. Cultural afternoons are run by elders and members of the community.

Student Welfare

Students at Gäwa Christian School are always looking out and caring for each other. Our school is very small but bigger children always take on the responsibility of supporting and being good role models to the junior students. We have a buddy system in place and the students enjoy working with their buddies each week.

At Gäwa we also have assemblies each term and welcome parents and guardians to attend. The students participate in these assemblies by contributing a dance, telling a story, singing a song or performing a drama

piece. They enjoy sharing what they have learnt with each other and for their parents. We also acknowledge wonderful student behavior, attendance and academic achievement by presenting awards during these assemblies. We also have a program where we present books to those children Caught Being Good.

Each week we meet for whole school devotions, prayer and time together. This is an important part of our week and a celebration of what God is doing in our school.

Teaching and Learning: Student Outcomes

Average student attendance – 2010

Our average student attendance is 73%. These figures however does not take into account the many students who come to school over 95% of the school year.

Proportion of students meeting national literacy and numeracy benchmarks for their year at 3, 5, 7 and 9

Currently only one of our Indigenous students has reached benchmark. The figures below include two 'non indigenous' children who have enrolled at the school (children of current non indigenous staff).

Number of students participating in NAPLAN testing in 2010:

Year 3: 4 students

Year 5: 3 students

Year 7: 2 students

Year 9: 1 student

All students improvements at school have however been recorded and mapped. We take great delight in looking at their reading progress in particular and contribute the great improvements to quality teaching and high attendance by many students. This should always be congratulated.

	Yr 3		Yr 5		Yr 7		Yr 9	
	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
Reading	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Writing	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Numeracy	0%	75%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Preschool centre (Engaging Remote Indigenous Students program)

Gäwa Christian School runs a community playgroup, which does not provide day care. The AMALA YOTHU (mothers and little ones) program is a community run project that caters for preschool aged children and toddlers. The Amala Yothu centre provides a social base for the mothers, fathers and young families within our community.

Gawutjurrwuy is our Amala Yothu coordinator. After volunteering for 12 months as an assistant, Gawutjurrwuy took over the role of coordinator and teacher in 2010. God is doing amazing things through Gawutjurrwuy and the children love attending the centre three mornings a week.

A typical morning will involve singing, painting, outdoor play, cooking, free play, Letterland activities for 3 and 4 year olds, story time, teeth time and fruit time.

We encourage all mums to attend and often we have several mums and up to 15 children attending a session. Bukmak Gululu! Everyone is welcome!

Student Retention

Our school is registered to teach from Transition to Year 10. Currently we do not have any students enrolled beyond Year 8. Six of our senior students that have previously attended Gäwa Christian School have enrolled at Marrara Christian School in Darwin. They continue their secondary education at the NTCSA school in Darwin and live in the family group homes with other students from Elcho Island.

Policy Development and Review

During 2010 NTCSA engaged a policy development officer to review and develop policies, guidelines and supporting documents for the Association. These documents inform and sit alongside individual school policies.

Policies that were developed and approved by the Board in 2010 are:

- Policy Development Policy
- Unpaid Leave Policy
- Paid Personal and Carer's Leave Policy
- Long Service Leave Policy
- Parental Leave Policy

Policies that were developed largely during 2010 but were approved by the Board in early 2011 are:

- Conflict Resolution Policy
- Students with a Disability Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Policies that were developed largely during 2010 but are yet to be finalised are:

- Child Protection Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Response to Allegations of Misconduct by Staff Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy
- Recruitment, Selection and Screening of Staff Policy
- Stewardship Policy
- Guidelines for Staff-Student Interaction
- Guidelines for Camps and Excursions

Existing Policies that are currently under review are:

- Policy – Child Safety and Protection
- (draft) Library Policy
- Teaching of Creation Policy
- Appraisal – Teaching and Capacity Building Process
- Fee Billing and Collection Policy
- Smoking and NTCSA Schools Policy

Camps and Excursions Duty of Care

Current Board Policies are available to all staff via the NTCSA Intranet. At this moment in time NTCSA policies are not made generally available to the public, though after this current process of policy development and review has concluded appropriate policies will be made available more generally. All policies are made available within the community and to the public on request.

Parent Involvement

It is very clear that students love coming to school and are excited about education. If a child has the opportunity to be in Gäwa they are at school every day. We have a 100% attendance among the students when they are supported by families and live in Gäwa for an extended period of time.

Parents are encouraged by our school and what we offer their children. This is evident that despite almost all of our parent population living in Galiwinku (1 ½ hours away) they still continue to send their children to Gäwa Christian School. Most children of all ages are living away from their parents in order to attend our school. Most children live with their grandparents onsite. There is a preference and expectation from our parents that their children will attend Gäwa. They respect and are excited about what Gäwa Christian School has to offer.

It is clear that teachers also actively support Gäwa Christian School and are excited about the quality of Christian education that is being offered. The teachers are integral to the life of the students in the classroom and also within the community in general.

We would like to see more consistent parent/elder participation in the school.

Financial Summary

Recurrent: \$656 037
Private: \$602 776
Capital: \$286 512

School Self Assessment

In 2010, Gäwa Christian School used the 'School Improvement and Renewal Framework' (SIRF) to complete 2 areas of self assessment - COMMUNITY & CULTURE and TEACHING & LEARNING

School Self Assessment Commendations

COMMUNITY & CULTURE

- Welcoming nature of the school and wider Gäwa community
- Use of community mosaic to build relationship between school and ksy homeland communities
- Much evidence of cultural diversity
- Key elders teach at the school and include culture and language in appropriate and authentic ways

- Balanda (Non- Indigenous) and Yolngu (Indigenous) live, learn and play with one another and within the same community and this is testimony to the uniquely successful meeting of 2 cultures in this remote location.
- Balanda and Yolngu students feel safe learning, living and socializing together. Within this culture of well being, student engagement in many and varied opportunities is high.
- Community worship times take place regularly with school and community members

TEACHING & LEARNING

- Establishment of a 'mothers and babies' program within the school
- school is taken into another offsite community once a week so that families can see their children learning
- robust daily nutrition program which includes fruit and vegetables.
- Learning opportunities are also enhanced through the new Phonic Ear Program
- Community members are integral to the learning process at Gäwa and elders can be seen to be involved in the teaching of culture and language.
- school staff are committed to their mission at Gäwa Christian School and see each child as an individual

School Self Assessment Recommendations

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

- Employ an Indigenous community liaison officer
- Investigate with a view to developing a practical understanding of the differences between Governance (Strategic) and Operational matters amongst school stakeholders
- Confirmation and marketing of a well articulated vision and mission statement that is clear to all stakeholders
- Encourage parents not currently engaging with the school to begin doing so
- Investigate the Remote Schools Curriculum and Assessment Materials (RSCAM) which is designed for Transition for Year 10 for remote schools.
- Documentation plans are needed for teaching and assessment practices
- Plan units of work and lessons with Indigenous staff
- Targeted training in the areas of ESL and Indigenous issues

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Document successful Teaching and Learning activities
- Collect and Collate newsletters and make use of them in the teaching and learning process
- Document appropriate policies and collate
- Document an ongoing curriculum framework
- Explore opportunities to improve NAPLAN results
- Build an awareness of student progression and attendance strategies
- Track student trends as they leave the Gäwa School
- Investigate opportunities to employ a part time liaison officer
- The AL program incorporates a major focus on explicit teaching and is working very successfully, allowing for systematic testing and tracking

of students. Student portfolios and rich learning tasks support these endeavours.

- Scaffolding is effectively employed in the school to assist students as required.

Future Priorities

- Investigate the possibility of hiring a part time community liaison officer.
- Develop and market a well articulated vision and mission statement.
- Get the Gäwa web site operational.
- Encourage parents not currently engaging with the school to begin doing so.
- Work with NTCSA to develop a practical understanding of the differences between Governance and Operation.
- Reach more parents in the homelands and Galiwinku.
- Investigate the Remote Schools Curriculum and Assessment Materials (RSCAM).

A further 2 area of self assessment will be conducted in 2011 using the SIRF document.

--