



Samford Valley Steiner School

A living education for social renewal

Annual Report 2016

Our Mission

To be a living and contemporary embodiment of the spiritual, cultural, and educational impulse of anthroposophy that contributes towards social renewal in the world.

Our School

Samford Valley Steiner School offers an inspiring and comprehensive education for children from Pre-Prep through to Year 12. Our school is located on 20 acres of leafy, natural bushland, in the semi-rural Samford Valley. This picturesque destination is approximately 24km/35 minutes drive from Brisbane, in South East Queensland, Australia.

It is our aim at SVSS to be true to the spirit and intentions of the educational impulses and anthroposophical insights offered by Rudolf Steiner. We are continually striving to provide and develop a curriculum and learning programme that; is inspired by a deep understanding of human development; embraces and reflects the universal values of freedom, equality, peace and democracy; and values diversity and individual worth. All curriculum content and experiences offered to young people during their schooling are purposefully and consciously considered in light of how and when the activity or knowledge will best support the child's natural development. Teachers at SVSS work to create a school where goodness, beauty and truth permeate the pedagogical, physical and social fabrics.

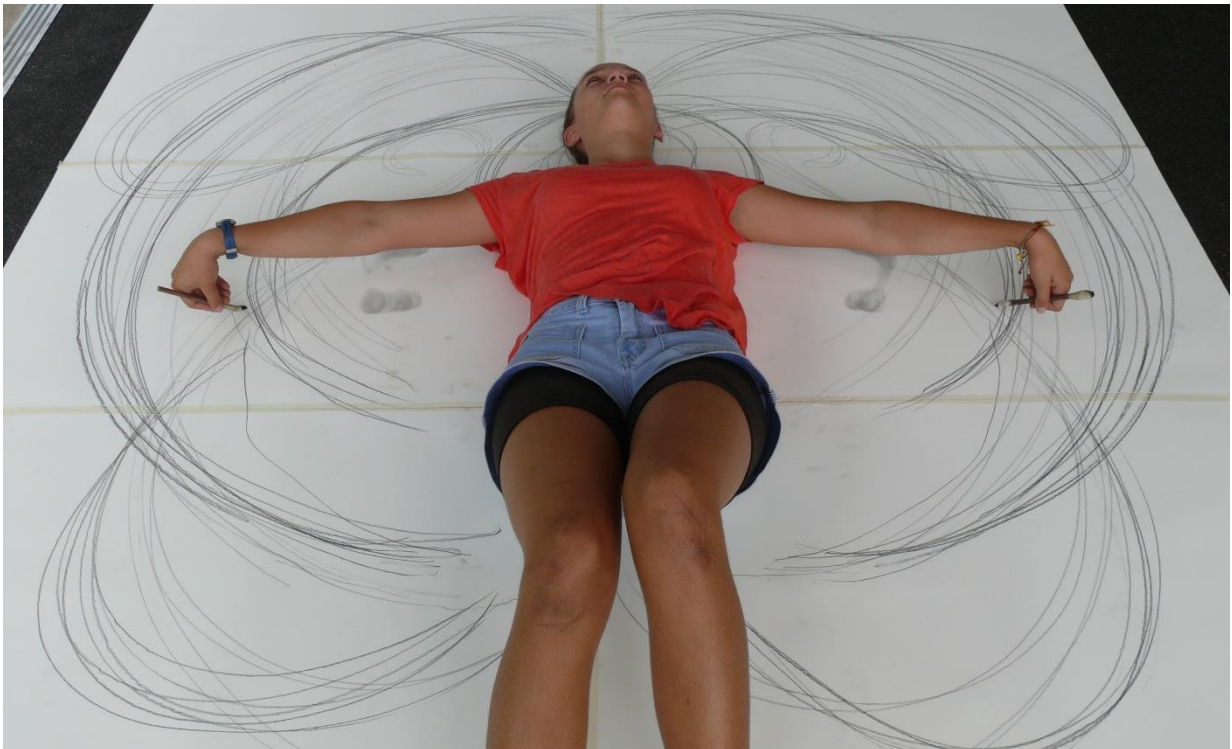
Steiner Education is holistic in nature and at SVSS we strive to develop equally the faculties of thinking, feeling and willing – head, heart and hands – within each child, so strong foundations are laid for academic and social success and initiative and moral strength in adult life. We seek to bring an integrated approach to knowledge; subjects are interwoven into Main Lesson Blocks which bring to the students a holistic view of the world and allow them to establish a balanced relationship to themselves, others and the world.

At SVSS we view ourselves as a community of learners; teachers, parents, and students, striving to achieve individual, communal and global growth and understanding.

Distinctive curriculum offerings



Our school offers a classical and yet contemporary curriculum that is holistic and integrated.





Early Childhood - Protecting the meadow of childhood

SVSS offers a two-year, play focussed, multi-age early childhood program that is based on knowledge of the young child from an anthroposophical perspective. Our Kindergarten has received an overall rating of Exceeding the National Standard. Below is a summary from the assessor:

The Regulatory Authority congratulates your service on its achievements in providing high quality outcomes for children, families and educators by exceeding the NQS in five of the quality areas. The holistic approach to teaching and learning, and the shared understanding of educators, enables children to be competent and capable learners. The strong partnerships between educators and families builds on children's sense of belonging, being and becoming.

Children are carried along by the rhythms of the world in which they live. Children flourish when their daily activities are arranged rhythmically to reflect the natural order of life. The children's day in the early childhood program is balanced with a rhythm of 'breathing in' and 'breathing out'; from quiet moments listening to a fairy tale to active moments of vigorous play and work.

Play is the corner-stone of our early childhood program and the children begin their day with an extended period of creative free play. Play is recognised as the real "work" of the young child; it is through play that the child explores, understands and builds meaningful relationship to their world.

The Class Teacher

At SVSS, where possible, the same teacher guides a class of children from when they enter the primary school in Class 1 until they transition into the high school in Class 8. In our rapidly changing world, having a Class Teacher who supports and cares for their pupils through most, if not all, of their Primary School years provides a haven of stability and continuity, which is extremely rare in other schools. The Class Teacher has overall responsibility and provides pastoral care for the class, thereby creating an ideal environment for sustained and supportive learning.

While the Class Teacher provides the Main Lesson each day, each class interacts with and enjoys the experience of a wide range of specialist subject teachers on a daily basis and throughout their Primary School years.

The Main Lesson

Main Lessons are unique to Steiner Schools, providing every pupil with a broad spectrum of learning experiences throughout their education.

Beginning in Class 1 and continuing throughout the 12 years of their education, Main Lessons are topic blocks that are carefully constructed to provide a balance between Humanities, Sciences and Arts and Crafts. The content of each Main Lesson is selected to be appropriate for a particular age group and developmental stage. The Main Lesson topic is studied continuously for between three and four weeks to build an in-depth knowledge and experience; Main Lesson occupies the first 2 hours of the school day.

For example, Class 5 students enjoy a Main Lesson on Ancient Greece. Rather than studying the subject from a textbook, they are required to create their own record of their learning in artistically composed Main Lesson books. The Class Teacher brings the subject to life by combining Math, Literature, Creative Writing, Mythology and History in a creative and engaging delivery. Practical application of the subject is a key ingredient of Main Lessons. During Ancient Greece, the students join with children from other Steiner schools to participate in the 'Steiner Olympics' - a re-creation of a traditional Olympic Games.

Music



At Samford Valley Steiner School, we offer a compulsory music program from Classes 1 – 12. Through providing an integrated and holistic music program we seek to create and encourage a school culture in which joyous, enlivened musical activity is embedded into the daily experience of every student and teacher across the whole school. A classroom music, choral and instrumental program is offered across the school that provides a solid musical foundation which balances the social nature of music making with the development of the art form of music.

All students learn to play the recorder from Class 1. In Class 3 an instrumental program is started with every child learning to play a stringed instrument and beginning to participate in class

ensembles. In high school the students are able to commence instruction on an instrument of their choice. A culture of singing is embodied in the school with some form of singing happening in every classroom every day. The school runs a student choir and a community choir and all the high school students sing in a massed choir each morning.



Eurythmy



Eurythmy is a dance-like art form in which music or speech is expressed in bodily movement; specific movements correspond to particular notes or sounds. It has been called 'visible speech' or 'visible song'. Eurythmy is a core part of the curriculum of most Steiner Schools. The simple rhythms and exercises of Eurythmy help the young child to strengthen and harmonize their body and life forces. Later the older students work out elaborate Eurythmy presentations of poetry, drama and music, thereby gaining a deeper perception of the compositions and writings. Eurythmy enhances co-ordination and strengthens the ability to listen. When children experience themselves like an orchestra and have to keep a clear relationship in space with each other, a social strengthening also results.



Outdoor Classroom Program



Camps and excursions are an important aspect of every child's education and an essential and compulsory part of the curriculum from class 3 onwards. Not only do activities and experiences away from school enrich and enhance a child's knowledge and understanding of the world, they also provide opportunities for social growth and learning. Our Outdoor Classroom program has been designed to support the children's' developmental stage and create opportunities to experience aspects of the curriculum in a unique and very practical way.

Young people need to feel connected to "place", and it is in the "wild" landscapes that the true essence of our country can be best met. Over the course of their schooling at SVSS, through the Outdoor Classroom program, the students will journey through unique landscapes, be challenged to develop self-reliance and responsibility, learn to distinguish wants from needs, develop a sense for beauty, truth and moral responsibility for all life, build their self-esteem by overcoming obstacles and coping with discomfort and breathe in the beauty of the natural world, observing and living with its many rhythms.



Language

A regular part of the weekly curriculum is the learning of a second language. German is currently taught at the school from Class 1 through to Class 12. Rudolf Steiner spoke of the importance of learning another language to diversify the child's inner life, to counter-act the one-sided influence that the mother tongue exerts on the developing child and to expose children to other cultures in a living way. Foreign language is taught as one means to encourage in the students the development of tolerance for difference.

Work Experience

Year 9 students complete a 3-week block of work experience on a biodynamic farm; learning all aspects of farming including care for cattle, building projects etc.

Year 10 students build a wooden sailing boat on site for their work experience. This experience covers all aspects of the business of boat building and the end result is added to our fleet of sailing craft. Class 11s have opportunity to sail these crafts on their sailing camp.

Year 11 are required to complete a total of 50 hours voluntary Community Service over the course of a year. The students are given support to allow them to choose providers to help them fulfil this requirement. The providers include Charitable, Child Care, Aged Care and Community Based Organisations, Non Profit Organisations.



Festivals



Intrinsic to the school year is the celebration of Festivals. A sense of reverence and respect for nature and our fellow human beings is encouraged not only through the curriculum, but also through the recognition and celebration of the seasonal rhythms and the Christian Festivals which accompany them. Joining in the seasonal mood of the Festivals benefits the inner life of the soul. Each festival, depending on the season, has a different character and expression, and celebrations vary from year to year. Festivals may include dramatic presentations by the children, recitations, storytelling, dancing and/or community singing, quite often followed by a shared meal. Parents and friends are invited to share these celebrations with the children.

Drama



Drama and performance are an integral part of the curriculum at SVSS. It is both integrated into the daily life of the classroom in the primary school years and becomes focussed activity through the annual performance of plays. High School students participate in weekly speech and drama lessons and major productions are brought to life each year by both Classes 10 and 12.

The amount of work that teachers and students put into these productions is significant. In both Primary and High School, students, through participation in the Class Plays, must face their fears, overcome their nerves or learn to relinquish the lime light to others. Teachers carefully select plays and roles so that students have the chance to meet and develop aspects of themselves in the characters they are chosen to play that may seldom otherwise have the opportunity to arise and be seen. Aspects of the children's social-emotional health are strengthened and developed each year through the class plays and drama lessons.



Social climate of the school

The welfare and best interests of the children within our School will always be a primary goal. Our educational philosophy views students as young human beings gradually unfolding and developing on their journey to adulthood. Therefore we place significant focus on nourishing the social and emotional development of the students as well as on academic rigour and achievement. This is achieved through a carefully designed and implemented curriculum based on the developmental needs of the students at different ages.

It is recognised that strong and loving student/teacher relationships are the key to maintaining a healthy social climate and this concept lies at the foundation of behaviour management in the school. Where possible, the one teacher accompanies a class for their entire primary school journey.

Within the High School there is a Class Guardian program to assist in meeting the pastoral care needs of the High School students. This program includes weekly meetings between classes and their guardian teacher as well as regular guest speakers / excursions. These cover topics such as drug and alcohol use, relationships, cyber safety, communication and conflict management.

Parental involvement

Parent participation is vital to the health of our school and parents are actively engaged in a wide range of activities.



Throughout 2016, parents were involved in activities such as assisting in class with reading groups and craft lessons; gardening and attending working bees; supporting with camps and excursions; coordinating events and volunteering with administrative duties.

Regular activities for parents include a weekly craft group, who make simple toys and figures, a fortnightly market called Friday Foodies where school families and community members sell food and wares and a weekly parent education morning known as Cuppa-Time. There is a parent library which contains books on education, health, parenting, family matters, gardening, craft and philosophy and a school shop that sells toys, books and art and craft materials.

Within the school, each class has a parent Class Carer, who co-ordinates parent support for both the teacher and the class. This role incorporates both practical and social elements.

The School Board is comprised of members of the school community, with the majority of members being parent representatives.

The Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) aims among other things to promote in the parent/friend body an understanding of the workings of the school community, thereby encouraging as many parents and friends as possible to be involved.

Director's Report on the 2016 School Year prepared for the Annual 2017 AGM

School Improvement is, or should be, a constant focus for all schools. Steiner Education is based on connection and so our improvement agenda is necessarily focussed on how we can continually find new ways to strengthen and deepen our students' connection to themselves, the world and the other. Many of the movement based activities that are a significant focus in our curriculum and a regular experience in the daily lives of our students, provide opportunity for students to develop relationship to their bodies (themselves) as spatial beings (in the world) and as individuals in relationship with a group (the other). In 2016 we undertook and completed 3 major building projects, constructing new buildings that all support the movement aspects of our curriculum: the Eurythmy Room, the High School undercover sports area and the Hard Craft Facility.



Over the last 5 years, we have had several changes in key leadership positions within the school, and in 2016 we worked to consolidate the workings of our Senior Leadership Team and the College of Teachers. I commenced in the role of Director in January and John Davidson joined the team in March as Early Childhood and Primary School Education Administrator. Joan Weir and Tim Dunn continued as College Chair and High School Ed Admin respectively. We had a change of Business Administrator mid-year as we farewelled Kerstin Andersson and welcomed Roger Craig to the role. Due to the expertise and professionalism of both of these people, the transition occurred seamlessly with minimal disruption to the workings of the school. The Board, College and Faculties spent time in 2015 collaboratively dreaming into the future and created a 20 year vision for the school. During 2016 this vision has been distilled into a 10 year Board/College Strategic Plan and a 2 year working School Improvement Plan.

We continued to grow and strengthen our music program in 2016, adding a combined schools curriculum music camp to our program for Classes 6 – 9. This new initiative saw 89 students from SVSS, Noosa Pengari and Rainbow Ridge Steiner Schools, gather at Baden Powell Scout Park for 3 days of focussed choral and instrumental ensemble music making. The camp gave students from the three attending schools a chance to participate meaningfully in music making as both an art form and as a deeply connecting social experience. The end of the camp culminated in performances from all the ensembles and choirs.

SVSS continued in 2016 to provide quality teacher education opportunities for our own staff and staff from other schools through our ongoing conference program. In March we hosted a National Learning Support Conference attended by 64 participants from Australian Steiner schools.

Annual Report 2016

We welcomed Carly Sheard as Class 1 teacher in 2016. Marian Jerrim came on board as our second teacher intern to continue the initiative started the previous year to develop new Steiner teachers internally. We welcomed new teacher aides Astrid Edwards, Mychele Wellsmore and Jordan Devine, a past student of the school. In the High School Mel Allan, Deb Boyd and Samuela Bettago joined the faculty. The extensive camp program is a key point of difference for our school and 2016 saw the employment of our first full-time Outdoor Education Co-ordinator Guy LEstrange.

Waiting lists for our Early Childhood and Primary Classes continued to grow and we spent time considering how the school might serve its mission to provide as many families as possible in South East Qld opportunity to access a Steiner Education. These considerations lead to the conceptualising of three major initiatives: the development of a second EC and Primary Campus, the creation of a Distance Education stream to support waiting list families and families for whom location prohibits access and the establishment of a sister Prep Class in 2017. Planning and preparatory work for these three initiatives was a major focus during the year.

The High School reached a major milestone in 2016, celebrating 10 years of operation. A wonderful anniversary celebration occurred in September, organised by high school staff and a small group of alumni students. The celebration was combined with our biennial Music Under the Stars evening and was an extremely joyous event and a fitting acknowledgement of the history and progression of the high school.

Our largest Class 12 cohort to date graduated at the conclusion of the year, with 20 students completing their Steiner Schooling journey. As always the senior projects were inspiring and a wonderful showcase of the outcomes of Steiner Education at SVSS.

Despite offering an accredited and successful Steiner senior program for several years, in 2014 the regulatory bodies advised us that we would need to commence offering work programs in Classes 11 and 12 that would allow students to bank points towards a Queensland Certificate of Education. After much hard work by Tim and the High School Faculty, we commenced offering the developed programs to our Class 11 students in 2016. Further regulatory changes were confirmed during the year that would in the future restrict our capacity to offer an authentic Steiner Senior Program even more.

The College and Board at SVSS are deeply committed to maintaining our special character right the way through to Class 12 and are committed to finding an alternative pathway to the impending changes. After much investigation we decided during 2016 to pursue and implement a certification and assessment model called the Steiner Senior Certificate. The Certificate was developed out of a perceived need to protect the special character of Waldorf Education and at the same time have the achievements of our students recognised and acknowledged in main stream circles and higher education institutions. The Steiner Senior Certificate is a New Zealand qualification that has been set up to be delivered trans-nationally. There are 4 schools in NZ currently offering the certificate as well as 9 schools in Europe.

In August I visited two NZ schools who have been implementing the certificate for over 5 years and spent a few days immersing myself in how this certificate looks in practice.

Annual Report 2016

Karen Brice-Geard, Educational Director of SEDT, visited SVSS in August spending time with management and staff to determine whether the school has capacity to implement the certificate. In October we had subsequent visits from Phil McKinstry, General Manager, and Mark McGavock, Moderation Manager, who worked with staff to begin to develop the knowledge and skills for implementation. Learning Outcomes were identified and the necessary preparatory work to offer the first level of the certificate to our incoming Class 10 students in 2017 was completed. Work with the accreditation bodies to gain full approval for SVSS to offer the 3 levels of the certificate to our Class 11 and 12 students as a comparable senior pathway will continue in 2017.

For me, the gesture of 2016 could be likened to a large in-breath or a gathering phase during which we have worked to create plans, gather resources and put preparatory measures in place to support the next steps of growth and development that are on the horizon for the next few years of our school's biography. I thank you all warmly for your support throughout the year; it has been a pleasure to serve the community in 2016 and I look forward to the onward journey.

2016 Parent Survey Results

In 2016, 73 of our 201 families responded to our annual parent satisfaction survey. Over half of these respondents have been at Samford Valley Steiner School for over 5 years. Parents were surveyed for their level of satisfaction with the school in the following areas with the summarised results:

- **Curriculum Content/ learning** – 90% + of respondents rated SVSS positively in all questions related to curriculum content and learning across the school
- **Curriculum delivery/ teaching** – 88% + of respondents rated SVSS positively in all questions related to curriculum content and learning across the school
- **Approach to student behaviour management and pastoral care** – 90% + of respondents confirmed that the school is a safe and nurturing environment for their children. Results indicated that 10 – 20% of parents would like to see more communication about their student's conduct and more consistency in school approach to behaviour management
- **Learning Support** – 90% + of respondents confirmed that they felt their students were well supported at SVSS, however 15 – 25 % did not feel well informed about school approach to learning support or referral processes.
- **Community interactions and relations** – 85 % + of respondents rated SVSS positively in all questions related to community interactions and relations across the school
- **Communications** – 100% of respondents rated the SVSS newsletter positively. 10-20 % of parents would like to see improvement in timeliness of communications.
- **Leadership and Management** – 94 % of respondents confirmed that they could see evidence of continual school growth and improvement. 30 -40 % of parents did not feel well informed about leadership and governance structure, roles, work and strategic direction.
- **Buildings, Grounds and Facilities** – 95 % + of respondents rated SVSS positively in all questions related to buildings, grounds and facilities across the school
- **Parent Education** – 95 % of respondents were satisfied with the parent education offered at SVSS. 80% of respondents indicated that they are actively involved in learning more about Steiner Education.
- **Parents and Friends Association** – Whilst 90% of respondents indicated that they had opportunity to engage in the cultural life of the school in a meaningful way, a significant percentage of respondents did not have awareness of the function of the PAFA or who is on the executive group.
- **Festival Life** – 100% of respondents with children in the kindergarten and primary school responded positively to all questions related to the school festival life. Engagement in and satisfaction with the festival life amongst high school parents was around 80%.
- **General School Culture** – 90% + of respondents rated SVSS positively in all questions related to the General School Culture across the school.

Results of the Parent Survey are used to guide School Improvement planning and direction.

School Details

Contact for further information

Further information is available from Pep Wright, Director, or from the school office by phoning 07 3430 9600, email info@samfordsteiner.qld.edu.au website www.samfordsteiner.qld.edu.au.

School Sector

Independent

School Address

5 Narrawa Drive, Wights Mountain 4520

Total Enrolments

309 (excluding Kindergarten)

Year Levels Offered:

K-12

Co-educational or single sex:

Co-educational

Characteristics of the student body

The student body was made up of 148 males and 161 females. There was a range of nationalities: French, German, Japanese, English and Australian.

Families live in nearby suburbs as well as inner city suburbs including: Samford, Mt Samsonvale, Clear Mountain, Mt Nebo, Ferny Grove, Ashgrove, Mitchelton, The Gap and Durack. The age of the children ranges from 5 – 18.

Staffing Information

Staff Composition

The School is an equal opportunity employer with 27 full time staff and 32 part time staff comprising 33 teaching staff and 26 non-teaching staff.

Qualifications of all teachers

Qualification	Percentage of classroom teachers and school leaders at the school
Doctorate	3.03%
Masters	12.12%
Bachelor Degree	72.73%
Diploma	9.09%
Certificate	3.03%

Expenditure on and teacher participation in professional development

<i>Description of PL activity</i>		<i>Number of teachers participating in activity</i>
Gleneaon Curriculum Intensives		6
Goethe Institute Australia		1
SEA National Teachers Conference		8
Lakshmi Prasanna Allamsetty Observations		33
Eurythmy Intensive		1
SEA Governance and Leadership Conference		3
Whole School Faculty Meetings		33
Primary Faculty Meetings		19
High School faculty Meetings		14
Prep Faculty Meetings		4
The Art of Education Teacher Training		6
WHS Fire Drill Child protection		33
SEA Delegates Meetings		3
SEA Business Manager Meeting		1
College Meetings		12
First Aid and CPR training		15
Introduction to Portrait Sculpting		1
Senior Curriculum Meetings		1
Leading with Spirit – New York		1
Milliwanga Sandy – Indigenous Education and Spirituality		33
Alcohol and Other Drugs Seminar		1
Clay workshop		29
School Law Conference		1
Kodaly Music Conference		2
Total number of teachers participating in at least one activity in the program year		33 or 100%
Total Number of Teachers	Total expenditure on teacher PL (as recorded in Financial Questionnaire)	Average expenditure on PL per teacher
33	\$48 958	\$1,584

Average staff attendance for the school, based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave periods of up to 5 days

Number of Staff	Number of School Days	Total Days Staff Absences	Average Staff Attendance Rate
33	181	65	98.9%

Proportion of teaching staff retained from the previous year

Number of permanent teaching staff at end of program year (Head Count)	Number of these staff retained in the following year	% retention rate
33	29	88%

Key Student Outcomes

Average student attendance rate

Number of possible attendances – based on 181 school days	Total number of all students	Total number of all student absences	Average Attendance Rate %
55929	309	4522	92%

Average student attendance rate for each year level

Year Level	Number of possible attendances for year level	Total number of students in each year level	Total number of student absences in each year level	Average Attendance Rate for each year level
K	5430	30	119	98%
1	5611	31	335	94%
2	5430	30	389	93%
3	4706	26	493	90%
4	5611	31	305	95%
5	4344	24	487	89%
6	3620	20	295	92%
7	4887	27	280	94%
8	4706	26	307	93%
9	3258	18	424	87%
10	3620	20	431	88%
11	1629	9	272	83%
12	3077	17	404	87%

A description of how non-attendance is managed by the school

Class rolls are marked daily by teaching staff and absentees reported to both campus offices, where they are entered on the school's database. Parents are required to inform the school of their child's absence by 8.30am by phoning the dedicated absentee line. Where a student is absent without parent notification, the school makes contact with the parent, initially by text and then follow up call if needed.

NAPLAN results for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2016

Details of the NAPLAN results may be found at the *My School* website <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

Apparent retention rate

	Year 10 Base	Year 12	Retention rate %
Number of students	20	17	85%

Year 12 student enrolment as a percentage of the Year 10 cohort is 85 %.

Year 12 outcomes

Samford Valley Steiner School offers an alternate fully accredited curriculum. Students are eligible for a Certificate of Steiner Secondary Education QLD and a statement of results. Eligibility for tertiary study is decided through the QTAC non-standard year 12 program through which students are eligible to be awarded a QTAC selection rank which enables them to achieve entry to tertiary study.

Outcomes for our Year 12 cohort 2015	
Number of students awarded a Senior Statement	N/A
Number of students awarded a Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement	N/A
Number of students who received an Overall Position (OP)	N/A
Number of students or are completing or completed a School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship (SAT)	0
Number of students awarded one or more Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications	N/A
Number of students awarded a Queensland Certificate of Education at the end of Year 12	N/A
Number of students awarded an International Baccalaureate Diploma (IBD)	N/A
Percentage of Year 12 students who received an OP1-15 or an IBD	N/A
Percentage of Year 12 students who are completing or completed a SAT or were awarded one or more of the following: QCE, IBD, VET qualification	18%
Percentage of Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) applicants receiving an offer	100%

Post school destinations

At the time of publishing this School Annual Report, the results of the 2016 post-school destinations survey, *Next Steps – Student Destination* report for the school was not available. Information about these post-school destinations of our students will be uploaded to the school's website in September after release of the information.



Samford Valley Steiner School
A living education for social renewal

Annual Report 2016