Vision Statement

Mäpuru Christian School strives to be an active member part of a much larger Christian community learning together to live life as God intended, offering hope for the world.

The school strives to uphold Christian values in all school matters, within the curriculum and in all its dealings with students, parents and broader community. In doing so, the school aims to support parents, students and teachers to practice an inclusive Christian theology where Yolngu traditions, knowledge, cultural practices and languages are respected. This vision includes:

- Supporting Mäpuru parents and community to live with dignity on their sacred ancestral estates as God intended.
- Supporting the teaching of, and respect for the sacredness and spirituality of the environment within an encompassing system of Yolŋu kinship.
- Actively supporting Mäpuru people to maintain their independent community lives, enabling them to do, to manage for themselves.
- Supporting the development of a broad inclusive Christian community within east Arnhemland.
- Offering Mäpuru parents and community hope and stability in an ever changing world.
- Offering an inclusive school curriculum, embedded in Yolŋu knowledges and Mäpuru’s micro-enterprises.
- Encourage and support non-Yolngu staff and family members to actively participate in community activities, and to learn a Yolngu language and use Yolngu kinship within the school and wider community.

Principal’s Message

Mäpuru Christian School opened its doors to the families and children of Mäpuru on 19th July 2010. Our journey has only just begun and has already brought exciting depths of learning for students, teachers and community alike. We have been blessed with enthusiastic, responsive and hard working students, school community and teachers who are all working together as kin in harmony to educate Mäpuru students and create Mäpuru Christian School.

There is still a long way to go to fully realize the vision that elders past and present held for Mäpuru Christian School, as outlined in the school’s vision statement. It is indeed a joy filled journey towards this vision that we are on.

Linda Miller
Teaching Principal
School Profile

Mäpuru is located 500kms east of Darwin in Arnhem land. Access is difficult from major transport routes, accessibility being dependent on weather conditions. This strongly impacts on student numbers that are high during the dry season with easy road access and low during the wet when there is no road or air access.

Mäpuru Christian School is a small school, offering a preschool to Year 10 program. Classrooms are multi-age and multi-level.

Total Number of Students: 60

Primary Class
Number of Students: 32
Gender: 13 female, 19 male
Age range: 3 years (preschool) - 10 years (Yr 5)

Secondary Class
Number of Students: 28
Gender: 12 female, 16 male
Age range: 11 years (Yr 6) – 21 years (Yr 10)

Teaching and Learning Initiative

Curriculum:
Mäpuru Christian School follows a community negotiated bilingual and bi-cultural curriculum that realises the educational goals of its community alongside their vision of Christian community education and goals of the NT Curriculum Framework (2009). Mäpuru Christian School’s curriculum goal is for students to become successful learners who are not only confident and creative individuals but active and informed citizens whose futures radiate the hope of dignity and independent lives.

Pedagogy:
Pedagogy at Mapuru Christian School is targeted to the Standards taught. It adheres to NTCF Policy Statement 2, using evidence based teaching and learning pedagogies that close the gap between the learners’ current achievement levels and targeted outcomes.

As a Yolŋu Christian School, Yolŋu pedagogies are used to deliver a range of programs including Indigenous Language and Culture programs. This includes bilingual and bi-cultural instruction for conceptual and literacy development in students’ first language Djambarrpuynu, bridging English language and literacy skills to deeper levels of understanding. To this end, classrooms are a working partnership between Yolŋu and Balanda teachers.

English as an Additional and Second Language pedagogies are utilized alongside bilingual pedagogies enabling students to learn in, through and about English as they study the range of Learning Areas across the curriculum. Literacy approaches include Do – Talk - Record alongside Walking Talking Text ESL methodology. These approaches support the strong partnerships that Mäpuru adults have expressed as a non-negotiable practice of the school, that the non-Indigenous teachers don’t take over and move so fast that it leaves the Yolŋu teachers behind. These approaches form part of a planning process at MCS, enabling Yolŋu teachers to be thoroughly skilled to plan, prepare and teach alongside the classroom teacher.

Yolŋu teachers are highly skilled at implementing the numeracy program developed through the Building Community Capital to Support Sustainable Numeracy project.
(BCCSSN). This pedagogy (is based on the same research) as the NSW Count Me in Too Learning Number Framework. All teachers are attending school based PD in this approach.

Mäpuru Christian School is developing a Numeracy curriculum based on NTCF Mathematics Standards using a Working Mathematically teaching and learning model and BCCSSN pedagogy. A strong emphasis on real life, directed investigations in the Mäpuru living and working context is used. One example of this is using the community co-op shop weekly takings, which is located in the school storeroom, to count ready for banking. Here Jackie Duluwidi leads the students to organize the co-op takings on a large place value diagram, grouping real money into units, tens, hundreds, counting the final earnings and bundling ready for banking.

Note: The term Assistant teacher is not used at Mäpuru. Instead we refer to our co-teachers as Yolŋu teachers, a respectful term acknowledging the depth of knowledge and experience these teachers bring to their classroom practice. Mäpuru’s Yolŋu teachers do much more than ‘assist the teacher’, they are expert teachers in their own right, teaching the non-Indigenous teachers and striving to complete formal teaching qualifications.

Programs:
Individual class programs reflect community aspirations and students’ learning needs. As students across the entire cohort displayed only initial concepts of print, our programs have focused on developing understanding of schooling, literacy, numeracy, and respect for school resources. To this end many of our school texts are based on the history stories told by elders. These stories are supported with photos and pictures of the community and the local environment, creating a text that is instantly accessible to the students.

Primary Class:
Students in this class are constantly drawing on their knowledge of the Yolŋu cultural world through their first language, Djambarrpuy̱ŋu. As the western classroom context is so foreign, teachers in this class are constantly developing literacy and numeracy resources in both languages, which provide a stimulating, purposeful use of literacy, oral English and numeracy. This includes classroom developed photo stories, history stories from elders etc enabling students to develop deep level understandings of the skills needed to be successful in school and make explicit the cultural knowledge embedded in a range of texts and contexts across the curriculum. Students are developing their literacy and numeracy skills alongside cross curriculum conceptual development. Most learning is, in the first instance, experienced through activities in the known local environment. Students are then further supported to apply these skills to learning through the outside, de-contextualised world.

Outcomes for these students include:
- developing and consolidating understandings of how to be a learner in the cultural context of a classroom
- developing confidence in understanding and responding to classroom language of instruction across the curriculum
- developing early literacy skills, ie decoding, reading simple texts and accelerating reading levels to age/grade levels. Writing in this class is currently focused on writing individual words and short sentences in English and will increase to short texts over the year.
- Developing early numeracy skills through western culture of numeracy. Yolŋu maths skills are developed through knowledge of kinship interrelationships and have a completely different cultural base to that of Western numeracy concepts.
Secondary Programs:
Secondary programs reflect students’ initial literacy and numeracy skills alongside interests, aspirations, skills and cognitive development of teens. As a consequence of little and inconsistent schooling, students’ literacy and numeracy outcome levels are currently commensurate with the Primary students’ levels, and are just starting to accelerate with consistent teaching. It is a very exciting time for students and teachers alike.

Whilst these students are still constantly drawing on knowledge of their home culture and first language, they are beginning to look to the outside world for knowledge to apply in their world. This includes the world of becoming independent adults and the world of work.

The western classroom context is still foreign to these students. Teachers in this class are still developing literacy and numeracy resources in both languages. In this class the imperative is on purposeful, relevant, applied English literacy and numeracy learning. Whilst this includes classroom developed photo stories, history stories etc, students are also now able to access some wider curriculum materials with extra ESL scaffolding, to form a bridge in their language and conceptual understandings from one world to another.

They are developing their literacy and numeracy skills alongside cross curriculum conceptual development through application in the known local environment before being supported to learn through the outside, decontextualised world.

Students need intensive ESL teaching in a bilingual classroom that is parallel to the classroom program, to learn the English required to access the curriculum.

Program Outcomes for these students spiral around all the outcomes for younger students above, and additionally include:

- how to learn in groups as well as independently in the classroom
- developing English language skills in both interpersonal and informational spheres
- developing informational use of English in and through the curriculum learning areas
- developing literacy skills, ie decoding, reading simple texts and accelerating reading levels to age/grade levels. Writing in this class is currently focused at writing sentences in English and will increase to paragraphs and whole texts over the year.
- Developing functional and communicative literacy to live as independent young adults, e.g. form filling, internet banking, talking in English on the phone to achieve goods and services, obtain driver licences etc
- Developing functional mathematical skills that can be applied to life at Mäpuru
- Planning and running the 3 micro-enterprises that Mäpuru elders have established leading to self determined, independent futures. These are:
  - An independent cooperative store
  - An eco-tourism fibre weaving enterprise “Arnhem Weavers”
  - An eco-tourism survival skills enterprise “Men’s Business”.

Electives Program:
An electives program takes place in the afternoons where a range of community members teach programs in:

- Food and nutrition (hunting and food gathering for survival)
- Sport
- Art
- Traditional arts
- Music
• Computing skills

Special Funded Programs

**Australian Government Literacy and Numeracy LNSLN Targeted Programs**
This project is developing targeted literacy programs and resources aiming to increase literacy outcomes for Mäpuru’s primary and secondary classes. It consists of two approaches.

1. Develop literacy programs and implementation resources that reflect local content and community aspirations. It will provide a model for future program and resource development within the school community aiming to increase student participation in active literacy learning and improve literacy outcomes.

2. Obtain wider reading literacy resources and library shelving to begin the establishment of the first school library at Mapuru. These will include a selection of graded readers, picture books, fiction, non-fiction literacy resources and some teacher reference items.

**Australian Government Country Areas Program**
This project is establishing a practical application for purposeful learning, a student run store, for numeracy and literacy development and consolidation in the school. Mapuru currently has a non-perishable food shop in the school store-room, run by a Yolnu Teacher with student assistance. There are no other stores, outlets or services in the community. Students will establish a small business to order and sell non-food items such as fishing lines, stationery and clothes. This will provide a purposeful environment for learning to communicate in English on the phone, via fax and email. It will also provide practical numeracy skills alongside knowledge and skills in financial management and accountability. Students will also develop competency with internet banking. The depth of communication skills needed, will also enable students to begin to develop the depth of English language and content knowledge to learn about interpreting for a range of purposes. In addition, it will provide a much needed community service to students and their families.

**Additional Teacher Funding**
Mäpuru Christian School is eligible to receive ‘Additional Teacher’ funding from the Commonwealth Government and has directed this funding towards the employment of a second teacher at the school.

**School leadership and school decision-making processes**

The School is led by the Mäpuru community, acting as School Council, in partnership with the Principal and teaching team.

School – community meetings take place as necessary, usually twice a term, to seek guidance with school decisions. Decisions are usually made by consensus. An item is raised, Yolnu teachers lead the discussion in Djambarrpuynu, then parents and community have a few days to a week to discuss further. Another meeting takes place to form a consensus.

The ultimate responsibility rests with the Principal to ensure decisions fall within NTCSA policy, are in the best interest of the student and community body, and for the longevity of the school.

**Capital improvements to the school over the past 12 months**

Teacher accommodation in the form of a 3 bedroom house commenced in 2010. This included installing a generator in a new shed which is attached to the school building, to back up the new school’s solar system which also feeds the power demands of the teacher accommodation.
No further capital improvements to the school buildings have been completed over the past 12 months.

**Capital improvements planned for the school in the coming 12 months**

NT Department of Education is installing a new satellite dish to install the NT Schools ICT network.

An application to the Block Grant Authority for a basketball court in planned during 2011.

**Current conditions of school buildings and facilities**

Mäpuru Christian School operates from three classrooms and has a toilet/shower block. Teacher accommodation includes a one bedroom flat attached to a classroom and a 3 bedroom house located within the community. There is no school office or staff room. The one bedroom flat attached to the classroom would make a good office and staff room when separate housing is attained.

The school buildings consist of two blocks. Block one was built in 1990, consisting of 2 small classrooms joined by a breezeway and verandah. It is in original condition, needing minor repairs, vermin proofing and repainting. A very small solar system is installed which is not adequate to meet the needs of this building and needs to be upgraded, in order to power fans and lights. Sections of verandah boards are under surveillance for weather damage. This building is placed on steel piers, approximately one meter above the ground which are rusting through at ground level. The Secondary students replaced fly screens in 2010.

Block 2 was built in 2007 and consists of a large classroom, a one bedroom teacher accommodation, a breezeway and has a solar array attached with a battery store, sufficient to serve the needs of the 2007 school and teacher's accommodation building. This building is in good condition.

A student toilet block was included in the 2007 building program which consists of a male and female section containing a single pit toilet and single shower room each. This in good condition.

**List of any critical incidents that have taken place over the past 12 months**

There have been no critical incidents over the past 12 months.

**Staffing Information**

1 x Teaching Principal Linda Miller (Masters Applied Linguistics, Bachelor of Education, Diploma of Teaching)
1 x Classroom Teacher Penny Whittaker (Diploma of Teaching, Early Childhood, Graduate Certificate of TESOL)
2 x Bilingual Yolŋu (Assistant ) Teachers
  - Jackie Duluwidi
  - James Burkiyalawuy
1 x Trainee Bilingual Yolŋu (Assistant ) Teachers
MCS retained both of its teachers into 2011.

**Teacher participation in professional learning activities**
- Daily Lesson planning in teaching teams
- Daily learning together session in teaching teams that includes supporting Yolŋu (assistant) teachers fulfill requirements of Certificates in Education Support
- Monthly school based PD
- Annual NTCSA ‘Over the Top’ conference

**Highlights**

Mäpuru Christian School had only been in operation for 2 Terms during 2010. Highlights during this period include:
- Representation (and sometimes 100% of adults) from every household at every school council meeting and school assembly.
- Gaining two Education Support Traineeships for Mäpuru Christian School. Negotiating the selection criteria with the School Council and having nine adults apply and undergo a trial to fill these 2 positions. When we informed the successful applicants, the look of joy across the faces of all family members was wonderful. Rebecca’s father (terminally ill at the time) lay back as we told him about her successful application, her roles and responsibilities, beamed with pride at the realization of his hopes and dreams for their community school and his daughter.
- Mowing the knee deep grass in the school grounds by whipper snipper (the mower was broken) on the weekend before the start of the school term – all those wonderful workers who were so determined to have a school ready for the start of school – speaks volumes about the support of the community for their school
- Children running to school to arrive before the bell rings
- The 7.30am arrival of a 7 year old wanting to read to his 4 year old sister. Sitting side by his side he ‘read’ her the book in English (that he’d memorised) and had her repeat each sentence
- The teenagers who screamed with delight at having successfully completed their first 4 sentence in ‘running dictation’. ‘We should do this every day,’ they said.
- Student progress. There is an atmosphere of successful learning in each classroom, with students displaying a knowing confidence that they ARE successful learners. Students can see good achievement in reading from their reading logs and running records.
- The eagerness of students to apply themselves to the reading program, multi-age learning where the older students assist and support their younger classmates.
- the tones of joy and laughter that always come with the morning singing program as students sing in unity the songs that are meaningful and fun to them.
- The smiles, laughter and enthusiasm of students and teachers as they sing with Jackie ‘If you are happy and you know it’.
- Music program run by visiting custodians of Mäpuru, Dick Munungu, Julie Maminyinawuy, Harry Báriya and their families. Every morning we sang together whilst Munungu, Maminyinawuy and Báriya taught new songs and demonstrated a range of music styles on guitar, keyboard and ukelele. Afterwards they led workshops on how to play guitar, ukelele and keyboards. In the evenings the music continued, with the whole community being involved in fellowship with songs and dances of praise late into the nights.
• Third term, October 2010, the entire school community implemented our first learning about ancestral country excursion as our school curriculum. Elders planned for us to go to an important ancestral site, Dhulmuwadany. We learnt about connections between Djambarrpuynu peoples and the interconnecting lines of land ownership there alongside the recent history and industry of Dhulmuwadany. Elders educated us all about Dhulmuwadany histories, recounting stories about growing up there, building the airstrip and trading crocodile skins. Upon our return to Mapuru we wrote and illustrated books, role played the stories and events centred on the Dhulmuwadany histories to form the basis of Term 4 literacy programs.
• Students spending their weekend mowing and clearing the camp area in preparation for Arnhem Weavers visitors

Student Welfare

MCS adheres to the policies and protocols of NTCSA regarding pastoral care. The Yolŋu teachers represent the diversity of households at Mäpuru. Under the wisdom and guidance of the three community matriarchs, these teachers communicate daily with families about their children. In reality, the entire school community is family, non-Indigenous teachers as well. It is a very close community where there is an abundance of care and acceptance, and open communication.

Teaching and Learning: Student Outcomes

The average student attendance at MCC in 2010 was 66%.

As Mäpuru Christian School only commenced in July 2010, students did not participate in NAPLAN testing. MCS students will participate in NAPLAN testing in 2011.

Preschools (where applicable)

Preschool students are included within the Primary classroom for the majority of the year. They are encouraged to return home after the morning 3 hour program, but often like to stay for the entire day.

When preschool numbers have exceeded more than 3 or 4 children, a CDEP worker joins the school team and offers a separate program under the guidance of the Primary class teacher.

Student Retention

Mäpuru Christian School is registered from Preschool to Year 10 therefore does not retain student to Year 12.

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

Mäpuru consists of nine households. The Yolŋu teachers are drawn from three of these nine households. MCS is making every attempt to include adults from all households when further paid work is available through our afternoon electives program.

As stated earlier, MCS has representation (and sometimes 100% of adults) from every household at every school council meeting and school assembly. Elders are enthusiastic to have their family stories documented and included in the school's literacy programs. We only have to ask for help and these elders are at the school or our homes ready and responsive.

The Yolŋu teachers who are completing Certificate 4 in Education Support are currently surveying parents and the community regarding parent and student satisfaction with the school. Roslyn Malunjumba discussed the working relationships within the school at a staff meeting. She stated that the children, even the young pre-schoolers, felt the harmonious working together as a strength of the school, “… they can feel it, they know and are happy at the school”.

Parents are thankful for the school vehicle and teaching resources. A recurring point of dissatisfaction has been the cessation of Assistance for isolated Children funding to parents and the difficulties they have experienced registering for Abstudy with Centrelink. The school requests assistance from Centrelink regularly and frequently for this registration to be completed and to be continued. There have been great
difficulties with Centrelink’s processes alongside accessibility during the wet season, which has rendered our students to be cut off this service soon after registration was complete.

**Financial Summary**

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**School Self Assessment**

MCS did not undertake a process of self assessment in 2010. During 2011, the ‘School Improvement and Renewal Framework’ will be used to undertake self assessments in the areas of ‘Teaching & Learning’ and ‘Community & Culture’.

**Future Priorities**

- Two more teacher houses to enable the school to have an office and the capacity to offer teachers time release and broader expertise
- Encourage Mäpuru to develop a community plan, so that a cemented basketball court and sports fields can be included
- Increase ICT teaching
- Improvement drainage for the airport in order to prevent lengthy periods of airstrip closure.
The information in this report has been verified and the priorities endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer of NTCSA

____________________________________
Chief Executive Officer

____________________________________
Date