Blue Gum Montessori School
Annual Report 2011

School Mission
To provide an excellent Montessori Education for 3 – 12 year olds

School Vision
Confident, independent, community minded children, inspired to a life long love of learning

School Philosophy
To acknowledge each child and to support the natural phases of their development.
We are an independent school that values community life and that actively fosters the partnership between children, parent/carers and professional staff.
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GENERAL INFORMATION

Blue Gum Montessori School Inc. is an association which has a stated Vision and Mission. The objects of the Association are stated in the Constitution.

Council Members are elected every year.

Elections are held every year at the Annual General Meeting.

Council Meetings are held regularly during term time and are open to Members of the Association. Minutes of the meetings are available on request made to Council.

An Annual General meeting is held each year within four months after the end of the financial year of the Association.

A notice regarding this meeting is published on the School website, on the notice boards outside the classrooms and in the School Newsletter.

The Annual Report and Accounts are available to Members of the Association from the School Office seven days before the AGM. The Annual Report and accounts are open for discussion at the AGM.

The Annual Report and accounts are published on the School website – www.bluegummontessori.wa.edu.au
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Bill Monaghan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Chairman</td>
<td>Terence Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Paul Williamson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Nicole Van Bloomstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community life Coordinator</td>
<td>Rachel Mirco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Representative</td>
<td>Mark Cox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Representative</td>
<td>Rheannon Binks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Representative</td>
<td>Shelly Doig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex officio member:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Janet Laing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2011 CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Another year has flown by and it has been another busy time for all of those people involved at Blue Gum Montessori School.

After some minor changes to our Constitution passed at last year’s AGM Council, which reflected both where we are heading and the way we have grown over the last 6 years, Council has spent significant time self-reflecting and identifying areas in which we can improve the Governance of the school. This at times has been a slow process but one in which I believe we are starting fully appreciate and will need to continually evolve in.

Council examined a large number of our Policies and Procedures along with the Council Handbook to ensure best practices are in place for future Councils. We have changed several policies to reflect our growth as well as introducing new policies including a Disputes and Grievance Policy. I would like to thank Rheannon Binks and Mark Cox for their efforts in coordinating this time consuming task.

Council explored ways in which we can better utilise the skills and enthusiasm of the parent body to improve the community feel at Blue Gum. The creation of the Community Life Coordinator’s position was the fore runner to a P&C Committee to be chaired by the Community Life Coordinator. We believe this will enhance the sense of community within our school which was one of the great attractions for my family when we first enrolled our children at Blue Gum.

A major hiccup for the school occurred late in 2011 with the loss of a large amount of electronic data through a computer system malfunction. Whilst this has created a huge amount of extra work for all the staff at BGMS we are in a much better position with our systems and practices since the malfunction. I would sincerely like to thank all the staff, both in the office and those in the classrooms, for their patience and extra work to painstakingly recreate our system. Also I would like to thank those who volunteered their time to help with this task.

The school will again be involved in the School Registration Process in 2012. In short, we need to demonstrate to the Department of Education Services (DES) that we are functioning as a school in the areas of Curriculum, Finance, Management and Governance. How well we comply with the standards set out by the DES will determine the length of time that the registration will cover. Our last Registration period was for 2 years and we will be working hard in order to be granted a longer period of Registration, which in turn allow us to plan long term for our school.

The registration process requires us to be accountable to the Government as an Educational Institution but also justify the level of funding we receive from the Government. Government funding for Independent Schools is very much on the agenda for the Federal and State Governments and this will possibly impact us in the coming years. One measurement used by the Government is the cost of educating each child at a school and we continue to be competitive against like schools. Whilst there was a significant fee increase for the 2011 school year we were able to keep the 2012 increase to a level well below that of our competitors, both Montessori and other Independent Schools. Council fully understand that our fees will continue to be a topic of debate in the school community and be compared to the charges at other schools. Our aim is always to cover our educational costs whilst providing a quality education for our children.
Although our levels of accountability have increased significantly and with our funding levels potentially to be challenged in the future we must remain true to our vision to provide an excellent Montessori education for 3 to 12 year olds. We as Council, Parents and Staff must continue to understand, implement and promote the Montessori Methods whilst conforming to external government and education influences. This will always prove to be a great challenge but one we must ensure that we continue do better than our competitors.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of our Teaching staff, Educational Assistants, Specialist Teachers and Office staff at BGMS for their contribution and commitment to our school. Whilst there are always challenges we are extremely lucky to have the quality of people that we have at Blue Gum.

Also I wish to make a special mention to Janet Laing for her dedication and professionalism as Principal of our school. I am often left amazed at her level of commitment, hours she works and the scope of her role as Principal. From dealing with Government Departments, other schools, staff, parents through to being called out to school when there is a break in or to fix our reticulation she always puts the school first. Thank you Janet.

I will be stepping down from the position of Chairman, a position that has been extremely rewarding although challenging at times. As part of Council’s succession planning I hope to continue as a General Member of Council to provide some continuity and have a mentoring role with the incoming Chair.

Rheannon Binks has nominated for the position of Chairperson and Terence Lee (Deputy Chair), Nicole Von Bloomestein (Secretary) and Rachel Mirco (CLC) will also be seeking re-election for their positions on Council. Paul Williamson (Treasurer), Mark Cox and Shelley Doig will not be seeking re-election to Council. Thank you for your contribution to the school and the support you have given me as Chair is very much appreciated.

All the best for the remainder of 2012.

Bill Monaghan

Chair BGMS Council
2011 PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

SCHOOL FEATURES

Blue Gum Montessori School is a dynamic learning community where the different members of the community – children, parents and staff work collaboratively to help the children to reach their potential.

At Blue Gum we strive for confident, independent, community minded children inspired to a life long love of learning

We value –

- **Self awareness** which is demonstrated by the development of self discipline, the pursuit of independent learning and collaborative learning.
- **Community life** which is demonstrated by the mixed age classes, inclusion of the staff and parents in the educational experience.
- **Care of the environment** which is demonstrated when we learn about nature and the connection of living things, involving ourselves in the care of the environment and taking responsibility for the care of the environment.
- **Cultural diversity** – this is demonstrated as we celebrate the festivals of our own society, study political geography and learn to speak French.

(See full version of the Blue Gum Montessori School Values is available from the School Office.)

We encourage the School, children and staff to aspire to:

- Consider the needs of self, others, the community and the environment
- Strive to understand and to care
- Respect self, others, the laws of the community and the natural laws of nature
- Appreciate and value the diversity of humans
- Honour the work of the past and today and to look forward to the future
- Contribute to society and the world
- Be responsible for one’s own actions, the community and the environment
THE CHILDREN

Children start at Blue Gum Montessori as close to their third birthday as possible, in the Junior Primary.

Enrolment Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total enrolments</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 years old</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 years old</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 – 12 years old</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of families</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The School seldom takes children in after their third birthday.

The School has accommodation for 181 students and it is anticipated that all places will be filled by the end of 2012.

Attendance

In their first year the children attend four mornings a week Monday to Thursday 8.30 – 12. Around their fourth birthday the children transition over a term to four full days a week 8.30 – 3.00pm. and at their fifth birthday the children attend five full days a week.

Attendance rates are influenced by a number of children who go on extended holidays with their families. Families are reminded in writing that attendance at school age is compulsory. All families are given activities to do with their children to ensure their child’s formal learning requirements are not interrupted. On their return to school the child is expected to present their ‘holiday work ’ to the teacher and the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average attendance rate</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 – 12 years old</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CURRICULUM EVALUATION

As an educational institution Blue Gum Montessori utilizes tools such as Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS), National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and Western Australian Monitoring Standards in Education (WAMSE) to confirm to the teachers that the work been undertaken by themselves and the children is considered equable to the National Australian benchmarks.

In the 2011 PIPS assessments of five year olds for mathematics, the School held a steady progress from the start of the year finishing above the state cohort average. The children’s progress was marginally stronger in reading, holding steady development and finishing well above the State cohort.
NAPLAN

% above National Minimum Standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YR3</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Grammar and Punctuation</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YR5</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Grammar and Punctuation</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>91.66%</td>
<td>91.66%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>91.66%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The eight year olds and eleven year olds once again sat NAPLAN and their achievements were exactly as their teachers predicted.

The largest age cohort in the School is nine children. Results are reported in this format to avoid compromising individual children’s privacy.

The school performed well in the assessments with all children above the National Minimum Standard. It is notable that there were no exemptions and no eight year olds fell in the achievement bands of 1 and 2 with the exception of spelling. The teaching staff recognized that spelling was an issue for the Year 3 cohort and put in place remedial action immediately. All eleven year olds achieved above achievement bands of 3 and 4.

In both year groups the Blue Gum Montessori children achieved on par with the major independent schools in Perth. Blue Gum Montessori School has been grouped using the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score, in the same basket as these schools.

The performance of the children is a credit to all their teachers, both past and present and the very effective intervention process in place for children who learn in different ways. Gifted and talented children are also identified at an early stage and they are encouraged to stretch themselves and are given opportunities to utilize their different intelligences.

WAMSE

In 2011 Blue Gum Montessori School children sat the Western Australia Monitoring Studies of Education tests for the first time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5 2011</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Science Investigating</th>
<th>Society and Environment</th>
<th>Society and Environment ICP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All participating schools mean</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGMS mean</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
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</table>

An integral part of the Blue Gum education is to help the children develop their independence. For the 3 – 6 year olds this is physical independence and for the 6-12 year olds it is intellectual independence.

There are a number of strategies in place to help the children accomplish this aim starting with taking care of themselves, their possessions and small social situations. Another strategy is the incursion
and excursion programme where the children have the environment brought to them or they go out into the environment. These experiences help ground the children’s learning in reality.

The Middle Primary continues to develop their independence with excursions to the Baldivis Children’s Forest Centre and a Shockproof incursion to name a few.

Upper Primary visited the Constitutional Centre, the Cockburn Wetlands, had a Noongar Incursion and went on a camp for three days. The camp can be a challenge for some of the younger children as they are away from their families for three nights.

The children continue to delight with their singing and acting vignettes at assemblies. The parents have been delightful audiences modeling for their children the behaviours of a respectful audience and the children have responded to the applause with grace.

Blue Gum has an event each term when parents are invited to share their child’s educational journey. In Term 1 the children invite their parents to breakfast on Harmony Day and to explore the different activities they have followed in learning about the diverse society that makes up the rich tapestry of Australia.

In Term 2 the children prepare gifts to present to their mothers at the Mums’ Tea. With keen excitement they once again send out the invitations, cook the biscuits and after showing their class work, take their mothers down to Kambarra to serve them a cup of tea and the ‘school baked’ biscuits. Term 3 brings Dads’ Big Night Out where once again the children prepare a gift for their father, invite them into their classroom to share their activities before finishing off with a sausage sizzle and kicking some balls around.

The rhythm of the school year is marked with these events and more. On World Environment Day in June the community gathers to plant out natives in the school gardens. The Montessori Picnic in September marks the celebration of Dr. Montessori’s birthday. In 2011 Blue Gum was the host of the gathering of the Montessori Schools of Western Australia and it was a marvelous opportunity to join with the children from other Montessori Schools and celebrate as a community.

In Term 4 are the Sports Days where the children are in teams of all ages and abilities to pat, pass, throw balls, jump hoop and tag each other in huge efforts to take their teams to victory.

Term 4 sees Remembrance Day commemoration with the children conducting their own service accompanied by the trumpet beautifully played by Elizabeth Anne Williamson (parents) and an immaculate minute’s silence kept. Melbourne Cup Day is kept with the children wearing hats of their own creation for a gold coin collection for the Princess Margaret Hospital for children.

The children and their families must be congratulated on their fundraising efforts this year. On World Environment Day Boab ran a stall to raise funds for the preservation of the Black Cockatoo. At the Montessori Picnic $1200 was raised through the sale of muffins and drinks for the Montessori Children’s Foundation to provide Montessori Schools in the Northern Territories and the Torres Strait Islands. $130 was raised for the Princess Margaret Hospital. The School also supported the Wheelchairs for Kids Project. The children collected aluminum pulls and soft toys throughout the year. This organization makes and sends wheelchairs, blankets and soft toys to disabled children in third world countries.

The children’s enthusiasm and thoughtfulness in these projects is a great inspiration to everyone around them.
STUDENT SATISFACTION

In the student survey the children had different variations of the answer to the question of what we are trying to do well and one of the answers perhaps summarises all the answers – ‘we are trying to concentrate and think about our work and do our work well.’

To the question what do we do well? – ‘We all do our work well, so there isn’t much words to write,’ which says it all.

To the question how can we improve? – the children had suggestions from a swimming pool to five slides and ideas that the School is able to consider working on.

SCHOOL DESTINATIONS

It was with great pride and sadness we say goodbye each year to our graduates many of whom have been at the school for all the cycles – nine years. 2011 was particularly special as we were joined in celebrating their journey by five past graduates.

The graduates of 2011 all went to the school of their choice. The Schools the graduates have moved on to range from All Saints, Somerville Baptist College, Winthrop Baptist, Penhros, Santa Maria to Ardross and Christian Brothers College.

Two girls will be taking up their scholarships for Perth Modern in 2013.

2011 Graduates
STAFF

Blue Gum Montessori School continues to enjoy the privilege of a stable and passionate educational team. Each teacher and education assistant brings different qualities to the School adding depth and breadth to the children's educational experience.

All teachers are registered with the Western Australia College of Teachers (WACOT) and all staff hold a current Working with Children Check.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Working Cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Tina Creese       | BA Early Childhood Education  
London Montessori Centre Diploma in Montessori Method of Education Nursery | 3 - 6         |
| Gurmayl Kaur      | BA Childhood and Family Education  
Modern Montessori International Diploma (2 ½ - 6yrs)  
Modern Montessori International Diploma (6 - 12yrs) | 3 - 6         |
| Catherine Day     | Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)  
Bachelor of Behavioural Science  
Currently studying Montessori (3-6) | 3 - 6         |
| Debbie Dwyer      | Bachelor of Architectural Studies  
Master of Teaching (Early Childhood)  
Modern Montessori Diploma Early Childhood (2 ½ - 6yrs) | 3 - 6         |
| Vinita Desa       | BSc (Statistics)  
Honours Diploma in Systems Management  
Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary) | 6 - 9         |
| Sujatha d’Souza   | B.Com  
Graduate Diploma of Education (Primary)  
London Montessori Centre Diploma (2 ½ - 6yrs) | 6 - 9         |
| Laura Nicholls    | Bed. | 9 - 12 |
| Melanie Hunt      | BA French and English  
Higher Diploma in Education  
Certificate IV in Training and Assessment | French in all cycles |
| Michelle de Bruin | Bachelor of Primary Education  
Further Diploma in Remedial Education | Curriculum Support  
Art  
All cycles |
| Jenny Moyles      | Montessori Diploma (2 ½ - 5yrs)  
Certificate of Education | Relief 3 - 6 |
| Pushpa Ramalingam | Master of Law  
Post graduate Diploma of Education  
MCI Diploma in Early Childhood (2 ½ – 6yrs) | Relief 3 - 6 |
<p>| 11 teachers       | | 7.6 FTE |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Assistant</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria Fahey</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant Cert</td>
<td>3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Engelbrecht</td>
<td>Residential Child Care Cert.</td>
<td>3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee du Toit</td>
<td>BA, Montessori Dip 3-6 yrs</td>
<td>3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwen Hills</td>
<td>BA Journalism</td>
<td>3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolores Castelino</td>
<td>Montessori Dip 2 ½ - 6yrs</td>
<td>6-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne</td>
<td>Cert III Teacher Assistant</td>
<td>6-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Barth</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant Dip Special Needs</td>
<td>9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 assistants</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.6 FTE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WORK FORCE COMPOSITION**

In keeping with the School value of cultural diversity, the female staff come from a range of birth places. Two sports masters are contracted to provide sport once a week to the Primary children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MONTESSORI TRAINING**

In 2011 Blue Gum Montessori School made a commitment to provide training for staff in the Montessori Method of Education.

Catherine Day, Wattle teacher is pursuing a 3-6 years Diploma with Montessori World Education Institute.

Lee du Toit, Wattle Education Assistant, who currently holds a 3 – 6 Montessori Diploma is studying for a Post Graduate Diploma in Montessori Education 3 – 6yrs.

Gwen Hill, Melaleuca Education Assistant is studying a Post Graduate Diploma in Montessori Education 3 – 6years.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

All the teachers have been involved in various professional developments ranging from attending a conference and workshops in preparation for the implementation of the Early Years Framework Standards to workshops on Dyslexia, Behaviour Management and the National Australia Curriculum.
Four internal professional developments were held over the year covering Special Needs, Identifying what the school delivers well, how it is delivered and how to tell people about it to observations in colleagues classrooms.

Direct expenditure on professional development for 2011 was $7 584

**STAFF ATTENDANCE**

Staff attendance is exceptionally high with 53 sick days taken representing 3% of the working days for the year.

**STAFF SATISFACTION**

40% of the staff completed the School Survey. As with any form of data collection the responses were varied. The opinions, reflections and views of the staff are taken very seriously. The ‘collective’ or ‘shared’ responses rather than individual issues are presented. The staff believe that the School seeks to help the children be well rounded individuals by attending to the individual and diverse needs of the children to help them develop physical, intellectual, social and emotional attributes.

It was considered that the School responds to individual needs while delivering a quality Montessori Education. That the staff respect diversity and cater for individual differences, create safe and conducive environments for learning and the development of the whole child.

Areas of improvement noted were the activities in the playground and communication between the staff, parents and the community.

**SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

Blue Gum Montessori School is nothing without the parents. The School was created by the parents and the partnership between the children, the parents and the staff is of vital importance to the success of the children. As in any community some stand above the rest in their service to the school and in particular by standing on the School Council. The Council puts in many hours working hard behind the scenes to ensure the school continues to thrive. To all the Council Members, and particularly Bill Monaghan who is standing down after four years as Chair, I thank you on behalf of the children, staff and parents for your efforts in 2011.

**SCHOOL COMMUNITY SATISFACTION**

Twenty four families (20.5% of our total number of enrolled families) completed the School Satisfaction Survey in December 2011.

As with any community organization what some people identified as a strength, other perceived as a not as strong and visa versa. The responses are valued and plans have been put in place in 2012 to publicize the policies and procedures and school events more strongly using the School newsletter, emails, School notice boards and the children.
On a personal note - Each year brings new challenges and 2012 will be no different. The role of Principal has grown exponentially and so has the work load. This is largely due to the increased expectations by both the Federal and State Governments. In 2012 the new National Australia Curriculum is phased in, the Early Years Learning Framework is rolled out, the funding debate continues to rage on and the School will be going through the Re registration process in September with the Department of Education. I try hard to maintain my contact with the children who are the ‘raison d’ être’ and their classes. This would not be possible without the help of the office staff – Tracey, Business Manager, Kathie, School Administrator, Lisa, Enrolments Officer and Louise – School Officer. Thank you for all your hard work and support behind the scenes.

Each year we aim to improve what we offer and each year more new families join the School. We are honoured by the faith placed in us. Blue Gum continues to be an exciting mix of people of varying views and interests and with many things in common but in particular the children. Each year is exciting and rewarding as the children strive to reach their potentials. Thank you for your trust and support and I look forward to a productive 2012.

Janet Laing
Principal
Dip Management, Montessori Dip Education (3-6) (6-9)(9-12)