



Student Layla Zarika, 6, is helped by Colleen Thompson.

Picture: PHIL BLATCH/CDP16403

Pupils show spark

BRENTON CHERRY

HAVING to compete with 25 other classmates for the teacher's attention can be even more difficult for students with special needs.

Over the last two school terms students from Guildford Primary School and Blaxcell St Primary School have been involved in the Spark reading program.

In partnership with the Australian Business and Community Network, volunteers from the Common-

wealth Bank visited the schools once a week to act as mentors in one-on-one reading sessions.

The students were from Year 2 and were either from non-English speaking background or needed extra help. In a special ceremony last week they were presented with their Spark certificates for completion of the course.

Blaxcell St Primary School deputy principal Justin Caban said the program was particularly valuable given the school

had 98 per cent of students from a non-English speaking background.

"It has been tremendous and helped them in three important ways," he said.

"Academically all of the students' results have greatly improved.

"They have also gained a lot socially and developmentally through the one-on-one attention.

"In a classroom they are competing with 25 other kids for the teacher's attention, so the one-on-one sessions were so valuable."