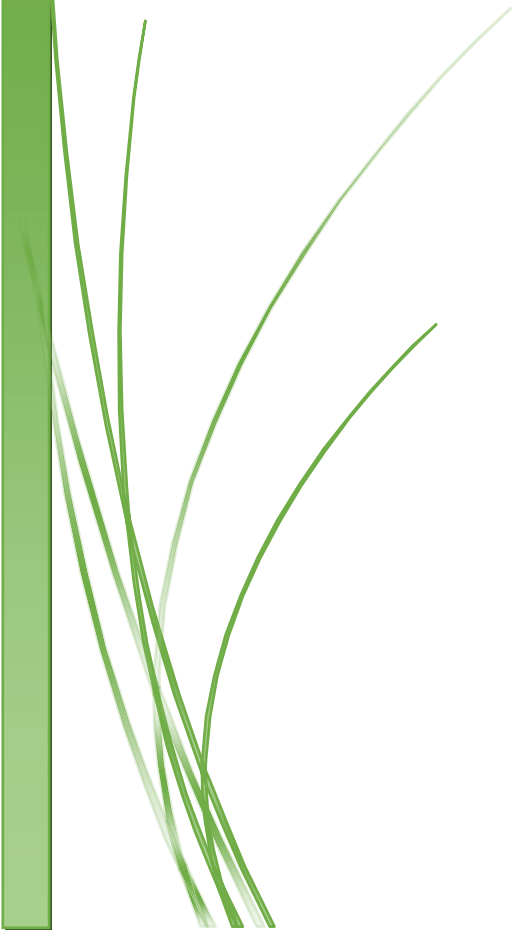




The Rainforest School Annual Report 2019

Grow Slow, Grow Strong



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Webpage	Additional information about The Rainforest School is located on trs.qld.edu.au and the <i>My School</i> website
Contact person	Julie Abbott - Principal Carolien Franken – Business Manager

School Sector

Independent

Total Enrolments

14

Year Levels Offered

Prep – Year 3

Co-educational or Single Sex

Co-Educational

School Background

The Rainforest School is a government approved, independent, co-educational primary school located in the hinterland of Mission Beach, Queensland.

In 2018, the Non-State School Accreditation Board approved our Prep – Year 3 application. We opened our doors in 2019 for a small cohort of students. In November 2019 our application to extend our accreditation to include Year 4 – Year 6 was approved.

Mission

Our mission is to deliver a child-centred and holistic approach to education which considers the individual needs of the child: mentally, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

Vision

Our vision is to provide a safe, natural and nurturing environment that promotes self-confidence and self-esteem, fosters authentic relationships and encourages within the child a connection with nature and a love of learning.

Motto

Grow Slow, Grow Strong

Pillars

Connection – Community – Conservation – Creativity

Social Climate

The Rainforest School is located in the tropical rainforest of North Queensland and resides in a high-set Queensland with a wrap-around veranda. Our school is small by design. The atmosphere is homely, with consideration given to beauty, simplicity and the use of natural materials. We encourage intrinsic motivation so that our learners can reach their full potential.

Fostering authentic relationships and the use of restorative practice assists our students to build on their social and emotional knowledge. Student well-being is a priority at our school as we understand that it leads to successful learning.

During our morning circle and our afternoon relaxation time we aim to create a safe space. It is this unwritten curriculum that helps to create the unique culture of The Rainforest School.

Characteristics of the Student Body

In our foundation year we taught a small composite cohort of 14 students. All our students live regionally and in the vicinity of Mission Beach, Tropical North Queensland.

Boys: 7

Girls: 7

Indigenous: 0

Our approach to curriculum delivery

Our teaching is child-centered, with a balanced mix of hands-on, real-life and explicitly taught lessons. We use age-appropriate pedagogy to develop our student's capacity to play an active role in their own learning and to provide challenging and stimulating learning experiences. We strive for our students to become creative, innovative and resourceful individuals who can draw on their knowledge and experience to solve problems. Our units of work and community projects are selected or developed around our distinct local context and is linked to one of our four pillars.

The classroom layout is designed to support our teaching practice and has many learning spaces for our students to utilise. Our lessons ensure students have opportunities to plan activities and communicate ideas both independently and collaboratively. Our flagship Kitchen/Garden Program provides students with real-life skills and daily nutritious vegetarian meals. Our whole school reading program gives students access to the essentials of effective, evidence-based reading instruction matched to their level of reading development. We believe that learning is a continuum and we strive to ensure that every student experiences success as they progress on their own individual learning journey.

Distinctive Curriculum Offerings

Kitchen – Garden Program

Our Kitchen - Garden program provides our students with daily real-life learning. Students and staff engage in planting and tending the vegetable garden as well as harvesting and using the ingredients in the kitchen to cook lunch for the school community. Our students are active participants in the full food cycle experience, from preparing the vegetable beds all the way through to composting the food scraps left after food preparation. This program provides students with important life skills and integrates various subject areas such as, English, Maths, Science and Design Technology.

Swimming Program

As part of our HPE program we run a weekly swimming program at our local aquatic centre. These lessons are subsidised by Sporting for Schools Grants and provide our students with valuable water safety and swimming skills.

Flying Arts Program

Our school has successfully applied for a Flying Arts grant. Our students participated in a 'Designs by Nature' project led by internationally recognised artist Nina Dawson from Birdtribe Wearable Art. In these 5 workshops the students were emerged in the process of creating naturally dyed fabrics and cards. This process started with the collection of seed pots, roots and other natural resources on the school's premises and resulted in naturally dyed aprons, cards and library bags.

Artist in Residence

Each year we invite a local artist to show our students how they produce their art. This year we had Jacque Jarrett teach our students how to felt, by creating individual wall hangings with each student with the theme "Where the Forest Meets the Sea".

Art workshops

Every Monday afternoon, parents and community members teach our students various art activities. These art projects involve the process of designing through to creating.

Extra-curricular Activities

Cassowary Festival

Our school played an active role in the annual Mission Beach Cassowary Festival. We designed and made costumes to wear in the 'Drumming of the Cassowaries Parade' and staff, parents and children provided coconut leaf weaving demonstrations and animal clay sculpture workshops.

Local Library

We have organised excursions to the local town library to celebrate 'Book Week' and to take part in robotic lessons.

National Parks Ranger

A local ranger has provided our students with rich local knowledge about the property 'Dundee Park' where our school is situated, as well as local National Parks, such as Garners Beach and Murray Falls.

Nature Walks

Our weekly nature walks around the property of Dundee Park include highlights such as the largest butterfly aviary in the Southern hemisphere and a bush tucker track created through a local Djiru project.

Morning Circle

Each day begins with an all-school Morning Circle, where we promote and support a growth mindset and relationship building by providing a safe space to reflect. Our students are given the opportunity to share ideas and speak freely about their experiences and feelings.

Relaxation Time

During our daily relaxation time – either inside the classroom to the sound of live classical piano or outside in the rainforest to the sound of bird song and the meandering creek - our students clear their mind and still their body. We believe that creating calm and peace within ourselves, helps create a balanced life.

Tree Planting

Each student at The Rainforest school planted a tree to add to the Bush Tucker Track at Dundee Park. Our plants were purchased from Girringun Native Plant Nursery and were chosen to create an edible garden and to attract butterflies.

Parental & Community Involvement

The Rainforest School started as a grassroots project in 2017 and was founded by a small group of passionate parents and community members. In 2019, The Rainforest School opened its doors to a small cohort of students in Prep to Year 3.

Our school welcomes volunteers both parents and community members to assist with our art workshops, music and dance, woodworking, gardening, cooking, sewing and other projects.

Parents are invited to join our excursions, which have included library visits, beach clean-ups, the exploring of National Parks with a local ranger, and a tour of Woolworths and Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre.

Parents also assist our school's contribution at the local Cassowary Festival, by helping to make costumes, setting up an information stall about our school and offering a clay workshop and weaving demonstrations to the community.

We have 'Parent Circle' meetings where ideas for parent fundraising and short- & long-term projects that relate to our four Strategic Pillars can be generated. Teachers and students may use this time to ask parents for advice or assistance with student-led projects. It is also an opportunity for the principal to give a school update and for parents and carers can give feedback and ask questions.

Our school has a Private Facebook Group for current staff and families. This group was created to share our school news in an interactive way. It is a platform to inform families of events, collaborate on projects, to discover ways to volunteer, celebrate our achievements and to organize social gatherings. It is also a place for staff to show case what our children have learnt and enjoyed at school and a place where parents can view these special moments.

We also have a Facebook Page to connect with our wider school community, which reaches to Victoria and South Australia and as far as England and The Netherlands. These posts are informative, and we welcome feedback and involvement.

Another initiative to connect with the local community has been achieved through the hosting of the Mission Beach Boomerang Bags movement. We took over this project in 2019 and welcome community members to monthly sewing bees at our school. The project aims to recycle donated fabric into funky bags to reduce the use of plastic bags, which aligns with our 'Conservation' and 'Creation' pillar. At the same time, it provides the participants a platform for connection and interaction with the community to build social relationships, which also links to our 'Connection' and 'Community' pillar.

Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction with the School

Satisfaction Data derived from the 2019 quantitative Parent and Student Survey show a high to very high average satisfaction. The Student Survey had a 100% participation rate, whereas the Parent Survey had a 50% return. Our school community is very small, and this means the results should be read in that light.

Student Conclusions

The 2019 Student Survey had a 100% response rate. Students were asked to rate statements on the following scale:

Rating	Score
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Not Agree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

Generally, our students experience a high to very high satisfaction, with an average score of 4.5.

Average Ratings Student Survey 2019	
1. I like being at my school	4.1
2. I feel safe at school	4.3
3. My teachers care about me	4.8
4. My teachers motivate me to learn	4.7
5. My teachers expect me to do my best	4.7
6. My teachers provide me with useful feedback about my school work	4.6
7. I can talk to my teachers about my concerns	4.2
8. Student behaviour is well managed at my school	4.3
9. Teachers at my school treat students fairly	4.8
10. My school takes students' opinions seriously	4.7
11. My school looks for ways to improve	4.6
12. My school is clean and tidy	4.1
13. I like the cooking we do at our school	4.7
14. I like Morning Circle	4.3
15. I like the Relaxation Time we do at our school	4.6
16. I like the Swimming program	4.5
17. My school gives me opportunities to do interesting things	4.7

Parent Conclusions

The 2019 Parent Survey had a 50% response rate, which is a very small base to draw conclusions on. However, based on other qualitative feedback we believe the below results are indicative of the total parent body. Generally, the Parent Satisfaction score averages 4.7.

Rating	Score
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Not Agree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

CARE FOR STUDENTS	Average Rating
My child likes being at The Rainforest School	5.0
My child feels safe at school	5.0
My child has a positive relationship with his/her teachers	4.8
Teachers at The Rainforest School treat my child fairly	4.8
My child feels nurtured and cared for at school	4.8
I trust that the staff have my child's best interest at heart	4.8
My child feels comfortable to approach his/her teachers	4.8
My child is making good progress socially and emotionally	4.4

TEACHING AND LEARNING	Average Rating
Teachers at The Rainforest School inspire and motivate my child to learn	4.4
Teachers at The Rainforest School expect my child to do his/her best	4.4
My child is making good progress with their learning at school	4.8
My child's learning needs are being met	4.4
Teachers provide my child with useful feedback about his/her learning	4.4
The combination of hands-on, real-life and explicit learning contributes to my child's educational development	4.8

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT	Average Rating
Student behaviour is well managed at our school	4.2
I value the implementation of restorative practices rather than punitive consequences for behaviour	4.8

RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION	Average Rating
I can talk to my child's teachers about my concerns	4.8
My opinions are taken seriously by the school	4.6

OTHER	Average Rating
The Rainforest School is well maintained	4.6
The Rainforest School looks for ways to improve	4.6
At The Rainforest School my child is able to connect with nature	4.8
Daily Relaxation time contributes to my child's well being	4.8

School Income Broken Down by Funding Source

School income, reported by financial year accounting cycle using standardized national methodologies and broken down by funding source is available via the <http://www.myschool.edu.au/> website.

Staffing Information

Staff Composition, Including Indigenous Staff:

Description	Teaching staff*	Non-teaching staff	Indigenous** staff
Headcounts	2	5	0
Full-time equivalents	1.4	2.2	0

*Teaching staff includes School Leaders.

** *Indigenous* refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

Qualifications of all Teachers

Qualification	
Masters	50%
Bachelor's degree	50 %

Expenditure on and Teacher Participation in Professional Development:

a) Teacher Participation in Professional Development

Description of PD activity	Number of teachers participating in activity
NCCD	2
Child Protection	2
Leadership	1
Naplan	1
First Aid	2
Environmental	1
Total number of teachers participating in at least one activity in the program year	2

b) Expenditure on Professional Development

Total Number of Teachers	Total expenditure on teacher PD	Average expenditure on PD per teacher
2	\$650.43	\$325.22
The total funds expended on teacher professional development in 2019		\$650.43
The proportion of the teaching staff involved in professional development activities during 2019		100%

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

Number of Staff (FTE)	Number of School Days	Total Days Staff Absences	Average Staff Attendance Rate
3.6	687.60	19	97%
For permanent and temporary classroom teachers, school leaders and non-teaching staff the average staff attendance rate was 97% in 2019			

** Where staff means permanent and temporary classroom teachers, school leaders and non-teaching staff*

Proportion of teaching staff retained from the previous year:

Number of permanent teaching staff at end of previous year	Number of these staff retained in the following year (the program year)	% retention rate
N/A	N/A	N/A
The Rainforest School started operating in 2019 and therefore a retention rate vs 2018 cannot be calculated		

Key Student Outcomes

Average student attendance rate (%) for the whole school:

The average attendance rate for the whole school as a percentage in 2019 was 88%

Average student attendance rate for each year level

The Rainforest School had 14 enrolments in 2019. For privacy reasons we are unable to disclose attendance rates for all year levels.

Year levels	Average attendance rate for each year level as a percentage in 2019
Prep	88%
Year 1	Data withheld to ensure confidentiality
Year 2	Data withheld to ensure confidentiality
Year 3	Data withheld to ensure confidentiality

The attendance roll is marked twice a day and parents are contacted in case of an absence. In 2019 all students did meet the attendance requirements for compulsory schooling and no further action had to be taken.

NAPLAN results for Years 3 in 2019

There are no 2019 Naplan results available.

Contact Person for Further Information

For further information about The Rainforest School, enrolment information and policies, please contact admin@trs.qld.edu.au