

The Rainforest School

Annual Report 2021

Grow Slow, Grow Strong



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|-----------------------|--|
| Postal address | 18 South Maria Creek Close, Maria Creeks, Queensland 4855 |
| Phone | 0437 553 852 |
| Email | admin@trs.qld.edu.au |
| 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

18

Year Levels Offered

Prep – Year 5

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: academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Vision

Our vision is to provide a safe, natural and nurturing environment that promotes self-confidence, 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 an independent primary school, located in the beautiful hinterlands of Mission Beach. Our school is a high-set Queenslander that is surrounded by lush rainforest. The Rainforest School is intentionally small by design. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming, 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. Each learning space is designed to support unity and collaboration. Student wellbeing is a priority at our school as we understand that it leads to successful learning. Our wellbeing program provides valuable life skills and promotes a growth mind set, while our daily circle time encourages student voice.

During this circle time we promote and support a growth mindset and focus on relationship building to instill a sense of belonging. Our relaxation enables our students to calm and clear their minds. It is this unwritten curriculum that helps to create the unique culture of The Rainforest School.

Characteristics of the Student Body

In 2021 we taught a small composite cohort of 18 students. All our students live regionally and in the vicinity of Mission Beach, Tropical North Queensland.

Boys: 12

Girls: 6

Indigenous: 2

Our approach to curriculum delivery

We deliver the Australian Curriculum in a unique and vibrant way. Our teaching is child-centered, with a balanced mix of hands-on, real-life and explicitly taught lessons. We deliver an education that is inclusive of all students at our school. We strive for our students to become creative, innovative and resourceful individuals who can draw on their knowledge and experience to solve problems. Our subject units and student projects are selected or developed around our distinct local context, student interests and alignment to our school values.

The classroom layout is designed to support our teaching practice, with flexible and fluid learning spaces, where students have a shared ownership of every school resource and space. Our flagship Kitchen/Garden Program provides students with real-life skills and daily nutritious vegetarian meals. Students do not bring a packed lunch to school, instead all meals are shared from the one table, which helps to create a culture of belonging. 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 learning progression.

Distinctive Curriculum Offerings

Kitchen – Garden Program

Our Kitchen - Garden program provided our students with daily real-life learning. Students and staff engaged 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 were 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 provided students with important life skills and integrated various subject areas such as, English, Maths, Science and Design Technology.

Wellbeing Program

Our students participated in daily mediation practices, where students were taught breathing techniques to the sound of a gong and mindfulness with the aid of visualization stories. Student voice was encouraged during our circle time, where they could decide on topics ranging from finding solutions to problems to the planning of the following term's menu.

Swimming Program

As part of our HPE program we ran a weekly swimming program in Term 1 and Term 4 at our local aquatic centre. These lessons were subsidised by Sporting for Schools Grants and provided our students with valuable water safety and swimming skills.

Instrumental Music

Under the professional guidance of a music teacher, our students have taken part in a weekly Instrumental Music Program focusing on percussion, harmonica and ukulele in lower primary and guitar in upper primary.

Dance Lessons

As part of our 'Dance' and 'Physical Education' Program our school provided weekly lessons with a professional dancer. During these lessons our students learnt dance elements and movement skills.

Artist in Residence

In 2021 we had artist Nina Blackcockatoo come and conduct a series of art workshops with our school. Under the tuition of Nina, our students made 3 large pollinator banners for our Spring Fair. This was to consolidate our students learning about Bee Awareness in an integrated English, Design & Technologies and Dance Unit.

Bee Awareness Unit

In 2021 we successfully applied for a Woolworths/Junior Landcare Grant which assisted our school in providing the following learning outcomes:

- Observing a Native Sapiens Beehive
- Designing and constructing Insect Hotels
- Creating a clay model of a Native Bee and a Paper Flower
- Writing Bee inspired writing and Puppet Plays
- Producing interactive multimedia Informative Posters
- Creating Pollinator Banners
- Performing the Waggle Dance and uploading it to the Global Waggle Dance Challenge to celebrate World Bee Day
- Purchasing and using Composting Bins

This Integrated Unit was presented at our Spring Fair in September 2021

Excursions

In 2021 we facilitated three excursions to our local library to participate in:

- National Simultaneous Storytime: a story read by an astronaut in space
- Book Week: 'Old Worlds, New Worlds, Other Worlds'
- Digital Technology 'Stop Motion' Workshops

In addition to these excursions, we facilitated the following outings:

- Mission Beach Community Arts Centre for an art workshop
- Dunk Island for HASS
- Gurrbum Reserve to plant trees for National Tree Day

Extra-curricular Activities

Nature Walks

Our weekly nature walks around the property of Dundee Park included 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 began 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 were able to clear their minds and still their bodies.

Parental & Community Involvement

Our school welcomed parent and community volunteers to assist with our art workshops, project time and gardening.

Parents were invited to join some of our excursions, which included a visit to the local library for Book Week and visiting Gurrbum Reserve to plant trees for National Tree Day.

Twice per term we conducted 'Parent Circle' meetings, where teachers gave classroom updates and (fundraising) projects, aligned to our four corner-stone Pillars were generated. Students and staff used this time to ask parents for advice or assistance with student-led projects. It was also an opportunity for the principal to give school updates and for parents and carers to ask questions, give feedback and input to the school.

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 showcase what our children have learnt and enjoyed at school and a place where parents can view these special moments.

We also have a public Facebook Page to connect with our wider community, which reaches to Victoria and South Australia and as far as England, the USA and The Netherlands.

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 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 four pillars 'Connect, Conservation, Community and Creative'.

Spring Fair

In September 2021 we hosted our very first Spring Fair. The families of our students helped making this event a big success. At this event we welcomed over 200 visitors to our school. It was a great way to connect with our local community while promoting our school values.

Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction with the School

Satisfaction Data derived from the 2021 quantitative Parent and Student Survey showed a high to very high average satisfaction. The Student Survey had a 89% participation rate, whereas the Parent Survey had a 94% return. Our school community is very small, and this means the results should be read in that light.

Student Conclusions

The 2021 Student Survey had a 94% 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 experienced a high to very high satisfaction, with an average score of 4.9, which is a 0.1pt increase versus 2020.

| Average Ratings Student Survey 2021 | 2021 Score | 2020 Score | Variance |
|---|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. I like being at my school | 5.0 | 4.8 | 0.2 |
| 2. I feel safe at school | 4.8 | 4.8 | 0.0 |
| 3. My teachers care about me | 4.4 | 5.0 | -0.6 |
| 4. My teachers motivate me to learn | 5.0 | 5.0 | 0.0 |
| 5. My teachers expect me to do my best | 5.0 | 5.0 | 0.0 |
| 6. My teachers provide me with useful feedback about my school work | 4.9 | 4.9 | 0.0 |
| 7. I can talk to my teachers about my concerns | 4.7 | 4.8 | -0.2 |
| 8. Student behaviour is well managed at my school | 4.6 | 4.8 | -0.1 |
| 9. Teachers at my school treat students fairly | 5.0 | 5.0 | 0.0 |
| 10. My school takes students' opinions seriously | 4.8 | 4.9 | -0.1 |
| 11. My school looks for ways to improve | 5.0 | 4.9 | 0.1 |
| 12. My school is clean and tidy | 4.8 | 4.6 | 0.2 |
| 13. I like the cooking we do at our school | 4.9 | 4.7 | 0.2 |
| 14. I like Morning Circle | 4.9 | 4.5 | 0.4 |
| 15. I like the Relaxation Time we do at our school | 4.9 | 4.5 | 0.4 |
| 16. I like the Swimming program | 4.9 | 4.7 | 0.2 |
| 17. I like the Dancing program | 4.9 | 4.5 | 0.5 |
| 18. I like the instrumental music program | 5.0 | 4.9 | 0.1 |
| 19. My school gives me opportunities to do interesting things | 4.9 | 5.0 | -0.1 |
| Average Score | 4.9 | 4.8 | 0.1 |

Parent Conclusions

The 2021 Parent Survey had a 94% response rate. This is combination with other qualitative feedback we believe the below results are indicative of the total parent body. Generally, the Parent Satisfaction scored averages 4.6, which is a 0.04pt increase versus 2020.

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

| | 2021 | 2020 | Variance 2021/2020 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Total - Average Score | 4.6 | 4.6 | 0.04 |
| CARE FOR STUDENTS | 4.7 | 4.9 | -0.1 |
| My child likes being at The Rainforest School | 4.9 | 5.0 | -0.1 |
| My child feels safe at school | 4.9 | 5.0 | -0.1 |
| My child has a positive relationship with his/her teachers | 4.7 | 5.0 | -0.3 |
| Teachers at The Rainforest School treat my child fairly | 4.5 | 4.8 | -0.2 |
| My child feels nurtured and cared for at school | 4.8 | 4.8 | 0.0 |
| I trust that the staff have my child's best interest at heart | 4.5 | 4.8 | -0.2 |
| My child feels comfortable to approach his/her teachers | 4.8 | 4.8 | 0.0 |
| My child is making good progress socially and emotionally | 4.6 | 4.8 | -0.1 |
| TEACHING AND LEARNING | 4.6 | 4.5 | 0.1 |
| I am happy with the quality of teaching at The Rainforest School | 4.8 | 4.7 | 0.1 |
| Teachers at The Rainforest School inspire and motivate my child to learn | 4.7 | 4.7 | 0.0 |
| Teachers at The Rainforest School expect my child to do his/her best | 4.6 | 4.7 | 0.0 |
| My child is making good progress with their learning at school | 4.6 | 4.6 | 0.1 |
| My child's learning needs are being met | 4.6 | 4.4 | 0.2 |
| Teachers provide my child with useful feedback about his/her learning | 4.5 | 4.3 | 0.2 |
| Teachers meet my child's specific needs | 4.4 | 4.2 | 0.2 |
| The combination of hands-on, real-life and explicit learning contributes to my child's educational development | 4.8 | 4.6 | 0.3 |
| BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT | 4.7 | 4.7 | 0.0 |
| Student behaviour is well managed at our school | 4.6 | 4.6 | 0.0 |
| I value the implementation of restorative practices rather than punitive consequences for behaviour | 4.8 | 4.9 | -0.1 |
| RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION | 4.4 | 4.2 | 0.2 |
| I can talk to my child's teachers about my concerns | 4.6 | 4.4 | 0.1 |
| My opinions are taken seriously by the school | 4.4 | 4.2 | 0.2 |
| I am well informed about what is happening at school | 4.2 | 3.9 | 0.3 |
| I feel comfortable to approach staff | 4.6 | 4.4 | 0.1 |
| I believe any concerns that I raise are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner | 4.4 | 4.2 | 0.1 |
| I feel part of the school community | 4.4 | 4.1 | 0.2 |
| OTHER | 4.7 | 4.7 | 0.0 |
| The Rainforest School is well maintained | 4.6 | 4.4 | 0.2 |
| The Rainforest School looks for ways to improve | 4.8 | 4.7 | 0.1 |
| At The Rainforest School my child is able to connect with nature | 4.6 | 4.6 | 0.1 |
| The Kitchen/Garden Program adds value to my child's education | 4.7 | 4.8 | -0.1 |
| Daily Relaxation time contributes to my child's well being | 4.8 | 4.8 | 0.0 |
| The Rainforest School looks for ways to improve | 4.8 | 5.0 | -0.2 |

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 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Full-time equivalents | 2.1 | 1.5 | 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 |
|--|--|
| Child Protection | 3 |
| Leadership Development | 2 |
| Employer Policies and Procedures | 3 |
| First Aid | 3 |
| Curriculum & Content | 2 |
| Students with Disability | 2 |
| Teaching and Learning Strategies | 3 |
| Total number of teachers participating in at least one activity in the program year | 3 |

b) Expenditure on Professional Development

| Total Number of Teachers | Total expenditure on teacher PD | Average expenditure on PD per teacher |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 3 | \$2,577 | \$859 |
| The total funds expended on teacher professional development in 2021 | | \$2,577 |
| The proportion of the teaching staff involved in professional development activities during 2021 | | 100% |

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

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 |
|--|---|------------------|
| 2 | 2 | 100% |
| From the end of 2020, 100% of staff were retained for the entire 2021 school year. | | |

Key Student Outcomes

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

The average attendance rate for the whole school as a percentage in 2021 was 87.5%

Average student attendance rate for each year level

The Rainforest School had 18 enrolments in 2021. 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 2021 |
|-------------|---|
| Prep | 86.9% |
| Year 1 | 90.7% |
| Year 2 | 88.2% |
| Year 3 | N/A |
| Year 4 | 87.1% |
| Year 5 | Data withheld to ensure confidentiality |

The attendance roll is marked twice a day and parents are contacted in case of an absence. In 2021 all students did meet the attendance requirements for compulsory schooling and no further action had to be taken.

NAPLAN results for Year 3 and Year 5 in 2021

There are no 2021 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