



# Isabella Plains Early Childhood School Board Report 2015



This report supports the work being done in the ACT Education Directorate, as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 “Leading the Nation”. It complies with reporting requirements detailed within the ACT Education ACT 2004 and the Australian Education Act 2013 and associated Regulations.



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## School Board Chair Report

As a parent and, as a member of the school board, it is a delight to see the children's bright and happy faces as they enter the school each day. It is obvious that the children enjoy attending and participating in the wide array of learning opportunities that our wonderful school has to offer.

The statistics show this to be true as well, with attendance at Isabella Plains Early Childhood School (IPECS) being above average at 95%, showing a measurable desire by children to attend. This is supported by the parental feedback received in the 2015 survey that children and families are well supported, that children like being at school, and that issues regarding learning are taken seriously by the staff at IPECS.

Many parents lament that the school only goes to Year Two, and seek similar parental and student engagement methods used within IPECS at the schools that are chosen for their children to transition to in Year Three. The additional supportive engagement programmes implemented throughout IPECS to allow each student to become the best they can be have shown positive results in all areas. Anyone walking about the school can observe that the children are appropriately and well engaged in play and learning opportunities, regardless of their skill or education level, which is a key component to the Early Childhood Learning Pedagogy. The model of engaging and promoting learning has been noted in anecdotal evidence from parents and/or carers as being one of the major drawcards in attending a school such as IPECS.

The support that is provided in the strong transition programme offered to students leaving IPECS has built within the students' resilience, confidence and a willingness to embrace learning in all environments.

The strong sense of community and its relevant values of: looking after yourself, looking after each other, and looking after this place (school) are evident in all parts of the school campus. The fierce competition to attend the Principal's afternoon tea is at times palpable and it is to be commended that the students strive to meet these goals so hard each day. These values along with the strong enrichment aspects of the curriculum such as the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Programme, Fresh Taste, Sustainability and KidsMatter have brought about some of the best students the ACT can offer. It is with thanks to the wonderful staff engaged at IPECS that these amazing young people have been introduced to the awesome world that is open to them as they start and continue their learning journey through life.

### Introduction to School

Isabella Plains Early Childhood School had another successful year delivering a quality education focussed on maximising children's academic achievement and enhancing their social, emotional and physical wellbeing. We worked in partnership with Communities at Work to deliver an integrated service including childcare and before and after school care programs, and with local organisations to provide family support and increase participation.

Student enrolment numbers remained steady with 4 preschool sessions delivered per week and an enrolment of 99 students from Kindergarten to Year Two. Strong transition programs occurred throughout the year with our feeder schools of Bonython Primary School, Monash Primary School, Richardson Primary School and the other schools that our Year Two students were to be attending in 2016.

### Student enrolment

In 2015 there were a total of 99 students enrolled in Kindergarten, Year One and Year Two at this school.

*Table: 2015 Student Enrolment Breakdown*

Group	Number of Students
Male	60
Female	39
Indigenous	6
LBOTE	13

Source: Planning and Performance, December 2015

### Student attendance

The following table identifies the attendance rate of students by year level during 2015. Student attendance rate is the percentage of school days attended by students in each year level at the school. Student attendance is measured over two school terms; that is from the first day of the school year for students in term one to the last day of term two.

*Table: 2015 Attendance rates in Percentages*

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
K	95.0
1	93.0
2	95.0

Source: Planning and Performance, December 2015

Student attendance is recorded twice daily by class teachers. In cases of frequent absences or regular late arrivals, class teachers work with families and the school community coordinator to support school attendance.

## Staff Information

### Teacher qualifications

All teachers meet the professional requirements for teaching in an ACT public school. The ACT Teacher Quality Institute has provided the following data based on teachers registered as at 18 December 2015.

The proportion of teaching staff with certificates/degrees/diplomas and a postgraduate qualification is shown below.

*Table: 2015 Qualification of Teaching Staff in Percentages*

Qualifications	% Teaching Staff
Certificate/Diploma/Degree	100
Postgraduate	67

Source: Teacher Quality Institute, Date 18 December 2015

**Note:** Qualifications for teachers who were registered under TQI Transitional arrangements in 2011 are self-reported.

100% of teaching staff at Isabella Plains Early Childhood School have a degree, with 67% of teaching staff holding postgraduate qualifications.

### Workforce Composition

In 2015 the workforce composition of the school is highlighted in the following table. The data is taken from the school's verified August staffing report. For reporting purposes it includes all school staff including preschools, staff absent for a period of less than four consecutive weeks and staff replacing staff absent for more than four consecutive weeks. It does not include casuals and staff absent for a period of four consecutive weeks or longer.

*Table: 2015 Workforce Composition Numbers*

Staff Employment Category	Total
Teaching Staff :Head Count	14
Teaching Staff :Full time Equivalent Permanent	12
Teaching Staff :Full time Equivalent Temporary	0
Non Teaching Staff (Head Count)	10
Non Teaching Staff :Full time Equivalent	7.1

Source: Workforce Management, August census 2015

**Note:** This table includes pre-school staffing

There are no indigenous staff at this school.

**Note:** \* Indigenous staff are reported where the staff member has self identified.

Workforce composition included 14 teaching staff and 7.1 non-teaching staff. Isabella Plains Early Childhood School supports part-time work arrangements and in 2015 there were 2 part time teaching staff and 3 part time non-teaching staff.

## Volunteers

The estimated number of hours in which volunteers have worked in the school during 2015 was 600. The number of hours dedicated to volunteering was recorded through our volunteers sign in process. In addition to the work undertaken during the school day, volunteers contributed on weekends, holidays and after hours through volunteering at breakfast club, covering books for the library, assisting with working bees and caring for the gardens and animals in the school farm.

## School Review and Development

In 2015, the ACT Education Directorate's *Strategic Plan 2015-2017* provided the framework and strategic direction for the school's plan. This is supported by the *School Improvement in ACT Public Schools Directions 2010-2015* and the *School Improvement Framework* which are the overarching documents providing support to achieve high standards in student learning, innovation and best practice in ACT public schools.

All ACT public schools participate in a four year cycle of school review and development. Schools take part in a continuous cycle of review comprising annual self assessments against their school plans. In the fourth year schools undergo an external validation process. This process provides an independent and unbiased assessment of the school's progress towards achieving system and school priorities.

Isabella Plains Early Childhood School will be reviewed in 2017. A copy of our most recent validation report can be found on the school website.

## School Satisfaction

Schools continually use a range of data collection tools to gain an understanding of the satisfaction levels of their parents and carers, staff and students. In August/September 2015 the school undertook a survey to gain an understanding of school satisfaction at that time. Staff and parents took part in an online survey.

## Overall Satisfaction

In 2015, 97% of parents and carers and 100% of staff at this school indicated they were satisfied with the education provided by the school.

As well in 2015, 14 national parent survey items and 12 national student survey items were included in the surveys. These items were approved by the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) for use from 2015. The following tables show the percentage of parents and carers and students who agreed with each of the national items at this school.

The results for the 16 number of staff who took part in the survey are tabled below.

*Table: Proportion of staff in agreement with each national opinion item*

Item	(%)
Teachers at this school expect students to do their best.	100
Teachers at this school provide students with useful feedback about their school work.	100
Teachers at this school treat students fairly.	100
This school is well maintained.	88
Students feel safe at this school.	100
Students at this school can talk to their teachers about their concerns.	100
Parents at this school can talk to teachers about their concerns.	100
Student behaviour is well managed at this school.	88
Students like being at this school.	100
This school looks for ways to improve.	100
This school takes staff opinions seriously.	93
Teachers at this school motivate students to learn.	100
Students' learning needs are being met at this school.	100
This school works with parents to support students' learning.	100
I receive useful feedback about my work at this school.	88
Staff are well supported at this school.	94

Source: 2015 School Satisfaction Surveys, August/September 2015

The results for the 60 number of parents who took part in the survey are tabled below.

*Table: Proportion of parents and carers in agreement with each national opinion item*

Item	(%)
Teachers at this school expect my child to do his or her best.	98
Teachers at this school provide my child with useful feedback about his or her school work.	92
Teachers at this school treat students fairly.	97
This school is well maintained.	95
My child feels safe at this school.	97
I can talk to my child's teachers about my concerns.	97
Student behaviour is well managed at this school.	95
My child likes being at this school.	97
This school looks for ways to improve.	97
This school takes parents' opinions seriously.	95

Teachers at this school motivate my child to learn.	97
My child is making good progress at this school.	98
My child's learning needs are being met at this school.	95
This school works with me to support my child's learning.	97

Source: 2015 School Satisfaction Surveys, August/September 2015

This information can be considered alongside information available on the *My School* website (<http://www.myschool.edu.au>).

These results as well as the continual review of school performance contributed to the evaluation of our school plan and the development of annual operating plans. The school plan is available on the school website.

## Learning and Assessment

As we are an Early Childhood School finishing at year 2, our students do not undertake NAPLAN whilst at our school. The results displayed below are our virtual NAPLAN results, demonstrating the attainment levels of our former students in year 3.

Test Domain	IPECS Year 3 virtual median results	Year 3 ACT median
Reading	476	442.7
Writing	419	419.7
Spelling	426	409.5
Grammar and Punctuation	502	441.3
Numeracy	475	410.0

Table shows that we exceeded the ACT mean in the areas of numeracy, spelling, reading and grammar and punctuation. Students were marginally below the ACT mean in the area of writing. Staff were engaged in the Principals as Leaders of Literacy ACT (PaLLSACT) program to address this deficit, and staff introduced reading strategies from this program across the school.

Students at year level	2015 % at or above ACTETD end of year Reading Benchmark Range
K	57%
1	75%
2	95%

Source: School Data, December 2015

All students were tested using the DIBELS assessment tool at the beginning of the year. Children scoring in the bottom 20% across the school were selected to participate in the literacy intervention program where students received additional targeted support four times a week. As a result of this intervention, individual student growth was evident. Several of the students jumped up to 4 reading levels in one term within the program, a distinct improvement in



fluency across the board. There was a strong willingness from students to engage in the program and this transferred into increased engagement with their learning across the school.

A detailed analysis of our school's academic achievement is incorporated into the information related to reporting against our priorities. This is found later in the report.

### **Performance in other areas of the curriculum**

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics were explored through a variety of learning experiences in 2015. Students welcomed the addition of the 'Bee Bots' robots to our school technology resources. These devices were used during whole school technology lessons to teach the students how to sequence, estimate, code, problem solve and be creative with technology. Students used iPads to support and consolidate learning, to promote sustainable practices and to create individual pieces. Several students participated in the science extension day at Theodore as part of the Tuggeranong extension program and the preschool students attended Birrigai to deepen their understanding of the impact of wetlands on our natural environment.

Physical health and wellbeing were a key focus in 2015 with the school completing three components of the Fresh Tastes program, all Preschool staff training in Kids at Play, Active Play, the introduction of a BMX bike program with the opening of the new bike track and the Therapy Assistance gross motor program. IPECS participated in the walk and ride to school days, and the Active Kids program, promoting the importance of health and physical activity to our overall wellbeing. IPECS partnered with Monash Primary School for the Cross Country carnival and with Bonython Primary School for the Athletics Carnival, strengthening our partnership and contributing to our transition programs for students exiting at Year Two.

Children continued to explore the world around them locally and globally, linking inquiry into other cultures, traditions and customs into their play. A trial Spanish program was delivered to a group of students incorporating language and culture with the view of expanding the program in 2016.

All students participated in the Arts throughout the year, with a whole school excursion to the theatre to watch 'The Cranky Bear' in Term 2. Students enjoyed the opportunity to watch a live production and their learning was evident upon return to school with students showing an increased understanding of stories being told through a variety of mediums, and responding to art in different ways. IPECS submitted several pieces to the Limelight art exhibition.

## Progress against School Priorities in 2015

### Context

A major focus of the 2015 Annual Operating Plan was improving reading outcomes for all students through intensive, school wide programs including the Therapy ACT Therapy Assistant Program (TAP) for preschool and kindergarten children, the MiniLit program for year one children and Principals as Leaders of Literacy (PALLs) program for all teachers. Teacher professional learning was focused on these areas as well as including a peer observation and mentoring program. Sustainability education was successfully introduced school wide and parent partnership opportunities continued to be a focus with the introduction of the class carer program and the provision of opportunities to be part of literacy, numeracy and science programs.

### Methodology in evaluating progress

At the beginning of each school year each school leader takes responsibility for one or more priority areas to lead. School leaders then work with team members to analyse what the priorities mean in practice and this is integrated into educator's professional pathways and performance management processes. Each term time is dedicated in leadership meetings to report back on the progress being made in each priority area, share problems that may have arisen and/or successes that may have occurred. This process allows the leadership team to keep the strategic priorities in focus throughout the year. Progress is documented and measured via student achievement data, School Satisfaction Survey data, feedback from children and families and formally through the National Quality Standards process for preschool.

### Priority

Strategic Priority 1: Improve student outcomes in literacy, numeracy and science.

### Target/s

By the end of 2015:

- 95 percent of teachers are satisfied with professional learning opportunities, as identified in the School Satisfaction Survey
- 80 percent of Year 2 children are reading at level 24 in PM Benchmarks testing
- 75 percent of kindergarten children achieve Band 3 or above in end of year PIPS Reading Assessment
- 85 percent of parents are satisfied that their child is making good progress at our school as identified in the School Satisfaction Survey.

## Progress

### [Links to Directorate Strategic Plan and 2015 Action Plan](#)

This school priority will assist the delivery of the Directorate's Priority area related to:

[Quality learning; Inspirational teaching and leadership; High expectations, high performance](#)

### **Key Improvement Strategy 1: Develop an Expert Teaching Team**

In 2015 IPECS introduced a formal mentoring program for all early career teachers. The program was developed based on learning gained at the five day ACT Teacher Mentor program attended by the Deputy Principal in 2014. The mentor teachers engaged in a series of professional discussions with the Deputy Principal in order to ensure they had adequate skills and knowledge to fulfill their role as a mentor teacher. Four early career teachers were identified and matched with willing and qualified mentor teachers from across the school. Together the mentee and mentor signed a formal agreement outlining issues such as the purpose of the partnership, the focus areas for the mentee teacher, when and how often they would meet, confidentiality and what the process would be if problems arose throughout the year. Formalizing the mentoring relationship has improved the communication amongst staff and provided mentees with a formal process to share problems of practice in a supportive and non-threatening manner.

Mid-way through the year IPECS nominated two teachers to participate in a new initiative, with other schools in the Tuggeranong Network, dedicated to further developing teacher capacity. 'Graduate and Grow' is a research based program from the Principals Australia Institute. The program focused on training experienced educators in how to become more effective mentors, providing them with tools and resources to lead and develop new educators in a purposeful manner. This resource and information will be added to the current mentoring process to make adjustments and improvements for 2016.

In addition to formalizing the mentoring process staff were engaged in collegial peer observations throughout the year. All staff, including preschool assistants, were encouraged to select a colleague, decide upon an area of pedagogy they would like feedback on, conduct the observation and then participate in a feedback session. This process not only provided staff with an opportunity to receive feedback on a nominated area but it also provided the observer with time to visit colleague's classrooms and gain new ideas that could be integrated into their own teaching repertoire and classroom practice. Staff reported that they found the process very valuable and all participants received feedback that allowed them to further interrogate their practice and make improvements accordingly.

The last implemented action linked to developing an expert teaching team was that the School Leader C, leading the K-2 team and the School Leader B, leading the preschool team conducted regular 'Teacher Talks' with teachers and provided formal written feedback each term reflecting an identified area from the AITSL Teacher Standards. All teachers reported that the

'Teacher Talks' were valued and allowed them to problem solve and receive advice and support on a regular basis with their team leader. This support is reflected in the Staff Satisfaction survey results

88 percent of staff support the statement *I receive feedback about my work at this school*

94 percent of staff support the statement *Staff are well supported at this school*

93 percent of staff support the statement *The school takes staff opinions seriously.*

In 2016 IPECS will continue to implement a range of strategies to develop an expert teaching team in order to improve student learning outcomes.

### **Key Improvement Strategy 2: Implement high quality literacy programs across the school.**

In 2015 two of the four targets were directly related to the achievement of students in reading, maths and science. The actions identified to facilitate this, focused on building teacher capacity through professional learning and targeted professional discussions.

As part of the key actions the PALLs team attended all of the training modules and lead professional discussions with the P-2 staff on all of the big six areas of literacy. These discussions included time for teachers to reflect on and share their knowledge and practices and develop an action plan for improvement/ change. To complement these opportunities the staff also participated in the Therapy Assistance Program (TAP) from Therapy ACT. The speech and language component upskilled teachers to competently use language screeners on their children and make appropriate program modifications. The K-2 teachers have since developed a bank of "vocabulary cards" and phonological awareness booklets for each of the shared texts they use.

The target of 80 percent of Year two children reading at level 24 using the PM Benchmark testing was not met with only 45percent achieving that level. However, 95 percent did achieve in the range of Levels 20-22 which is in-line with system guidelines. To address this key improvement strategy Isabella Plains Early Childhood School (IPECS) implemented a modified Mini Lit program (LISI- literacy intervention and support at Isabella) to help address literacy deficits in the Year One and some Year Two children. Subsequent testing using the Dibels assessment tools show growth for all children across most of the areas assessed. Significant growth in phoneme segmentation was noted for the Year One children while the growth for the Year Two children was in oral reading. All children demonstrated significant growth in self-confidence and engagement.

In addition to the above reading target for Year Two, it was also projected that 75 percent of Kindergarten children would achieve in Band 3 or better for reading, that is in the 'at expected' or 'above expected' performance range. This goal was achieved in PIPS with 33 of the 44 (75 percent) Kindergarten children tested achieving a standardised score which placed them in Band 3 or higher.

While the strategic priority targets were specific to reading it should be noted that 81 percent of Kindergarten children achieved in Band 3 for better for maths, that is they achieved in the 'at expected' or 'above expected' performance range.

**Key Improvement Strategy 3: Develop and implement sustainability education programs.**

During 2014 IPECS undertook many sustainability projects including seeking ACT Smart accreditation. As a result it was decided to make the development and implementation of sustainability education programs a 2015 priority. The key actions for this priority were focused on upskilling of teachers, explicit sustainability lessons and enhancing the K-2 outdoor environment. Professional learning opportunities attended by staff include Juliette Robinson's "Dirty Teaching: a beginner's guide to outdoors", Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Training, Early Childhood Sustainability Conference and an Inspired Outdoor Play workshop.

While the goal was to employ a teacher for two days to teach sustainability to all Kindergarten to Year Two classes funding only allowed for one day. This one day has provided four of the six classes with weekly explicit sustainability lessons. This teacher has also provided her program for the remaining two class teachers to use so a consistent program and messages are delivered to all children. She has also worked with teachers to embed sustainable practices in their own planning. As a result the teachers are now more aware of the importance of and how to embed sustainability into their planning. Teachers have made comment that the children are initiating sustainable practices during both indoor and outdoor play and showing more care for the school and school resources which is in line with the school agreement of "look after this place".

The third key action for this key improvement strategy was to enhance the outdoor play opportunities for children in P-2. Many good practices were already occurring in the preschool area however the team felt it could be better. They initiated a roster for educators for the planning and set up of the outdoor environment. This same system was also introduced in the Kindergarten to Year Two team. The outdoor environments were divided into sections with pairs of educators assigned to plan and set up each day. The learning experiences and target outcomes are displayed in each play space. One team member each week is tasked with recording the learning in the team's outdoor learning environment journal. While there was not a set target for this area feedback from parents and relief staff has been very positive with many commenting on how engaged the children are. There has also been a noticeable decrease in the number of incidences of inappropriate play.

**Priority**

Strategic Priority 2: Enhance the wellbeing of children, staff and community.

**Target/s**

- 90 percent of families indicate that their child feels safe at this school in the School Satisfaction Survey
- 90 percent of families are satisfied that their child's teacher cares about their child as indicated in the KidsMatter parent surveys
- 90 percent of teachers are satisfied that the school works effectively with families and professional in caring for children with mental health and learning needs in the Kidsmatter staff surveys.

**Progress****Links to Directorate Strategic Plan and 2015 Action Plan**

This school priority will assist the delivery of the Directorate's Priority area related to: Inspirational teaching and leadership, High expectations, High Performance and Connecting with Families and the Community.

**Key Improvement Strategy 1: Implement a sustainable mental health and wellbeing framework**

In 2015 a staff member engaged in training to become the IPECS KidsMatter implementation partner. Additionally four new staff joined IPECS in 2015 and approximately eight staff have joined IPECS since staff had previously completed the KidsMatter component one workshop a number of years ago. Thus the decision was made to re-familiarize staff with the new online Component One: "Creating a sense of community" workshop to help build all staff's knowledge and skills in this area. This workshop helped to unite staff in our commitment to improving children's health and wellbeing at IPECS in collaboration with families and the wider community.

All classes Preschool to Year Two have engaged in weekly Bounce Back lessons explicitly focusing on a range of social and emotional learning skills. This learning is often linked to other areas of the curriculum when relevant, such as literacy or the arts. Children have time to consolidate their social and emotional learning through the play component of the school day. Teachers take observations, workshop skills with children and help children to apply the skills learnt during lessons into authentic, play based experiences. Many children have this support and learning documented in their Learning Journals. This year we have had a number of regular relief teachers' comment on the positive and focused play the children are engaged in during outside play. They have communicated that they can see the positive impact IPECS focus on

social and emotional learning is having on the children. This support, sense of wellbeing and positivity is reflected in the Parent School Satisfaction Data -

97 percent of families report that their child feels safe at IPECS

97 percent of families report that their child likes being at IPECS

In 2016 the school will select a new KidsMatter implementation partner and team leader, as the current leader will be on leave. Staff will participate in Component Two: "Developing children's social and emotional skills" and Component Three: "Working with parents and carers workshops". This will incorporate the establishment of a 'Safe and Supportive Environment Team' to oversee the social and emotional learning programs at IPECS.

### **Priority**

**Priority 3: Enhance collaborative partnerships with families and the wider community.**

### **Target/s**

By the end of 2015

- 97 percent of families have indicated that the school communicates effectively with them
- 85 percent of families have indicated that the school works with families and provides opportunities to be involved in the school community
- 85 percent of families have indicated that existing community partnerships are valued and maintained.

### **Progress**

#### **Directorate priority Areas covered with this priority**

High expectations, High performance, Connecting with Families and the Community.

#### **Key Improvement Strategy 1: Implement strategies to strengthen parental engagement**

A class carer model has been introduced to strengthen links and build positive relationships between educators and families within the school community. The program was implemented in the first half of 2015 and is known as the Class Connect Program.

Class Connect is a voluntary program and has focused on communicating with families and educators about the value of building capacity and involvement of a greater number of families in the classroom setting. Class Connect volunteers attended an initial training workshop to explore the purpose of the program, ideas for family engagement, how to engage in effective communication between educators and families as well as information and resources that they would need to undertake the role successfully.

Class Connect volunteers have assisted in classrooms in a range of ways such as setting up children's experiences, helping with cooking and gardening and communicating with the classroom educator and other families about classroom happenings. A Class Connect family survey has been developed by the group to gather information from families regarding availability, skills and interests that they may wish to share with the school. The survey will be circulated early in 2016 and will provide direction for further strategies and actions.

IPECS has maintained its commitment to improved communication with families through communication letters and learning reflection letters each fortnight for each Preschool, Kindergarten, Year One and Year Two class. We continually receive positive feedback from families regarding the level of information we provide in order to keep families up to date with their child's learning. The Class Connect program and our communication processes have helped us to actively engage more families in their child's learning.

Family engagement in classrooms varies widely across the school however many more families have been involved in 2015 than in previous years. Family members assist with a range of learning experiences such as listening to children read, playing literacy and numeracy games with children, assisting with science experiments and hands-on experiences, participation in Fresh Taste cooking experiences. We have approximately fifteen family members that assist throughout the school on an ongoing basis in classrooms providing support to children and educators.

Parent Satisfaction Survey data supports this commitment to communication and collaboration with families –

97 percent of families confirm they can talk to their child's teachers about their concerns

97 percent of families confirm this school works with them to support their child's learning

90 percent of families believe that community partnerships are valued and maintained

The development of Community Program brochures reflecting our key community programs (Breakfast Club, Move and Groove, Backyard Rangers and Family Playgroup) was achieved. A postcard and A4 flyer was developed for each of the programs and provides the community with a brief description of the program and its purpose. The high quality nature of the postcard and flyer has helped to brand our community programs. They have been received very well by families and have streamlined the advertising process. The postcards have created interest with the DET Media Department, the Early Childhood Schools and numerous other schools in Tuggeranong.

### **Key Improvement Strategy 2: Enhance partnerships with local community organisations**

The Isabella Plains Community Connections group was formed in January 2015 as a result of discussions at school leadership and with the wider community. The purpose of the group is to enhance partnerships within the Isabella Plains services and local businesses. The groups



identified were IPECS, the Isabella Gardens senior residences, Communities@Work, Isabella Plains Neighbourhood House, Karralika and the businesses at the Isabella Plains local shops.

As agreed by the group the purpose has been to:

- Understand each other's services and business better enabling members to direct and promote to clients as needed
- Work with each other on projects and events that build connectedness for the Isabella Plains Community.

An initial task of the group was to provide service information in print and electronically to include in each service's newsletter, Facebook page and/or display areas. A partnership has been formed with the Isabella Gardens residents working together on the development of a community garden. The residents have applied for a grant, with the school supporting the application as a partner. Three residents have also offered to volunteer with the children in the classroom setting. This relationship will continue to be nurtured and plans implemented early in 2016.

The partnership with Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre (TCFC) is very important to IPECS due to the number of supportive and relevant services they provide for families. This partnership is maintained by providing assistance to TCFC when hosting parenting programs at the school such as Circle of Security and Cool Little Kids. This assistance can range from identifying participating families to providing venues and administration support. Regular communication takes place between the TCFC and IPECS to discuss or refer individual families. The ACT Child and Family guide is provided to IPECS educators and families, and other promotional material is also displayed in prominent places throughout the school to share with families and the wider community. We enjoy a high degree of collaboration with the TCFC and actively work to maintain and contribute to this important partnership.

In 2014 IPECS initiated a series of Early Years Extension Workshops in order to meet the needs of our highly capable children in Preschool, Kindergarten, Year One and Year Two in a range of curriculum areas. In the initial year of implementation three schools were involved, in 2015 this has grown to nine Tuggeranong schools being involved. Each workshop provides the opportunity for 72 children in the Tuggeranong network to be involved in higher order thinking, extension workshops relating to different curriculum areas. This year in term two the focus area was mathematics, in term three visual arts with links to literacy and in term four science. The Early Years Extension Workshops are now an embedded program within the Tuggeranong network and has helped to establish IPECS as experts in early childhood education. In 2016 IPECS will continue to lead this initiative with twelve out of sixteen Tuggeranong primary schools indicating that they wish to be involved.

Transitions to Tuggeranong Public Schools remains strong. 19 out of 22 Year Two children have enrolled in local Tuggeranong Network Government Schools for Year Three in 2016. Of the three other children one is attending their local NSW Government School and two siblings are

enrolled at a South Weston Network ACT Government School. This is the highest majority of Year Two children we have successfully transitioned to Year Three in the Tuggeranong Network since opening in 2009.

### Preschool Unit- Quality Improvement

The National Quality Framework, which has been agreed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), has put in place a new National Quality Standard to ensure high quality and consistent early childhood education and care across Australia. The National Quality Standard assists the school in identifying preschool unit strengths, and areas that require improvement. The school has identified the following preschool unit strengths using the National Quality Standard. Areas for improvement will be identified in the School's Operating Plan. In August 2015 IPECS preschool underwent the assessment and rating process and was awarded an overall rating of *Exceeding*.

### Education program and practice

This year the IPECS preschool team have focused on critical reflection, specifically from the National Quality Standards: Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is regularly used to implement the program. The team discussed the desire to move from simple reflections to more critical reflections, using the critical reflection questions in the Early Years Learning Framework as a guide.

Through the formal assessment and rating process IPECS preschool was awarded the rating of Exceeding in the area of education program and practice. The preschool team have benefited enormously from our involvement this year in the Principal as Literacy Leaders (PALLs) program and the Therapy ACT Therapy Assistant Program (TAP). These two programs have focused educator's pedagogy on language and literacy development. The resulting outcomes for the children have been very positive. One of the significant projects the team undertook was the production of a '50 Essential Songs and Rhymes for Preschool'. The purpose of this task was to intentionally teach a broad range of songs in order to enhance the children's language and vocabulary. The book will be reviewed each year and be a constant 'work in progress' in order to keep the document relevant and meaningful.

### Children's health and safety

All staff actively plan for both the indoor and outdoor learning environments to reflect the individual needs of children within the groups and in order to meet their cognitive, physical, social and emotional wellbeing. In 2015 the team refined and reviewed many of our processes and procedures in this area and as a result documentation was either developed or reviewed to reflect changes. In 2015 eight out of nine preschool staff completed and/or updated their ACECQA approved First Aid, Asthma and Anaphylaxis qualifications. The preschool children were also once again involved in the 18 week mPower minis program facilitated by an educator from the mPowerdome. This fundamental gross motor skills program was very effective at improving the children's fundamental movement skills.

The preschool children were also offered the opportunity to participate in the Royal Life Saving Australia Swim and Survive program. Educators observed enormous improvement in both swimming skills, confidence and knowledge but also in the children's self-help and independence skills out of the pool. Involvement in all of the above has helped to further enhance children's health and wellbeing. IPECS was awarded a rating of Exceeding in the area of Children's health and safety in the recent assessment and rating process.

### Relationships with children

Our IPECS philosophy values the importance of respectful relationships across our school for our children, families and educators; this philosophy is reflected daily in our practice. Once again at the beginning of the school year all preschool staff participated in robust professional discussion to create a 'Shared Preschool Beliefs' document. These discussions resulted in the formulation of a written guide to reflect how staff interact and speak to children in order to provide the highest quality care and education to all children.

Educators work collaboratively to meet children's individual needs whilst respecting the general IPECS agreement: Look after yourself, Look after others, Look after this place. The preschool team meet regularly to discuss children's wellbeing and involve others when needed in order to achieve improved outcomes. As many of the IPECS preschool children also spend time in either the Diamonds or Zircon rooms, with our Communities@Work partners, we will often collaborate in order to achieve greater consistency for the child and the families. This is one of the greatest strengths of IPECS preschool and it enhances our relationships with children and families enormously.

Through the recent assessment and rating process IPECS was awarded a rating of Exceeding in the area of Relationships with children. Educators were commended for their interactions, responsiveness and communication with children. Two excerpts from the report illustrate this clearly

*The educators were attuned and responded consistently to children's ideas, thoughts and feelings. Interactions from the educators were warm and demonstrated a genuine interest in the children's efforts to communicate their ideas and thoughts. Supportive relationships were observed and contributed to developing trust and confidence. The educators did not hesitate to engage in pretend play with the children, following their lead and directions.*

*Practices at the service actively supported the children in feeling accepted, in developing attachments and trust in those who cared for them. The children were encouraged to communicate with the educators and with their peers. Strategies were in place to support children with additional needs. The educators showed empathy for children especially in the morning when children had difficulties separating from their family.*

### Staffing arrangements

In 2015 all educators had ACECQA approved qualifications. Teachers and assistants are trained and have the appropriate and adequate skills and qualifications to be working within the

Preschool setting. Child to adult ratios are maintained at all times and are a focus for all staff. Timetables were created to ensure that children had consistent educators to cover staff lunches and planning time. This allowed educators and children to form positive and meaningful relationships throughout the year, which also helped to maintain the integrity of the educational programs. Through the recent assessment and rating process IPECS was awarded a rating of Exceeding in the area of Staffing arrangements.

### **Leadership and management**

All ETD staff were actively involved in ongoing professional discussion regarding The Early Years Learning Framework and National Quality Framework. The preschool team is a high performing and functional team. Through the recent assessment and rating process IPECS was awarded a rating of Exceeding in the area of Leadership and management.

The position of Educational Leader is designated to the Deputy Principal of the school, who leads the direction of the early childhood team. The leadership team, under the guidance of the educational leader, set clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning and curriculum direction. Planning days offer an opportunity for the preschool educators to gather with other early childhood professionals to discuss the delivery of the educational program and reflect on teaching practices. Individual pathway goals are linked to curriculum direction and the QIP is utilized by the educational leader to guide fortnightly discussions to revisit and drive change. The educational leader has developed a professional discussion book that is used as a guide to improve practices.

### **Physical environment**

The outdoor learning environment has seen further improvements and developments in 2015. In January a large deck was built on the area known as the 'desert plains' outside of the Diamonds room. This significant project was made possible due to fundraising undertaken in 2014 and in part through the school budget. The preschool team then conducted a staff working bee and landscaped the area around the deck. This area is now better utilized by the children and it has provided them with a wider range of learning opportunities.

Additionally the school committed to purchasing artificial turf to improve the grassed area outside of the Amethyst/Coral classroom. This has had a significant impact on the outdoor environment. It has allowed a greater range of learning opportunities to occur in a clean and inviting space. The area is now inviting and has brightened the outdoor learning environment significantly.

Children are encouraged to spend equal amounts of time indoors and outdoors and can exercise choice during inside/outside time. There is a visual plan called the Outdoor Statement of Intent that is used as a communicative and visual aide for all educators in the Preschool playground. This year the children have taken an active role in gardening and planting a range of plants in four large planter boxes. Each group chose a different garden to plant e.g. drought tolerant plants, flowering plants, vegetables and edible plants. Through the recent assessment

and rating process IPECS was awarded a rating of Exceeding in the area of Physical environment.

#### **Collaborative partnerships with families and communities**

Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing was identified in the Quality Improvement Plan an area for improvement. Due to a range of issues educators were noticing in children starting preschool in 2014 and 2015 the educators committed to creating documentation to help families prepare for preschool. The preschool team created documentation relating to language development, toileting, the role of play groups, separation strategies, agencies that can provide support etc. This was collated and presented to families in July as they accepted their 2016 preschool enrolment.

The Community Coordinator has continued to communicate and work with staff at the newly established Isabella Gardens in order to try and establish sustainable and meaningful long term partnerships between IPECS and the new residents at Isabella Gardens. This work is ongoing and will continue to be a focus in 2016. Through the recent assessment and rating process IPECS was awarded a rating of Exceeding in the area of Collaborative Partnerships with families and communities.

### Financial Summary

The school has provided the Directorate with an end of year financial statement that was approved by the school board. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

The following summary covers use of funds for operating costs and does not include expenditure in areas such as permanent salaries, buildings and major maintenance.

#### Financial Summary

<b>INCOME</b>	January to June	July to December	January to December
Self management funds	141559.00	91976.85	233535.85
Voluntary contributions	2722.00	540.00	3262.00
Contributions & donations	253.18	87.00	340.18
External income (including community use)	4018.17	7218.19	11236.36
Proceeds from sale of assets	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bank Interest	3289.83	2230.35	5520.18
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>151842.18</b>	<b>102052.39</b>	<b>253894.57</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Utilities and general overheads	65644.88	41149.21	106794.09
Cleaning	27632.82	25041.84	52674.66
Security	1110.00	0.00	1110.00
Maintenance	13374.39	26432.23	39806.62
Administration	5937.70	4475.21	10412.91
Staffing	49749.00	0.00	49749.00
Communication	805.91	2984.52	3790.43
Assets	10387.48	10301.75	20689.23
Leases	408.36	0.00	408.36
General office expenditure	8290.00	4644.02	12934.02
Educational	14245.66	18935.59	33181.25
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>197586.20</b>	<b>133964.37</b>	<b>331550.57</b>
<b>OPERATING RESULT</b>	<b>-45744.02</b>	<b>-31911.98</b>	<b>-77656.00</b>
<b>Actual</b> Accumulated Funds	113963.26	107299.45	114299.45
Outstanding commitments (minus)	-4092.23	0.00	-4092.23
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>64127.01</b>	<b>75387.47</b>	<b>32551.22</b>

**Professional learning**

The average expenditure at the school level per fulltime equivalent teacher on professional learning was \$ 836.53. There were 11 beginning teacher days and 42 development days used for this purpose.

**Voluntary contributions**

In 2015, IPECS received \$ 3262 in Voluntary contributions. These funds listed were used to support the general operations of the school. The spending of voluntary contributions is in line with the approved budget for 2015.

**Reserves**

<b>Name and purpose</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Expected Completion</b>
Front of school upgrade	\$25000	December 2016

## Endorsement Page

I declare that the Isabella Plains Early Childhood School Board has operated in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 2004 including the following sections.

- 39 (4) The school board must give effect to the chief executive's directions.
- 44 (2) The chief executive must end the appointment of a member of the school board of a public school, other than the principal of the school if-
- The member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings of the board without reasonable excuse or leave given by the board or
  - Contravenes section 49 (disclosure of interests by members of school boards) without reasonable excuse.
- 46 The members of the school board of a public school must, whenever is necessary, nominate a member of the board as a member of any selection panel established by the chief executive to make recommendations to the chief executive about the appointment of the principal to the school.
- 47 (2) However, the school board must meet at least four times a year.
- 48 (10) The school board must keep minutes of its meeting.
- 49 Disclosure of interests by members of school boards.
- 49 (3) The disclosure must be reported in the school board's minutes and, unless the board otherwise decides, the member (The first member) must not-
- be present when the board considers the issue or
  - take part in any decision of the board on the issue.
- 49 (5) Within 14 days after the end of each financial year, the chairperson of the school board must give the chief executive a statement of any disclosure of interest under this section in relation to the school board during the financial year.

**MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD**

<b>Parent Representative:</b>	Phil Jones
<b>Community Representative</b>	Suzanne Vincent
<b>Teacher Representative</b>	Penny Jackson
	Hannah Eversham
<b>Board Chair:</b>	Alison Yialeloglou
<b>Principal:</b>	Kate Woods

I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the data and information reported in this Annual School Board Report represents an accurate record of the school's operations in 2015.

**Principal Signature:** *Kate Woods* **Date:** 17 MAY 2016

I approve the report, prepared in accordance with the provision of the *Education Act*, section 52.

**Board Chair Signature:** *A Yialeloglou* **Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> MAY 2016