

ISABELLA PLAINS EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOOL

Annual Action Plan Report 2017

Context

Isabella Plains Early Childhood School (IPECS) is a birth to 8 school in Tuggeranong that operates under an integrated service delivery model. The IPECS mission is to provide high quality care and education for children from birth to year 2 and their families within a collaborative and integrated service. 2018 will mark ten years of operation as an early childhood school, and will coincide with the introduction of a new school vision and new school values that are currently in the process of being collaboratively developed with the staff, students and the parent community. The new vision and values will reflect the viewpoints of all stakeholders, maintain a focus on the core elements of the early childhood schools framework and reflect a commitment to implementing contemporary educational practices and pedagogy that develop the skills and dispositions for 21st century learners. The current school values are: children are competent and capable, all children are unique, children are at the center of all we do, children learn through doing, productive partnerships between home and school are essential, staff employ best practice in Early Years Learning, staff are members of a collaborative team providing care and education. The children's values are to 'look after yourself, each other and the school'.

The core elements of the IPECS service delivery model are high quality learning, integrated service delivery and family support and participation. Children and families in attendance at the school are part of a strong and participative school community who benefit from on site childcare, before and after school care, vacation care, seamless transitions between service providers, playgroups, connections with local community groups and rich and diverse learning experiences delivered through a pedagogy of play-based learning. When children finish at IPECS, they transition to their local primary school. The priority enrolment schools for children residing in Isabella Plains are Richardson Primary School, Monash Primary School and Bonython Primary School. We maintain close collaborative partnerships with all schools in the immediate vicinity to support student transitions through the establishment of consistent year level expectations and sharing of information on children's cognitive, social, emotional, language and physical development.

We offer a holistic program designed to address the five domains of early childhood development (cognitive, social, emotional, physical and language). Specialist teaching areas include sustainability, music and the arts, library, ICT, PE and Spanish. We pride ourselves on our inclusive practices, ensuring that resources, language and displays are diverse and reflective of the members of our community. All members of our community can see themselves reflected back in their school environment while also gaining insight into other peoples cultures and ways of being. We place equal emphasis on the value of indoor and outdoor learning environments, and are currently working through a grounds masterplan designed to incorporate the natural landforms where possible. At IPECS there is a conscious effort to learn with and through nature in all that we do. We explicitly teach social and emotional learning, and use the 7 Cs identified by Bill Claxton as a framework to foster and guide children's innate curiosity and wonder, to develop children's grit and commitment and teach them to be assessors of risk to enable them to safely challenge themselves and learn new things.

2017 was a year of consolidation for the principal and induction of a new Deputy Principal and School Leader C. A consistent community coordinator and business manager has supported the transition of new people into their roles and protected against the loss of corporate knowledge.

Methodology

The strategic plan was developed in consultation with staff representatives from IPECS and Communities@Work along with members of the parent and wider school community. The priorities determined at the inception of the 2014 – 2017 Strategic Plan remained unchanged. The three priorities were to:

- Improve student outcomes in literacy, numeracy and science
- Enhance the wellbeing of students, staff and community
- Enhance collaborative partnerships with families and the wider community

The 2017 Annual Action Plan was developed collaboratively with all teaching and administrative staff P-2 and the leadership team of Birth – 5. The initial data interrogation to track school improvement and identify areas of need for continued growth, was conducted during Professional Learning Communities. Staff worked with the Deputy Principal to analyse student performance against the targets set in the strategic plan and reflect on strategies undertaken to improve performance and their level of embeddedness. This findings of these discussions, along with external data sets such as the AECD data, PIPS and virtual NAPLAN and an audit of community partnerships were used with all staff at the beginning of the year professional learning days to determine targets for the 2017 AAP.

The targets were taken to the first GEMS parent and communities meeting and shared with all members present. A presentation was given on the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, achievements of previous AAPs, the NSIT tool and the draft 2017 AAP. The GEMS received information on the data sets that informed the priorities, targets and key improvement strategies of the draft 2017 AAP. All members present had the opportunity to look over the data in small groups and provide feedback and ask questions. Where appropriate, parent feedback was incorporated into the plan and a revised draft was presented to the School Board. The School Board approved the 2017 AAP.

Evaluation of Performance

Priority One

Improve Student Outcomes in literacy, numeracy and science

Targets

- 93% of teachers are satisfied with professional learning opportunities in the School Satisfaction Survey data up from 91% in 2016.
- 80% Year 2 children reading at level 24 in the PM Benchmark kit up from 68% children in 2016.
- 60% of children meet expected growth in literacy PIPs reading assessment up from 52% in 2016.
- 90% of children in year 1 and year 2 receive a C grade or above in A-E reporting for science up from 86% in 2016
- Maintain 98% parent satisfaction that their child is making good progress at our school.

The first Key Improvement Strategy was to 'Develop an Expert Teaching Team' and the second Key Improvement Strategy was to 'Embed a culture of analysis and discussion of data across the school'. This was achieved through the development of a culture of collective accountability for student outcomes through a school based response to intervention and the introduction of Professional Learning Communities led by the Deputy Principal. Organisational structures and roles and responsibilities were changed to release all staff within a teaching team at the same time. PLCs used discipline dialogue questions to interrogate the data and make sure teaching and learning was evidence informed. All staff were involved in system endorsed programs such as Principal's as Numeracy Leaders, Principal's as Literacy Leaders, the Early Years Literacy Project, the Writing Project, Australian Curriculum workshops, Gavin Grift Professional Learning Communities and RTI and Fresh Tastes. Individual staff members attended a variety of Professional Learning sessions across the year, sharing their findings and key take-aways with all staff upon return. These sessions included: Claire Warden Nature Pedagogy, Edutech, Spanish PL, Music workshops, Reggio Emilia Visible Thinking, Count Me In Too, Google Summit, ALEA Powerful and Playful Literacy and Learning, ECA Livewires and Minilit.

Individual members of staff received individual professional development plans which were established through the in-school appraisal systems, notably the Staff Performance Agreement and the staff development for exceptional teaching and learning at IPECS document. As a result of these plans, teaching, administrative and LSA staff participated in a variety of targeted PL sessions linked to individual goals and areas for ongoing development which aligned with the National Professional Standards for Teachers or the duty requirements for administrative or LSA staff. All educators participated in whole school walkthroughs Birth to year 2, focusing on domains within the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum. The three topics covered were; *Engagement with children*; *Print Walk – establishing a print rich environment*; and *Safe and Supportive Learning Environments*. The data collected from these walkthroughs informed the whole school birth to 8 staff meeting content and provided talking points across the school and sharing of practice. 100% of educators found these walkthroughs to be valuable to them, and evidence of changes across the school as a result of feedback from the walkthroughs indicated that the program was a success.

The leadership team continued walkthroughs in 2017, collecting data and evidence around the initiatives and key improvement strategies within the Annual Action Plan. The focus from 2016 was maintained and evidence collected indicated that 100% of staff were using success criteria, formative

assessment and learning intentions, and that children's individual learning goals were being used effectively to differentiate children's work. In addition to this, the *ten essential instructional skills for literacy* as identified through the Early Years Literacy Project were introduced. It was noted that these instructional practices were being used across the classrooms as a result of the project. Continued focus in this area will be a priority in 2018 to embed practice and continue to build staff capacity. 100% of teaching and LSA staff participated in initiatives that allowed them to see colleagues teach and to be observed. All staff received written feedback throughout the year, providing ongoing opportunity for reflection on personal development and areas for ongoing improvement.

To improve student outcomes in literacy, numeracy and science, we focussed on contemporary pedagogies and the development of 21st century learning assets, skills and dispositions. The 7 Cs from Guy Claxton's *Educating Ruby* were used to guide thinking about the types of learning experiences that would develop the necessary skills to operate effectively in the 21st century. The 7 Cs had wording developed to accompany them that was user friendly for children and parents, allowing the use of these as a guide for planning, but also for children to recognise the development of the skills, assets and dispositions and be able to name them when reflecting on their learning. A 21st Century Learning Coach was employed who worked in a coaching role alongside staff to develop their skills and knowledge around the Digital Literacies curriculum and the use of digital technology to support children's learning. 100% of staff believe that they have improved their knowledge, skills and understanding of the digital literacies curriculum and confidence and capacity to work with digital technology to enhance learning opportunities for children.

All teaching, administrative and LSA staff participated in School Improvement Teams in which they were involved in action research into three discrete areas; Student Engagement and Wellbeing, Staff Engagement and Wellbeing and Parental Engagement and Promotions. Staff researched, collected and analysed data and identified goals and actions for school improvement in these areas. As a result, high level data analysis now takes place at the classroom and whole school level amongst all staff.

3 out of 5 targets were achieved. It is acknowledged that these were arbitrary figures, and that target creation in subsequent plans needs to focus on individual student growth to successfully track school improvement and improved student learning outcomes. 93% of teachers are satisfied with professional learning opportunities in the School Satisfaction Survey data up from 91% in 2016 was not achieved, although staff report that they had more PL opportunities than ever before. 80% Year 2 children reading at level 24 in the PM Benchmark kit up from 68% children in 2016 was not achieved, with 75% reading at level or above which was a significant improvement on 2016. 60% of children met expected growth in literacy PIPs reading assessment up from 52% in 2016 was not achieved, with 74% meeting expected growth. 90% of children in year 1 and year 2 receive a C grade or above in A-E reporting for science up from 86% in 2016 was achieved. Maintain 98% parent satisfaction that their child is making good progress at our school was not achieved, with 88% the result.

Future direction for IPECS include continued implementation of the Staff Development Package for Exceptional Teaching and Learning at IPECS with modifications to the coaching and mentoring aspect. Clarification around what constitutes professional learning is also required for staff and will be incorporated into staff induction processes. Ongoing focus on the ten essential instructional practices for literacy will be maintained into the new strategic plan and documentation of shared beliefs and practices around literacy, numeracy and inquiry will be developed for consistent pedagogical practices across the school.

Priority Two

Enhance the wellbeing of students, staff and community

Targets

- 75% of families indicate satisfaction that the school provides a safe and caring environment for their children in the KidsMatter parent surveys up from 70% in 2016.
- 98% of families indicate satisfaction that their child's teacher cares about their child in the KidsMatter parent surveys up from 96% in 2016
- Maintain 100% of staff that indicate that our school works effectively with families and professionals in caring for children with mental health and learning needs in the KidsMatter staff surveys from 2016 result.

The introduction of staff led *School Improvement Action Learning Teams* in the areas of student engagement and wellbeing, staff engagement and wellbeing and parent engagement and promotions contributed to a result of 97% satisfaction that parents believe their child feels safe at this school. Staff inquired into school practice across each of these areas, designing and developing targeted goals and strategies to address deficits, leading to a more engaged school community as evidenced by staff attendance records, increased participation in social events, a decline in behaviour incidents requiring executive intervention, increased participation from parents in children's learning through seesaw and in the classroom.

All large scale projects were undertaken in consultation with the whole school community, canvassing input and feedback from children through to local Community members. In 2017 we finalised the grounds masterplan and developed an explicit school vision, mission and values across the school birth to 8. Community input was sourced through a variety of means, including digital surveys, P&C meetings, pop-up feedback sites in the courtyards facebook interaction and direct emails. The consultation period provided the opportunity to front load parents with information about our philosophy and current education research evidencing the reasons for undertaking certain practices and pedagogy at IPECS. As a result we have a far more informed and knowledgeable community that are able to promote and advocate on behalf of the school throughout the wider community. The new school mission, vision and values have been provided to the media section of the Education Directorate to allow the development of visuals and signage to be displayed consistently throughout the school and also in all correspondence both hardcopy and electronic based.

During 2017 we employed a 21st century learning coach who undertook to upskill staff in the digital literacy curriculum, increase student and staff engagement with technology and implement policy and procedure around the use of Seesaw and the makerspace. The 21st century learning coach worked side by side with staff in classrooms using a gradual release of responsibility coaching model to increase depth of knowledge and proficiency with the schools resources. She also developed a five year strategic plan for digital technology curriculum implementation and a corresponding budget. Links were established between Bonython and the ICT coordinator to facilitate the sharing of resources and expertise. Attendance at the Google Summit was high amongst the staff and staffroom discussions and lesson observations demonstrate that the practices learned are being implemented independent of the coach. As a result of this new position and support from the leadership team, 100% of staff are now using ICT in their classrooms on a daily basis to enhance learning and parental engagement (smartboards, ipads, chromebooks, seesaw).

To enhance wellbeing and engagement of students we invested in indoor and outdoor learning environment upgrades. A Makerspace was developed which included the purchase of flexible

furniture, additional low and high tech resources, and a woodwork bench. This area promotes collaborative problem solving in a flexible learning environment where children have autonomy and can self-direct their learning as appropriate. Lock boxes and trolleys were purchased for the classrooms to allow the children to have easy everyday access to the IT equipment, providing the required security to remain in the classrooms at all times. Children/Staff no longer have to get their ICT equipment from the front office when they wish to use it, and the accessibility that this has provided to children and staff has seen an increase in everyday use. Upgrades are planned for the outdoor learning areas, with works to commence during term 1, 2018 on the area outside the library. This area will provide an extension from indoor learning to the outdoors, utilizing the large doors off the library and the existing courtyard to introduce reading cubbies, safe and sensory spaces and landscaped plantings to enhance the aesthetic appeal contributing the wellbeing of students.

Upgrades to the staff collaborative planning room and the staffroom have been undertaken to enhance staff wellbeing. The staffroom has had the inclusion of a food preparation bench and new seating to increase the functionality of the space. New couches were also purchased for this area, term calendars, a television that shows the daily news, staff wellbeing activities and 'noticing board' along with a shelf displaying all new teacher resources purchased. A staff awards system was introduced and awards received weekly displayed for the duration of the term to recognize staff success and achievement and inspire others. Teaching staff have moved to a more digital platform for communication over the course of 2016/2017. In 2017 the staff handbook was created in a google document, giving staff access to all information about school processes, procedures, policies and expectations anywhere, anytime. Teaching teams worked collaboratively through google docs, creating and modifying planning and teaching tools in real time.

Parent wellbeing and engagement was enhanced in 2017 with the introduction of a series of three one minute videos that outline the practices within each of the core elements of the early childhood school model. These promotional videos will be used around peak enrolment times and played at school gatherings as well as being pushed out through our website and social media channels. Active engagement of parents has been achieved through the use of Seesaw. This digital portfolio tool allows parents to engage with their children's learning in real time. In 2018 the school will be moving to digital portfolios and removing the paper-based portfolio system from previous years. Parents have benefitted from a revised parent handbook, an annual calendar of events provided at the beginning of the school year and a number of parent information sessions on literacy, numeracy and play-based pedagogy.

3 out of the 3 targets were met. The Kidsmatter parent survey was not delivered, however the questions were incorporated into the School Satisfaction Surveys. 97% of families indicated that the school provides a safe and caring environment for their children in the School Satisfaction Survey. KidsMatter parent surveys. 98% of families indicated satisfaction that their child's teacher cares about their child in the KidsMatter parent surveys. We were successful in maintaining 100% agreement from staff that our school works effectively with families and professionals in caring for children with mental health and learning needs in the KidsMatter staff surveys.

Future direction for IPECS includes the continuation of the school improvement action learning teams targeted to particular areas within the school plan. These action learning teams will use evidence and research to contribute to the shared belief statements around teaching and learning at IPECS, particularly on literacy, numeracy, Inquiry and pedagogy. We will continue to grow the number of digital resources available for parents, including sessions on assisting children at home with reading, writing, numeracy and inquiry through play while maintaining the delivery of face to face information sessions as required. All policies and procedures are to be reformatted into a consistent template and reviewed over the course of the next two years.

Priority Three

Enhance collaborative partnerships with families and the wider community

Targets

75% of families are satisfied that community programs are tailored to their family's needs in Satisfaction Survey data up from 69% in 2016.

During 2016 an audit was conducted of school partnerships using Domain 9 of the NSIT as a framework. Necessary changes were implemented with a focus on productive and sustainable partnerships that were mutually beneficial and provided enhanced opportunities to our community. A review of school communication methods was conducted with a focus on parental engagement and teacher workload. A communications procedures document was developed in consultation with staff and community members and a number of digital methods introduced including Seesaw and a school app. The class connect program grew and facilitated a variety of whole school, and class based events, teacher support and a growing sense of community across the school. We believe that the indicator of success of 100% of partnerships directly benefit the members of the current school community and/or local residents has now been achieved.

A variety of strategies were implemented to strengthen parental engagement based on a review of current parental engagement strategies and parent preferences. The focus was on practices that were sustainable and environmentally responsible, enabled parents real time access to students learning and were interactive. The review indicated 95% of parents actively engaged with at least one method of digital communication which was demonstrated through engagement with posts, the use of online forms and increased attendance at events after predominantly digital promotion.

Seesaw was strongly supported by parents as a quality tool for parental engagement after a trial in 2016. After the success of this trial, Seesaw was implemented school wide in 2017. The agreed expectations for use were included in the communications procedures and hardcopy portfolios were phased out at the end of 2017. Communities@Work use a similar platform called Storypark and follow similar guidelines as P-2 with regard to use for parental engagement.

The Class Connect program was well subscribed in 2017 with 80% of parents linked in to their class group. Experiences of activities organised by class connectors were shared and included things such as family picnics, fundraisers, school fete stalls, parent assistance for class projects and parent only dinner events. The sense of community across the school was enhanced as a result of this program, and attendance at the GEMS P&C meetings on average was 10 parents.

There was a strong focus on enhancing the partnerships with local community organisations, specifically Isabella Gardens Retirement Village. A meeting between IPECS leadership and Isabella Gardens Residents Leadership was held to establish roles and responsibilities for each of the committee members and ascertain the experiences, skills and interests that the residents held that could assist in the richness and authenticity of program delivery at IPECS. A variety of collaborations were added to the existing 'Gardening with the Grands' program in 2017, including combined craft, mentoring in maths for advanced students and providing assistance with the establishment of a photography club.

The target was met with 81% of parents agreeing that the community programs offered at IPECS

meet their family's needs. We would have liked to achieve a better percentage based on the work of the community partnership audit, but upon reflection understand that the work undertaken as a result of the audit will come into effect for parents in 2018 and beyond. Exit surveys undertaken at the completion of programs offered for parents and students indicate that 90% of parents were extremely satisfied with the program.

Future direction for IPECS is to continue to enhance and diversify the partnership with Isabella Gardens residents. This will be achieved through regular committee meetings and a beginning of year skills, interest and expertise register of the residents. The annual calendar includes termly trips to visit the residents and participate in collaborative experiences including singing, craft and performance pieces. Continued actions from the audit on domain 9 will be implemented, ensuring a range of programs is available to families that meet their needs and that programs are sustainable, reviewed bi-annually and deliver reciprocity to all involved.

We will retain a continued focus on a cohesive and collaborative partnership with Communities@Work, continue to strengthen and diversify the Class Connect program and establish school improvement teams with parent representatives as core members.