

# O'Connor Cooperative School Annual Action Plan Report 2017



## Context

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The O'Connor Cooperative School has a long history of providing innovative, high quality early childhood education to the children and families enrolled at the school. The school has four classes, one each of preschool, kindergarten, year one and year two. The school believes that all children are unique beings, bringing with them a wealth of knowledge and beliefs about the world and their place in it. The school sees children as capable, confident and creative learners with unlimited potential.

O'Connor Cooperative School is committed to excellence in early childhood education. As a community of learners, we work together to create sustainable connections between each other and within our environment, developing intellectual, personal, social and environmental responsibility.

We value: *(No rank order of importance)*

- A thriving school community where staff and families openly work as willing partners
- A safe, inclusive setting where the strengths and needs of all members of our school community are recognised, respected and valued
- A family-friendly environment where privacy of personal information is respected and safeguarded
- The professionalism of staff as educational leaders committed to play-based best practice in early learning
- A strong focus on a balanced literacy and numeracy program which is embedded in all aspects of learning and teaching in our school
- The importance of social, emotional, physical and cognitive development - all the developmental domains.

It is central that our students have many opportunities to investigate, research, take risks, ponder, wonder, experiment, experience, engage and express themselves every day. Through a play-based approach, children are able to engage in a wide variety of high quality learning experiences that are supported with explicit teaching designed to meet each child's individual needs.

We believe that children arrive at our school with a wealth of prior knowledge and experience, and use this as a foundation for their learning and development.

We have **secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships** with all members of the community.

At our school the educators:

- ensure that the interests, abilities and culture of every child and their family are understood, valued and respected;
- encourage children to be active participants for sustainability, influencing the quality of life now, and for future generations;
- respect the views and feelings of each child;
- initiate warm, trusting and reciprocal relationships with children;
- provide safe and stimulating environments for children

The parent community is closely involved in supporting the school through representation on the School Board, an active Parents and Citizens association, committees and day to day help throughout the school.

Enrolment in 2017 began at 75 and fell to 70 students with several families moving overseas and interstate. Our year one and two cohort combined this year to form two Year 1/ 2 multi age classes this year. Of our twelve staff members, seven are full time and five undertake a part time workload.

## Methodology

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Throughout the year we have used Professional Learning sessions, Professional Development Plan meetings, classroom observations, consultative planning sessions, data analysis, along with the National Quality Framework and the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) self-evaluation tools. The nine domains of NSIT provided another lens to oversee how teaching and learning aligned with our Annual Action Plan (AAP), the Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

Staff collected and analysed student learning data throughout the year. This enabled us to track progress in English and Mathematics (number). Along with regular data collection we also compiled pictorial evidence and feedback in other learning areas, showcasing the many things we do at the Cooperative School to provide rich learning experiences and valuable community connections.

### **School Policies and Procedures**

Staff are using the [National School Improvement Tool](#) to track our school improvement. The National School Improvement Tool consists of nine interrelated domains, which combine and overlap to provide a comprehensive framework for school improvement. Current work is around how we are tracking the [Australian Curriculum](#) each year ensuring systematic coverage for all year levels.

# Evaluation of Performance

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## Strategic Priority 1:

**Improve the quality of learning and teaching to improve student outcomes**

### Targets

By the end of 2017

- Increase the proportion of students achieving benchmark reading levels by 5% points on 2016 cohort data,

In 2017 the year 2 cohort grew from 89 % achieving benchmark in 2016 to 100% achieving benchmark in 2017. In addition to this across the school the average benchmark level in each year group grew.

Table: Average PM benchmark levels across 4 years

PM Benchmark Levels	Average PM 2014	Average PM 2015	Average PM 2016	Average PM 2017
Kinder 5	9.5	6.4	6.4	8.1
Year 1 14	19.7	16	16.7	17.9
Year 2 20	24.7	25	26.3	26.9

Source: School Data

- Achieve a 5% points increase on the 2016 four year average of the percentage of students making expected growth in PIPS reading and maths.

In 2017, 86% of kindergarten students made expected or better than expected progress in reading and 71% made expected or better than expected progress in numeracy. There was a significant gain in the better than expected growth in both reading (0 – 43%) and maths (6-57%) as measured by Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) on the 2016 cohort.

Table: Proportion of students achieving growth in PIPS

Year and Level of Growth	Reading	Maths
2015 Expected Growth	37%	68%
2016 Expected Growth	39%	39%
2017 Expected Growth	43%	14%
2015 Better than Expected Growth	5%	26%
2016 Better than Expected Growth	0%	6%
2017 Better than Expected Growth	43%	57%

Source: School Reviews Team

- Staff demonstrate satisfaction in survey data related to support for practice and professional opportunities

Table: Proportion of staff who participated in the survey who agree or strongly agree with the following statement about practice and professional opportunities

My professional achievements are celebrated at this school.	100%
I am satisfied this school has high expectations in all that it does.	100%
Teachers set high standards for learning in their classes.	100%
Teachers expect everyone to work hard	100%

Source: Planning and Analytics

**Key Improvement Strategy 1: Develop teacher capacity in teaching literacy and numeracy**

Our 2017 professional learning plan was designed to further develop the teachers knowledge and skills in developing and delivering high quality literacy and numeracy programs.

Professional Learning - Individually targeted for staff as well as whole school targets

- The Writing Book - All classroom staff undertook PL with Sheena Cameron and Louise Dempsey. Ongoing follow up PL throughout the year.  
 Week 4 Term 3 hosted the Early Childhood Network meeting here. 40 teachers attended. Staff shared their processes and strategies.  
 Week 7 Term 3 Participated in the Directorate Writing Project Learning Fair at HBCTL

Teachers have demonstrated growth in confidence and student work samples evidence increased complexity and stamina in writing across the classes. Initial focus was on secretarial features of writing which then extended to sentence and text complexities

- MEP Classroom Singing, lilts and rhymes, personal confidence, social and emotional learning through The Outreach Principle.

Through our weekly community singing, professional learning and additional session with Dr. Susan West, staff grew in confidence to use singing across multiple curriculum areas including literacy history, geography and health and wellbeing.

- Whole school participation in Chief Minister’s Reading Challenge - documented through reading logs K-2 and the class program in preschool.
- Early Childhood School network meetings took place in  
 Term 1 Isabella Plains: Communication  
 Term 2 Lyons: Play Based Learning and Investigations  
 Term 3 O’Connor Cooperative School : Writing

Teacher from each school shared practice, participated in classroom walks, whole school sharing and discussions about each schools learning environment.

- Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within teaching and learning across the school

Teachers embed genuine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives across the school. Storytelling, identifying Australia as a land of many cultures, acknowledging the contributions of Ngunnawal people and the sense of place we feel as we work on Ngunnawal land is apparent in all classrooms. Staff and students share their own personal acknowledgement of country on many occasions. A cultural competency team has been established and our year 2 cohort attended the cluster Indigenous day with our Aboriginal student this year.

## **Key Improvement Strategy 2: Build teacher capacity to support children with additional needs**

Through staff consultation and regular communication with our school psychologist our individual case conference form has been enhanced. This enables within school stakeholders to effectively share communication from parents about external support and to ensure recommendations are aligned with individual and personalised learning plans. SMART goals are used in ILP/PLP/TLP which are reviewed and updated regularly in consultation with executive staff and parents.

Professional learning undertaken by staff includes

- Formalised Learning Support procedure for staff. Executive teachers provide targeted learning support in classrooms or small groups every morning.
- Working with Children who are Anxious *Pysch4Schools*
- Traffic Jam in My Brain PL - Sensory processing
- Chinese and African dance and drumming
- Cultural competency

## **Key Improvement Strategy 3: Ensure differentiation of teaching and learning is across the school**

Differentiation in all areas of learning both indoors and outdoors continues to be a strength across our school. All teachers plan diverse learning experiences enabling students to demonstrate their learning in meaningful ways. This may range through written tasks, number stories, mind maps, placemats, use of ChromeBooks for editing and publishing, video conference chats with international schools, use of iPad apps, presenting learning at assembly, sharing at Learning Journeys, interacting with students from Black Mountain school and Belconnen Community group.

All students (and their families – including alumni) had the opportunity of performing in Llewelyn Hall during our Term 3 “Sing Around the World” concert.

- Team planning taking place with 1/2 team
- Focus on Investigations to ensure students have a voice in their learning
- Year 1 /2 classes have integrated Investigations and Geography
- MEP student song selections, student choice about type of participation in the concert (drama and singing). Concert at the end of term 3 was a resounding community success. Strong student voice in song selection, public speaking and drama items
- Kindergarten trialling Investigations in the afternoons during term 4

Table : Percentage of staff completing the School Satisfaction Survey strongly agree that

Teachers encourage students to try out new ideas (think independently).	100%
Teachers challenge students to do better.	100%
Teachers are willing to give students extra help on school work if needed.	100%

## **Key Improvement Strategy 4: Ensure assessment data is relevant, understood and used as a basis for all teaching**

All staff gather and use data everyday ranging from anecdotal conversations, meetings with families, formal and informal assessment both in the classroom and the outdoor environment. Regular meetings have been formalised where staff meet individually with exec team to share data. Classroom data is used for term and weekly planning. The Writing Assessment Guide utilised this year to create baseline writing data K-2. This guide created a numerical data gathering tool to show growth in writing across the year however teachers did not find it a useful tool.

Table : Percentage of staff completing the School Satisfaction Survey agree / strongly agree that

Teachers at this school use results from system testing and system processes to inform planning	87%
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Source: Planning and Analytics

## Strategic Priority 2:

### Build and grow a safe and supportive school environment that fosters learning

#### Targets

By the end of 2017

- Maintain the proportion of parent satisfaction survey data related to community partnerships, expectations, safety, fairness, concerns and improvement
- Build on collaborative partnerships with families and communities through the Arts (Community Singing and Outreach within our community)

Table : Percentage of parents completing the 2017 School Satisfaction Survey agree or strongly agree that

Community partnerships are valued and maintained	100%
Teachers at this school expect my child to do his or her best.	96.5%
My child feels safe at this school	100%
Teachers at this school treat students fairly.	100%
This school looks for ways to improve	96.5%
I can talk to my child's teacher about my concerns	100%
Overall I am satisfied this school has high expectations in all that it does	96.4%

Source: Planning and Analytics

#### **Key Improvement Strategy 1: Grow community capacity to support whole child well-being**

Early Childhood School sharing of practice - week 4 each term

Term 1 Isabella Plains (Writing and Parent feedback – Seesaw App)

Term 2 Lyons (Pedagogy of Play)

Term 3 O'Connor Cooperative School (The Writing Project)

Term 4 Robyn Strangward Acting principal weeks 1-3 of term 4 shared Australian curriculum knowledge

Continuing to work closely with School Psychologist to support students and families with additional needs

#### *Music Engagement Program*

Throughout 2017 staff, students and parents across the school participated in a range of community engagements in conjunction with Dr. Susan West, ANU, through the Music Engagement Program. Students across the school took part in weekly (and often daily) singing activities as explicit teaching sessions, transition to other activities within the classroom, weekly community singing and school assembly singing. Staff used singing as a form of health and wealth being. Singing brings joy. Staff also support each other by learning or consolidating songs to commence each staff meeting. On several occasions we were hosts to the Belconnen Community Group (adult members with varying disabilities who love singing) and took part in many 'Outreach' sessions at the local Aged Care facility, Morshead Homes, including their ANZAC and Remembrance Day commemorations. Within our school students

have a strong voice in nominating the songs they enjoy singing for community singing each week. Additional songs were added to the known song set which included international songs. In term three we came together as a community to sing in Llewelyn Hall, ANU, with students, staff, parents, alumni and community members joining us in an interactive evening of celebration of drama and songs from around the world.

Following a visit by teachers from New Zealand we established a connection with a small school in Invercargill (South Island of New Zealand) and shared singing (via Skype) with Rimu School. The children enjoyed seeing each other on the big screen, asked each other questions and shared some known and new songs. Both groups were keen to extend the relationship. From singing together, the children wrote letters to each other (pen pals) and we were able to sing together again when Susan was visiting the school in New Zealand. The links across the curriculum, along with growing the whole world child, were extremely valuable.

#### *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Day*

During term 4 a small group of children accompanied our Aboriginal child to the Inner North Indigenous Cluster celebration. Whilst providing valuable connections for our Aboriginal child it also enhanced the understanding our other students have about Aboriginal culture. Games and ideas experienced on the day were then shared with staff and students in our school.

#### *Harmony Day and Cultural recognition*

Once again this year we invited families to share their cultural heritage in classrooms across the school. On Harmony Day several children dressed in their national costume and identified the country and flag from their family. Throughout the year many parents shared their national costumes, favourite foods, music songs and dance, favourite stories and photos. Students beam with pride as they and their families share their stories.

#### *Craft Your Park*

This initiative was established via an ACT Government program to upgrade the community park behind our school. The SPACELAB team developed a strong connection with our local community who live in the adjacent area and play in the park. As a school community we highly valued the collaborative approach taken by the SPACELAB team to engage with, listen to and incorporate the needs of our school and the community into the project. Many parents were involved in the planting and now ongoing maintenance of the park due to their connection to the land. As a school we use the park for play and learning including reading groups, creative writing, drama, loose parts play, lunch in the park and connecting with Ngunnawal land.

### **Key Improvement Strategy 2: Maintain quality transitions for all students**

Transition is an ongoing process from the moment children arrive in preschool and continues throughout their four years in our school. All students have the opportunity to integrate across the school with all students, teachers and school staff. Through the activities listed above familiarisation and the ability to work with a range of peers and adults provides the students (and their parents!) with confidence and capability to successfully manage each of the transition phases. In follow up discussions with families after the students have transitioned to year 3, families acknowledge the nurturing nature of our care and commitment to the families as well as individual children and noted how confidently the children coped with their transition to year 3.

Our transition from preschool to Kindergarten is an enormous strength of our school. We consistently maintain over 90% of students from our preschool class transitioning to our Kindergarten group with the only students leaving being those of families moving interstate or overseas, families relocating to other parts of Canberra or students moving to a small group special needs class placement.

Some of the range of transition activities which take place across the year include

- All classes participate in 'cross school' activities every term
  - Whole school assemblies
  - Shared singing P/K; 1 /2; Community Singing
  - Shared investigations
  - Science Week activities in multi age groups
  - Shared playground experiences / interaction with all staff
  - Visiting performances
- Parent interviews at the end of semester 1
- MEP concert in term three to included Alumni students and families
- Children's Week and Science Week multi age rotation arts activities allowing all students to engage with other groups and work with teachers across the school
- Transition visits with our cluster for year 2 students include sporting events in terms 1 and 2 schools and scheduled classroom visits in term 4
- PS – Kinder, K- Yr 1/2 continue regularly - with formal sessions in Term 4

### **Key Improvement Strategy 3: Improve communication with key stakeholders**

In our ever increasing world of technology communication is a vital link between the three way partnership of our school. Our families have a multitude of ways to communicate with the school and most regularly, it is in person. Along with email, electronic newsletters, the website, our Facebook page, notice boards, signs, paper notes and word of mouth our community maintain a strong connection with the day to day happenings across the school and wider community.

Some of the initiatives used this year included.

- **Seesaw App** in preschool has been well received by families
- **Your Say ACT** Information shared via School Board, P&C and through school newsletter. All families received a postcard to record their wish which was summarised and shared with the Board and the Directorate
- **School Satisfaction Survey** - link distributed for all parents and staff to complete
- Using **Google Drive** to share meeting minutes and correspondence with staff. Useful for part staff to access Anywhere Anytime particularly useful for part time staff

### **Key Improvement Strategy 4: Build closer links and share quality pedagogy and practice with key partners.**

Every year we build on and strengthen our community connections and partnerships. Noted below are some of the wide range of connections we have established, maintained or strengthened in 2017.

- Links with Early Childhood Schools to share practice
- Scientist and Mathematicians in Schools program
- Inner North Indigenous Cluster celebration
- Craft Your Park - Community and Government consultation
- Preschool Jamboree at Southern Cross Early Childhood School
- Sporting Schools programs
- Fresh Tastes / Mr Tim and the Food Detective
- St John First Aid
- World Ranger Day
- MEP - continued support of Dr Susan West (ANU) and the MEP program funded by Arts ACT
- Preservice Teacher mentoring
- ACT Fire Brigade Visit



- FrogWatch
- ACT SMART schools - Showcase example for School Eco Bus Tour which took place in November to share our practice. (80 students and 6 teachers)
- YWCA (Before and After School Care)
- ACT Playgroups

Our school is situated in close proximity to two other ACT government P-6 schools. Parents choose to enrol their children in our early childhood school because of the range of learning options, community connections, our vision and values and quality teaching and learning.

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I can talk to my child's teacher about my concerns	100%
Overall I am satisfied this school has high expectations in all that it does	96.4%

Source: *Planning and Analytics*

Each and every day staff, students and families work together to ensure that each child has access to high quality, accessible education. In line with the ACT Education Directorate, *we strive to provide an environment where every student will learn, thrive and be equipped with the skills and attitudes to lead fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.*

**Together we Learn: Together we Grow**