



2013 ANNUAL REPORT

School Context

The Alice Springs Steiner School came into being due to the energy and vision of a group of dedicated parents and friends and began with a kindergarten in 1996. Strong community support and involvement has seen the school steadily grow and develop. The school has a playgroup, four pre-school groups, two transition classes and single stream primary classes from years One to Six. The school moved on to its permanent site for the 2005 school year and since 2007 has steadily replaced demountable buildings with beautiful architect designed permanent buildings with established grounds.

The Alice Springs Steiner School offers a broad but solidly integrated curriculum interweaving academic subjects with art, craft, music, storytelling, and drama. This is complimented by a rich program of practical and outdoor activities, with the aim of balancing and developing the whole child - "head, heart and hands". We aim for creative and imaginative teaching to instil and inspire a love of learning and self-motivation, which continues throughout life.

We are committed to;

- Educating the growing child through love.
- Fostering a love of learning and the pursuit of truth.
- Striving toward a collaborative relationship between home and school that supports the child's development.
- Protecting the integrity of childhood.
- A comprehensive curriculum, which develops the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual potential of each child.
- Maintaining a distinct curriculum that reflects the major developmental stages of children.
- Fostering respect for one another and the environment.
- Striving to overcome racial, sexual and other forms of prejudice, and working positively in the community both socially and in the natural world.

Some of our recent achievements are;

- Two new classrooms for Transition classes
- Increased student numbers
- Creation of a Teacher Training program
- 0.5 FTE Mentor teacher trainer position
- Contracts for all staff
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities

"A healthy social life is found only, when in the mirror of each soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the whole community the virtue of each one is living"

Principal's Report

2013 was a year where rapid growth brought a number of challenges. The decision to create a mixed age double Transition class put pressure on our ability to accommodate all classes and maintain dedicated spaces for specialist areas. The former library and music spaces had to be used for classrooms and learning support were limited to two small rooms.

It was an incredible relief to have the Cassia building finished at the end of 2013. We acknowledge the singular efforts of Chris Masters in expediting this project. The building was completed on time and on budget with little fuss. A remarkable achievement. This has now allowed us to create spaces for teacher training, music and Learning Support.

Business Planning

Every two years the Business Plan is reviewed and revised to reflect achievements, evaluate goals and reset targets.

The process for this begins half-way through alternate years where The College of Teachers review the Educational Master Plan with the Principal to assess the progress of our aims and objectives.

In 2013 our focus highlighted three elements:

Recruitment and retention of staff.

There has been a patchy history in relation to retention of staff over the years with very few teachers actually making it through a full round. This pattern has developed because of a number of determinants, the climate of Alice Springs being a crucial one.

1. One strategy we have adopted to combat high turnover of staff has been to develop an in-house teacher training program. The idea of training local teachers in Steiner pedagogy and methodology has many positives and the added advantage of providing Professional Learning opportunities for all our current staff.

Having the expertise to run a teacher training course has been a blessing and the addition to our 'learning environment' of an adult education facility has been remarkable.

2. Additionally we decided to resource a 0.5 FTE staff member to support new and inexperienced teachers as a mentor and teacher trainer.

Development of the Learning Support Program

Developing a program that recognises, tracks and supports the different learning needs of children is an ideal we are striving for in this school. With the motto 'parents should never receive any surprises' when it comes to their children's progress, we endeavour to assess and track the children's educational journey from an early age all the way through to class six.

With the changes in national funding formulas in the area of 'Disability' we are entering a period of great uncertainty. Our school has the highest commitment to meeting the many ways children learn and we hope we can continue with our ambitious program.

The consciousness of economic responsibility

We are striving to develop a consciousness of global thinking amongst our staff where the 'whole' needs of the school are understood and taken into consideration when economic decisions are made. By understanding the schools broader needs it becomes easier to prioritise resources and take a measured approach to funding projects and programs.

Seeking alternate funding sources and creating opportunities for altruistic benevolence is under investigation.

The Evolution of a School and Parent Engagement

During our Business Planning meetings a growing consciousness has developed around the evolution of schools as organisations. Parent Re-engagement was identified as requiring a renewed focus in 2014/15.

Schools like many other organisations follow very similar pathways through distinct phases of growth and development with varying degrees of parental input over these periods. Many parents who have been here a number of years will recognise these phases.

- **The foundation phase:** could also be called the 'Existence Phase' filled with idealism, high energy and enthusiasm, high rates of volunteerism and an intimate community feeling. Not much money around but lots of effort to keep the venture alive. The dream is born here and the future direction set. The founders of this school chose 'Steiner' as the educational impulse.
- **Survival Phase:** once you are up and running parents have to work hard to keep the dream alive, find teachers, pay teachers, accommodate children in classrooms etc. the level of parent involvement, energy and personal commitment is high.
- **Stabilization:** the school begins to take shape, grants arrive, buildings begin to go up. Student numbers grow. Economics creep into the equation, what can we afford? Composite or single stream classes? Parents are still heavily involved in supporting the life of the school. There is increasing need for processes and procedures to manage this growing entity.
- **Growth:** more people begin to arrive, the product is becoming popular, the education is attractive, we begin bursting at the seams, more buildings are required, greater organisation is required, more processes and procedures, more policy to manage the direction of the school.
- **Take-off:** I believe we are on the cusp of this next stage of development where consolidation of processes and procedures has occurred, the school's rhythms have been established, staffing is stable, governance is secure, finances are reliable and the school's reputation is solid in the wider community.
- **Maturity**

Future growth and potentialities

Participants in the business planning meetings were cognizant of a desire within the community to give serious consideration to the possibility of the school moving forward into the High School arena.

We recognised the need to consolidate our recent growth and create a solid platform for any further growth. There was also recognition of the fact that our student numbers currently subsidise two important elements of the school that are largely unfunded, the Pre-School and the Learning Support Program.

In 2014 we determined to assess the interest in funding a feasibility study that would provide the necessary information regarding the viability of such an intention.

Student Performance in National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

NAPLAN, The National Assessment Program- Literacy and Numeracy assesses all students in Australian schools at years 3, 5, 7 & 9.

The Alice Springs Steiner School does not currently extend past Class 6 so NAPLAN only applies to Classes 3 & 5. In 2013 all Class 3 parents sought withdrawal from testing for their children and so NAPLAN testing consisted of just Class 5. However there were insufficient numbers sitting in 2013 to record against the National Average.

2013/14 Satisfaction Survey. Results

A poll was conducted late in 2013 to canvas parent's response to a range of questions.

We thank all the respondents and below are the collated results:

Area	Statement	1		3	4	5
Front Office Admin Effectiveness	Invoices and other business communications are timely and accurate	<i>Never agree</i> 0	<i>Rarely agree</i> 0	<i>Somewhat agree</i> 5%	<i>Often agree</i> 20%	<i>Strongly agree</i> 75%
Communication	I am kept aware of what is going on in the school in a timely and helpful manner	<i>Never agree</i>	<i>Rarely agree</i>	<i>Somewhat agree</i> 15%	<i>Often agree</i> 25%	<i>Strongly agree</i> 60%
Responsiveness	I feel I have a place to go where my thoughts and concerns are heard and understood	<i>Never agree</i> 0	<i>Rarely agree</i> 16.6%	<i>Somewhat agree</i> 16.6%	<i>Often agree</i> 33%	<i>Strongly agree</i> 33%
Environment	I feel the grounds & facilities are attractive, functional and safe	<i>Never agree</i> 0	<i>Rarely agree</i> 0	<i>Somewhat agree</i> 9%	<i>Often agree</i> 23%	<i>Strongly agree</i> 68%
Educational Philosophy	I'm happy with the philosophy of education and the way its carried out at Alice Springs Steiner School	<i>Never agree</i> 0	<i>Rarely agree</i> 0	<i>Somewhat agree</i> 0	<i>Often agree</i> 45%	<i>Strongly agree</i> 55%
Academic Education	I feel the Steiner curriculum is giving my child(ren) a solid academic education	<i>Never agree</i> 0	<i>Rarely agree</i> 0	<i>Somewhat agree</i> 10%	<i>Often agree</i> 15%	<i>Strongly agree</i> 75%
Holistic Education	I feel my child(ren) are receiving a well-rounded, holistic education	<i>Never agree</i> 0	<i>Rarely agree</i> 0	<i>Somewhat agree</i> 5%	<i>Often agree</i> 20%	<i>Strongly agree</i> 75%
Social, Spiritual & Values	I believe my child(ren) receive a positive exposure of important social and spiritual issues	<i>Never agree</i> 0	<i>Rarely agree</i> 0	<i>Rarely agree</i> 5%	<i>Often agree</i> 35%	<i>Strongly agree</i> 60%
Anthroposophy	I believe Alice Springs Steiner School provides me with adequate information and opportunities to learn more about Anthroposophy and how the impulses and values live in our school	<i>Never agree</i> 0	<i>Rarely agree</i> 0	<i>Rarely agree</i> 25%	<i>Often agree</i> 55%	<i>Strongly agree</i> 25%
Referral	I would recommend the Alice Springs Steiner School to both friends and colleagues	Never agree	Rarely agree	Somewhat agree	Often agree 21%	Strongly agree 79%
Your Time with ASSS	I have been with ASSS for.....	Less than a year 30%	1-2 years 5%	2-3 years 10%	3-4 years 35%	More than 4 20%

Number of Children Enrolled	I have (have had)	1 Child at ASSS 40%	2 Children at ASSS 35%	3 Children at ASSS 20%	4 Children at ASSS 5%	More than 4 Children at ASSS
Prior Knowledge	Before enrolling my child(ren) at ASSS	I had no knowledge of Steiner Education 16%	A little knowledge of Steiner Education 63%	Fair knowledge of Steiner Education 5%	A great deal of knowledge of Steiner Education 0	I had direct experience with another Steiner School 15%
How I found Alice Springs Steiner School	I discovered ASSS through	Referral 35%	The website 15%	An open day or other event at ASSS 25%	An event not held on the ASSS grounds 0	Other (please specify) 5% playgroup 5% mum from working here Friends 15%
Reason for Enrolment	I enrolled my child(ren) at the ASSS because	A belief in the educational philosophy 34%	A desire for a more nurturing Environment 25%	The needs of my Child 17%	The belief my child would be more well rounded 14%	Strong referral from someone I trust 8%

Major Events

Financial Assistance

The school received no additional funding from government sources.

School Buildings and Facilities

The school's permanent buildings are all less than seven years old and in good repair. We have four demountable buildings also in good repair.

A new double classroom was added in 2013 for the purpose of housing two Transition classes.

Teacher Qualifications

Category	No. Teachers
T – 6 Teachers having qualifications sufficient to meet the requirements of the NT Teachers Registration Board.	10
T – 6 Teachers <u>not</u> having qualifications sufficient to meet the requirements of the NT Teachers Registration Board.	0
Pre-school working towards Teaching Degree in Early childhood	2

Primary Workforce Composition (including transition)

Teaching Staff over 2013	7
FTE Teaching Staff over 2013	1
FTE Music specialists	2
Non-teaching staff 2013	2
FTE Non-teaching staff 2013	2

Student Attendance

From Ruby Salt Bush Kindy (pre-school) to Class 6, the overall attendance for 2013 was 92%. Class breakdown is as follows:

Preschool (RSB)	Transition (Cassia)	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6
95.9	93.0	86.4	87.0	92.9	92.1	93.9	93.3

Management of non-attendance.

Rolls are marked by teachers. Office staff visit classrooms daily in early morning with messages of absentees. Rolls are checked and any unexplained absences are followed up via phone calls to parents and attendance rolls marked accordingly.

Current Staff 2013

Early Childhood

Name	Position	Load
Susanne Doecke	Transition (Cassia Kindy)Teacher	F/T
Kitty Braks	Assistant	P/T
Amie Sanderson	Transition (Cassia Kindy)Teacher	P/T
M'Lis Scott	Ruby Salt Bush Teacher	P/T
Unantji Scales	Assistant	P/T
Rene McKay	Ruby Salt Bush Teacher /Primary Craft	P/T
Simone Dann	Assistant	P/T
Jen Rowe	Assistant	P/T
Jenny Edney	Play Group Leader	P/T

Primary

Name	Position	Load
Katy Egger	Teacher	F/T
Ann Poulsen 2013	Teacher	P/T 0.5
Pam Shiers 2013	Teacher	F/T
Noel Ferry	Teacher	F/T
Denise Berry	Teacher	P/T 0.6
Megan Hatton	Teacher	F/T
Ellen Sallows	Learning Support Teacher	P/T
Merren Weaver	ISA	P/T
Nick Hempel	Music specialist	P/T
Sabine Gonelli	Music specialist	P/T
Adelaide Church	Release Teacher	P/T
Barbara Starr-Arnett 2013	ISA Class 1	P/T
Bethany Lambeth	ISA Class 2	P/T

Administration and Facilities

Name	Position	Load
Brian Dodd	Principal	F/T
Chris Masters 2013	Business Manager	P/T
Chris Gillen	Finance Officer	P/T
Yvonne Betteridge	Front desk	F/T
Tony Castleden	Gardener	P/T

Professional Learning

Professional Learning Activity	No. Staff
SEA Delegates Conference	1
Glenaeon Teacher intensives	5

Spending on Professional development - \$13,319