



2015 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, a pre-school group, three transition classes and primary classes from 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:

- Construction of a new building, Class 5/6
- Successful application for BGA grant to build a double classroom in 2016 to finalise the Master Plan created in 2006
- Restructuring the Early Childhood area from three pre-school classes and two Transition classes to one Pre-school class and three Transition classes
- Most financially successful Fair to date

"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"

Challenges and Changes

Challenges

- **Recruitment and retention** of teachers is an ongoing challenge and term 4 of 2015 was an illustration of the difficulty. People leaving Alice Springs to follow different paths impacted on the Early Childhood staffing most significantly with three of the four positions being vacated.
The Primary school remained solid although we said farewell to Noel Ferry who left the school after completing a teaching round and assisting two further classes in their final year. Noel's service to the school was greatly appreciated. He was ever reliable and dependable.
Ellen Sallows decided her time in Alice Springs had come to end in order to pursue a slower paced lifestyle back in her home town in Adelaide. Ellen contributed hugely to the knowledge and understanding of the teachers and will be missed by the children who knew her as 'Grandma Ellen'.
Rene Mackay had the opportunity to return to Melbourne to renew her association with the school where her children attended for many years. Rene's vibrancy and quick wit is missed by all who knew her.
Lenley Bursle and her family moved to the coast to pursue specific high school opportunities. Lenley had worked in the school over a number of years in a variety of capacities.
We initiated a new Co-ordinators position in Early Childhood that commenced in term 2. Julia Sherriff took this position and although only here for a short time steered the Pre-school through the Accreditation assessment and provided a wealth of experience and knowledge to the staff before her departure at the end of the year.
- **Student numbers:** Student numbers have remained steady notwithstanding a turnover of families who have left Alice Springs for a variety of reasons. It is a challenge keeping pace with the changeable nature of the labour market in Alice Springs and the volatility of student numbers.
- A challenge now being addressed by our current Board is to market the school more successfully.

Changes

- **Restructured Early Childhood:** We restructured the Early Childhood area creating 3 home groups of mixed age children ranging in age from 4 through to 6. We reduced the Pre-school to 1 Ruby Salt Bush group comprising children turning 4 yrs of age. There had been a reduction in student numbers in pre-school and the opportunity arose to introduce mixed age Transitions which had been a dream for some time amongst the early childhood teachers.
- An impulse began which was encapsulated in the words '**Embracing Place**'. The conversation revolves around the deeper identity of the school being linked strongly to this unique place and the significant influence of the people, cultural life and historical values present here in Alice Springs. Teachers are working on blending the curriculum with stronger elements of Central Australian identity.

- We began a **pilot Arrente Language project** with Class 1 which will be extended into class 2 in 2016.
- **Our Farm Garden** has survived a number of changes in personnel after Tony Castleden and his family went on the road. Mark Hussey has done a great job in picking up the position as well as his duties as our Maintenance Man. The Garden is an incredible teaching resource for our students and still has huge potential for future input from the children.
- We received a **wonderful contribution** from Ashley Whear whose creativity and skill are on permanent display in the Primary playground. The Sentinel swings are well loved by the children and serve as Dragon guardians overlooking the playground, keeping everyone safe.
- We had a number of **new Board members** take their place on the Governing Body at the 2015 AGM. (Michael Tuckwell, Di Newham & Sophie Taughton (observers) Marc Woods,) They have integrated beautifully into the governance positions under the steady hand of Libby Prell who has provided stability and continuity as the Chair of the Board for a number of years now. Libby's professionalism and financial expertise have been invaluable in guiding the school from its troubled days of 2010/11 to the stable and thriving school we have today.
- Nic Hempel left us to take up a teaching position in town and Emma Clarke picked up Nic's task of taking the cello students

Supporting our teachers

The initiative taken to recruit teachers from the territory and provide on-site Professional Development and Mentoring has proven to be successful. Thanks to Ellen Sallows and John Burnett (visiting mentor), our staff have benefitted from two highly experienced Anthroposophists who have provided deep insights into child development and the curriculum. The teachers have grown in confidence and ability and this is evident in the quality of work they are creating with the children.

Additionally the school maintains its commitment to Professional Development by sponsoring the teachers each year to attend the Curriculum Intensives held at the Glenaeon School in Sydney over the summer break. The teachers always return refreshed and inspired by the work they undertake with the experienced tutors at the oldest Steiner School in Australia.

The spirit of co-operation is strong in the school as we head towards the end of our 5 year Strategic Plan and there is feeling of optimism and confidence accompanying us.

Major Events

The Alice Springs Steiner School Autumn Fair

The Fair reached a financial peak in 2015 thanks to the incredible dedication of its organising committee and the many people in our community who rally to make this event one of the most successful and highly anticipated on the Alice Springs calendar.

In the aftermath though there was a feeling the size of the fair had over-reached the capacity of the volunteers to manage the event and still enjoy the day themselves.

It was with this in mind the Board decided to revisit the Fair's original ideals and see if there was a way to preserve these and reduce the workload and stress on parent volunteer time.

An external review was commissioned to explore the many facets of the event. Peter Kay was engaged to undertake the review and he came back with many recommendations which the Board has subsequently instituted.

2016 will be the test case for the new structure.

School Buildings and Facilities

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

The Ruby Saltbush/Playgroup/Cassia building was refurbished at the end of 2015. We painted inside and out, renewed the kitchen benchtops, removed the old air conditioning units and replaced some carpets.

The new Class 5/6 classrooms were completed mid-year in time for students to commence classes in term 3. This building was possible through the generous donations to our 'Building Fund' by you the parents, the proceeds of the Fair and funding from the Block Grant Authority (BGA).

During the year we also made another application to the BGA for another double classroom. Our application was successful and when the latest project is complete the school will have successfully achieved the goals of the current Master Plan created in 2006.

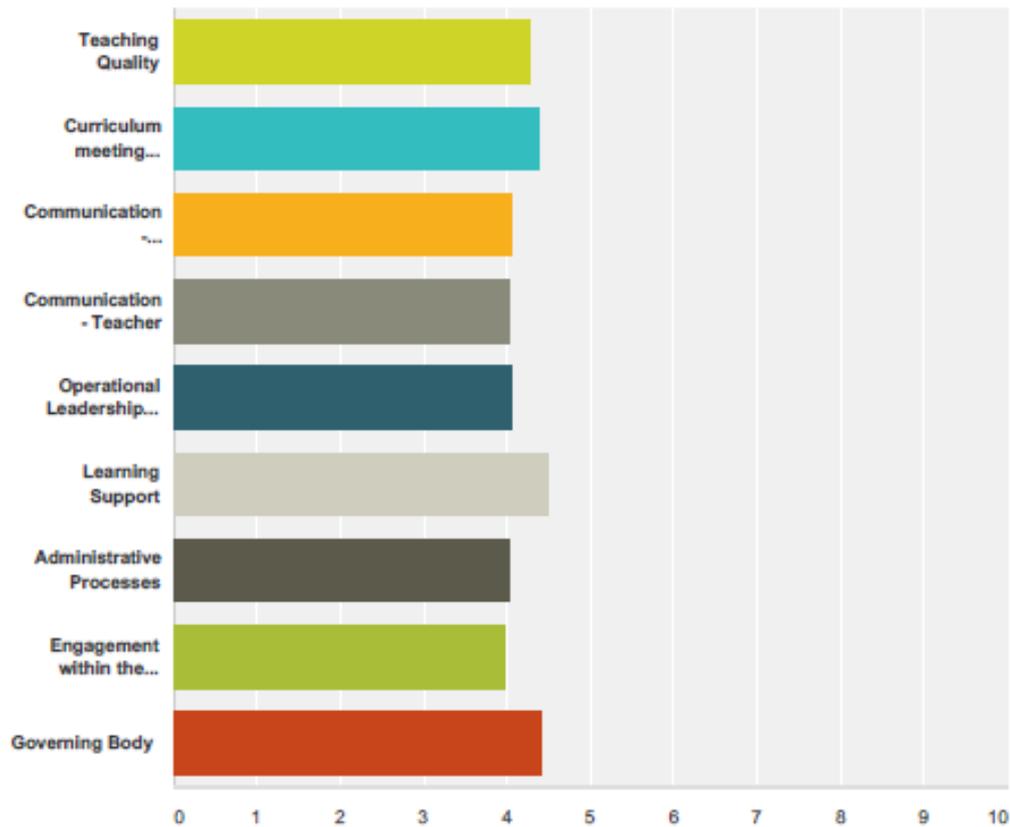
Once the next project is complete our school accommodations will look like this:

Class(es)	Accommodation
Playgroup/Ruby Salt Bush	Share ½ demountable building
Cassia 3	Share ½ demountable building
Cassia 1	Purpose built classroom
Cassia 2	Purpose built classroom
Flexible Learning Area	A Hall in Admin Block
Class 1	Purpose built classroom
Class 2	Purpose built classroom
Class 3	Purpose built classroom
Class 4	Purpose built classroom
Class 5	Purpose built classroom
Class 6	Purpose built classroom
Library	Purpose Built
Music	Purpose Built
Learning Support	2 Demountable buildings

PARENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

How would you describe your experience at the school in the following areas?

Answered: 106 Skipped: 5



	Poor	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Good	Excellent	No Relevant Experience	Total	Weighted Average
Teaching Quality	0.94% 1	8.49% 9	7.55% 8	30.19% 32	50.00% 53	2.83% 3	106	4.28
Curriculum meeting Childrens' needs	1.89% 2	7.55% 8	7.55% 8	24.53% 26	50.94% 54	7.55% 8	106	4.38
Communication - Administration	2.86% 3	5.71% 6	16.19% 17	32.38% 34	41.90% 44	0.95% 1	105	4.08
Communication - Teacher	2.86% 3	7.62% 8	13.33% 14	39.05% 41	34.29% 36	2.86% 3	105	4.03
Operational Leadership (Principal/admin)	3.85% 4	4.81% 5	16.35% 17	36.54% 38	35.58% 37	2.88% 3	104	4.04
Learning Support	0.96% 1	5.77% 6	10.58% 11	29.81% 31	32.69% 34	20.19% 21	104	4.48
Administrative Processes	2.91% 3	8.74% 9	12.62% 13	39.81% 41	31.07% 32	4.85% 5	103	4.02
Engagement within the School Community	1.90% 2	8.57% 9	15.24% 16	41.90% 44	28.57% 30	3.81% 4	105	3.98
Governing Body	1.90% 2	8.57% 9	12.38% 13	27.62% 29	21.90% 23	27.62% 29	105	4.42

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 2015 all but two Class 3 parents and five class 5 parents sought withdrawal from testing for their children and so NAPLAN testing consisted of 8 children across classes 3 and 5.

Because of the small sample below, the results are not statistically reliable enough to provide an accurate picture of the class levels. Parents are always advised to speak with their class teacher to ascertain the progress of their child.

Overall NAPLAN Results

Test Area	Above		Below		Band 6	
	Minimum Standards		Minimum Standards		Or Higher	
	C3 2 <i>students sat</i>	C5 5 students sat	C3 2 <i>students sat</i>	C5 5 students sat	C3 2 <i>students sat</i>	C5 5 students sat
Reading	2	4	0	1	0	4
Writing		2		3		1
Spelling		1		4		2
Grammar & Punctuation		3		2		4
Numeracy		3		2		3

Teacher Qualifications

Category	No. Teachers
T – 6 Teachers having qualifications sufficient to meet the requirements of the NT Teachers Registration Board.	9
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	3

Primary Workforce Composition (including transition)

Teaching Staff over 2015	9
FTE Teaching Staff over 2015	8
Music specialists	1
FTE Music specialists	0.8
Non-teaching staff 2015	8
FTE Non-teaching staff 2015	4.5

Student Attendance

From Ruby Salt Bush Kindy (pre-school) to Class 6, the overall attendance for 2015 was 91.9%. Class breakdown is as follows:

Preschool (RSB)	Transition (Cassia)	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6
82.0	89.9	95.0	92.6	96.6	92.5	93.0	91.8

Management of non-attendance.

Rolls are marked by teachers. Roles are brought to the office before 10am. Rolls are checked and any unexplained absences are followed up via phone calls to parents and attendance rolls marked accordingly.

Staffing @ 11.12.15

Early Childhood

Name	Position	Load
Trudi Nordblom	Transition (Cassia Kindy)Teacher (Long Service Leave replacement)	F/T
Tracey Lardner	Assistant	P/T
Rene McKay	Transition (Cassia Kindy)Teacher	F/T
Kitty Braks	Assistant	P/T
Julia Sherriff	Early Childhood Co-Ordinator & Ruby Salt Bush Teacher	F/T
Lenley Bursle	Ruby Salt Bush Teacher	P/T

Simone Dan Brandon	Assistant	P/T
Jen Rowe	Assistant	P/T
Cherie Johnson	Billy Button & Release Teacher	P/T
Janine Cock	Play Group Leader & Billy Button Assistant	P/T
Susanne Doecke	Transition (Cassia Kindy)Teacher on Long Service Leave	F/T

Primary

Name	Position	Load
Adelaide Church	Teacher	F/T
Zara Goldsack	Teacher	F/T
Katy Egger	Teacher	F/T
Bethany Lambert	Teacher	F/T
Megan Hatton	Teacher	F/T
Noel Ferry	Teacher	P/T
Denise Berry	Teacher	P/T
Ellen Sallows	Learning Support Teacher	F/T
Michael La Flamme	Learning Support Teacher	P/T
Emma Clarke	Music specialist	P/T
Zana Fox	ISA	P/T
Fiona Ball	ISA	P/T
Priya Radhakrishnan Nair	ISA	P/T

Administration and Facilities

6 staff

Name	Position	Load
Brian Dodd	Principal	F/T
Roger Craig	Business Manager	F/T
Chris Gillen	Finance Officer	P/T
Yvonne Betteridge	Front desk	F/T
Mark Hussey	Groundsman & Gardener	F/T
Angela Crack	Administration	P/T

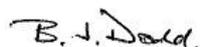
Professional Learning

Professional Learning Activity	No. Staff
<i>SEA conference</i>	8
<i>Glennaeon Teacher intensives</i>	5
AISNSW/SEA leadership course	1

Spending on Professional development & Staff Mentoring - \$41,768

It has been a great pleasure to serve as the Principal of this school over the last four years. There is something very special about this place and the people who reside here. It is blessed by beauty and wisdom both ancient and current.

Brian Dodd



Principal