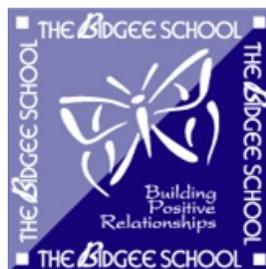


The Bidgee School Annual Report



2016



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2016 is provided to the community of The Bidgee School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

In 2016 The Bidgee School continued to integrate How2Learn and our understanding of the neurobiology of trauma to support student growth across all areas of their personal and school lives. We provide specialist support to students impacted by complex trauma, abuse, neglect, family violence, autism and other mental health conditions. The Bidgee School provides intensive support that focuses on educational/academic intervention and wellbeing/emotional regulation for students from Years 5–10.

In 2016 we have further developed our knowledge and understanding of neurobiology, relationships and trauma which has revolutionised the way we understand traumatised student's behaviour, their abilities and the impact of their past on their capacity to learn and relate to others. This trauma informed practice/strategies assists us to unlock the potential of traumatised students to grow and develop at school.

In 2016 the school was very excited to be joined by Humphrey our Educational Support Dog, provided and trained by Assistance Dogs Australia. Research is very clear about the benefits of animal therapy for children/young people with disabilities and mental health conditions. Young people who have difficulty relating to other children and adults have been observed to behave positively with pets. Humphrey has a calming influence on our students. He offers emotional support by recognising signs of anxiety, a sense of fun and laughter with his antics and improves concentration and communication skills. Student emotional and physical well-being is supported by bonding and caring for Humphrey who provides unconditional love and support as only animals can.

It is both a pleasure and a privilege to work within such a dynamic environment with skilled staff dedicated to improving the outcomes, across all areas, for our students.

Marianne Mitchell

Principal

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School background

School vision statement

The Bidgee School provides students with engaging, personalised learning programs to develop their academic, social and emotional needs.

School context

The Bidgee School was established in 2006 to assist students with emotional difficulties and challenging behaviours who have not been able to maintain their place in the mainstream setting. The Bidgee School provides specialist support to students who are impacted by complex trauma, abuse, neglect, family violence, autism and mental health. The school provides intensive support that focuses on educational/academic intervention and wellbeing/emotional regulation for students from Years 5–10 with a new Emotionally Disturbed (ED) class for Years 2–4 to be established in 2017. Students attend The Bidgee School for between 12 and 18 months. The Bidgee School is committed to developing and delivering quality educational programs which are engaging and stimulating in a supportive learning environment and which prepares students for successful transition back to their mainstream school or other program. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of Literacy, Numeracy and Personal Development/Social Skills. The Bidgee School aims to provide students with the opportunity to understand their feelings, be accountable for their actions and learn new skills in a smaller, highly structured environment whilst still maintaining contact with their mainstream school.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

For all schools (except those participating in external validation processes):

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

Learning

In 2016 The Bidgee School had a strong focus on strengthening and developing our positive learning culture. We further developed our already strong and respectful relationships between students and staff. Teachers tailored learning to suit the needs of their learners. This was achieved through each teachers' Professional Development Plan (PDP) which assisted teachers to implement engaging learning programs in the classroom context. Staff at The Bidgee School had high expectations for their students, which ensured high quality learning experiences.

Whole staff participation in ongoing Professional Development in HOW2Learn (Higher Order Ways to Learn) was a requirement in 2016. This resulted in staff and students developing knowledge of growth mindsets as well as the capacity to monitor and strive towards achieving an academic and personal growth mindset. Moreover, participation in HOW2Learn supported staff in embedding successful learning habits in their teaching and learning programs. Staff committed to explicitly teaching and modelling successful learning habits to our students in order to develop a range of transferrable habits and skills.

Teaching

To ensure effective classroom practice teachers regularly use student performance data to guide their teaching practice. This has been demonstrated in a student tracking sheet which uses diagnostic and other testing, on a regular basis, to show student strengths and the areas that need improvement. Lessons are then planned around individual student needs based upon initial testing such as Probe reading comprehension results.

After specific learning tasks, teachers give students explicit feedback on how to improve their learning. This happens particularly in Literacy and Maths lessons. Targets are set so students have a learning goal to aim for.

Teachers use data from student results both academic and behaviour to guide their planning and teaching for individuals. Teachers change their practice according to the data results and area of improvement needed for individual

students.

The above has been achieved by collaboratively planning and working together to improve teaching and learning in each class grouping. Peer feedback is provided to improve teaching practice and student learning.

In alignment with the school's strategic direction, teachers have engaged in intensive HOW2Learn professional development to learn strategies to engage students and to foster lifelong learning skills and encourage responsibility of their own learning. This is a whole school process and is consistent across all areas of the school. The professional development has enabled teachers to be consistent with language and resources throughout classrooms so students receive the same message.

Leading

The Bidgee School places importance on leadership roles within the school. All staff have high expectations for themselves and for their students. The school has made significant gains in its relationships with external agencies, such as TAFE, where a number of students are now enrolled in TVET courses. Useful partnerships have also been established with local businesses, which allowed older students to begin workplace transitions. This will help students develop a positive plan and direction for their lives after school.

All teachers have a strong understanding of the strategic directions, and this is conveyed in their lessons and programs in class. Teachers liaise regularly with parents and caregivers, helping to foster strong, positive relationships with the school community. School resources are effectively managed to ensure they benefit the students in the best possible way.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/school-excellence-framework>

Strategic Direction 1

High quality educational practices.

Purpose

To consistently develop high quality educational practices to improve literacy and numeracy skills across the Key Learning Areas. Engaging students through high quality practices will foster lifelong learning in young people.

Overall summary of progress

In 2016, staff at The Bidgee School participated in a range of Professional Development opportunities to support classroom practice. These included 2LS, TOWN assessment training, as well as weekly staff meetings weekly to explore HOW2Learn modules. Teachers have successfully incorporated this learning into their daily practice. Students have benefited in numerous ways, moving through the literacy and numeracy clusters and developing key lifelong learning habits such as resilience, resourcefulness and open mindedness.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Quality teaching is embedded across all facets of classroom practice resulting in all students improving by one cluster on the literacy and numeracy continuums within 12 months of commencing attendance at The Bidgee School.	Teachers used a number of varied activities to engage students in literacy and numeracy activities. As a result, 100% of students have moved up by at least one cluster on the Literacy and Numeracy continuums.	• Equity Funding (\$12300.00). Resources and staffing.

Next Steps

- Staff investigate PLAN data/ NAPLAN results to inform further unit planning
- Staff to become more familiar with Quality Teaching Framework to develop high quality programs
- Continue to participate in fortnightly HOW2Learn Professional Development to ensure staff foster lifelong learning skills of their students



Strategic Direction 2

Develop a positive school environment.

Purpose

To foster successful student participation in school life through the development of a positive school environment. All students will learn the values of respect and responsibility. When students are engaged at school improved attendance rates and positive student outcomes will follow.

Overall summary of progress

Teaching students the values of respect and responsibility through explicit lessons has supported students to feel valued and respected at school, by staff and fellow students. Students feel that they are being listened to, and contribute to the running of day to day activities. Our positive school environment is responsible for improving overall attendance by 32% and decreasing suspensions by 71%.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Programs are directly connected to student interest and will result in students' willingness to attend school and participate in all aspects of school life. Unexplained absences will decrease by 10%.	Students participate in many highly engaging activities throughout the week designed to increase attendance and engagement. Attendance has improved by 32%. Total suspensions 71% lower in 2016 than in 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aboriginal background loading (\$6700.00)• Socio-economic background (\$9000.00). Resources and staffing.

Next Steps

- Continue weekly social skills lessons exploring key topics such as inclusion, diversity and acceptance
- Develop checklist to help gather data of the effectiveness of high interest activities and explore new options for Sport/BEEP activities
- Ensure reward system remains up to date and motivating for students



Strategic Direction 3

Social and emotional wellbeing.

Purpose

To facilitate a holistic education by providing teaching and learning opportunities which nurture the whole child and which are responsive to individual needs. This will enhance health, wellbeing, learning and behaviour.

Overall summary of progress

The Bidgee School places strong value on a holistic education, providing nurture and care which are responsive to individual needs. This vision enhances health, wellbeing, learning and emotional regulation. Each morning and afternoon students rank themselves on a resilience and happiness continuum. These ratings encourage students to be more self-aware. A decrease in suspensions by 71% demonstrates increased mindfulness around daily choices.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Students will increase success rates of Behaviour Management Plan targets as each term progresses. In order to prepare students for transition back to mainstream, regular conferencing with students is held to develop conflict resolution strategies and maintain social relationships. This will lead to a decrease in the entry of negative incidents on Sentral and suspensions.	Professional learning around Trauma and its impact on the brain supported the continued implementation and further extension of trauma informed strategies to support students who have experienced trauma. On average, students have increased Behaviour Management Plan targets by 20% this year.	• Equity (\$19300.00). Resources and staffing.

Next Steps

- Integrate trauma informed principles to inform all school practices to develop social and emotional wellbeing
- Continue to place strong values on nurturing the whole child to ensure constant growth
- Develop positive relationships with home schools



Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background loading	<p>Students have participated in explicit learning around the brain and utilised trauma informed strategies such as mindfulness to improve emotional regulation and conflict resolution. These strategies have enabled a lower level of arousal which has supported high level engagement across all areas and a decrease in entry of negative incidents in Sentral.</p> <p>All students have Personalised Learning Programs and have shown growth across literacy and numeracy continuums.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal background loading (\$6,700) • Socio-economic background (\$9000)
Socio-economic background	<p>Students participate in highly engaging learning experiences throughout the week designed to increase attendance and engagement. Attendance has improved by 32%. Total suspensions 71% lower in 2016 than 2015.</p>	<p>Socio-economic background (\$12,300).</p>



Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boys	19	18	16	15
Girls	2	2	3	4



Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	3.42
Teacher Librarian	0.17
School Administration & Support Staff	4.18
Other Positions	0.2

*Full Time Equivalent

The Bidgee School comprises 11 staff members with 1 Indigenous staff member. All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	80
Postgraduate degree	20

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

During 2016 The Bidgee School staff accessed training through a range of modalities including school based training, conferences, workshops and online modules such as:

- * Space to Learn – Trauma informed strategies
- * 2LS – Secondary Learning Strategies
- * HOW2Learn training
- * Stem – Thinking Classroom
- * Art of Leadership
- *Core Financial Literacy
- *Sentral Assessment
- *Understanding the Neurobiology of Complex Trauma
- *Robotics
- *Developing Teacher Practice using Teaching Standards in action.

Financial information (for schools using OASIS for the whole year)

Financial information

This summary financial information covers funds for operating costs for 2016 and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Income	\$
Balance brought forward	127 308.56
Global funds	72 646.15
Tied funds	65 916.36
School & community sources	42 701.78
Interest	2 823.29
Trust receipts	0.00
Canteen	0.00
Total income	0.00
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	12 874.66
Excursions	4 668.49
Extracurricular dissections	23 152.00
Library	466.37
Training & development	7 983.34
Tied funds	69 605.25
Short term relief	1 092.70
Administration & office	11 572.15
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	12 487.44
Maintenance	3 041.01
Trust accounts	41.67
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	0.00
Balance carried forward	0.00

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance

Other assessment data

Students at The Bidgee School are regularly assessed for movement through the various clusters. For data purposes, students are recorded in one of three categories:

- Students who require further assistance to make adequate gains through the cluster.
- Students who have made adequate gains through the cluster, at a suitable rate.
- Students who are excelling and progressing rapidly through the clusters at beyond the recommended rate.

In reading, 20% of students require assistance to make adequate gains through the clusters, 50% have made adequate gains through the clusters and 30% of students are excelling and progressing rapidly through the clusters. In writing, 20% of students require assistance to make adequate gains through the cluster, 50% of students are making adequate gains and 30% of students are excelling and making progress.

In numeracy 15% of students require assistance to make adequate gains through the cluster, 50 % of students have made adequate gains and 35% of students are excelling and progressing rapidly though the clusters. As well as assessing students against the continuum, the Probe2 Reading Comprehension assessment kit has been used to establish baseline data and information around where students need to improve. We have then used Key into Comprehension resources to teach students skills needed to improve their comprehension. We use TOWN assessment to gauge numeracy strategies being used by the students. Online assessment tools are utilised to assess students against their stage level in mathematics. This information informs our teaching and learning practice.

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10. The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

The performance of the students in our school in the NAPLAN is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards cannot be reported due to the small number of students registered for participation through The Bidgee School in 2016.



Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Each year schools are required to seek the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below. In 2016 The Bidgee School sought feedback using the Tell Them From Me survey battery, soliciting responses from parents, students and staff.

- Parents and carers reported they were happy with The Bidgee School. They felt welcomed into the school community when they visited, and enjoyed the frequency and positivity of home – school communication. 100% of the surveyed parents and carers indicated that they believed the school has a good reputation in the community.
- School staff responded that they felt a strong sense of belonging and were a valued member of the staff team. They indicated that the staffing team collaborate well and are flexible in the delivery of their programs. Teachers discuss their learning goals with other teachers and share resources openly. High expectations are held amongst staff of both student behaviour and effort in academic tasks.
- The majority of students report that they enjoy coming to The Bidgee School. A minority indicated that a lack of friends in the school community is an issue for them. Students enjoy the extra-curricular activities, but indicate that they would like more excursions. Students commented on the positive teacher– student relationships within the school.



Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

A significant number of indigenous students attend The Bidgee School, consequently emphasis is placed on Aboriginal education. Each term staff meet with parents/carers and students to develop and implement Personalised Learning Plans (PLP) designed to support students to set academic and personal goals. Further the PLP's ensure our indigenous students engage in learning across the curriculum through the inclusion of student identified high interest learning activities.

Aboriginal perspectives are embedded within all teaching and learning programs across all KLA's so all students can gain a greater insight and appreciation of our first Australians. Some examples this year included learning about local areas that are places of significance in the area such as 'The Rock'. Additionally, students learnt about famous Koori resistance fighters Pemulwuy and Windradyne of the Wiradjuri and learnt some Wiradjuri language during their studies. During an Australian History unit, a strong focus was placed on the Black Anzacs, and their significant contribution during World War I.



Multicultural and anti-racism education

The Bidgee School places a high importance on difference and diversity across our community. Students often participate in classroom activities where respect, tolerance and responsibility are promoted. Novels and picture books focussing on people from other cultures and diverse backgrounds are used in social skills and wellbeing lessons to help students understand how the lives of others differ from their own. Cooking lessons also provide classes with the opportunity to explore the lives of others by trying new ingredients and tasting new foods that are unfamiliar to us, but are common meals to others. In the weeks leading up to Harmony Day each class studied a different region of the world, learning about their culture. This culminated in a whole school luncheon, where each class presented a poster of their

researched country and prepared local cuisine as part of our three course lunch.

Other school programs

This year The Bidgee School Wellbeing Program continued its focus on mind–body integration tools that develop self–awareness and self–care. We continued the practise of meditation to cultivate presence, resilience and self–compassion and mindful movement to nurture and nourish our nervous–systems. Teens that are taught mind–body integration tools are supported to develop self–awareness and self–care and to overcome their traumatic patterns to make healthier, more empowered choices for themselves. These techniques were designed specifically for the at–risk community of young people to enhance health, well–being, learning and expression. Staff and students participated in simple and accessible breath movement, relaxation and visualisation practices that support well–being and produce both immediate and long–term positive results in mood, attention, communication, self–regulation and self–esteem.

Together, we focused on developing physical, social, emotional skills and attentional self–regulating strategies to cultivate wellbeing, happiness and resilience. We discovered what to do when we face real challenges and what positive character traits mean, how we show them through our thoughts, feelings and actions, why they matter and how they effect our mindset. We developed optimism and practiced research–based methods and nurtured our creativity through mindful artistic expression.