

Acacia Hill School
Annual Performance Report to the School Community
2019
Aligned to the Department of Education's 'Education NT Strategy 2019-22'

Acacia Hill School

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School Overview

Our School

In 2019, Acacia Hill School focused on

- increasing the capacity of students with **transitions**: from outside of school into school, within school, and from school to outside of school including school to work
- growing every child's capacity in **communication**, and
- growing **leadership capacity** in order to nurture an expert teaching team.

Our Staff

Acacia Hill School had a total of 47 staff with a full-time equivalent of 45.3. This included

- 17 Classroom Teachers, three of whom were part-time
 - 3 Senior Teacher Level 1 (ST1)
 - 1 Senior Teacher Level 3 (ST3) – Assistant Principal
 - 1 Contract Principal (ECPL2)
 - 1 Admin Manager (AO5)
 - 18 Special Education Support Assistants (SESO - AO4 92)
 - 1 Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO - AO4 92)
 - 1 Executive Officer (AO4 96)
 - 1 Admin Officer (AO2 half time)
 - 1 Maintenance Officer (PH3)
 - 2 casual School Council Employees – Therapy Assistant and Hydrotherapy Assistant
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- Three staff – our AEO (Aboriginal Education Officer), and two SESOs (Special Education Support Officers) – identified as Aboriginal.
 - 35 staff were female (74%) and 12 were male (26%).
 - Early Childhood qualifications: One staff member had a Masters in Early Childhood, one had a Bachelor in Early Childhood and Primary Education and two had a Certificate III in Early Childhood.
 - Special Education qualifications: Five staff members had a Masters in Special Education or a related area. Five staff had a certificate (II-IV) in Disability.
 - Teaching staff held a range of other qualifications, including Masters in English Literature, Commerce, Business Administration and Applied Linguistics, and a Bachelor degrees in Arts, Behavioural Science, Environmental Science, and Science.

- One teaching staff member held a TESOL diploma and another a Diploma of Fine Arts.
- Two staff members held a Cert IV Training and Assessment.

All teaching staff met the professional standards for teachers in the Northern Territory, including having obtained appropriate qualifications for teaching and abiding by the Code of Ethics for Northern Territory teachers.

Our Students

In 2019:

- 73% of students were male and 27% female
- 66% were Indigenous
- 34% were from a language background other than English
- 20% of students were in care and under Territory Families
- 45% of students were on the Autism Spectrum
- 11% of students had Cerebral Palsy
- 8% of students had Downs Syndrome
- 56% of students had an Intellectual Impairment
- 46% of students needed communication support – from mild to fully nonverbal
- 19% of students needed mobility support.

Placements at Acacia Hill School:

- 9% of students had a placement for Global Developmental Delay (for children up to the age of 7 until they have a formal diagnosis)
- 23% of students had a full placement due to intellectual impairment
- 62% of students had a functional placement for multiple complex disabilities
- 9% of students had no placement yet.

Student mobility is minimal at Acacia Hill School compared with other schools in Alice Springs.

Many Acacia Hill students are very vulnerable, and for these students, non-attendance is due to the child's disability or sickness. However, there are also some students who miss school with no valid reason. Teachers are asked to follow up any U's on the roll. The AEO also assists with Aboriginal students with phone calls and home visits.

Our Community

On average, parents and carers are quite involved with the school and are very supportive of the school. In general, children come to school with a uniform and shoes, and either bring a packed recess and lunch, or some families pay for a lunch to be provided – organized by the AEO.

In Term 1, there was an EAP (Educational Adjustment Plan) meeting for most students. This meeting involved the class teacher, parents or carers and other relevant stakeholders such as Territory Families or an allied health practitioner, according to each child's situation.

Teachers communicate with families through communication books which go home each evening, and sometimes electronically.

The School Council met twice a term. It was decided by the new council at the start of the year to have the meetings during school time, which allowed some parents to join the Council when otherwise they would not have been available for evening meetings due to having to take care of their child with a disability. The Council was very welcoming of two student members for the first time.

Some parents joined staff at the whole school professional development day with Tracey Ezard in Term 1, 'Creating Collaborative Cultures'.

Principal's Report

Buildings!

The 2019 school year began with Acacia Hill School resembling a 'castle' of fenced off building construction surrounded by a 'moat' of classrooms, as the old admin block was demolished then replaced by beautiful new buildings. My office was located in the Sadadeen Primary Music Room and the administrative staff were in the eastern end of the Sadadeen Primary Hall. I acknowledge the generosity, welcome and tolerance of Sadadeen Primary in accommodating us for over a semester during the building works. We moved into the new building on Saturday 24th August, and haven't looked back! The opening ceremony for the new buildings was on 20th September.

There was one more building project: our successful Building Better Schools expression of interest was used to refashion the preschool building into a double classroom and family room over the holidays at the end of Term 3.

School leadership

In addition to the infrastructure works, there was significant change in school leadership at the start of 2019, with me taking the helm after Wendy Haynes' seven years of excellent leadership, Sheina Treuel in the role of Assistant Principal, Maree Woolford took over the role of Senior Teacher from Nicole Hacquoil and Janet Dales was on leave with her elderly mother for Term 1, so Lufen Cowham, with the assistance of Maree Hayes from Regional Office, was Acting Admin Manager.

Number of students

Our student enrolment rose from 83 to 91 through the 2019 school year. Our average attendance was 75.8%, which is lower than the attendance for the previous four years, which had been around 80%.

Senior students

Five of our senior years students took on leadership roles in 2019. These students assisted with running assemblies and two became student representatives on School Council. These leaders had the opportunity to join student leaders from other Alice Springs schools for leadership training at Centralian Senior College in September.

We lowered the age for Individual Transition Plans for secondary students from the year they turn 18 to the year they turn 15 to give longer for transition plans from school

to work and life after school. Some of our senior students started a Barista VET course at the beginning of Semester 2.

Farewells

At the end of Term 3, we farewelled five of our senior years students, and at the end of Term 4, we said goodbye to eight Year 6 students from satellite classes, who went to Centralian Middle School and St Philip's.

Alice Can Dance

A group of our students were amongst the 200 students from ten Alice Springs schools who participated in Alice Can Dance on 13th September, with the theme 'Our planet, our future'. Once again, our students' performance was very moving and it was great to be in the audience watching.

Communication

As part of the school focus on communication, speech pathologist Fran Liepa from Desert Therapy was employed two weeks each term to work with students and teachers.

Curriculum

Many Acacia Hill staff were familiar with the ABLES curriculum (Abilities Based Learning and Education Support) as Wendy Haynes was the first principal in the NT to introduce this curriculum. From Term 1 2019, all teachers began to use the English and Maths section of ABLES and reports were designed to include the ABLES A-D pre-Foundation Levels for students for whom this was relevant.

Leadership

We had some increase in teachers willing to put up their hand and take on leadership responsibilities, with Hannah Charlie starting a Professional Learning Community in Structured Teaching and Learning, Emma Arthur investigating communication assessments suitable for our students, Shinaide Dilles coordinating the Year 6 transition to middle school and Vish Kroutz working on a Data PLC with Sheina.

Staff professional development

We had a very inspiring staff professional development day with Tracey Ezard in Term 1. A lasting gem from this day, 'Creating Collaborative Cultures', was team planning days in the second last week of each term. It was great to also have some parents join us for the PD day with Tracey.

Flinders physiotherapy students

We saw the fruition of some work started a few years earlier by Wendy Haynes involving a partnership between Flinders University and Acacia Hill School, with two groups of four final year Masters physiotherapy students undertaking a placement at Acacia Hill School under the supervision of experienced paediatric physiotherapist, Anne Bent. The school gained much from these placements, both for individual students, classes – such as the morning PE routine for the high sensory boys group which they maintained until the end of the year - and some PD for the whole staff.

Classes

In response to need from other schools, a fifth satellite class was started in Term 2 – an upper primary class at Braitling Primary School.

NDIS

2019 was a big year for Acacia Hill School in terms of understanding and engaging with the NDIS. At the beginning of the year, some allied health practitioners from the Child Development Team still engaged with some of our students, but by the end of the year, almost all students were either on NDIS or in the process of getting on. For a time for many students there was a gap in services, with limited paediatric allied health specialists in Alice Springs. However, by the end of the year, there was a gradually growing pool of specialists, many from Darwin or interstate, beginning to connect with our students.

Visitors

Acacia Hill School was visited by the Honorable Selena Uibo, Minister for Education, in March, and the Member for Braitling, Dale Wakefield assisted in the opening ceremony of our new building in September. Robyn Lambly, Member for Araluen, visited the school on a couple of occasions.

All in all, 2019 was a very big year. I'm happy to say that I felt we had a united staff team, reflected by minimal staff turnover at the end of the year.

Kind regards

Julie Permezel

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School Council/Board Report

Schools may choose to include a report from the school council/board that outlines the council's/board's membership, role, key decisions, events and achievements.



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Engage: Increase the number of students attending school more than 80 per cent

- **What were the school's deliverables for this priority area in 2019?**

Increase the capacity of all students to **transition**, within school, outside school to school, and school to outside of school including school to work.

- **What actions did the school undertake to address the deliverables?**

Individual Transition Plans for all students aged 15 and above.

Positive Partnerships – three staff trained and some staff PD at staff meetings.

- **What was the impact?**

The deliverables did not have an obvious impact on attendance, although the larger enrolment and growth in satellite classes means we have some more students who may have had existing attendance issues before coming to Acacia Hill School. There were also a number of students with very debilitating disabilities, leading to frequent or lengthy absences and susceptibility to sickness.

Collection	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Active	Att %	Active	Att %	Active	Att %	Active	Att %	Active	Att %
Feb (1)	70	85.0%	66	80.0%	77	82.2%	77	84.4%	83	79.6%
Mar (2)	70	84.5%	68	82.6%	77	79.8%	79	77.7%	88	81.0%
May (3)	74	77.6%	70	79.3%	76	77.4%	77	72.1%	93	72.0%
Jun (4)	74	77.1%	71	82.8%	77	81.2%	77	79.5%	95	72.0%
Aug (5)	71	79.1%	73	83.4%	80	75.7%	81	80.6%	98	76.0%
Sep (6)	72	80.4%	72	79.9%	78	81.2%	82	81.1%	97	76.0%
Oct (7)	66	79.7%	70	82.9%	76	81.3%	80	83.0%	91	74.0%
Nov (8)	66	80.2%	70	81.2%	77	84.4%	80	81.3%	91	73.0%
Average	70	80.5%	70	81.5%	77	80.4%	79	80.0%	92	75.5%

In the school survey element: 'My child was well supported to transition into primary/middle/senior school' school community responses were

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
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13%	13%	13%	33%	27%
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In the school survey element: 'The school provides suitable programs or pathways for students to transition from primary to secondary school / from secondary school to work or further education' staff responses were

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
0%	0%	6%	61%	33%

- **What are the gaps?**

Positive Partnerships did not successfully embed, possibly due to too many changes occurring. Better to focus on less and do that well. The ITPs were good – better to consider bringing these to lower ages down through the school.

The school needs a common vision and values underpinning high expectations for all students.

- **What are the school's Deliverables for 2020?**

Develop a whole school vision and values relating to high expectations for all students and valuing cultural backgrounds.

Grow: Improve students' two year gain in NAPLAN writing in Years 5, 7 and 9

- **What were the school's deliverables for this priority area in 2019?**
 - Every child has a communication plan (including Augmentative and Alternative Communication - AAC - where appropriate) with a tool to measure growth.
- **What actions did the school undertake to address the deliverables?**
 - Employ a speech pathologist two weeks per term.
 - Explored a few different tools to measure communication.
 - Whole school professional learning day with Jane Farrell in 4 Blocks Literacy.
 - Commenced using ABLES and Victorian Curriculum across the school.
- **What was the impact?**
 - All teachers reporting on Maths and English using ABLES and the Victorian Curriculum where appropriate by Semester 2.
 - Potential for using Communication Matrix looking positive.
 - Some teachers used Jane Farrell's ten week unit plan.
- **What are the gaps?**
 - Role of speech pathologist needed more clarity. Spread too thin and purpose not clear.
 - ABLES and VC data need to be more aligned with planning.
 - 4 Blocks PL Day was unclear and did not lead to a clear uptake of 4 Blocks or clarity on what it is.
- **What are the school's Deliverables for 2020? What are the next steps?**
 - Whole school curriculum and assessment plan based on ABLES and VC.
 - ABLES as an assessment tool where appropriate.

Grow: leadership capacity in order to nurture an expert teaching team.

- Deliverables: increase distributed leadership and staff willing to step into leadership roles.
- Actions to address the deliverables: staff PD Day with Tracey Ezard; opportunities for staff to take on leadership roles and mentoring of some of these teachers.
- **What was the impact?**
 - At the end of 2018, an ST1 position was advertised and one Acacia Hill School teacher applied; in Semester 2 2019, an EOI was put out for an ST1 and six AHS teachers applied.
 - During 2019, four teachers put up their hands to take on leadership roles, in forming a Structured Teaching and Learning PLC, in Data, in coordinating transition to Middle School, in coordinating STEM and in coordinating communication across the school, including visits from a Speech Pathologist two weeks each term.
- **What are the gaps?**
 - Succession planning for principal and assistant principal.
- **What are the school's Deliverables for 2020?**
 - Supporting the Structured Teaching and Learning PLC to continue to grow organically through 2020, with an intended larger whole school focus in 2021.
 - Continue the Communication and Transition PLCs.
 - Data PLC - work towards clear measurable targets to be added to all we do.

NAPLAN

Include data available in BIC Report 16031:

- *Number and percentage of students participating in NAPLAN for each domain*
- *Percentage of students achieving National Minimum Standard for each domain*
- *Number and percentage of students below, at and above National Minimum Standard for each domain.*

No Acacia Hill School students participated in NAPLAN in 2019.

Student Enrolment, Attendance and Learning

Include Families as First Teachers program participation, where appropriate, and student enrolment and attendance data for all students and Aboriginal students for each year level in the whole school including preschool. For example:

	2018				2019			
	Indigenous		All		Indigenous		All	
	Avg Enrolment	Attendance	Avg Enrolment	Attendance	Avg Enrolment	Attendance	Avg Enrolment	Attendance
Preschool	7	72.8%	11	73.5%	11	57.7%	19	63.0%
Transition	1	93.3%	5	69.1%	3	93.5%	4	82.4%
Year 1	4	80.2%	7	81.1%	3	76.0%	8	75.6%
Year 2	4	70.4%	6	78.9%	3	71.0%	7	77.3%
Year 3	5	60.7%	7	66.7%	6	77.3%	7	79.9%
Year 4	3	75.2%	4	80.5%	7	73.4%	10	74.4%
Year 5	8	78.9%	8	80.0%	5	65.3%	5	67.8%
Year 6	2	90.2%	5	89.7%	8	61.6%	9	65.2%
Year 7	3	91.4%	4	92.0%	1	90.1%	4	81.6%
Year 8	1	18.2%	1	18.2%	3	92.8%	4	92.5%
Year 9	4	83.3%	4	83.3%	1	28.8%	2	55.4%
Year 10			2	73.5%	6	80.4%	7	77.5%
Year 11	6	90.7%	8	89.9%	2	94.8%	2	89.9%
Year 12	5	87.7%	6	89.4%	6	88.3%	6	88.5%
Acacia Hill School	54	78.7%	79	80.1%	63	74.0%	92	75.5%

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Senior Secondary Outcomes [include where applicable]	Percentage
Students in Year 12 undertaking vocational or trade training	0%
Students in Year 12 attaining a Year 12 certificate or equivalent VET qualification	0%

Note: under the Australian Education Regulation 2013 it is a requirement that schools report on post school destinations such as the number of students undertaking further study, training, or working. This information may be captured through student exit surveys/interviews or identified through planning of personalised learning strategies.

Student Destinations	University	VET	Apprenticeship/ Traineeship	Employment	Other
Year 10					
Year 11					
Year 12	0	0	0	0	5

School Survey Results

Note: under the Australian Education Regulation 2013 it is a requirement that schools report on parent, student and teacher satisfaction with the school, including (if applicable) data collated using the National School Opinion Survey.

Audited Financial Statements



2019-Audit-Rpt.pdf



2019-Audit-Mng-Ltr
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