

ANNUAL REPORT

2020

Maridahdi Early Childhood Community School Toowoomba



While reflecting on 2021, it was hard to get past Covid19 and how it dominated and changed our lives in ways that we could never have imagined. This report will speak to our community response and share some details of how we ensured the child and their well-being were placed at the centre of all decision making.

In 2020 we celebrated the opening of the Maridahdi Brisbane Primary School, Wynnum. Contributions from community members in both Toowoomba and Brisbane helped bring this new educational community to life. This new school had been a 5 year project, delayed for a term to support our ability to navigate the challenges that Covid presented.

We will always be grateful to so many who supported 'Bringing Maridahdi to Brisbane'! Already we are starting to see the benefits of having more than one space to play with our thinking.



Before speaking to the details of how 2020 looked, it's important to acknowledge our community.

1. **MCGC (Maridahdi Community Governing Council)**

Firstly, to all members of the Maridahdi Community Governing Council, thank you!! To Nat, Kirsten, Alisha, Alex, Dale and Steve, what a year to be a member of the governing council! Job keeper added a whole new set of questions and challenges!

2. **The Maridahdi Team (Teachers and Support Staff)**

The Maridahdi team were so up for the challenges that Covid presented. Their skill in navigating a constantly moving and changing environment was even more amazing given they were also dealing with how life looked for them and their families.

It's important to note that expectations of 'schools' looked very different to many other professions and organisations. Teachers, while not health care workers, were placed front and centre of the epidemic. From what we experienced and observed I feel that this really added to how 'big' the year was for many. We will always be grateful for your skill, courage and kindness during these times.

Teaching has increased in complexity over the years, 2020 really highlighted the shift for 'teachers' towards being more of a counsellor, a psychologist and social worker. For all those who were up for it, your contribution to supporting children and their family needs to be recognised. THANKYOU!

This increased burden on teachers needs to be supported as we move forward. In 2021 we are exploring ways of walking with team member while considering how 'training' can support them to meet the needs of our students and their families while prioritizing their own 'well-being'.

3. **Parents/Community**

Thank you to all the parents who walked with us throughout 2020! The shift in our daily reality presented opportunities to explore how we can guide children to navigate uncertainty. We know that for some families it presented as an opportunity to reconnect, while for others the uncertain times created times of high anxiety and stress.

Time spent in lock down was a great reminder of the importance of our daily 'check in' process. While we missed having parents in the space, sharing stories of what life looked like for them and their children, we were amazed with the variety of ways children, with support, maintained connection to Maridahdi and their learning.

This was all such a great learning opportunity for us. Unfortunately or fortunately, we felt just as we were getting our heads around it, we were back on site!



4. Learning at Home!

Parents were grateful and responsive to how we connected children to their 'learning' at home. Aligning the learning opportunities with key elements of the Maridahdi ethos supported us to keep the learning relevant and meaningful. Our focus to keep it 'hands on' was important, knowing that Covid was already increasing children's screen time.

To maximise the delivery of 'curriculum' at home we focused on the following:

(i) 'Feelings and Needs'

We knew that supporting children to navigate their emotions during lockdown was key if children were going to access learning possibilities while learning at home.

Including the list of emotions from Non-Violent Communication allowed parents to support children to navigate the emotional challenges that lockdown presented.

Encouraging families to 'check in' on a daily basis with each other provided continual opportunities for children to speak to what they were 'feeling' and 'needing'!

(ii) 'Learning Packs'

Our focus for curriculum delivery was to connect children to their learning in ways that they were familiar and comfortable with! We supported this process with the preparation and delivery to all students of materials and resources that were familiar to them.

An interesting mix of arts, science and mathematical materials were offered to support children to design their own learning experiences, both inside and outside their home, covering all curriculum areas.

(iii) Curriculum Delivery

All spaces explored using technology to support curriculum delivery. Some of the teams used zoom to encourage and support children's connection to their peers. Others prepared short presentations to cover specific skills that were to be targeted in a week, while the introduction of personal email

addresses for all students supported opportunities for more individualised, tailored learning.

5. **Unpacking ‘Leadership’!**

2020 presented an opportunity for Maridahdi to explore leadership and how we could make it look more reflective of the Maridahdi Ethos.

Business Manager

The role of **Business Manager** grew to respond to the increasing complexity of governance and compliance. Kirsten’s work in this role has been outstanding! To Kirsten and members of her admin team THANKYOU!

Curriculum

With the change in legislation in 2018, and in response to the Alice Springs Declaration (Mparntwe) we introduced a curriculum role to support curriculum development and delivery.

Child Advocacy

The Maridahdi Ethos supports children to have a voice. This role has presented children with an opportunity to ‘connect in’ and share with an adult what they are thinking and feeling.

These conversations have directly supported children to connect to self and their learning.

As we move forward we are keen to develop this role further.

Parenting

As we move forward we are keen to support the role of ‘parenting’. We have played with this before and know that parents are keen to connect and share about their parenting.

Research is showing a shift towards ‘permissive’ parenting. While this has multiple components, what we are hearing from parents is they are keen to design an approach to parenting that reflects their beliefs and values, while continuing to play with boundaries and ensure children feel supported ‘emotionally’!

Space of Difference

This year we are beginning to have the conversations about a space to support difference. This conversation has been growing over time and in 2021 we are beginning to play with possibilities of how this space might look at Maridahdi.

The research is showing that 1/3 children are presenting with learning difficulties. The question is how do we support that?

'Diversity...The challenge of supporting diversity!'



6. COMMUNITIES



Maridahdi Toowoomba

The Maridahdi Community has supported the process of ‘Bringing Maridahdi to Brisbane’. For this we are grateful, but as we move forward we are keen to bring the focus back to Toowoomba, to respond to the needs of our local community.

The biggest challenge we are currently facing is around capacity. While enrolments are a component of this, learning spaces and the need for a variety of flexible spaces to support increased learning options is also presenting as a need i.e ‘Space of Difference’.

There is interest in building a Maridahdi High School, and strategically the governing council has been speaking to the acquisition of a bush block to support this process.

The intention is to over time move the middle years to this site. This would support the potential provision of childcare through to years 3 or 4, while addressing some of the challenges we currently have with limited space.

It is important to acknowledge here that this process will require a shared commitment from our community to support the financial viability of such a project. This is about uniting and mobilising community! Our story tells us that there is no better way to build community!

Thank you!

Louis Bradfield

Principal/Founder

MARIDAHDI

School Sector:

Independent

School's Address:

3-7 Bowtell Street Rangeville Toowoomba QLD 4350

Total Enrolments:

74

Year Levels Offered:

Kindy to Year 6

Co-educational or Single Sex:

Co-educational

Characteristics of the Student Body:

Prep: 8 Female 6 Male

Year 1: 3 Female 7 Male
Year 2: 6 Female 7 Male
Year 3: 5 Female 5 Male
Year 4: 4 Female 4 Male
Year 5: 5 Female 8 Male
Year 6: 3 Female 2 Male

Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction with the School

Satisfaction Data:

Maridahdi receives regular feedback from parents and encourages same. Maridahdi aims to be responsive rather than reactive.

A thank you card that was received:

Dear Kaye, Louis, Bridgette, Stacey, Michele, Mel and everyone on staff, whether teacher, support of admin, It says that it takes a whole village to teach a child.

Our family remembers a little boy coming to Maridahdi broken by a public education system. You all took him under your wing and gave him a home.

The [REDACTED] family will always be eternally grateful for this.

Love Emily, Ben, Kim, Dennis and Kat

"The Covid Packs helped us parents who had no idea, work with more ease. I feel grateful for the weekly zoom check ins with the teachers; and even the innovative group music and group choir over zoom, that was such a treat. It was a crazy time, however, Maridahdi again went above and beyond. Thank you so much for supporting us." Kate (parent)

"Thank you! To all the people past and present who have built this community. I will not name individuals because there has been so much work and sacrifice by so many people to make Maridahdi what it is. Our family first came to Maridahdi in 2008, so we have been lucky enough to witness the evolution of this incredible little school.

Thank you for your support, acceptance, friendship, and the opportunity for our children to just be. We will always be grateful for Maridahdi." Christine (parent)

Contact Person for Further Information:

The title of a school-based contact person for further information on the school and its policies.

Kirsten Dengler, Business Manager

School Income Broken Down by Funding Source

Please visit the My School website <http://www.myschool.edu.au/> for further information.

Staffing Information

Staff Composition, Including Indigenous Staff:

1 Full-Time Principal (including .4 teaching)

1 Full-Time Business Manager

2 Full-Time Teachers

1x 0.9 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teacher (with 0.1 Child Advocacy role)

3x 0.6 FTE Teachers

1x 0.3 FTE Curriculum Liaison Support Teacher

1x 0.4 FTE Teacher

3x Full-Time Support Staff (Teacher's Aides)

2x 0.8 FTE Support Staff

2x 0.6 FTE Support Staff

1x 0.5 FTE Support Staff

3x 0.4 FTE Support Staff

1x 0.8 FTE Administration

1x 0.2 FTE Administration

Consisting of 19 Female (1 Indigenous) and 4 Male Staff.

Qualifications of all Teachers:

Qualification	Either detail the number or the percentage of classroom teachers and school leaders at the school who hold this qualification
Doctorate or higher	0
Masters	0
Bachelor's degree	7
Diploma	3
Certificate	0

Expenditure on and Teacher Participation in Professional Development:

a) Teacher Participation in Professional Development

Description of PD activity	Number of teachers participating in activity
Ethos/Curriculum/Operations (23 & 24/1/2021)	8
Preparation for Remote Learning (15/4/2021)	8
Ethos/Curriculum (16 & 17/10/2021)	7
Total number of teachers participating in at least one activity in the program year	7

b) Expenditure on Professional Development

Total Number of Teachers	Total expenditure on teacher PD (As recorded in Financial Questionnaire)	Average expenditure on PD per teacher
8	\$6581	\$822
The total funds expended on teacher professional development in 2020.		\$6581 (not including wages for days attended outside of usual rostered days)
The proportion of the teaching staff involved in professional development activities during 2020.		%96
The major professional development initiatives were as follows: Ethos and curriculum development and preparation for remote learning for Term 2, 2020.		

Average staff attendance for the school, based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave periods of up to 5 days:

Maridahdi balances the wellbeing of its staff through a preference for teaching teams in every classroom. This allows for flexibility and consistency in the classroom when staff require personal leave. Maridahdi does not view staff absences as solely symptomatic of work dissatisfaction or unsatisfactory staff performance as Maridahdi understands that personal issues are not always able to be negotiated outside of work hours. Accordingly, Maridahdi does not publish this data.

Proportion of staff retained from the previous year:

Number of permanent staff at end of previous year	Number of these staff retained in the following year (the program year)	% Retention rate
21	20	95%
From the end of 2019 95% of staff were retained for the entire 2020 school year		

Key Student Outcomes

Average student attendance rate (%) for the whole school:

The average attendance rate for the whole school as a percentage in 2020 was 90%

Average student attendance rate for each year level:

Year levels	Average attendance rate for each year level as a percentage in 2019
Prep	90%
Year 1	89%
Year 4	88%
Year 4	91%
Year 5	91%
Year 6	89%

A description of how non-attendance is managed by the school:

All children are signed in every morning and signed out every afternoon by their parent/carer. All parents/carers are required to fill out a 'Note of Absence' after their child has been absent. Parents are also encouraged to phone in on the day their child is absent so their teacher can be notified. Long term non-attendance is managed by:

- Maridahdi identifies that an unsatisfactory absence exists.
- If there is no positive change to absenteeism after 14 days and there is no valid reason from parent/carer, a letter (letter 1) is sent by registered post and signed by the Principal.
- A meeting with parent/carer is arranged and if there is no change in absenteeism within 7 days another letter (letter 2) is sent by registered post and signed by the Principal.

If there is no change in the further 7 days enrolment is terminated, the matter is referred to child safety, and a final letter (letter 3) is sent to QPS (Queensland Police Services).

NAPLAN results for Years 3, 5 and 7 and 9 in 2020

Education ministers made the decision to cancel NAPLAN in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This means students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2020 did not undertake the assessment in 2020 and will not do a 'catch-up' test in 2021.