

The Ponds School

Annual Report



2018



5765

Introduction

The Annual Report for **2018** is provided to the community of The Ponds 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.

Leonie Donaldson

Principal

School contact details

The Ponds School
201 The Ponds Boulevard
The Ponds, 2769
www.theponds-s.schools.nsw.edu.au
theponds-s.school@det.nsw.edu.au
9629 2470

Message from the Principal

Welcome to The Ponds School 2018 Annual Report. Our current enrolment is 110 students, with 18 established classes and 1 temporary class. Our students range from Kindergarten to Year 10. In time our school will be K – 12. All students have a moderate or severe intellectual disability. Many of our students have complex needs such as: autism, challenging behaviours, physical disabilities and health care needs. Each student has a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) developed in collaboration with families and therapists and other key stakeholders, which works towards the achievement of person centred goals and outcomes from the K–10 syllabus. The Ponds is a Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) School and has established a Learning Support and Wellbeing team. All members of staff are committed to the Quality Teaching Framework and work collaboratively. We have a staff of 19 teachers, 4 Assistant Principals, 22 School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs – 19 substantive + 3 additional), 2 School Administration Officers, 1 School Administration Manager, 1 General Assistant, 1 Deputy Principal and a Principal. We currently have 5 teachers on leave, resulting in temporary teachers. We also have 1 SLSO on long term Workers Compensation. During 2018 our Deputy Principal gained a Principal position, Anne Bennett gained the Position of Deputy Principal, Alicia Stroud gained the position of Assistant Principal, two teachers gained transfers to other schools and Agul Deng gained a School Learning Support Officer position.

Students travel to school from a wide geographical area. Due to the diverse geographical areas that our school community call home, building strong relationships with our school community is a priority.

The relationships which are formed within our school community are integral to the education of our students. By bringing families in, we enable them to develop strong partnerships within the school, which in turn enables teachers and parents/caregivers to work together in the best interests of the students who attend our school. Parents form relationships, providing support to each other and connecting them to our school community, and to the services available for families with children with special needs. Our school community engages in a range of ways and is continually developing programs to assist in the development of our students and their families, demonstrating our strategic use of facilities and opening our school to use our facilities to benefit our students, families and the community itself. Currently, the following community groups hire our facilities: Advantage Aquatics, Salvation Army Rouse Hill – CSC, Pete McDonald's Music Therapy classes and Rainbow Swimming Club. PODD training and Key Word Signing courses were held using the school facilities.

Beyond this, relationships developed externally to the school continue to benefit the education of our students. By working with other schools in our network, such as Riverstone PS, Riverbank PS, John Palmer PS and The Ponds High School, students have opportunities beyond our school borders to develop academically, socially and emotionally. Our teaching and non-teaching staff proactively seek to improve their performance by working collaboratively within and across settings, Learning Communities and Networks that support their performance development and that of others to monitor performance. Partnerships with local businesses allows our broader community to see what we do and how they can help. Our Special Events also include our greater school community, particularly our partner schools and parent

body, which continues the development of the relationships we are building and the ripples we are creating beyond our own school borders. The school engages in strong collaboration between parents, students and the community that inform and support continuity of learning for all students at transition points. These effective partnerships in learning mean the whole school community demonstrates aspirational expectations of learning progress and achievement for all students and to focus on their ability as individuals.

Parents are an integral part of The Ponds Community. Our parent body run a charity which supports the school – Making it Happen – for children with disabilities inc. The charity supports the school by running special events to raise funds which have been used by the school to purchase technology and playground equipment. The Salvation Army Rouse Hill-CSC support our parents. Run by one of our own parents, this group supports our parent body with a Tribe Parent support group, a weekly bread and baked goods drive, and Kids in the Kitchen where families and children come together with volunteers to cook a meal on Friday afternoons in our school hall. Parents are involved in regular information meetings and workshops covering topics such as NDIS, behaviour and communication, nutrition, wellbeing and external organisations who provide services for our students.

The Ponds School has strong partnerships with local schools and other organisations within the community. We partner with The Ponds High School and Pacific Hills Christian School, and regularly invite students from these schools to partner with us for school based activities. Relationships between students are continually being developed, to the benefit of all. We partner with Wiggles and Giggles Pre-School with students from both schools sending letters and visiting during community access. Local businesses also support our school in the way of donations via TAG Charity Golf Days and community service days where staff help out around our school, as well as via donations of items to be used during classroom programs and special activity days. We support University and TAFE students in placements, assisting in developing their skills in their chosen field of study and enhancing the one to one interactions with our students. Fostering strong community partnerships such as these is a strength of The Ponds School and benefit our whole school community in developing skills and supporting each other to be the best we can be.

The students at The Ponds School have opportunities to be involved in a wide range of extracurricular activities. Selected students and classes are involved in integration across the school or with local schools covering areas such as social wellbeing, English, mathematics or STEM. There is a strong multicultural and Aboriginal focus, involving the wider community and parent body where possible in these events. Students can join The Ponds Possums Dance Group or the Signing Choir. Both these groups perform within the school and in the community regularly. During 2018 they performed at TAG Golf Day, Education Week at Castle Towers, Hills Performing Arts Festival, Ridges Festival of the Arts, Blacktown Council's International Day for People with a Disability, our playground opening and Carols at The Ponds School. All extracurricular activities support the social and emotional development of our students and allow them to participate in activities on the same basis as their peers. The Ponds School held an Athletics Carnival, Swimming Carnival, and a MOVE Colour Run. Selected students participated in our first school camp, Swim School, sailing and Christmas parties. Our students were audience members at The Invictus Games and Schools Spectacular.

The Ponds School are active members of the Blacktown Learning Community, Blacktown Area Primary Principals' Association, Blacktown Area Special Education Network (BASEN), and Special Education Principal and Leaders Association (SEPLA). Staff regularly attend the BASEN meetings to share professional knowledge with other special education teachers. Our Wellbeing journey and STEM were shared with the SEPLA Conference attendees in 2018, delivering engaging and relevant professional learning across the network and sharing our knowledge and skills with others. Our school is involved with the Live Life Well @ school initiatives, attending and hosting professional development workshops across the network.

Special events are an integral part of the calendar at The Ponds School. Students and parents are regularly involved in events such as; Harmony Day, Easter Fun Day, NAIDOC, Diwali, Zoomobile, Science Week, Education Week, Fire Brigade visits and Book Week Parade. We raised money for the following charities: Do Something Day, Heart Day, Gold Coin for a Farmer and Epilepsy day. We celebrate the achievements of our students each term at our Amazing Achievers, Positive Behaviour for Learning Assemblies and at our Celebration Assembly. Making it Happen – for children with disabilities inc. hosts events such as Mother's Day/Father's Day stalls, Carols and Twilight Markets. All these events serve to bring the school together to support student learning and inclusion.

On the 25th October, The Ponds School completed the External Validation (EV) process, which saw the Executive all work collaboratively and build the body of evidence that we presented to the Principal Leadership Support and Peer Principal. During the process I saw all of the EV team members shine in different areas of knowledge and capabilities. The External Validation process provided opportunities to increase our knowledge of the School Excellence Framework and we now have a deep understanding of our School Plan and how each Strategic Direction comes together. Our School Plan is the focus of our efforts for student and staff growth and continual improvement. All Executive have successfully demonstrated their leadership capabilities throughout this process. As a school we have embraced the opportunity to take part in the External Validation process.

2018 saw the culmination of many years of fundraising come to fruition with the construction of our accessible playground. We give a huge thank you to our community and especially to: Blacktown The Ponds Lions Club, Variety the Children's Charity, The Primary Club, TAG Financial, Wiggles and Giggles and Making it Happen – for children with

disabilities inc. who contributed greatly to making this dream become a reality. By working towards expanding the outdoor learning areas by including an accessible playground, we aim to improve student outcomes in the following areas:

- Social Skills: students will learn to take turns, develop relationships, share, initiate activities with others, be able to self-regulate and understand emotions.
- Communication: students will request activities independently, comment, make choices, describe experiences and the environment, and express feelings.
- Life Skills: enhance skills such as decision making, assessing risks, being safe, understanding cause and consequences, following instructions, self-care and awareness of time and pre-vocational work.
- Physical Development: supporting both gross and fine motor skills, develop muscle tone and physical skills e.g. climbing up and down stairs.
- Sensory: it can help regulate sensory processing and develop touch, smell, hearing, sight and taste.
- Science: such as the various states of matter, textures, principals of physics such as gravity, motion and resistance, understanding weather and seasons.

Professional Learning has been strongly supported to build the capacity of our leaders and teachers to enhance the learning outcomes of our students. Throughout the year the staff continued to work collaboratively to develop and refine quality educational programs. The school has continued to work on the three Strategic Directions, which are: To prepare students to be lifelong learners that contribute to the community now and in the future; Create highly skilled, strong, resilient and confident 21st Century thinking staff; and creating a shared conversation about learning to drive continuous improvements. These directions are underpinned by The Ponds School motto of Believe Learn Achieve.

Our Mission Vision Statement is a declaration and aspirational description of what The Ponds School Community does and why.

"The Ponds School provides quality individualised and meaningful education in a safe and caring environment. The Ponds School supports families, encourages independence and assists students to become valued members of the community now and into the future."

Message from the school community

During 2018 Making It Happen – for children with disabilities inc. helped to provide funding and community support to The Ponds School. The charity has continued to support the students with building social skills and independence. We have used the Mother's Day and Father's day stalls to help the students learn about choices and shopping. We are looking forward to helping the students and school community with further fundraising and learning opportunities. A successful Market and inclusive Carols event was held late in 2018 in association with CSC Salvation Army and Hills Musical Theatre Company. Funds in the last few years have gone towards funding the fantastic inclusive playground.

Project CSC is an initiative of The Salvation Army Rouse Hill. CSC stands for Connect, Support, Community and aims to support families of children with medically complex or additional needs in various ways. For 2018 within The Ponds School community we have been able to:

- Provide meals at short notice – approx. 100 meals provided to families.
- Baked goods have been packed and supplied to over 35 families per week, in partnership with school parents packing the bags, meaning over 100 people per week are supported with baked items.
- Initial hospital cafe support: 15 X \$20 vouchers for meals and refreshments given to families attending Westmead Children's Hospital.
- Chemist Support: \$200 given to subsidise non-PBS medications or medical equipment not supplied.
- Transport Support: 10 families assisted in emergency situations:
- Operated our first year of families in the kitchen with 8 families each term on average 38 attending plus 12 volunteers.
- Created an opportunity for parents to connect within "Tribe Parents" weekly.
- Held a number of sensory holiday activity days for families to attend.
- Held a High Tea and pampering morning during Carers' Week
- Partnered for our Inclusive Carols Event with other community groups and seeing 2000 people throughout the day and 800 during the carols.

School background

School vision statement

The Ponds School provides quality individualised and meaningful education in a safe and caring environment. The Ponds School supports families, encourages independence and assists students to become valued members of the community now and in the future.

School context

The Ponds School is a purpose built School for Specific Purposes located in The Ponds. The school has an enrolment of 110 students ranging from K– 10 and will eventually be K–12. All students have a moderate or severe intellectual disability. Many of our students have complex needs such as: autism, challenging behaviours, physical disabilities and health care needs. Each student has an Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) developed in collaboration with families and therapists and other key stakeholders, which works towards the achievement of person centred goals and outcomes from the K–10 syllabus. The Ponds is a Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) school and has established a Learning Support and Wellbeing team. All members of staff are committed to Visible Learning and the Quality Teaching Framework and work collaboratively to deliver individualised and meaningful education in a safe and caring environment. The Ponds School supports families, encourages independence and assists students to become valued members of the community now and in the future.

Currently, the school has 18 permanently established classes and one temporary class.

Students travel to school from a wide geographical area. Due to the diverse geographical areas that our school community call home, building strong relationships with our school community is a priority.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

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 and participated in an external validation. 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. During the external validation process, an independent panel of peer principals considered our evidence and assessment of the school's progress, aligned with the standards articulated in the School Excellence Framework.

The results of this process indicated the following in the domains of learning, teaching and leading.

Learning

The results of the External Validation process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Learning:

Our balanced judgement indicates we are **Sustaining and Growing**. We are excelling in the elements of; Learning Culture, Wellbeing, Curriculum and Reporting. We are Sustaining and Growing in the elements of; assessment and student performance measures.

The learning culture of The Ponds School shows high expectations amongst the staff and with parents, students and the community, ensuring all students have a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP). These PLPs are developed using a person centred planning approach and in collaboration with parents/carers, therapists and key stakeholders. Our learning culture demonstrates aspirational expectations and achievement for all students. This occurs by always looking towards the next environment or transition point in our students' lives, with a focus on life skills and students learning in the most appropriate setting, which often includes the community. At times, students require a wraparound approach and complex case meetings, return to full time attendance, and plans for continuity of learning and shared enrolment with The Hospital School, Westmead needs to occur.

Wellbeing is planned and strategic at The Ponds School and as research has shown there is a direct link between staff and student wellbeing and the achievement of students. Staff wellbeing surveys are completed and evaluated regularly. We have a whole school approach to Positive Behaviour for Learning, which includes the strategies of individual reinforcement schedules, key people, engineering the environment, developing Behaviour Support Plans, Crisis Management Plans and collecting data on major incidents. The Ponds School has introduced So Safe to develop the

social skills of our students. Wellbeing is a focus at The Ponds School so students can connect, succeed, thrive and learn.

A strong literacy and numeracy curriculum and practice has been inherent at The Ponds School. Currently, whole school assessment has been gained using SWANS (Literacy, Numeracy and Communication) and a whole school data wall has been formed. Teachers program collaboratively and differentiate the curriculum to suit individual student needs. Teachers use learning intentions and Bump Up Walls to make learning visible. Integration for our students at schools close by has increased their knowledge of STEM and improved their communication and social skills. The Ponds School has a Signing Choir and an Aboriginal Dance group called "The Ponds Possums". These groups perform at our weekly assemblies and at performing arts festivals. Assessment takes many forms at The Ponds School. We celebrate student achievement by presenting a range of awards in line with our PBL goals of Learning, Being Safe and Caring.

Reporting on learning occurs formally twice a year and informally daily. Semester reports have been developed in collaboration with the staff and parents/carers. Reports are clear and accurate and provide information about progress and achievements. PLPs are developed at the beginning of each year and reviewed at least once a semester. Communication with parents is regular and takes many forms through; fortnightly newsletters, class photos journals, class Dojo, phone calls, emails, communication books, the school website and Facebook page, and notes home.

We assess our students' performance in a range of ways that are appropriate to their individual needs. SWANs data will assist us to report and form classes. PLPs have recently been modified to include three goals. As our students move into the high school years, the focus will be on life skills, increasing the number of environments our students access, transitioning, integrating and increasing community access.

Teaching

The results of the External Validation process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Teaching:

Our balanced judgement indicates we are **Sustaining and Growing**. We are excelling in the element of: Learning and Development . We are Sustaining and Growing in the elements of; Effective Classroom Practice, Data Skills and Use, and Professional Standards.

The basis of effective classroom practice at The Ponds School is being able to know your students, have well planned lessons, use a range of explicit teaching methods, differentiate, engineer the environment, gain feedback, make accommodations and adjustments, and have good classroom management procedures in place. Using the principles of Visible Learning (including learning intentions and Bump Up Walls) and the PBL classroom systems, Behaviour Support Plans and clear expectations, students know what is expected of them and what to do to achieve their goals. Programming collaboratively is an embedded procedure at The Ponds School. This allows teachers to work smarter, not harder. In regards to effective classroom practice, The Ponds School is innovative in its approach by trialling programs such as TEACCH, So Safe, MOVE and STEM.

The Ponds School uses a wide variety of data to capture the information needed for a range of uses. Data is gained on accidents and injuries, major and minor behavioural incidents and is used to inform the writing and updating of Behaviour Support Plans. SWAN assessment data was moderated and used to create our Data Wall and group like students together. This information will be used to form classes. Each and every goal from student PLPs is SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound. Along with the Bump Up Walls, students can view their achievements. Staff complete surveys on Wellbeing, achievements, and class and teaching information for the staffing and formation of classes. Parents and carers are invited to join focus groups to provide feedback and evaluate areas such as: reporting, assessment and the School Plan. This then leads to changes being made in line with the data being gained.

Professional Standards at The Ponds School begin with all staff developing a Performance Development Plan on an annual basis and having their collegial team leader mentor and/or coach them through this process of reflection and improvement. Accreditation is now a focus for all teachers. We have Beginning Teachers gaining proficient, teachers maintaining and teachers looking towards completing Highly Accomplished and Lead. Due to this factor, we have created an opportunity for an accreditation mentor one day a week. This teacher also registers Professional Learning with NSW Education Standard Authority (NESA). The structure of our school provides coaching and mentoring opportunities for all staff.

Professional Learning is aligned with the School Plan. This year Visible Learning and assessment is our PL focus due to Strategic Direction 3 of our School Plan being; Creating a shared conversation about learning to drive continuous improvement. The QTSS staffing allocation has allowed the Assistant Principals to form collaborative practices with the teachers in their teams, team teach, provide quality feedback, participate in Quality Teaching Rounds and watch others teach. The development of our Skill Sharing Wall encourages staff to share their expertise with others.

Leading

The results of the External Validation process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Leading:

Our balanced judgement indicates we are **Excelling**. We are excelling in the elements of: Educational Leadership, School Planning, Implementation and Reporting, School Resources, and Management Practices and Processes.

Our priority for the current school strategic planning cycle is to ensure that the School Plan is the core of our continuous improvement efforts. The Ponds School culture is one of high expectations for all and community engagement. All members of The Ponds School Executive are instructional leaders and have great impact on teachers, which leads to sustained and measurable whole school improvement and students progressing and achieving. We have received letters of affirmation from our school community and been invited to present PL at a variety of schools and at the Special Education Principals and Leaders Association (SEPLA) Conference.

Our Strategic Directions of: creating a shared conversation about learning to drive continuous improvement and create a highly skilled, strong, resilient and confident 21st Century thinking staff, are the core of our continuous improvement. Our School Plan in general is now a working document that the Executive refer to and has become far more relevant to staff. Staff understand their role in implementation and meeting the school's improvement measures as there are clear processes and timelines in place, which are reflected in the School Plan milestones. The School Report reflects the focus of the School Plan and contains the impact that can be measured.

An above establishment class was created at the beginning of Term 2, taking into account student and staff needs and the available expertise. A Wellbeing class was established and students were able to opt-in. We are currently evaluating the effectiveness of this class. The management of a new school with great facilities, including a hydrotherapy pool, library, special purpose room (kitchen) an all-purpose space (hall), a bike track, oval and all accessible playground means that students can learn in a variety of different areas within the school. This prepares students for community access. Having a purpose built school also allows the community to use the facilities and thus ensure the community is part of the school. The payments that the community users make assist with the fiscal management of the school.

Administrative and management practices, procedures and processes are in place to plan and implement the budget and monitor effectiveness. School community feedback is sought and taken into consideration when working towards improving service delivery. The whole school community was able to provide feedback when the start time of the school day was changed and support the day-to-day operations of a complex yet dynamic school.

The External Validation process has provided The Ponds School with the opportunity to self-access, know where we are and what is required to make achievements happen, collect data and evidence, and align our practice with the School Excellence Framework.

Our self-assessment and the external validation process will assist the school to refine our school plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability/sef-evidence-guide>

Strategic Direction 1

To prepare our students to be life long learners that contribute to their community now and in the future

Purpose

Students will develop life skills that can be generalised to a range of environments allowing a greater level of independence and contribution to their community now and in the future.

Overall summary of progress

The Ponds School is committed to preparing students for life by equipping them with the necessary skills to become contributing members of the community. By building positive relationships with students, staff members were able to identify individual strengths and interests and encourage independence and self-belief. Programs addressed cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities by incorporating a variety of meaningful and relevant learning experiences for students to develop their understanding, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours. Students have been involved in a range of programs, which focus on their learning for life, including washing dishes, laundry, cooking, recycling, gardening, delivery of notes/supplies, bus/car washing and a canteen program. Tasks were broken down into a sequence of small steps, which students learn through modelling and guided practise. We have investigated the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) program in partnership with other SSP schools, and have purchased modules, which will be linked to the NSW syllabus outcomes to be implemented in 2019. Selected students attended an overnight camp at Teen Ranch during Term 3, which was a testament to their growing independence and confidence. Staff also implemented the So Safe program throughout 2018. In Term 1, teachers attended in school professional learning and collaborative planning sessions to develop a program suited to the needs of the students in their class. Programs were then implemented throughout 2018 and will continue to be a focus in 2019.

Community Access forms an integral part of the program at The Ponds School. It provides many students with rich educational opportunities to apply existing skills and develop new skills as they extend their learning beyond the classroom. Students practise their Literacy and Numeracy skills, develop their social and communication skills, strengthen their fundamental movement skills/ gross motor skills and learn about safety in the community and safe travel. They visit a range of exciting community settings including parks, shopping centres, fitness centres and cultural centres under the guidance of school staff members and qualified volunteers. Excursions are tailored to meet the needs of students and are planned well in advance in consultation with the school Principal. Staff members are diligent about conducting risk assessments, booking school buses, arranging to use public transport and providing parents/carers with the necessary information to gain their trust and consent prior to excursions. SES timetables were developed and modified to meet the ever changing needs of the students in the school and to support student learning in the classroom, school environments and in the community.

There was a focus on improving student Personalised Learning Plan Goals during 2018. Each student had 3 goals, which were in line with the School's PBL goals. Parents and teachers collaboratively planned student personalised learning goals, meeting twice during the year to plan and then review the PLPs. Each student had a Safe and Caring goal, a Valued Member of the Community goal and a Lifelong Learner goal. Staff worked throughout the year to teach students the skills required to meet these goals. 59% of students received an Amazing Achiever Award during 2018, indicating they had achieved at least one of their PLP goals. Complex Case Meetings were conducted in collaboration with the School Councillor and the Learning Support Team to assist in improving the educational outcomes for students with complex needs and who needed additional support.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
By the end of the three-year plan all students will increase their range of life skills.	ASDAN Purchases \$1500	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ADSDAN programs purchasedScope and Sequence developed for ASDAN programs
By the end of the three-year plan 80% of students will be able to generalise life skills to a range of school and community environments.	ASDAN Professional Learning Amazing Achiever Ribbons \$700	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Professional Learning planned for Term 1 2019Community Access programs were implemented across an increased number of classrooms59% of students achieved Amazing Achievers awards
By the end of the three-year plan all students will demonstrate a	Link and Integration	

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<p>greater level of independence across environments.</p> <p>By the end of the three-year plan students will learn a range of strategies to regulate their own behaviour.</p>	Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADSDAN programs purchased • Scope and Sequence developed for ASDAN programs • Professional Learning planned for Term 1 2019 • Community Access programs were implemented across an increased number of classrooms • 59% of students achieved Amazing Achievers awards

Next Steps

In 2019, our high school students will be involved in choosing Electives. 6 classes will be involved and each student will participate in 4 electives across the year in mixed groupings. Our high school students will again attend camp. More students will participate in Community Access programs with the support of additional SES funding. Staff will be involved in Professional Learning around the ASDAN Programs and our new programming proforma, and how to implement a variety of life skills programs across their classrooms. Parents will be invited to a Mini-Expo in Term 3 to explore Post School Options programs and will have the chance to visit some of these centres. Our year 10 students and their families will do Transition Meetings with the Itinerant Support Teacher Transition for the first time. Staff will continue to work closely with parents to support students learning across all KLA areas and to work towards achieving PLP goals.



Strategic Direction 2

Create highly skilled, strong, resilient and confident 21st Century thinking staff

Purpose

The school will develop accreditation policies, procedures and roles to support staff in developing PDPs that align with the school plan and assist staff to build their capacity through engaging with the accreditation process.

Overall summary of progress

Ongoing school wide continual improvement was a fundamental component of The Ponds School vision and ensured student outcomes were reached and lifelong learning was taking place. There was a continued culture of high performance and high expectations as well as a commitment to providing all staff with opportunities for growth and development. Performance Development Plans (PDPs) for teachers were aligned to the Australian Professional Teaching Standards, and Professional Learning (PL) linked directly to goals outlined by staff through their PDPs. All non-teaching staff also completed PDPs and identified numerous goals for professional development.

Members of the Executive team have received professional learning in capacity building, mentoring and coaching. Through mentoring and coaching all staff are supported to build their capacity by engaging in professional dialogue, collaboration and classroom observations.

The Ponds School continued to deliver high quality teaching and instructional leadership across the school and the wider network. The school is renowned for its innovative practices and effective teaching strategies, with many local schools sending staff to visit classrooms and observe our teaching and learning. The school is recognised as a centre of excellence with a number of staff at The Ponds School being invited to present at the SEPLA (Special Education Principals and Leaders Association) Conference 2018.

Teaching programs were collected each term by Collegiate Support Leaders who provided written and verbal feedback. Classroom observations occurred frequently to provide support in areas including, but not limited to, behaviour management, lesson delivery, communication and differentiation. Collegiate Support Teams (CST) met weekly to discuss programming, resources, student concerns and wellbeing. Informal mentoring relationships were forged by the Executive team connecting beginning teacher staff with more experienced staff to share knowledge and skills. An initiative to further enhance mentoring is having all staff document something they wish to learn and linking them with colleagues that are able to upskill and share their expertise in various areas. Quality Teaching Rounds continued to be implemented at The Ponds School, which encouraged peer dialogue, and allowed for mentoring and coaching to occur in a positive and supportive manner. Team teaching occurred frequently in all classrooms with teachers and School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs) working collaboratively to achieve understanding of purpose and enhance student learning outcomes. The Ponds School continues to pride itself on having an open door policy and sharing skills and expertise amongst staff.

The Ponds School staff are supported through the accreditation process. One staff member successfully received their Accreditation at Proficient Level with the support of their Collegiate Support Leader, whilst another staff member commenced their journey working towards recognition at Highly Accomplished status. Assistant Principals were able to utilise Quality Teaching Supporting Students (QTSS) funding to provide additional support to teachers. This time was focused on instructional leadership and continual improvement to enhance student learning outcomes.

As 2018 welcomed pre-2004 teachers to their accreditation journey, The Ponds School recognised the need to have an Accreditation Mentor Position to support all staff through the accreditation process. This saw school based Professional Learning NESA recognised, which was a first for The Ponds School. As a result, many staff achieved hours at Proficient level for their maintenance cycle. A survey was conducted to gain information on all staff so executive staff were aware of their status and end periods for their accreditation journey. This ensured all teachers were being supported appropriately and in a timely manner.

Collaboration between colleagues has been consistently highly valued and has built a culture of high performance as well as ongoing, school wide improvement. Each term teachers were provided with a collaborative planning day to develop programs and evaluate and reflect on previous programming. The whole school staff met weekly to share information on individual students, whole school events, changes occurring to the school day and systems being implemented.

Professional Learning and Collaboration at The Ponds School was aimed at building staff capacity to improve student outcomes. Teachers attended Professional Learning weekly on site, which began our Visible Learning and Preparing for Life journey. Professional Learning was aligned with the School Plan and strategic directions, ensuring we are preparing

Progress towards achieving improvement measures		
Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Performance Development Plan (PDP) goals will identify specific areas of Professional Learning to develop skills and knowledge to increase student access and engagement to curriculum and improve student outcomes. School procedures in place to guide and track accreditation across the school Teachers will align their skills and knowledge with the teaching standards and track their improvement over the three year planning cycle Professional Learning will be aligned with the teaching standards and NESA registered when appropriate.	Professional Learning Funding \$29360 QTSS Beginning Teachers \$8328	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of executive staff presented at SEPLA • Professional Learning for Visible Learning and Preparing for Life were recognised as NESA registered • A staff member commenced Highly Accomplished status in their teacher accreditation • A staff member achieved proficient status for their accreditation • PDPs continued for teaching and non-teaching staff, identifying at least three goals

Next Steps

The Ponds School will continue its culture of being a supportive and positive environment through the:

- implementation of the Department's 'Strong Start, Great Teachers' resource
- development of a 'Buddy Program';
- development of a Formalised School Induction Program;
- provision of additional Release From Face to Face Teaching for all Beginning Teachers and teachers new to The Ponds School to support Professional Learning and the development of resources;
- development of NESA registered Professional Learning to support the maintenance of teachers at Proficient Level Accreditation;
- continuation of a school funded Accreditation Mentor to support teachers achieving higher levels of Accreditation;
- provision of Professional Learning on Mindfulness for staff;
- provision of Professional Learning on Trauma Informed Practice and Challenging Behaviour;
- employment of therapists to support student learning and behaviour management;
- investigation of the employment of a Community Liaison Officer to help parents connect with NDIS, therapists and other services;
- provision of Professional Learning for staff on how to deal with questions, feedback, complaints and compliments from parents and the community (how to have those tricky conversations);
- access to a counsellor through EAPS to support Beginning Teachers, provide coaching and mentoring, debrief critical incidents; and
- implementation of additional strategies to support communication between the school and parent/carers (including 'Community Fun Nights', 'Tea and Tim Tam' information mornings, 'Open Classroom' mornings, 'Good News' phone calls, consistent home/school communication strategies and proformas).

Strategic Direction 3

Creating a shared conversation about learning to drive continuous improvement

Purpose

Staff

will understand and use a range of assessment strategies as an integral part of daily classroom instruction.

To

develop school wide assessment tools and practices that can be used systematically and reliably to identify and analyse student progress.

Students

and parents will understand the assessment approaches used in the school and the benefits for learning.

To develop school processes

to support consistent, evidence – based judgements.

Overall summary of progress

Commitment to innovation, continuous improvement, capacity building and ensuring our students become "valued members of the community now and in the future" drives everything we do at The Ponds School. This has led us to actively seek out research and invest in Professional Learning opportunities that assist us in identifying the very best research-based assessment and reporting strategies for our school.

In capturing school data, we have selected the Students with Additional Needs (SWANs) assessment, reporting and planning tool; an online tool developed by The University of Melbourne's Assessment Research Centre. This assessment tool guides teachers as they collect reliable evidence with which to identify the current level of skill and understanding of their students. It provides the school with meaningful achievement data with which to identify and respond to trends, evaluate student learning over time and implement change which leads to measureable improvement.

Hattie's Visible Learning has guided us in developing a school-wide Data Wall, with which to analyse student progress and achievement data. We have implemented 'Bump Up Walls' to support the assessment of our students Personalised Learning Plans, which aim to make assessment an integral part of daily instruction and guide our feedback to students. The use of learning intentions and success criteria has also guided us in improving our program development and reporting, through differentiation of learning goals and assessment.

Through focussing on 'creating a shared conversation about learning', The Ponds School has been able to identify meaningful assessment tools and strategies and develop school-wide systems to collect valid data on student learning. We are able to reliably identify and track our student's learning longitudinally. This aids in identifying school trends, informs school planning and ensures continuous improvement so that we can get the very best learning outcomes for each and every one of our students. All staff at The Ponds School are able to identify and articulate progress for each and every one of our students; ensuring that every student at The Ponds School is truly 'known, valued and cared for'.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
The collection and analysis of whole school data. Identification and systematic use of a range of appropriate assessment tools and practices All class programs and PLPs will	SWANs Subscription \$297 Visible Learning PL \$1400 36 casual teacher release days for Collaborative Programming QTSS for Team Teaching	• We have implemented the SWANs assessment tool to capture student and school data in the areas of Literacy, Numeracy and Communication. School processes and procedures that support this have been the delivery of Professional Learning around the tool and the provision of time within the Professional Learning Calendar for teachers to complete and moderate the assessment twice per year. Results are tracked and progressively

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<p>include differentiated assessment in the form of learning intentions.</p> <p>All programs will include a range of appropriate assessment evidence collected fortnightly at a minimum.</p> <p>To develop a range of school developed assessment rubrics targeting life skills across environments.</p> <p>For reports to clearly identify student progress.</p>	and classroom supervision	<p>measured through the whole school Data Wall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Class has developed their own Bump Up Walls to assess, evaluate and track the progress of student's against their Personalised Learning plan goals. This feeds directly into Semester one and two Reports. • In Term 3 we delivered school developed registered Professional Learning focussed on assessment of Life Skills. This involved teachers learning to use task analysis and Visible Learning to support the programming and assessment of Life Skills programs across the school. • In Term 4 we delivered school developed Registered Professional Learning to support teachers in writing Learning Goals and Intentions to improve differentiation, assessment and reporting. We implemented a school-wide programming proforma in response to teacher feedback and support programming, assessment and reporting.

Next Steps

The Ponds School will continue to ensure improvements in programming, reporting and assessment through the:

- development of Bump Up Walls to support assessment and reporting on student's Personalised Learning Plans;
- development of Parent Support Resources on being a part of 'Developing Your Child's Personalised Learning Plan';
- continued use of SWANs to identify and respond to trends, evaluate student learning over time and implement change;
- review and refinement of School Assessment and Reporting Procedures in line with Department Policy and to support the implementation of Visible Learning; and
- continuation of Professional Learning on Visible Learning to support programming, assessment and reporting through collaborative programming, team teaching opportunities, supervisor observations and peer/to peer observations.



Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	\$8067	A range of events were funded through the Aboriginal background loading. These included; NAIDOC, Smoking Ceremonies, inviting Aboriginal Elders to the school, presentation from a National Parks and Wildlife Officer and purchasing Aboriginal artefacts such as tools, musical instruments, books and fabric.
English language proficiency	\$26152	Additional support was provided through employing a casual School Learning Support Officer to support students. A range of resources were purchased to assist in teaching and motivating students' English capabilities. These included; site licences for Reading A-Z, Reading Eggs, Clicker 7, books and library resources.
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	Teacher relief 0.464 FTE position	QTSS has continued to provide the Assistant Principals additional release from face-to-face teaching time to mentor and work with the teachers in their Collegiate Support Teams. This has included time spent in classrooms, observing and team teaching, support with planning and programming, support with parent meetings and time to develop shared resources.
Socio-economic background	\$39175	Providing student assistance support to families who were unable to pay for uniforms, excursions, incursions, and extra curricular activities. Additional support was provided through employing a casual School Learning Support Officer to support students. Funds supported the purchase of additional resources such as; hydrotherapy equipment, slings, colour run powder, covered foam shapes, gym mats, paint, iPad cases, books, wonder wall and switch adapted and sensory resources.
Support for beginning teachers	\$8328	In 2018 we had two beginning teachers in their second year of receiving Beginning Teacher Funding. These funds were used flexibly by beginning teachers to support attendance at Professional Learning, provide additional release from face-to-face teaching for planning, programming and development of resources, and to provide additional release for teacher mentors to work with beginning teachers on identified areas of need.
Targeted student support for refugees and new arrivals	\$365	Additional support was provided through employing a casual School Learning Support Officer for three days to support communication.

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2015	2016	2017	2018
Boys	62	70	74	77
Girls	35	40	38	35

Management of non-attendance

Average student attendance continues to be high at 86.75%. Some contributing factors to student absences include: students with complex medical conditions and a number of students taking extended leave to visit relatives overseas.

The Ponds School follows Department of Education and school procedures and seeks advice from parents regarding absences. The Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) checks attendance of those students with less than an 80% attendance rate regularly and is consulted when a need arises.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Deputy Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	4
Classroom Teacher(s)	17.18
Teacher Librarian	0.6
School Administration and Support Staff	21.96

*Full Time Equivalent

In 2018 no staff at The Ponds School identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Teacher qualifications

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

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	65

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

In 2018 all pre-2004 teachers were accredited at Proficient level. The Ponds School introduced an Accreditation Mentor position that supported all staff through the accreditation process. This person ensured some of our school based Professional Learning was NESA accredited, supporting staff to reach their required amount of hours for their maintenance cycle. A survey was conducted to gain information about where all staff are on their accreditation journey, ensuring they are being supported appropriately and in a timely manner.

During 2018 we had one teacher complete their accreditation at Proficient level and one teacher commence their accreditation at Highly Accomplished level. The Ponds School has four teachers at Provisional level working towards their Proficient status, and twenty teaching and executive staff maintaining their accreditation at Proficient level.

The Ponds School had two professional learning courses registered through NESA, including Visible Learning and Preparing for Life. We also had our Term 4 Staff Development Day NESA registered, where all executive, teaching staff and school learning support officers were able to access a range of post school organisations for people with disabilities and commence planning for successful transition to similar services for our students. Having these professional learning activities NESA registered continued to recognise the quality training we provide for our staff.

All staff completed Performance Development Plans in 2018. Classroom teachers gained a leadership role when becoming supervisors and mentors to their SLSOs, and supporting the development and ongoing implementation and review throughout the year. All Teacher's Performance Development Plans were aligned to the teaching standards.

Our Strategic Directions have formed the focus of Professional Learning for all staff. This allows us to build the capacity of staff to ensure that the key priorities within the school plan are achieved.

Whole school Professional Learning included mandatory courses such as; Code of Conduct, Child Protection, CPR, Anaphylaxis and visiting a range of post school organisations for people with disabilities.

Professional Learning specifically for our School Learning Support Officers and SASS included: Administration of Prescribed Medication, Health Care Procedures, Probity, Journaling, and The School Administration Manager Conference, SLSO Conference, Management of Actual or Potential

Aggression (MAPA), Pragmatic Organisational Display Device (PODD), Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP) training, Working with Young People, Traffic Jam in my Brain and Supporting Vision Impairment.

The Ponds School has two teachers completing their second year of Beginning Teacher assistance.

Professional Learning our Beginning Teachers participated in includes: ASDAN, Special Education Principals and Leaders Conference, Australian Association of Special Educators Conference, Key Word Signing, Introduction to Higher levels of Accreditation, MAPA, School Gardens Workshop, Leading Aboriginal Education, Celebrating Aboriginal Australia and Anti-Racism Co-ordinator course.

Two of our aspiring leaders completed a Growth Coaching course. One of our Assistant Principals attended the Assistant Principal Induction Conference.

Professional Learning for our teaching staff included: MAPA, Pragmatic Organisational Display Device (PODD), Mental Health of Students with a Disability, Music Education Skills for the Primary Classroom, Improving Outcomes for Students who are Blind or have Low Vision, Maximising MyPL training, ASDAN, Traffic Jam in my Brain, Key Word Signing, CESE Teaching Stream Pilot, Road Safety, Embedding the School Excellence Cycle, Mindfulness Compassion and Wellbeing, Fundamental Movement Skills in games, K-6 Physical Activity and Health Conference, Positive Behaviour Management and Live Life Well @ School.

Professional Learning is conducted for staff within school each Wednesday afternoon. These afternoons include Collegiate Team Meetings and specific scheduled Professional Learning. All staff have the opportunity to apply for external Professional Learning courses that are aligned with their Performance Development Plan and apply for Watching Others Teach. Professional Learning is key to enhancing student learning outcomes. As with previous years, the entire school staff participated in a wide range of Professional Learning that was linked to our Strategic Directions.

The agendas for Staff Development Days are always full. Department of Education mandatory professional learning was presented, including: Child Protection, Code of Conduct, CPR and Anaphylaxis. Professional Learning that was specific to our school's needs including Collegiate Support Meetings, Collaborative Planning and Programming, STRETCH, Vision, Hearing, Health Care and Wellbeing, Visible Learning and Bump Up Walls and Preparing for Life.

Professional Learning for teaching staff included: Programming, Learning Support Team Referrals, Students with Additional Learning Needs Assessments(SWANS), So Safe, working with therapists, reporting, Visible Learning, Data Walls and Moderation, Bump Up Walls, Procedures for Community Access, Behaviour Support Plans, task analysis and student review forms.

Professional Learning for the Executive Staff included:

Accreditation, Teachers Matter, My PL Training, School Excellence Cycle, Mental Health and Students with a Disability and Mindfulness. Executive attended Special Education and leaders Association (SEPLA) meetings and conference, Blacktown Primary Principal Meetings, The Ponds Network meetings and Blacktown Learning Community meetings. One newly appointed Assistant Principal attended the Assistant Principal Induction Conference. Two executives attended Embedding the School Excellence Cycle. Three executives attended ASDAN training and two completed Growth Coaching courses.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018.

	2018 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	265,116
Revenue	5,138,419
Appropriation	4,931,256
Sale of Goods and Services	10,425
Grants and Contributions	191,860
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	4,878
Expenses	-4,855,254
Recurrent Expenses	-4,894,825
Employee Related	-4,267,946
Operating Expenses	-626,879
Capital Expenses	39,571
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	39,571
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	283,165
Balance Carried Forward	548,281

Income and Expenditure is regularly and carefully monitored by the Finance and Committee and at Executive Meetings.

The above balance carried forward includes \$164971, in our Deductible Gift Recipient fund which has been earmarked for shade sails for our new accessible playground. The balance also includes funds received from hiring out our hall and hydrotherapy pool.

We are utilising some of the residual funds for the

employment of additional staff, above our established positions, to support our teachers and SLSOs in the classrooms where the need is the greatest.

Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

	2018 Actual (\$)
Base Total	846,152
Base Per Capita	49,158
Base Location	0
Other Base	796,994
Equity Total	73,394
Equity Aboriginal	8,067
Equity Socio economic	39,175
Equity Language	26,152
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	3,601,699
Other Total	75,323
Grand Total	4,596,569

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

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

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

At The Ponds School, we have a strong commitment to continuous improvement; supported through rigorous and authentic self-evaluation. In 2018, our self-evaluation was driven by our engagement in the External Validation Process. Our External Validation team was made up of representatives from across the school community; including Senior Executive, Assistant Principals, a classroom teacher, a School Learning Support Officer and a parent representative. This team worked collaboratively with staff, families and the broader community to evaluate ourselves against the School Excellence Framework, collect evidence, evaluate current practice and make recommendations for future development and improvements.

In addition to this process, our school engaged in self-

evaluation through communicating with our school community about our Strategic Directions. In 2018 we used Parent Information mornings, round table discussions and a 'High Tea' to discuss ways to improve communication with families and provide better access to Life Skills and Community Access programs for all our students. The suggestions that arose from these conversations have been embedded within our Strategic Direction milestones for 2019.

In 2018, we engaged our staff in the evaluation and improvement of our Wellbeing programs through surveys and conversations. The suggestions and improvement measures have been included in our 2019 milestones. Staff have also been involved with the evaluation and improvement of our excursions and programming, assessment and reporting procedures. This has resulted in improved systems and learning outcomes for students.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

The Ponds School provided supportive and culturally inclusive learning environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Team ensured all staff and school community valued and acknowledged the identities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, recognised that education about Aboriginal Australia is for all students, and delivered quality education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through a variety of initiatives, such as relevant teaching and learning programs (integrating Aboriginal components into English, History, Geography, Art and Music) as well as the interest group (cross-curriculum content). The interest group weekly classes, inclusive for ATSI and non-ATSI students, had a different focus each term, i.e. Language, Art, Food and Dance. The Ponds School created opportunities for interested staff to gain awareness and learn about Aboriginal cultural education through Professional Learning and career development experiences (Aboriginal Education workshops and Professional Learning, community meetings and networking). Our dance group – The Ponds Possums continued to develop and master their skills by performing on the TAG Golf Day (Stonecutters Golf Club), during Education Week in Castle Towers (Castle Hill), on the International Day of People with Disabilities (Blacktown), and during school celebrations for Harmony Day and NAIDOC Day in 2018. We collaborated with Aboriginal Education Liaison Officers from Nirimba Educational Precinct to create our 2018 ATSI Action Plan and to discuss their ongoing support for our programs. Local Aboriginal Elders and the Aboriginal Dance Group from Glenwood High School were invited as special guests on NAIDOC Day 2018 to celebrate with our school community so that Aboriginal students could access educational opportunities in a range of settings and all students were provided with opportunities to develop deeper understandings of Aboriginal histories, cultures and language.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

The Aboriginal and Multicultural Group, founded in 2017, continued to work on and develop cultural understanding and appreciation of all the cultures present in our multicultural school community, throughout 2018. Our main goal was to get to know each other better, learn from one another and to enrich the communication between students, parents and staff members in order to achieve more in everyday learning and teaching.

Data driven information regarding the students and parents' country of birth and the country they identify themselves with, was used to choose the multicultural events to be presented to the whole school community during assemblies once a month, and also to plan a wide range of differentiated activities for our multicultural celebrations. On the faculty drive we gathered and shared programs, resources and ideas with the whole staff to implement and celebrate certain community festivals or important events, e.g. Reconciliation Week, Chinese New Year, St. Patrick's Day, Diwali, Easter and Christmas. The information about those community festivals was regularly published on our school Facebook page and in the school newsletter. Parents and carers were always invited and encouraged to participate in the multicultural assemblies and celebrations organised at school, e.g. Harmony Day and Easter Fun Day, and they supported the school by volunteering on those days or by sending a plate of traditional food to share.

The Ponds School is committed to multicultural education with culturally inclusive school wide and classroom practices.

The Ponds School has one trained and appointed Anti-Racism Officer and there were no reported incidences of racism.

Other school programs

Positive Behaviour For Learning

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) forms an integral part of life at The Ponds School and is deeply embedded into programs and routines. All students are encouraged and supported to demonstrate behaviour which epitomises and promotes Caring, Learning and Being Safe in every situation. Our PBL Teaching Matrix guides explicit and incidental teaching of appropriate behaviours specific to each area in the school. Positive behaviours are consistently reinforced and consolidated through the use of a common language supported by clear, attractive and meaningful signage, and a school wide reward system featuring our 'Froggy' mascot. Classroom expectations are formulated to address the behaviour needs of the students in each class. They are positively stated, clearly displayed, taught and reinforced within the PBL framework. A focus behaviour is identified at the beginning of each term and reinforced by all staff members. Six Key Behaviour Support Strategies are consistently used to support students across the school. Accident/injury and minor/major incident data collected on a weekly basis assists in tracking the impact of PBL on student

behaviour over time. The PBL framework has continued to promote wellbeing and safety for all, during school based activities and community access programs alike. Throughout 2018 it proved to be effective in promoting a climate for optimal learning and engagement across the school.

Technology

This year we continued to extend our STEM collaborations with other local schools. Class 6 and Class 12 visited John Palmer Public School to participate in a coding lesson using Bee-Bot technology. Students with high support needs were assisted to make choices between colours and shapes to navigate the Bee-Bot to different targets. All students were supported to create a code to manoeuvre the Bee-Bot in forward/backward and right/left directions. This was a wonderful opportunity for students to socially interact with same age peers. In addition to this project, technology is an integral part of teaching and learning. All classrooms have access to a number of computers and touch screen devices, which enhance student access to the curriculum. This year we participated in the STEM Share project where we were able to borrow the Virtual Reality STEM Share Kit. This was an amazing and wonder inspiring opportunity as students were able to virtually visit places around the world, such as explore marine life under the sea. Virtual reality was accessed by a variety of student groups across the school including high support needs and sensory classes. We are hoping to purchase Virtual Reality for our school because student engagement with this program was highly successful and very motivating.

So Safe

The Wellbeing Team at The Ponds School has been instrumental in promoting student wellbeing through the teaching of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). Since students with special needs are particularly vulnerable and with many of our students reaching puberty, So Safe was identified as an appropriate program for the explicit teaching of child protection and personal safety at The Ponds School. The Wellbeing Team attended Professional Learning (PL) on So Safe and subsequently presented PL to the whole staff. Parents were informed and invited to a So Safe presentation. The So Safe program has been steadily implemented in classes across the school this year with aspects embedded into Personalised Learning Plans for many students. The students have been learning about private and public parts of the body and private and public places. The *Talk Touch Triangle* is a visual display used in classrooms to teach the degrees of intimacy appropriate to different relationships. A *People and Relationship Book* is being personalised for every student to guide them in the levels of intimacy that apply to the different people in their lives.