

The Rainforest School

Annual Report 2024



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Contact person	Carolien Franken – Acting Principal

School Sector

Independent

Total Enrolments

26

Year Levels Offered

Prep – Year 6

Co-educational or Single Sex

Co-Educational

School Background

The Rainforest School is a government approved, independent, co-educational primary school (Prep – Year 6) located in the South Mission Beach, Queensland.

Mission

Our mission is to deliver a child-centred and holistic approach to education which considers the individual needs of the child: academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Vision

A home-away-from-home, where self-confidence is fostered, authentic relationships are nurtured, and a connection with nature and a love of learning is embedded.

Motto

Grow Slow, Grow Strong

Pillars

Connection – Community – Conservation – Creativity

Social Climate

The Rainforest School is an independent primary school located in South Mission Beach. Nestled between the lush rainforest and the beach, our school is intentionally small by design. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming, with careful consideration given to beauty, simplicity and the use of natural materials. We encourage intrinsic motivation so that our learners can reach their full potential.

Fostering authentic relationships and using restorative practices supports our students in developing social and emotional awareness. Our learning space is designed to promote unity and collaboration. Student wellbeing is a priority, as we understand that it underpins successful learning. Our wellbeing programme provides valuable life skills and promotes a growth mindset, while our daily Circle Time encourages student voice.

During Circle Time, we promote and support a growth mindset and focus on relationship building to instil a sense of belonging. Our daily relaxation practice helps students calm and clear their minds. This ‘unwritten curriculum’ contributes to the unique culture of The Rainforest School.

In February 2024, our school experienced a major flood event that led to a relocation of our campus and the suspension of programs such as the Kitchen Garden program. While this brought significant challenges, including disruption to routines and access to resources, it also strengthened the resilience of our school community. Staff, students, and families came together in extraordinary ways, and our commitment to connection and wellbeing helped guide us through the recovery process.

Characteristics of the Student Body

In 2024 we taught a small composite cohort of 26 students. All our students live regionally and in the vicinity of Mission Beach, Tropical North Queensland.

Boys: 14

Girls: 12

Indigenous: 4

Our approach to curriculum delivery

We deliver the Australian Curriculum in a unique and vibrant way. Our teaching is child-centred, with a balanced mix of hands-on, real-life, and explicitly taught lessons. We provide an inclusive education for all our students. Our aim is for students to become creative, innovative and resourceful individuals who can draw on their knowledge and experiences to solve problems.

Subject units and student projects are selected or developed around our distinct local context, student interests and alignment with our school values. Our classroom layout supports our teaching practice, with flexible learning spaces where students share ownership of all school resources.

Our whole-school reading program offers evidence-based reading instruction tailored to each student's level of development. We view learning as a continuum and aim to ensure that every student experiences success on their individual learning progression.

Distinctive Curriculum Offerings

Kitchen Garden Program

In 2024, the flagship Kitchen Garden Program was on hold due to the flood and relocation. Ordinarily, this program provides students with real-life skills and daily nutritious vegetarian meals. Students do not bring packed lunches; instead, all meals are shared at a communal table to create a culture of belonging. This program integrates English, Maths, Science, and Design Technology, while also teaching important life skills and fostering responsibility. The program will be resumed in 2025.

Wellbeing Program

Our daily wellbeing practices include guided meditation, breathing techniques using a gong, and visualisation stories. Circle Time supports student voice and discussion on diverse topics—from problem-solving to collaborative menu planning (on hold due to the flood and relocation).

In the face of the 2024 flood event, this programme played a vital role in helping students process change and build emotional resilience.

Swimming Program

In Terms 1 and 4, our students participated in weekly swimming lessons at the local aquatic centre. Supported by Sporting Schools Grants, this programme taught essential water safety and swimming skills.

Gymnastics Program

In Terms 2 and 3, students attended weekly gymnastics lessons at the Tully Gym and Tramp Club. These lessons were partially funded through a Sporting Schools Grant.

Tennis Program

In Terms 3 and 4, students took part in a weekly tennis program at the Mission Beach Tennis Club, also supported by a Sporting Schools Grant.

Instrumental Music

Students participated in a weekly instrumental music program focused on percussion, harmonica, keyboard, ukulele, and guitar, led by a specialist music teacher.

Dance Lessons

As part of our HPE and Arts programs, students participated in dance lessons with a professional dance instructor in Terms 1 and 4, learning movement skills and dance elements.

End of Term Performance

Each term concluded with a showcase of student work. These include exhibitions, events, concerts and performances, providing opportunities for students to express their learning creatively.

School Production

The school conducted a whole school production called 'An Egyptian Whodunnit'. Students researched the history of the ancient Egypt practiced their scripts, acting, singing and dancing throughout Term 4. The school held two performances to the wider community.

Harmony Day Luncheon

To celebrate Harmony Day, each student designed a custom ceramic platter or bowl to serve a family favourite or traditional dish, shared in a community luncheon.

Excursions

In 2024 we facilitated two excursions to our local library to participate in:

- National Simultaneous Storytime: the reading of 'Bowerbird Blues' by Aura Parker.
- Book Week: 'Reading is Magic'

In addition to these excursions, we facilitated the following outings:

- Excursion to Skydive Mission Beach and the Tully Aerodrome
- 'Read To Me Day' at Tully
- Clean Up Australia Day Excursion at Mission Beach
- Excursion to Dunk Island & Family Group Islands
- Olympics Day at MARC's Park
- Surf Life Saving Beach Day
- Cassowary Coast Sports Spectacular, hosted by Peninsula School Sport
- Tree Planting at Frog's Hollow

Incursions

In 2024 we welcomed the following experts to our school:

- Aviation expert Chris McHughes visited the school for a science incursion, enhancing students' understanding of flight and aviation, building on their studies of birds and flying..

- Ceramic artist, Dee Dean came and conducted a workshop with our students to create custom-made platters and bowls for Harmony Day.
- Students worked with Artist in Residence Asep Suhenda to create Indonesian-style puppets and performed at the Mini Indonesian Festival. This project enhanced their learning of puppetry, gamelan, and the Rama and Sita story, supporting our focus on sustainability and the arts.
- The Australian Red Cross ran a workshop to help students prepare for emergencies. Students learned to manage stress, create an emergency kit, and decorated a pillowcase to start their own kit.

School Camp

In 2024, Years 3–6 attended a school camp at Forrest Beach. Students visited:

- Girringun Aboriginal Corporation
- TYTO Wetlands Information Centre and Boardwalk
- Mungalla Station (Kupmurri feast, historical tour, weaving, boomerang throwing)

The overall aim of this camp was to:

- extend on students' learning about Wetlands and Birds
- extend on the delivery of nature-based, outdoor learning
- promote and foster team building and co-operative learning
- improve and enhance our students' self-confidence, and independence and to improve their ability to work with others by developing their social and emotional and leadership skills
- enhance friendships and memorable school moments

Extra-curricular Activities

Circle Time

Daily Circle Time fosters a growth mindset and meaningful relationships. Students are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings in a safe, respectful environment.

Pampering Day

In the final week of Term 2, students wore pyjamas and explored self-care activities including hand massages and cuddles with specially trained service dogs.

Halloween Disco

Students dressed in Halloween-themed costumes and enjoyed a joyful, inclusive school disco.

Parental & Community Involvement

The 2024 flood tested our school community—but it also brought us together. Parents and carers played a crucial role in relocating the school, helping with cleanup efforts, setting up new learning spaces, and offering practical and emotional support.

Parents volunteered regularly during project time and gardening. They also joined students on excursions such as Clean Up Australia Day and Book Week library visits.

Twice a term, we hosted Parent Circle meetings where staff gave classroom updates, proposed fundraising projects aligned with our school’s values, and invited parents to contribute ideas and feedback. These sessions fostered strong, collaborative relationships between home and school.

Our school maintains an active public Facebook page, with engagement reaching audiences not only across Australia but also in the UK, US, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Indonesia, Vietnam, Argentina and South Africa.

Spring Fair

In September 2024, our annual Spring Fair welcomed over 200 visitors. The families of our students helped make the event a success, contributing time, creativity and hospitality. The Fair provided a valuable opportunity for students to engage in real-life learning by designing, producing and selling their handmade goods. The event deepened our connection with the local community and celebrated our school’s core values.

Parent/Carer, Teacher and Student Satisfaction with the School

Data from the 2024 quantitative Parent/Carer and Student Surveys showed consistently high to very high levels of satisfaction. Both surveys achieved a 100% participation rate. Given the small size of our school community, these results should be interpreted with this context in mind.

Student Conclusions

The 2024 Student Survey had a 100% response rate. Students were asked to rate statements on the following scale:

Rating	Score
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Not Agree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

Overall, students reported a high to very high level of satisfaction, with an average score of 4.6. It is worth noting that, due to the school’s temporary relocation after the February flood, the Kitchen Garden program was paused.

Average Ratings Student Survey 2024	2024 Score	2023 Score	Variance
1. I like being at my school	4.8	4.8	0.05
2. I feel safe at school	4.4	4.7	-0.31
3. My teachers care about me	4.9	4.9	0.00
4. My teachers motivate me to learn	4.6	4.8	-0.19
5. My teachers expect me to do my best	4.9	4.8	0.05
6. My teachers provide me with useful feedback about my school work	4.6	4.7	-0.08
7. I can talk to my teachers about my concerns	4.4	4.6	-0.20
8. Student behaviour is well managed at my school	3.9	4.6	-0.61
9. Teachers at my school treat students fairly	4.5	4.7	-0.19
10. My school takes students' opinions seriously	4.3	4.6	-0.32
11. My school looks for ways to improve	4.9	4.8	0.05
12. My school is clean	4.2	4.3	-0.16
13. I like the cooking we do at our school	N/A	4.6	N/A
14. I like Morning Circle	4.6	4.9	-0.30
15. I like the Meditation and wellbeing we do at our school	4.4	4.8	-0.42
16. I like the Sporting programs (tennis, gymnastics and swimming)	4.6	4.4	0.26
17. I like the Dancing program	4.8	4.3	0.43
18. I like the instrumental music program (ukulele, guitar, keyboard & Percussion)	4.8	4.9	-0.18
19. My school gives me opportunities to do interesting things	4.8	4.8	-0.01
Average Score	4.6	4.7	-0.11

Parents/Carers Conclusions

The 2024 Parent/Carer Survey had a 100% response rate. Parents/Carers were asked to rate statements on the following scale:

Generally, the Parents/Carers Satisfaction remained stable with an average score of 4.7.

The Rainforest School - Parent/Carer Survey

	2024	2023	Variance 2024/2023
Total - Average Score	4.7	4.7	-0.01
CARE FOR STUDENTS	4.8	4.8	0.0
My child likes being at The Rainforest School	4.9	4.8	0.1
My child feels safe at school	4.8	4.8	0.0
My child has a positive relationship with his/her teachers	4.9	4.9	0.0
Teachers at The Rainforest School treat my child fairly	4.9	4.9	0.1
My child feels nurtured and cared for at school	4.8	4.9	-0.1
I trust that the staff have my child's best interest at heart	4.9	4.8	0.1
My child feels comfortable to approach his/her teachers	4.5	4.8	-0.3
My child is making good progress socially and emotionally	4.8	4.8	0.0
TEACHING AND LEARNING	4.7	4.7	0.0
I am happy with the quality of teaching at The Rainforest School	4.8	4.8	-0.1
Teachers at The Rainforest School inspire and motivate my child to learn	4.8	4.8	0.0
Teachers at The Rainforest School expect my child to do his/her best	4.8	4.8	0.0
My child is making good progress with their learning at school	4.7	4.7	-0.1
My child's learning needs are being met	4.5	4.6	-0.1
Teachers provide my child with useful feedback about his/her learning	4.8	4.5	0.2
Teachers meet my child's specific needs	4.6	4.7	-0.1
The combination of hands-on, real-life and explicit learning contributes to my child's educational development	4.8	4.8	0.0
BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT	4.6	4.5	0.1
Student behaviour is well managed at our school	4.4	4.4	0.1
I value the implementation of restorative practices rather than punitive consequences for behaviour	4.8	4.6	0.2
RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION	4.7	4.8	-0.1
I can talk to my child's teachers about my concerns	4.8	4.8	-0.1
My opinions are taken seriously by the school	4.7	4.8	-0.1
I am well informed about what is happening at school	4.6	4.7	-0.1
I feel comfortable to approach staff	4.8	4.9	0.0
I believe any concerns that I raise are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner	4.8	4.8	0.0
I feel part of the school community	4.6	4.6	-0.1
OTHER	4.8	4.9	-0.1
The Kitchen/Garden Program adds value to my child's education	N/A	4.9	N/A
The sporting programs (tennis, swimming, gymnastics) delivered by external coaches contributes to my child's education.	4.8	4.9	-0.1
I value the instrumental music (ukulele/guitar, keyboard and percussion) delivered by professional musicians	4.8	5.0	-0.2
I value the dance program delivered by a professional dance instructor	4.8	4.9	-0.1
The practices (yoga, meditation mindfulness and breathing exercises, etc) taught at The Rainforest School assist my child's wellbeing	4.8	4.9	-0.2
I value the 4 pillars of The Rainforest School (Connection, Community, Conservation & Creativity)	4.9	5.0	0.0
The Rainforest School has a strong focus on sustainability	4.8	4.9	-0.1
I value that my child can connect with nature at The Rainforest School	4.9	4.9	0.1
The Rainforest School delivers an indigenous perspective and connects with first nation people	4.8	4.8	-0.1
The Rainforest School looks for ways to improve	4.8	4.9	-0.2

School Income Broken Down by Funding Source

School income, reported by financial year accounting cycle using standardized national methodologies and broken down by funding source is available via the <http://www.myschool.edu.au/> website.

Staffing Information

Staff Composition, Including Indigenous Staff:

Description	Teaching staff*	Non-teaching staff	Indigenous** staff
Headcounts	3	5	0
Full-time equivalents	2	2.4	0

*Teaching staff includes School Leaders.

** *Indigenous* refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia.

Teacher Qualifications	
Masters	50%
Bachelor's degree	50 %

Key Student Outcomes

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

The average attendance rate for the whole school as a percentage in 2024 was 84.6%

Average student attendance rate for each year level

The Rainforest School had 26 enrolments in 2024. For privacy reasons we are unable to disclose attendance rates for all year levels.

Year levels	Average attendance rate for each year level as a percentage in 2024
Prep	86%
Year 1	82%
Year 2	75%
Year 3	90%
Year 4	89%
Year 5	95%
Year 6	Data withheld to ensure confidentiality

The attendance roll is marked twice a day, and parents are contacted in case of an absence. In 2024 all students did meet the attendance requirements for compulsory schooling and no further action had to be taken.

NAPLAN results for Year 3 and Year 5 in 2024

There are no 2024 Naplan results available.

Contact Person for Further Information

For further information about The Rainforest School, enrolment information and policies, please contact office@trs.qld.edu.au