

THE RAINFOREST SCHOOL
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ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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Webpage	Additional information about The Rainforest School is located on trs.qld.edu.au and the <i>My School</i> website
Contact person	Carolien Franken – Principal

School Sector	Independent – Co-Educational
Total Enrolments	24
Year Levels Offered	Prep – Year 6

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 Steady, 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.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

In 2025 we taught a small composite cohort of 20 students. All our students live regionally and in the vicinity of Mission Beach, Tropical North Queensland.

Boys: 10

Girls: 10

Indigenous: 1

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.

Cross-Curricular Focus

In 2025, our *Beneath Our Feet* focus provided a rich, whole-school focus that connected learning across disciplines and brought the curriculum to life through meaningful, real-world experiences. This theme invited students to explore the complex and ever-changing world beneath the surface, examining soils, rocks, minerals, fossils and landforms, and developing an understanding of how landscapes are formed and transformed over time. Through this inquiry, students considered not only the science of the natural world but also the historical, cultural and environmental stories embedded within it.

A key strength of the program was its emphasis on experiential learning. Students engaged in a range of incursions with visiting scientists and experts, including specialists such as archaeologists and

palaeontologists, who provided authentic insights into their fields. These experiences were complemented by a series of field trips and excursions, enabling students to investigate local environments, geological formations and ecosystems firsthand.

Learning extended beyond the classroom through partnerships with community organisations and opportunities to learn from Traditional Owners, deepening students' understanding of Country and fostering respect for Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.

The inquiry was highly cross-curricular, with students:

- investigating geological and environmental concepts in Science and HASS
- developing written and oral communication through reports, persuasive writing and inquiry projects in English
- expressing their understanding creatively through The Arts, including works inspired by natural forms and textures

Throughout the year, students were encouraged to ask thoughtful questions such as: *How did our landscape come to be? What stories lie beneath the ground we walk on? How can we care for the land that sustains us?*

As a result, students developed a deeper understanding of the natural world, strengthened their inquiry and critical thinking skills, and grew in their awareness of their role as responsible and informed caretakers of the environment.

DISTINCTIVE CURRICULUM OFFERINGS

Kitchen Garden Program

In 2025, the flagship Kitchen Garden Program resumed for 3 days per week after the previous year where it was on hold due to the flood and relocation. 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.

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.

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.

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 Term 2 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 Term 3 students participated in weekly tennis lessons at the local tennis courts. This program supports physical health, enhances motor skills and coordination, and fosters confidence and resilience.

Surf Life Saving Beach Day

Students participated in a Surf Life Saving Beach Day, providing valuable opportunities to develop water safety awareness, teamwork and personal confidence in a beach environment. Through engaging, practical activities led by trained surf life saving educators, students learned essential skills for staying safe in and around the water. This program was supported by a Sporting Schools Grant, enabling students to access high-quality instruction and meaningful outdoor learning experiences.

Dance Lessons

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

School Performance

The school conducted a whole school production called *"Tales of the Hollow - Wisdom of the Rainforest"*. This performance explored storytelling through movement, integrating drama and dance to express emotion. The performance was presented to parents and staff at the end of the term.

Excursions

In 2025 we facilitated two excursions to our local library to participate in:

- National Simultaneous Storytime: the reading of 'The Truck Cat', Deborah Frenkel
- Book Week: 'Book an Adventure'

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

- Excursion to Crystal Caves
- 'Read To Me Day' at Tully
- 'Clean Up Australia' Day at Mission Beach
- Excursion to Dunk Island
- Fruit Forest Farm
- Tully Sugar Mill and The Pocket

Incursions

In 2025 we welcomed the following experts to our school:

- Djiru - Leonard Andy
- Mission Beach Historical Society - Valerie Boll
- Archaeologist - Ethan Devereux
- Palaeontologist - LeeAnn Hally
- Ceramicist - Justin McCallum
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council - Amber Kellett and Damien Sides
- Envirocom - Rose Childe
- Red Dirt Robotics - Jameson Harvey

School Camp

In 2025, Years 3–6 attended a school camp at Undara and Atherton Tablelands. Students visited:

- Innot Hot Springs
- Undara Lava Tubes
- Kalkani Crater Rim Walk
- Herberton Mining Centre
- Rainforest to Bush Tour Cultural Experience – Mbabaram Experience

The overall aim of this camp was to:

- extend on students' learning about the geology of our local landscape
- 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

Harmony Day Luncheon

To celebrate Harmony Day, each student's family brought to school a family favourite meal to share at a community luncheon.

Pampering Day

Students wore pyjamas and explored self-care activities.

Halloween Celebrations

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

PARENTAL & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Parents actively volunteered their time during project-based learning sessions and gardening activities, contributing valuable time and support. They also participated alongside students in excursions, including Clean Up Australia Day and Book Week library visits, strengthening community engagement.

Each term, we hosted Parent Circle meetings where staff shared classroom updates, discussed fundraising initiatives aligned with the school's values, and invited parents to offer ideas and feedback. These sessions nurtured strong, collaborative partnerships between home and school, fostering a shared commitment to student learning and wellbeing.

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 2025, our annual Spring Fair welcomed over 250 visitors and was a vibrant celebration of our school community. Families played a key role in its success, generously contributing their time, creativity, and hospitality. The Fair provided a meaningful opportunity for students to engage in authentic, real-world learning by designing, producing, and selling their handmade goods. It strengthened our connection with the local community while showcasing and celebrating our school's core values.

Parent/Carer, Teacher and Student Satisfaction with the School

Data from the 2025 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.

Conclusions

The 2025 Student Survey had a 100% response rate. Overall, students reported a high level of satisfaction, with an average score of 4.5. The 2025 Parent Survey had a 100% response rate. Overall parent/Carers expressed a high level of satisfaction with an average score of 4.7.

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	4	5	0
Full-time equivalents	2	2.4	0

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

Teacher Qualifications	
Masters	50%
Bachelor's degree	50 %

Key Student Outcomes

In 2025, total average student attendance rate (%) for the whole school was 87.58%

Year levels	Average attendance rate for each year level as a percentage in 2025
Prep	86.2%
Year 1	86.3%
Year 2	90.7%
Year 3	85.2%
Year 4	96.1%
Year 5	N/A
Year 6	91.3%

The attendance roll is marked twice a day, and parents are contacted in case of an absence. In 2025 all students did meet the attendance requirements for compulsory schooling and no further action had to be taken. The Rainforest School had 20 enrolments in 2025. For privacy reasons we are unable to disclose attendance rates for all year levels.

NAPLAN results for Year 3 and Year 5 in 2025

There are no 2025 NAPLAN results available. No students participated in NAPLAN.

Contact Person for Further Information

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