



Headland Montessori ELC - Annual Report – 2020

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Principal: Margaret Thwaites
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1. Message from Key School Bodies

1.1 Message from the Principal

2020 was certainly unexpectedly eventful, but one in which we were able to respond with adaptability, compassion and innovation.

It started with the catastrophic fire events across Australia which thankfully did not affect our immediate area at North Head, but concern for the plight of families and wildlife in the affected regions was very much in the minds of our community. The mother of one of the children was involved in koala rescue on Kangaroo Is. As her daughter shared photos and stories of this work our children decided they wanted to contribute in some way. The kindergarten class joined with the preschool children to make crafts and cookies and set up a stall selling their wares to the broader community and distributing information about the cause. This magnificent effort raised \$720 and gave the children a sense of engagement, compassion and hope.

2020 was, of course, the year that a global pandemic which changed life as we know it...including our education system.

Thanks to the dedication of our teachers, we learnt to adjust and adapt our teaching and learning to a home-school model where our students continued to learn successfully at home. During Term 1, weekly packs for at-home learning were created. As we already programmed for our children as individuals, we were able to ensure that our students' home learning was tailored to their abilities and needs. However, it was certainly a challenge to translate the Montessori fundamentals of using concrete materials and providing practical life experiences to home learning,

and we were grateful for websites and YouTube videos that were able to supplement our take home packs. We also ventured into creating some of our own YouTube videos which were made available on our website.

In Term 2 we attempted some Zoom lessons. This had varied results as parents had mixed feelings about how the children were affected emotionally by seeing their friends in different settings separated due to the pandemic.

Ensuring the safety and emotional wellbeing of students and teachers was also of great importance and was regularly reviewed as part of our Covid Safe plan.

Exceptional circumstances also give rise to innovation and when we discontinued our outdoor providers of sport, we developed a wonderful inhouse program utilizing the skills of our teaching staff that was so successful that we decided to continue with this well after the lockdown was over. As such the children have enjoyed a Dances from Around the World program and Montessori Football lessons on a weekly basis.

Just prior to the lockdown we welcomed back for the third year First Nations elder Roderick McLeod and his brother Jumma Jumma. This year the focus of their presentation of songs, stories and opportunity to handle a range of traditional items was to promote understanding and knowledge of First Nation culture whilst facilitating positive attitudes towards the oldest living culture in the world.

Due to the uncertainty of further lockdowns we decided to modify our annual coach excursion and instead had our excursion right here at North Head hosted by the local educational company Eco-Explore. The topic of the field trip was *From Bugs to Bandicoots*.

There were 4 children enrolled in our Kindergarten program in 2020. Three of these children graduated to Farmhouse Montessori School to continue with Montessori education through their primary years. It was a privilege to enable these children to complete the Montessori 3-6 program and be well prepared for the transition to the Montessori 6-9 program. The fourth child is attending a local primary school.

I would like to thank the teachers involved with the Kindergarten program for their ongoing commitment to the education of young children particularly in a year with so many external challenges and to the families for their adaptability and support throughout the year.

1.2 Message from the Board

It has certainly been a challenging year for Headland Montessori, but our team of amazing educators continued to implement our mission of providing authentic Montessori education in Long Day Care and School throughout the lockdown. With the assistance of Job Keepers and funding from the government, we were able to stay financially viable.

We have seen genuine support from our communities and the board will continue to work with our Principal to make provisions that improve our school going forward and ensure quality education delivery and financial viability.

2. School Contextual Information

Headland Montessori ELC is beautifully located in the North Head Harbour Trust Sanctuary on the doorstep of the Sydney Harbour National Park.

Established in 2013 we offer Montessori education and care for children aged 6 weeks to 6 years in a long day care setting. The introduction of the Kindergarten program has meant that we can offer the full Montessori program for 0-6 year olds. Kindergarten class runs within the context of the 3-6 classroom and is both the third year of this program and the first year of school. Children completing Kindergarten program can then continue with Montessori education in a 6-9 class or start in Year 1 at the school of choice.

Our location allows us to frequently go for bushwalks and develop an appreciation of our natural environment.

We are also in walking distance to Manly and during the year the Kindergarten children planned an outing to the Manly Art Gallery to see an exhibition that included art works by local children.

Why Multi-Age?

One of the main principles of a Montessori preschool classroom consists of children in a mixed age group ranging from 3-6 years old. The Montessori model supports children helping each other and embodies an environment of peaceful peer teaching and learning. The children are responsible for their community and this encourages respect amongst the children. A Montessori trained teacher is taught to follow the individual needs of each child in his/her classroom.

KLA Integrated Learning

Headland Montessori uses an integrated learning approach. This means that the topic area chosen for the term incorporates all the Board of Studies NSW Curriculum Key Learning Areas. Students study each topic in depth and all together.

We have found that this approach stimulates the learning environment and encourages students to develop a natural love for learning. Lessons flow from one-to-another and students receive a comprehensive education on each topic.

Our approach also offers the flexibility to cater for the interests of the children.

The children also participate in an afternoon Spanish immersion and a sport program that offers dancing and Montessori football.

3. Student Outcomes in Standardised Testing: NAPLAN

Since we only run a Kindergarten program we do not participate in the NAPLAN.

4. Professional Learning and Teacher Standards

4.1 Teacher Qualifications and Workforce Composition

The Kindergarten children were a part of a classroom with 23 children aged 3-6. This room was staffed by an Early Childhood Teacher and a Montessori teacher.

4.2 Professional Learning Undertaken

Throughout the year both teachers participated in Child Protection Training and workshops on Reflective Practices and Special Needs.

5. Characteristic of Student Body

The Kindergarten class consisted of four children who are completing their third year in the Montessori 3-6 classroom. These children have previously attended the Headland Montessori ELC and as such these children have known each other since they were toddlers.

5.1 Student Attendance Rate 2017

The annual Student Attendance Rate for the whole school was around 87%. Attendance rates for each school year cannot be published due to small student numbers and confidentiality.

5.2 Management of Non-attendance

A register of daily attendance and absences of individual students was kept and recorded digitally.

All parents(s)/ guardian(s) are expected to notify the Teacher of their child's absences with a phone call or email. The Teacher will follow-up any unexplained absences with a phone call or text to the student's parents(s)/ guardian(s). Any unsatisfactory attendance information will be transferred to the student's files.

The School will maintain a roll of daily attendance (taken by the Teacher) that includes the following information for each student:

Daily attendance and absences

Reasons for absences with appropriate documentation

The register of enrolment will be available for a minimum of five years and then archived thereafter for three years. The Roll of Daily Attendance will be retained for seven years after the last entry is made. Student records will be kept for six years after the student has turned 18 years of age.

Application for Exemption of School Attendance

Our School understands that there may be situations where parents(s)/ guardian(s) wish to take their children out of the school environment for more than two days due to medical or extracurricular activities.

Parents(s)/ guardian(s) are requested to discuss the specific circumstances with the Principal and complete an Application for Exemption from Attendance at School Form as soon as possible.

If agreed to, the Principal will accept, sign and file the application in the Attendance File. The Head Teacher will then complete the Certificate for Exemption from Enrolment at School Form, making a copy and giving the original to the parents/guardians. An 'M' (for exemption) will be recorded on the daily attendance register for the child on these days.

A Certificate of Exemption cannot be given for a holiday. Families are encouraged to holiday or travel during school vacations; however, if travel occurs during the school term the following codes will apply:

Absences will be recorded as 'L' (leave) if the Head Teacher accepts the reason for absence.

Absences will be recorded as 'A' (absent) if deemed unjustified by the Head Teacher.

All holidays and travel taken outside school holidays will require a written letter from the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). These will be filed in the School's attendance file.

If the period of absence is in excess of 50 days, the student may be eligible to enrol in Distance Education.

5.3 Enrolment Procedures

Enrolments are processed in order of receipt and careful consideration is given to each applicant based on his or her individual needs and the ongoing needs of the current student body. It is expected that the child will have already completed the first two years of the Montessori 3-6 program. Continued enrolment is also based on these requirements.

Our enrolment procedures are outlined in our Enrolment Policy below:

5.4 Enrolment Policy

It is not assumed that all children finishing the pre-school program will automatically be accepted into the kindergarten year.

Kindergarten places are only available for existing Headland students

- Parent(s)/guardians of the student accepted in the Kindergarten Year will be required to complete a re-enrolment form for the Kindergarten Year.
- The Principal will maintain a register of enrolments electronically:
- the name and contact telephone number of parent(s)/guardian(s)
 - a. date of enrolment and, where appropriate, the date of leaving the school and the student's destination
 - b. for students older than six (6) years, previous school or pre-enrolment situation
 - c. where the destination of a student below seventeen (17) years of age is unknown, evidence that a NSW Department of Education officer with home school liaison responsibilities has been notified of the student's full name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details, an indication of possible destination, other information that may assist officers to locate the student,

6. School Policies

Headland Montessori ELC keeps full copies of all our policies (listed below) on file in the School's Reception and online in our school CRM System using third party software provider Childcarers. All our policies are updated to meet legislative requirements.

6.1 Overview of Anti-bullying Policy

We believe that every person should be valued equally thus we should care equally for all parties involved in a situation involving bullying. This policy aims to assist in the promotion of a safe school environment by reducing the occurrence of bullying and reconciling the parties involved.

6.2 Overview of Child Protection Policy

This Policy document is provided and made available to staff, including employees, contractors and relevant voluntary workers during their employment or engagement with the School to ensure a clear understanding of their duties and obligations under the key items of child protection legislation in NSW.

This Policy outlines the key concepts and definitions under the relevant legislation including mandatory reporters, reportable conduct, and risk management. It also sets out expected standards of behaviour in relation to employees, contractors, the Headland Montessori Board, and relevant voluntary workers, and their relationships with students.

6.3 Overview of Pastoral Care Policy

Individual children have a range of personal and academic needs to be met whilst at Headland Montessori ELC. In meeting these needs the School will develop individual learning programs for each child within the wider school curriculum.

It is recognised that children may have physical or medical problems that may impair their ability to learn and influence their social interactions. All efforts will be made for such children to feel relaxed and confident while at school.

This policy aims to outline the processes used to ensure the welfare and well-being of all children at Headland Montessori ELC.

6.4 Overview of Positive Guidance and Behaviour Management Policy

Our overall objective is to provide a happy, caring and nurturing environment in which all feel valued and trusted, showing respect and concern for one another. Students at Headland Montessori ELC are learning self-control and self-discipline.

Headland Montessori ELC will not tolerate any action that lessens an individual's right to feel safe and will take the necessary actions, as outlined in our policies, to stop such behaviour. Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment are unacceptable behaviours.

6.5 Overview of Grievance and Complaint Policy

This policy provides a step by step process for resolving complaints or grievances, to ensure that they are dealt with in a confidential, timely and appropriate manner. It is our School's aim to ensure all matters are resolved to the satisfaction of the individual and the School community as a whole

7. School Determined Improvement Targets

7.1 - 2020 (current year)

To improve the quality of our communication and advertising of the Kindergarten program making greater use of social media platforms for year 2020 to prospective parents. We will make relevant information available online and promote the Montessori program via promotional video.

To address the issues raised from 2017 and update our policies and procedures to effectively improve quality in Educational outcome and satisfaction to families.

To provide at least 3 parent education evenings to promote a greater understanding of the Montessori philosophy and how its implemented within our curriculum.

7.2 - 2021 (next year)

To increase enrolments and community awareness of our Kindergarten Program.

Teacher to attend curriculum development workshops.

To resume/extend community engagement activities, such as shared literacy program with Farmhouse Montessori, gardening with the North Head Sanctuary volunteers.

Develop the leadership roles of the Kindergarten children.

Teacher to participate in mental health/wellbeing forums to ensure we are well prepared to support children and their families as the pandemic continues and creates covid related fatigue, stress and grief.

Work with children on charitable initiatives

Improvement areas

- Building awareness of our program and curriculum with parents.
- Marketing of our Kindergarten program and Montessori Education.
- Professional development for teacher **focused on curriculum development**
- Mental health

8. Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility

Grievance; complaints, and anti-bullying policies are read and adhered to by all members of the School board and staff. All parents are encouraged to read the policies and it is readily available through our Childcares CRM system.

The school vegetable garden is regularly maintained by students to help preserve the natural environment and to encourage healthy eating/cooking. The school also uses a compost and worm farm to help teach the children the importance of sustainability.

Students actively recycle (and reuse where possible) their rubbish and are involved in activities that promote saving water and using minimal electricity.

Children learn respect and responsibility through the older children teaching the younger children important literacy skills, an important aspect of our mixed age group environment.

Students participate in a range of excursions and sporting activities each term, to a variety of locations, where appropriate behaviours are modelled, expected and taught.

Students participate in activities that enhance multi-cultural appreciation.

All students participate in activities that help to maintain a healthy and clean school environment, working together as a team.

9. Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Overall, we had positive responses from parents, students and teachers. All our parents support the delivery of Montessori Education in the Kindergarten year.

10. Financial Information

