



Annual Report 2015

School Context:

Spirit of Play Community School was established in 2002 and has provided education for children from Kindergarten to Year One. In 2013 it was granted the Minister's advanced determination to become a full primary school, providing for students up to Year Six by 2019, with approximately 92 students. In 2015 we had 46 children enrolled from Pre-Kindergarten to Year 2.

Key goals for 2015 and beyond:

- Keep class sizes small, with an average of eight and a maximum of twelve students per year group
- Keep staff to student ratios high, with a benchmark of 10 students to staff member in the early years (PK – 2) and no more than 20 in the upper primary years (3-6).
- Select and retain exceptional staff who can offer specialist expertise in key aspects of the curriculum promoted by the school (Bush School Program, Music, Permaculture, Physical Education, Environmental Education, Indigenous and Multicultural Learning, Community Engagement)
- Develop a new school site that integrates indoor and outdoor learning and provides space for children to engage directly with their ecological environment every day.
- Create a model school that stretches the concept of sustainable education and nourishes the next generation of adults to become creative, connected and capable of meeting any challenges that the future may present.

Outdoor Education and Walkabout at Spirit of Play

“The child is the teacher and learner, the practitioner is the observer and facilitator and the environment is the cohesive whole that offers the fabric of the learning and teaching to all involved.”
Archimedes Bush School

Much of the education at Spirit of Play takes place in the school grounds and surrounding area. As part of the Australian Curriculum Outdoor education provides the opportunity to engage with the overarching Cross Curriculum Priorities of 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures' and 'Sustainability' and integrates all aspects of the formal learning priorities into concrete experiences. Furthermore, our program is designed to specifically support the five aspects of emotional literacy: Self Awareness, Self Regulation, Self Motivation, Social Skills and Empathy.

Outdoor education is part of every day at Spirit of Play as the children are engaged in their environment within and outside of the school grounds. Teachers plan specific learning opportunities and are responsive to 'teachable moments' that arise during the day. In 2015 the Year 1 & 2 class spent every Friday on Walkabout, learning about the local environment and community, but the walkabout curriculum is embedded in all of our school days, not just on Fridays.

What we got up to

Overall 2015 was a year of growth for the School, offering Year 2 for the first time, creating a solid team of teaching staff, and instigating whole school learning programs and themes.

The School continued its emphasis on reaching out to the broader community with visits from our Noongar elders, Auntie Avril and Nana Carol Patterson, Festival of the Voice workshops with Rachel Hore and a visit from Table player Babu, weeding days with the Denmark Weed Action Group, creative sessions using recycled materials with James Gentle from the Tip Shop, pottery sessions with artist Robyn Lees creating the mystical numbat birds, the Peace Run visit in term 4. Scitech came and gave us an exciting demonstration of physics and we continued with our regular visits from the Albany Museum and their 'mini muse' project. We particularly remember visiting and learning about the Pelican's who live just next door at the Caravan Park.

Community gatherings and celebrations included the seasonal celebrations in Bunuru/Djeran (autumn equinox), Makuru (winter solstice) and Djiba/Kamberang (spring equinox) as well as our Christmas/summer celebration at the end of the year. A highlight was surely the magical floating candles at the winter solstice celebration. Our Games night in Term 3 at Singlefile winery was a roaring success, as was the International Mud Day gathering at Olly's dam in Term 2.

We contributed to Denmark Art's Brave New Works 2015 through our artworks that were displayed in the Reflections exhibition at the wetlands. Our beautiful memorial birdbath for Kardi was at the heart of this creation. The children also participated in the national 'Music Count Us In' event, where we simultaneously sang a song created by other school children in conjunction with hundreds of others around the country. We also raised more than \$1000 dollars in our participation in the Skip Rope for Heart fundraiser.

The older children ventured to Town along the Karri walk trail to visit the library and recreational centre, and had amazing fun on walkabout visiting so many of our favorite places. Our fishing trip to Muttonbird Island was another stand out, as was the fungi finding expedition at The Wolery. We held a couple of 'bikeabout' days and walked and rode to school as group on a couple of occasions.

Pat instigated very popular free surfing sessions during Term One and we also had yoga, circus and jogging before school for the early birds. Sonia's in school yoga sessions also helped the children to activate and elevate their minds and bodies. Zak came and did some amazing capoeira sessions as part of our multicultural exploration of South American countries.

NAPLAN

NAPLAN was not offered in 2015 as we did not have any Year 3 or older students.

Funding Sources

In 2015 our funding ratios were approximately 69% from the federal government, 16% from the state government and 15% from fees, donations and fund raising.

Our staff

Teacher qualifications

In 2015 we had a combination of graduate and experienced teachers, bringing their wealth of knowledge, experience, enthusiasm, creativity and research to Spirit of Play. Their qualifications can be found on the public register of teachers. <http://www.trb.wa.gov.au> All staff at our School have Working with Children clearances. Our multi-cultural staff reflect the many different cultures we attract to our school.

Staffing 2015

Principal	Ingrid Jansen-Neeling
Admin Assistant	Katie Bewley
Bursar	Oona Mansour
Teachers	Regi Peppin
	Oliver Watkins
	Pat McCarthy
Education Assistants	Angela Dickinson
	Serena Kirby
	Kanae Jones
Cleaner	Maren Heckel

Staff Retention

All of our staff from 2014 remained with us in 2015, with the exception of Sarah Pozzi who took a year off to complete her Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood. She has re-joined the School in 2016. We added new staff members in Pat McCarthy, Kanae Jones and Oona Mansour.

Student Attendance 2015

Pre-Primary: 89%

Year 1: 87%

Year 2: 81%

Monitoring attendance

- . Teachers mark attendance rolls every morning and afternoon and hand them in to the office.
- . The office staff will then call the parent of any absent child whose reason for absence is not known.
- . The attendance roll remains in the office when it is not being used to record attendance.
- . Absentee notes are given out to families at the end of each month.
- . Parents complete this form within three days of the non-attendance. Acceptable reasons for absences include illness, culture or religious observation, educational program approved by the school, any other reasonable cause as approved by the Principal.
- . Records will be kept by the school until the child reaches 24 years of age. The records are kept confidentially for this period.
- . Students' attendance is recorded on a spreadsheet for regular monitoring by the principal.

Extended Absence Parents are encouraged to take family holidays during planned school breaks. This is written in to our Parent Handbook and is stated verbally to parents. We understand, however that this is not always possible. Where appropriate the teacher, with the principal's support will develop an individual education plan for the child so that he or she can continue with the education during the absence. We encourage parents to make the most of learning opportunities when they are traveling and provide opportunities for the children to share their experiences with the class upon their return.

Irregular Attendance

Students who do not attend school regularly are case-managed, and encouraged to resume regular school attendance. This is first done informally between the teacher and the parents. Every effort is made to resolve any school-based issues that may be a contributing factor in the absenteeism. The principal will have an informal conversation with the parents of regularly absent children to remind them of the need for regular attendance. This is followed by a more formal 'case management' meeting where a written plan is developed to help ensure more regular attendance.

2015 Parent Survey:

The Parent Survey conducted at the end of 2015 shows a happy and committed parent body, with 100% of parents interviewed responding that they were happy with the School.

Most parents were very happy with the School's learning programs and in particular with the teaching staff. There was huge support for the adventure offered in the walkabout program, and strong support for the multi-aged approach taken by the School.

Areas of concern and improvement for this year seemed to coalesce around organizational issues and the facilities/resources available, particularly into the future.

Parents of younger children typically were unsure of what was offered in terms of the learning program in the older year groups and had some uncertainty over whether the School would continue to meet the needs of their child as they grew older. By contrast the older children's parents were as a general rule extremely happy with the learning program offered.

Spirit of Play