

Ajuga School
Annual Report



2017



5748

Introduction

The Annual Report for **2017** is provided to the community of **Ajuga 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.

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School background

School vision statement

The purpose of Ajuga School is to provide an individualised approach so that each child can become independent, resilient and confident. On completion of the Ajuga program our aim is for students to successfully integrate into the most suitable environment, such as high school, primary school, an alternate educational setting, TAFE, university or the work force. Our shared vision is to offer a high quality educational program in a caring and safe environment. Using a range of quality student-centred teaching and learning programs we provide students with the opportunity to learn the skills and strategies to enable them to reach their full potential socially, emotionally, academically and physically.

School context

Ajuga School forms part of a complex of schools for specific purposes situated on approximately two hectares of land; ideally suited to providing a therapeutic setting for K–12 students with a severe emotional disturbance. Ajuga provides an integration program for up to 49 students. Currently there are 4 primary classes including a class for students with Autism and an emotional disturbance and 3 high school classes. Our classes are predominantly organised according to stage groups. The school is staffed by a highly dedicated and experienced staff working in a team environment. Each class has a Teacher and a School Learning Support Officer. Our school community consists of parents and carers, referring home schools, Sydney Distance Education, TAFEs, local businesses, health services and our neighbouring schools. The school and its community have high expectations and value the provision of a variety of learning experiences including: Music Therapy, Counselling, Environmental Education, Sport, Ajuga Reading Challenge, Social Skills, and an inclusive curriculum in all Key Learning Areas. Ajuga School is participating in the Empowering Local Schools reform and is part of the initial implementation of the Learning Management and Business Reform program. Ajuga School continues to receive a range of new processes and tools to support education and learning.

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. 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.

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.

School Excellence Framework domain of Learning...

The school's self-assessment is consistent with the evidence presented in four elements and is validated using the School Excellence Framework. In the element of;– Assessment and Reporting the evidence presented indicates the school is operating at the Sustaining and Growing stage. There is demonstrated commitment within the school to strengthen and deliver on school learning priorities.

School Excellence Framework domain of Teaching...

In the domain of Teaching the school's self-assessment is consistent with the evidence presented in four elements and is validated using the School Excellence Framework. In the element of;– Effective Classroom Practice the evidence presented indicates the school is operating at the Sustaining and Growing stage. Teachers work together to improve teaching and learning to support to support the growth of student learning and welfare.

School Excellence Framework domain of Leading...

In the domain of Leading the school's self-assessment is consistent with the evidence presented in four elements and is validated using the School Excellence Framework. In the element of;– Leadership the evidence presented indicates the school is operating at the Sustaining and Growing stage. There is a broad understanding of, and support for school expectations and aspirations for improving students learning across the school community.

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

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/school-excellence-framework>

Strategic Direction 1

Excellence in Learning

Purpose

To deliver an integrated approach to quality curriculum planning that meets the needs of all students. To enable students to flourish by developing their cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual strengths through engaging learning experiences.

Overall summary of progress

Ajuga School has a positive learning culture where respectful relationships are nurtured between students, staff and the community. This culture is underpinned with policies that ensure student attendance is analysed and appropriate action is taken to best support students and families. Student success, learning and behaviours are discussed daily with all staff during a debrief meeting. Whole school communication develops a holistic approach that supports the emotional and learning needs of our students. The school is utilising data to track student learning to inform future directions. This is particularly relevant in our literacy and numeracy groups. Students are taught to accept responsibility for their choices through daily reflection. This gives peers and teaching staff the opportunity to address both successes and areas for student improvement. In addition, every student works towards behaviour goals underpinned by the SMART principle. Students are active participants and are key contributors to the planning and execution of various fundraising initiatives and contribute to the wider community. The school's Welfare and Discipline Policy as reviewed in 2017 to reflect Department policy and ensures that a fair and consistent approach to behaviour support is provided for students with appropriate consequences for positive and negative behaviours. The policy clearly defines behavioural expectations that are of a high standard. Improved student wellbeing.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Each term there will be improvement for 100% of students using the numeracy continuum learning descriptors.	Mathletics \$835 Teacher relief \$1300 Learning support officer \$2000 Read Revisit Retell Books \$1250	Formative assessment strategies were used to collect data that allowed staff to differentiate learning programs the year to differentiate learning programs to support the learning growth of each child. The work done this year is helping staff to cater for the individual learning needs of our students. Maths groups were formed to differentiate the learning for every child.
An increased percentage of students are reaching level 2 through self regulating their behaviour and achieving their learning goals.	Level excursions \$500 Prizes and trophies \$100 Music therapist \$20,000	Data indicates an improvement in attendance levels and an increase in students achieving level 2 and level 3 this year. There has been a focus on wellbeing through Positive education, music therapy and maintaining high expectations of student behaviour in all classrooms. We have used the flexible wellbeing funding to support this.
Increase percentage of positive responses from students and parent/carers via the Tell Them From Me survey		The TTFM survey indicated students were engaged and enjoying their experiences at Ajuga. Increased communication via social media has improved whole school partnerships. Staff are experimenting with a range of methods to build upon authentic communication with parents.

Next Steps

- Further develop student engagement through a Berry St Trauma Training, Attendance and Positive Education programs
- Further develop student wellbeing through Art and Music Therapy, Shine 4 Girls Program and Ambassador Program

- Further develop staff capacity in Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting using Spirals of Inquiry and Formative Assessment
- Further development of the SRC is needed to enhance greater student representation
- Introduction of Allied Health professional to build teacher and student skills in self regulation and self care.
- Introduction of a student mentoring program

Strategic Direction 2

Excellence in Teaching

Purpose

To inspire and create excellence in teaching and learning through positive personalised and differentiated experiences driven by focused professional development. Joint collaboration between the school and community will lead to improved student outcomes and a deeper sense of pride within the school community. Partnerships with all stakeholders both within and beyond the school are encouraged and sustained through high quality communication and shared professional practice.

Overall summary of progress

Ajuga School provides opportunities for all staff to undertake leadership roles within the school that move beyond the classroom. Project teams plan and execute whole school events that give students the opportunity to showcase their talents to the wider school community. These events are well attended by parents and are highlights of the Ajuga School calendar. Further, opportunities for classroom teachers to relieve in executive roles are facilitated to support aspiring leaders. Collaboration is the pivotal component that enables teachers to establish classrooms that are well managed so students access the curriculum equitably. Primary Mathematics and Literacy groups is an outstanding example of collaborative planning that meets the learning needs of individual students. In 2017 Formative Assessment practices have been embedded in all classroom practice. An evidence based lesson format is delivered in all classrooms. This involves explicit instruction complimented with a Learning Intention and Success Criteria. Through this format, students are able to assess their own learning and have a clear understanding of the educational purpose of the lesson. Timely feedback that focuses on the next step in student learning is evident in classrooms and student feedback is gained through exit slips. As a result students are at the centre of the learning process and have an understanding and input into curriculum delivery.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
All staff receive feedback against their PDP's to evaluate their practice in order to direct the next steps to improve their professional knowledge to address student's learning needs.		PDP's implemented and working well for staff to support both their professional growth and development goals, the school vision and support the individual learning and welfare needs of each child. Further professional learning about how to write Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely (SMART) goals is planned for 2018
All staff collaboratively design learning programs with students using learning intentions and success criteria.	Staff Professional Development \$13578	Learning intentions and success criteria are used for each learning task. Staff see the benefit of collaboration within and outside of the school. Staff use student data to plan learning programs. Staff have been given the opportunity to engage in professional learning which has had a positive impact on student learning. Further opportunity for collaboration will be sought in 2018
100% of students have been benchmarked using Multilit	SLSO support of Multilit / training – \$47,000	Each student's reading skills are supported daily using the Multilit literacy program. All students reading competency will be further assessed in 2018 using the PM benchmarking kit.

Next Steps

- Performance & Development practices and procedures will be further refined using SMART goals for all staff including SASS.
- Strategic focus on staff development of classroom management skills, with teachers as the leaders in the classroom requiring less executive intervention.
- Collective efficacy will continue to be a focus with staff consultation playing a major role in the development of the

2018–20 school plan and general day to day functioning.

- Teachers will lead committees to ensure that all staff play a significant role in major events of the school.
- Further staff development in pedagogies relating to assessment moderation and feedback and wider use of instructional leadership.
- Further development of the teacher mentoring program.
- A greater focus on systematic and regular collection of data
- Staff will engage in the Berry St Trauma training to inform their teaching practice when working with students with mental health issues

Strategic Direction 3

Excellence in Leading

Purpose

To support the efficiency of Ajuga School operations and strengthen innovative practices in a framework of continuous change and dynamic student population. Capacity building and reform management are driven by strong leadership, planning and evaluation. To ensure that the Ajuga School community including parents, carers, mainstream schools and external agencies form an integral part of the decision making process.

Overall summary of progress

Ajuga School adopts a holistic approach to leadership whereby students, parents/carers and staff have opportunities to make positive contributions. The school has an active SRC that take on personal responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that sets an example to peers. The social and emotional development of students is targeted through students taking responsibility to lead assemblies and take on individual responsibilities around the school. We are developing an active parent community who attend whole school events and have contributed to school planning through surveys. The parent community provide peer support at our weekly parent group – connect.ed. Ajuga School requires all staff to connect to external schools and agencies to best support our students. Classroom teachers establish clear communication links with mainstream schools to enable successful integration of students. SLSO staff support the dynamic needs of students in mainstream schools on integration days. The executive team is well respected and provides support for staff across all levels of school functioning as evident in survey data. School facilities have been upgraded to meet the broad range of students at Ajuga School. The Flexible Learning Spaces have been designed to give students the opportunity to learn in an environment that is conducive to their own style of learning. The reading nook has provided a warm and cosy space for children to read quietly in a relaxed setting. The Orchard and Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden receives modifications as per need and produces seasonal produce used regularly in the school. Fresh eggs are obtained from our upgraded chicken coop and the students in our Tech Ed classes maintain the coop.. Upgrades to facilities have contributed to learning spaces being organised, in good condition and aesthetically pleasing thus contributing to a welcoming and supportive environment for all.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
An increased number of staff are leading projects designed to improve professional knowledge and practice to better meet the learning needs of students.	Teacher relief \$6700	Staff were identified to lead projects to support the validation process and growth in student learning. This has helped to initiate and engage professional discussion with colleagues to improve the individual and collective skills of our staff. Further work is planned in 2017 to provide authentic opportunities for aspiring leaders and classroom teachers.
Increase in the percentage of parent/carers contributing to the development of their child's learning and wellbeing.	Staffing and Programs within Connect Ed \$21000	There has been significant community engagement through Connect:Ed and social media. Both Facebook and Twitter accounts are used regularly by staff and accessed by parents and carers. In 2018 we will be build on the opportunities to engage parents/carers in the progress of their child's learning and wellbeing.

Next Steps

- Further development of management practices, school policies and School Planning & Evaluation strategies
- Greater focus on systems leadership and mentoring practices
- Greater Community Engagement through Connect:Ed, and social media
- Additional leadership opportunities for aspiring leaders and classroom teachers.
- Further opportunities for parents/carers to engage in their child's learning and wellbeing including working with Allied Health professionals to ensure strategies used at Ajuga are also used at home.
- Regular home school visits to ensure teachers share and collaborate on common strategies to support each

student across both schools.

- Implementation of more structured enrolment procedures with the expectation that every home school will send a representative to the students enrolment meeting.

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	\$12000 teacher relief for programs	All Aboriginal students have Personalised Learning Pathways (PLP) and are demonstrating progress across the literacy and numeracy continuums. Once the yarning circle was built a program of learning was facilitated to train staff in the implementation of best practices for children with Aboriginal background and the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives into all teaching programs. The Gamarada Aboriginal group has been formed to give Aboriginal children at Ajuga a sense of community with their Aboriginal peers.
Socio-economic background	\$29000	Additional training and implementation of a Literacy program including literacy groups. The Multilit program has had substantial success with a staff member released to facilitate the program. Two other staff members have been trained in Multilit to enhance the p[rogram in 2018 as well as the purchase of the resources needed to provide the best possible opportunities to each student.
Support for beginning teachers	\$6000	Early Career teachers have been supported by receiving additional teacher release time, individualised professional development, mentoring and coaching sessions. Beginning teachers are highly supported by the Assistant Principals to deliver excellent curriculum and focus on improving student learning outcomes. Teachers actively participated in stage and whole school planning and reporting. Teachers feel supported in the development of their knowledge and skills and are valued members of the school community.

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2014	2015	2016	2017
Boys	32	31	30	30
Girls	11	15	10	8

Since 2011 Ajuga has been staffed to enrol 49 students across K–12. Ajuga has been at full capacity since 2000 however this is not accurately reflected in the graph below as it only shows recorded student numbers at a certain census point in 2016. Student enrolment constantly fluctuates due to the integration model at Ajuga, which sees students exit and enter at various times throughout the school year.

Students are referred to Ajuga from their mainstream school. Applications are considered by a regional panel at an intake meeting held in Week 8 each term. The panel consists of welfare personnel as well as principal's representing schools for specific purposes, primary schools and high schools. Recommendations for placements are made by the panel and students enrol into Ajuga within the first few weeks of the following term.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal(s)	0
Assistant Principal(s)	2
Head Teacher(s)	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	4.84
Teacher of Reading Recovery	0
Learning & Support Teacher(s)	0
Teacher Librarian	0.2
Teacher of ESL	0
School Counsellor	0
School Administration & Support Staff	8.82
Other Positions	1.8

*Full Time Equivalent

There are no Aboriginal staff employed at the school.

Ajuga had 9.788 teaching positions allocated in 2017. This included staffing allocated to the Glenfield Return to School Program and a regional Student Welfare position. Our teaching staff are supported by 8 School Learning Support Officers including 1 at the Glenfield Return to School Program, a full time School Administration Manager, a School Administration Officer and a General Assistant.

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	1

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Significant amounts of professional learning were undertaken by Ajuga School staff in 2017. All staff participated in weekly professional learning sessions on a vast variety of topics relating to our context. These topics ranged from Child Protection to Effective iPad Use, Autism, Challenging Behaviours and Individual Learning Plans. Teachers participated in external professional development in the areas of Formative Assessment, Spirals of Inquiry, Mentoring, Classroom management through effective teaching, STEM in the classroom, Leading change with a growth mindset at a total cost of approximately \$15500. In 2017, we had 4 teachers become accredited at Proficient level with NESA and 3 maintaining accreditation at Proficient level.

Financial information (for schools fully deployed to SAP/SALM)

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017.

	2017 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	560,156
Revenue	2,142,028
Appropriation	2,123,430
Sale of Goods and Services	482
Grants and Contributions	14,212
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	0
Investment Income	3,904
Expenses	-2,048,836
Recurrent Expenses	-2,048,836
Employee Related	-1,941,265
Operating Expenses	-107,571
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	93,192
Balance Carried Forward	653,348

Our school's financial management processes and governance structures meet financial policy requirements. There was no unusual spending patterns or substantial underspending/overspending

Financial summary equity funding

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

	2017 Actual (\$)
Base Total	402,650
Base Per Capita	14,314
Base Location	0
Other Base	388,336
Equity Total	83,473
Equity Aboriginal	8,187
Equity Socio economic	74,886
Equity Language	400
Equity Disability	0
Targeted Total	1,404,625
Other Total	187,312
Grand Total	2,078,061

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.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

The Tell Them From Me survey was again used to gather feedback from the community on their satisfaction of school. The information collected is used to support decision making for school improvement. The feedback we received from students, parents and carers demonstrated strong support and relationships. Our school's Facebook and Twitter page also endorses this strong partnership. We also took a survey of staff, students and community with 3 questions – What skills or abilities do you want to leave Ajuga with?; How well do you feel cared for at Ajuga (on a scale of 1–10)? What programs of learning would you like to see at Ajuga?

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

In 2017 we continued to acknowledge students who have shown the capacity to respect themselves, their peers and staff with our weekly Aboriginal Respect Award. All students contribute to our Sorry Day, NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week assembly items to show respect and acknowledgment of the Indigenous people of this land. We have formed the Gamarada group for Aboriginal students and they played a significant role in the reconciliation week inviting students to try bush foods and take part a smoking ceremony led by an Aboriginal elder. The Gamarada group also painted a dreamtime mural in the school. We have also continued our breakfast program and provided fresh fruit at recess and lunch.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

In 2017 we continued to promote differing cultural beliefs and customs by promoting cultural understandings and acceptance in the classroom, school and community. All of our students participated in Harmony Day activities that recognise and celebrate Australia's diverse multicultural population.

The Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) is the contact person for any students, staff, parents/carers and community members with any questions regarding racism. In 2017 our ARCO undertook further training and again delivered pamphlets and posters to school community members who originated from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This strengthened communication links with the wider school community.

The school community also recognised a number of students from refugee backgrounds and have liaised with the refugee support group and services to provide extra support in the form of SLSO's from a Persian background who give language support and behavioural support through the refugee counselling service.