

2005 Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools Submission Form

Title of submission: *Camp Hill Infants: Where Boys Fly High Too*

School/s: **Camp Hill Infants State School**

District: **Mt Gravatt**

Area: **Southern Brisbane**

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Showcase Award for Excellence in the Early Phase of Learning

Submission overview: *(for public relations and media use)*

Camp Hill Infants State School has embarked on a program to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of its students, especially the boys. The school has established support networks, refined teaching techniques and reorganised its resources so that it can approach literacy and numeracy education as a whole-of-school endeavour.

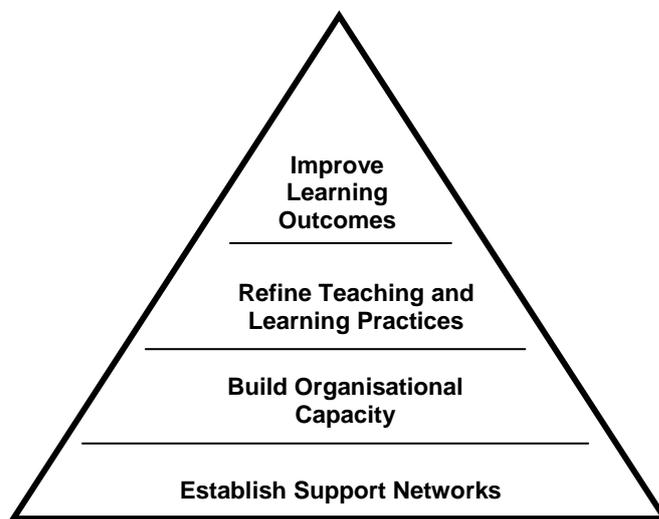
Today, superior performances in reading, writing and numbers demonstrate the differences that can be made when teachers, parents and students work together.

Since the program began in 2000, the number of students, particularly male students, NOT requiring additional support in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net has increased significantly and is now higher than state targets. In 2004, only 8 per cent of boys required extra assistance with their reading (a 28 per cent improvement over four years), six percent with their writing (a 24 per cent improvement) and 15 per cent with numbers (an 11 per cent improvement).

The school is now recognised as a leader in the Early Phase of Learning and hosts visits from state, national and international educators.

Detailed Description of Submission:

Camp Hill Infants is a small school (245 students) situated in the eastern suburbs of Brisbane with children from 4-7 years of age. Between 6 and 9% of children attending the school are identified with special needs (Autism Spectrum Disorder and/or Intellectual Impairment). This submission outlines how Camp Hill Infants State School (CHISS) has improved, and continues to improve, literacy and numeracy outcomes for its students through a whole-of-school approach to the Early Phase of Learning that focuses on establishing support networks, building organisational capacity, refining teaching and learning practices and improving learning outcomes (see Figure below).



Learning outcomes are built on strong foundations.

1. Establish Support Networks

The staff have established support networks to inform themselves of latest education trends and embrace current research and practice. This is vital to challenge current practices and justify the need to change. It provides a perspective of CHISS within a broader educational context (we are not an island on our own but part of an education system). Staff participate in alliances, networks and discussions groups (eg P-T Alliance, PTP – Powerful teaching Practices, TTT – Teachers Talking to Teachers, LDC – Literacy Development Centre)

- The school has engaged critical friends to support the change process. These included Associate Professor Brendan Bartlett from Griffith University's (GU) School of Cognition, Language and Special Education, Patricia Connell and Carolyn Harrod from the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) and Angela Hack (Early Childhood Unit, EQ). Their role is to provide advice and be a sounding board for ideas. GU has undertaken a research project *Boys Flying High* on our behalf to determine why our practices are so successful for boys.

2. Build Organisational Capacity

The school has established a Learning Community comprised of Principal, parents, teachers, aides and students. We all identify as learners and assist one another.

Parents are recognised as their child's first teacher and are engaged in the decision-making processes of the school as well as being involved in the decision-making related to their child's learning. Regular communication is ensured through the use of KIT (Keep in Touch) books.

An open door policy actively promotes parents' involvement in school and classroom activities. Parents bring children into classrooms each morning and involve themselves in the program. Dads can often be found on the carpet reading books to children or involved in intricate constructions. Others are involved in daily reading, other literacy and numeracy activities, enrichment activities, and sport.

- Staff develop expertise by engaging in projects with other schools. Two recent projects have been the use of *Learning Objects in Maths* – a joint project with Mt Gravatt State High School and Mt Gravatt State Primary School; and *Inquiry Learning and Science* with Camp Hill State Primary School and Whites Hill State College. They participate in conferences, workshops and seminars.

- Staff share knowledge and expertise by hosting visits from teachers in other schools, mentoring student teachers from Griffith University, and taking on leadership roles within the school. In addition, parents, teachers and aides regularly present at conferences and forums in relation to Prep and the Early Years.

Refine Teaching and Learning Practices

- The school community has developed a shared philosophy and rationale for the early years of learning that promotes learning as active, investigative and play-based and is evidenced in classroom practice.
- Programs are child responsive. This means that they respond to the developmental needs of individual children and provide flexibility and choice.
- Literacy and numeracy are embedded in activities that are purposeful. Programs are co-constructed with children and respond to their interests (see CD Rom for an example)
- Staff recognise that most children do not begin school knowing how to behave and operate in a school context as a learner. Social skills and appropriate behaviours are explicitly taught and a proactive Behaviour Support Plan facilitates successful interactions.
- Teachers scaffold children's learning to focus on higher order thinking. They do this by listening and responding to conversations, inquiries, questions and theories about the world; using interactions to extend and build understandings, capabilities and dispositions; making learning explicit and relevant; building connections to link prior learning and new learning; investigating and challenging alternate ways of knowing, thinking and doing; discussing with children the outcomes of choices made; and reducing support as independence grows.
- The school employs deliberate strategies to engage children's interest and recognise their success. These include *Star Writers' Capes* to recognise writing attempts (which have captured media attention), *Book Worm Awards* to promote reading, and careful monitoring of the books that boys and girls borrow from the library to inform staff of children's interests.

Improving Learning Outcomes

Staff are committed to improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for students. They are uncompromising in their expectations that children will succeed and set goals and targets collaboratively that are shared with parents and outlined in the school's Annual Operational Plan.

3.

- Children's progress and development are carefully monitored through our Student Welfare Committee and internal school monitoring. A skilled teacher provides point-in-time support for individual children.

Connection to QSE – 2010, Destination 2010 and/or Education and Training Reforms for the Future:

The programs and school processes outlined are congruent with the Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) agenda and incorporate the following components of Destination 2010's Key Performance Measures and Indicators:

- LE 1.1 – Percentages of students not requiring additional support for each area of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net: Reading, Writing, and Number
- LE 1.5 – Schools have targeted intervention strategies to improve learning outcomes for all students.
- LE 2.3 – Schools with primary classes have a shared philosophy and integrated learning programs enacted across the early years
- SC 1.1 – Schools have a clear educational rationale responsive to community needs for their distinctive approach to improving learning outcomes

In addition, the outcomes from our school approach demonstrate that implementing the ETRF agenda in the Early Years can make a valuable contribution to the Smart State.

Outcomes Achieved and Evidence:

Literacy and Numeracy Results

- Overall school results in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net for literacy and numeracy have improved since 2000 (see Appendix G, Figures 1 –3). The graphs show:
 - Percentage of students NOT requiring additional support in reading has increased by 17.1% (see *Figure 1*)
 - Percentage of students NOT requiring additional support in writing has increased by 10.1% (see *Figure 2*)
 - Percentage of students NOT requiring additional support in number has increased by 10.7% (see *Figure 3*).
- School has surpassed State targets set for 2005 in reading and number since 2001 and in writing since 2002 (see *Figures 1-3*).
- Boys' results in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net for literacy and numeracy have improved since 2000 (see Appendix G, Figures 4-6). The graphs show:
 - Percentage of boys NOT requiring additional support in reading has increased by 28% over 4 years (see *Figure 4*)
 - Percentage of boys NOT requiring additional support in writing has increased by 16.3% (see *Figure 5*)
 - Percentage of boys NOT requiring additional support in number has increased by 10.8% (see *Figure 6*)

Results of *Boys Flying High* Research Project that explain why our children, especially boys do well at our school

- A survey of children across Preschool to Year 2 ($n=32$) indicated that 86% think themselves to be a good reader.
- Teachers focus on developing deep knowledge and understandings and have high expectations of children.
- Staff actively engage boys by seeking out and responding to boys' interests and providing them with opportunities to engage in things that interest them,
- Teachers use strategies (eg flexibility, co-constructing) that make boys feel in charge (empowered) in their learning.
- The close liaison between parents and teachers make boys see being literate as important, feel confident about their own ability to develop as a reader/writer, and are motivated by positive feedback.
- Teachers recognise gender differences and tailor their teaching strategies to respond to them in their teaching.

Support from Parents

- Parents commend and support the school's approach to teaching (*Source: Boys Flying High*)
- 94.9% of parents are satisfied that children are getting a good education at the school (source – *Parent Opinion Survey*)
- The school enrolment has increased – 2 additional Year 1 classes formed in 2005.

Teachers' Knowledge and Skill

- Teachers presented their practice at Griffith University's International Conference- *Educating: Weaving Research into Practice (2004)*
- All teachers have made significant changes in teaching practices at Camp Hill Infants. As part of the Griffith research project, observations in all classrooms of literacy and numeracy lessons (*n=60*) using the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRL) identified a high percentage of the elements of Productive Pedagogy evident in lessons (see *Appendix G Figure 7*).
- Griffith University's research study *Boys Flying High* identified our successful teaching practices that support children's literacy and numeracy success, especially for our boys (see above).

Support from the educational Community

- During 2004-2005, many educators visited Camp Hill Infants State School to find out about our Early Years program. These were from Queensland, inter-state and overseas (see Table below).
- Griffith University has negotiated successfully with Education Queensland to establish an Early Years Internship experience at Camp Hill Infants for final year Education students commencing 2005 (see Appendix D).
- Media interest in the Early Years Program at CHISS has resulted in features on *ABC Stateline*, *Channel 9 A Current Affair*, and the news on all channels.

| Visitors | 2004 | 2005 |
|--------------|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 school teams • 3 Brisbane university • 3 international universities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 school teams (to date) • 2 Brisbane universities |
| Research | ➤ <i>Boys Flying High – Griffith University</i> | |
| Publications | ➤ <i>Bartlett, B. Grimbeek, P. Fluckiger, B. (2004). Researching Caped Crusaders: The Boys Flying High Project in Early Literacy at Camp Hill. Griffith University</i> ➤ <i>Rogers, N. (2004). Boys and Literacy at Camp Hill Infants State School. University of Newcastle</i> ➤ <i>Irwin G, Noble, K. Rogers, N. Boys Flying High in Literacy at Camp Hill Infants State School.</i> | |