Welcome to McDonnell Creek State School. We pride ourselves on hard work, achieving success and respecting the tradition of our community and school.

I believe that if children feel safe and happy, they will engage and excel in their learning. We deliver a quality multi-age curriculum, reflective of current practice, to meet the needs of all students in a caring family atmosphere.

Our supportive community coupled with our active and forward thinking P&C provide our families with the comfort of a safe, happy and welcoming learning environment.

Our school and community practice a ‘zero tolerance’ policy to bullying anti-social behaviour. We strongly adhere to a School-Wide Positive Behaviours (SWPBS) framework.

The Now:

We are very much a school on the move. With enrolments continually on the increase, families are particularly interested in investing their children’s future in our reinvigorated curriculum.

Staff provides a supportive environment throughout your child’s primary schooling years where health and safety are paramount. Our nurturing relationships bonds parents, teachers and students, and together we achieve success.

Our staff takes much time perfecting their planning to consistently deliver the best learning products for students. We deliver learning in small group setting with low ratios ranging from 1-3 to 1-8 instructors to students, with a number of opportunities for one-on-one support.

We pride ourselves on using the most up to date technologies and practices in education to deliver the best learning tools and information for student learning, on a daily basis. Professional development of our staff, parents and our community are very high on our agenda, as we do believe in holistic education practices to enhance students’ engagement in learning.

McDonnell Creek is a school where beliefs, cultural and physical differences and backgrounds are mixed as one and the school and community celebrate diversity. We believe that our differences make what we know to be a dynamic learning environment rich with diverse thinkers.

Our Curriculum and Learning Environment

The school has successfully adopted the Australian Curriculum and C2C into the classroom throughout the whole school curriculum this year. This has brought a number of exciting educational opportunities to consolidate and extend our learning and caters for all our diverse learners and styles.

McDonnell Creek prides itself on providing students with a significant head start in their life and we believe this begins with a very strong literacy reading program. Each day all students are exposed to active reading from teachers, student to teacher and peer guided reading. We consolidate students’ knowledge of a text through comprehension programs. We will continue to develop our strong curriculum with the knowledge that reading shapes the children’s future.

All of our classes across all curriculum areas consist of learning groups directly catering for students learning at their level. Students are always engaged in small learning network, with like-minded and levelled students and are offered many opportunities for extending their learning. All learning groups work with either teacher or teacher aide with low ratios of instructor to students.

Both literacy and numeracy programs are supported by ICT software which is directly linked to the student’s daily classroom learning and consolidates their classroom understandings.

Our curriculum includes: Literacy, Numeracy, SOSE, Science, Music, Instrumental Music, HPE, The Arts, Library and ICT.

The Future:

In 2013 we celebrated our 100th Anniversary! And celebrating all things that make McDonnell Creek what it is – fantastic!

We will continue to develop our curriculum, school ethos and hone our skills as outstanding practitioners to exceed the expectations of our families and the community, while upholding the values and quality of Australia’s Public Education System.

We continue to research and implement a number of digital technologies and practices to meet the needs of our changing environment, and to meet the needs of all of our students and societies changing expectations.

I am delighted on behalf of our community to be able to share our school with you. I encourage you to contact the school at any time to discuss this further and learn about many other things that make McDonnell Creek a fantastic place to learn.

Yours sincerely and with kindest regards,

Sam Symes
Principal

McDonnell Creek State School

PO Box 324 Babinda QLD 4861
Phone: 07 4067 5389
Fax: 07 4067 5104
Email: the.principal@mcdonnellcreeks.eq.edu.au
ABN: 87 534 547 495
SCHOOL PROFILE

McDonnell Creek State School is a small school in the Cairns Coastal District, midway between Cairns and Innisfail. Situated close to the coast and adjacent to the valley of the Mulgrave River and near the Russell River, there is considerable high rainfall almost year round.

The school serves a community that was once almost totally devoted to cane growing, but the current school population comprises children from a range of family occupations. The changes in cane growing in the 1980s saw many farms change from multiple family operations to mainly single-family operations. Some local parents now commute to Cairns and nearby centres to pursue work while an increasing proportion of parents from nearby larger centres choose to send their children to McDonnell Creek State School, preferring the small school setting.

The socio-economic level of the area is middle class with accompanying traditional values. There is a solid appreciation of the function and service of the education centre of the community – our school. Parents and community members generally support the school and its functions, attending assemblies and community events as school representatives. There is an obvious air of pride and belonging with activities structured to encourage broad community participation and keep as many people as possible in touch with the school. The student population is a combination of local children drawn from Fishery Falls (2km), Deeral (3.4km) and Gordonvale (18km). A bus service operates daily between our school and Gordonvale.

The school consists of two classrooms joined by an enclosed ‘verandah’, a small reception and office area, a staffroom and storeroom. A double teaching space demountable building was added in the late 1990s to cater for an increase in enrolments. It has been fully refurbished and equipped with all modern and current requisites. The completion of a covered walkway in 1995 provided all weather access to the toilets and was added to in 2000 giving a complete covered walkway from the main school to the demountable. To the west of the toilets is a large storage shed and a smaller sports equipment shed, and beyond that, a tennis court. This court was fully refurbished with a grant from the Community Gambling Benefits Fund. There is a large multi-purpose undercover area, which allows students to play in all weathers. The undercover area, constructed in 2008, was funded through the Investing in our Schools program. Resources and amenities at the school have been kept at optimal levels through annual purchases of new technology, and through federal government’s Building the Education Revolution funding in 2010.

The school is situated in arguably the most scenic stretch of Queensland coast and has a panoramic view of great beauty. There is an environmental block at the rear of the school, which has been used by visiting children from other schools. This area was devastated by Cyclone Larry (2006), and Cyclone Yasi (2010), and was been the focus of a major revegetation project. Submissions to the Main Roads Department have seen the expansion of the road facilities in front of the school with expanded pullover lanes and bus parking areas included. We also have a sealed car park on the northern side of the school. This gives parents a safe, off road parking area with direct access to the school grounds.
STUDENTS

While most children in years gone by were from cane farming families, this is now changing. While a number of students still come from families involved in cane farming, or associated industries e.g. mill workers, harvest operators, there is now a significant number of children from a wide ranging spectrum of work backgrounds, including hoteliers, service station, bus driver, concreters, fruit growers, self-employed, tilers, food industry and Main Roads employees.

In 2010, there were seventeen students enrolled in the school for the majority of the year. Because of the number of enrolments, there is one teaching principal and a multi-age learning philosophy is in place for most teaching activities.

The students at McDonnell Creek State School are engaged in learning activities drawn from the current Education Queensland documents across all of the Key Learning Areas. Students participate in a broad range of experiences and contribute to the direction of their schooling in meaningful ways.

STAFF

PRINCIPAL: Mr Sam Symes
TEACHING STAFF: Mr Sam Symes (Friday Lynne Rees)
Miss Gemma Ewin

ADMIN OFFICER: Ms Christine Fardon
TEACHER AIDES:
Mrs Karen Buﬁ
Mrs Sharon Magnus
Mrs Lesley Addison
Mrs Donna Lauridson
Ms Gina Woods

CLEANING STAFF:

Visiting Teachers

Physical Education - Mr Wheeler
Students learn a variety of sporting skills.

LOTE Teacher - Mrs Smith
For Years 4 to 7. Students learn about the culture of Japan and how to speak the language.

Music Teacher - Mrs Rees
Students learn music appreciation; how to develop singing voices; how to read musical notes and play the recorder.

Instrumental Music - Mr Zahner
Offered to the students who are 9 years and over. Instruments available for loan from school.

School Prospectus McDonnell Creek State School
MULTIAGE PHILOSOPHY

Due to the small number of students at our school we have adopted a multi-age approach to the structure of class. There is a great deal of advantages of running a multi-age classroom.

Multi-age promotes and supports the understanding that different ages groups can be achieving at the same academic level, while maintaining healthy social and emotional well-being and development.

- Easier transition and adjustments
- There are always students who are familiar with class routines in turn this means there are more people to ask for help or assistance with day to day matters and procedures.
- Curriculum activities are designed to best meet the needs of all the students.
- It provides students with opportunities to achieve success yet be able to progress and meet more demanding and challenging tasks.
- It is vitally important to provide students with opportunities to feel and achieve success. This is where the academic aspect of school impacts on a child’s social development.

Multi-age classroom environments allow students to develop a greater ability to accept their own strengths and weaknesses and respect the strengths and weaknesses of others.

Other aspects that our school values about our multi-age classroom;

- Age is not a socially determining factor
- General acceptance of difference
- Friendship goes across ages
- Milestones achieved at different ages (home and school)
- In built mentoring / support
- Different points of view
- Supportive environment
- No sense of failure
- Children doing different activities at different levels working to their own capacity.
- The close ties between the school and community enhance their education. We hope you will become involved in the school and help us continue providing an education relevant to your child’s needs.
TEACHING AND LEARNING

McDonnell Creek State School uses the Australian National Curriculum documents for planning teaching and learning sequences:

- English
- Maths
- Technology
- The Arts
- Languages other than English (LOTE)
- Studies of Society and the Environment (SOSE)
- Science
- Health and Physical Education (HPE)

Learning contexts are negotiated with the students, in order to engage them as fully as possible in the learning experiences provided. Units of work are planned, depending on the longevity of the National Curriculum – C2C unit, and integrate learning outcomes from across several Key Learning Areas (KLAs). Students produce Key Assessment Tasks which are assessed on criteria sheets, as demonstrated evidence of their learning.

The School Curriculum Plan ensures the provision of a range and balance of learning experiences across the KLAs, and the incorporation of inclusive educational practices catering for a range of individual students.

A multi-age philosophy sees students from Prep-Year 2 and Year 3-Year 7, in air-conditioned double demountable spaces. Group work is used extensively to cater for students at their individual developmental level rather than their chronological age.

Specialist subject areas are a regular part of the classroom program, with Instrumental Music being offered to interested students from Year 4; classroom music for all students for 45mins per week; Health and Physical Education (HPE) for all students for 45mins per week; and LOTE for Years 4-7 for 90mins per week. Specialist teachers service the five schools in the cluster.

LEARNING INTERVENTION

Where children are identified by either internal monitoring processes or systemic data collection, as having a specific need in a particular area, individual or small group programs are organised.

Tuition is provided by the classroom teacher or trained teacher aides. A Support Teacher: Learning Difficulties visits the fortnightly, to provide additional support to the students and staff.

Where further referral is required, we have access to a Guidance Officer and a Speech Language Pathologist and can arrange for any other support needed.
THE SCHOOL DAY

A normal school day begins with the ringing of a bell at 8.45 a.m., to alert students to prepare themselves and get ready for the day. It enables students to go to the toilet, have a drink and take books etc into their rooms. At 8.50 a.m. the school day officially begins. Generally, we ask children not to come to school before 8.00 a.m. as there is no formal supervision of children in the grounds before this time. However, should there be an occasion requiring early arrival, we can arrange supervision with prior notice. Bus children generally arrive earlier, as they have no alternative.

There are three sessions to the day:-

   Morning Session  (8.50-11.00)
   Middle Session   (11.40-1.10)
   Afternoon Session(1.50-3.00)

It is normal to ring a bell five minutes before the end of each break to alert children to go to the toilet, wash their hands and have a drink if needed. At 10am students are permitted a 5min ‘Munch ‘n’ Crunch’ break where they can visit the toilet, have a brink and a fresh piece of fruit or vegetable or a diary item. Morning Recess is primarily to ensure that children have something to eat and drink and go to the toilet. Time remaining after these activities may be used to play. Midday Recess is used for the same reasons, with approximately 10 minutes given to eat lunch, followed by play.

The school offers a private small bus which runs from White Rock to McDonnell Creek, picking up students along the way from their door. This service will arrive at school at 8.30am each morning and will depart with the same schedule at 3.10pm. The private bus is managed and run under insurance and supervision of the Miss Lolly’s Day Care and Kindy Centre in Edmonton. Government subsidies are also available to assist in covering costs to those families who qualify. More information on the private bus system can be obtained from the school office direct.

The school bus from Gordonvale arrives at approximately 7.45 a.m. and leaves school at approximately 3.30 p.m. The contractor should be contacted by parents to obtain a schedule of fees. The Queensland Transport Department subsidises those living over the stipulated minimum distance for eligibility, but only if travelling to the nearest state school.

Should parents require their children to leave earlier than the nominated time for close of the school day, arrangements can easily be made by either a written note or a telephone call to school. Should there be a problem with parents being late to pick up their children after school; it is appreciated if the same process can be used to notify school staff.

Yours Sincerely,

Sam Symes

Principal
SCHOOL UNIFORMS

New Uniforms:
Are now available (see image below).
- Senior students can purchase the Senior Student Shirt and the Standard Shirt is available for all other students.
- A school hat is required; see the bottom of the page.
- Boys and girls are encouraged to wear shorts; however girls may choose skorts as an alternative. Shorts and skorts must be Navy blue in colour.
- Students are encouraged to wear white runners or black shoes, which must be fully enclosed, with white socks.

Hats:
All children must wear a broad-brimmed hat in accordance with Government Legislation and the Sun Safety Initiative. The P&C has a stock of hats available for those who lose or wear out their hats. Prices are kept to a minimum and merely cover the cost of purchase. Hats are to be worn on any occasions where we leave the school grounds. We always have on hand a supply of sunscreen and offer it for use by students, especially in the hot summer months.

Shoes
For safety reasons, students are to wear shoes at all times.

Jewellery:
Jewellery is not part of the school uniform. If students have pierced ears, small sleeper or stud ear-rings are acceptable; large, hanging ear-rings have the potential to damage ears if they are accidentally pulled during play time. Students may wear a necklace for cultural or religious reasons (e.g., crucifix), inside their shirts. Students are also permitted to wear a wrist-watch.

School Uniform Prices:
As at 1st September 2013, school uniform prices are:

- Senior school shirt $28.50
- Standard school shirt $28.50
- Hat $12.00
 GENERAL INFORMATION

A very supportive P&C operates within this community to aid students through the purchase of equipment and resources as a result of its fundraising. This association meets once a month at the school and is generally very well represented, despite work commitments of parents. As well as providing valuable financial support, the P&C has input in program and budget decisions within the school. The association plays a very important role in the continuation of some valuable and valued traditions of the school. Each year, an end of year Presentation Afternoon is held involving as many local families, relations, community members as possible. We feel it is important to retain links with the broader community which has been active in supporting and promoting the school. These social occasions are very enjoyable and enable the children and present community members active in the school, to provide tangible evidence of modern trends and developments.

Meetings are held on the first Monday of each month (pending school holiday dates) from 3.30pm.

Our P&C Committee Consist of:

President: Mrs Emma Poyner
Vice President: Mr Gary Meehan
Treasurer: Mrs Nycole Freeman
Secretary: Mrs Stephanie Pieroni

Absences In the case of any absence, parents are asked to notify the school in writing or by phone. In this way, needless anxiety and worry may be avoided. Absences longer than three days, without notification, may be considered truancy under Government Legislation, which often involves the police in trying to determine the whereabouts of the absent pupil[s] – a potentially embarrassing and needless situation. Whilst having to involve the police in such a matter may be considered by some to be an over-reaction, all actions taken are purely on the grounds of ensuring pupil safety.

Borrowing resources, such as library books, is encouraged. There are some limitations placed upon these, especially those resources that have to be shared. In this case, we impose a time limit so all can share the material. Library books should be returned in one week from the time of borrowing, but an extension can be made to the return date should pupils / parents request one. Children are only allowed to borrow from the library if they have a waterproof library bag.

Care of school and personal property is an issue requiring attention. Although the utmost care and regard is taken to protect property, there can be no guarantees given. Parents and caregivers are urged to mark all items of stationery, clothing etc with clear and visible nametags or identifiable marks. We have a history of honesty and care at this school that has been in no small way due to the responsibility shown by our parents and students.

Enrolments Children enrolling in Years 2 to 7 should present on enrolment a transfer certificate from their previous school and if possible have available a copy of the latest report. In addition, existing workbooks and/or work samples (from the previous school) are welcome and can prove helpful in quickly identifying the needs of the child.

ADMISSION OF CHILDREN TO YEAR 1/PREP

Department Regulations States:

Children entering Prep must be five (5) by 30th June in the year of his/her enrolment.

Children entering Year One must have attained the age of six (6) by the 30th June in the year they enroll in Year 1.

Children can be enrolled any time during December.

Please come to the office and see Christine or myself.

When enrolling children in Prep and Year One, a BIRTH CERTIFICATE needs to be presented to verify the child’s age. Parents will also be asked to fill in forms, which advise us, what to do in case of an emergency; any allergies we should be aware of etc.

I look forward to meeting all of you. If we can help in any way don’t hesitate to ask!

Lunches at school are the responsibility of the parent / caregiver. We have a large refrigerator to keep lunches cool. We encourage children not to swap lunches and also to take home any excess lunch with them so that parents can determine the exact needs of their child. We encourage bus children to bring along something for afternoon tea. Students are encouraged to eat healthy food at school; e.g., fruit, vegetables, sandwiches, dairy foods, lean meat.

Medicines at school can be administered only if they are prescription medicines, with the child’s name, doctor and dosage printed on the medicine label. The medicine must be accompanied by a signed and dated letter from the parent or carer, which is kept on file. No over the counter medicines can be administered. These are Education Queensland requirements.

Newsletter The Bellenden Ker State School and Community Newsletter is sent home every even-week Friday of the term. If parents are to be notified about important information, a newsletter will go home on the alternate day. The newsletter contains information on current, past and future activities related to the School, P & C Association and Community News.

Parent Involvement We would like to encourage parents to assist in the school, whether in the classroom or the library. We welcome all the help and appreciate the assistance. The area of work chosen depends on the needs of the Teacher, or the expertise the parents have. Should you feel you have a skill, or time to offer, please contact the school.

School Prospectus McDonnell Creek State School
Reporting: Student report cards are sent home at the end of each semester. The Report Card must be returned to the school for verification that it has been signed, and it will then be returned home again. Interviews are arranged when the parent or teacher feels it necessary. I ask that you make an appointment to ensure that information required is readily available.

School photographs are taken every year, usually in term 1. From the beginning of 1988, government legislation allows the taking of individual as well as family and school photographs. Children are normally asked to pay in advance with a 4-6 week wait for the returned photos. This is purely a Company policy, not that of the school. Our school uses a local company which provides quality materials at a very reasonable rate and supports the school with promotions and fundraisers.

School staff includes a teaching principal, a full-time classroom teacher, 3 teacher aides, an administrative assistant, a cleaner and a grounds men.

Special needs of any students should be communicated to staff at school so that we can comply with parental wishes e.g. early release from class to accompany their parents, special toileting arrangements, help with lunches etc.

Specialist teachers in Music, Physical Education, Learning Support, Guidance and Language Other Than English [L.O.T.E.] visit on a regular basis. A Guidance Officer visits on an ‘as needed’ basis; L.O.T.E., twice a week; Music, Library and Physical Education are once weekly. We have access to other support personnel mainly on an ‘as needs’ basis. Specialist staff members are located in every district to provide specialist advice and help in Literacy, Numeracy, Studies of Society, Technology, Science etc.

Sports equipment is kept in a shed at school and is available for use by any pupil. Students are encouraged to return equipment to the shed immediately after each break. Should a student constantly leave valuable equipment lying out, they are given a warning to replace it where they found it and if the behaviour continues, they may be refused use of the gear for a period of time.

Parents and community members are encouraged to make full use of the school sporting facilities, especially the tennis court. If a request is made prior to the date of using the court etc, equipment can be made available.

Community members and parents of students generally have social tennis every Tuesday from 9.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. New players are always welcome.

Staff and P&C: As a general policy, all school decisions and directions are shared with the parents and community members. There is a strong traditional base of close cooperation between all members and pride in the achievements accomplished.

Stationery and books. A book list is provided to students towards the end of the school year, clearly indicating the type and quantity of items required for the following year. We endeavour to keep the lists as reasonably priced as possible, and only ask for items we fully intend to use. Text books are selected only if they will fully support our classroom learning programs.

Swimming is the part of the school Physical Education Program for all students during fourth term. Lessons are conducted at the Babinda Pool, once a week. The school arranges transport of students to and from the pool. The state government provides funds to cover some of the students’ pool and bus costs in its Learn to Swim Program. This is an Education Queensland curriculum requirement and students can be exempted only by forwarding a letter to the school requesting such exemption, usually because of a medical condition that prevents the child’s participation in this subject.

Teaching Principals are allocated administrative days, and are replaced by a registered teacher. This allocation is approximately 1 day per week and allows the teaching principal time to undertake the necessary management and administration tasks. Principals also are absent from time to time, involved in meetings of their professional association and with cluster schools. For continuity in the classroom, we have an arrangement whereby the same registered teacher will replace the principal for the administration days, as often as possible.

2014 SCHOOL YEAR

TERM 1
January 28 – April 4

TERM 2
April 22 - June 27

TERM 3
July 14 - September 19

TERM 4
October 7 - December 12
SCHOOL RULES AND PHILOSOPHIES

There are 3 School Rules, as determined by the students:

1. I am a learner.
2. I am safe.
3. I am respectful.

Our aim is to provide a safe environment for all children and adults.

1. Try to be punctual to class and remember the items you will need for the lessons.
2. Ask permission before you go somewhere or do something so that staff members know where you are and that you are safe.
3. Do not take other pupils with you unless they, too, have sought and received permission.
4. Always do your best to protect your belongings and those of the school.
5. Be helpful, kind and sharing in dealing with other students, staff and parents.
6. Be proud of your school and its uniform and do your best to bring credit to it and yourself.
7. If you do not know something, ask politely.
8. Regard your school as a place of learning and enjoyment; use the opportunities you have offered to lead you to success.
9. Always remain optimistic.
10. Try always to think of positive remarks or comments to use – ‘Build Up’, don’t ‘Put Down’.