

Hurstbridge Learning Co-op

An alternative approach to primary education for parents and children

2019 Annual Report to the School Community

School Number: 1721



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1. The School Context

The Learning Co-Operative Primary School, “the Co-op”, is an independent primary school set on 18 acres of natural bushland. Established in 1973, the Co-op operates as a consensus-based co-operative of families. The group is committed to working together to create a stimulating alternative to the children’s education.

1.1. *Facilities and Surrounds*

The land and buildings are totally owned by the Co-operative. The facilities include a kitchen as an integral part of the learning program, a library, an Arts space, an instrumental music space, a fully equipped theatre space (built with assistance of the BER grant), a small group workspace, a kiln room and a multi-purpose room for indoor games and performing arts.

The surrounds include adventure play equipment, cubbies and plenty of space to play. There is an abundance of creative garden spaces, a chook shed, and an organic kitchen garden including wicking beds and a food forest. The facilities accommodate enrolments of 25–30 students from ages 5 – 12 and include a shared open classroom space that encourages and supports multi-age learning, interaction, and child-to-child mentoring. The intimate size of the Co-op creates a community much like an extended family.

1.2. *Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility*

The Learning Co-operative supports environmental sustainability through its use of solar energy, tank water only supply, and is working towards becoming a carbon neutral environment. The children participate in the “Kids teaching Kids” conferences where environmental issues are explored as part of the learning program. The Learning Co-operative manages the bushland around the school and holds regular ‘Bushcare’ working bees to conserve the habitat. Children are involved in regular gardening activities in our organic kitchen garden.

1.3. *The Learning Environment, Philosophy & Curriculum Model: Overview*

The Learning Co-operative Primary School offers play-based learning opportunities based on the Victorian Curriculum in an environment where children are given a true voice with regards to their learning. Working within a dynamic educational framework, we provide a learning environment which is creative and constantly evolving; children work with their friends, in a peer based but cross aged learning environment, guided by parents and teachers to develop their unique passions. We do not use age-based grade levels, preferring broader groupings of ‘Biggies’, ‘Middlies’ and ‘Littlies’. We believe that every member of the community can contribute to the learning and raising of its children.

Choice, co-operation, open-mindedness, non-judgmental attitudes, wonder and curiosity are defining features of the learning environment.

Core units of numeracy, literacy and the other competencies of the Victorian Curriculum are delivered via a range of experiences to cater for all learners. The teaching staff and parents offer two focus-time sessions per day, where the children work on core competencies based on their individual needs and interests. The remainder of the day is spent on child-initiated projects and tasks, as well as activities created by the parent-body and teaching staff and plenty of time to play.

An Indigenous cultural program, through the Boite schools chorus experience and related activities and stories, has been a feature of the learning program at the Learning Co-operative. We also incorporate learning units on the environment, sustainability and social justice.

The school has a long history of performing arts and LOTE (Italian and Auslan) and these form a central part of our curriculum. The learning is showcased through drama performances, songs and games. The annual concert features a wide range of plays written and directed by students and each year includes a Shakespeare play and Italian play. Circus skills practice during the year provided more material for the concert with many children participating across all age groups.

Themes in the concert included instrumental performance, solo and group singing, dance items, fantasy, comedy and puppetry as well as a series of child-created animations and movies.

For more detailed information please refer to Student Learning..

1.4. Parent Involvement and Responsibility

Since inception, parents have been responsible for the management of the Co-operative. Responsibilities include parent involvement in presenting activities and participation in the learning programs at Co-op, administration, maintenance, cleaning and transport. Decisions regarding all aspects of the Co-op's activities are made at fortnightly adult meetings attended by all staff and parents. Typically, meetings include discussion about what occurs in the school, organisational matters and planning. Importantly, they provide a forum for philosophical debate and an opportunity to discuss the challenges and milestones occurring for individual children and families.

2. Student Learning

The school has implemented changes in Curriculum and Learning to ensure a comprehensive program. Methods of recording the learning program include a daily Chronicle kept by the children and a Day book which records the activities, participation and achievements of each student. English and Mathematics are taught as stand-alone subjects but are also integrated into other areas of the curriculum.

The school uses ongoing fortnightly discussions as one means of measuring student performance and readiness for learning. All parents are involved and guided by the teachers/coordinator in these discussions. This forum supports planning and provision of learning opportunities for the next fortnight. The school uses semester-based Individual Learning Plans to facilitate parent/child development of specific goals and to create strategies to address learning needs for each child. This process is a collaborative exchange among the parents, child, and the teacher/coordinator and the goal is to create a balance between interests and learning needs.

In 2019 we continued to streamline Individual Learning Plans (ILP) in a format which includes all eight learning areas. The plan is to further support child-initiated learning through these ILPs. Each family is encouraged to develop goals and agreed measures of achievement in these eight areas. A folio is also kept of each child's work to complement the ILP and to monitor student progress, along with teacher and parent observations.

In 2019 written reports were prepared as per requirements but not provided. All parents wrote letters expressly requesting not to have such reports provided, preferring to communicate

directly with the educators and other parents in the community regarding their child's progress.

2.1. *Engaging Children*

Co-op children are engaged in their learning and enjoy having access to programs that provide them with a target for their passions. In 2019, focus areas included setting up and running a Co-op City, Australian history, space and our extensive concert and camp programs.

Learning activities link in with integrated theme studies or are multi-faceted and involve a high level of student decision-making and participation. The range of activities offered during 2019 was varied and vibrant, and demonstrates the Co-op's commitment to providing a tailored, inspiring education for our students and families.

2.2. *Activity highlights in 2019:*

The following groupings are arbitrary, as many of the projects listed are aspects of larger integrated projects and therefore include invaluable social and interpersonal learning, as well as providing authentic avenues for students' ideas and passions.

2.3. *Language and Literacy*

- Chairing daily meetings, sharing and discussion at meetings
- Student Council
- Daily Chronicle and Journals
- Co-op City Council
- Learning Italian and Auslan
- Performing in Italian and Auslan
- Multicultural nature of Australia, sharing of words in other languages from kids' families
- Learning Indigenous language songs from around Australia for Boite Schools Chorus
- International Year of Indigenous languages.
- Old Melbourne Gaol project
- National Reconciliation writing and poster
- Script writing for plays
- Shakespeare script reading and learning for our performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream
- Children's Rights writings
- Rights and responsibilities discussion
- Ocean stories, aquarium stories, camp stories
- Peregrine Falcon bird's eye view stories
- Co-op City reflections
- Co-op City sign writing
- Personal story boards
- Well Being journals
- Kids Reading with Kids
- Letter formation, spelling conventions
- Phonics and M100W words
- Reading with and to the children
- Kids reading with kids
- Comic Club



- Playing board games
- Word games targeting spelling
- Grammar games – writing conventions
- Creative storytelling and writing circle
- Writing camp at Wilsons Promontory
- Ball of string story writing game
- Reading in nooks and crannies, bush writings
- Writing recounts
- Reading and writing instructional texts
- Letter writing
- Magazine articles, Newspaper articles
- Writers' Group
- Story writing
- Reading Eggs online literacy program
- Book Clubs
- Creating fantasy characters
- Group discussions
- Project writing
- Recipe writing
- Poetry
- Response to Art Gallery visit
- Secret Codes
- Debating Club
- Film – Wall E discussion and response
- Public speaking for Boite Children's Chorus performance
- Project oral presentations

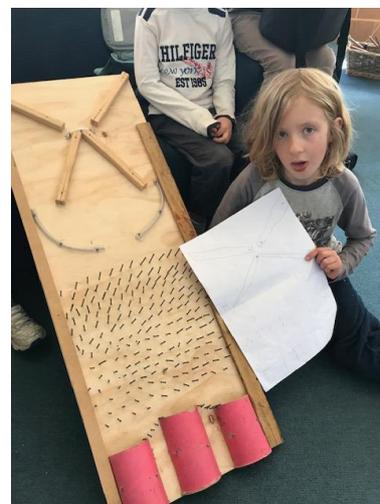
2.4. *Technology*

- Stop-motion animation
- Film making
- Photoshop editing
- Boat building for dam
- Engineering Club
- Ned Kelly armour
- Cubby and Go-Cart building and maintenance
- Cardboard constructions
- Movie night showing movies made by students
- Playing with motors and electronics
- Building props for Concert
- Using a sewing machine
- Scratch coding program
- Bird and animal nesting box construction
- Woodwork
- Building insect hotels
- Kite making
- Sand pit creations
- Board game making
- Cardboard creations
- Terrariums
- Wattle Festival and Co-op City stalls and displays



2.5. Maths & Logical Thinking

- Maths for Co-op City – Sales and banking
- Problem solving
- Basketball court maths games and activities
- Pie Graphs
- Mathletics online maths program: all basic concepts covered
- Maths workbooks
- Geometric shape constructions, Tangrams
- Making a sundial
- Orienteering
- Concept Drawing – Architectural Design – Scale
- Maths Games
- Kangaroo Ground Tower and Hurstbridge town measurements, directions, models
- Writing in code and code breaking
- Timing and graphing physical actions
- 2D and 3D drawings and construction
- Probability and chance
- Maths problem solving – logic puzzles, thinking backwards
- Jigsaw puzzles
- Mathematics of music
- Aussie Backyard Bird count tally and graphs
- Maths of the periodic table
- Making obstacle courses
- Body measurements and graphs
- Cooking maths
- Distances and area
- Orienteering
- Equations
- Lengths, volume and mass
- Food miles
- Planet fractions
- Analysing patterns
- Drawing tables
- Multiplication and division
- Decimals and fractions
- Measuring heights
- Delivering ‘Roundabout’ maths
- Minibeast surveys and mapping



2.6. Science

- Frog species and Habitat at Co-op
- Mini beast survey
- Kids Teaching Kids conference and sustainability presentation

- Peregrine falcon online nest observing and discussions
- Kitchen chemistry experiments
- Tree of sciences
- Engineering Club
- Life in the Freezer - Antarctica presentation from Amy's time as an educational researcher there
- Metals, periodic table, elements, molecules
- Microscopy
- Microbiology
- Vet Club
- Physics of music
- Favorite scientist project
- Genetics
- Egg Science
- Raising Chickens
- Composting, Worm garden, recycling, sustainability
- Kitchen Garden
- Hydraulics in the sandpit
- Making things explode
- Field identification and sketching trips
- Fungi hunting
- Bird-identification and drawing, native wildlife and local plants, insects
- Lyrebird and koala talk and observations at Kinglake National Park ranger
- Edendale Farm visits
- Co-op bush, quadrat and rabbit proof fence research
- Bird migration
- Participation in annual Victorian bird count
- Natural Science in the Mallee, Alpine and Coastal environments
- Edible potions, Lotion and slime making
- Change states of matter
- Density of liquids
- Marine Animals around the World
- Sundials
- Aerodynamics
- Space: Planet making; space buggy construction, rocket making, moon landing anniversary, black holes, astronomy, space junk etc.
- African animals
- Electrical circuits
- Hot air balloon making
- Light and color
- Habitats and adaptation



2.7. Humanities

- Co-op City discussions – concept, setting up, rules and democracy, city charter, consumerism discussion, official opening
- Bush walking excursions in Kinglake, St Andrews and Panton Hill
- Map reading for touring camp and orienteering at Westerfolds Park,
- Globe study, unusual places around the world
- Wurundjeri history and culture
- Wurundjeri acknowledgement
- Convicts, Bush rangers, gold rush
- White settlement and Aboriginal history
- My Place 1786
- Old Melbourne Gaol project
- Children’s rights around the world
- Archeology dig at Co-op
- My Place – home, town, country, planet
- Halloween activities, community Christmas decorations
- Visiting Healesville Sanctuary
- Café: Planning, cooking, serving (and eating!)
- Anzac biscuits – making and history
- ‘Roundabout’ delivery (local Hurstbridge newspaper)
- Life-Skills
- Berlin Wall destruction 30th anniversary
- Dubai, Hong Kong, Japan – visitors and talks
- Teddy Bears picnic
- Fire Drills and Emergency training
- Organising Fire clothes – with kids help
- Interpersonal management
- Survival kits
- Reconciliation week discussions
- Qi Gong, sound meditation
- Reading a globe, mapping, flags
- Immigration and refugees
- Stories of children from around the world, including aboriginal Australia



2.8. *Performing Arts*

- Co-op Annual Concert Term 3
- Kids Teaching Kids performance at Edendale Farm
- Reconciliation Day performance
- Creative dance, multicultural folk dancing
- Shakespeare ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream
- Script reading, rehearsal and performance
- Puppet shows
- Spontaneous plays
- Music through marimba, violin, cello, guitar, ukulele, piano, ensemble
- Percussion workshops with Kate Adam
- Boite Schools’ Chorus performance Melbourne Town Hall
- Recording for Hurstbridge community Christmas CD



- Door step concerts
- Busking for Co-op City
- Community Music Vic camp
- Visits to Melbourne for live theatre experiences
- Drama games
- Film making workshops
- Songwriting
- Playwriting
- Script analysis
- Theatre improvisation and sports
- Physical theatre
- Making your own band with singing and instruments
- Stagecraft and management
- Set and costume design
- Costume Box Play
- Singing together at meeting
- Sword craft for A Midsummer Night's Dream performance
- French, Italian and indigenous language songs



2.9. Art Design

- Mask and costume making
- Weaving using frames
- Aboriginal artwork and cultural significance
- Students' Paintings of Boite songs
- Papier-mache Planets
- Microbiology drawings
- Self-portraits in various media
- Ephemeral art
- Clay projects
- Local wildlife sketching trips
- Examination of various artists and their works
- Sewing, doll, cushion and bag making.
- Portrait project
- Pastel drawing
- Animation & Film Making
- Art/Craft activities – Drawing
- Knitting and knitting nancies
- Dream catchers
- Painting workshops
- Woodwork: bird houses and boxes
- Sewing & Clothes Design.
- Cubby Building
- Nature photography
- Flower pressing and picture making
- Halloween lanterns
- Collage, sculptures
- Natural boat building
- Bush art
- Paper Money making for café
- Concert posters and programs, props and sets



- Reverse garbage excursion
- Gingerbread constructions
- Art Gallery Visits
- Bush Art
- Fairy Garden design
- Christmas lanterns for Hurstbridge community

2.10. Sport

- Swimming - Term 1 and 4
- Gymnastics Terms 2 and 3.
- Bike riding at Diamond Creek
- Basketball
- Ball games, especially poison ball
- Yoga, Qi Gong
- Circus Skills
- Running Games
- Dance
- Crocodile, crocodile (In Italian!)
- Bush walking
- Soccer
- Outdoor games – Capture the Flag etc.
- Skipping
- Archery



2.11. Excursions/incursions

- Annual Family Camp at Cape Patterson
- Biggies camps – Pre-Family camp at Bear Gully, Writing camp at Wilsons Promontory, Joint Alternative Schools camp at Phillip Island, Music camp at Grantville and Touring Camp at Mt Buffalo.
- Temple Ridge for regular bush familiarization
- Middlies' Camp at Wilsons Promontory
- Grey Horse Equine Therapy
- Edendale Farm
- Bollygum Park, Kinglake
- Donnellys Weir for bushwalk and swim
- Healesville Sanctuary
- Bookshop, Library
- Reverse Garbage
- Kids teaching kids
- Funfields Excursion
- Museum visit
- Botanic Gardens
- Cooking and doing a stall for the Wattle Festival
- Boite Schools' Chorus
- Live Theatre productions at Art Centre
- City excursion
- Bushwalks



3. Student Engagement and Wellbeing

The school requires parents to participate and contribute to the learning programs for a minimum of half a day per week for each family. This involvement allows an intimate understanding of any issues regarding student engagement and wellbeing; this enables appropriate support to be given and individual learning plans tailored for each child. The fortnightly meeting of all families is the forum for discussions and the development of strategies to support individual needs.

The teachers/coordinator are also available to privately consult with parents regarding student engagement and wellbeing. Student engagement and wellbeing is also addressed through whole-school meetings held twice daily. The children lead meetings and are part of a democratic process that promotes inclusion and respect for their views. The children have a voice in any issue that may affect their engagement or wellbeing.

The school uses inclusive approaches to empower children to manage social interactions. The groupings for learning vary; most often they are interest-based, but when appropriate, age-based groupings are organised. The children negotiate the context for learning and this greatly enhances social maturity and engagement. The children take part in regular wellbeing discussions and journal entries.

The emphasis on play in learning also supports the development of social skills and results in a high level of proficiency amongst all the children within the social-emotional context. Areas of interest and passion are identified, as are gaps in knowledge, skills or proficiency, and activities are tailored to address these areas and maintain a high level of student engagement and inclusion.

The school provides a camping program for the older children; it involves a number of five-day under canvas experiences where the children are expected to erect their own tents and share in the day to day responsibilities of camping. The children are directly involved in the planning and costing of the camp. The children plan the menu, cooking and cleaning roster, activities, and are responsible for budget-management. The school also includes sleep-overs for all children at the school as part of the transition to this extended camping program.

An extracurricular support program is provided for children who it is felt will benefit from personal growth and social skills development and utilizes equine therapy with a qualified psychologist.

The school is a very close community where children can develop sibling-like relationships with the other students. The parents are supportive of each other and contribute to the wellbeing of families with their natural generosity and support.

4. Student Pathways and Transitions

The Learning Co-operative has specific strategies to support Student Pathways and Transitions:

- Preps for 2020 – Inclusion in Term 4 in the Co-op learning environment.
- Year 6 – Transition Program to secondary school

In term 4 we invite children enrolled for prep in the following year to engage in our programs for one day a week. The parents attend with their child; this provides a gradual introduction to our school's approaches and operation. By the start of the Prep year they are ready for a full day at school. Preps attend only a maximum of four days a week until parents feel they are ready to come full time.

The transition to secondary schools is managed through orientation days and reports to high-school coordinators. Some high schools send a representative to visit prospective students at the Co-op. This program is largely coordinated by the various high schools.



The Learning Co-operative does not use an age-grade approach and we find that the children move through the Victorian Curriculum recommended Levels of Learning at their own pace. We have children of a young age capable of literacy skills of the older children and those children participate at this higher level quite naturally. The differentiated learning available at the Learning Co-operative allows for children to find their own ability level and receive scaffolding into their next level of learning without experiencing undue pressure; children largely choose their learning.

5. Staff Profile

5.1. Teaching Staff

In 2019 the Co-op employed one additional part-time teacher.

Elizabeth Bennet

Role: School coordinator / teacher

Appointed in 2010 as specialist LOTE/music/literacy teacher. Moved to School coordinator/ teacher role in 2014.

VIT registration No: 321908

Qualifications:

- Education: BA Majoring in French (also studied Italian, music, psychology and linguistics) at Melbourne and Latrobe Universities.
- Dip Ed (Alternative education stream) 1987 Latrobe Uni. Methods: Modern Languages and ESL
- Lived and worked in Italy 1984 - 1985 and France Jan- April 1985
- Cert IV in Education and Training 2011

Previous and current positions

- Teacher/Coordinator LOTE/Music Strathewen Primary School 2007-2013
- Teacher/Coordinator LOTE Plenty Valley International Montessori School 2012-2013 Curriculum Development
- Teacher/Coordinator ESL and ESL/Literacy Kangan Batman TAFE Broadmeadows 1988 – 2011 working with traumatized refugees and migrants, Student Welfare, Integration Programs and Curriculum Development.
- Teacher Italian evening classes, Diamond Valley Learning Centre and Swinburne Uni 2000-2006
- Tutor for Music Workshops, including Roses Gap Folk Festival & VOSA marimba camp

Amy Rogers

Role:

School teacher

Appointed 2018

V.I.T registration 404348

Qualifications:

- PGCE Fast Track Science QTS, University of Warwick, UK (2005-2006)
- PhD 'The Ecology and Song of the Eastern Whipbird', University of Melbourne (2000-2004)
- BA (Hons), MA (Cantab)-Natural Sciences (Ecology & Zoology), First Class, University of Cambridge, UK (1995-1998)

Previous and current positions

- Learning Facilitator, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (Nov 2015 – present)
- Urban Ecologist, City of Melbourne (Sep 2015 – Sep 2016)
- Science Engagement Project Coordinator 'Chemistry for All', Nottingham Trent University (Jan 2015- Apr 2015)
- Assistant Forest School Leader, volunteer 'Into the Forest'(Sep 2013 – Apr 2015)
- OPAL Community Scientist, University of Nottingham (Sep 2008 – May 2013)
- Fuchs Foundation Antarctic Expedition (May 2006 – Dec 2007)
- 'Fast Track' Science Teacher, Higham Lane School, Nuneaton (Sep 2006 – July 2008)
- PhD Research, University of Melbourne, Australia (June 2000- Dec 2004)

5.2. Other Staff

Fenja Schulze

Role: Office Manager/Book-keeping
Appointed: 2018

Tracy Alamanos

Role: Administration
Appointed: 2018

Claire Hinge

5.3. *Parents with Education Qualifications in 2019.*

Ruth O’Dowd (VIT: 392109)

Lisa Kanto (VIT: 412854)

Gemma Elliott (VIT: 402294)

6. Student Enrolment Data

The Learning Co-operative is a small school of around 25 students on average, the enrolments were 29 in 2019 and 20 in 2020 school year.

The Learning Co-operative highlights personal growth and strives to create individual learning streams for each student across their primary years rather than relying entirely on the more concentrated and specific standards expected through the Victorian Curriculum. This approach allows the teachers and community to take each child’s specific circumstances into account on a daily, and even momentary basis.

In 2019 we had one full-time teacher/school coordinator and one part-time teacher. This has proven to be of great benefit as there is a greater ability to focus on each child’s passions and learning needs and desires as outlined in their Individual Learning Plan.

‘Focus-time’, the twice-daily session focuses mainly on core literacy and numeracy, continue to be an important part of each day. These scheduled focus times not only improved literacy and numeracy, but also had a positive effect on the children’s interest in these subject areas.

The Learning Co-operative gathers performance data via student feedback, teacher observation and small-group intensive focus times. All parents are also involved in monitoring student progress, meeting with the coordinator on a fortnightly basis. This allows for a targeted response to each child’s individual learning needs.

School performance data is more difficult to track and report on with any accuracy given the small cohorts of students at any specific year level. Much of the data involves examination of the value added for each student as they move through the school year.

All relevant families are given information relating to the NAPLAN testing scheme. In 2019 there were 6 children in the relevant NAPLAN cohorts. The families of these students all submitted a request to withdraw from the NAPLAN test.

6.1. *Enrolment Profile*

In 2019, the school had a total of 29 students enrolled, with 23 full-time equivalent enrolments (see Table below). The gender mix consisted of 13 boys (57%) and 10 girls (43%). 45% of the students had a language background other than English. . The numbers at each year level were evenly balanced, we have strong intended enrolments of Littles Group at the start of 2020. The school aims for enrolments between 25-30 students to ensure that we can maintain the special character of our community.

Table: 2019 Enrolment Profile

	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
	3	4	1	3	1	1	2	15
Female total	2	5	1	0	1	2	3	14
Male Indigenous only	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female Indigenous only	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	8	1	1	4	5	1	229

Enrolment levels are currently within our target zone; we had xx new enrolments at the Prep level in 2019. We had 5 children due to transition to secondary school in 2019. We expect the numbers to build up over the next few years due to solid intended enrolments across the younger levels of the school by 2021.

We anticipate that enrolments will remain steady into the future, due to strategies put in place to increase awareness of the school's programs and approaches. In 2019 we had 26 students as at the August census, and we have strong interest for 2020 due to three Open Days and great interest within the local community.

6.2. Socio-economic background

ICSEA value – 1057

Average ICSEA value - 1000

School ICVEA percentile- 72

	Bottom quarter	Middle quarters		Top quarter
School Distribution	11%	33%	29%	27%
Australian Distribution	25%	25%		25%

The school is deemed metropolitan despite its bush location north of Hurstbridge. Parents choose the Learning Co-operative School based upon philosophy not location.

The ICSEA value provides an indication of the level of the school's educational advantage. This is worked out by looking at certain factors – for each student and for the school:

- parents' occupation
- parents' education
- a school's geographical location
- proportion of Indigenous students.

7. Student Attendance Data

This report was generated from the school roll and offers a data snapshot of the period February 6th through to September 21st, 2019. Note that prep attendance is not included in this snapshot, as in Victorian schools it is only compulsory from age 6.

Attendance is always very strong at our school. This reflects the extraordinary enthusiasm and engagement of our students; they are usually disappointed when it is holiday time. Absences are all communicated to the Coordinator / Teachers directly. The school is able to address any long-term absence of a child through the community network, though this is a very rare occurrence due to the high levels of engagement of both parents and children. In 2019 we had some families exposing their children to other worthy educational experiences such as travel and outings whilst all other absences were due to illness.

	Semester 1	Term 3
Student attendance rate	94%	90%
Student attendance level*	93%	89%

*Proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time.

8. Parent, teacher and student satisfaction

The Co-op is committed to working together to the benefit and satisfaction of the students, parents and teachers.

The school operates as a consensus-based cooperative involving parents, teachers and students. Decisions regarding all aspects of the Co-op's activities are made at fortnightly adult meetings attended by all staff and parents. Students also have the opportunity to express their views and opinions at meetings held daily; these meetings are attended by all students and staff as well as those parents who are at the school on the day.

These discussions provide a forum for philosophical debate and an opportunity to discuss the challenges and milestones occurring for individual children, families and staff.

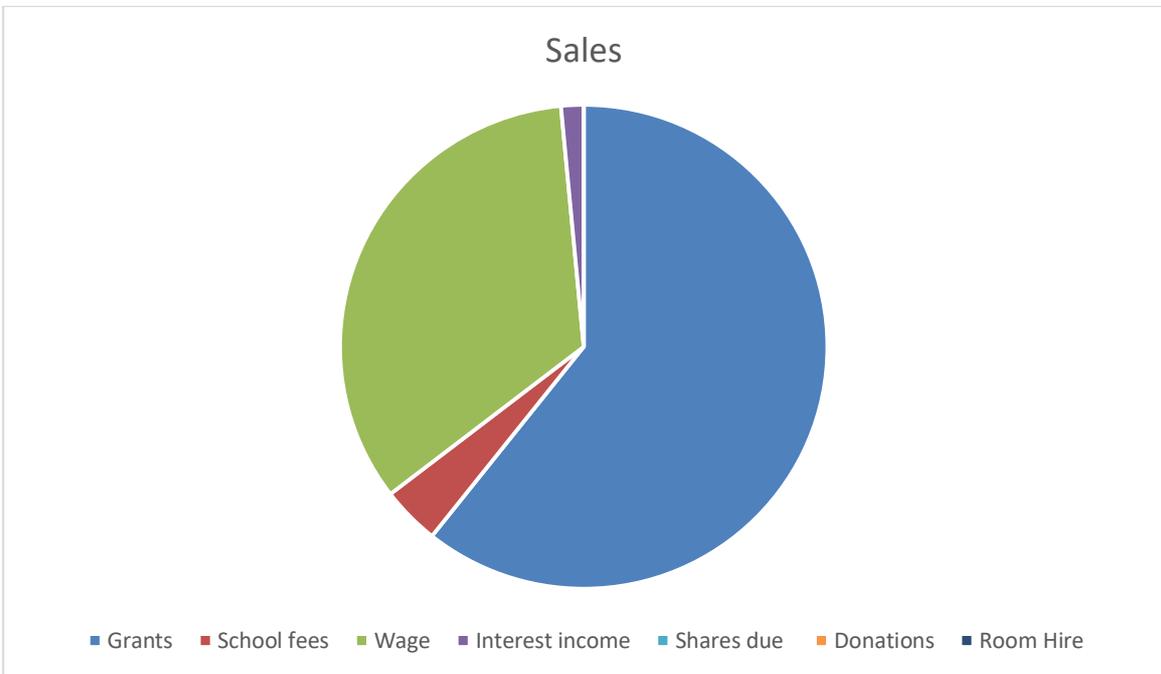
9. Financial commentary

9.1. Grants

The total amount received from Government Grants for 2019 was \$402,166.75.

These grants included the State and Commonwealth grants, Resiliency and the Camps, Sport and Excursion Fund.

9.2. Income summary 2019



9.3. Savings and term deposits

The school has a solid financial safety net. The Investment Term deposits at 31.12.19 were \$420,253. The balance of the school’s operating account at 31.12.2019 was \$41,644.

The School maintains a debit card account which is used for small purchases and is kept at an approximate \$1000 balance.

9.4. Expenditures and other items

The Learning Co-operative had to renew some outdoor play structures in 2019. The old big playground with the iconic wide slide had to be partly rebuilt due to termite infestation. Also the biggies cubby had to be completely renewed due to age.

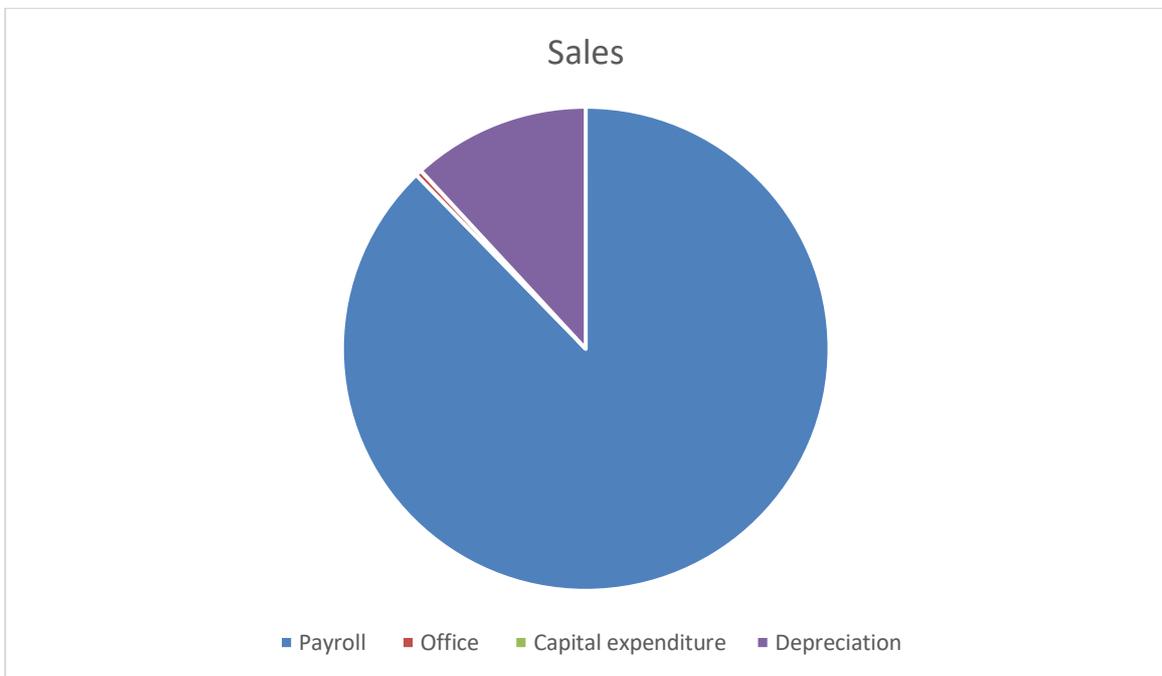
The school continues to maintain a low-fee structure, to enable maximum access. There are social justice policies around fee payments to support families on Health Care Cards or when multiple children are enrolled. In 2019 the school continued to provide free babysitting for all families to assist with the demands of evening meetings.

The Learning Cooperative also supplied at least one free home cooked lunch per week.

The school purchased a closed box trailer for camps.

9.5. Expenses summary 2019

10.



9.6 *Future financial considerations:*

9.6.1. *Professional Development*

Budget for ongoing professional Development for staff and parents responsible for:

- Occupational Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- Financial management/ Governance
- Education
- Student welfare

9.6.2. *Solar Energy*

- Review Grant opportunities to extend current system.

9.6.3. *Welfare fund:*

- Review methods we use to offer assistance to families facing short and long-term challenges.

9.6.4. *Babysitting*

- Maintain the current mode of paying for babysitting to enable all parents to attend meetings.

9.6.5. *Facilities Upgrade*

- Possible strategies/ideas for the future include:

- The car park area to be planted with trees for future shading.
- The installation of big decorative rocks is still being considered for beautifying the entrance area
- Plans for the wood working building have been abandoned due to supervision problems for a further learning area.
- Plans for an upgrade to the current bus shelter including catering for the second bus and the new trailer are still in planning stage.
- The creation of a new office room in the old storage room, adjoining the main building, commenced in 2019.

9.6.6. Staffing

- Our casual and relief teacher continued with 2 days per week.
- The Learning Cooperative decided towards the end of the year that we needed a further part time casual and relief teacher to help children with some one on one work in numeracy and literacy. We employed former parent Ron Fuhrer in this role for around 12 hours per week.
- This was due to an increase in the amount of repair work that needed to be carried out at the school. The school received a wage subsidy for the cost of this position.
- A paid office administration position was created in 2019 for 5 hours a week with parent Tracy Alamanos taking on the role.

10 Goals, Targets and Key Improvement Areas

Please refer to Appendix 1 for information regarding forward planning, goals, and targets.

Our comprehensive professional development program is supported by 1% of our annual school budget and has strong links to the Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework.

APPENDIX 1

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2020

Hurstbridge Learning Cooperative Ltd

SWOT Chart:

The context for this SWOT analysis is the situation as per early 2020, and the following key improvement strategies outline the main areas in which we will be focusing our efforts over the next 2 years. This is an ongoing process which is reviewed annually by each current Board of Director, alterations or additions made as necessary, and actions undertaken to ensure the school continues to meet all its responsibilities.

<p>Strengths (internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students love going to school • Parent body who are highly committed and willing to input an extraordinary amount of energy to ‘run’ the school • Continuing strong enrolments in the lower half of the school • Highly Participatory, multi-age atmosphere • High level of opportunity for parental involvement and a strong supportive community. • Diverse parent body enables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Modeling to children different personalities working together to achieve a common goal ○ Children access to adults with different interests, aptitudes and personalities ○ High parent to child ratio (lots of personal attention) 	<p>Weaknesses (internal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing education of the continuously evolving parent body about governance structures, role and responsibilities of board members, and the legal obligations inherent in running a school. • Ongoing education of said parent body in the operational procedures for office and general management tasks. • High work load and commitment required from parent body
<p>Threats (external)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of affordable housing 	<p>Opportunities (external)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase in families with children in area

Threats (external)	Opportunities (external)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly busy lifestyles which may reduce the number of people able to commit the time required to have their child attend co-op and the amount of spare time current parents have to devote to running the Learning Co-operative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parents willing to drive long distances to access our unique learning environment improved information in the community around who we are and what we do. a community which contains a high proportion of people who are interested in sustainability, environment, and indigenous studies a VRQA registered increase in families opting for home-schooling; this is one of our key prospects

Self-Assessment

The parent group and the staff meet every fortnight on a Monday evening to discuss a broad range of issues relating to the school. This is an opportunity for every participant to give feedback on the school's management and the day-to-day running. All decisions are consensus based following in-depth discussion. It is the Chair's task to ensure that all voices are heard. Daily children's meetings allow for discussion of any aspects which directly affect the children and feedback is then taken to the adult meeting.

Reform Areas - The Five National Reform Directions

(This section outlines how the five national reform directions were considered during the development of the School Improvement Plan).

The five national reform directions are:	Strategies we are using to address reform directions:
1. Quality Teaching (enhancing the performance of teachers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal and external quality professional development for coordinators and parents focusing on learning styles and current trends in education.
2. Quality Learning (improving students' learning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing development of a curriculum based on Australian Curriculum that ensures that all learning areas are covered.
3. Empowered School Leadership (building Leadership capacity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing ongoing quality professional development for the coordinator and teachers to ensure their roles are clear and support the ethos of the Co-op.

The five national reform directions are:	Strategies we are using to address reform directions:
4. Meeting Student Need (providing for the needs of all students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The small size of our school continues to allow us to attend to the children on an individual basis where needed. The needs of all students are well supported by having a coordinator/teacher and four part time teachers engaging in meaningful learning experiences with children. Continuation of twice daily focus times where all students are engaged in learning activities relevant to the Australian Curriculum is under constant refinement and aims to provide a completely integrated learning experience.
5. Transparency and Accountability (providing data on school performance and student outcomes for the community).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing examination of the best practice method for recording daily activities, focus time activities and parent led programs, including levels of student participation and their achievements. Ongoing discussion to ensure that the method is clear and transparent for parents and other stakeholders to interpret.

Priority Areas for the School Improvement Plan

1. Curriculum design, recording of children’s participation and achievements, streamlining of learning activities with a focus on a particular area of the curriculum each year. In 2019 we plan to focus on science.
2. Training for staff and parents in the area of student welfare.
3. Training and support for parents in the supervision of children.

School Improvement Goals

This school improvement plan is linked very closely to our school’s current Strategic Plan. We have selected some areas from our Strategic Plan that were highlighted in the self-assessment as being a priority for improvement.

- Goal 1: To invigorate our science program
 Goal 2: To further educate parents and particularly staff in the areas of student welfare.
 Goal 3: To further educate parents in the supervision of children outside class.

Goal 1

Strategic Area	Student Learning
3 Year Goal	To fully develop a science curriculum specific to the philosophy of our learning cooperative that by the richness and breadth of the activities offered will broaden the children's scientific thinking and ability.
2020 Goals	<p>To develop a rich resource of activities, games and resources with the aim of increasing the children's interest in science.</p> <p>To work on projects with the children where science is an integral part of the process.</p> <p>To overview activities offered by parents and staff so they are more streamlined and consistent.</p>
Review	<p>The Science curriculum offered at Co-op is based on Australian Curriculum and offered during Focus times and molded to each individual child through ILPs targeting their areas of interest and passions. The children are exposed to activities, observations and discussion about environmental science on a daily basis, mainly due to our surrounding bushland and our camping program. We plan next year to extend their interest in the environment as well as focusing on other areas of the science curriculum.</p> <p>Ongoing assessment of the Day Book recording student activities, participation and achievements.</p> <p>Continued refinement of the Chronicle recording the children's' reflections on each day's activities and as a record of their learning. Anecdotal evidence and observational notes have been introduced to ensure that each child is moving forward with their scientific learning.</p>

Goal 2

Strategic Area	Student welfare
3 Year Goal	To further educate parents and staff in the areas of student welfare.
2020 Goals	<p>To attend training sessions in student welfare to ensure that children with emotional and welfare needs are identified early and receive appropriate help and that government requirements are met.</p> <p>To set in place stronger pathways for dealing with welfare issues that arise at the Learning Co-operative.</p>
Review	Ensure all staff and parents are aware of their roles and responsibilities in regards to student welfare.

Strategic Area	Student welfare
	Ensure all staff and parents clearly understand the process of reporting and following through with student welfare issues.

Goal 3

Strategic Area	Student supervision
3 Year Goal	To further educate parents on appropriate levels of supervision of children during outside play.
2020 Goal	For the staff of the Learning Co-operative to run training sessions for the parents on the supervision of students outside of class time.
Review	Newer and more experienced adults will work together on a regular basis so skills and knowledge are passed on. There will be regular discussions at our meetings to assess the effectiveness of the training.

The School Improvement Plan 2020 was discussed at our regular Monday night meeting attended by the parents and staff of the Hurstbridge Learning Cooperative. The plan will be reviewed by the staff and the parent body on an annual basis, though discussions around each of these goals will be ongoing at our fortnightly evening meetings.