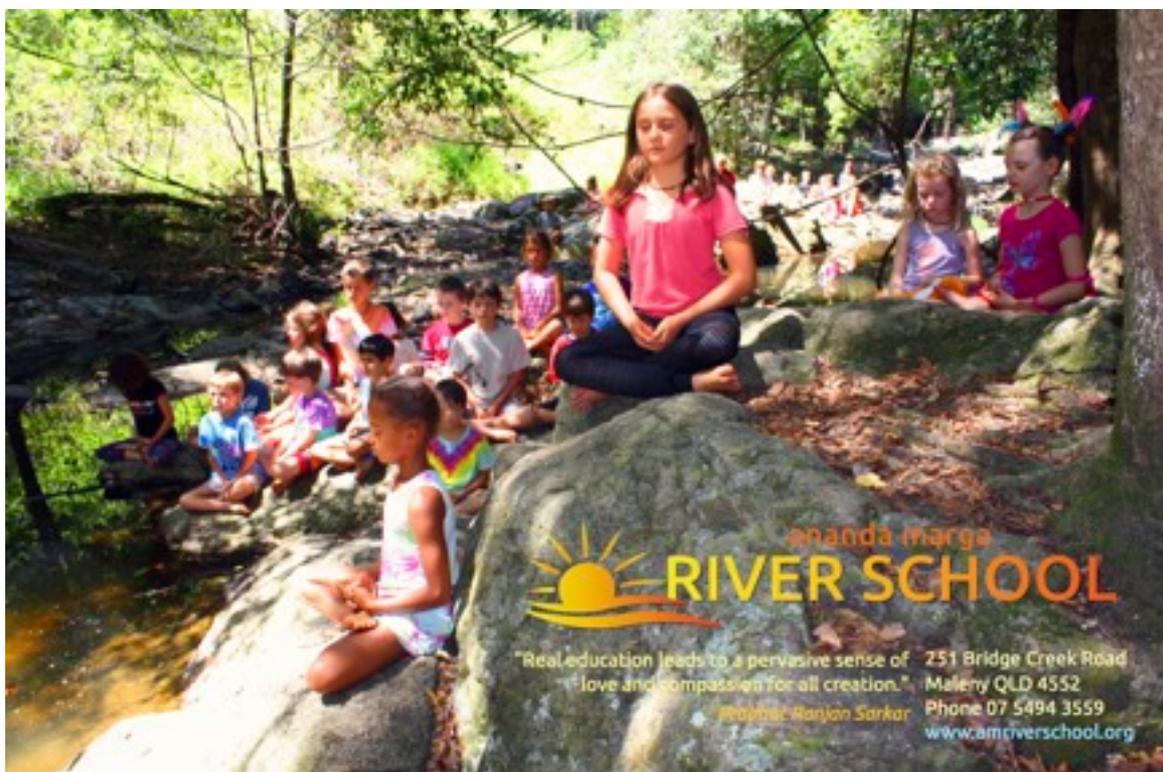




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## Annual School Report 2013 (Based on 2013 Data)



The Ananda Marga River School is an independent, co-educational primary school and Early Childhood Centre located in a beautiful rainforest valley in Maleny, Queensland. The school is a service project of Ananda Marga, a global organisation for self-realisation and service to all.

The guiding philosophy of the Ananda Marga River School is Neohumanist Education. Based on Neohumanism, the philosophy of the innate oneness of all things, it seeks to instill in children an innate sense of love and compassion for all beings: people, animals, plants, and even the inanimate matter of the whole universe.

Our school is a loving community for 123 primary students from Prep to Year 7 (64 girls and 59 boys). We also operate a Long Day Care Centre for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children.

# History of the Ananda Marga River School

In 1995 the Ananda Marga River School opened its doors as a one-classroom, one teacher primary school. Children who attended a playgroup on the land before the school opened, came up with the school's name while playing in the beautiful creek that runs through the property.

Ten years previously, in 1984, 52 acres of picturesque rainforest land was purchased by members of Ananda Marga. One year later the the Prout Settlement Co-operative Limited was formed, creating the opportunity for families to build dwellings on the land. The dream of creating a school for the local community came to fruition in 1995. This spirit of service and community continues today with the Prout Community continuing to lease half of its land to the school.

The dedication and passion of the Prout Community, Ananda Marga and numerous Dada's and Didi's has shaped the River School to become a leader of Neohumanist educational practices. Many of the original founders of the school remain on the Prout land and continue to be significant contributors to the school culture and environment. Prabha Demasson, a co-founder and major contributor to the development of the school, served 16 years as Deputy Principal, and 3 years as Principal before leaving in 2013. At this time, Jenny Oakley was appointed as the new Principal to continue the legacy and vision of the school founders.



## Social Climate

Based on our Neohumanist philosophy, the school works to foster a sense of family in the school. This family feeling extends beyond the school to all humanity and even beyond to plants and animals. Children develop this understanding both intuitively and rationally. In meditation they are guided to experience their oneness with all things. Rationally they learn to respect and appreciate the diversity and unity of our human family. Service projects are encouraged in every class, in each phase of learning, so that children can act on their understanding of connectedness and develop confidence and skills to make meaningful changes in the world around them.

The school also runs "Buddy Programs" between younger and older classes, including our Early Childhood Centre. Furthermore, some sporting and service projects involve multi-age groups to build a sense of community in the school.

## **Distinctive Curriculum Offerings and Extra-Curricular Activities**

### **MORNING CIRCLE**

The week begins with an all-school Morning Circle that includes a candle-lighting ceremony, singing, meditation, small performances, our virtues program and general announcements. Parents often attend these uplifting gatherings and are welcome to take part.

### **MEDITATION AND YOGA**

This is our daily Quiet Time. Children benefit from early use of their imagination and intuition in creative visualisation and meditation exercises. Yoga exercises help children stretch and relax, meditation centres them, and discussions at this time focus on our virtues and other introspective topics.

### **THE ARTS**

We have specialist teachers in art, music and Indigenous Studies. Students have the opportunity to learn guitar, piano, percussion, and strings and the school offers a variety of choirs and performance groups. All students study marimba throughout their River School years, as well as learning violin in year 3 and guitar in year 5. Individual private lessons in guitar and keyboard are also available. Video classes were offered in years 6 and 7.

### **SPORT**

During 2013, the school participated in a number of sporting activities. Our Prep to Year 7 students enjoyed swimming lessons at the Maleny Pool and our Year 7 children learned how to surf. We held an “all school Olympics” in term 3 and in the summer season, students of all ages cooled off in our fresh water creek at the school.



### **EMPOWERMENT CENTRE**

Our Empowerment Centre offered one on one and small group learning support in literacy and numeracy to supplement classroom programs. The Empowerment Centre is a place of learning where students at the River School are provided with intensive literacy tuition to ensure they reach their full potential in the classroom. Programs run at the Empowerment Centre are individually tailored to meet the needs of each student and are designed to compliment their learning preferences.

The Empowerment Centre maintains a close relationship with all classroom teachers. This in turn guarantees that learning activities completed at the Centre support the students' classroom learning. At the end of each term a progress report is compiled for each student, drawing upon qualitative and quantitative data collected throughout the term. The

program runs for 10 weeks, after which students are often given a well-deserved break that allows them to consolidate their learning in the classroom setting uninterrupted. If further assistance is required, students then return to the centre refreshed from their break and ready for the next challenge.

## **SCHOOL CAMPS**

The River School loves school camps! In 2013 our Year 1 and 2 students stayed on Bribie island for 2 nights with their parents and teachers. Our year 3 students did a 3 night camp at Bribie Island while our Year 4's and 5's travelled to Currimundi. Our Red Cedars (Year 6 and 7) travelled to Canberra for a week to consolidate their understanding of our Government system and to also spend some time in the snow. At the end of 2013 our senior boys and girls participated in our Inaugural "Warrior Camp" and "Girl Power Day".



## **HEALTH**

Our vegetarian, whole foods tuckshop provided delicious meals for purchase three days a week. Each classroom has a garden area where children have the opportunity to grow food for the tuckshop kitchen.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Children from Year 5 were involved in Kids Teaching Kids week and produced an innovative performance about the history of toilets, earning the "Kids Choice Award". Across the school, students also participated in Anzac Day celebrations and NAIDOC commemorations.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Year 5 students supported the Wilvos (Wildlife Volunteers) and presented a circus performance including trapeze, swings and circus skills to raise money for this worthy cause. Our Year 6/7 students created and sold a sentient vegetarian recipe book full of our

families' favourite recipes, and our Year 2 students completed a unit on service and random acts of kindness spreading love around our local community and publishing a beautiful book about their experiences.



Students from Prep to Year 7 participated in an elective program that allowed them to select areas of interest to explore. These included activities such as origami, golf, ICT, ball games and creek exploring. This elective program was so successful that it has become a standard element of the distinctive River School curriculum.

### **Parental Involvement**

Our school welcomes Parent volunteers and on many school days, there are more parents on site than staff members! Parents engage in many activities at school including gardening, helping in the library, or participating in art projects sharing their expertise with our teachers and students. Parents and families are an integral part of the River School.

In 2013, the school offered a number of avenues for parent involvement.

**Energy Levy:** Parents are requested to donate two hours a week (20 hours per term) in Energy Levy. They may assist in their child's class, help in tuckshop, assist on school camps, or help in other ways as needed.

**Parent Committee:** In 2013 there was an active Parents' Committee that organised Cafe Nights and a successful "Spring Festival", that served as a fundraiser, fun-raiser and marketing event. Our Cafe Nights involved dinner at the school with various events such as Open Mic nights, a bush dance, circus performance and student performances.

### **Parent, Teacher and Student Satisfaction with the School**

Before beginning her role as Principal in July, Jenny surveyed the teachers and parents of the River School to gain a deeper understanding of the school. Overall, the response to these surveys was very positive, indicating open and collegial relationships, an appreciation for the Neohumanist values and philosophies of the school, and recognition of the dedication and passion of the teaching staff.

A sample of questions and responses from the parent survey are included below.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Teachers are enthusiastic	56%	44%				
Teachers care about their students	81%	19%				
Students feel loved and cared for at our school	69%	29%	2%			
My children love coming to school	61%	31%	8%			
I have a good relationship with staff	35%	54%	11%			
I value yoga, meditation and the other spiritual values at our school	79%	16%	5%			

Data from these surveys have initiated whole school discussion to ensure that all students feel valued at our school and that students know that they are loved and cared for.

In June 2014 we will again survey our parents, students and staff, and use the responses to contribute to improve our school.



## School Income - Funding Sources

The Ananda Marga River School receives funding from a variety of sources including Federal and State funding, Grants, school fees and parent contributions. Details of funding sources can be found on the MySchool website.

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

## Staffing Information

In 2013 our school employed:

- 9.0 Full time equivalent teachers
  - 1.6 FTE Specialist Staff,
  - 4.0 FTE Admin/Clerical Aides and
  - 4.4 FTE Building/Grounds and Bus Drivers.
- The school had one Indigenous Staff member.

All of our classroom teachers hold a Bachelor's Degree. All of our classroom teachers participated in Professional Development opportunities in 2013 which included curriculum development, restorative practice, behaviour support and digital technologies. The school spent \$7118.87 on Professional Development during 2013.

**Average staff attendance for the school, based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave periods of up to 5 days:**

<i>Number of Staff</i>	<i>Number of School Days</i>	<i>Total Days Staff Absences</i>	<i>Average Staff Attendance Rate</i>
9.0	188	54	97%

**Proportion of teaching staff retained from the previous year:**

<i>Number of permanent teaching staff at end of previous year</i>	<i>Number of these staff retained in the following year (the program year)</i>	<i>% retention rate</i>
9.0	9.0	100%

## Key Student Outcomes

### Student attendance

The Average Student Attendance Rate as a percentage in 2013 was 92.25%.

**Average student attendance rate for each year level:**

<i>Year levels</i>	<i>Average attendance rate for each year level as a percentage in 2013</i>
Prep	92%
Year 1	92%
Year 2	92%
Year 3	91%
Year 4	92%
Year 5	93%
Year 6	92%
Year 7	94%

All students at our school are expected to be in attendance on all school days unless they are sick or absence has been prearranged with the school Principal. Should students be absent from school, the parent/ guardian is expected to contact the school to inform them of the student's absence. If the school is not notified in an absence, the parent / guardian will be contacted. Prolonged absences or repeated late arrivals are followed up by the School.



## BENCHMARK DATA FOR 2013

### Reading

Year	Average Score (School)	Average Score (National)
Year 3 (2013)	443	419
Year 5 (2013)	462	502
Year 7 (2013)	560	541

### Writing

Year	Average Score (School)	Average Score (National)
Year 3 (2013)	398	416
Year 5 (2013)	443	478
Year 7 (2013)	536	541

### Spelling

Year	Average Score (School)	Average Score (National)
Year 3 (2013)	394	411
Year 5 (2013)	421	494
Year 7 (2013)	546	549

### Grammar and Punctuation

Year	Average Score (School)	Average Score (National)
Year 3 (2013)	427	428
Year 5 (2013)	441	501
Year 7 (2013)	561	535

## Numeracy

Year	Average Score (School)	Average Score (National)
Year 3 (2013)	417	397
Year 5 (2013)	467	486
Year 7 (2013)	527	542

Benchmark date is available in detail at the *My School* website <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

## Further Information

For further information about the Ananda Marga River School, or for a copy of our prospectus or enrollment information, please contact [admin@amriverschool.org](mailto:admin@amriverschool.org).

