Exciting things are happening at Poseidon Primary School which was recently awarded for its sustainable good practice. Rosie Hanson takes a look inside the school and speaks with its staff who are proud to be part of the Poseidon team.

"A city school with a country feel", "a real little gem", and "the best kept secret" are the praises sung by staff about Poseidon Primary School.

They're on to something – Poseidon Primary School really is a little gem.

With a harmonious environment, support from the community and clever programs and initiatives to maintain an innovative school, it has achieved above average results in literacy and numeracy for the past three years.

In recent years, the Heathridge school has emerged as exceptional and was recently awarded a certificate for sustainable good practice by the Expert Review Group.

Associate principal Michael Wright believes the strong relationships between staff, parents and students create the all important harmonious environment.

All members of the school community are seen as equal stakeholders and are encouraged to be involved. Many former students return to the school with their young families, forming close bonds and new experiences to add to their memories of time at Poseidon Primary School.

"Staff know their students well and expect them to work hard – and students want to do their best in return. Staff believe that all students have the capacity to learn and achieve," says Michael.

"Two-way respect is strongly evident here. Relationships and collaboration are lived and breathed by staff."

The importance of building relationships can be seen in the school’s playgroup which is open to families who have children at the school as well as families from the area.

The strong literacy focus of the playgroup helps prepare children for school.

Early years teachers have been busy establishing relationships with parents and a Kindergarten and Year 7 buddy program set up by Kindergarten teachers is helping to improve speech development and computer literacy skills in young students.

Students work with different buddies each week to complete computer based activities which is also helping to build positive relationships between students.

Rod Louthier, director of the Expert Review Group, says there is a strong and optimistic approach to developing and maintaining high quality relationships within the school and between the school and the community.

"Teachers at Poseidon Primary School have built respectful, trusting relationships with families enabling them to work as partners in each child’s education," says Rod.
Staff also say the structure of the school plays a key role in delivering positive outcomes.

There is an emphasis on continuous self-improvement through professional wellbeing and the learning and development of staff. Staff are also encouraged to implement new strategies and programs.

"Teachers and school staff are passionate, flexible, innovative and creative in delivering new programs and initiatives," says Michael.

The Expert Review Group reinforced this in its report.

"Staff reported regular, ongoing professional dialogue with a sharing of ideas, successes and areas for improvement as well as timely advice and assistance when required," says Rod.

One initiative which embodies this is The Ideas Process. Staff wanted to continue the positive outcomes already achieved but also realised the importance of being modern and so changed the school's philosophy to remain innovative and current.

Regular all-staff meetings to brainstorm and discuss innovative ideas are held to stay on target.

The Ideas Process has led to a revitalised Poseidon Primary School and resulted in the creation of a new school vision – Creating Opportunities Together.

"The establishment of core values and the school vision has guided the staff as they develop agreed school-wide practices," says Michael.

Rod has endorsed the school's status as a school that "demonstrated sustained high levels of teaching practice and quality school relations".

Programs, initiatives and relationship building have all added to the school’s positive environment and staff and students are resoundingly “happy and proud to be at Poseidon.”

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