

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT 2015

Introduction

The 2015 Annual Report is provided as an account of the School's operations and achievements throughout the year. It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide quality education to Year 11 and 12 students and outlines the findings that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning.

School Contact Details

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School Context

Australian International High School (AIHS) is wholly owned by Academies Australasia Group Limited. Established in 1908, Academies Australasia has been operating for more than 108 years. It was listed on the Australian Securities Exchange 39 years ago. Academies Australasia has a long and successful experience in providing quality education in Australia and overseas. There are 18 colleges in the group, each with its own license to operate as an education institution. Apart from having to meet the well regarded and carefully supervised standards of the education sector, Academies Australasia colleges must also comply with the strict financial and reporting regulations of Australian Securities Exchange.

AIHS is a very small school, offering only Year 11 and Year 12. It focuses on international students looking to further their studies at another Academies Australasia college.

Message from the Principal

During the year under review, there was a consolidation of the strategies initiated in the previous years. This led to better results for the School in the NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC) 2015 in comparison to 2013 and 2014. The additional focus on ongoing professional development of academic staff has contributed to effective classroom practice as well as the use of student performance data and student feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching practices.

The HSC 2015 results showed substantial improvements across the board compared to 2014. Improvement was made in Mathematics (from 68.5% to 73%), English (from 64.5% to 73%) Information Technology (from 62% to 82%), Chinese for Background Speakers (from 77% to 78%), Community and Family Services (from 60.5% to 71%)

and Business Studies (from 60% to 73%).

We are proud of the academic achievement of the students who sat the HSC and the ongoing success of the strategies being implemented by the School to create high quality learning experience for our students.

We have highly dedicated academic staff who work together to provide an inclusive environment, where all students are encouraged to achieve their best. Our teachers and staff devote themselves to supporting students through teaching and learning, mentoring and administration.

I certify that information in this report is a balanced and genuine account of the School's achievement and areas for development.

Prasad Menon, Principal

Professional Learning and Teacher Standards

At AIHS, quality teaching and professional practice are evident in every learning environment, providing students with opportunities to connect, succeed and thrive that are relevant to their stages of learning and development.

The attainment of professional learning goals and teaching requirements are part of the School's performance and development processes. Staff are supported in their learning and professional accreditation processes. The School seeks to attract, retain and support intelligent, inspiring and motivating teachers and to provide them with opportunities to refine their capabilities and to pursue their passion and love of learning. Teachers are committed to their ongoing development as members of the teaching profession.

All teachers at AIHS hold university degrees and teaching qualifications from a higher education institution in Australia and/or as recognized by the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition guidelines and by the NSW Institute of Teachers.

During 2015, AIHS teachers met regularly to discuss the best approaches to teaching students. Teachers undertook a range of external professional learning opportunities to ensure that the professional growth of staff remains a focus at AIHS. Some of the courses attended were the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) professional development seminars in 2015, such as, A Pedagogical Tour, Enhancing the Contemporary Society and Culture in the Classroom, What is literature and why is it so vital for our students to engage with it in their study of English, Closely examine the Discovery Rubric and consider its implications for teaching this mandatory component of the HSC.

The week after attending training, the teacher who attended the seminar conducted an information and feedback session to share what they learned with other teachers.

Participation in such external training and then sharing internally, facilitates engagement with teacher and other professionals from other schools and also improves collaboration and staff development amongst colleagues.

Teachers participate in professional learning targeted to school priorities and their professional needs. Teachers are actively engaged in planning their own professional development to improve their performance. The school evaluates professional activities to identify and systemically promote the most effective strategies.

Each term, teachers meet to discuss student progress, attendance, term requirements and scheduling. Overall there was a strong focus on professional learning that examined methodology and how to plan for and implement effective teaching and learning. Assessment of learning continued to be an ongoing focus for staff professional learning.

Student attendance and management of non-attendance

The Principal is responsible for keeping accurate records of attendance, for deciding if the reason given for absence is justified and can request medical certificates or other documentation for long or frequent absences explained by the student or parent/guardian as being due to illness. Therefore, all absences require an explanation. It is a condition of enrolment that students achieve a minimum of 80% attendance throughout the course of their study.

Absence without permission is viewed seriously. The School Liaison Officer contacts the student and parent/guardian to ascertain the reason for the absence with a Counseling Report placed in the student file.

Class attendance and academic records of all students are retained by the School and monitored to ensure that students meet the relevant school policies and the statutory and regulatory requirements.

Student attendance is monitored on a daily basis in the class rolls, which are marked for each subject by the relevant teacher. The Student Services Officer in charge of maintaining attendance records monitors the attendance of each student. Students whose attendance falls below 80% are called to advise them of their unsatisfactory attendance. Reasons provided by the student are recorded in the counseling report and placed in the student's file. The Student Services Officer then issues a Non-Compliant Rate of Attendance letter which is sent to the student and guardian where applicable. The letter advises the student that unsatisfactory attendance is serious and continued failure to comply with their visa conditions would require the school to report the matter to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP).

During the monitoring process, if student attendance does not meet the 80% requirement of the scheduled course contact hours for the term, an Intention to Report Notice is issued. The student is given 20 working days from the date specified on the letter to access the Complaints and Appeals process.

In order to improve student attendance the School has a Student Liaison Officer to monitor attendance and performance of the students and contacts the parents/guardians of the students directly where there are signs that the student might have some issues. The Student Liaison Officer contacts the parents and or guardian every Friday and records the details of the conversation. This contact is made before attendance falls substantially or performance falls too far.

The appointed Student Liaison Officer is a native Chinese speaker, who can effectively communicate with the parents or guardian of the Chinese students at AIHS. This has proven to be effective also with students who are over 18 and not living with a guardian, especially when their parents live in China.

The School conducted regular counseling sessions with students, at least once a month or as needed, to monitor course progress and attendance. The counseling sessions were conducted by the teachers, the Student Liaison Officer and the Principal.

An Attendance Certificate is issued to students on completion of their course, to confirm their rate of attendance during the course undertaken. The attendance certificate will list the attendance percentage without the inclusion of medical absence as well as the percentage with the inclusion of medical absence.

Applications for exemption from School attendance must be made in writing on the Application for Exemption from Attendance at School form, with supporting documents. Where the reasons for application for exemption includes long term travel, arrangements of more than 20 school days, copies of travel itinerary, medical certificates and other relevant documentation should be included with the application. This application must be submitted at least 2 weeks in advance to the Principal, who will inform the student of the outcome of the application within 3 working days.

Assessment and Reporting

Students are given individual progress reports, a mid-term and the end of the year report. The reports include descriptions of the student's strengths and areas of growth. Teachers set transparent criteria for student assessment and have in place principles of consistent assessment and moderation. Student reports contain detailed information about individual learning achievement and areas for growth, which provide the basis for discussion with parents and guardians. Students are encouraged to use assessment and reporting processes to reflect on their learning.

Post-school destinations

In 2015, seven students were enrolled for Year 11. During the course of the year, five students transferred to another provider and one student left for personal reasons. One student was reported for unsatisfactory attendance and course progress.

Five students enrolled for Year 12. Three were reported for unsatisfactory course progress/attendance. In the year under review, two students sat and passed the HSC. In 2015, two students received their HSC certificates and moved on to TAFE NSW to enrol in Diploma courses.

Enrolment policies and characteristics of the School Body

When completing enrolment for students of the Preliminary and High School Certificate (HSC), AIHS complies with the guidelines and policies of DIBP, NSW Department of Education and Training (NSW DET) and Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Studies (BOSTES).

Students seeking to enroll in Year 11 and/or Year 12 are required to complete the AIHS Application for Enrolment form and must meet the following requirements:

- Successful completion of Year 10 or equivalent
- IELTS 5.0 or equivalent

Applicants who are under 18 years of age must also satisfy DIBP that suitable welfare and accommodation arrangements have been made for them.

Students, except exchange students, must meet additional academic and age requirements when applying for a Student Visa to study at AIHS.

Students are required to submit the completed AIHS Application form and supporting documents (IELTS certificate, copy of the passport, Academic Certificate, etc.).

Student welfare

The provision of student welfare is central to our School community. Effective student care is essential to the core of learning and it is fundamental to the sense of community. Student welfare is valued and implemented through a range of policies, which provide guidance to ensure that students are individually valued. An understanding of the value of developing compassion for others underpins student welfare. The School endeavours to provide a culturally engaging and academically rigorous education, where students have effective learning experiences.

The School has in place a fair and effective discipline system which encourages good behavior and seeks to improve the behavior of students who do not behave well.

Creating an environment in which it is clear that bullying, violence and aggression are unacceptable.

The School Student Protection policies and procedures ensure that staff appointed are fit and proper persons to occupy those positions through interviews and employment screening and requiring staff to commit to a Code of Conduct which is actively monitored.

The School implements procedures to identify when a student is at risk of harm and to notify this to the proper authorities. The School also has in place, procedures to notify and investigate complaints of improper conduct by staff, recognising that dealing with harassment is the shared responsibility of parents, staff and students and are dealt with fairly and consistently.

The School rejects all forms of bullying and no student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of the School. The School has in place strategies, which include maintaining a positive climate of respectful relationships, where bullying is less likely to occur.

The School implements early intervention support for students who are identified as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships. The School has clear procedures, to report incidents of bullying and respond to incidents of bullying that have been reported to the School. Procedures are also in place for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the anti-bullying plan.

School determined improvements

Strategies implemented in 2015

During 2015 the School implemented the following strategies to enhance student performance.

Contacting Parents/Guardians

Parents and Guardians were contacted through emails informing them of the Schools complaints and grievances policy. A copy of the student handbook was also sent to parents/guardians, so that they were kept informed of the School's policies and procedures that could affect their child and they were encouraged to contact the Principal, if they had any concerns.

Allocation of new classrooms

Classes were allocated to larger classrooms with better seating arrangements, including allocation to a computer room with internet access for each student and access to a printer. A projector was also installed to assist in teaching.

Ongoing strategies reinforced in 2015

Extra Tuition and assistance

Students were provided extra tuition, especially before the start of the HSC exams. This is reflected in the results for 2015, which showed an average increase of more than 12 percentage points in the marks obtained by the students in comparison to 2014. The extra tuition also assisted students to complete assigned homework in class.

Warning letters

Student class attendance was monitored closely and when attendance fell below 80%, warning letters were sent to both the student and parent/guardian. Meetings were scheduled with students and parents/guardians in regards to unsatisfactory attendance and course progress.

Student Liaison Officer

In order to improve student attendance and course progress the School has a Student Liaison Officer to monitor the performance and attendance of students and contact parents/guardians directly where there were signs that students may have some issues. The contact was made before attendance dropped substantially or performance fell too far. The Student Liaison Officer is fluent in mandarin which allowed for better communication with the parents/guardians of Chinese students. This has proved to be more effective, for students who are over 18 and are not living with a guardian. In addition, we believe that parents have a greater influence than their guardian.

Counseling

Counseling from both teachers and Principal took place in order to understand reasons why students were not attending class or had unsatisfactory results. Counseling sessions were also conducted with every student after mid-term and year end examinations to discuss their academic progress.

Extra- curricular activities

The School organised social and cultural activities for students to participate to enable them to better understand living in Australia and to engage with the wider community. Activities in 2015 included picnics in the park, excursion to the museum, and art gallery and end of year lunch for students who had completed the HSC.

Results of the strategies

The parent/guardian community appreciated the level of engagement provided by the School Principal to ensure parents/guardians were well informed and involved in their child's education.

Students were appreciative of the bigger classrooms provided and the availability of computers for each student. This has contributed to better learning outcomes in a more conducive environment.

Extra tuition provided to the students was a big factor in the increase of student performance at the HSC exams. This is reflected in the HSC results for 2015. All students interviewed expressed high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching and the effort made by the teachers to provide the best educational outcomes.

The Student Liaison Officer's role has proven effective as student attendance improved substantially over the previous year. The average attendance for 2015 was 85%.

Feedback from students suggested that they were appreciative of the extra-curricular activities organised. Similar activities have been planned for 2016.

Financial information

AIHS is wholly owned by Academies Australasia Group Limited. A copy of the Annual Report of the group is at <http://www.academies.edu.au/Annual-Reports.html>.

As expected from its very small student population, the AIHS numbers are not significant.