

# Woongoolba State School & 'Fence Friends'

When Woongoolba State School became involved in KidsMatter Primary in Term 1 2011, KidsMatter Primary was one of the components embedded in the four-year strategic plan. Another component was a new whole-school initiative, *We are leaders*, which is based on 'The 7 habits of highly effective people', the well-known text written by Stephen Covey. The Principal, David Cramb, introduced the concept that everyone in the school community can take leadership responsibility and developed the framework of *We are leaders*. Included in the framework is KidsMatter Primary as well as other initiatives such as the school values; a pedagogical framework; a strategy for differentiation called, *One child, One learner*, and a reading program, *Readers are Leaders*.

## Reasons for implementing KidsMatter Primary

The School Guidance Officer and the Principal were keen to address the mental health and wellbeing of all students. They were also concerned about some students and thought it would provide teachers with skills and knowledge. Of particular interest,

was the evidence that KidsMatter contributed to improvements in mental health and also academic achievement.

## Who is on the Action Team?

Members of the Action Team include: the School Guidance Officer; the Teacher/Librarian; the Prep classroom teacher; and the Principal. Two parents are in the regular email communication loop of KidsMatter in the school.



We thought it would add weight to our school's focus on social and emotional learning, and we liked the connection between training and assisting teachers to try new approaches to support students. It matched our vision of creating a culture of belonging and learning.

**David Cramb, Principal**

## What has the school done so far?

Woongoolba State School has implemented Components 1 and 2, and parent representatives have

been informed about Component 3. The Action Team hopes that initial training for all Components will be completed by the end of Semester 1 2012, and will enable deeper connections between the KidsMatter resources and planning for whole-school events such as Harmony Day and Leadership Week. It has been valuable to draw on KidsMatter for the social and emotional learning resources that complement the leadership focus of the school.



## Fence friends

As part of the *We are leaders* initiative, the school invested time and other resources over six months in 2011 to develop a public visual display of images of community members.

*Fence friends* involved every student designing and painting an image of themselves to display along the school's front fence.



The Fence Friends Project developed over several stages including planning; purchase of materials; creation of working groups to sand and paint undercoat of images and production of students' individual designs. The plywood for the images was purchased and a local business cut the 90 cm x 60 cm templates. Students worked in small groups with teachers. Teachers' aides managed the steps in the technical processes of preparing the templates and designing the images on A4 sheets for each actual fence friend. Older students assisted younger students with their ideas.

All students painted themselves as fence friends. The Fence Friends Project provided opportunities for

students to participate in a permanent public art exhibition. The images provided an innovative snapshot of the school community in 2011; a long fence line of 200 colourful images that highlights the positive and inclusive school culture.

**Woongoolba State School:  
a community of participants**

The focus on leadership and belonging is shared and promoted in classroom talk, meetings with students, playground activities and visual images throughout the school.

**“** We're setting up an environment which is about a community of participants. What's surprising is that students in Prep use language that demonstrates their understanding of leadership and belonging.

**David Cramb, Principal**

Across the year levels, each student regularly uses a data notebook to record her/his educational and personal/social goals. The notebooks provide ongoing opportunities for students to communicate with teachers about their personal growth. The seven messages of highly

effective people have been translated into the school context, and are written on signposts in the 'streets' of the campus. Instead of 'rules', the school supports students to develop habits like 'put first things first' and 'begin tasks with the end in mind'.

Woongoolba State School engages with students and parents, and invites participation in positive contexts. The KidsMatter Action Team wants to embed in the community the processes associated with the school vision: *innovate; participate, excel*.

**School Profile**

**Woongoolba State School**  
Queensland

Located 44kms south east of Brisbane in a rural setting

Draws a student population from families in farming, fishing and aquaculture

Has around 200 students from Preparatory to Year 7.

<http://woongoolbass.eq.edu.au/>

