

The Social Impact of the b kinder school program

Queensland Primary Schools



Introduction

The b kinder school program currently operates in 50 schools across Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia. The program runs across the full school year and supports student leadership teams to implement five kindness initiatives within their schools: organising b kinder day, creating a safe space within their school, recognising kindness in peers, participating in community service, and connecting with student leaders from other schools. Students also participate in two online or face-to-face leadership workshops and an annual in-person full-day summit. The purpose of this investigation was to examine the impact of the

b kinder school program on participating student leaders from four Queensland primary schools: Bowen State Primary School, Proserpine State School, St Catherines Catholic College, and Whitsunday Christian College. For this report, a retrospective pre/post-test survey design was used, whereby participants completed the survey at the conclusion of the program and reflected on their perceptions both at the beginning and at the end of their participation. This approach enabled the evaluation of perceived changes in student leadership, empathy, kindness, and related outcomes over the course of the program.

“It has made me think that I need to help others and stand up for them because that is what makes a better world” - Grade 6 Student

“I think that the b kinder school leadership program has made me feel better to speak up and help others and interact with others that may be younger than me.” - Grade 6 Student

“It helped me understand others and how they were feeling.” - Grade 6 Student

Program Objectives

The b kinder school program aims to empower student leadership teams to become kind, compassionate and empathetic leaders who inspire positive change and leave their schools better than they found them. By strengthening these leadership capabilities, the program seeks to create positive ripple effects throughout schools and their wider communities, contributing to a growing culture of kindness, connection and improved mental and physical wellbeing.

Program Delivery

The b kinder school program is centred around five student-led kindness initiatives, which provide practical opportunities for student leaders to embed kindness, empathy and leadership within their school communities. Together, these initiatives empower students to develop leadership skills while creating lasting, positive change throughout their schools.

1. Organising b kinder day

Student leaders plan and deliver a whole-school b kinder day celebration that encourages every student to participate in acts of kindness. The main activity on b kinder day is that every student receives one of Billie's beautifully illustrated b kinder day greeting cards and writes a kind message to someone they care about.



2. Finding a safe space within the school

Student leaders establish a dedicated safe space where students who feel left out, sad, or have no one to play with can go. b kinder ambassadors monitor this space, connect with students, offer support, and encourage them to join games, conversations, and other activities.

3. Recognising kindness in others

Student leaders actively recognise and celebrate acts of kindness demonstrated by their peers through initiatives such as kindness awards, certificates, assemblies, or other school-based recognition activities.

4. Committing to community service

Student leaders identify and implement a community service project that gives back to their local community, helping them develop empathy, social responsibility, and an understanding of the positive impact they can have on others.

5. Connect with other student leaders from other b kinder schools

Student leaders participate in two b kinder online workshops and the annual in-person b kinder summit, where they connect and collaborate with student leaders from other schools, share ideas and experiences, and strengthen their leadership skills.

“I didn’t know what other people thought but when I came back from the b kinder program I started to ask what they are feeling and I communicated.” - Grade 6 student

“It has helped me to become a better person and learn how to be kinder, it was a fun and we got to meet new people and learn about others.” - Grade 6 student

Program Delivery (Continued)

Throughout the b kinder school program, student leaders from Queensland primary schools were invited to attend two interactive workshops designed to strengthen their leadership skills and equip them with the skills to create positive change within their school communities. Delivered by experienced educators, each workshop explored topics such as kindness, empathy, compassion, emotional wellbeing, communication, resilience, and student leadership. Students were encouraged to reflect on their own leadership journey, develop practical strategies for fostering a positive school culture, and collaborate with student leaders from other participating schools. These workshops provided a supportive environment where students could share ideas, build confidence, and gain the knowledge and inspiration needed to lead meaningful kindness initiatives throughout the year.

Meet our facilitators below!



Catherine Kolomyjec

Catherine Kolomyjec is a trauma-specialist social worker and one of Stanford University's Global Ambassadors for Applied Compassion. In this workshop, students explored the physiological and psychological benefits of kindness. They gained an understanding of what it means to lead with compassion and why compassionate leadership matters. Students also identified their individual strengths and leadership qualities and learnt practical strategies for building and sustaining a culture of kindness within their school community.



Dr Mark Williams

Dr Mark Williams is a Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience, internationally recognised author, and leading expert in social neuroscience, with more than 25 years of experience researching human behaviour and the brain. In this workshop, students discovered how the brain influences kindness, empathy, leadership, and connection, and explored the science behind positive relationships and collaboration. Students also reflected on their own strengths and potential, and learnt practical strategies to create a more inclusive, compassionate, and connected school community.



Matthew Smith

Matthew Smith is a Principal with extensive expertise in trauma-informed practice, inclusive education, and community engagement. In this workshop, students explored the importance of diversity, inclusion, and respecting differences while developing the skills to become positive bystanders and compassionate leaders. Through engaging case studies and practical activities,, students strengthen their understanding of empathy and ethical leadership, as well as identify meaningful ways to promote kindness, inclusion, and a strong sense of belonging within their school community.

Survey Methodology

This evaluation examined the perceived impact of the b kinder school program on student leaders from four Queensland primary schools. A total of 64 students (Years 5–6) completed a 59-question retrospective post-test survey at the conclusion of the program. The survey measured a broad range of outcomes, including empathy, kindness, emotional intelligence, self-regulation, communication, confidence, leadership, problem-solving, community connectedness and empowerment. Most questions used a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The survey also included program evaluation questions and open-ended responses to capture participants' experiences in their own words.

Results

Measured Changes in Student Outcomes

Each outcome domain was measured using one or more survey questions. The Units column indicates the number of questions that contributed to each outcome score (e.g. kindness was measured using three questions, while some domains were measured using a single question and others by up to four questions). Composite scores were calculated by averaging the responses across all questions within each outcome domain before statistical analysis was undertaken.

The largest improvement was observed in kindness, which increased by 10.6% ($p < .001$), providing very strong evidence that students' perceptions of kindness improved following participation in the b kinder school program. Significant improvements were also observed in empowerment (+8.7%, $p = .001$), self-discipline (+8.6%, $p = .014$), problem-solving (+8.5%, $p = .002$), role modelling (+8.0%, $p = .005$), independence (+7.3%, $p = .017$), empathy (+6.9%, $p = .002$), emotional intelligence (+6.4%, $p = .042$) and community connection (+4.5%, $p = .004$). These findings indicate that students experienced meaningful improvements across a broad range of leadership, social-emotional and interpersonal skills following the program. Although positive improvements were also observed in self-belief and confidence (+4.6%), adaptability (+4.5%) and communication skills (+4.5%), these changes were not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

	Number of Items	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Mean Difference	% Improvement	p-Value
Empathy	4	3.7	3.98	0.28	6.9	0
Kindness	3	3.94	4.36	0.42	10.61	< .001
Emotional Intelligence	4	3.72	3.98	0.26	6.38	0.04
Community Connection	3	2.94	3.12	0.18	4.49	0
Communication Skills	2	2.94	3.12	0.18	4.49	0.1
Adaptability	2	3.14	3.32	0.18	4.49	0.21
Self-belief/Confidence	3	3.61	3.79	0.18	4.57	0.09
Self-discipline	1	3.49	3.84	0.34	8.61	0.01
Problem Solving	3	4.02	4.36	0.34	8.53	0
Role Modelling	4	3.62	3.94	0.32	8	0.01
Independence	1	3.61	3.9	0.29	7.26	0.02
Empowerment	4	4.02	4.37	0.35	8.67	0

Student Perceptions of the Program

Students reported overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the b kinder school program and its impact on their leadership, personal development and relationships with others.

The strongest finding was that 82% of students agreed the program had helped them become a better leader, demonstrating its success in developing leadership capability among participating student leaders.

Nearly three-quarters (74%) agreed they had learnt skills they would use throughout their lives, while 73% reported feeling more confident to help others. In addition, 69% agreed the program had helped them become kinder, more compassionate and empathetic, and 68% reported a greater understanding of others.

Students also described improvements in their personal development, with 60% agreeing the program had helped them better understand themselves. Finally, 57% believed they had left their school better than they found it, reflecting the program's emphasis on student-led action and creating positive, lasting change within school communities.

Overall, these findings indicate that most participants perceived the b kinder school program as having a meaningful and lasting impact on their leadership, wellbeing and ability to positively influence others.

