

Life after Kinma



Inspiring a passion for learning, for life

Kinma

PRIMARY • PRESCHOOL • PLAYGROUP

Life after Kinma

In NSW as a whole, 26% of 20-54 year olds have at least a bachelor degree. At the time of the survey of former Kinma students, 88% of the respondents had pursued further formal education. Almost two out of three (64%) hold a bachelor degree or above.

“I believe that individual learning has set me up well to be creative and flexible as an adult, flowing through from childhood experiences and the freedom to choose our own path.”

— 42 y.o. respondent

When you first arrive at Kinma, you are probably struck by the beauty of the bush setting and the atmosphere of freedom and joy that flows from the classroom to the playground and back.



The scene which awaits you might include a student climbing a tree, or other students creating a magical world of sticks, rocks, and cardboard in the sandpit. In the classroom, students might be sitting in a circle on the floor having a heated discussion with their peers and teacher—dialoguing, disagreeing, then going inward to draw and write about their conclusions in their journals.

It is true that as a learning environment, Kinma's ideals emphasise the development of critical thinking skills: the ability to collect information, analyse it, and come up with unique solutions.

Kinma education is built around the unique learning approaches of each student. It encourages learning in the context of relationship and creativity.

Inevitably, however, parents wish to understand how their children will fare in the very different learning environments of high school and beyond. How will the cultivation of community, relationship, critical thinking, creativity, and child-led projects equip a Kinma student for more standardised practices in high school? How about their social experience, going from a relatively small primary school to something bigger?

Kinma sought to address just such questions by undertaking a survey of former Kinma primary students. This was done on the 40th anniversary year of the primary school as part of a larger celebration of Kinma's founding.

The results are fascinating and encouraging, and highlight much about the benefits of the Kinma journey. Eighty-eight former students took part in this survey. They were enrolled at Kinma throughout the decades from the start in 1972 to 2006, aged 18 – 51 years.



Transition to high school

While there is a period of transition from any primary environment to the high school environment, the experience of a primary education at Kinma contributes to self awareness and mature responses when moving into high school.

More than 3/4 of our surveyed alumni reported a positive or neutral transition to high school. Specifically, respondents reported the extent to which they realised what a special and enjoyable time they had at Kinma; how much they enjoyed learning compared to the average high school student; and how much their positive social experience and their nurturing relationships with teachers at Kinma informed their experiences and confidence.



Here are some of their observations on the transition to high school:

"I saw other students struggle with thinking outside of the square, however, this is what Kinma prepared us for. It was all about ideas and not having anyone tell you that you couldn't do something."

"No problems. I was nervous at first as I'm sure all children are. I remember that I was quite excited to be going to the type of school I had read about in books with things like school uniforms with hats and a school bell. It was a very different environment but I adapted quite easily, although quickly realised how lucky I had been to spend my primary school years at Kinma."

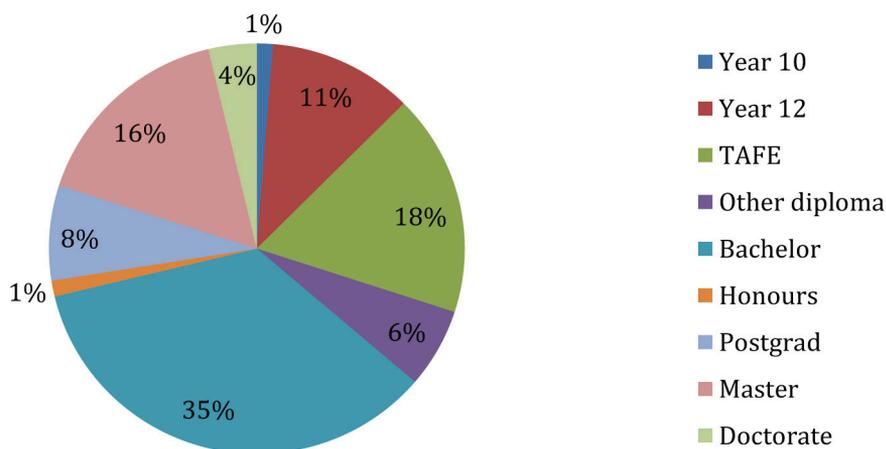
"It was an interesting and daunting experience. I went from a very small secular school with only three core rules (respect the school, respect others and respect yourself) to a large catholic school with many rules. I had to get used to the regimented system and wearing a uniform and calling teachers by a different name. On the other hand though, I think it was good for me and I adapted quite easily. I also liked broadened choice in people I was able to become friends with. I did miss the closeness with teachers though."

Kinma alumni chose a wide range of high schools: almost half attended public high schools, with the remainder almost equally choosing religious and secular nongovernment high schools, including about 15% choosing "alternative" high schools.

Education after high school

In NSW, 26% of 20-54 year olds have a degree. In 2012, when Kinma alumni were surveyed, 88% of the respondents had started a degree, with 64% having completed a bachelor degree. Indeed, 23% had gone on to complete a postgraduate degree.

The highest educational attainments of Kinma alumni at the time of our 2012 survey were:



The remaining 12% of Kinma alumni had not undertaken tertiary education after completing high school.

Kinma alumni followed a broad range of interests in tertiary education including business, education, art, science, engineering, medicine, communication, social science and law, amongst others. This very broad range of interests confirms that Kinma education fosters personal interests and choices for its students.



Careers and life beyond education

After finishing their studies, respondents have been occupied with paid employment (84%), travelling (50%) and parenting (32%). Five percent of respondents were still studying.



How Alumni remember their Kinma years

Most Kinma alumni (around two thirds) strongly believe that Kinma gave them a good foundation for further education. In the words of one alumnus:

"I believe that individual learning has set me up well to be creative and flexible as an adult, flowing through from childhood experiences and the freedom to choose our own path."

"Foundation is probably not the right word - I'd use inspiration. Foundation to me implies the solid building blocks which more aptly describes what the public system delivers. Kinma provided the inspiration to learn."

The high degree of tertiary education among Kinma alumni is an explicit illustration of the foundation Kinma provides.



Kinma in the 1980's

Reflections on relationships with teachers

A unique feature of the Kinma experience is the student's relationship with teachers and their fellow students. Kinma education is founded in relationship.

Teachers take great care to form relationships with each student, to foster relationship between students throughout the school, and to know each student's unique personality, interests, and ways of learning.

This is well reflected in the research report.

"I always felt close to the teachers and they always had a lot of time for me and my peers. I had ongoing communication with them after I left the school, which helped a lot in high school."

"The freedom Kinma gives to its students to be children and completely themselves in such a relaxed and informal environment is something I find so important and has been a leading factor in the person I am today. The size of the classes was fantastic as it was a very intimate learning environment and gave the teachers the chance to know each child needs. One of my favourite things about Kinma was that it was parent run so since our teachers were also parents at the school we were friends with their kids therefore building a very close community."

"The relationship I had with adults in Kinma allowed me to see them as equals, and to not mindlessly fear or revere adults for the sake that they were adults. This has helped me tremendously through life and as I begin to depart my adolescent years I have taken on more adult friends whom I have always seen as fellows and equals."

Reflections on Kinma

Over eight-five percent of surveyed alumni had good memories of Kinma's educational practice, its physical environment and their relationships with teachers and other adults. They believed that attending Kinma had contributed positively to their lives.

The predominant feeling from former Kinma kids was that their primary education gave them a lifelong love of learning, and an ability to think critically and creatively. In their own words:

"Kinma provided me with the ability for self-directed learning, which was vital in all later education. Fostering a passion for education at a young age has meant that I have continued to love to learn and continue my education at all levels."



"It taught independence in learning and self-sustainability as well as critical reasoning skills from an early age. It encouraged curiosity in learning, which for me has been life long."

"The physical environment of Kinma in the years I was there was one of its great strengths. The Bush setting and organic layout of the buildings and play areas, not to mention the bush itself in which many walks and other activities were taken, were all part of an almost magical place to spend one's primary school years."

"Kinma;

Fostered empathy and compassion.

Encouraged enquiring mind rather than unquestioningly following status quo and deferring to authority

Highlighted the importance of collaboration

Creative approach to education fostered lifelong love of learning

Taught importance of respect for animals the environment and other people"



Kinma in the 1970's

About Kinma

Kinma has been leading the way in innovative holistic child-centred teaching and learning for over 40 years, centred around the key areas of relationships, respect, reflection, creativity and intellectual critical thinking.



create
learn
grow



kinma

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