

From Seed to Success: Coolnwynpin State School's First year Achievements in 2025



Coolnwynpin State School, based in the Metropolitan South region of Queensland, joined Pick of the Crop (POTC) and quickly became a standout example of how a whole-school approach can transform food and nutrition education.

With a passionate team, strong community connections, and a commitment to embedding sustainability into everyday learning, Coolnwynpin State School has cultivated a thriving garden culture that supports student wellbeing, hands-on learning, and environmental awareness.

2025 has been a year of remarkable growth - not just in the garden beds, but across the entire school community. Students, staff, and families embraced POTC, working together to foster a culture of healthy eating, sustainability, and outdoor learning.



Garden Features and Activities

At the heart of Coolnwynpin's transformation is the school's new vegetable garden, established through POTC and centrally located near the student eating area.

This vibrant space has quickly become a hub of daily activity and learning.

- Students are actively involved in planting, nurturing, and harvesting a variety of seasonal crops, with favourites like cherry tomatoes and sweet peas often enjoyed straight from the vine during lunch breaks.
- The school has introduced bush tucker plants throughout the grounds, enriching the garden's biodiversity and providing opportunities for students to learn about native foods and Indigenous culture.

These additions complement the school's commitment to sustainability and deepen students' connection to Country.

The garden is more than just a growing space—it's a place where students connect with nature, take ownership of their environment, and develop a sense of responsibility. The Friday Garden Club offers a dedicated time each week for students to get involved, learn new skills, and contribute to the care and success of the garden.



From Seed to Success: Coolnwynpin State School's First year Achievements in 2025



Curriculum Integration Through Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning is a cornerstone of Coolnwynpin's educational approach. Under the guidance of the STEM teacher, the garden has become a living classroom where students explore science concepts such as plant life cycles, ecosystems, and sustainability.

- Lessons are regularly taken outside, where students can observe, question, and engage with the natural world in meaningful ways.
- The moveable seedling table plays a key role in supporting curriculum links, allowing students to witness each stage of plant development—from germination to harvest.

These experiences not only reinforce classroom learning but also boost curiosity, critical thinking, and a deeper appreciation for the environment.

Family and Community Connections

Coolnwynpin has built strong community engagement around its garden program.

- A local grandparent contributed hand-painted garden signs, adding a creative and personal touch to the space.
- Fresh produce from the garden, including lettuces and herbs, is supplied to the school tuckshop most days, supporting healthy food options for students.
- Families are also invited to purchase produce via an email list and at school events, further promoting healthy eating and strengthening the connection between the school and its wider community.

Mini Farmers, Major Fun

A highlight of the year was Mini Farmers Day, a whole-school celebration of fresh food and farming. The event featured a fruit and vegetable tasting table with unique produce like purple carrots and broccoli-cauliflower hybrids, a seedling table, scarecrow building, and even a visit from chickens.

Students dressed up as farmers, Prep students proudly harvested potatoes, and everyone enjoyed colourful platters of fruit and veg. The day was a joyful celebration of the school's achievements.



From Seed to Success: Coolnwynpin State School's First year Achievements in 2025



Key Drivers of Success

The success of Coolnwynpin's first year in POTC has been driven by a powerful combination of passionate leadership and student enthusiasm.

STEM teacher, Andrew, and school gardener, Lisa, have played a pivotal role - working together to embed the garden into everyday learning and create a space that is both educational and inspiring. Their collaboration has helped shape a garden program that is both educational and inspiring.

The school's success was further supported by a strong foundation, including a pre-existing fruit orchard, chickens, flower garden, native bee hive, and a Yarning Circle.



Equally important has been the students' excitement and ownership of the garden. Their curiosity, willingness to get involved, and pride in growing and harvesting their own food have been central to the program's impact. Classes have shown interest and actively participated in planting, harvesting, and learning through hands-on experiences. The garden is no longer just a project - it's a valued and vibrant part of daily school life, driven by a shared sense of purpose across the whole school community.

Looking Ahead: Growing the Vision

Coolnwynpin State School is excited to continue building on the success of its garden program in 2026.

Looking ahead, the school hopes to install a greenhouse to expand growing capacity and support year-round planting.

A new compost pile will be established to manage organic waste and enrich the garden's soil, while a new garden shed will provide storage at the garden area for tools and resources.

The school also plans to launch the OzHarvest FEAST cooking program, which will connect students with healthy cooking and nutrition education using produce grown in their own garden.

These next steps will further strengthen Coolnwynpin's commitment to sustainability, hands-on learning, and student wellbeing.

For more information on POTC, visit <https://hw.qld.gov.au/pick-of-the-crop/>

Acknowledgements: Health and Wellbeing Queensland wish to congratulate Coolnwynpin State School for their hard work and dedication on implementing Pick of the Crop in their school. Also thanks to Kimberley Theron, Regional Coordinator for the Metropolitan South region, hosted by Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service, for supporting the school and for developing this factsheet.

November 2025.