

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL **ANNUAL REPORT** 2024





Contents

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Theme 1 - CONTEXT - page 3

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR - page 4 & 5

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL - page 6 & 7

CHARACTERISTIC OF STUDENT BODY - page 8

Theme 2 - OUTCOMES AND RESULTS - page 9

Theme 3 - STAFFING - page 10

Theme 4 - ATTENDANCE - page 11 & 12

Theme 5 - SCHOOL POLICIES - page 13

Theme 6 - STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION - page 14, 15, 16 & 17

Theme 7 - SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION - page 18

THEME 1 - CONTEXT

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Northside Montessori Society was established in 1978 and operates Northside Montessori School in Pymble. Northside Montessori School operates Toddler (age 18 mths – 2 ½ yrs), Transition (age 2-3yrs), Pre-primary (age 3-6, Pre School & Kindergarten), Primary (Years 1-6) and a growing Secondary (Years 7-12) school.

Our school is very community orientated, and we seek to partner with families to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children can be supported as lifelong learners guided using Montessori approaches.

Our school delivers the NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) K-10 Curriculum and is a candidate school for the IB Diploma in Years 11 & 12. In our pre-school we also deliver the outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework. We also offer before and after school (OOSH) services as well as Vacation Care.

At Northside opportunities for students and high-quality education go well beyond the mainstream curriculum. Montessori education is highly sought after and is implemented in thousands of schools and pre-schools in more than 110 countries for over 100 years.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Dear Members of the School Community,

It is with great pleasure that I present on behalf of the board an update on the progress of our school over the course of 2024.

Throughout this period, our school has remained focused in its pursuit of excellence, with particular interest in finalising the establishment of the final years of our high school program. We have received from NESA the final registration up to year 10, and in 2025 will be undertaking the process for accreditation of year 11 and 12. Additionally, the school has been progressing all the International Baccalaureate Candidacy work and staff training requirements to finalise the establishment of the IB Diploma program. We anticipate receiving the accreditation towards the end of Term 3 in 2025. Our first IB cohort will start in 2026.

Our infrastructure expansion commenced in early 2024 and has progressed on schedule with key classrooms delivered for the commencement of the 2025 school year. The remaining rooms are on target to be available at the beginning of Term 3 in 2025. The landscape works will progress to finalise the project towards the end of 2025. In 2024 we conducted a parent and staff satisfaction survey and in response to identified outdoor space needs through the survey, we have further developed our plan for outdoor spaces and will lodge a DA application in early 2025 to develop a basketball court and playground space leveraging our property at 38 Bobbin Head Rd.

2024 saw the board embark on the review and renewal of our 5-year strategic plan. I'm glad to inform we have been able to finalise the process, and the new strategy will be available to our members in 2025. Our key strategic focus will be to (1) Enable our children to reach their potential as the leaders of tomorrow, (2) Elevate Montessori education as the future of learning, and to (3) Foster the measured growth of our school to deliver on our purpose.

Additionally, we continue reviewing our governance frameworks leading to the update of our constitution for acceptance in 2025 as well as underlying policies. This activity will continue throughout the coming year.

Financially, our school remains in a robust position, we continue to attract prospective families to Montessori education and through this growth and are able to support a positive Montessori learning environment for our children. We have continued to see high levels of retention of our highly qualified staff, as well as the development and improvements of our facilities. This growth is a testament to the appeal of our offering both within our immediate school community and to families outside our school.

*"We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are a part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity. This idea helps the mind of the child to become fixed, to stop wandering in an aimless quest for knowledge. He is satisfied, having found the universal centre of himself with all things."
(Dr Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential)*

On behalf of the board, I take this opportunity to thank our school Executive team of Adam Scotney (Principal), Janene Johnson (Deputy Principal), and Deborah Soler (Business Manager), the staff and educators for their continuous efforts, dedication, and commitment to providing an outstanding school experience, a high-quality education, and unique learning opportunities to our students and community.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the commitment, support, and diligence demonstrated by my fellow directors throughout the year. As we reflect on 2024, it is with a sense of gratitude that in our 2025 AGM we will bid farewell to director Chandan Kaur, whose 10 years of dedicated service have greatly contributed to the advancement of our school. Also, we thank Marcel Kaba for his 3-year commitment.

Looking ahead, we remain resolute in our commitment to pursuing our strategic objectives and anticipate another year of progress and achievement.

Felipe Garcia Garcia
Board Chair



MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

It has been an exciting time in the life of Northside Montessori school over the past year as we have seen growth across our school both in student numbers as well as facilities. In part this has been from the establishment of our Montessori high school program, but also due to the fact that our school has continued to provide high quality Montessori toddler, pre-school, primary school and high school education. We are very fortunate to have highly trained and committed educators and staff as well as a focus on continued improvement in our school facilities.

In 2024 we undertook our 5 year registration process with NESA and are now registered and accredited from Kindergarten all the way through to Year 10. At the end of 2024 we also lodged our paperwork for initial registration for Years 11 & 12. We are currently a candidate school for the IB Diploma and it is our intention to deliver the International Baccalaureate Diploma program in the Senior secondary years commencing in 2026.

In 2024 students across the school participated in school wide events throughout the year such as Harmony Day, Maria Montessori's Birthday, Mother's and Father's Day breakfasts as well as a School Musical Productions.

Following an extended break due to Covid, in 2024 students from our 9-12 and secondary classes had the opportunity to be involved in Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) activities which involved a number of students and their families travelling to Italy to participate in this wonderful program. Now we have returned to this international program, it is anticipated that students will attend the New York Conference in 2025.

A highlight of Term 2 again in 2024 was the combined 'North of the Bridge Montessori Athletics Carnival'. On this occasion, students from Barrenjoey Montessori, Central Coast Montessori, Farmhouse Montessori, Forestville Montessori, Cameragal and Northside Montessori schools participated in this wonderful event at Bannockburn Oval in Pymble. The cooperation and participation of students and parents throughout the day was exceptional, and this was an excellent day of fun and physical activity for all involved.

One feature of the Northside community is the opportunity for students to be involved in Co-Curricular activities both before school and after school. While the school operates an OOSH program, it also offers a range of alternate activities for students during these times. Co-Curricular activities include- Lego Robotics, Origami, Tae Kwon do, Japanese, French, Chess, Band and Choir. Student participation in these activities is high and they provided an excellent opportunity for students to develop new skills across a range of areas.

In 2024 we commenced construction of our new classroom facilities for our Toddler program, Primary school and High School. Given the continued steady growth across the school with good retention of students from our Pre-Primary programs into the Primary School as well as continued enrolment in our Secondary School program, this new building due for completion mid 2025 will be an excellent addition to the already wonderful facilities that we have at the school.

Throughout 2024 the school undertook a survey of parents and staff to identify areas of need within the school and gauge satisfaction across the school. One area of need identified was the further development of outdoor spaces for students to play. Towards the end of 2024 we commenced a development application process to demolish the dwelling which the school owns at 38 Bobbin Head Road and develop this space into an outdoor basketball and playground area for all students. If approved by council, this will provide the much needed outdoor spaces that we require and will hopefully be available by the commencement of 2026.

With AMI trained educators across the school, and a commitment to continue providing training to staff across the school ensures that we have staff with the school's vision in mind. As part of this commitment, two more of our staff commenced their 12-18 AMI Training in 2024.

I want to again thank our whole school community for such a wonderful year in 2024. We greatly value the continued partnership that exists between the school and parents to ensure that Northside Montessori School continues to be able to provide the best Montessori education for our students.

Adam Scotney
Principal

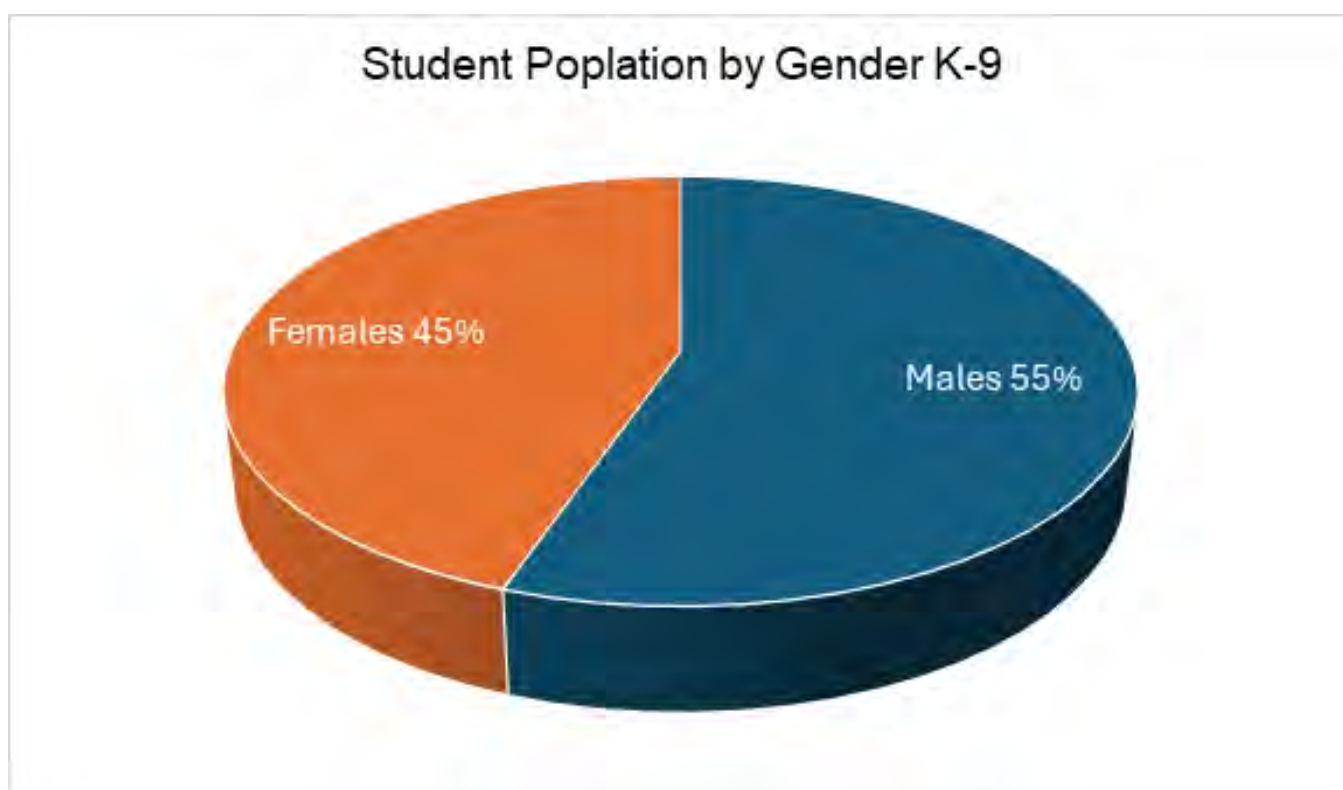


CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

In 2024 Northside offered a 3-6 aged Pre-Primary / Kindergarten program 5 days per week, Montessori Primary program, split into 6-9 (Years 1,2 & 3) and 9-12 (Years 4,5 & 6) age group classes. In the third year of our Adolescent High School program we offered courses in Year 7,8 and 9.

In 2024 the total enrolments across the school were 211 students. There were 68 Students in Pre-Primary (Pre School - 56/ Kindergarten - 12), 117 students in Primary Years 1-6 and 26 students in Secondary, Years 7, 8 & 9.

Enrolments K-9 :- 155



Boys 55 % (86)
Girls 45% (69)

Full-time equivalent enrolments: 155



THEME 2 - OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

In the Montessori School setting regular formal assessments of students such as written tests are not common place. Despite this, Northside Montessori students still participate in the national testing in Literacy and Numeracy that is available through NAPLAN.

As a school we see that NAPLAN tests are one assessment tool which provides a snapshot of a child's ability in literacy and numeracy which can help us identify individual student's strengths and weaknesses; and in part serve to inform our teaching practices.

The small number of students sitting for the NAPLAN tests in Years 3, 5, 7 & 9 at our school can mean that making assumptions about the overarching performance trends of the school is limited. The individual performance of just one or two students can significantly alter the statistical data which might lead to assumptions about either high or low performance that may not be a true reflection of the cohort.

While our school community recognises the need to undertake NAPLAN and uses the results to inform teaching practice, we also acknowledge that there are many other values in Montessori Education that are not measured by this tool. Attributes highly valued in Montessori Education such as creativity, critical thinking, resilience, motivation, persistence, curiosity, questioning, humour, endurance, reliability, enthusiasm, self-awareness, self-discipline, leadership, compassion, courage, sense of wonder, resourcefulness, spontaneity, humility or civic mindedness cannot be measured in this way. These qualities are globally valued and can be equally important to a child's future success.

For a detailed overview of the results for students in NAPLAN at Northside you view that on the MySchool website

www.myschool.edu.au/school/43856/naplan/results



THEME 3 STAFFING

TEACHER ACCREDITATION

Level of Accreditation	Number of Teachers
Conditional	1
Provisional	4
Proficient	13
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	18

Workforce Composition

School Staff

NESA Accredited Teaching staff - 18

Early Childhood Educators (Cert III or Diploma) - 9

Non-teaching Classroom Support - 3

Administration Staff - 10

Full-time equivalent NESA Accredited Teaching staff - 13.9 FTE

Full-time equivalent all non-teaching staff including Administration – 17.4 FTE

At Northside we embrace all faiths and backgrounds for all our staff and students. None of our staff members have identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, however, we strongly encourage applications from First Nations teacher and other staff.



THEME 4 ATTENDANCE

Overall average attendance – 90.1%

Overall	90.1%
Boys	90.7%
Girls	89.3%
Year K	87.9%
Year 1	91%
Year 2	89%
Year 3	87.9%
Year 4	92.4%
Year 5	92.5%
Year 6	93.7%
Year 7	93.9%
Year 8	93.2%
Year 9	87.7%



The attendance rates provided above cover each cohort for the entire school year. While our attendance rates are generally good, it is important to note that given our small cohort sizes, one or two students absent for a prolonged period can significantly impact how these rates appear. The 2024 overall attendance rate of 90.1% is a slight decrease from the 2023 attendance rate of 90.6%. Average attendance over the past 5 years has been 91.42%

Management of Non - Attendance

At Northside Montessori School the regular attendance at school is considered to be vital in achieving the best possible learning outcomes. The School has developed the Student Attendance Policy and Guidelines which manages recording attendance and the manner in which non-attendance is dealt with.

Summary

- Northside Montessori School maintains a register of enrolments.
- Northside Montessori School monitors the daily attendance and absence of students in the School by maintaining a daily register for each class
- Student absences from the School are identified and recorded in a consistent manner by the staff member responsible for each class.
- Unexplained absences from school are followed up in an appropriate manner with the child's parent or carer.
- Northside Montessori School notifies parents and/or carers in an appropriate and timely manner where a student has a poor record of school attendance. This is initially done by the classroom teacher.
- Where unsatisfactory school attendance is identified, the attendance issue and any action taken are recorded, as appropriate.

Unexplained absences that cause concern are followed up in an appropriate manner with the parent or carer by:

1. Class teacher or administration staff telephones the parent of an absent child to confirm that the child is absent from school.
2. Teachers report to the Principal (or delegate) the names and number of days absent of children with unexplained absences.
3. Unexplained absence notifications are communicated home by the administration staff to parents stating date/s of absence and requesting a written or verbal explanation.
4. Where necessary, parent meetings will be held to investigate reasons of non-attendance and referrals to appropriate support services implemented.

Results of unsatisfactory attendance are recorded by the Principal or delegate and collected and filed in the child's record file.



THEME 5 SCHOOL POLICIES

The following school policies are publicly available on the school website.

- Enrolment Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Complaints and Grievance Policy
- Whistle blower Policy
- Privacy Policy



THEME 6 STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

Parent Satisfaction

A key feature of Northside Montessori School is to involve families in the education of their children. Across the school parent involvement across a range of areas is strong. Parents who choose Montessori education for

- Class Parents
- Education Events
- Mother's Day and Father's Day breakfasts
- Fundraising events
- Working Bees
- Parent and Community Committee
- Tuckshop
- Excursions and Incursions
- Gardening and garden projects
- Caring for animals (and babysitting them in holidays)
- Board membership
- Cooking or Craft workshops with children
- Many other events.

Northside Montessori is committed to listening to the views and expectations of key stakeholders and commissions independent surveys to provide performance feedback on a wide range of related education topics.

The feedback from these surveys greatly assists the School with both its operational and strategic planning and its determination to continually improve the educational experience offered to the students.

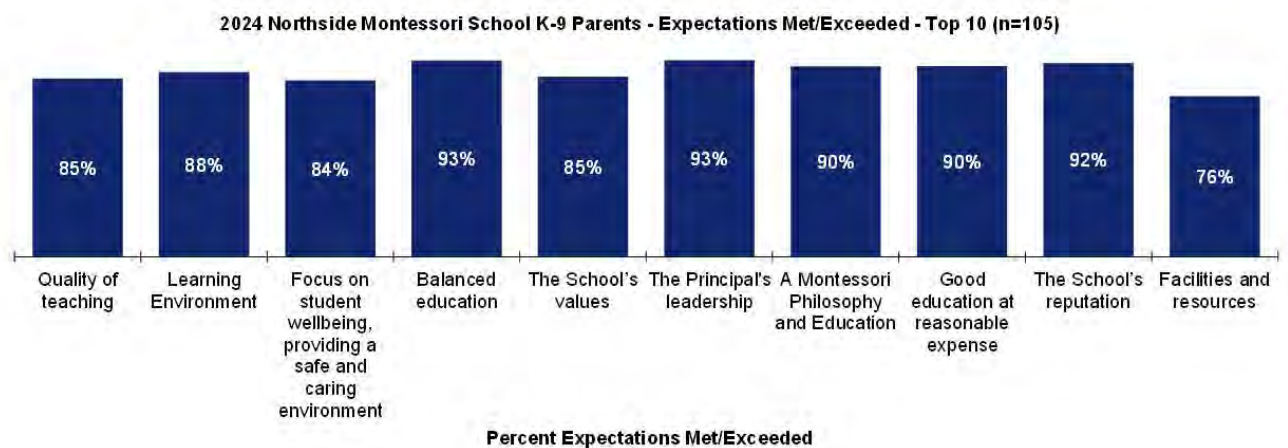
In 2024, 124 parents and 32 staff participated in surveys and provided views on areas such as academic performance, student wellbeing, co-curricular activities, reputation and facilities.



Parents

A selection of the parents' top level findings are detailed below, ranked in order of the importance the parents placed on reasons for choosing a school for their children. The top five areas are noted below:

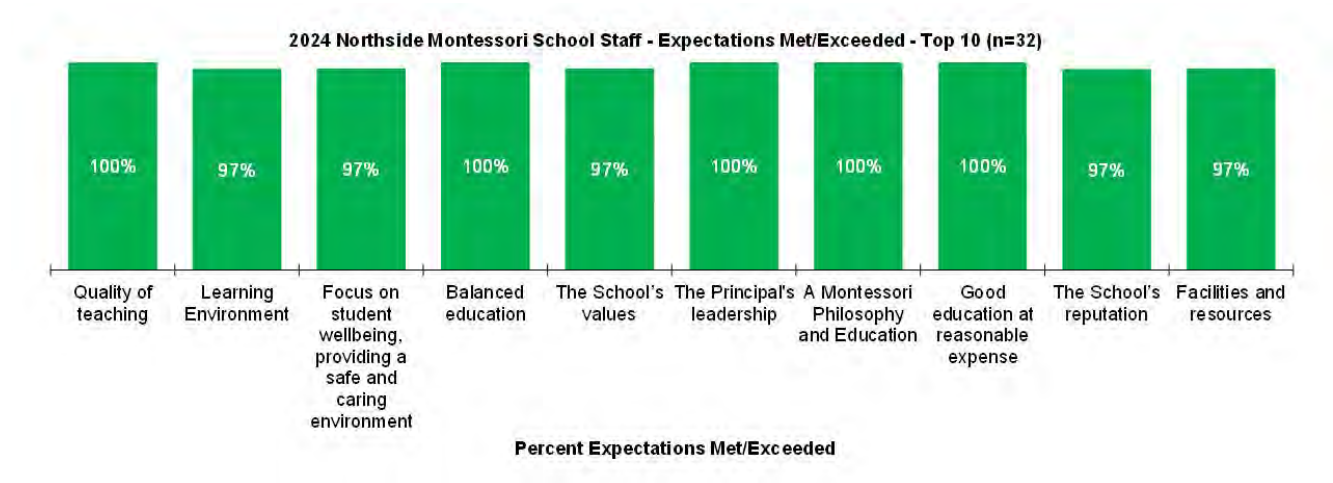
1. 85% of parents noted their expectations were met or exceeded in relation to the quality of teaching
2. 88% of parents noted their expectations were met or exceeded in relation to the learning environment
3. 84% of parents noted their expectations were met or exceeded in relation to the focus on student wellbeing, providing a safe and caring environment
4. 93% of parents noted their expectations were met or exceeded in relation to the balanced education
5. 85% of parents noted their expectations were met or exceeded in relation to the ability to School's values



Staff

A selection of the staff's top level findings are detailed below, ranked in order of the importance the parents placed on reasons for choosing a school.
The top five areas are noted below:

- 1. 100% of staff noted their expectations were met or exceeded in relation to the quality of teaching
- 2. 97% of staff noted their expectations were met or exceeded in relation to the learning environment
- 3. 97% of staff noted their expectations were met or exceeded in relation to the focus on student wellbeing, providing a safe and caring environment
- 4. 100% of staff noted their expectations were met or exceeded in relation to the balanced education
- 5. 97% of staff noted their expectations were met or exceeded in relation to the School’s values



Parents and staff were asked to provide open responses to the most valued aspects of Northside Montessori School. The most frequently nominated aspects were:

2024 Northside Montessori Parents - What do you value most about your association with the School? (Top 5)
The School community
Quality of teachers & staff
Safe, caring & supportive environment
Child's happiness attending school
Child's Education & Learning

Student Satisfaction

Positive attendance levels suggest that the children enjoy coming to school and that our parents value and support learning at Northside Montessori School. Parents often report that their children don't like school holidays because they prefer to be at school!

Students across the school have a voice and can share their opinions and concerns through regular class meetings which occur on a weekly basis. Students also engage positively with school staff and have opportunities to speak openly to staff and also school leadership when they wish to raise concerns.



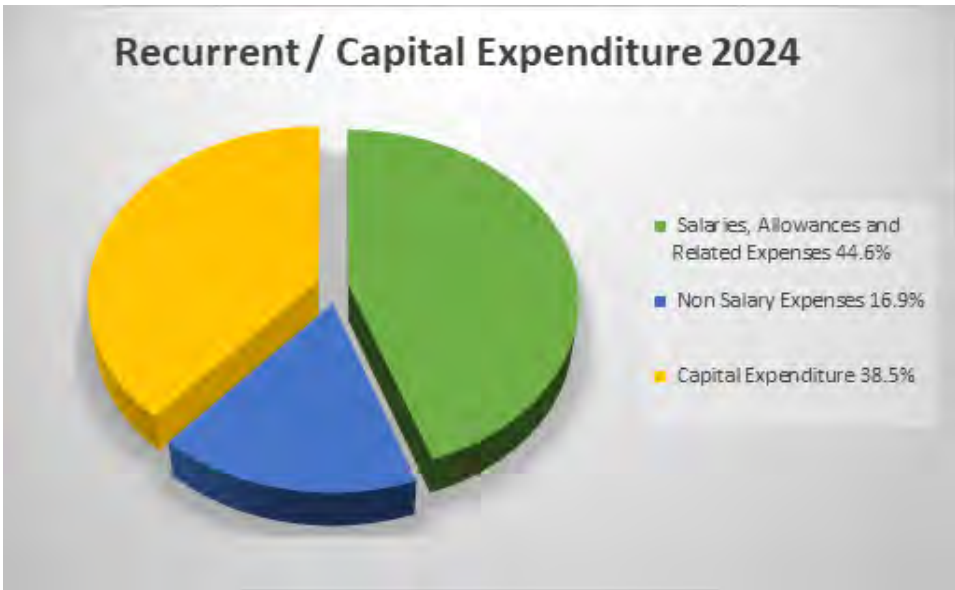
THEME 7 SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

In 2024, our income streams remained strong, reflective of our growth in student numbers at the School.

Funding received for the year, from the Commonwealth Government and State Government, totalled \$1.60 million, representing 37% of total income. This is based on the Federal Government’s new funding model and the schools Capacity to Contribute score of 117. Our most significant expenditure is employee expenses representing 45% of total expenditure (including capital expenditure). Increases in salary and on-costs were in accordance with the applicable Multi-Enterprise Agreements 2021. Overhead costs remained within budget and overall working capital was strong.

Mid-year we commenced a significant capital improvement program to support the growth of our School as well as provide leading educational facilities, including three new classrooms, new toilet facilities and a small meeting room, as well as the refurbishment of three existing classrooms and extension of the school’s library. This is on schedule to be completed by end of 2025.

In addition, other major capital projects completed in 2024 included an upgrade to the primary students outdoor playing area with a new 12 player handball court and two new chess boards as well as repaving a large section in front of the school; upgrade to one of our pre-primary classrooms with new kitchenette, new bifold doors and upgrade to the student toilet area; and replacement of the student computers in all our primary classrooms.





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