

SOUTHSIDE
Montessori School

- Est 1979 -

2021

Annual Report

*The greatest gifts we can give
our children are the roots of
responsibility and the wings of
independence.*

Dr Maria Montessori



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Introduction



Participation in Annual reporting process

Southside Montessori School (SMS) seeks to comply with the expectations of the Australian Curriculum, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), the Montessori Curriculum and the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. Southside Montessori School maintains the relevant data and documentation for, and complies with, the reporting requirements of the Minister for Education. During 2020, School registration was successfully renewed for the period 2021 - 2025. SMS students sit for NAPLAN assessments each year.

The Principal is responsible for coordinating the final preparation and distribution of the Annual Report to NESA and other stakeholders as required. Determination of the specific content to be included in each section of the Report and review of the year's progress, to ensure ongoing compliance, is the final responsibility of the Principal.

Preparation and publication of the Report – Office copy, electronic copy and distribution of the Report to NESA and other stakeholders.

Reporting Area 1

Messages from key school bodies

Head of Board's Annual Report - Southside Montessori Association

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Southside Montessori School, I write this report to acknowledge the determination and resilience of the School community during 2021 which was another difficult year with COVID-19 proving to be both challenging for society as well as our School.

The 2021-2022 school year involved remote learning with parents/caregivers providing significant support to children during this time. The Board wishes to thank the staff who successfully pivoted into their roles as remote learning instructors and for parents who courageously supported learning through this unique and challenging time. The ability of our students to continue learning through the pandemic is due to no small part of the fearless dedication and leadership of staff and parents.

We are also proud and thankful to the amazing new team that has come on board in the past year, from our Principal to the new teachers, each has contributed and given their all to help build the school into a better place. Some of the large accomplishments include the successful relocation of the Garden room, establishing a school newsletter, design and establishment of a junior and senior library space, building high quality connections in the community and much more.

Everything that was accomplished this year, we did together. At every turn, we met each other with strength and kindness. While we could not be physically connected at times, we remained connected through our shared desire to see our community grow and thrive in the midst of unfathomable circumstances. Each of us is a piece of the SMS puzzle and when we work together we make the picture complete. I am proud and grateful for our SMS children and families and the effort and fortitude everyone showed during this time.

With COVID behind us, it is an exciting time to be part of Southside Montessori School as we steer the school into the future and grow our community and passion for Montessori education.

Lastly, may I thank all the volunteers of the Southside Montessori School community who give their time, expertise and energy to the school – these contributions make a difference to our students' educational experience. The efforts of volunteers are a vital part of the community and are appreciated by all.

Mark Karachony and Alex Abrate
Chair, Southside Montessori Society

Reporting Area 1

Messages from key school bodies

Principal's Annual Report - Southside Montessori School

2021 has marked several new beginnings for Southside Montessori School. With the resignation of Mrs Debra Avery in Term 4, of 2021 and the appointment of myself in Term 1, 2022, the school has been through a state of both transition and transformation.

Although impacted by Covid-19 and flooding, the community remained resilient and resolute in the face of adversity. Whilst change generated uncertainty, it also revealed opportunity - we looked inward to reflect on the existing strengths within the bones of our school and considered thoughtfully how this could be nurtured in the development of a strategic plan with a future focus.

With the introduction of new staff members to the team, the school pursued directional and cultural change, shifting not only ideologies but also classrooms. The 'Primary Garden' assumed a new home and was renamed 'The Garden', taking shape in the purpose built preschool environment. In renewing staff structures, we welcomed new educators who had spent many years before inspiring the young minds of Southsiders across previous generations. Whilst we sowed new seeds, we've also gone back to our roots to uncover the essence of what connects people with Southside.

In Term 1 of 2022, the school established a dedicated Parents and Friends Committee which has been fruitful in building community bonds, strengthening connections and fostering a sense of unity. With the implementation of several community projects including the Garden Club, our community came together to enhance our green spaces and to cultivate fruit, herbs and bush tucker that can later be shared with others. Through connection and collaboration, the school community has worked together in the pursuit of excellence.

The school embarked on an ambitious marketing plan to promote the benefits of a quality Montessori education. The commitment and focus of the board, administration staff, parents and teachers to put this plan into action is an example of the dedication and support of our school community. The ability of the community to work through the opportunities and challenges that were presented in 2020 is testament to the strength, energy and resilience of the Southside Montessori community. Thank you to the children, families and to the community for your ongoing support and contributions to the School. We look forward to a continued partnership as we work together to realise a shared goal and common vision for a future that is flourishing for our students.

In 2022 and beyond, the School maintains its commitment to providing high quality education based on the traditions of Montessori as it has for over 40 years. Whilst we hope to retain the essence and spirit of what has come before us, we look to cultivating a future that harnesses the best of what has been and the best of what is yet to come.

Charisse Sweeney - Principal (Term 1 and 2, 2022)

Reporting Area 2

Contextual information about the School and characteristics of the student body

Core Guiding Principles

Conceived by Dr Maria Montessori in Italy over one hundred years ago, the Montessori pedagogy adopted by SMS adheres to the educational philosophy valuing the whole child as they evolve through the natural sequence of development. This philosophy is underscored by one-on-one teaching, intrinsic motivation, concrete learning opportunities leading to the abstract as well as freedom of choice within agreed parameters aligned with curriculum outcomes. The School also reflects the outcomes determined by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

Our vision

Our vision is to create an educational environment aligned with authentic Montessori methodology and to position ourselves as guardians of a future that is bright, sustainable and equitable for our students who will represent both community and global values endorsed by the Montessori world.

Our values

Connection - celebrating our uniqueness and oneness whilst embracing a sense of belonging to a community with shared values

Collaboration - Acknowledging and understanding differences and working in partnership to achieve common goals

Community - Recognising and responding to the needs of others through acts of service for the school and broader community

Grace - Conduct that reflects sincerity, dignity and compassion

Integrity - Guided by a moral compass and acting in accordance with ethical principles

Our mission

Our mission is to cultivate an authentic Montessori community that promotes the development of the whole child, fostering an environment that inspires learners to grow as compassionate, critical thinkers driven to generate positive and meaningful change as they shape the future.

Reporting Area 2

Contextual information about the School and characteristics of the student body

Characteristics of the student body

SMS Enrolment Profile - Summary 2021

Term	Stage 1 (4-6 years)	Stage 2 (6-9years)	Stage 3 (9-12 years)	Total
3	28	5	4	37
4	28	5	4	37
1	32	9	3	44
2	27	8	1	36

Enrolment Profile - gender and age - as at December 2021

Age (years)	Male	Female	Total
4	7	3	10
5	7	4	11
6	1	2	3
7	1	3	4
8	2	1	3
9	0	2	2
10	1	0	1
11	3	0	3

Reporting Area 3

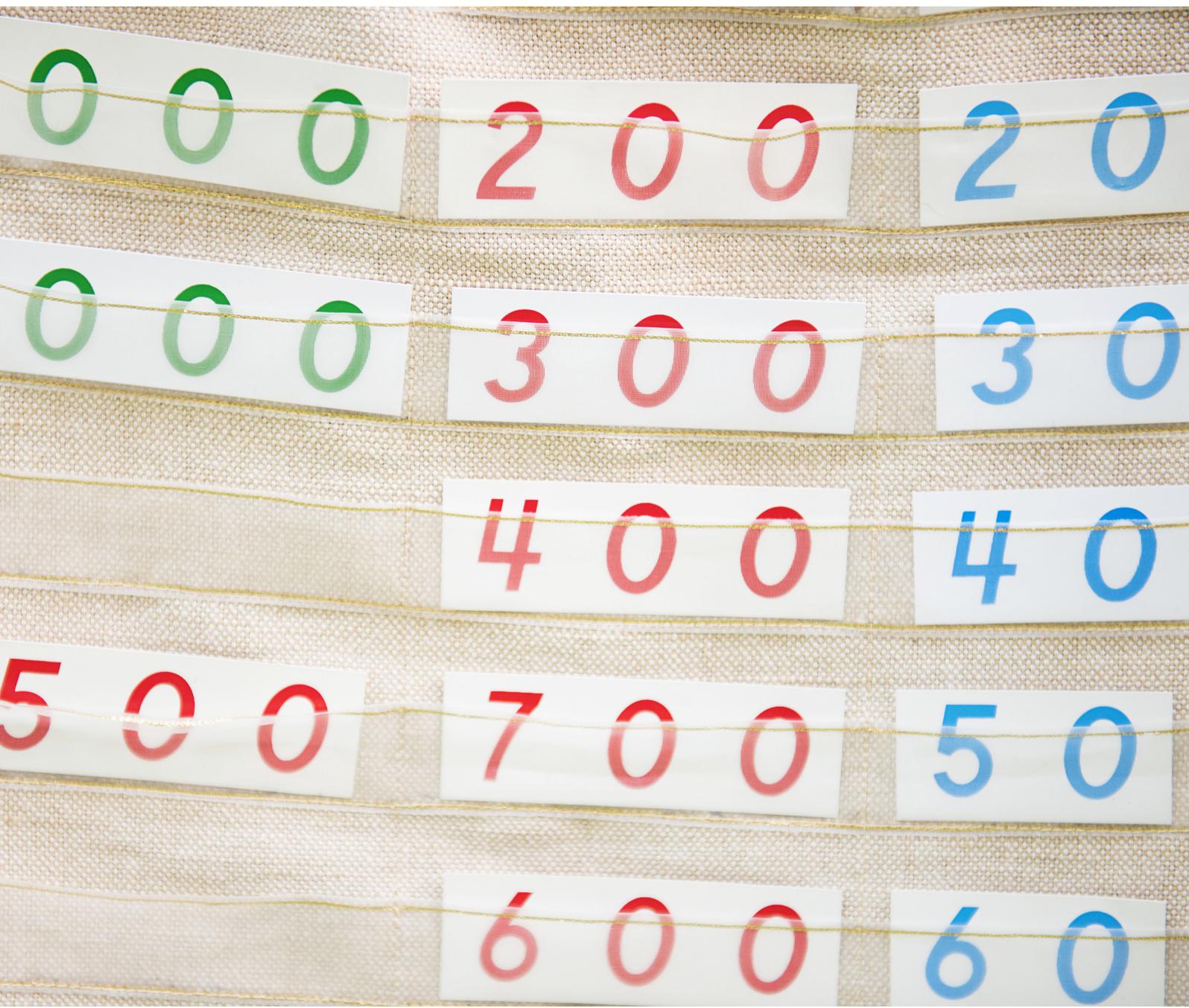
Student outcomes in standardised National Literacy and Numeracy

NAPLAN Standardised testing

Southside Montessori students in Year's 3 and 5 sit for NAPLAN assessments each year. Please be advised that due to the small cohort of students sitting NAPLAN our school's results are not posted on the *My School* website.

NAPLAN is one assessment tool from a varied range we use to track student progress. Online record keeping, teacher observations, student work samples, parent and student reflections, curriculum planning and documentation are all used to support student learning and monitor progress from the time the child enters our school.

In 2020, NAPLAN was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Reporting Area 4

Teacher Professional learning, Accreditation and Qualifications

Teacher professional development

Southside Montessori staff participate in professional learning which in 2021 has comprised workshops, seminars, lectures and meetings.

Professional Learning	Staff participation
Provide First Aid (HLTAID001)	5
Provide CPR (HLTAID004)	5
Building Evacuation Training & Portable Fire Fighting Equipment	5
Infection Control training – COVID-19	5
(PRT001) Identify and respond to children and young people at risk	5
Inclusion workshop - Montessori Australia	3
Principal Induction course - AIS	1

Teacher Accreditation

Level of Accreditation attained	Number of teaching staff
Conditional	0
Provisional	0
Proficient	1
Experienced	3
Highly Accomplished (voluntary)	0

Reporting Area 4

Teacher Professional learning, Accreditation and Qualifications

Teacher Qualiifications

Details of teaching staff (as defined by the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004) who are responsible for delivering the curriculum in accordance with the following categories:

Level of Accreditation attained	Number of teaching staff
Teachers having teacher qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia, or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skill Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guideline	4
Teachers having a Bachelor degree from a higher educational institution within Australia or one recognised within the (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	1



Reporting Area 5

Workforce composition

Southside Montessori had a staff retention rate of 28.6 % in 2021 compared to 60 % in 2020. The SMS workforce consists of teachers, support and administration staff, with both traditional tertiary and Montessori qualifications. Southside Montessori School did not retain staff in 2021 recognised as Indigenous Australian or Torres Strait Islander.

School staff	Staff representation
Teaching staff	5
Full time teaching staff	1
Non- teaching staff	1



Reporting Area 6

Student Attendance

Student attendance rate

Preparatory

87%

Kindergarten

83.5%

Extended or repeated absence is usually due to illness. Any exception to this is managed according to pastoral processes, initially through the classroom teacher and thereafter by the Principal, where required. Parents and caregivers are required to report planned absences in advance, where extended leave is approved by the Principal.

Attendance rolls are submitted electronically to Administration by 9:30am each morning, where planned or unforeseen absences are recorded. Parents report any unplanned absences by phone or via the SMS Schoolstream app. An automated text message from the School messaging system is sent to parents of children still absent at 9:30am. Responses are monitored and families are called by phone should further information be required. These prompts allow us to track absences and support the safety of children.

Partial absences are also monitored through the attendance roll. Late attendance or early departures are recorded via Administration where parents are required to sign in/out.

Year 1

76.5%

Year 2

77%

Year 3

87.4%

Year 4

83.7%

Year 5

80%

Year 6

-

Whole school

82%

Reporting Area 7

Enrolment Policy

Enrolment and Orientation Policy

Southside Montessori School is a coeducational Pre and Primary School providing an education underpinned by the philosophy of Dr Maria Montessori and fulfilling the educational requirements of the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

Applications are processed in order of receipt and consideration is given to the applicants' support for the values and philosophy of the School, siblings already attending the School and other criteria determined by the School. SMS offers a three year Preschool Montessori program in our Cycle 1 class which builds a solid foundation as students progress to our Montessori Primary (Years 1-6) program. Commencement of Stage 2 is roughly equivalent to commencement of Year 1 in a traditional school.

Overview of Procedures

The Principal processes all enrolments and is accountable for reviewing applications for enrolment aligned with the policy:

1. Process all applications within the School enrolment policy
2. Tour and interview booked with the family
3. 3 day trial offered for prospective students considering the applicant's supporting statement/ interview responses regarding their ability and willingness to support the School ethos
4. Consider each applicant's educational needs, with information gathered in consultation with parents/caregivers/relevant stakeholders.
5. Identify any strategies required to accommodate the applicant and the school's capacity to meet these needs before a decision is made
6. Interview in consultation with teachers and Principal where the applicant is Informed of the outcome.

Of particular importance when considering the acceptance of the child, is the commitment of the child's family to the Montessori philosophy as a strong partnership between home and school as well as an active interest in the school provides the most benefit for students in their Montessori education. In alignment with the ethos of Dr Maria Montessori, SMS welcomes children of all backgrounds and abilities, where programs are designed to meet the diverse needs and stages of development for all students. Enrolment is accepted on the assumption that parent(s) will be supportive of the School management team and the philosophical foundations of the School, with a commitment to adhering to appropriate pathways when following up on concerns relating to their child.

Admissions Policy

The enrolment process and selection criteria for our various programs is outlined below. All enrolments are processed through the office of the Registrar. To enrol a child for Pre and Primary, attendance at a tour is required along with the corresponding application fee. All programs are offered throughout the year dependent on placements available in relevant classes and there is no waitlist. Students currently enrolled in the Cycle 1 program (pre-school) are given preference to enrol in the Primary program.

Reporting Area 8

School Policies

Policy summary	Amendments in 2021	Access
<p>Student Welfare: SMS is concerned about the social, emotional, and physical well-being of all students in our care and our policies and procedures to support child welfare including Child Protection are updated accompanied by regular training.</p>	<p>The Child Protection Policy and Procedures were revised, including the language, to include the Crimes Act legislation and specifics around the requirement to protect and to report offences.</p>	<p>Families have access to the electronic version of this policy through the website. Staff have access to the live, electronic version through the SMS Staff Intranet. Hard copies are available at Administration.</p>
<p>Anti-Bullying: SMS advocates a whole-school approach that promotes lifelong learning in a supportive environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. The school fosters a shared responsibility of all community members in the promotion of social justice, high quality connections and restorative practices. There is no tolerance for bullying behaviours that impact on the wellbeing of an individual and the policy outlines the prevention of such behaviours. The 'Code of Conduct', provides clear strategies and procedures in responding to bullying.</p>	<p>Descriptions of bullying and indicators of bullying according to behaviour have been revised. Information provided by the Office of the E-safety Commissioner has been included to reflect legislative changes.</p>	<p>Families have access to the electronic version of this policy through the website. Staff have access to the live, electronic version through the SMS Staff Intranet. Hard copies are available at Administration.</p>
<p>Discipline: SMS students are required to adhere to the School's values and ethos, which are underpinned by overarching rules of conduct. Students are required to follow directives provided by staff. The school expressly prohibits corporal punishment and does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administration of corporal punishment by non- school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the school. All behaviour management actions are based on procedural fairness and expressly communicated in consultation with families. The qualities inherent of a Montessori environment are used to integrate values education through Grace and Courtesy, empowering students to make respectful and positive choices. This approach is reflected in the policy documentation.</p>	<p>The Policy was reviewed and no changes were made in 2021.</p>	<p>Families have access to the electronic version of this policy through the website. Staff have access to the live, electronic version through the SMS Staff Intranet. Hard copies are available at Administration.</p>

Reporting Area 8

School Policies

Policy summary	Amendments in 2021	Access
<p>Complaints and Grievances: The Complaints and Grievances Resolution processes aim to deal with all complaints in an open and fair manner, ensuring the rights of students, staff and parents are respected and upheld, support sensitivity and confidentiality and help reach an agreed solution.</p> <p>The school will seek to resolve concerns informally where possible but acknowledges that in some cases a person may wish to formally raise a concern. All formal concerns can be made to the Principal or the Chair of the Board.</p> <p>The policy ensures there is appropriate, procedural fairness in dealing with complaints and grievances. The processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents and/or students are also outlined in the policy.</p>	<p>Procedures were amended in line with compliance requirements to publish policy documents on the website. Resolution strategies were amended to provide procedures according to different age groups as well as changes that include the language and compliance for ACEQA.</p>	<p>Families have access to the electronic version of this policy through the website. Staff have access to the live, electronic version through the SMS Staff Intranet. Hard copies are available at Administration.</p>



Reporting Area 9

School determined improvement targets



School improvement Initiatives

Area of improvement	Actions towards goal attainment
Development of a whole-school library	Previously separated, the Junior and Senior Fiction libraries were amalgamated and relocated to a new space, forming a whole-school library
Refine and update School policies to align with curriculum expectations	In consultation with professionals and regulatory bodies, policies and procedures were reviewed and refined to align with curriculum expectations for NESAs, ACEQA and the National Montessori Curriculum
Raise profile and increase brand awareness	Marketing plan designed to raise the school's profile in the immediate community and to broaden the reach of our audience through social media platforms
Establish a united community through fundraising efforts	P & F Committee established with community consultation to engage in fundraising, community networking and the acquisition of community grants
Generate growth and sustainability through alumni and community network	Relationship building with alumni through guest speakers and founders of the School
Establish School newsletter	3 weekly School Newsletter established in Week 6, Term 1
Increase parent engagement	Parent education session introduced in Term 2 to increase understanding and awareness of Montessori education. Open classrooms established to build partnerships between home and school
Enhance organisational culture	Student, parent and staff voice considered through satisfaction surveys implemented June 2022

Reporting Area 10

Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility



Civics and citizenship are the cornerstone of the Southside Montessori community, with the aims of the School to develop citizens who act with integrity and respond with empathy. Respect is a core value that underpins our approach to learning, where students are encouraged to co-create an environment that fosters inclusivity and each person feels a sense of belonging and personal value. Respect and responsibility are embedded within our practices that honour grace and courtesy. These guidelines continue to support the children and adults in our community, enabling them to flourish.

Aligned with Montessori pedagogy, students are encouraged to develop a sense of autonomy and accountability as a learner. Independent choices are provided that align with the student's capacity, interests and that provide purposeful and meaningful engagement with the world in which we learn.

SMS recognised many key cultural events throughout the year that fostered a sense of belonging, promoting respect and responsibility. Participating in Harmony Day, Eid al-Fitr, Remembrance Day and Clean up Australia Day honoured a sense of citizenship.

Student Leadership has been implemented within our transition program, with a Peer support - Buddy-system established to support children as they move between cycles. The program promotes leadership, wellbeing, positive relationships, resilience, and mental and social health.

The establishment of our Garden club provided students with the opportunity to manage, maintain and cultivate our green spaces. The duties required foster a sense of respect for the shared environment, purpose and responsibility, aspects that support the domain of Practical Life within the Montessori Curriculum.

Reporting Area 11

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction



The participation and engagement of families are welcomed and encouraged in the School. Southside Montessori School provides varied opportunities and platforms for the community to express their views and be heard, these include Parent Education sessions, Observation days, Open classrooms as well as parent/teacher conferences. In June 2022, a formal Student Satisfaction Survey was conducted with 10 students across Stage 2 and 3, with responses collated to indicate the percentage representing a 'usually' or 'yes' response.

Student Satisfaction Survey results

I like being at school	30%
feel valued and respected at School	70%
I enjoy what I am learning at School	80%
Children are kind and help each other	90%
I feel safe at School	90%
I am learning new things (making progress with my learning)	90%
I get to make decisions about my learning	100%
The School has all the materials I need to do my work	90%
I like the outdoor environment	80%
I think our School cares about the environment	70%

Reporting Area 11

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

In June 2022, SMS conducted a formal Parent Satisfaction Survey via Survey Monkey with a high number of our families responding in regard to their child/ren. The survey has been collated to show responses that represent a 'usually' or 'always' response.

Parent Satisfaction Survey results

SMS prepares children for lifelong learning	64%
SMS supports my children's wellbeing and capacity for flourishing	36%
SMS provides sound instruction in key learning areas	45%
SMS provides a challenging and engaging curriculum	45%
My children are happy attending school	55%
My children are valued and respected at SMS	45%
My children are making progress with their learning and experience a well - rounded learning environment with opportunities to grow as individuals	45%
The classroom environments are pleasing for my child	45%
I feel comfortable approaching staff to discuss my children's progress	45%
I feel welcome to contribute/volunteer to enhance my child's school experience on the provided platforms	36%

Reporting Area 11

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

In June 2022, SMS conducted a Staff Satisfaction Survey via Survey Monkey with all staff members responding. The survey has been collated to show responses that represent a 'usually' or 'always' response.

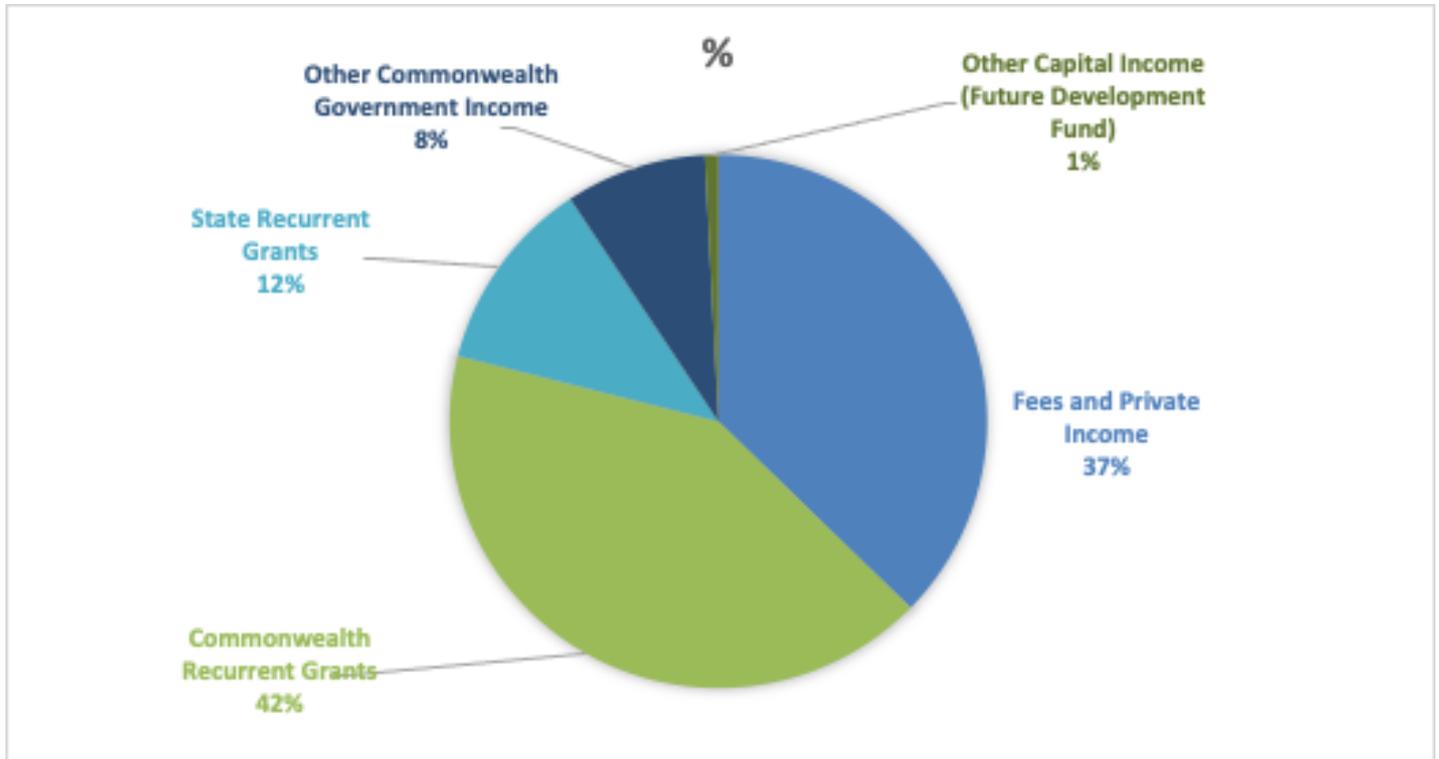
Staff Satisfaction Survey results

Staff at the School have a unified approach and treat each other with respect	100%
The School staff are caring and respect the students	100%
The School staff has a sense of belonging and responsibility	100%
Staff collectively brainstorm on resolutions to provide effective learning	100%
The School facilities are well looked after and are up to appropriate standards	67%
The School's ICT Services are appropriate to support staff in their roles	83%
Professional Development activities have had a positive impact on your career growth at the School	100%
Whole Staff Meetings and Pupil Free Days are important and are a positive experience	100%
The voice of the staff is valued and considered	100%
Staff feel supported by executive leadership to fulfill their role with a degree of autonomy and self-determination	83%

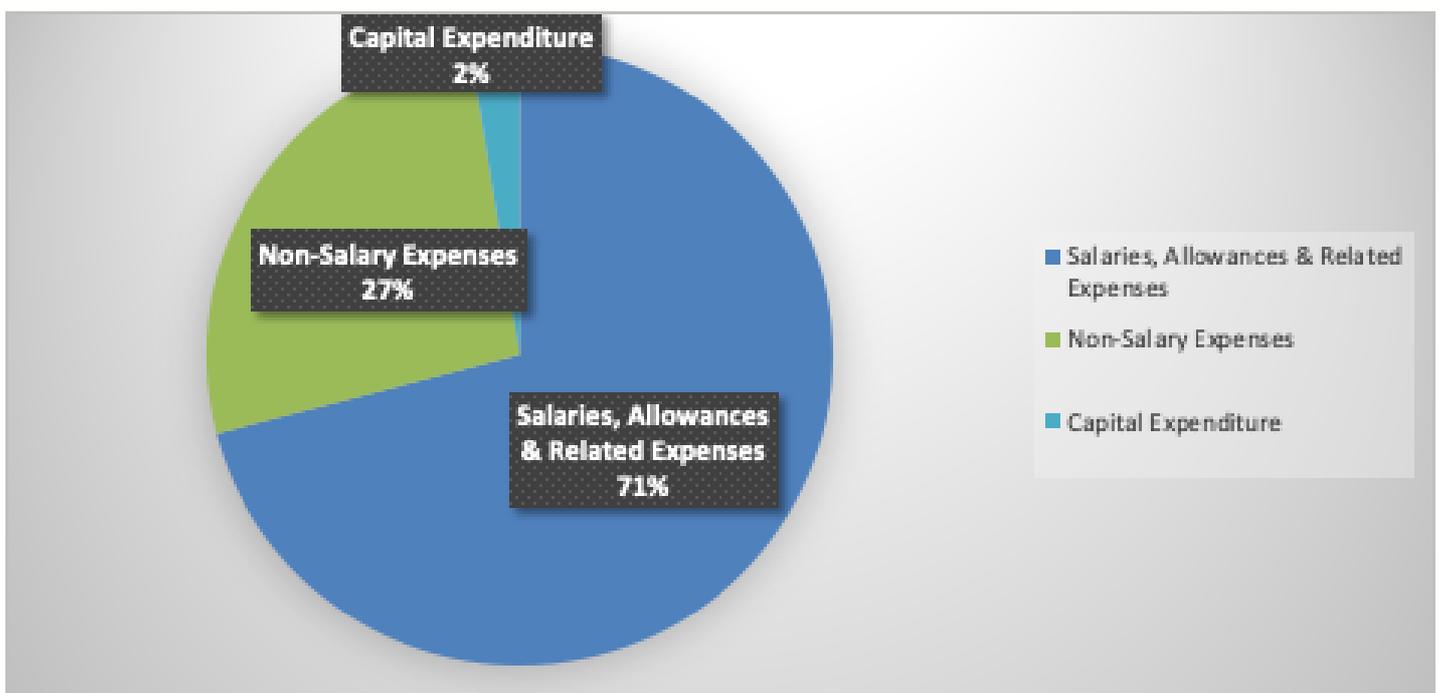
Reporting Area 12

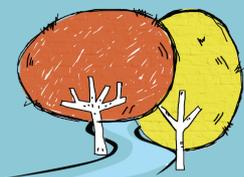
Summary Financial Information

Southside Montessori School - Recurrent and Capital Income for 2021



Southside Montessori School - Recurrent and Capital Expenditure for 2021





SOUTHSIDE
Montessori School

- Est 1979 -

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