



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

MONTESSORI
sydney
pre • primary • high school

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Sydney Montessori School

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A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

It is with pleasure that I present the 2020 Sydney Montessori School Board Annual Report and reflect on the activities of the Board over the last twelve months. 2020 was an unprecedented, uncertain and very busy year due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the challenging year the school continues to grow and achieve great things and provide an excellent education for our students. As the Chairman of the school board, but also as a parent, it is encouraging to see how the students continue to excel and develop as individuals, independent learners and leaders.



George Mifsud
Board Chair

As part of our succession plan Mick Attridge stood down from the school board after 8 years of dedicated service left the board after many long years of service. I would like to thank Mick for his dedication, leadership and personal support he provided me after stepping down as Chairman in 2019. During his tenure Mick's contribution has helped shape the school to what it is today, a financially stable and growing educational facility.

During the year we have seen our school Master Plan start to take shape with the commencement of upgrades to our classrooms and school grounds. It is pleasing to see years of planning to improve the school coming together. In 2020 the school also continued to drive investment in IT resources, classroom teaching material and electronic devices for student learning. In addition, the board has continued to work on keeping our policies up to date and successfully planned to reopen the high school in 2021. Financially the school remains in a strong position and I would like to thank the executive team and the school Finance and Governance committee for their ongoing guidance in this area.

The P&F continue to run and assist with numerous activities around the school. The support and funding boost we receive from their work forms an integral part in the day-to-day improvements that the school can make which in turn directly benefits our students. I would like to thank all the P&F volunteers for their excellent efforts.

A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

We are truly fortunate to have a group of teachers and support staff who are committed, approachable and dedicated to developing our young people to achieve their potential. You contribute substantially to the ongoing achievements we see every day at the school, and I thank you for your work. Sadly, we had to farewell to some excellent teachers at the school in 2020, but on the other hand this has allowed us to employ a whole group of new teachers and support staff who bring fresh ideas and their own experiences to the role, including our new high school teachers for 2021.

The Board has performed various aspects of its role over the year including:

- Endorsing new policies and reviewing existing policies such as School and Community Codes of Conduct, Child Protection Policy and various Educational policies etc.
- Giving due time and consideration to the School's Business Plan, to ensure that the goals and strategies included within this document continued to provide an ongoing framework for the day to day functioning of the school.
- Developing a Board skills matrix to assess the skills of the existing Board and determine if there are any additional skills that would be beneficial to the school.
- Reviewing the Financial Budget for 2020 and developing a detailed plan to 2025 including an ongoing review of the actual spend in comparison to budget.

Recognition should be paid to all the Board members for their time, energy and engagement during the year. The Board would also like to acknowledge and thank the dedicated and professional staff at Sydney Montessori School lead by our Principal Mr Peter Maclean who continues to do an outstanding job.

Finally, a special thankyou to our teachers, assistance, parents and care givers who worked together as a community to get through the challenges we all faced as a result of Covid - 19 including running classes at home using streaming and workbooks as our medium.

As you will read in Peter's Principal's report there have been many highlights and we are making good progress in implementing our strategic plan and goals which we continually revisit and update.

George Mifsud

Chairman of the Board
26th April 2021

A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

“Education cannot be effective unless it helps a child open up himself to life”

“Free the child’s potential and you will transform him into the world.”

– Maria Montessori.

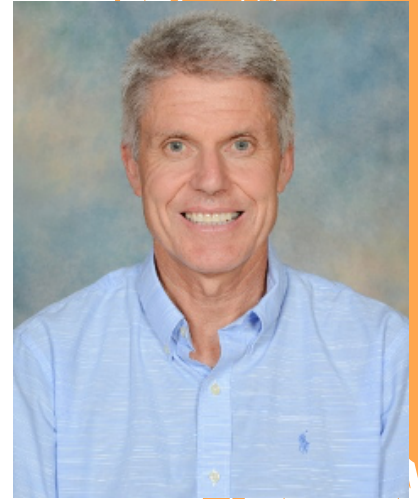
We are clear on our purpose and aspiration to create an environment in which all children can achieve their potential. 2020 was another year of focus, unlocking student potential and of positive development for our school.

It was also a year no one could have predicted with the onset and impact of Covid-19. Covid had a significant impact on many families and likewise also on our operation.

I must thank the staff for their extraordinary effort during the year, but especially during the periods of Covid lockdown. All staff attended during the whole period, working together to provide above average support and service to our families and children. Whilst Montessori typically relies on many ‘hands on’ and ‘practical activities’, without shutting down we shifted to a remote learning model, with all staff, from the office, Long day care, assistants and teachers working together to develop and provide resource packs and to support the development and delivery of remote and on-line learning resources.

Some schools were reported to have had as little as one teacher contact per week, while our teachers provided lessons and support to the students in our care throughout the whole day. Where possible we provided an environment that allowed for continuity of learning and importantly ongoing social contact for the students.

Depending on parent work requirements, some children attended during the entire period, others came and went depending on their families’ circumstances so teachers at times taught normal lessons to the class and supported those who could not attend, for the most part, our teachers continued to teach the majority of students on-line whilst supporting students who attended school. The word zoom took on a new meaning for most of us!



Peter MacLean
Principal

A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

I would therefore like to thank our parents and community for the ongoing support you provided to the school and to the children as we worked through this difficult period. Covid is not gone, and in terms of the 'rest of the world' we have indeed been lucky. We hope we never have to repeat such a period, but we are now better prepared and know that our students have the resilience, the self-control and motivation, and in particularly in upper primary, the self-management skills to cope in the future should the worst happen again.

During 2020, we completed significant school improvements. This was part of our ongoing school development approach and also to prepare for the possibility of offering a future High School program. The development of new pathways, repainting of various rooms and the Hall, improvements in the gated security, redevelopment of a new Keyboard and technology rooms were key developments for us. We also purchased a range of new furniture for classrooms.

With Covid, our Long Day Care numbers suffered severely. However, on balance, with increased enrolments throughout the Primary School (13% by the end of year), our numbers overall increased by 9%. The provision of Early childhood programs are seen as a wonderful foundation for learning and development and an important part of our school offering. We have had significant purchases of new Montessori equipment and we have been progressively replacing all the furniture in the Early Childhood area. In line with this improvement focus, the Board has prioritised a significant new playground development for early 2021. Our First Steps program has gone from strength to strength, with four fully booked mornings operating by term 4 2020. My thanks to all staff involved.

As part of our strategic planning, we undertook a major master planning process in 2020. Aligned with this was the strategic development of options for the establishment of a High School program. Options that include the provision of a small High School model within our existing site (up to 50-75 students) and the option of a high school catering up to 130-200 students utilising additional available space.

The Board has rigorously developed a plan for an 'onsite' model, with current funding (subject to council approval "STCA") designated for two new classrooms and a science lab, followed by the redevelopment of the current 'Maria's Market', to include a commercial kitchen (for high school) and a multi-use art room and additional class space as well as a new car park. These works have been designed and budgeted for construction over the next two years (STCA). A full proposal has been submitted to the Council for consideration and approval. The Board has also progressed planning for the possible future use of land opposite the school (Premier Street), to allow for a High School growth model (up to 130-200 students).

A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Considerable work was undertaken by the team to gain NSW Education Standards (NESA) accreditation to open Years 7 &/or 8 in 2021. This consisted of a whole school review, and development of programs for a potential Year 7 and/or 8 in 2021. We were very pleased to gain approval /initial accreditation in October 2020. The Board made the decision to open the High School, late in term 4 so we continue to look forward to an exciting start and continued growth throughout 2021 and beyond. Although we see it as a 'soft launch' with a small group of students, the decision to open will enable us to employ staff and develop innovative programs and resources as we progressively 'grow' the new future high school.

A growing strength of the school has been our co-curricular program. Unfortunately, due to covid, the majority of camps and excursions had to be cancelled in 2019. Our talented music staff still created the opportunity for students to practice, experience and excel in the opportunity of the creative arts and be part of our music concert. Zoom had its challenges, however the costuming and performances of the students and thus the experience they had, was still outstanding. I am sorry we did not have a live audience, but my thanks to the staff involved and the parents for your positive encouragement and support of your children. We were very pleased to be able to hold a great end of term 4 'fun day sports activity' at Sutherland athletics centre. This day was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Whilst it was far from a normal year for us in 2020 and I know many families had a 'tough time', I would like to thank you for your continued support of the school. I would like to assure you that you have a wonderful and committed staff at the school and I acknowledge and thank them for their efforts. I would like to thank the Parents and Friends for their ongoing support, the parent volunteers and of course also the Board for their commitment and work to support the school and provide a framework for good governance of the school.

The school is in a positive position financially and strategically to develop over the next 3-5 years. We will remain focussed on the support and delivery of our Montessori programs across the Primary classrooms and we have great plans for the future as we commence future building programs and an introduction of our new high school program.

I look forward to working with you in 2021.

Peter MacLean

Principal

2nd May, 2021

A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM THE P&F

The P&F Committee held 1 community meeting throughout the year during which we had many new faces as well as many returning Parents and Carers. Unfortunately, due to the covid pandemic and the new world of quarantine restrictions we were unable to meet for the rest of 2020.

Through this challenging year, we were able to maintain an excellent working relationship with Peter, our schools Principal and we believe this helped the P&F to achieve both its vision and mission as the year unfolded.

The P&F had mapped out a year of fun and community engagement, instead, we needed to work with the pandemic and scale things back to stay within restrictions. Discussions were taken offline and email and phone became the medium for the P&Fs communication.

Unfortunately for the school's community, most of the annual events the P&F normally host had to be cancelled. For those new to our school, these included:

- Clean up Australia Day
- Easter Hat Parade and Fundraiser raffle
- Book Week (this was scaled right back)
- Mothers Day stall
- Our twice a year, whole school dinners
- Our twice a year, whole school family get together afternoons
- Fathers Day stall
- Gynea Fair stall
- My Kids Markets held at Sutherland.

During a year that saw our children being home schooled during term 2, the P&F moved to support just a few events later in the year. These were shaped around the covid restrictions at the time however they were even more important to the children. The P&F focused on keeping things as normal as possible, celebrating the positive energy of returning to school and for those graduating from SMS.

A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM THE P&F

A few highlights of what the P&F did manage to achieve once restrictions were eased included:

- P&F Chair and her family volunteered many hours, rolling up their sleeves to transform our school hall into a Juniors Disco. This was a massive effort resulting in a truly wonderful success! It was highly anticipated by the children and thanks to the Coulon Family, it was very much appreciated and enjoyed by all the children in the school!
- The Year 6 Graduation – again decorating the hall and coordinating the cake for the year 6 class was a privileged P&F achievement.
- P&F organised a handful of volunteers to coordinate the provision of refreshments for the end of Term 4 Sports Carnival, which once again was a highlight in the school's calendar!

The P&F Executive were very grateful for:

- the continuing support of our SMS parents and friends.
- to the school's admin staff who continually facilitate vital communication and provided invaluable support.

The P&F look forward to more gatherings in the coming year where we warmly encourage families to come along and join in on our discussions and hear updates from the Principal. If they cannot attend, SMS families are more than welcome to contact the P&F with ideas and suggestions via our email pandf@sms.nsw.edu.au

All the planned SMS P&F meeting dates are noted in the school newsletter calendar which is emailed out weekly.

Parents and Friends Committee

May 2021

A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD

Our Early Childhood classrooms are thriving and there have been many exciting developments in the last 12 months; through growing environments, an increase of staff numbers as well as continual improvements to the indoor and outdoor classroom spaces. It is not without a special mention, to Steve Gulliver for all of his hard work in continuously ensuring the grounds of Sydney Montessori School remain wonderfully maintained and the gardens beautiful for our community to enjoy throughout the year.

In our early childhood rooms we are pleased to report we have maintained longevity and consistent staffing that has enabled the children to comfortably connect and establish bonds with all our staff.

Our first steps environment has again increased in numbers, which has allowed us to open up for another morning so that we are able to offer this program 4 mornings a week. It is great to see this environment growing and supporting the community.

In our Tara classroom we welcomed Rebecca Nesbitt to our team. Rebecca brings with her enthusiasm and passion for working with the younger children. Our Tara classroom is continuing to grow in enrolments, and Kelly and her team do a tremendous job.

In Akasha, we welcomed Isabelle Dunstan. Isabelle has a real enthusiasm for learning the Montessori Principles and has been a great asset to the team. Sadly, we said goodbye to Renae Klause. Renae has been a staff member of not only the Akasha classroom but the school administration team for over 7 years. We wish her well in her next adventures.

Simone Denmande and Mika Shojima continue to run our outstanding 3-6 environments. In our preschool rooms our numbers continue to grow, and our consistent staff approach has supported this.



Anna Firla
Early Childhood Coordinator

A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD

This year, as always, we had many exciting incursions planned for our EC classrooms. However, all of this dramatically changed when we were faced with the challenge of COVID-19 and what this meant for us as a school and a community. Here we learnt how to adapt and change our current practice of teaching, in particular for our stage 1 classrooms from such an interactive, hands on, concrete style of education to one that is to be done at home, through work books and even online via an iPad or computer. Not our ideal, but the only way to stay connected.

Our staff underwent training in a very short period of time to help prepare and become knowledgeable of recommended online platforms for example ZOOM, Seesaw and Reading eggs. At this stage, we learnt how to facilitate teaching and learning remotely, designed a timetable of how to offer it and off we went. We were so thrilled our families stayed positive during this time students were to learn from home and that we had successfully found a way that could offer them support and guidance.

With the return of relaxed restrictions, children were bursting through the gates and could not wait to come back to learn and re-unite with their friends. Our parents, of course were very happy to send them back also, as we all know teaching a child from home, whilst juggling a full work load is not an easy task. But we all did it. We have learnt a lot from this year.

Whilst COVID provided us with a huge challenge at the beginning, we have learnt many new things such as live streaming events, making digital recordings of our music performances as well as a greater appreciation for being physically connected as a community.

Anna Firla

Early Childhood Coordinator



A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM PRIMARY

2020 saw the Primary students and families returning to SMS for another stellar year ahead, jam packed with incursions, excursions, camps, musical events, carnivals and an eagerness to connect with friends and teachers.

All this anticipation was proceeding smoothly during term 1 as we enjoyed a visit from an African drumming group for a hands on incursion in the hall which was immensely enjoyed by students and staff alike.

All this was to change swiftly as the impact of COVID was deeply felt. At first there was a selection of students and families who were opting to keep their children at home instead of sending them to school which naturally presented challenges for staff. Initially it was decided to keep the school open for as long as possible until advised by the appropriate health authorities that there was a need to change the method of teaching from face to face to remote learning. Eventually the impact of constantly changing information, unknown risks and the inevitable falling numbers of students meant that the decision was taken to switch to remote learning with the option for families to send children to school if keeping them at home was not appropriate.

Our stage 2 rooms were presented with constant obstacles as they embarked on their remote learning journey, one of the chief causes of these is the use of physical materials for a high percentage of lessons for the child aged 6 -9 years. The ability of the Montessori material to unlock concepts for children through repetition and concentrated effort is unparalleled in education, and this was locked away from our children during these challenging times. Our stage 2 staff endured with grace and persistence throughout the lockdown period, keeping in regular contact with children via Zoom meetings and through setting work from textbooks and other formats.

It is tempting to view the experience of remote learning as negative, especially when one considers the use of physical materials in a Montessori environment compared to other styles of education available, however, we are able to reflect on our experiences through this time with a positive outlook and pride in the efforts of all SMS staff in delivering continued learning via an unfamiliar format.



Cameron Richmond
Primary Coordinator

A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM PRIMARY

We appreciate the efforts of families who were often required to sit with children to ensure that there were no technical hitches and in a lot of cases, to help their children grasp concepts which were difficult to understand without an adult present. The result is that we were able to consistently challenge and inspire the children, particularly in areas of mathematics and language, yet there were obvious challenges in other areas, for example experiments that require specialist materials, a large amount of resources such as books, art materials and so on.

Whilst it can be said that the children of stage 2 were excited to see their teachers and friends in the first few weeks of lockdown using the Zoom meetings, the lack of face to face contact was felt by all and served to remind us of how important our Montessori environment is for children to develop their social skills and practice their powers of negotiation, conflict resolution and leadership in real world situations. It was a happy time when the Jililan and Junee rooms were occupied by busy children again working with material, talking to each other, posing questions to themselves and staff and bringing life back into the environment.

Stage 3 were met with a variety of challenges with the onset of COVID which required the staff to re-think their method of operation in order to deliver a substantial curriculum on new platforms. Whilst the stage 3 child is constantly working towards abstraction, they still derive much benefit from face to face instruction and the use of materials. Material is often used to present concepts and then the child works towards solving problems in their head and on their own by working through on paper. In a sense stage 3 were able to deliver a larger component of their syllabus simply because the 9 -12 year old child is at a different stage of development, and can cope with a new technology-based style of learning with more ease.

The SMS staff in stage 3 were able to become familiar with the Zoom and Google Classroom platforms and use them efficiently, both classes were delivering between 10 - 14 Zoom lessons per day and were able to follow the planned term lessons plans quite well. As with stage 2. The stage 3 children were excited by the novelty of having online lessons with their teachers and friends, but with a week or two it was apparent that face to face school life is the much preferred option for SMS children. It was indeed a welcome relief to welcome the children back to school after lockdown, the rooms became alive with joy and laughter as the children connected with friends and staff again.

A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM PRIMARY

The inability to run camps and excursions will remain a negative aspect of 2020, particularly for our graduating year 6 students as they also missed out on the year 6 trip to Canberra, a highlight for these students after completing their primary years education with SMS. They accepted this fact with grace as they were aware that we were all in the same position, and they chose instead to focus on the positives of their final year with us. Our end of year concert was an event of huge excitement for our children as they performed a variety of plays across stage 2 and 3. The effort the children put into these events is inspiring to observe and they are justly rewarded by the enjoyment their parents draw from watching the students on stage.

At the end of 2020 we bid farewell to 10 graduates, Antonia, Ava, Lucas, Gabby, Steven, Liam, Samuel, Allegra, Sana, Elizabeth-Rose and Jacob. Some of these graduates were completing the end of their Montessori journey after beginning the adventure way back in Stage 1 at the busy age of three.

It is a privilege to be involved in their development as they go about the important task of building their own knowledge and understanding. It was pleasing to observe the graduates conduct themselves with grace and courtesy throughout this challenging year, as they were only too aware that their graduating year had been impacted greatly in terms of events and experiences for them to engage with. These are qualities that our Montessori enhances throughout the years because the child is always encouraged to speak their mind, and they are respectfully listened to in turn. It is obvious to the audience on graduation evening how highly the students regard the contribution each class has made to preparing them for life after Montessori. The gratitude of their parents combined with the genuine pleasure and pride the staff feel towards the students is testament to the very real sense of community our Montessori school fosters throughout the child's experience. We look forward to hearing more tales of their adventures in high school as they continue their education.

The Primary school cohort is actively involved in music education at SMS, both through programmed curriculum lessons with Simon as well as private tuition from our external tutors, Gabi, Bernie and David, giving instruction on a range of instruments. The annual musical evening this year required an immense effort on the part of the musical staff as they delivered this via Zoom, no small feat considering the amount of parents who wished to watch online. The staff organised and planned each child's performance to keep to a tight schedule to deliver a show that was enjoyed at home by all.

A MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

REPORTING AREA 1

A MESSAGE FROM PRIMARY

SMS continues to provide a weekly sports program run by Damian who provides instruction for our students across a wide range of sports, focussing on developmental skills all the way through to advanced physical movement and coordination tasks. He is connected with all the students each week and they respond to him with a high level of effort for their participation in the sport program. This year we held our sport's carnival at Waratah Oval, Sutherland on the last school day of the year. This was due to it being postponed due to COVID. The re-scheduling resulted in a very fun day conducted on a fine summer's day, the children especially enjoyed the parents and staff employing water guns to drench them during races.

As we reflect on the unique year that has been, we continue to be inspired by the children within our care and the families that support them. We are all proud to be a part of this important work and especially fond of working alongside motivated children and families who view the education of their children as a huge responsibility for both teachers and families together.

We anticipate many more positive examples of the value of a Montessori education as we move into 2021, to continue to enjoy each moment with the children in Primary as we observe the pleasure they derive from building their own knowledge and realising the powers they have at their disposal to solve their own problems, share accomplishments with others and manage the environment around them to foster their growth across emotional and academic areas.

Cameron Richmond

Primary Coordinator



CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

REPORTING AREA 2

Sydney Montessori School is a community-based non-denominational, co-educational, independent school for children aged between 15 months and up to 12 years of age (Year 6). We facilitate a parent and baby/toddler education program (0-3), run a Long Day Care facility with a capacity to teach from 15 month to 6 years of age (in the tradition of Maria Montessori's first Casa dei Bambini), which operates from 7am to 6pm, a 3-6 Preschool program and Primary School program. An Out of School Hours care program run by Primary OSHCare operates for our children on our site.

We are a **progressive** Montessori school, future-focused and aligned with evidence-based 21st century learning goals such as:

Customised learning - allowing each child to learn at their own pace, inspired by their own interests, and driven to achieve their personal best.

Availability of diverse knowledge sources - utilising technology, experiential methods, books, experts in the field, news and primary sources.

Collaborative group learning - each class is purposefully made up of multi-age, mixed gender groupings. Classrooms are carefully set up to encourage students to work in groups or individually, as best suits their needs. They are assisted to take responsibility for their learning, time management and the quality of their completed self-driven projects.

Integrated curriculum learning - subjects are not taught in isolation nor in set blocks. The Montessori curriculum is designed to work fluidly so that its contents can be studied in an endless variety of orders and each subject can be taught in relation to other subjects so as to best follow each child's needs and interests. It is also designed to help children see the connections and interconnectedness of all aspects in our universe: Geometry, Mathematics, Natural Science, History, Art, Music, Movement and Language.

Pedagogical guides - the role of the teacher has been consistently proven to be central to student outcomes. Our teachers are highly trained professionals. They hold State approved University teaching credentials in addition to Montessori teaching qualifications. They are experts in pedagogy. They know their subjects deeply and are specifically trained in running multi-aged, collaborative learning groups. They are adept at programming for this environment and customising their programming to perfectly meet the needs of each individual child.

Assessment for deeper understanding - we are committed to formative assessment which gives us a full understanding of a child's capabilities and performance. We do this using a variety of methods including observation notes, informal assessments, student feedback from regular student teacher conferences and student work samples.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT BODY

REPORTING AREA 2

Montessori philosophy of education - Montessori theory is deeply tied to neuroscience and the natural developmental path of the child. It mirrors all of the major recommendations of 'best practice' education. Montessori education produces happy, social, confident, self-disciplined, independent young adults with a true love of learning.

Our staff body was made up of 7 full time teaching staff, 2 part time teaching staff, 18 Educators (early childhood and primary) and 5 non-teaching staff. We had 187.5 students across all areas (daily average), ending the year at 189.6 students. Our community is made up from a diverse range of children, representing the community which we serve. Whilst we treat each student as an individual, we consider that our students have a range of all talents, gifts and abilities. We are proud of our harmonious school environment.

VISION:

To guide each child, not just in the moment but for life.

MISSION:

To inspire our students to be lifelong independent learners, develop their sense of wonder and promote them as peacemakers and leaders.

VALUES:

At Sydney Montessori School, our Educational Philosophy and teaching practice are research- and evidence-based.

As Montessori educators, we are committed to educating the whole person.

We foster a love of learning and an understanding of the world and our interconnectedness with it.

WE VALUE:

1. Peer learning
2. Curiosity, independence and achieving your personal best.
3. Empathy and courtesy
4. Diversity and inclusivity
5. Partnerships with our families and community

STUDENT OUTCOMES IN STANDARDISED NATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY TESTING

REPORTING AREA 3

Sydney Montessori School uses a variety of assessment methods, in line with current research. We are dedicated to primarily using formative methods of assessment, rather than summative ones. This includes tools such as observations and the examination of work samples used to inform further planning for each student. Feedback on student progress is regularly provided with rich detail.

Sydney Montessori School parents often choose to apply for an exemption from NAPLAN tests, in line with the Montessori philosophy which does not encourage summative assessment. Therefore, there is a very small cohort of students who sit the NAPLAN tests each year, which makes our school data statistically difficult to interpret. However, analyses of combined data over several years shows that the school performs well in areas of Literacy and Numeracy.

For more information, see the My School website at www.myschool.edu.au

SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES

REPORTING AREA 4

In 2020, Sydney Montessori School did not offer a secondary program for students enrolled in Years 7 - 12. However, the school Board is actively pursuing options with a view to reopening High School in the coming year offering year 7-8 in the first year.

The approach to the program is to build on the existing Montessori Philosophy and deliver an initial program consistent with the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (MYP).

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

REPORTING AREA 5

Professional development for staff is an important part of the School program. Staff attended the following professional development sessions in 2020:

Description of Professional Learning Activity 2020	No. of Staff Participating
First Aid Pro: CPR HLTAID001	9
First Aid Pro: HLTAID004 - First Aid, Asthma & Anaphylaxis Course	13
QIP Training	1
Civica iWise Training	2
AIS: Workplace Bullying, discrimination and harassment	1
AIS: The Neuroscience of Learning and Leading	1
IB Workshop	1
Sydney Montessori School - Child Protection & Mandatory reporting	27
IEU Early Stage 1: Managing Anxiety during challenging times	1
NSW Office of the Childrens Guardian: Child Safe elearning	1
Supporting early development for children with Down Syndrome from birth to 5 years	1
Centre Support: Quality Improvement Plan - An Evolving Process	1
Early Life Foundations: Building Resilience in Pre-Schoolers - online	1
CELA: The law and Regs for Nominated supervisors	1

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

REPORTING AREA 5

Description of Professional Learning Activity 2020

No. of Staff Participating

AIS: Governance Online Module 1- Intro to School Governance 1	1
AIS: Governance Online Module 2- School Governance	1
AIS: Governance Online Module 3- Legal Compliance	2
AIS: Governance Online Module 4- Financial Compliance	2
AIS: Governance Online Module 5- Executive Supervision	2
AIS: Governance Online Module 6- Managing Risk	2
AIS: Governance Online Module 9- Strategy	2
AIS: Governance Online Module 11- Financial Governance	1
AIS: Human Resources Professionals	1

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

REPORTING AREA 5

As at December 2020, Sydney Montessori School employed 7 full-time and 2 part time teachers who are responsible for delivering the curriculum. The following is a breakdown of their qualifications:

a) Have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition guidelines.	9
b) Have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition guidelines.	
c) Do not have qualifications as described in a) or b) above but have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context.	
d) No qualifications or teaching experience	

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

REPORTING AREA 6

Teaching Staff	9
Full Time Equivalent Teaching Staff	8.2
Educators/Assistants (in all early childhood rooms-not including teachers)	18
Full time Equivalent Educators/Assistants	14.9
Non-Teaching Staff	5
Full time Equivalent Non-Teaching Staff	4.4

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

REPORTING AREA 7

Kindergarden	94.8%
Year 1	95.7%
Year 2	92.7%
Year 3	93.8%
Year 4	95.6%
Year 5	94.6%
Year 6	91.6%
Total School Attendance	94.1%

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

REPORTING AREA 7

Attendance Policy

- The School maintains a register of enrolments.
- The School Register of Students will be kept by the Enrolments Registrar. On enrolment at the School or departure from the School, records will be updated on the School Register. This includes which school the student has come from (if they are over 6 years of age) and which school they are going to on departure.
- Should the School not be able to gather information on a student's destination, for a student under the age of 17, the HSLO at the DET will be informed by the Principal of the student's name, age and last known address.
- Should a student be absent for more than 30 days, a report will be made to the Principal who will report to the appropriate agencies.
- The School Register will be kept for a minimum of 7 years.
- The School will monitor the daily attendance and absence of students in the School by maintaining a daily roll for each class of students.
- Students' absences from classes or from the school will be identified and recorded in a consistent manner by the staff member responsible, as per the guidelines at the front of the roll.
- Unexplained absences from classes of the School will be followed up in an appropriate manner with parents or guardians.
- Where unsatisfactory class or School attendance is identified, the attendance issue and any action taken will be recorded, as appropriate, on the student file.
- Rolls will be archived for a minimum of 7 years.
- Withdrawals from Sydney Montessori School: when a child ceases to attend School on a regular basis, the child must be officially withdrawn from the rolls. This withdrawal includes the following:
 - a) A letter from the parent or guardian requesting withdrawal. This needs to be on full term's notice.
 - b) A declaration made by the parent or guardian stating a destination of the student (specific school/education program)
 - c) Destination to be recorded on the School Enrolments Register.

ENROLMENT

REPORTING AREA 8

Enrolment

Sydney Montessori School (SMS) is a small school with composite classes. Class sizes are limited and variable. In order to create a successful learning environment at SMS, it is essential that the school and family are compatible.

The Montessori Educational Program based on the discoveries of Dr Maria Montessori is child-centred, teacher facilitated and suitable across all socio-economic and cultural boundaries, adhering to the Montessori maxim "follow the child". The main aim is the development of the person socially, intellectually, emotionally and physically so that each child has the opportunity to achieve his or her potential.

SMS operates within the policies of NESA (NSW Education Standards Authority) and ensures it achieves or exceeds all Curriculum Outcomes.

SMS has multiple entry points for families to begin their children's education:

in the Montessori First Steps Playgroup (0-3 years), through to Long Day Montessori (15 months -3 years, 3-6 years) or enrol in the School for Stage 1 (3 & 4 years Preschool and 5 years Kindergarten), Stage 2 and Stage 3 (Primary Years 1-6).

In an effort to achieve a compatible result and to ensure equity for all applicants, SMS has developed the following criteria for Enrolment Applications:

- All applications will be processed in order of receipt of Enrolment Application form and payment of Application Fee.
- Families who already have siblings enrolled at SMS and do not have outstanding school fees.
- Families committed to a Montessori education, whose child/ren have been educated at a Montessori school other than SMS.
- Families who have shown commitment to SMS's education through Playgroup or Long Day Care.
- For children with Additional Needs - Related to Disability, Health, Mental Health & Other Areas Requiring Support, SMS will gather information about a student's disability and need for adjustments before an enrolment is confirmed in order for the school to appropriately plan to include the student. Parents may have numerous reports which could be of assistance. Of these, the following current reports would be particularly helpful:
 - Previous school reports and current school achievements.
 - Psychologist report documenting functional skills and IQ test results.
 - Speech pathologist reports documenting receptive and expressive language skills and
 - any recommendations for programs or technology in the classroom, if relevant.
 - Occupational therapy reports documenting self-help skills and mobility, if relevant.
 - Medical specialist reports, if relevant.
 - Vision and hearing reports, if relevant.

ENROLMENT

REPORTING AREA 8

If an enrolment is not accepted, SMS reserves the right not to enter into discussion as to the reasons that the enrolment was not accepted or is terminated in line with the policies of the school.

Offer of Placement

A formal offer of placement at SMS will be made and should be accepted in writing within 2 weeks. If the offer is not accepted, the child's name may be returned to the Waitlist.

Conditions of Acceptance

On acceptance of the offer of a position, the parents will agree to abide by the policies and ethos of the School as described in the Parent Contract. From time to time these policies and conditions may change as the needs of the School change.

For Enrolment into the School (Stages 1, 2 & 3) payment of the Enrolment Fee must be received at the time of Acceptance.

Orientation Visit for Stage 1

Where possible the Enrolment Registrar will arrange a meeting with the Class Teacher, parents and their child prior to commencement date to familiarise the family with the classroom environment and to allow parents to discuss child's health, interests, prior experiences, family background etc with the Teacher.

School Register

The School Register maintained by the Enrolments Registrar, includes details required by relevant Government regulations. The Register is maintained to ensure that it is current and compliant.

Sydney Montessori School does not discriminate in its enrolment policies or procedures on the basis of gender, race, religion or disability.

OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

REPORTING AREA 9

As part of preparation for the school's periodic review and audit (2020) by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for registration all school policies have been reviewed and approved by the Board. Policies may be shared via email with the school community, selected and published on the school's website or are available for viewing in hard copy from the School reception.

The School has a Code of Conduct for all staff. This has been provided to and accepted by current staff and is included as part of the induction process for new staff on their appointment. This sets the tone for the appropriate behaviour and professional conduct of staff in supporting our students and in creating a nurturing school environment. This is accompanied by the School's Duty of Care policy for staff.

The School also has a Code of Conduct for parents, which is available at the point of enrolment or on request.

Our student welfare framework is guided by our Safe and Supportive Environment Policy. In this policy we outline the importance of providing our staff and students with a mutually supportive environment, in keeping with the gentle, peace-loving and harmonious nature of the Montessori philosophy.

We have policies around the safety of all students in the School. This encompasses appropriate levels of supervision as well as the assessment of risks, WHS and emergency responses. We have carefully crafted policies and procedures to ensure that there is procedural fairness around complaints and grievances between staff, parents and students.

Our Safe and Secure Environment policy has sections on the pastoral care of our students, as is naturally built in to the design of our programs, including emphasising the close relationships between staff and students that develops over a potentially three-year period. We also do everything within our capacity to support children who may have identified special needs.

Sydney Montessori School aims to eliminate bullying of any person at the School by developing a school environment which promotes tolerance and respect and accepts differences in others. The School does not tolerate bullying or harassment. All staff are firmly committed to seeking an end to acts of bullying. We believe that it is the responsibility of students, staff, families and the community as a whole to contribute to the development of a happy and safe school.

The School has an extensive Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy and Procedures. It outlines a positive approach to behaviour management and the processes to be implemented around minor misbehaviour, repetitive misbehaviour and serious misbehaviour.

OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

REPORTING AREA 9

Our third strategic pillar is 'Improved student conduct and social wellbeing'. As such, based on the earlier work with consultants from the Association of Independent Schools, we have created a framework for student conduct and discipline and a structured intensive program for student wellbeing across all our developmental groups.

In line with legislative requirements, the School has a comprehensive Privacy Policy. The policy is available to all current parents, staff and contractors. This Privacy Policy, which has been uploaded to the school's website, sets out how the School manages personal information provided to or collected by it.

SCHOOL-DETERMINED PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

REPORTING AREA 10

In 2016 Sydney Montessori School released its ten year 2016–2026 Strategic Plan. The school continues to work towards its key objectives and has achieved key milestones as is reported to the Annual General Meeting and is summarised periodically in the newsletter each year.



Our Vision

To guide each child,
not just in the moment
but for life.

Mission

To inspire our students
to be lifelong independent learners,
develop their sense of wonder
and promote them as
peacemakers and leaders.

Values

At Sydney Montessori School
our Educational philosophy
and teaching practices are
research and evidence based.

As Montessori educators, we
are committed to educating the
whole person.

We foster a love of learning
and an understanding of
the world and our
interconnectedness with it.

We value:

1. Peer learning
2. Curiosity, independence and achieving your personal best.
3. Empathy and courtesy
4. Diversity and inclusivity
5. Partnerships with our families and community.

SYDNEY MONTESSORI SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 - 2026

2016 - 2021

1. Education

By 2019, the school will incorporate specifically designed **specialist language, music and sports programs** into its curriculum.

The High School will, following the Montessori philosophy, use the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program framework as mapped to the NSW Board of Studies (BOSTES) syllabuses. The High School will apply to become an IB candidate school with the aim of **becoming an IB (Middle Years Program) World School (Stages 4 & 5: ages 12 to 15 years) within 5 years.**

3. Facilities

We will design and build **state of the art Primary and Early Childhood playgrounds.**

The school will build a **new High School building** with a state of the art science laboratory, music room and art facilities.

The school will develop a **contingency plan** in the event that the **F6 extension** proceeds.

4. Brand & Community

The school will become an **employer of choice** by providing staff with ongoing professional development and opportunities for career advancement. Staff are key stakeholders in the community and their opinions are valued and their voices **heard.**

The school will develop a **formal relationship with a 'sister school'**, enabling opportunities for student, staff and information exchange.

The school will engage in **charitable works.** In particular, the school will make a **formal connection with Montessori Children's Foundation (MCF), supporting Indigenous Australian children in MCF.**

INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

REPORTING AREA 11

Respect and responsibility is woven into the very fabric of the Montessori philosophy and education method. In almost every presentation, workshop or lesson offered to students, the notion of respect for self, others and the environment is implicit. The structures embedded in Montessori education exist to promote respect and responsibility. These structures include, but are not limited to:

Lessons in Grace and Courtesy: These are specific, targeted lessons in appropriate, kind, graceful and peaceful behaviour towards others and the environment.

The Prepared Environment: The environment is specially prepared to engender student individuality and responsibility for their own learning. Students, with guidance from their teacher, design their own work cycle, choose their work and take responsibility for their own learning. This is assisted by an environment which is prepared with learning materials accessible to students. This environment also requires students to learn to act respectfully of one another so that each child respects the independent learning of their peers by not disturbing them and by allowing them the space to conduct their learning.

Student Diaries: In Primary School, students are taught how to use diaries to record the work that they are doing. They bring their work and work diaries to conferences with their teachers, during which time they are able to showcase the work that they have done and the responsibility that they have taken for their own learning.

Class Meetings: There are regular class meetings during which any issues can be raised and discussed. These are excellent opportunities for teachers to model conflict resolution strategies to the class community. Students learn to have the confidence to stand up for what they believe in, how to respectfully take a stance and how to negotiate with their peers.

Multi-Age Groupings: Our classes are comprised of multi-age groupings. This allows older children to take on the role of the 'elder' in the class community and take on the responsibility of acting as a role model to their peers. At the same time, younger students look up to their older peers and naturally learn appropriate behaviours by mirroring them. In addition to this, the older children, supported by their teachers, often assist the younger ones when they are unsure of appropriate behaviour strategies. This engenders an environment whereby students are respectful of one another.

One of the School's strategic pillars is student behaviour and wellbeing. The School is working through a process of selecting, fine-tuning and implementing a new behaviour management and whole-school wellbeing framework.

PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

REPORTING AREA 12

We periodically survey parents and staff in our school community to ensure that we seek feedback on our performance and include feedback as part of making evidence based decisions. The following is a brief summary of the findings.

Parents:

During the Covid lockdown, 78.9% of our parents were satisfied with the communication from the school. 60% of our parents were satisfied with the provision of adequate learning materials/tasks provided for their children to complete at home whilst learning remotely.

78.9% of our primary parents felt that online learning during Covid was effective at providing opportunities for social contact for the students.

100% Parents felt that the pedagogical practices at SMS are effective, with well over half of our parents stating that the teachers show a tremendous amount of respect for their children. 93% of parents considered that the teaching styles effectively match students learning styles and that all of the parents felt their children enjoy coming to Sydney Montessori School.

In support of the Montessori learning and teaching approach, 94.7% of our parents felt that SMS students are able to work independently on learning activities at home with 86.8% of our students regularly reading for fun. All parents are confident that their children feel a sense of belonging at Sydney Montessori School.

Staff:

At the time the school was impacted by Covid; collaboratively 63.6% staff felt their workload had significantly increased during this time. However, all teaching staff were able to apply new teaching skills during this time.

100% of our staff team felt that the school implemented appropriate health practices.

100% staff were positive that the school provided appropriate resources to support teaching and learning.

In preparation for a different approach to teaching and learning during Covid 63.6% of staff reported that they had learnt new IT skills, with 27% of staff stating that they would have liked to have been provided with further professional learning to understand new technologies.

94.7% of staff supported the statement that there are opportunities at SMS for professional growth and 78% of those staff were satisfied with the support they received for opportunities for professional development.

84.2% of staff agreed that the school appropriately targets resources for whole school improvements.

94.4% of staff are engaged with their work at the school. 78.9% of staff felt communication between senior leaders and employees is positive. All staff treat each other with respect and the organisation is dedicated to diversity and inclusiveness.

Students:

Enrolment growth as well as the parent satisfaction evident in the figures above suggests that the children enjoy coming to school and that our parents value and support the learning at Sydney Montessori School.

Primary students have regular conferences with their teacher during each term and the Principal welcomes feedback and discussion with teachers and students at any time through an open door policy.

SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

REPORTING AREA 13

RECURRENT / CAPITAL INCOME

Trading Activities - including LDM & preschool	\$1,277,597.00	26%
Other Capital Income	\$90,684.00	2%
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants	\$1,338,318.00	27%
Fees and Private Income	\$1,643,200.00	34%
State Recurrent Grants	\$523,280.00	11%

60%

RECURRENT / CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Salaries, Allowances, Related Expenditure (Note: Partially funded by State & Commonwealth recurrent grants)	\$1,576,942.00	49%
Trading Activities - including LDM & preschool	\$1,065,327.55	33%
Capital Expenditure	\$09,684.00	3%
Non-salary Expenses	\$510,472.00	15%

40%

