



MONTESSORI sydney school

pre • primary • long day

A progressive Montessori school that is future-focused and aligned with evidence-based 21st century learning goals

2018
ANNUAL REPORT

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*Michael Attridge
SMS Board Chair*

A Message from the Board Chair



The Montessori method of education is finally coming to fruition in the outside world.

In 2017, a report from the government was published, stating that starting a child's education at 3 years was a definite advantage. This is something we as Montessorians have been practising for many years.

The journey of a 3 year old through to a 12 year old being educated in all 3 Stages at the School, is one that needs to be completed to really feel the effect of the Montessori education and the 3 hour work cycle.

The value of educating any child especially with the Montessori Philosophy is one to be experienced.

I have seen, after all these years, so many well-mannered children starting and finishing this Montessori education system and how they have transitioned so easily into other schools and the community at large. My family has been at the school now for 13 years and 2 of my boys have transitioned so easily into high school and young men.

I joined the SMS board in 2012 as a school parent with my 4 children at the school. I was soon to learn what sitting on the School Board was all about: 1) Governance 2) Budget, and 3) Compliance

As I write this report, post the 2019 May AGM, I have decided to step aside to let another board member take their views as Chairman to the School Community.

However, I will be remaining on the Board into the future and very proud of what we all together as a school and a community have achieved.

I thank you all for your support over the years

At the start of 2018 we needed some serious planning put into place after the departure of our fantastic Principal Raquel Charet who helped the school develop and grow. Raquel took us to where we are now with the school Accreditation in place and with an excellent approval rating. With Raquel's departure we were looking at commencing the year with an interim Principal in Nick Coucouvinis, who had been head of High School, taking over until the new Principal arrived.

After interviewing a quality field of applicants, the Board offered the position to Peter MacLean. Peter is a well-experienced Principal with International Baccalaureate experience, international teaching, Principal at a Montessori School, certainly well suited to our Strategic Plan and our school.

Peter started at the end of Term 2, 2018 with multiple huge tasks ahead of him as Registration was also again due at the end of 2019. The experience and knowledge that Peter brought to the school was immense and we have never looked back.

We have in recent times excelled in every department and with all the hard work Management and staff put in, we have once again achieved our goal of receiving 5 years Accreditation and Registration. This of course happened in the beginning of 2019, with all of the hard work done in 2018 by Peter and his staff. Thereby now confirming a great future ahead of us and for all the children, which is reflected in our current arrangement with the CBA who have secured us finance for the next 10 years.

The average number of students across the year 2018 was 157, and ending the year at 168. Enrolments are a big part of managing the school and a major priority for both the Board and Principal together. Every good business and school has a succession plan in place for both management and board

Together we have developed a strong business plan and a new 10 year Strategic Plan which holds the key to our success. This plan will be constantly updated in the coming years. The updated Strategic Plan will be on the website for all to see very soon.

The next thing is a Master Plan, which delivers a map for how we are putting all our ideas into practice. It also maps out the school areas and structures on the site. The School owns 3 of the 11 blocks of land.

THE SCHOOL AND ITS STUDENTS

I cannot stress enough how, whoever we are or whatever we do, this is all about our children now and tomorrow for their education and wellbeing. So, let me say a huge thank you to us all as parents for trusting the school with our most valuable assets.

YOUR CHILDREN

The school is now highly recognised for its academic excellence and strong financial performance and good education system. This is a testament to the strength of the current Board, the School's Management and its dedicated Staff led by our outstanding Principal Peter, but again without our students, who all enjoy being here, what is the point?

Our Open Days are very successful but we need more parents to sing the praises of the Montessori education method and our School. Our profile in the Sutherland Shire is improving daily, but please, all continue to spread the word as it's the best advertising we can get.

We have as a team and a school, with our dedicated Staff, reached all of our goals and are sitting exactly where we planned on being at this time.

However, there are always challenges ahead to be dealt with but I feel very strongly with our current structure and team we can overcome each challenge and grow our school into its next phase. There has never been in the last 10 years a better time for us to continue to promote the Montessori education method and of course our ever-growing Sydney Montessori School here in the Shire.

In 2019, we will be applying to Council for an extension to our current DA to allow us to provide the quality Montessori education that the parent market is demanding. The DA should be approved by end 2019.

Economically, the school is on sound footing and trading well, with good surplus forecast for 2019 and beyond.

STRATEGIC PLAN & CAPITAL WORKS

The Board and Management have been focusing on our 5-10 year strategic plan, which is about quality education and school growth and expansion. We recognize that as a not-for-profit organisation the school is still a business and we need to plan ahead and manage any potential issues on the horizon.

Any future capital works have been catered for in the 2019 budget, and we are expecting a large surplus for the first time in many years.

We have introduced Music, Sport and Languages (Duolingo for Stage 3) into the school and there will be an ongoing expansion of all these fields into 2019-20 and beyond.

STAFF

We have an excellent team of highly qualified, experienced and dedicated teaching and administration staff with good long-term retention. We have also welcomed new staff members into our school, as necessary, particularly given our rapid growth. With the Principal, the Board monitors the well-being, morale and performance of staff ensuring they understand the role of the Board, communication channels and most importantly that we as

a school have the best teachers for the students at SMS.

THE SCHOOL BOARD

We are lucky to have a committed and stable Board who meet every 6 weeks with Management to monitor the progress of the school, to oversee all compliance matters, review the finances of the school and to discuss strategic matters.

Board members are:

Michael Attridge (Chair & Board member since 2012),
Liza Arney (Board member since 2013)
Dean Alley (Board member since 2011)
George Mifsud (Board member since 2014). New incoming Chair
Lindsey Parks,(Board member since 2017)
Tim Coulter (Board member since 2017)
Olivier Coulon (Board member since 2017)

The Board members are committed to attending the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) Governance Symposium to be updated on governance issues and engage in ongoing professional development.

IN CONCLUSION

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the SMS Management, all staff and the community in supporting the School and especially to all our wonderful students for whom we are all here.

Regards,



Mick Attridge
SMS Board Chair



*Peter MacLean
Principal*

A Message from the Principal



2018 has been another wonderful year at Sydney Montessori School.

At SMS our vision is to guide each child, not just in the moment, but for life.

We pride ourselves on our wonderful learning community that nurtures each child supported by our community that is made up of Staff and students as well as parents, carers and friends who support our School.

Valuable lessons occur every day and in all sorts of places. Our Teachers, who are so committed, know where to look. These lessons occur formerly within the classroom and informally throughout the days, weeks and years whilst the students are in our care. Education is not a point in time, a single incident or lesson. It is not the result of a single teacher or group of students in a given year. It is the culmination of all of us within the SMS community. It is a journey and one which we hope will continue throughout the lives of our children.

It is easy to forget as adults that our children in school are constantly learning new skills, undertaking new and exciting experiences and learning to take risks beyond their comfort zones – sometimes on a daily or weekly basis. This is occurring in a supportive environment and it is what helps to build student resilience and confidence.

With our student-centered approach to learning our environment encourages students to be creative, to take risks, to learn from mistakes and to contribute to make our community a better place.

Throughout the year we have seen many fine examples of our students' work. This has been evident through different Open Days, morning teas and classroom visitation days where students have had the opportunity to demonstrate first hand what they have been learning in class. At a School wide level, student learning was further highlighted this year with our 'Show Time' Music Performance night. Despite some nerves and uncertainties our students took on a new challenge, to demonstrate their newly acquired music skills. Despite some believing they could never perform 'publicly' we were treated to a wonderful night of music as the children showed us a love of music.

A highlight for many students was the combined Montessori Schools camp (term 2) to The Great Aussie Bush Camp at Kincumber for Stage 2-3. Whilst initially daunting for some students as it was their first time on a sleepover camp, the students all came back safely with many tales of adventure, new friends and great experiences as a result of their attendance. This was also followed up in Term 3 with a new camp for Year 6 students to Canberra. With a focus on Civics and Citizenship the students attended a range of venues from the National Film and Sound Archive, Questacon and The Australian War Memorial and of course Parliament House where they were able to role play parliamentary procedure.

Following the resignation of Rachel Charet in 2017, a new Principal was appointed in June 2018. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Relieving Principal Nick Coucouvinis who managed the School throughout the

first part of 2018. As the newly appointed Principal I have been impressed with the professionalism of the Staff and their commitment to their students.

Our Early Childhood program, remains rated as 'exceeding' against the National Quality Standards (NQS). This is the highest standard that can be achieved.

During the latter part of 2018, the School commenced preparation for its periodic re-registration audit. This is a major 'event' for the Board and School. Accordingly, a major focus of the later part of 2018 has been on the review of policies, curriculum plans, teaching programs and school operations in preparation for the review. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all staff in this regard.

Part of a strong community is the involvement and support of our parents. Whether it is assisting on rosters from arts and craft, involvement in the P&F, helping at 'busy bees' or moral support of the School's direction and our programs, your support makes a big difference. Thankyou.

The contribution of our P&F must also be noted. Your feedback at meetings, involvement in a range of activities from events such as 'Scissor Sunday' to fruity platters at our Sports Carnival, your efforts make a difference to our School Community.

The greatest asset of any School is its Staff. We have a wonderful and committed Staff at SMS. Staff who are positive role models and highly committed within their respective classes. I truly appreciate and thank them for their individual and collective efforts.

2018 has seen a re-focus on improvement to our grounds and resources. This work has been diverse in nature and has included: review of the former High School class areas to set-up new music rooms and re-development of a multi-learning space, repairs to the commercial kitchen, establishment of a new Sports Store in the Hall, a new Staff Room in the Administration area and have added additional storage spaces under the School. In 2019 we are planning for a new playground for the students.

At Sydney Montessori School, we value each student as an individual learner. As a School, we cultivate a love of learning and a love for the global community that we are a part of. For those leaving us at the end of the year, I wish you well for the future and I am sure that your experience at SMS will stand you in good stead for where-ever you should go next. For those returning, I look forward to seeing you for another great year in 2019!

Warm regards,
Peter MacLean
Principal

A Message from Parents & Friends Group

The P&F Committee held 8 community meetings throughout the year during which we welcomed many new faces, including our acting Principal Nick Coucouvinis and then our permanent Principal Peter MacLean. The P&F have been able to develop and maintain excellent working relationships with both Nick and Peter, and we believe this has helped achieve both our vision and mission.

During 2018, the P&F hosted and/or supported a substantial number of wonderful events to encourage community engagement and involvement. A few highlights:

- We hosted whole school dinners in Terms 1 and 3 at Willow Lounge at Tradies Club Gymea. Both nights had a great turn out (30-40 attendees), which were wonderful opportunities for parents to casually catch up in a relaxed environment.
- In Term 2 the P&F organised a whole school family picnic afternoon at Old School Park in Gymea, which was also very well attended.
- The new classroom-based libraries officially commenced in Term 1 following the closure of the school community library at the end of 2017. The P&F volunteers who assisted the library transfer were on standby to assist the teachers with the new borrowing process. From all accounts, the new system was well received with minimal issues.
- Our Clean up Australia Day event saw many families gather after school on Friday to help clean up the local area surrounding our school.
- The Easter hot cross bun drive was a great success. It allowed SMS to support our local Gymea Bakers Delight, who donated \$2 from each 6-pack sold back to our school. They in turn support our Scissor Sunday event by donating bread for our sausage sizzle.
- Scissor Sunday Family Fun Day saw a record number of volunteers on the day offering their time on stalls, and quite a few families that donated some wonderful items that we either sold or auctioned on the day. We received generous donations from both businesses run by SMS parents and those in our local Gymea community. The P&F raised a total of \$2,200 (up from \$1,274 in 2017) which was allocated to the new adventure playground which will commence construction in 2019.
- One of our P&F regulars also single-handedly organised the Mango Fundraiser contributing \$917.50 to the playground.
- Primary Music Performance was a wonderful school highlight. The P&F assisted with the set up and pack away as well as organising a delightful supper for the conclusion of the performance. It was fantastic that so many parents contributed a plate to the supper which was very much appreciated and showed a great sense of community.
- P&F helped run the Gymea Fair promotional stall at the end of October. There was an excellent response from parents to staff our stall for an hour, as well as a couple of teachers. A few parents worked on marketing material to help positively position our school, and build awareness of Montessori to potential new parents and the local community.
- P&F volunteers rolled up their sleeves and used their collective creative skills to transform the school hall into a special space for our Year 6 Graduates to enjoy their Graduation Ceremony and farewell SMS.

Sadly, we also farewelled our P&F Chair, Kim Redmond-Fewtrell, at the end of 2018 as her youngest daughter, Jewel, finished up her primary schooling at SMS. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Kim for her tireless efforts in helping shape our school over more than a decade through her contributions both with the P&F and generally.

The P&F executive are very grateful for:

- the continuing support of our SMS parents and friends who kindly donate their time to help organise and support our schools' events;
- the families and community who attended and supported our efforts; and
- to the school's admin staff who continually facilitate vital communication and provided invaluable support making these fun and fulfilling community events happen.

We warmly invite and encourage families to come along and attend our schools P&F meetings and if they cannot do so to contact us through pandf@sms.nsw.edu.au with any suggestions or ideas they may have. All of the SMS P&F meeting dates are noted in the school newsletter calendar and we have been successfully continuing to use the Monti Mums and Dads Facebook page to help disseminate information and updates as needed including agenda items and meeting reminders.



Anna Firla
Head of Early Childhood

A Message from Early Childhood



There have been many changes that have happened within all of our Early Childhood rooms as well as out outside environments over the past year here at Sydney Montessori School.

In our staffing across Early Childhood and our 5 spaces that we foster, we have had the privilege with consistency in our rooms. We have had a few changes, with Christina Dean finishing up her time here at Sydney Montessori school. We have welcomed in Karen McRae from Primary to be our new 0 – 3 Facilitator. Simone Denmande and Mika Shojima continue to run our outstanding 3-6 environments. In our preschool rooms our numbers are every expanding.

In our Tara room, Long Day Care, Kelly Livett is still enjoying the opportunity of running our every growing 15 months till 3 years room, with her supportive team.

In our Akasha room 3-6 Long Day Care, we have also had some staff changes. We still have Anna Firla running this room, Shelley Blythe sadly left Akasha as she moved interstate.

Over the past year, we have had exciting room upgrades, expansions and overall improvements. In our preschool opportunities.





In our 0-3 room we have put in new open shelving, creating a more organised feeling. They have also opened up the back verandah, which allows the children to move more freely between the inside and outside spaces.

We have continued to improve and expand the incursions we have at our school which the children have thoroughly enjoyed. We have had visits from the NRMA to teach us about road safety, bike and helmet safety and the importance of seat belts in cars.

For the third year in a row, we have had Cameron the lifeguard come and support our understanding around water safety. He has brought to us a very interactive experience and the children always enjoy waving the

yellow and red flags, holding a surfboard as well as learning to identify all the various signs that are displayed for our safety. We have learnt about pet safety, in particular how to be safe and handle dogs. We had the pleasure of 'Sandy' the pup come along for our demonstration.

We have continued with our whole school celebratory events in Harmony Day, Easter hat parade, Mother's Day, Father's Day and Grandparent's Day, Book week, Science week and our Christmas picnics. It is always a pleasure and joy to celebrate these events with the whole school and our supportive





*Cameron Richmond
Primary Coordinator*

A Message from the Primary School



2018 required the expansion of our Primary school with the addition of another Stage 3 room. We now have four vibrant and original classrooms, Junee, Jililan, Samsara and Wingara. Children responded with energy and spirit to the Stage 3 classrooms, swiftly taking ownership of their rooms and beginning the important social work of building class communities as well as forging and consolidating friendships. Our Stage 2 classrooms are operating at near capacity which continues to demonstrate the commitment our families and students have to the Montessori principles we embed in our educational practice.

This year we said farewell to 13 graduates, Anthony, Gokul, Julian, Deni, Jewel, Cristian, Rohan, Zach S, Lilly, Zach B, Hugo, Jad and Raghav. The culmination of their time with us was the Graduation farewell, attended by many families and students of our school community. During the evening we were treated to farewell speeches from our graduates followed by an opportunity to socialise with families and children who have been an important part of our school community for many years. It was a fitting send off for our students as they prepare to embark on their high school education in various settings.

For our graduates, it has been a busy year, conducting the Peer Support program throughout the school, an opportunity to challenge themselves by leading weekly sessions focussed on establishing positive relationships. The students found the task of planning for, and managing younger students, to be challenging, interesting and rewarding as it allowed them to implement their own strategies to engage students and demonstrated the maturity and confidence they have developed during their time in our school.

The highlight for our graduates was the inaugural Year 6 camp to Canberra. We set off for the nation's capital in term 3 and visited Parliament House, The National Gallery, The War Memorial and stayed the Canberra Youth Hostel. The students also rode bikes around Lake Burley Griffin and hiked to a local lookout at Square Rock. It was great to observe the cohort come together as a close group and express their feelings and ideas about life after SMS, and reflect on the positive experiences and special memories they have acquired along the way.

This year we enjoyed a unique format for our annual primary camps. Both Stage 2 and 3 attended a





children to explore their musical interests in the SMS music rooms. Here they have been practising instrumental performance, reading musical notation and singing.

Children displayed excitement at the prospect of performing at the annual music concert where parents and friends were treated to an entertaining night of song and instrumental performance.

SMS continues to embed 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 brings an abundant amount of energy and fun to the lessons which are anticipated highly by our primary students and result in many satisfied children eager to display their new skills to teachers and friends alike. Our school athletics carnival in term 2 proved to be a fun day out for children, parents and staff where children participated in a range of athletic events before finishing the day with the old favourite, the tug-of-war!

Finally, we come to our end of year Primary concert, a gala event involving song, dance and drama which, as always, was attended by a large audience of family and friends. This year we were treated to a drama piece from each of our Stage 2 classes, Jililan and June as well as a play from Stage 3, written and directed by our graduating students. The fun and excitement the children feel towards these experiences is infectious, and in large part is due to the ownership they place on performing their own work. The joy on the faces of parents in the audience reminds us why working with children at Sydney Montessori School is such a rewarding and satisfying experience.

It is with fondness that we reflect on our 2018 year in primary, and look forward to another year of children reaching their full potential by following their interests, collaborating with peers and responding to the committed guidance from our team of teachers and assistants. The continued expansion of our primary numbers is a testament to the hard work of staff and the commitment of the families within our community to the Montessori philosophy in practice, and the benefits for our children can be observed as they live by the values we hold dear throughout their school lives.



combined Montessori schools camp at The Great Aussie Bush Camp, Kincumber. Our students were able to meet and form friendships with other Montessori students and our teachers enjoyed connecting with Educators who share our passion for the Montessori approach to education. It was a wonderful experience to share special moments with people who genuinely feel our children should grow to be engaged members of a community and who will follow their hearts when their hearts beat the drum of action.

Music continues to be an integral part of our students experience at SMS with weekly classes conducted by Julia allowing

REPORTING AREA 2 | Contextual Information about the School and the Characteristics of the Student Body

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 15 month to 6 year olds (in the tradition of Maria Montessori's first Casa dei Bambini), which operates from 8am 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 goals¹ 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.

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 6 full time teaching staff, 6 part time teaching staff, 16 Educators (early childhood and primary) and 5 non-teaching staff. We had 157 students across all areas (daily average), ending the year at 168 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

¹ As outlined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). For further information, see: <http://www.oecd.org/general/thecasefor21st-centurylearning.htm>

REPORTING AREA 3 | Student Outcomes in Standardised National Literacy and Numeracy Testing

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, so low it is statistically insignificant.

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

REPORTING AREA 4 | Senior Secondary Outcomes

In 2018, **Sydney Montessori School** did not offer a secondary program for students enrolled in Years 7 - 12

REPORTING AREA 5 | Teacher Qualifications and Professional Learning

Professional Learning

Professional development for staff is an important part of the School program. Staff attended the following professional development sessions in 2018:

Description of Professional Learning Activity 2018	No. of Staff Participating
AIS Governance Symposium 2018	2
Civica iWise Training	8
Easter Eggs Workshop Natural Play	1
First Aid, Asthma & Anaphylaxis Course	7
Highlighting Writing	1
MAF People Skills	2
MAF Marketing and Communications	1
Montessori Institute 0-3 Years Cultural Studies and Integrated Curriculum	1
Montessori Institute 0-3 Ye3ars Educational and Child Development Theory	1
Montessori Institute 0-3 Years Mathematics Semester 1	1
Montessori Institute Role of the Teacher and Professional Issues	1
Montessori Institute Diploma 0-3 Years	1
Montessori Institute Family & Quality Environments	1
Montessori Music	3
Montessori Theory and Philosophy workshop	1
Montessori Whole School refresher	4
Macqlit PD	1
Nature Play	4
Step by Step – Managing Challenging Behaviours	2

REPORTING AREA 5 | Teacher Qualifications and Professional Learning

As at December 2018, **Sydney Montessori School** employed 12 teachers who are responsible for delivering the curriculum. The following is a breakdown of their qualifications:

Level of Qualification	Number of Staff
a) Have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition guidelines.	11
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.	1
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.	0
d) No qualifications or teaching experience	0

REPORTING AREA 6 | Workforce Composition

Teaching Staff	12
Full Time Equivalent Teaching Staff	9.15
Educators/Assistants (in all early childhood rooms-not including teachers)	16
Full Time Equivalent Educators/Assistants	12.1
Non-Teaching Staff	5
Full Time Equivalent Non-Teaching Staff	3.5

Kindergarten	99.3%
Year 1	98.8%
Year 2	98.6%
Year 3	98.6%
Year 4	99.1%
Year 5	98.9%
Year 6	97.9%
Total School Attendance	98.75%

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, the Principal will access Keep Them Safe website (www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au) and determine whether a report is required.
- 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.
- 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 Policy

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.

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.

REPORTING AREA 9 | Other School Policies

As part of preparation for the school's periodic review and audit (2019) by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESAs) 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.

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.

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

REPORTING AREA 9 | Other School Policies

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.



REPORTING AREA 10 | School-Determined Priority Areas for Improvement

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.



**STRATEGIC PLAN
2016 – 2026**

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.

2. Growth & Sustainability

The school will **grow to 250+ students**.

The school will be **financially thriving** and reinvesting in education programs and facilities for sustained growth

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

Sydney Montessori School will become a **locally acclaimed school of choice**. The school will actively develop a marketing plan for achieving this goal.

The school will become registered as a **Montessori Quality Assured School** under the Montessori Quality Assurance Programme (MQAP).

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 remote communities by providing them with quality Montessori education.



2021 - 2026



REPORTING AREA 11 | Initiatives Promoting Respect & Responsibility

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.

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. Recent surveys have measured satisfaction growth across 9 areas.

The following is a brief summary of the findings.

Parents:

1. An explicit improvement agenda – increase of 33%
1. Analysis and discussion of data – increase of 19.7%
1. A culture that promotes learning – increase of 25.4%
1. Targeted use of School resources – increase of 34.6%
1. An expert teaching team – increase of 20.8%
1. Systematic curriculum delivery – increase of 28.4%
1. Differentiated teaching and learning – increase of 23.1%
1. Effective pedagogical practices – increase of 25.9%
1. School community partnerships – increase of 30.4%

Staff:

1. An explicit improvement agenda – increase of approx. 28%
1. Analysis and discussion of data – overall positive growth of 28%
1. A culture that promotes learning – increase of 20.3%
1. Targeted use of School resources – increase of 9%
1. An expert teaching team – increase of 23%
1. Systematic curriculum delivery – increase of 24.6%
1. Differentiated teaching and learning – increase of 18.3%
1. Effective pedagogical practices – increase of 7.7%
1. School community partnerships – increase of 0.5%

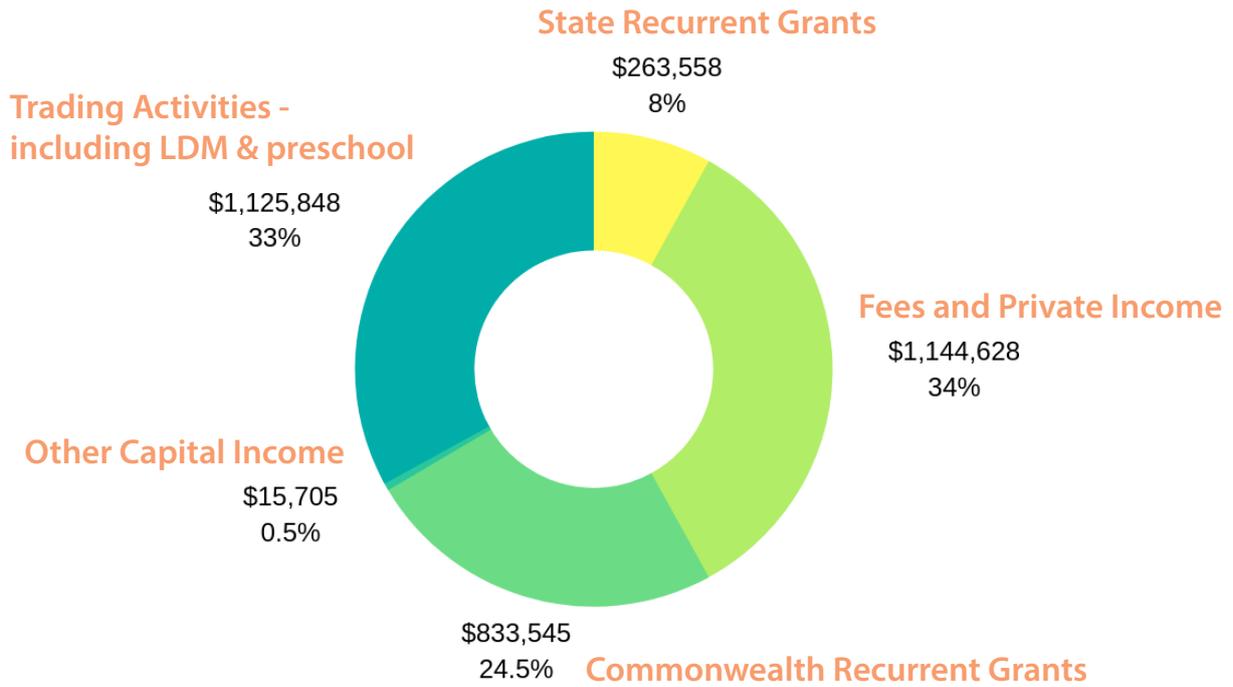
Students:

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**.

Parents often report that their children don't like school holidays because they prefer to be at school! Informal discussions with students and graduating speeches reflect the high level of satisfaction amongst the students. 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 2018

Recurrent / Capital Income



Recurrent / Capital Expenditure

