



2017 ANNUAL REPORT



“The first aim of the prepared environment is, as far as it is possible, to render the growing child independent of the adult.”

~ Maria Montessori





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INTRODUCTION

The Montessori approach to education provides an extraordinary opportunity for young people to develop to their full potential in a positive, supportive environment encouraging independence, enquiry, and freedom to grow. Our whole school reflects the ideals set in our classrooms— we value high standards, sharing of knowledge, perpetual education, individuality, community spirit and respect. Collaborative relationships with parents are critical, and together we create a community centred on ensuring Montessori schooling fulfils its role as a recognised leader in individualised learning.

Based on our Montessori philosophy, CMS caters for over 200 children from birth to twelve years of age. The Montessori curriculum is an integrated one where all aspects of a child's learning (e.g. music, writing, reading, mathematics, science, art, craft, culture, and physical activity) are presented as part of an interrelated whole. We implement the National Montessori Curriculum whilst adhering to the Australian Curriculum and complying with MQAP expectations, ACECQA requirements and the Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.

This document addresses our accountability requirements , both educational and financial, as set out by the Commonwealth Government.

“We must help the child to act for himself, will for himself, think for himself; this is the art of those who aspire to serve the spirit.”

~ Maria Montessori



OUR VISION

'To continually extend the opportunity for every child to have a Montessori education that provides for them to develop to their full potential.'

OUR LOGO

Our logo uses various symbols that represent the education provided by Canberra Montessori School, with icons illustrating Science, Life, Ideas and an Open Book. The logo was chosen to reflect the professional and up to date approach to education delivered by CMS whilst the primary colours and symbols also are reflective of an early learning environment.



Science



Life



Idea



Open Book



MESSAGE FROM SCHOOL BOARD

Dear CMS Community,

2017 has been a significant year and despite facing some tough challenges, the School consistently demonstrated to the Board that it was continuing to focus intently on outcomes for CMS children. The School's commitment to offering authentic Montessori education in a highly regulated educational landscape, is testament to the dedication of its amazing people; children, families, staff and executive.

CMS is now looked to from other Montessori Schools to see how to maintain an authentic Montessori offering within the strict regulatory requirements of school funding from the ACT and federal governments, representing approximately 25% of the total CMS budget. Much of this happens in the background to the experience of the children, so at the same time, the School has continued to engage with AMI Consultants, Trainers and staff experts, to enhance the Montessori experience in classrooms.

Specific Outcomes for 2017

Finance outcomes have centred on working closely with the executive to ensure the School returned a surplus despite constantly shifting variables. I am pleased to confirm that we have returned a surplus for 2017. Together with the Principal, our goal is to consistently strive to return surpluses moving forward, enabling reinvestment back into the School as we build and grow again moving into 2018 and beyond.

Compliance outcomes are focused on the design and implementation of a rigorous Audit Plan and procedures that ensure the School maintains full compliance with all requirements of the ACT school registration process and the Montessori Quality Assurance Framework on an ongoing basis.

Governance outcomes have centred heavily on the complex change program, holding the new Board Open Sessions and designing and delivering the Independent Review agreed at the Special General Meeting (SGM) in winter. The review is now complete and the Board is reviewing the recommendations.



Members of the Board

Jacqueline Gellatly—Chair
Felix Pirie—Acting Chair
Melanie Buswell
Tony Butler
Martin Drinkwater
Christine Harrison
Rose Nairn



MESSAGE FROM SCHOOL BOARD cont./...

Society Engagement

The second resolution at the AGM was to allocate Society Engagement to two Board members. Tony Butler headed up this work and also engaged sub-committee members with relevant expertise from the parent community to assist him. Several products have now been shared with the community showing the results of this collaboration.

Update on the Strategic Plan

The final resolution agreed, was for an update on the Strategic Plan. As mentioned at the end of 2017 the Board will invite all community members to participate in a full review of the Strategic Plan in 2018.

Across 2016 and 2017, the following items were scheduled and achieved by the School:

Pillar One – Excellence in Student Development

- The Montessori National Curriculum was mapped to the Australian National Curriculum as part of achieving ongoing registration as an ACT school and CMS continues to work on this pathway
- Student progress was reported against all areas of curriculum for all primary age students twice yearly via updated Student Reports
- Student Reports are completed using the School's enterprise software platform, PC School
- CMS coaching and mentoring has been enhanced through the implementation of Professional Portfolios, a consistent performance appraisal framework, regular Montessori practice meetings as one collegial team of Montessori educators and regular informal coaching and collaboration
- As well as receiving coaching and mentoring support from international Montessori Consultants and expert Trainers, to support the School and staff commitment to AMI training, the School has also employed an AMI trained Primary Montessori Director with more than 20 years of Primary Montessori experience to direct CMS Learning and Teaching

Board Message
continued/...



MESSAGE FROM SCHOOL BOARD cont./...

- Parent education has continued and strengthened, with a recent event attended by close to 60 community members about Montessori and The Six Cs of 21st Century Education
- The School is considering even more creative ways to offer parent education moving into 2018, potentially leveraging video technology so that all community members can access these opportunities online in their own time - watch this space!
- In partnership with the School, the Australian Centre for Montessori Studies (ACMS) established an AMI Training Centre at CMS this year, and will award its inaugural Canberra AMI Graduates in March next year
- Long-term training strategies have been implemented for staff, bringing to life the CMS commitment to lifelong learning and quality Professional Development

Pillar Two – Excellence in Community

- Online content has been published about Montessori education
- A Smart App has been implemented through School Stream
- Board Open sessions are now held and more regular messages from the Board have been provided to the community.

Pillar Three – Excellence in Business Operations

- The School achieved the full, five-year registration from the ACT Education Directorate following rigorous review of all education, strategy, operations and finances over the full five out years.
- The Board has reviewed progress annually, and in 2018, looks forward to conducting that review in partnership with the community via a dedicated Board Open Session.

Subject to the community review of the Strategic Plan in 2018, you will see:

- Adjustments to how the School enables parent engagement and volunteering, ensuring greater opportunities for parents to engage in the learning journey of each child as well as opportunities for involvement in

Board Message
continued/...



MESSAGE FROM SCHOOL BOARD

the School community, to increase School accountability for outcomes and to enhance linkages across volunteer groups

- Alumni newsletters and encouragement for ongoing giving and involvement at CMS
- Increased engagement with parents about linking the home and prepared environments of the School
- Communication about the benefits of volunteering to educational outcomes
- A Volunteering Register re-established
- Review of the Professional Development and Mentoring program for staff
- Implementation of electronic only communication for all administration functions
- Consideration of increased interest from external parties about offerings from CMS
- Consideration of community groups using CMS facilities

Warm regards, and all the best for an exciting 2018

Jacqueline Gellatly
CMS Board Chair

Board Message
continued/...



MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL

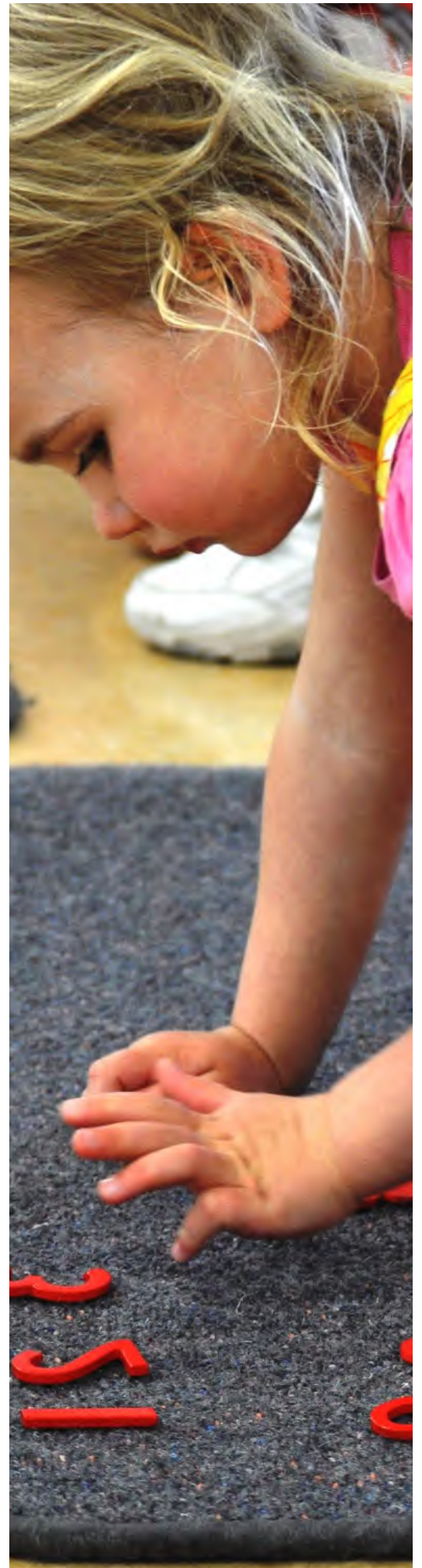
While my messages tend to focus on education and our most important people at CMS, our children, for the Annual Report I will focus on the more administrative aspects of our school. In 2017, CMS continued to implement its strategic plan and a range of key initiatives identified the year prior, by Montessori and other education experts, as being key to our ongoing success. We continued to strengthen our staff team in terms of who we are and how we operate as a collegial group, we continued to offer extensive Professional development opportunities, hosted an AMI Montessori Diploma course for the first time and continued to consolidate resources to deliver the best offerings to our students, while maintaining a strong financial position.

Students are accessing at CMS a strong Montessori experience alongside a qualified, experienced, diverse and collegiate team of education and administrative staff who care deeply about them, a team who I appreciate leading moving into 2018 and beyond.

I would like to take this reflective opportunity to thank all CMS staff and volunteers for the efforts that went into 2017. Every individual adult at CMS can play a role in the school life of our children, and so many do. This is also the appropriate time to thank our interim Business Manager, Ms Velinka, who worked diligently as a member of the executive in 2017, while our ongoing Business Manager, Ms Amy, was on maternity leave with her first child. Thank you, Ms Velinka, for the year past and the remaining months ahead before Ms Amy's return.

For 2018, we have a range of initiatives planned to achieve our key priorities this year, to enhance engagement across the community and bridge the gap between home and school. 2018 will demonstrate a year of growth, growth of a fantastic offering, and evidence the benefits of a long-term Montessori education. Together, we will continue to strive for our school to be 'simply the best for each child.'

Anthony Vandermolen
Principal, CMS





COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Communication between Canberra Montessori School (Administration and Staff), parents and students is continuous. Informal discussions and communications between school community and staff are a dimension of school culture, forming a function of the feedback mechanism for the school.

These communications occur on a daily basis and any issues of concern or dissatisfaction are addressed in a formal matter, as they arise, using our Communication Pathway to ensure they are dealt with effectively and by the most appropriate person.

In addition, in 2017 a comprehensive survey of Parents was undertaken, together with surveys following various school events, and the feedback used to inform future development and areas of focus.

Regular contact between the Principal and Board and with various school committees ensures the school remains in touch with the feelings of the broader school community.





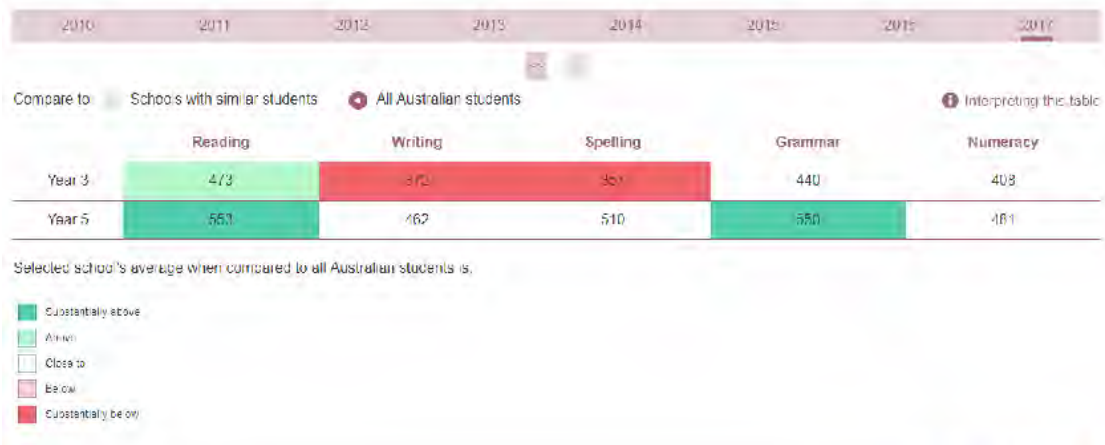
NAPLAN 2017

(National Assessment for Literacy & Numeracy)

In 2017, 9 of our Cycle 2 children (Year 3) and 7 of our Cycle 3 (Year 5) children sat various NAPLAN assessments. The results for CMS are outlined in the table below with the National Average across Australia in this age group.

Analysis of NAPLAN results over the last five years reveals our students as a whole (combining results from Years 3 to 5) to have achieved above the National average, despite lower than average scores for students in Year 3. This trend indicates a progression in attaining higher scores as students move from Year 3 through to Year 5. The data is consistent with Montessori progression through the Cycles taking into account the pace associated with Montessori's 'Planes of Development'. Scores above average in Year 5 are understood in Montessori as being aligned with a period of consolidation following new presentations and development of intense areas of interest.

For more information please visit : <https://myschool.edu.au/school/49991/naplan/numbers>





WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

Our CMS team is comprised of teachers, support staff and members of administration. CMS has no indigenous or Torres Strait Islander staff members. All teaching staff have the required teaching qualifications and have or are working towards their Montessori diplomas.

In 2017 the Executive Staff consisted of the Principal, Deputy Principal and Business Manager, who were supported by a small administrative team. All staff are responsible to the Principal who has general operational and day to day management responsibility for the various activities of the School.

Our Staff

Administration

Anthony Vandermolen—Principal

Aine Barker—Deputy Principal

Velinka Vecchi—Business Manager

Judy McGowan

Brigid Lombard

Tonia Lewis

Directors

Halima Khurram

Ros Hartley

Louise Draper

Aileen Frost

David Holmes

Leharne Fountain

Glen Watson

Tom Ransom

Assistants

Viv Moir

Veda Limaye

Sukhi Sahota

Vic Micallef

Stephanie Viegas

OHSC

Taryn Smith-Hardy

Kylie Hunter



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2017

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF STAFF
Enhancing the performance and development culture in your school	2
Mental health first aid	2
The ACT Reportable Conduct Scheme	24
Montessori Whole School Refresher	5
Montessori Business Managers Forum	1
Educating for Sustainability in your School Grounds	1
KidsMatter Facilitating Component	1
KidsMatter Modules for Directors	3
KidsMatter Program	24
Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy Reading Workshop	1
Supporting Sustainable Schools Co-ordinators	1

CMS is committed to supporting the on-going learning journey of all staff members to increase the depth and understanding of Montessori principles.

All directors are TQI registered and hold or are working towards appropriate Montessori qualifications. All assistants have a Certificate III in Early Childhood as a minimum requirement.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cont/...

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF STAFF
Reconciliation Action Plan Meeting	1
Office of the eSafety Commissioner Teacher Essentials	3
AMI Montessori Diploma 3-6 years	5
A Key to Writing & Reading English	1
Food&ME Preschool Professional Learning	3
International Montessori Congress	4
International Montessori Congress Presenter	1
MAF Early Childhood Conference	1
ACER Using and Interpreting Data in Schools	6
Building Positive Relationships at work	1
Montessori Leadership Network Forum	2

“It is not enough for the teacher to love the child. She must first love and understand the universe. She must prepare herself, and truly work at it.”

~ Maria Montessori



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cont/...

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF STAFF
HDR Indigenous Policy Conference	1
Personalised Learning Processes for Aboriginal Students	1
Sue Larkey Program	1
MEP Basic Principles and Practice	2
Supervising Preservice Teachers	2
AMI 6-12 Assistant's Course	1
Cross Sectoral NCCD Analysis	1
Get Creative with STEM	1
Teacher Mentoring	6
National Assessment Platform Workshop	1
AISACT Celebrating Teaching & Learning	4

“The teacher’s task is first to nourish and assist, to watch, encourage, guide, induce, rather than to interfere, prescribe or restrict.”

~ Maria Montessori



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cont/...

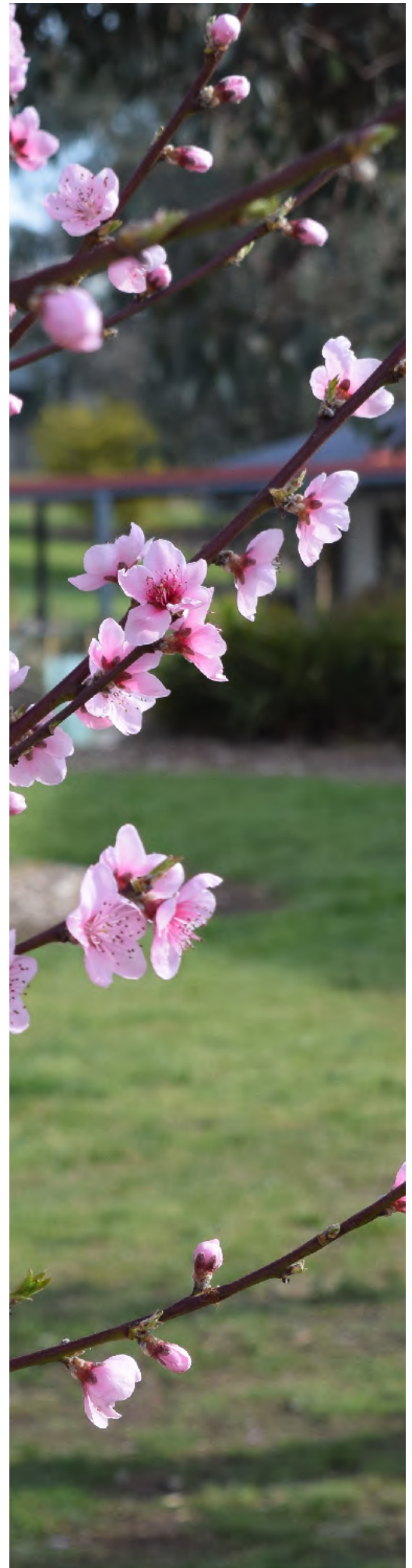
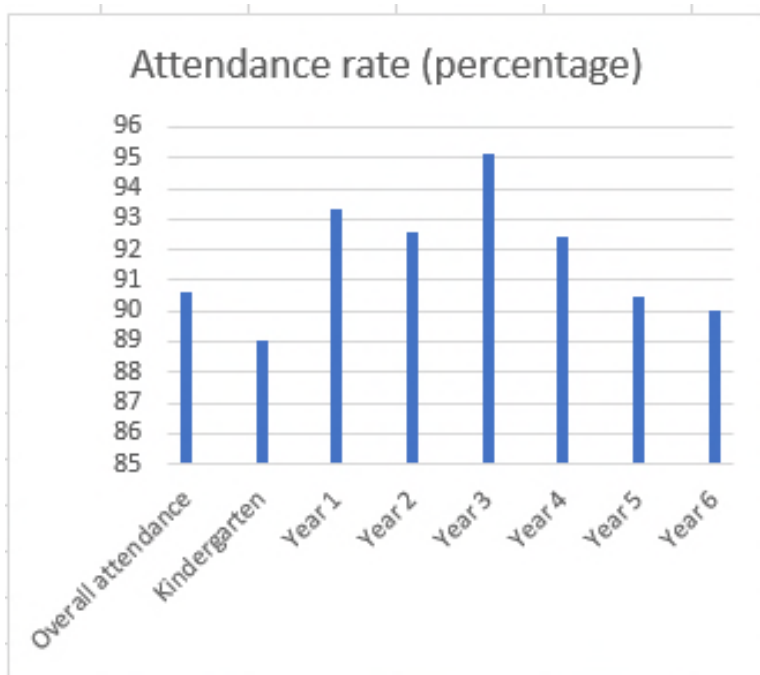
CATEGORY	NUMBER OF STAFF
AIS Gifted and Talented Workshop	1
Montessori Leadership Network Forum	2
First Aid	10
Sunsmart Workshop	25
Asthma First Aid for School Staff	8

“The education of even a small child, therefore, does not aim at preparing him for school, but for life.”

~ Maria Montessori



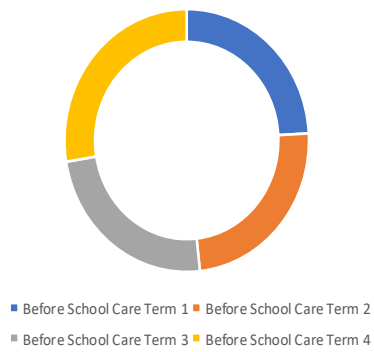
STUDENT ATTENDANCE





OUT OF HOURS SCHOOL CARE

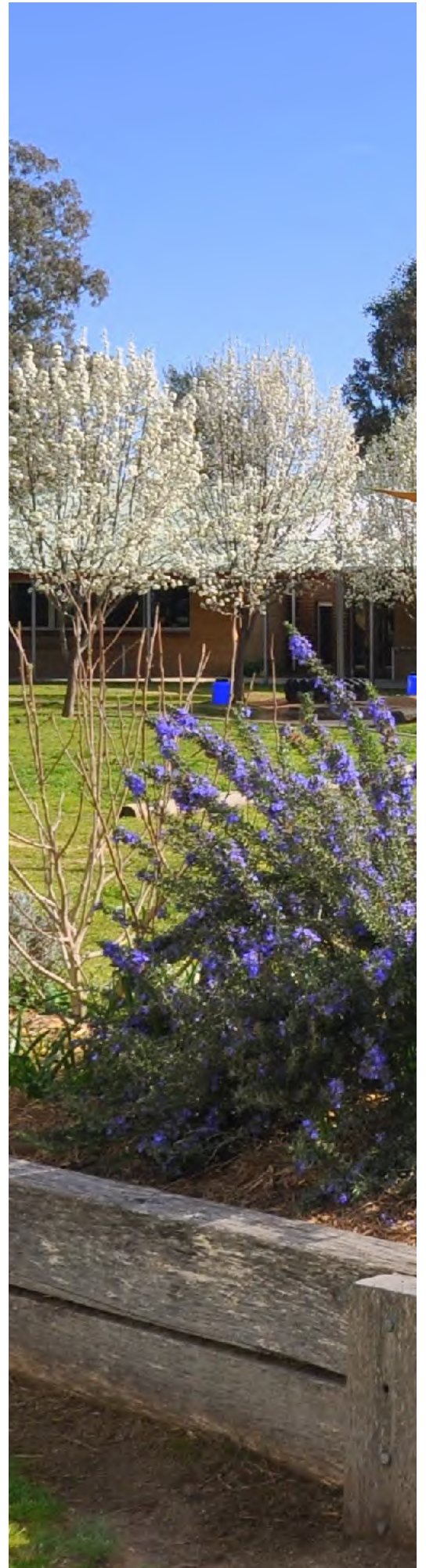
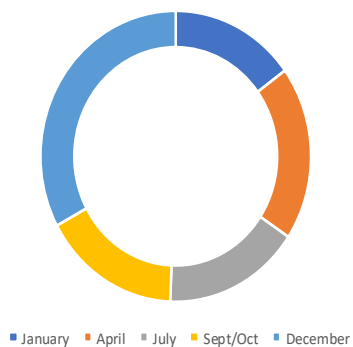
Before School Care, daily average



After School Care, daily average



Holiday Program, daily average





GIFTED/LEARNING NEEDS

The nature of individual learning was discovered by Montessori in addressing the challenge of meeting the needs of every child. Working with specialist physicians of her time, Montessori refined didactic materials as well as creating her own through test conditions based on observation of the handling of the materials by the children.

For example, a child skilled with good pencil control, and perhaps creatively talented, will quickly progress through the lessons in writing with the use of the Metal Insets (a stencil supporting design elements and correct pencil pressure). The child will quickly progress, only stopping to have the extension presentations delivered by the Director. This child fulfils their innate potential and does so with ease. A child who may have difficulty with pencil grip will be guided by the educator to develop the grip through use of tongs and holding specially designed knobs on puzzle pieces within the materials across all curriculum areas. When introduced to the Metal Insets, this child will take a long time (stretching into months) to proceed step by step through the lessons. The Director may need to reintroduce the presentation on more than one occasion. The beauty of auto education is that the child sets the pace and will master the activity in his or her own time with the freedom to repeatedly practise the material without comment or coercion to catch up with others. Each is guided by the adult, each to their own pace and each to reach his or her potential.

Since many of our children are enrolled at CMS from birth, identification of additional needs is not known on commencement at our school. Once realised our Directors and parents work together to ensure similar responses to specific needs. The Directors can identify any differences to the whole staff through weekly meetings, share knowledge and support each other to suggest parent referrals to professionals when necessary.

On enrolment and provided a disability has been diagnosed prior to enrolment, extra care is taken to ensure the school is able to make reasonable adjustments as required. Extra time one on one with the child/director for familiarisation is undertaken on a case by case basis.

Children who require significant classroom enrichment or extension have an Individual Education Program (IEP) to document their individual course of study and the reportable outcomes.

Áine Barker
Deputy Principal

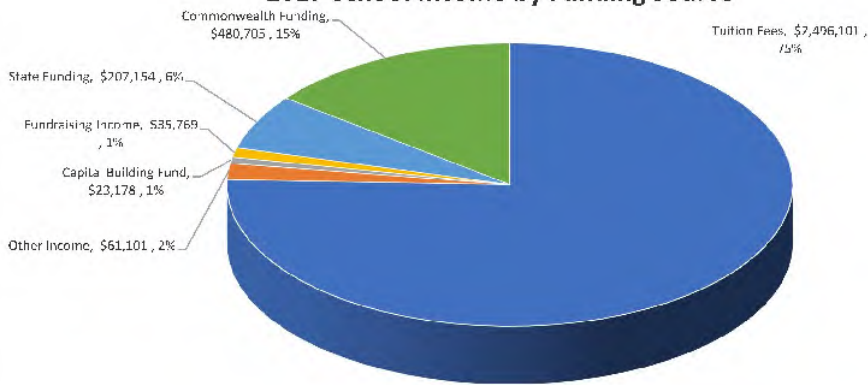
“The difference in the reaction between deficient and normal children, in the presentation of didactic material made of graded stimuli, is plainly seen from the fact that the same didactic material used with deficient makes education possible, while with normal children it provokes auto-education.”

~ Maria Montessori
The Montessori Method

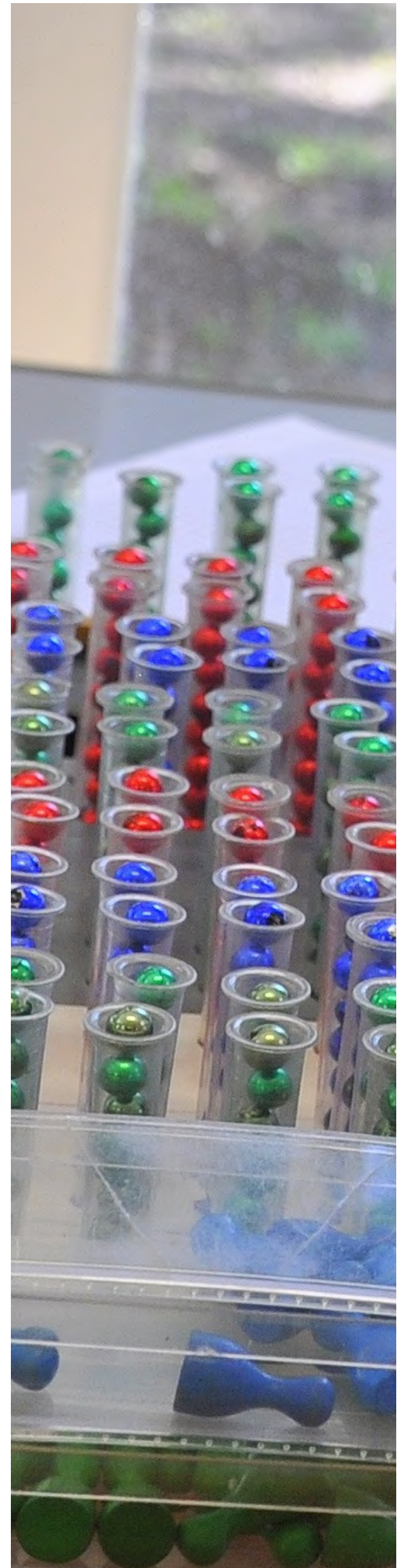
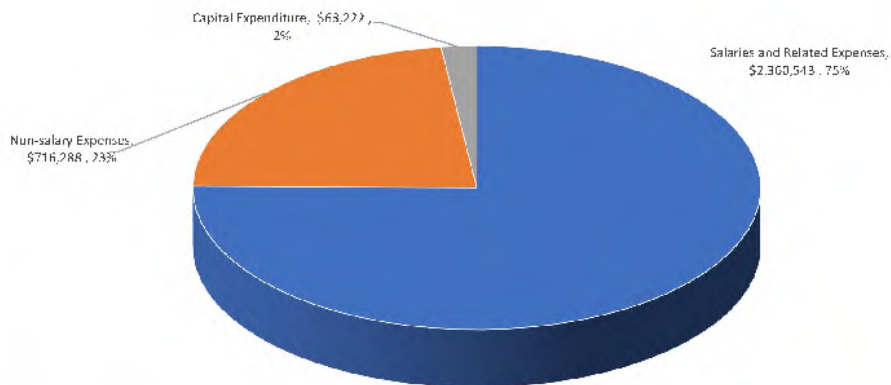


FINANCIAL INFORMATION

2017 School Income by Funding Source



2017 Recurrent/Capital Expenditure





COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP/ ENGAGEMENT

Building purposeful internal and external relationships, networks and partnerships:

Under Principal direction, many relationships and networks are prevalent at CMS. Recently invited onto the Montessori Australia Federation (MAF) Board, Anthony now can go beyond the boundary of school and support effective change for Montessori education in Australia and internationally.

CMS continues to support the Karinya House Home for Mothers and Babies by offering two PTP places and one school place as supported by the Bursary Program. CMS is proud to be one of 20 corporate and community sponsors of Karinya House in the ACT.

Each year CMS involves the children in Camp Quality week which culminates with Spiky Hair Day when funds are raised for children with cancer.

The partnership developed with Orana School resulted in CMS and Orana children on stage together singing to the community. Towards the end of 2017, a new contract was drawn up where support of grounds maintenance is conducted by the Orana team.

In 2018, we will continue to partner with the Orana School to further develop a pathway for CMS graduates after their primary years, Orana's new International Baccalaureate (IB). A pathway will open for CMS graduates to access the new IB program specifically. Transition from CMS primary to Orana IB for high school and college, will be facilitated and CMS graduates will be very well prepared for their new environment, should this be their chosen pathway. This is an exciting achievement for CMS and more information will come out as the program evolves. We are hopeful that our 2018 graduates can be our first to access this new pathway.

