

# Aspect Treetop School Annual Report

For the year 2016



autism  
spectrum  
AUSTRALIA





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Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is Australia's largest not-for-profit provider of services and supports working with people on the autism spectrum and their families.

Knowledge about autism has come a long way since 1966 when six families founded Aspect as the Autistic Children's Association of NSW to provide schooling and support. Now, 50 years on, Aspect operates one of the world's largest networks of schools and satellite classes for students on the spectrum and is approved to provide a range of therapy, intervention and lifestyle options under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

We offer evidence-informed services and supports across all life stages and share this evidence-informed Aspect practice and applied research internationally.

At Aspect, we believe that people on the autism spectrum are a different brilliant and this shines through in our work with more than 14,000 Australians on the spectrum and their families each year.

## Our Vision

The best opportunities for people on the spectrum

## Our Mission

We develop person-centred solutions, which are flexible, responsive and evidence-informed, with people of all ages on the autism spectrum and their families.

## Our Values

We are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible.

# Message from the Principal

Aspect schools provide specialised evidence-based programs for children on the autism spectrum aged 4 to 16, who require an autism-specific program. The primary focus of the schools is to equip students with the skills to become as independent as possible and enable them to transition into more inclusive settings.

Aspect Treetop School opened on 25th July 2016. It is the first Aspect school outside of New South Wales and the only autism-specific school in South Australia (SA).



Treetop school has increased the educational options for students on the autism spectrum in SA and came to fruition due to collaboration between Aspect and the Treetop Autism Specific School Board which comprised a group of parents and citizens in SA.



The school is situated in Ashford and opened with 23 students. Enrolments came from Adelaide and surrounding suburbs as well as from families who relocated from regional areas in SA.



In accordance with Aspect's comprehensive approach for education (ACAE), each student has an individualised plan (IP) which details each student's abilities in relation to the primary autism specific areas of learning (social communication, social interactions, behaviour and sensory) and includes a strong focus on quality of life and learning strengths and interests. IP's are developed collaboratively with families and encourage student involvement. The staff consists of a team of very committed teachers, school support officers (SSO) and therapy personnel comprising an Occupational Therapist and Speech Therapist.

Stage 2 of the school's refurbishment began in term four, and will provide an additional six classrooms to accommodate enrolments for 2017.

Kaye Perry  
Principal

*My daughter walked in the doors of Aspect Treetop with nothing but fear and pain in relation to school. At the end of this school year, all she could think of was how much she was going to miss it. We've been counting down the days till next school year.*

## Student performance in standardised national and state-wide tests and examinations

Each student has an individual profile of characteristics that outlines strengths and interests, current levels of functioning and areas for development in the autism-specific areas of learning: social communication, social interaction, behaviours and sensory processing which are integrated into the Australian curriculum. The school uses a multi-disciplinary team approach, working collaboratively with families to develop the best possible outcomes for the students. The school provides information and training workshops to families to help them support their child.

### Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

There is no NAPLAN result for this report as the school commenced its operations in Term 3.

## Professional learning and teaching standards

### Teaching standards

All teachers have teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines.

### Professional learning

Professional learning activities included:

Description	Number of Teachers Participating
<i>Aspect Staff Induction</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Nonviolent Crisis Intervention full course</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Aspect Comprehensive Approach for Education (ACAE):</i>	
<i>Introduction to autism</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Social skills and autism</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Sensory processing and autism</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>WHS Induction</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Aspect online induction course</i>	<i>6</i>

### Composition of teaching staff

Composition of Aspect Treetop School staff is documented on the My School website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)

No staff is identified as of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

## Student attendance

For the whole school attendance rate, please refer to the school's data on the My School website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au).

### Managing students' non-attendance

All Aspect schools have a policy to monitor the daily attendance and absences of students. Unexplained absences from classes or school will be followed up in an appropriate manner with the student and/or their parent or guardian. Where a student has a poor record attendance, the school will notify parents and/or guardians in an appropriate manner. Should this occur the family counsellor and/or the principal will become involved. The unsatisfactory record and any action taken will be recorded on the student's file.

If a student has exited the school and the destination of that student, who is below seventeen (17) years of age, is unknown, the principal will advise the SA Director, School and Regional Operations with the student's name, age and last known address, last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details, an indication of possible destination, other information that may assist officers to locate the student, and any known occupational health and safety risks associated with contacting the parents or student.

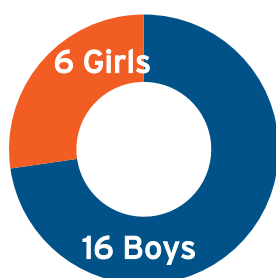
### Student retention rates

As with all of Aspect's schools, Aspect Treetop School has a policy of transitioning students into less specialised/more inclusive settings. The decision to transition a student is based on the student's readiness and ability to cope in a less specialised setting and is made in collaboration with families/carers as part of the student's Individualised Plan (IP). The success of the school's transition program is reflected in the relatively small number of students enrolled across the school in Year 3 upward.

In 2016, a Year 6 student transitioned to a mainstream high school.

## Enrolment

In 2016 Aspect Treetop School had an average enrolment of 22 students, 6 girls and 16 boys.



## Enrolment Policy: Service Entry: Schools

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) provides educational services for eligible school aged children to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific.

### Policy Purpose

This policy details the processes to be followed to determine eligibility for placement in an Aspect School.

### Scope

For all Aspect schools.

### Definitions

**Eligible school aged child** - Eligibility for enrolment in an Aspect school requires a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder by a pediatrician, clinical psychologist or psychiatrist and a recent cognitive assessment by a psychologist.

**Aspect School Enrolment Committee** - is the school based committee that meets once per term to determine if a child is eligible for placement. It comprises:

School Principal

School Family Counsellor

School Coordinator

**Aspect Eligibility Committee** - is the Education & Research Committee, convened by the Director Education & Research that clarifies applications sent by the Aspect School Enrolment Committee.

### Procedures

Each Aspect School Principal is responsible for:

1) Organising an information meeting once per school term for prospective parents or guardians who would like to enroll their child.

- a. This meeting outlines the school program and application process
- b. Application for enrolment forms is available at this meeting.

2) Convening the Aspect School Enrolment Committee which meets once per school term following the information meeting to review applications submitted.

- a. This committee determines if a child is eligible for placement in an Aspect School. To be eligible for placement in one of Aspect's schools, prospective students must have the following:
  - a current diagnosis which clearly states that the child fulfils the criteria for ASD from a specialist medical practitioner or clinical psychologist, which is not more than 12 months old and
  - a current standardised cognitive or developmental assessment (e.g. IQ Testing, Griffiths, WISC-IV, WPPSI-III, Stanford Binet V), which is not more than 2 years old.

3) Informing the parents of the outcome of their child's application for a placement in an Aspect school.

If the child has been deemed eligible by the Aspect School Enrolment Committee, the principal will inform the parents or guardians that the diagnosis has been confirmed and their child's name has been placed on the schools waiting list. If a vacancy arises, the school principal or delegate interviews families that might fill the vacancy regarding accommodations/adjustments for their child.

4) Referring the application to the Aspect Eligibility Committee if the diagnosis needs clarification.

The National Director, Aspect Education is responsible for:

- 1) Convening the Aspect Eligibility Committee once per school term to review any applications that require clarification.
- 2) Reporting to Aspect principals the results of the Aspect Eligibility Committee, so that they can inform the parents of the outcomes.

The principal will inform the parents or guardians if the diagnosis has been confirmed or not and if confirmed the child's name is placed on the schools waiting list.

A parent or guardian can appeal the decision if the diagnosis is not confirmed. The principal will consult with the relevant staff, including the National Director, Aspect Education, and inform the family of the outcome of the review.

### Guidelines

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) recognises that children with an autism spectrum disorder have the right to access and equity of service regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, religion or language. As a service provider Aspect will respond appropriately and sensitively to the needs of the entire community including people from



indigenous, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds within the limit of available resources.

When vacancies arise in the school, the decision about how to fill them is made based on whether the type of vacancy available, for example, a preschool, primary or adolescent group, would be appropriate for the child, a child's age, the length of time a child has been on the waiting list, the availability of alternative placements and the family situation.

## References

### Legislation

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)  
Community services (Complaints, Appeals and Monitoring) Act 1993 (NSW) Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)  
Disability Standards for Education Act, 2005 (Commonwealth) Education Act 1990 (NSW)  
Education Act 1972 (SA)  
Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA)  
National Disability Services Standard  
Standard 5: Service Access

### Other Relevant Policies

Complaints by People with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, Family Members and other Aspect Clients  
Contributing to Decision Making  
Fee Collection  
Fee Reduction  
Privacy, Dignity & Confidentiality  
Registration & Accreditation Procedures: Schools  
School Fees and Compulsory Building Levy  
Working with Families

## Policy: Service Exit: Schools

A student enrolled in an Aspect schools may leave because:

1. the student transitions to a new setting;
2. the student's parents withdraw their child from the Aspect school;
3. a safe working environment for students and staff cannot be achieved; or
4. because of the non-payment of outstanding schools fees.

### Policy purpose

This policy sets out the guide for Aspect staff when a student leaves an Aspect school.

### Scope

All Aspect schools

### Procedures

#### 1. Transition

When a student transitions from an Aspect school to

another educational placement the Aspect school principal follows the procedure outlined in the policy 02 01 09 Transition of students from an Aspect School.

#### 2. Parent choice to withdraw their child outside the transition process

When parents, guardians or the person responsible informs the Aspect school principal that their child will be leaving the school, the school staff will discuss with the parents, guardians or the person responsible what transition and post-transition support the child may need and what support the school can offer.

The Aspect school principal will consider requests for transition and post-transition support from families and may provide this if resources are available.

Parents, guardians or the person responsible are required to give the school's principal one term's notice in writing of their intention to withdraw their child from an Aspect school. If notice received is less than one term, 1 months school fees will be payable in lieu of notice.

#### 3. Safe working environment

Even with Aspect's very active and specialist intervention to support the student, an Aspect school principal may decide that a school is unable to maintain the enrolment of a child in the school if it cannot achieve an acceptably safe working environment for students and staff. Such decisions will be made as a result of procedural fairness considering the steps outlined in Appendix A.

If an issue arises for any other reason, in which the principal believes that the mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation between the parents, guardians or the person responsible and school has broken down, to the extent that it adversely impacts on that relationship, the principal will try and resolve the issue at the earliest indication.

If the principal is unable to resolve the issue and following discussion and agreement with the National Operations Director,- Aspect Schools, the principal may require the parents, guardians or the person responsible to remove the child from the school

#### 4. Non-payment of outstanding school fees

Aspect can make a decision to exit a student for non-payment of outstanding fees as outlined in the policy 08 14 02 Fees Collection policy.

### Guidelines

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) provides educational services for eligible school aged children to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific.

## Legislation

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)  
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)  
Disability Standards for Education Act, 2005 (Commonwealth)  
Education Act 1972 (SA)  
Education and early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA)  
Education Act 1990 (NSW)  
Equal Opportunities Act 1984 (SA)  
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998  
National Standards for Disability Services  
Standard 5: Service Access

## Other Relevant Policies

Complaints & Feedback by Aspect Service Users, Family Members & the Public  
Discipline - Schools  
Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk  
Fees Collection  
Individual Planning and Review  
Positive Behaviour Support  
Privacy, Dignity & Confidentiality  
Prohibited and Restricted Practices  
School Fees  
Transition of students from an Aspect School Working with Families

## School Policies

Policies tabled below cover

- A. Student welfare
- B. Discipline
- C. Reporting complaints and resolving grievances

Parents/care givers may view the full policy by contacting the school office. Extracts of some of the policies can also be found in the parent handbook.

The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment which:

- Minimises risk of harm and ensures students feel secure
- Supports the physical, social, academic and emotional development of students
- Provides student welfare policies and programs that develop a sense of self-worth and foster personal development

Aspect has introduced a new system of its Policy Framework and is currently in a transition phase while policies and procedures are converted to the new system.

Aspect will now have fewer policies which are seen as the overarching statements that set a minimum standard required of Aspect services and staff by both legislative and external standards as well as Aspect's own internal brand.

Procedures and Guidelines will be used internally to provide details of how Aspect processes are completed by the Aspect schools. The procedures or guidelines link the rationale for why the processes are required back to the Aspect policy and legislative requirements.

Work Instructions provide site specific internal instructions for each school based on the Aspect procedure and guidelines.



## A. Student Welfare

To ensure that all aspects of the school's mission for providing for a student's welfare are implemented the following policies and procedures were in place during 2016.

POLICY	CHANGES IN 2016
<b>Child Care and Protection encompassing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation requirements</li> <li>• Definitions</li> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures</li> <li>• Responding to allegations against employees</li> <li>• Investigation processes</li> <li>• Documentation</li> </ul>	Nil
<b>Community Access encompassing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures</li> <li>• Staff requirements</li> <li>• Risk Assessment</li> <li>• Supervision</li> <li>• Documentation</li> </ul>	Nil
<b>Code of Conduct for staff encompassing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work &amp; personal behaviour</li> <li>• Confidentiality &amp; Privacy</li> <li>• Conflict of Interest</li> <li>• Copyright</li> <li>• Acceptance of gifts or benefits</li> <li>• Personal presentation</li> <li>• Public statements</li> <li>• Complaints handling</li> <li>• Legislation</li> <li>• Safety and Duty of Care</li> </ul>	Nil
<b>Aspect's Comprehensive Educational Approach encompassing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the Aspect Comprehensive Approach for Education (ACAE)</li> <li>• The five principles of the ACAE</li> <li>• The Autism Spectrum Disorder Evaluative Education (ASDEE) model</li> <li>• The ACAE continuous improvement self-review framework</li> </ul>	Revised 2016 Retained as a procedure in the new policy framework
<b>Duty of Care &amp; Dignity of Risk</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles</li> <li>• Definitions</li> </ul>	Revised 2016 Retained as a procedure in the new policy framework
<b>Emergency Procedures encompassing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures and Contingency Planning</li> <li>• Legislation</li> </ul>	Nil
<b>Individual Planning and Review encompassing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Structure</li> </ul>	Nil
<b>Incidents encompassing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition</li> <li>• Procedures</li> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Documentation</li> <li>• Investigation Guidelines</li> </ul>	Revised 2016 No substantive changes made
<b>Illness and Infectious or Communicable Diseases encompassing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition</li> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Procedures</li> </ul>	Nil
<b>Missing Persons encompassing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background</li> <li>• Protocol</li> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Documentation</li> </ul>	Nil
<b>Safe Administration of Medication encompassing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition</li> <li>• Procedures</li> <li>• Guidelines</li> <li>• Asthma Plan and Student Asthma Record</li> <li>• Epilepsy Management</li> <li>• Diabetes Management Plan</li> <li>• Anaphylaxis Procedures</li> </ul>	Nil
<b>Safe and Supportive Environment: Schools encompassing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Protection</li> <li>• Support</li> <li>• Conduct</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Support</li> <li>• Complaints</li> <li>• Pastoral Care</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>	Nil



POLICY	CHANGES IN 2016
Sun Smart encompassing • Guidelines • Procedures	Nil
Student Attendance encompassing • Guidelines • Procedures	Nil
Swimming encompassing • Guidelines • Procedures	Nil
Visual Support encompassing • Principles • Guidelines	Nil
WHS Work Health and Safety encompassing • Legislation WH&S Act 2011(NSW, ACT, QLD, NT, SA TAS), OH&S Act 2004 (WA, VIC) • Consultation • Incident & Accident reporting • Induction & Training • Risk Management • Emergency Procedures	Nil
Working with Families encompassing • Guidelines • Process	Nil

#### B. Discipline

POLICY	CHANGES IN 2016
Positive Behaviour Support encompassing • Definition • Assessment • Legislation • Prohibited/ restricted practices • Individual planning and support • Crisis intervention	Revised 2016 Retained as a policy in the new policy framework.
Prohibited and Restricted Practices encompassing • Guidelines • Procedures	Nil
Discipline: Schools • Guidelines • Procedures	Nil

#### C. Policies for Complaints and Grievances Resolution

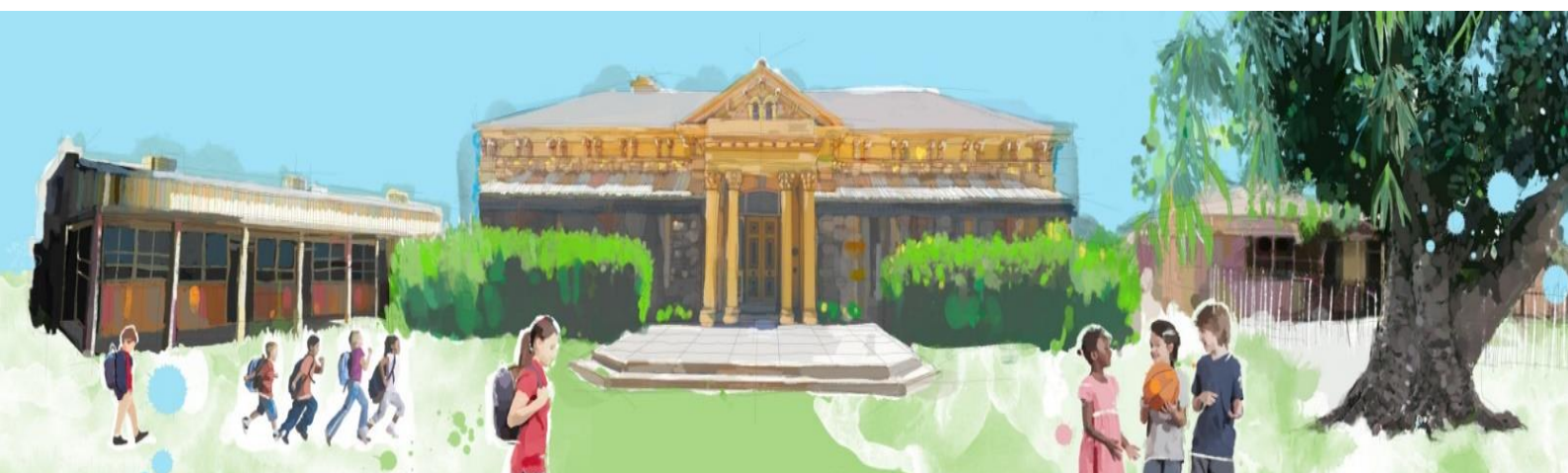
The School's policy for dealing with complaints includes processes for raising and responding to matters of concern identified by parents, students and staff. These processes incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness.

The full text of the School's policy and processes for complaints can be obtained from the administration office.

The policy on 'Complaints by people with ASD and/or their families' and the policy on 'Complaints by Staff (Employees and Volunteers)' remained unchanged in 2016.

## School-determined improvement targets

AREA	PRIORITIES	ACHIEVEMENTS
Teaching and Learning	<p>Develop a school Scope &amp; Sequence to reflect the Australian Curriculum learning areas.</p> <p>Develop and refine programming templates for staff to utilise. Have consistent and appropriate environmental supports displayed and utilised in all classes/spaces at Treetop.</p>	<p>Whole school scope and sequence to be developed as a priority for 2017.</p> <p>Extensive collaboration about programming templates occurred.</p> <p>Environmental supports continually evolving across the school and class programs.</p>
Family Support	<p>Offer and deliver 'Recipe for Success' (or similar) for the school community.</p>	<p>Positive Behaviour Support in Aspect Schools, half day workshop was delivered to families by Dr Tom Tutton and Adam Larkin. Approximately 50% of families attended.</p>
Staff Development	<p>Provide training to develop staff expertise around the ACAE.</p>	<p>Professional Development Days focused on training staff around the ACAE. In class support by executive is ongoing.</p>
WHS Compliance	<p>Maintain diligence and training for staff to ensure Treetop school is a safe work environment.</p> <p>Have a dedicated WHS coordinator to monitor safety measures.</p>	<p>Ongoing commitment to maintain safety for staff and students.</p> <p>Site WHS coordinator was instrumental in monitoring safety measures with support from Aspect WHS Manager.</p>
Student achievement	<p>Focus on student assessment for both autism specific areas of learning (SMART goals) and academic learning areas.</p>	<p>All students received an IP and academic report which was based on assessment during their first semester at Treetop School.</p>
Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorder	<p>Continue meetings with the DECD, CESA and Independent sector to establish satellite programs in Adelaide.</p>	<p>Follow up meetings occurred with regards to the establishment of satellite classes.</p>



## Respect and responsibility

Aspect Treetop School wants all students to recognise that they are valued and an integral part of the school community, with parents and staff providing care and support that engender self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility. There is much scope to develop talents through each student's Individual Education Plan and to learn through experiences.

The structure of the school's satellite program provides opportunities for students to participate in classes and cultural activities with host school students, which allow them to get to know each other. The satellite program has assisted in promoting respect for the individual and the rights of others.

Aspect Values have been reviewed with Aspect Board of Directors and Management Team in collaboration with our Stakeholders. Aspect value of "We are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible" mirror the nine recommended values (National Framework for Values in Education).

Aspect has a commitment to ensuring all team members know and embrace our core values to ensure they are reflected in interactions and relationships with stakeholders. Aspect recognises that in order to achieve this it is important to share information with staff and the community so that Aspect is known not only for the work that we do but also for the values we uphold.

*We value the understanding,  
caring nature and ongoing support.*



## Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

During 2016 Aspect schools surveyed families using the Net Promoter Score survey. Aspect Treetop School received a response rate of 43% from families and a Net Promoter Score of 80. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive with families stating that they appreciated the autism-specific education program, the staff's acknowledgment of their child's individuality and the collaborative approach between staff, students and families.

*There is a genuine sense of an open,  
honest, collaborative approach to solving  
problems and finding effective  
strategies*

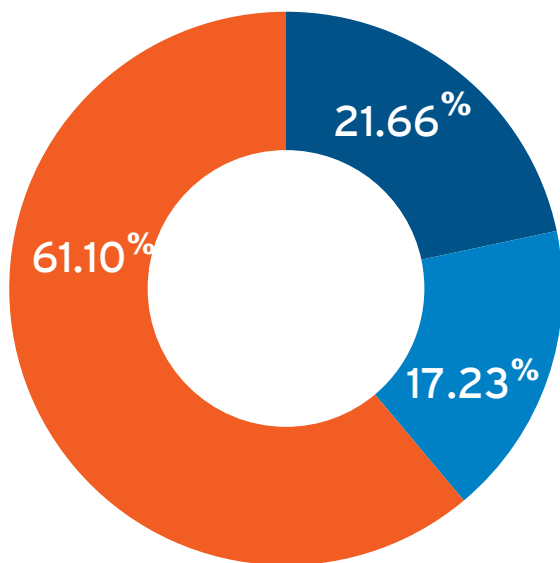
*I like that the teachers respect my child's  
individuality and work to improve his social  
skills in a positive way.*



# Financial Information

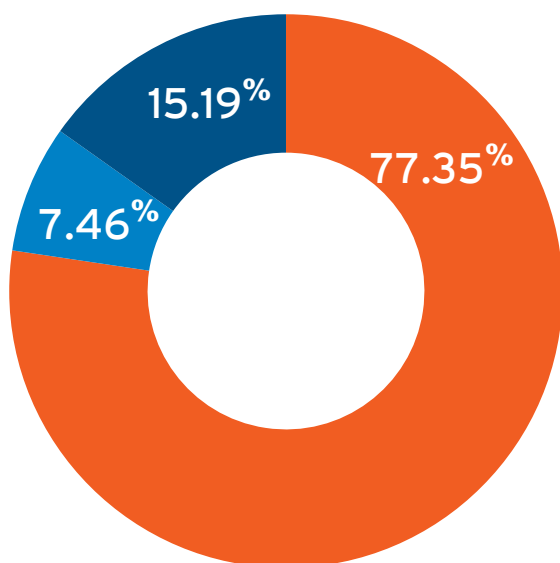
## Aspect Treetop School

### Recurrent/capital income 2016



- Fees and private income – 21.66%
- State Government recurrent grants – 17.23%
- Federal Government recurrent grants – 61.10%
- Government capital grant - 0%  
(No government capital grant was received in 2016)

### Recurrent/capital expenditure 2016



- Salaries, allowances and related expenses – 15.19%
- Non-Salary Expenses – 7.46%
- Capital expenditure – 77.35%



## **Aspect Treetop School**

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