

Aspect Vern Barnett 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

In 2016 Aspect Vern Barnett School provided an autism specific education for students ranging in age from 4 years to 17 years. The primary approach of the school is to focus on students' strengths and special interests in an environment of positive behaviour support. The school comprises a main campus site located at Forestville and nine satellite classes hosted in mainstream schools at Sacred Heart Catholic School (Mona Vale), Corpus Christi Catholic School (St Ives), Our Lady of Good Counsel (Forestville), St Kevin's Catholic School (Eastwood) and Lane Cove Public School. A detailed overview of our educational approach ACAE (Aspect Comprehensive Approach for Education) can be found on the Aspect website www.autismspectrum.org.au

In addition to our highly competent teachers, who are experienced in curriculum delivery, we had teacher aides allocated to each class and a school learning support team. The learning support team supported teachers, families and students using a consultative model. The team consisted of a psychologist, occupational therapist and speech therapist providing in class support for students and teachers.

Aspect Vern Barnett School also provided Educational Outreach services to support students on the autism spectrum in other school settings across northern Sydney and country NSW. Schools were supported with access to teacher expertise in providing input and support for students on the spectrum to engage positively in their school and experience success in their learning.

In 2016 the school was successful in gaining funding support from the Association of Independent Schools NSW for an Embedding Excellence grant. The school was supported by a consultant from the AIS, as well as finances to help devise a strategic plan for school improvement. The community completed surveys and engaged in professional learning in order to formulate three focus areas for improvement; school climate, active learning and shared leadership. Embedding Excellence support will be continued in 2017.

Fiona Dignan
Principal





Message from the P&F

The mission of the Aspect Vern Barnett P&F is to raise funds and bring the school community together. For a number of years now the school has had a very dedicated and active P&F committee, 2016 was no exception.

Proceeds raised during 2016 contributed towards additional playground equipment, stenciling across the various playgrounds of games and activities, sports equipment, a storage container to house and protect all sports equipment, readers and grants to all satellite classes for resources, to name a few.

Fundraising events over the course of the year were; Cake Stalls, Rotary Spring Fair, Chocolate Drive, Raffles, Entertainment Book and Car Boot Carnival. These events are a great opportunity for families to socialise and get to know each other.

The P&F provided a celebratory cake for all students that graduated at the end of the year as well as an end of year lunch for all of the hard working teachers & staff at the school. It was a great afternoon and gave everyone an excuse to break and sit together while the classrooms were being prepared for the new 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 NSW Board of Studies mainstream curriculum - the Key Learning Areas (KLAs). 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

For NAPLAN results, please refer to My School website www.myschool.edu.au

Record of School Achievement

The formal Record of School Achievement credential was awarded to one student.

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 (AOI-NOOSR) guidelines.

Professional learning

Professional learning activities included:

| Description | Number of Teachers Participating |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <i>Child protection</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>Digital Art All</i> | |
| <i>Aspect Comprehensive Approach to Education</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>iPad Model Classroom</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>Disability Legislation</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>Working in Teams</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>NCI refresher training</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>Teaching the English Curriculum</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>Structured Teaching</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>Music Programming</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>What is ABA? Is it Sensory or Behaviour?</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>Literacy Programming</i> | <i>All</i> |

| | |
|--|------------|
| <i>AAC Devices</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>Transition</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>Primary Connections</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>Asthma Training</i> | <i>All</i> |
| <i>Shared Purpose, Different Journeys - Focusing on Impact - The AISNSW Conference</i> | <i>3</i> |
| <i>Siblings</i> | <i>1</i> |
| <i>Lesson Observation and Feedback</i> | <i>1</i> |
| <i>Key Word Signing</i> | <i>3</i> |
| <i>LAMP</i> | <i>3</i> |
| <i>Sexuality Education For Life</i> | <i>6</i> |
| <i>Key Word Sign Workshop</i> | <i>2</i> |
| <i>Jill Eggleton - Reading and Literacy Workshop</i> | <i>4</i> |
| <i>Music Seminar - St Lucy's Wahroonga</i> | <i>2</i> |
| <i>iPad Palooza</i> | <i>1</i> |
| <i>Smarter Assessment</i> | <i>2</i> |
| <i>Kids OT - Zones of Regulation</i> | <i>3</i> |
| <i>Kids OT - Information Processing and Working Memory 2</i> | |
| <i>Kids OT - Is it Sensory or Behaviour?</i> | <i>2</i> |
| <i>Kids OT - Prompting Focus and Attention</i> | <i>2</i> |
| <i>How Accreditation Works</i> | <i>2</i> |

Composition of teaching staff

Composition of Aspect Vern Barnett School staff is documented on the My School website 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.

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 write or fax the NSW Department of Education officer with home school liaison

responsibilities with the student's name, age and last known address.

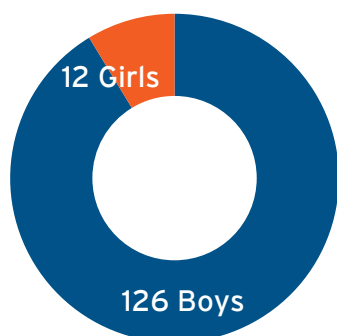
Student retention rates

As with all of Aspect's schools, Aspect Vern Barnett 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, 37 students transitioned from our school. 15 students transitioned to mainstream schools, 8 to support classes and 11 to special school settings. 3 students transitioned to overseas school placements.

Enrolment

In 2016 Aspect Vern Barnett School had an average enrolment of 138 students, 12 girls and 126 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 enrol their child.

This meeting outlines the school program and application process

Application for enrolment form 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.

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 O8 14 O2 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.

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

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

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

| POLICY | CHANGES IN 2016 |
|--|-----------------|
| Safe and Supportive Environment: Schools encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection • Support • Conduct • Security • Support • Complaints • Pastoral Care • Communication | Nil |
| Sun Smart encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Procedures | Nil |
| Student Attendance encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Procedures | Nil |
| Swimming encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Procedures | Nil |
| Visual Support encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles • Guidelines | Nil |
| WHS Work Health and Safety encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation WH&S Act 2011(NSW, ACT, QLD, NT, SA TAS), OH&S Act 2004 (WA, VIC) • Consultation • Induction & Training • Emergency Procedures • Incident & Accident reporting • Risk Management | Nil |
| Working with Families encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Process | Nil |

B. Discipline

| POLICY | CHANGES IN 2016 |
|--|---|
| Positive Behaviour Support encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Legislation • Individual planning and support • Assessment • Prohibited/ restricted practices • Crisis intervention | Revised 2016 Retained as a policy in the new policy framework. |
| Prohibited and Restricted Practices encompassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines • Procedures | Nil |
| Discipline: Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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.

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

School-determined improvement targets

| AREA | PRIORITIES | ACHIEVEMENTS |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Teaching and Learning | Class Programs | Review of teaching programs to ensure continual compliance with BOSTES and to reflect the ACAE. |
| | Scope & Sequence | Review of Scope and Sequence to ensure alignment with implementation of new syllabus documents. |
| Family Support | Parent Network Meetings | Meetings were held twice a term with parents on a variety of topics delivered by the teaching team, as well as the therapy specialists in speech, occupational therapy and psychology. |
| Staff Development | Structured Teaching and Literacy | Teaching staff received professional learning in structured teaching and literacy. Improved practice has been seen in the classroom. |
| WHS Compliance | RiskMan | Training of leadership team in the use of RiskMan to record incidents and WHS compliance. Development of a plan for implementation across the school in 2017. |
| Continuous Improvement | Embedding Excellence (AIS) | Staff training and development of school wide focus areas for school improvement based on community survey. |
| Student Achievement | IP Goal Acquisition | Through the IP process students were supported to achieve their personal goals and progress recorded and reported to parents via individual meetings and reports at the end of the year. |
| Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorder | Increase Satellite Classes | Formation of a parent advocacy group focused on sourcing spaces that would be suitable for satellite classes. Meetings held with the Department of Education and Broken Bay Catholic Schools Office. |
| | Education Outreach | The school completed individualised outreach visits for students across the north of Sydney and in country areas across NSW. |



Respect and responsibility

Aspect Vern Barnett 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 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.

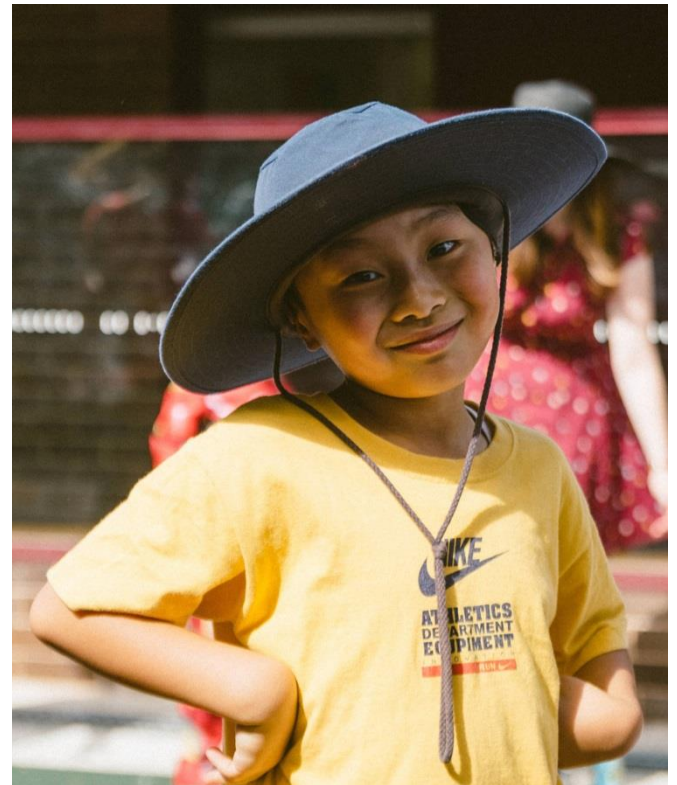
Aspect has been such an amazing support for our family and it has been so encouraging to see improvement in our son.

*I value the diversity of the services that Aspect offers/provides.
I value the opportunity to participate in ongoing learning and support experiences provided by Aspect and the school.*

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

During 2016 Aspect schools surveyed families using the Net Promoter Score survey. Aspect Vern Barnett School received a Net Promoter Score of 60. The positive feedback that parents gave included recognition of the tireless work that teachers do on a daily basis, as well as the care and encouragement shown towards each of the students by staff.

2016 saw the start of the two year Embedding Excellence project for Vern Barnett School. The community was surveyed to decide on the areas of focus to ensure ongoing school improvement. The pre surveys have informed the action plan for 2016 & 2017. The three focus areas decided on based on the data were; shared leadership, school climate and active learning.

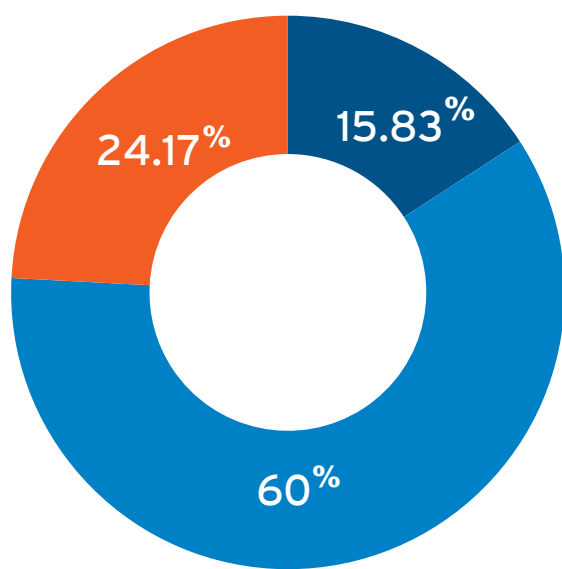


The teachers put in tireless efforts to help our children and are to be commended..

Financial Information

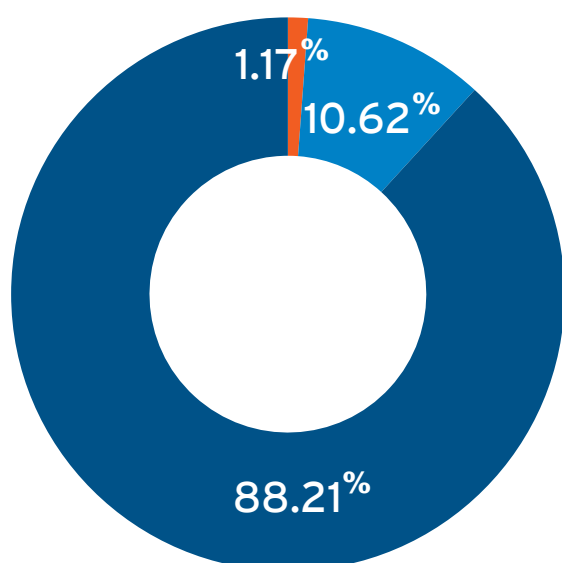
Aspect Vern Barnett School

Recurrent/capital income 2016



- Fees and private income – 15.83%
- State Government recurrent grants – 60.00%
- Federal Government recurrent grants – 24.17%
- Government capital grant - 0%
(No government capital grant was received in 2016)

Recurrent/capital expenditure 2016



- Salaries, allowances and related expenses – 88.21%
- Non-Salary Expenses – 10.62%
- Capital expenditure – 1.17%



Aspect Vern Barnett School

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