

Annual School Report

Aspect South Coast School

2023



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our vision

The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum.

our values

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

our mission

We work with people of all ages on the autism spectrum, delivering evidence-informed solutions that are person-centred, family focused and customer driven.

our purpose a different brilliant®

Understanding, engaging and celebrating the strengths, interests and aspirations of people on the autism spectrum.

our work

We focus on the strengths and interests of people on the autism spectrum

We work in partnership with people on the spectrum, their families and their communities

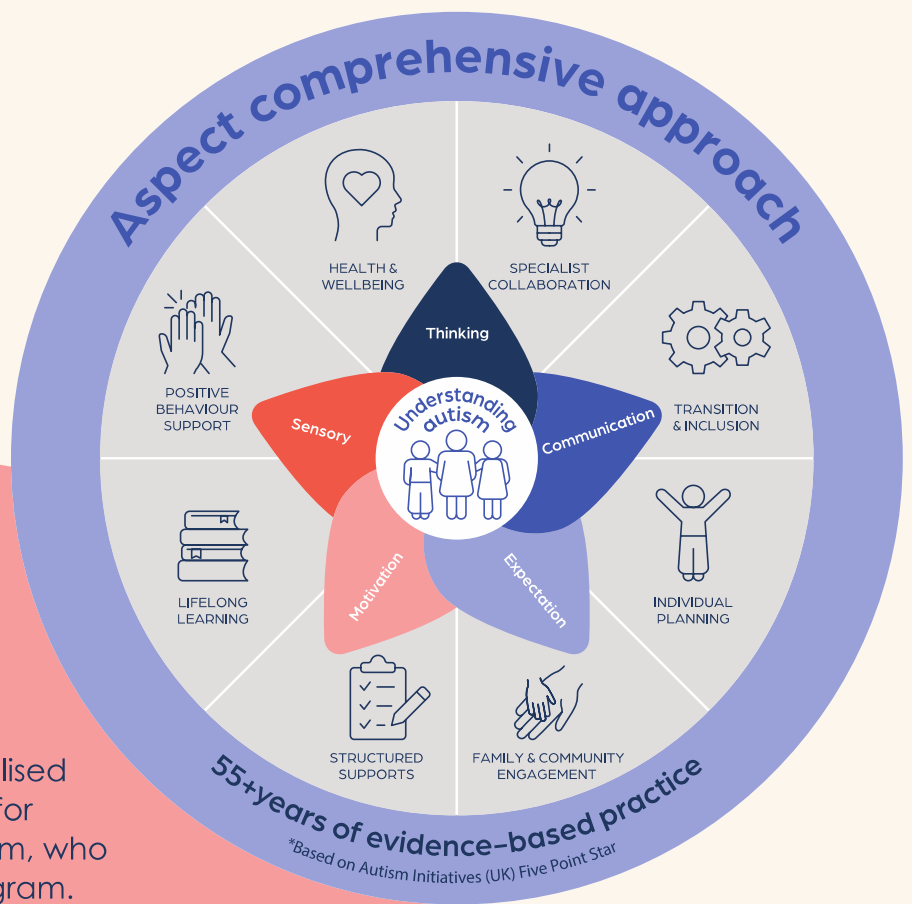
We work to understand people on the spectrum from their perspective

Our approach is autism-specific

Our research focuses on best practice

We expect positive change and progress

Together we can achieve positive outcomes.



Aspect schools provide specialised evidence-informed programs for children on the autism spectrum, 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. This is achieved through the application of the Aspect Comprehensive Approach. At the centre of the approach is the Autism Initiatives' (UK) Five Point Star to support autism-specific person-centred planning and respectful and positive relationships between the educator and student. It also focuses on the following elements: Individual Planning; Family & Community Engagement; Learning & Participation; Positive Behaviour Support; Structured Supports; Transition & Inclusion; Specialist Collaboration; and Health & Wellbeing.

Message from the principal

I would like to acknowledge the Wodi Wodi people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which our campuses are located.

Aspect South Coast School currently caters for 111 students between the ages of 4 and 17 years of age. Enrolments are received from the Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and the Shoalhaven local government areas.

Our enrolment is comprised of 95 boys and 16 girls. The school operates from a main site at Corrimal which consists of an administration office and seven lower primary classes. The school also has satellite classes located within Barrack Heights Public School, St Pius X Catholic Primary School Unanderra, St Paul's Catholic Primary School Albion Park, and the University of Wollongong (UoW) where we have a primary and secondary campus.

Our school has undergone renovations to the Corrimal site with improved facilities including a multi-purpose hall, sensory room and library which are now operational.

The Cedars Christian College campus closed at the end of 2023 due to the host school requiring additional space. We opened a secondary unit at the UoW campus to allow our high school students to have an opportunity to experience an adult education environment whilst we continue to search for another host school site for this cohort.

We also opened an Infants campus at the UoW campus in 2023 supporting 12 students.

Aspect South Coast School Improvement Plan for 2023 focussed on leadership development, quality teaching and learning in all classrooms using data as evidence of learning. We also looked at the social and emotional learning programs we offer at the school including Zones of Regulation. We worked with our behaviour plans across the year to ensure we had positive strategies and supports in place for students.

South Coast School continue to use the Five Point Star documents in each of our classrooms to better understand the needs of our students. We work with the students where possible to develop these profiles and update them as needs change. Students in our secondary classes choose how they would like this document displayed.

The Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA) continues to drive the work we do in our school. We have completed some professional learning with staff in mapping the ACA to our Aspect Learning Improvement Collaborative (ALIC) work. We achieved this by using the 14 Parameters of the Clarity book as our reference.

Our school education programs have focused on data collection to show improvement in student outcomes. We are furthering our work in this area to be able to further improve on the quality of our teacher learning we deliver at South Coast School.



Rowena Perritt
Principal

Student outcomes

Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

Each student has an individual profile that outlines their strengths and interests as well as information about how to provide effective support. The profile includes areas for development, particularly related to autism-specific areas of learning: social communication, social interaction, behaviours and sensory processing which are integrated into the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) mainstream curriculum - the Key Learning Areas (KLAs). The school has a multi-disciplinary team approach which sees teachers, support staff and therapists 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

Literacy and numeracy assessments were conducted to meet the learning needs of autistic students. They highlighted individual student learning strengths and challenges that ensured accurate program construction and adaptation. Learning progress was also monitored using assessments. Our assessment schedule included a broad range of assessments to cater for a diverse range of ages and abilities. Assessments were selected based on the learning needs of the individual student. A few of these were: the PAT Reading and Maths Adaptive tests, selected Macquarie University – Motif assessments, SEAPART and SPAT-R, Blanks level questions, SENA and Mary Brooksbank (for pre-early stage one students). The YARC Passage Reading assessment was also used by the literacy support teacher to further assess reading accuracy, fluency and comprehension.

Teachers continue to receive external training in implementing and interpreting the PAT Adaptive assessments. They also received individual training and support with the Motif and SEAPART/SPAT-R assessments that tested phonic knowledge and phonological awareness respectively.

Specific assessments for pre-early stage one students were researched, written, and conducted in the teaching and learning context during the year. These included: phoneme-grapheme, fine motor, early language, and early phonological awareness assessments. Programs were created and taught based on the skills identified.

South Coast Schools assessed all students on Interactions data using the Learning Progressions and added this to our data dashboard. Students were then reassessed in Term 3 to gauge improvement and identify areas for further work.

All assessments were aligned with the new NSW K-2 English and Mathematics syllabus outcomes.

Senior secondary outcomes

Aspect South Coast School awarded the RoSA credential to one Year 11 student who exited the school to take up a Work Education Program with an external provider.

The reporting of the HSC results is not applicable in 2023.

Record of School Achievement

1

Teacher professional learning, accreditation, qualifications and workforce composition

The following professional learning activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2023:

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA): Individual Planning	All
Aspect Learning Improvement Collaborative: introduction to Dr Lyn Sharratt's 14 Parameters	All
Aspect Professional Code of Conduct – face to face workshop and online module.	All
Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) Training	All
Child Protection – responsibilities related to child protection based on state/territory legislation, federal legislation and Aspect policy and procedures	All
Disability Standards for Education – overview of the Disability Standards for Education (2005) and the legal obligations of all education providers	All
CPI Safety Intervention – trauma informed and person-centred training to prevent, de-escalate, and safely respond to crisis situations.	All
Manual Handling	All
Risk Assessment and Incident Report Training	All
Staff and Student Wellbeing Training Day	All
Supporting people on the autism spectrum using the 5 Point Star	All
NESA Updated Syllabus Training (Numeracy)	41
NESA Updated Syllabus Training (Literacy)	41
Curriculum and data training	40
CPR training – skills to provide Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	30
First Aid – knowledge and skills to help an ill or injured person until emergency help arrives	30
Language Acquisition and Motor Planning (LAMP) Training	28
Organisational Induction Training	12
Asthma First Aid for School Staff	8
ASCIA Anaphylaxis e-Training or e-Training refresher	7
CLARITY: What matters most in learning, teaching, and leading. Presented by Dr Lyn Sharratt	7
HLTAID011 Provide First Aid	1

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	No. of teachers
Conditional	0
Provisional	1
Proficient Teacher	40
Highly Accomplished Teacher or Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditations)	0
Total number of teachers	41

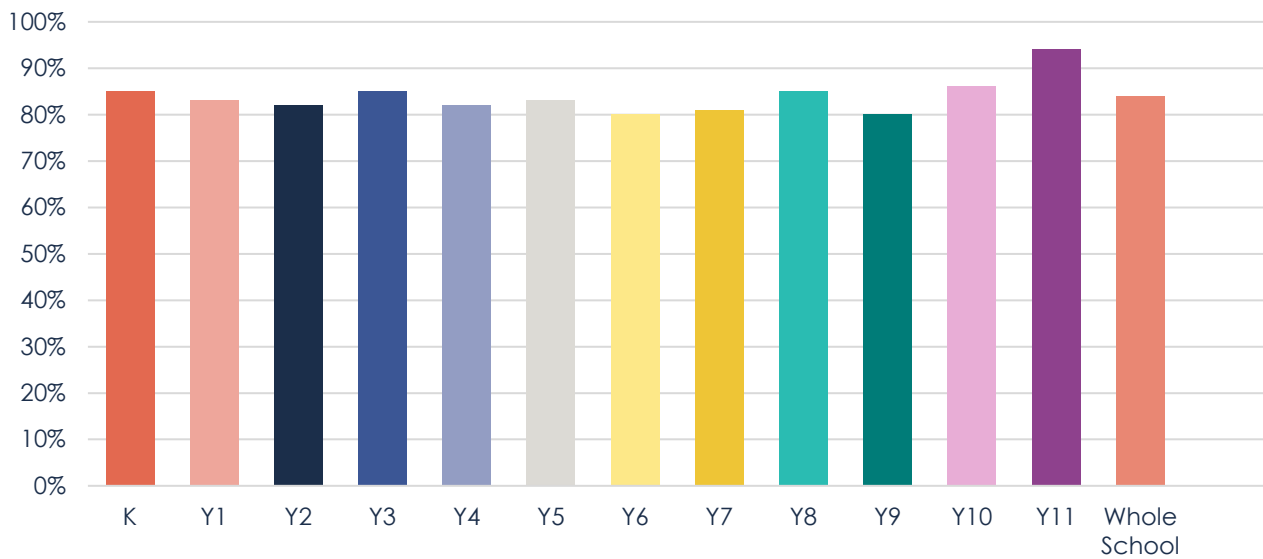
Teacher qualifications

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.

Workforce composition

Composition of Aspect South Coast School staff is documented on the My School website www.myschool.edu.au

Student attendance, retention rates and post-school destinations in secondary schools



Student attendance rates

Kinder	85%	Year 7	81%
Year 1	83%	Year 8	85%
Year 2	82%	Year 9	80%
Year 3	85%	Year 10	86%
Year 4	82%	Year 11	94%
Year 5	83%	Whole School	84%
Year 6	80%		

Management of non-attendance

Aspect Education has a work instruction to ensure compliance of the Aspect schools with school attendance requirements for compulsory school-aged students as outlined by the NSW Education St.

Unexplained absence will be followed up by the school with the parent/guardian. Repeated unexplained absence or absence of concern may need to be reported to Family and Community Services.

Where unsatisfactory attendance is identified, a student attendance improvement plan is formulated in collaboration with the student and their parent/guardian. The plan is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Aspect South Coast School met once a month to review the attendance of each student and identify any areas of concern to follow up with families to see how we can assist and support the family to improve student attendance.

Post-school destinations

No students from the 2021 Year 10 cohort completed Year 12 in 2023. The retention rates over the past two years have been declining. Based on the information provided to the school when students leave it appears that many of the students who leave the school at the end of Year 10 or during Year 11 do so because of family circumstances or to pursue employment or vocational training. One student left South Coast School in Year 11 to pursue a Vocational Training program.

Enrolment policy

Aspect provides autism-specific educational services for eligible school-aged children on the autism spectrum, to prepare them for transition to environments that are not autism specific.

Aspect recognises that children on the autism spectrum have the right to access and equity of services regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, religion or language.

An application is made for an Aspect school rather than a specific class. Our school's professional staff decide in consultation with the family which class is best suited to the educational needs of the student. Each school is responsible for managing its own application, intake and waiting lists process, which is managed by the school principal.

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

Entry criteria

Aspect schools are funded in part by the Commonwealth and state governments, which have specific criteria for placement. To be eligible for placement in one of Aspect's schools, prospective students must satisfy the following criteria:

Citizenship and visa status – a child must:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia or holds an eligible visa (refer to guide to checking citizenship and visa status for enrolment).
- be aged between 4 and 17 years.

Diagnosis – a child must:

- in both NSW and South Australia, have a current diagnosis which is not more than twelve (12) months old as being on the autism spectrum from a specialist medical practitioner, child psychiatrist or clinical psychologist with the necessary training and experience to be able to undertake a diagnostic assessment;
- in South Australia, a second report from a psychologist or speech pathologist that confirms the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder that is not more than two (2) years old; and
- in both NSW and South Australia, have a current standardised cognitive or developmental assessment (e.g. IQ testing, Griffiths, WISC-IV, WPPSI-111, Stanford Binet V) which is not more than two (2) years old.

Registration to school waitlist

Expression of interest in Aspect schools may be made in the following ways:

- direct enquiry to the Aspect school by telephone or email;
- telephone or email to Aspect Customer Service, who will direct the enquiry to the school;
- general enquiry via the Contact Us page on the Aspect website, which will be directed to the school.

The registration form can be obtained from the following processes:

- families who are interested in enrolling their child to an Aspect school are asked to attend a School Information Session. Aspect principals or their delegate are responsible for organising a school information session once per school term, in line with the School Information Session work instruction, for prospective parents or guardians who would like to enrol their child. This information session outlines the Aspect education program and the registration and enrolment process. The school registration form is obtained after attending this session.
- families who are unable to attend a School Information Session can obtain a registration form directly from an Aspect school. A School Enrolment Committee representative will provide them with information about the Aspect education program and the registration and enrolment process, before sending them the registration form.

A non-refundable processing fee is required for each application submitted.

Application to more than one Aspect School

When a family wants to place their child on the waitlist of more than one Aspect school, they first apply to their preferred Aspect school and indicate which other Aspect schools they will consider enrolment. The preferred Aspect school is responsible for processing the application, inform the other Aspect school/s to place the student on their school's active waitlist and share the application documents.

Aspect School Enrolment Committee

School principals are responsible for convening the Aspect School Enrolment Committee (comprised of school principal, psychologist and selected school coordinators) which meets once per school term, following the information session, to review registrations received. This committee determines if a child is eligible for placement in an Aspect school.

Eligible/Not Eligible for service

Citizenship and age criteria

If the citizenship or age criteria is not met, a school representative will inform the parents or guardians that their child is not eligible for enrolment due to citizenship or age criteria not being met. If the parents or guardians are not satisfied with the result, they can make a complaint to Aspect (refer to Aspect's Complaints Management procedure).

Diagnosis criteria

If the child has been deemed eligible by the Aspect School Enrolment Committee, the principal will inform the parents or guardians that, based on the diagnostic information provided, their child has been deemed eligible for the program (Letter – Confirmation of diagnosis) and their child's name has been placed on the school waitlist.

The principal is responsible for referring the application to the Aspect Eligibility Committee if the diagnosis needs clarification. Parents/Carers will be informed, in writing (Letter – Application sent to full eligibility committee), that their case has been sent to the Committee for review.

If further information is required by the Committee, the principal is responsible for writing to the parents requesting updated information (Letter – Request for updated Psychological reports).

Aspect Eligibility Committee

The National Director, Aspect Education is responsible for:

- convening the Aspect Eligibility Committee once per school term to review any registrations that require clarification, and
- 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 (Letter – Confirmation of diagnosis) that based on the diagnostic information provided their child has been deemed eligible for the program or not and, if confirmed, the child's name is placed on the school's waitlist.

Vacancy Management

If a vacancy arises, students on the waitlist who can potentially fill the vacancy will be considered. The principal or delegate interviews families whose child might fill the vacancy regarding accommodations/adjustments for their child following the interview pro forma.

If a student being considered for enrolment is not an Australian citizen, the principal or their delegate must check that the visa is still valid and eligible for enrolment.

Following completion of the interview, the principal, or their delegate will complete the Risk Management Plan pro forma, to assist with decision making.

Following the interview process, the school will inform the family if a child has been offered a placement (Letter – Enrolment Contract/Acceptance of Offer) or (Letter – Placement to Satellite Class) or will be retained on the school's waitlist.

Principals are responsible for forwarding parents the relevant enrolment package and liaising with them throughout the process.

Enrolment Package

When a family is offered a placement, in addition to the enrolment contract, they will be sent documents based on the enrolment acceptance checklist.

A family can decline an enrolment offer and inform Aspect school if they want to be placed in the school's active waitlist.

To secure enrolment, the family must pay a non-refundable enrolment fee as published in the Aspect School fees schedule (NSW or SA).

When a family informs the Aspect school of their decision to withdraw their child from enrolment before commencing, they must also inform the Aspect school if they wish to be placed in the school's active waitlist

Other school policies

Summary of policy

Changes in 2023

Access to full text

Student welfare

The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of students through the following policies:

Customer Experience and Service Innovation Policy – defines the way Aspect works in collaboration with students and families to achieve their goals.

Strategy and Risk Management – identifies risks and defines criteria for the assessment of consequence of those risks

Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk - ensures that staff understand and recognise the rights of the people we support to make informed choices and take calculated risks. Aspect facilitates each student's meaningful choice and control to maximise their independence; and minimises the risk to the individual or others wherever possible.

Safeguarding the People We Support - Aspect is committed to appropriately responding to and preventing incidents of abuse, injury, neglect and exploitation of the people we support, in both participation with Aspect, and as a partner of the broader community

Strategy and Risk Management was reviewed & updated in 2023.

Safeguarding the People we Support was reviewed and updated in 2023 to update language and match legislation.

The following policies can be accessed from Aspect's website www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies

Customer

Strategy and Risk Management

Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk

Safeguarding the People we support

Pastoral Care and Bullying Prevention in Aspect Schools

The Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA), including the use of the Five Point Star, drives aspect's guiding principles for pastoral care.

Aspect is required and seeks to exercise due diligence in all of its duty of care responsibilities towards students, staff and the school community. Leaders of the school endorse activities and plan for the safety and maintenance of good mental and physical health and well-being of the students, staff and parents involved. Schools seek to accommodate and make provision for particular needs of individuals who require special arrangements to secure safety and avoid discomfort or threat to their health and wellbeing.

Bullying or harassment is not tolerated in any form. All members of our community are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment which promotes personal growth and fosters positive self-esteem for all. Aspect Schools aim to maintain a setting in which everyone feels valued and respected and where individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted and encourages the reporting of complaints and feedback.

Nil aside from changes listed above.

The full text of the Pastoral Care and Bullying Prevention in Aspect Schools procedure can be accessed by request from the school principal.

The following related policies can be accessed from Aspect's website www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies

Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA)

Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk

Embracing Diversity

Feedback, Complaints and Incidents

Safeguarding the People We Support

Discipline

Aspect adopts a positive behaviour support (PBS) approach when working with children on the autism spectrum ranging from strategies for all students through to more intensive strategies for students who may exhibit more challenging behaviours as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Support policy.

Aspect follows a PBS approach but when behaviours occur that put the safety of any stakeholder at risk, the school will be required to implement appropriate procedures to safeguard all stakeholders' safety. All staff have responsibilities in relation to implementing discipline in Aspect Schools.

Nil

The full text of the Discipline in Schools work instruction can be accessed by request from the school principal.

The Positive Behaviour Support policy (PBS) can be accessed from Aspect's website

www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies

Complaints and grievances resolution

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) values complaints about the quality of its service and communications to support the continuous improvement of services and management.

Aspect's complaints management process provides a transparent framework for promptly and sensitively addressing and resolving complaints and disputes that may arise from complaints having regard to procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy.

Nil

The full text of the Complaints Management Process can be accessed by request from Aspect's website

www.aspect.org.au/feedback-and-complaints

The Feedback and Complaints brochure can be downloaded from our website

www.aspect.org.au/uploads/documents/Governance/Aspect-Feedback-and-Complaints-Brochure.pdf

The Feedback, Complaints and Incidents policy can be accessed on Aspect's website

www.aspect.org.au/about-aspect/policies

School determined priority areas for improvement

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	To increase student academic achievement levels by training staff to use data to inform student outcomes by completing assessments in Literacy and Numeracy by the end of Term 2.	Professional Learning has commenced for all staff. Data has been collected in Term 3.
	Teachers will use assessment data to track and monitor student progress. All students will be assessed using Precursor checklists or Learning Progressions in 3 areas of communication intentions to use as a baseline measure for our data dashboard by the end of Term 1.	Completed for all students in 2023.
Family Engagement	Zoom training sessions offered to families four times per year on topics of interest.	Four sessions completed and good parent attendance recorded.
	Coffee mornings held twice in 2023 with Social Worker and LST offsite.	Good attendance and further requests made for discussion topics.
	P&F establishment underway with EOI sent out to families.	Limited response so far. Further work required.
	Family Fun Day at Illawarra Live Steamers.	Eight families and friends attended this day in 2023.
Staff development	Staff are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.	All staff attended Child Protection Training and teachers attended PL on Positive Behaviour Support Plan development.
	To equip staff with the knowledge, skills and training to keep themselves and students safe. This is achieved by using the Behaviour Support Plan (orange form) to identify triggers and management strategies to assist students to regulate.	Training delivered to all teachers in July 2023.
	To increase confidence and knowledge of trauma informed practice so that 80% of staff will score themselves 3 or higher using a Likert scale by the end of 2023.	Berry Street Training delivered at South Coast School in August 2023.
Facilities and Resources	To upgrade the Corimal site and ensure that it completed and open for student occupation by April 2023.	Renovations completed in July 2023. The Library was ready for use with all systems in place for effective teaching and learning to occur.
	To open new classes by April 2023 at the University of Wollongong (UoW).	UoW campus opened in July 2023 for the Primary campus. The secondary campus will open in 2024.
	By September 2023 meet with CEDoW to further discussions around the establishment of a secondary satellite unit in a Catholic Secondary campus.	Initial discussions have taken place.
Student achievement	Interactions Data collected using the Learning Progressions.	Completed for 2023. Data collected twice throughout the year. 28.4% of students showed growth in this area for the 2023 school year.
	Data was collected on Phonemic Knowledge to develop our data walls and look at student improvement across the year.	Data walls established in each campus at South Coast School to monitor student achievements and outcomes.

Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

Aspect South Coast School wants all students to recognise that they are a valued part of the school community, with parents and staff providing care and support that promotes self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility.

Students have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities such as Harmony Day, National Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week. Aspect South Coast School hosts a walkathon to celebrate Autism Awareness. The day is a fun day shared with families and the community to ensure our students are celebrated in a way that showcases their strengths and interests. As well as the walkathon we have various activities for the students to participate in. We also host a Train Day at Illawarra Live Steamers to offer a family outing opportunity in a safe environment.

Aspect's Purpose of "understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests & aspirations of people on the autism spectrum" and Aspect's Value of "we are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible" mirror the nine recommended values of the 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.

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

The Aspect South Coast School welcome staff, student and parent opinions, which highlight the positive aspects of the school and identifies any areas for improvement. Feedback is collected in a variety of forums including student enrolment and exit surveys, Net Promoter Scores, parent testimonials along with family engagement in school events.

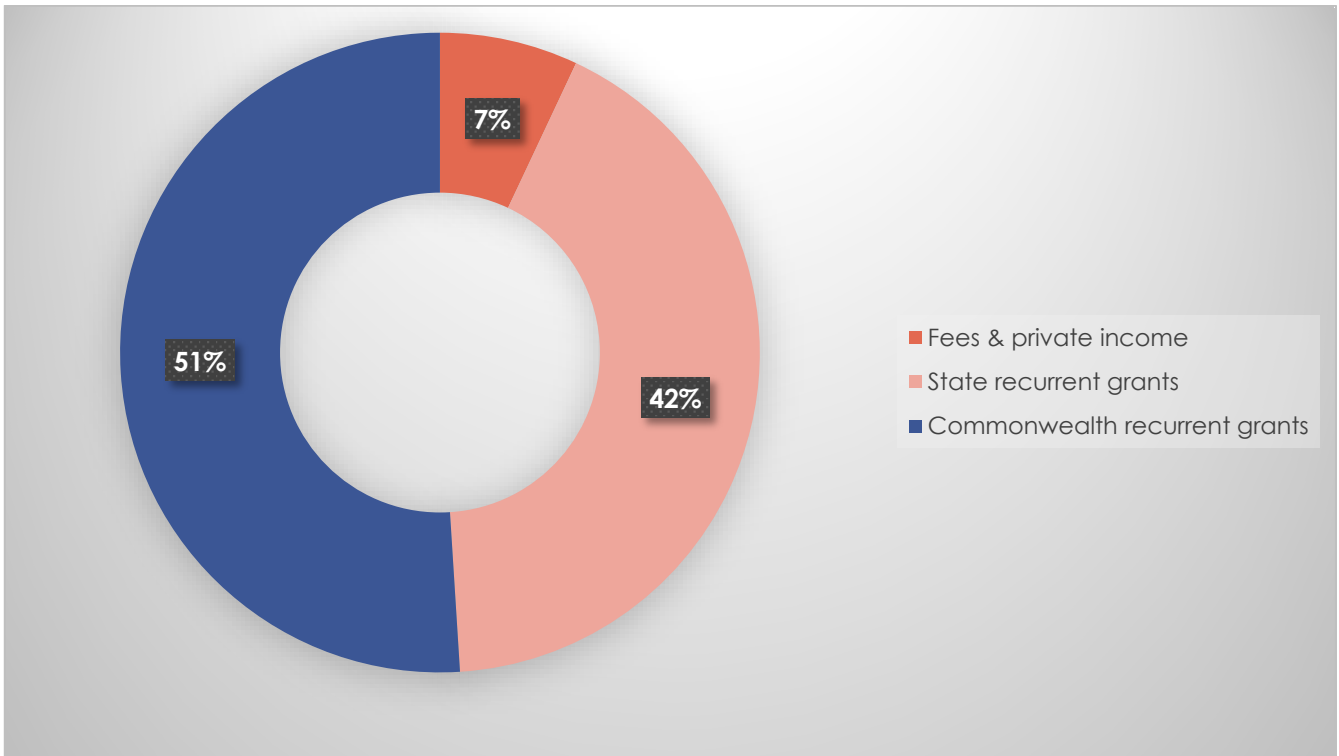
Parents and staff were consulted regarding our reporting system on student outcomes. Some parents and staff would like to see more focus on the achievements for students that have an autism focus and how this has impacted the student's learning. This also links to how our students access the curriculum so showing how students make progress in these other areas is very important to staff and families. This information was shared with the Education Executive to look at for future reports.

Our Employee Engagement surveys helped us to look at Capital priorities for our school. Whilst some of our sites have had renovations completed two campuses require an investment to improve the facilities thus improving staff and student wellbeing. This has been included as a priority goal for our school in the development of our School Improvement Plan for 2024.

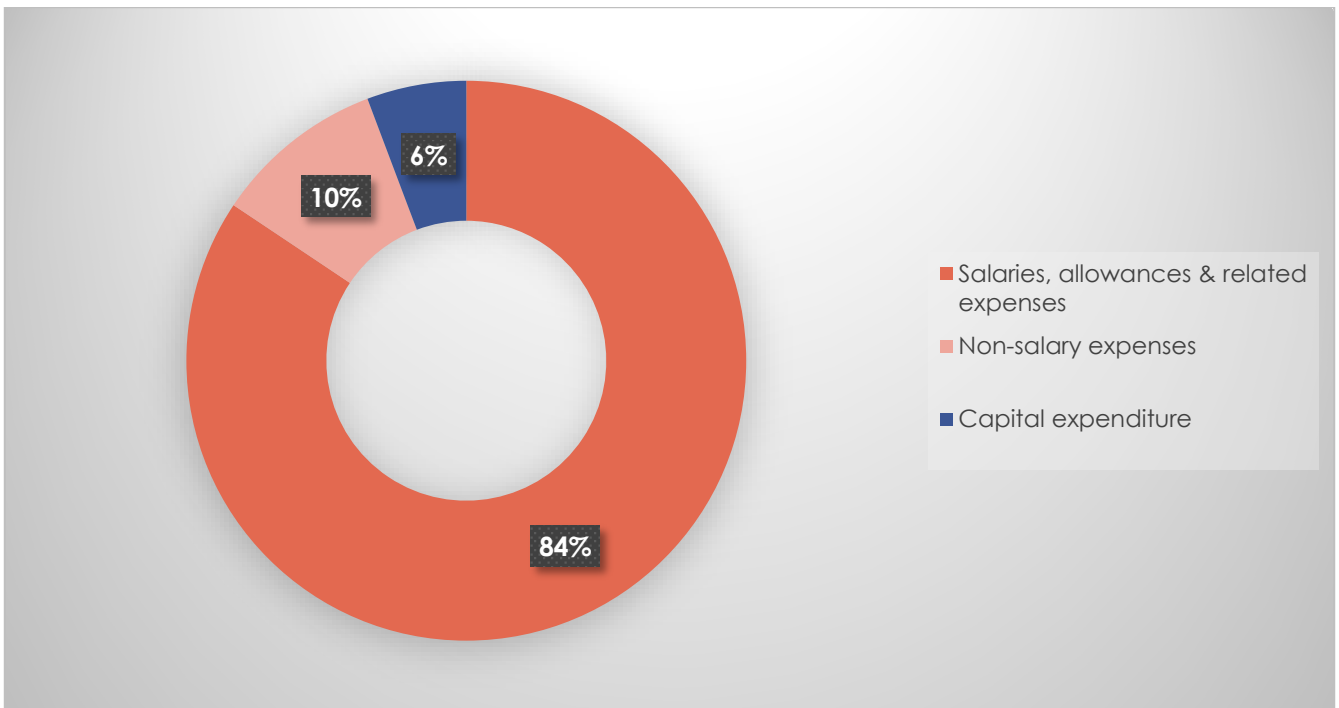
Transition has been a focus for students and families to ensure we are always working with our students to ensure they transition to the next less specialised setting that suits their learning needs. This is a collaborative approach working with students, families and other schooling systems.

Financial information

Income



Expenditure





aspect.org.au | 1800 277 328 | customerservice@aspect.org.au