

Annual School Report

Aspect Hunter School

2024



INSIDE THE REPORT

All about Aspect	
Aspect's approach	
Message from the principal	5
Message from the Parents & Friends (P&F)	6
Message from the Student Representative Council (SRC)	7
Student outcomes	8
Staffing	9
Student attendance	10
School policies	11
Parent, student and teacher satisfaction	12
Financial information	13

All about Aspect

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 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.

Our purpose
**a different
brilliant®**

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



Aspect's approach to supporting students on the autism spectrum

Drawing on more than 55 years of expertise, Aspect schools deliver specialised, evidence-informed programs designed for children on the autism spectrum. We take a person-centred approach, learning how each student experiences the world and using their strengths, interests and aspirations to shape tailored supports.

Our practices are guided by the latest evidence, informed by input from the student and their support network, and are continually refined to meet each student's unique needs.

As Principal of Aspect Hunter School, it is with great pride and enthusiasm that I present our Annual School Report.

Aspect Hunter has a main site at Thornton, satellite schools in Port Macquarie, Tarro, Waratah West, Abermain, and Muswellbrook, and 63 students in our Distance Education program. Our total enrolment stands at 267 students: 187 boys, 80 girls. Of these, 8% speak a language other than English, and 12% are Indigenous.

This year has been a remarkable journey marked by transformative educational practices, dedicated efforts to support student and staff wellbeing, and unwavering commitment to fostering leadership and safeguarding.

Our focus for teaching and learning this year has centred around the comprehensive assessment of student literacy. Quality assessments enhanced our understanding of each student's literacy skills, enabling us to tailor teaching methods and learning activities to individual needs. This targeted approach has enabled us to make significant strides in improving student outcomes, ensuring every learner has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Student wellbeing is at the heart of our philosophy. In 2024, we embedded a consistent Morning Circle using the Berry Street Education Model. This practice has been instrumental in supporting student readiness to learn, creating a safe and nurturing environment where students feel valued and prepared for the day ahead. By prioritising emotional and social wellbeing, we have laid a strong foundation for academic success.

Recognising the pivotal role of our staff in the educational process, we have implemented a structured debrief process following incidents that have occurred with students. This initiative aims to improve staff wellbeing by providing a supportive mechanism for addressing and reflecting on challenging situations. Through this process, we have fostered a culture of care and resilience among our staff, ensuring they are well-equipped to continue delivering high-quality education.

Building the capacity of our Leadership Team has been a focus this year. By empowering our leaders with necessary skills and knowledge, we have positively impacted student outcomes, driving continuous improvement and innovation in our educational practices.

Safeguarding our students is a paramount concern. We have taken substantial steps to improve the accuracy of student attendance data and implemented effective strategies to boost student attendance, recognising that consistent attendance is crucial for academic success. Our efforts in this area have resulted in better monitoring and support for students, ensuring they are present and engaged in their learning journey.

Our educational program is designed to cater to the diverse needs of our students. Aspect Hunter's approach to education is grounded in respect, inclusion, and empowerment. We believe in the potential of every student and are committed to creating an environment that celebrates diversity and promotes equity. Our dedicated team of educators works collaboratively to provide a safe, supportive, and stimulating learning atmosphere. Through innovative teaching and autism practices and a strong focus on wellbeing, we aim to develop confident, capable, and compassionate individuals ready to contribute positively to society.



Craig McNee
Principal

Message from the Parents & Friends (P&F)

I am delighted to highlight the contributions of Aspect Hunter School's P&F. In 2024, a committed group of parents played a vital role in the school by organising fundraising events and fostering a strong community spirit.

2024 was a year packed with fundraising, social events and coming together as a school community.

Our major fundraising events were:

- Bunnings BBQ at Maitland Bunnings
- Christmas Gift Wrapping at Westfield Kotara
- Annual Aspect Walkathon
- Creative Arts Night
- Easter and Christmas Raffles

Fundraising events enabled us to support the following events:

- Mother's Day morning tea
- Year 12 formal
- Sports jersey's for the Hunter Disability Sports Day
- Easter Egg hunt
- Christmas Hampers provided to 47 of our families.

In 2024, our President, Bronwyn Free, stepped down after 3 years and we thank her for her dedication. Leeanne Hawke after a 5-year break as President has returned.

We were fortunate again to receive a grant from Carers NSW to host a Carers event as part of National Carers Week, which we combined with our annual Grandparents Day.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our previous Principal, Lara Cheney, for her passion and dedication to our students and families. Lara finished in term 1, 2024. Lara's replacement, Craig McNee, has continued that passion and dedication, quickly establishing a wonderful rapport with our students and families, and we are very fortunate to have him.

We are looking forward to successful 2025.

Leeanne Hawke

P&F President

Message from the Student Representative Council (SRC)

Hi, my name is Ella. I was SRC in 2024 and I absolutely loved it. I loved organising events and fundraisers like the Creative Arts night. Meeting other SRC members in meetings was magical, I was also a part of the design team and we'd design posters and student awards.

Aside from designing and meeting new people, a part of the SRC role is helping students feel safe and included. When you want a new product brought to the school, such as a podcast microphone, you need to think who would use it and would it be necessary. SRC's have a huge impact on our school. When I was SRC, I made sure I included everyone and I made sure everyone felt safe. I am so honoured to pass my leadership onto the wonderful members of the SRC this year. They know how to look after our school.

Ella

SRC Member

The SRC have worked on many projects and to be good role models in our school community. I have campaigned for this read a thon because I believe that it makes everyone at the school able to participate, not just those who are near main school. It gives everyone a chance to raise funds for our amazing school while doing something fun and relaxing. It can be set to all levels so anyone that wants to can give it a go.

Allan

SRC Member

Student outcomes and results

Each student has an individual plan 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, and sensory processing which are integrated into the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) 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.

Literacy and numeracy assessments

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

The school administers assessments each year to help inform practice and monitor students' literacy and numeracy progress. This includes some standardised testing as well as assessments tailored to the needs and abilities of our students.

Senior secondary outcomes

Records of School Achievement (RoSA)

In 2024, Aspect Hunter had eight students awarded a Record of School Achievement.

TVET Courses and Year 12 Vocational/Trade Training

Four of our students have participated in Certificate 2 TVET Courses, and one student an SBAT Course in Aged Care and another student a school-based apprenticeship with EHEALTH NSW – IT.

Post school destination

Students who left school, following completion of their school education, joined Community and Day programs, enrolled at TAFE, secured an apprenticeship or volunteer at various organisations.

Staffing

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	No. of teachers
Conditional	15
Provisional	13
Proficient Teacher	31
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	18
Total number of teachers	77

Workforce composition

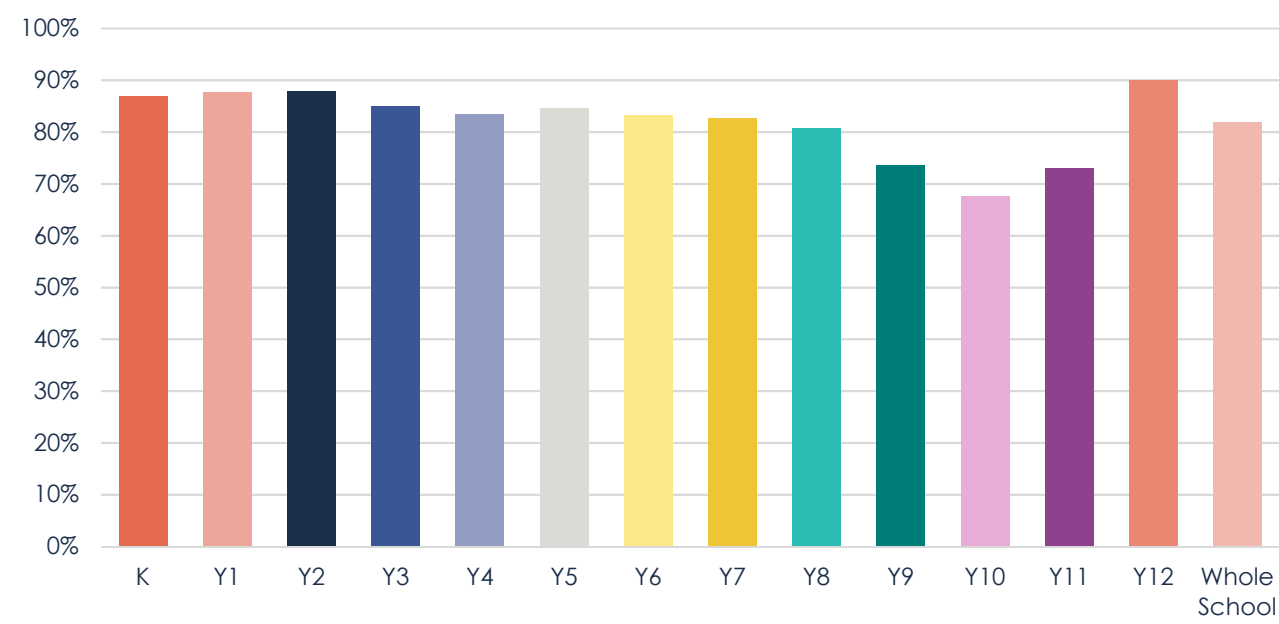
Composition of Aspect Hunter School staff is documented on the My School website www.myschool.edu.au

Workforce composition	
Teaching staff	77
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	62.3
Non-teaching staff (including classroom support staff)	78
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	52.3

At our school we welcome staff and students from all backgrounds and religions. Aspect Hunter School welcomes Autistic and neuro-diverse staff who's lived experience helps to support our students. We strongly encourage applications from Autistic teachers and other staff.

Five of our staff members have identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. We strongly encourage applications from First Nations teachers and other staff.

Student attendance



Student attendance rates

Kinder	87%	Year 7	83%
Year 1	88%	Year 8	81%
Year 2	88%	Year 9	74%
Year 3	85%	Year 10	68%
Year 4	84%	Year 11	73%
Year 5	85%	Year 12	90%
Year 6	83%	Whole school	82%

In 2024, 82% of students attended school each school day on average. This was a small decrease compared to the daily attendance in 2023.

Management of non-attendance

Aspect has a student attendance procedure, which all schools follow.

All unexplained absences are followed up each day by the school administration team using a variety of methods including SMS messages, email and phone calls. If a student is absent for more than three days without explanation this will be referred to the Principal who will continue to monitor absences and will initiate appropriate action to check on the welfare of the student and family, which may include notifying relevant authorities.

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 Hunter's Wellbeing team meets regularly to discuss students' attendance and other well-being matters.

School policies

The following school policies and procedures are publicly available on the [website](#):

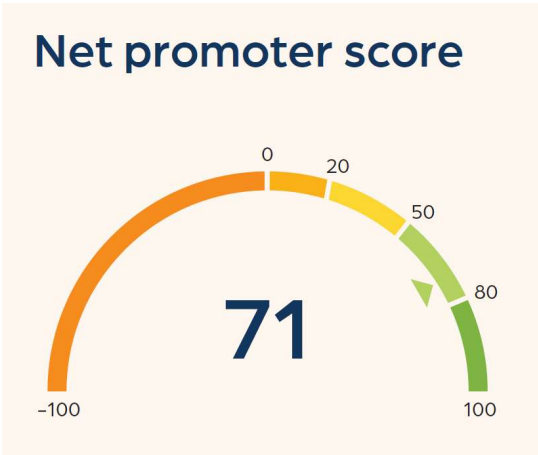
- Suggestions, compliments and complaints
- External whistleblowing
- Enrolment
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Discipline & Positive Behaviour Support
- Anti-bullying

Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

Aspect schools participate in the Association of Independent School's Perspectives survey biannually, to support school improvement and celebrate success. The Aspect Hunter School results for 2024 were strong and the net promoter score (NPS) was 71, which indicates the majority of families would highly recommend Aspect Hunter School because the school provides a high-quality education that meets families' expectations and makes them feel proud and confident in their choice of school.

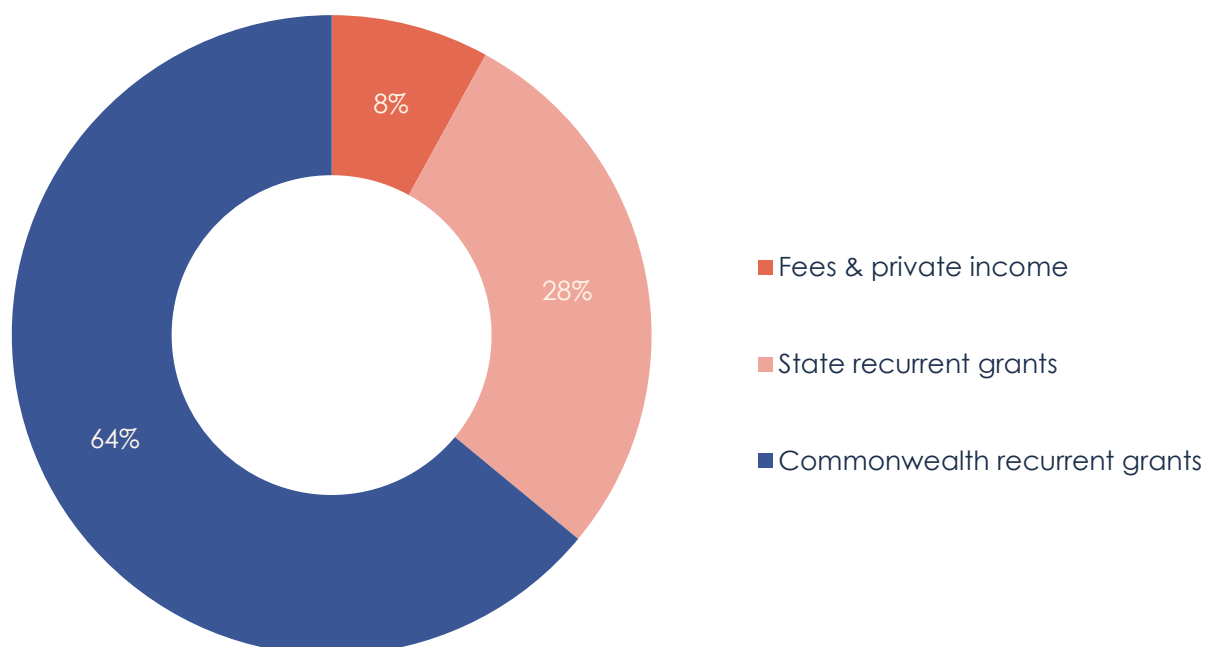
Our parents are confident their child feels a sense of belonging at our school, supported by trusted adults and guided in resolving conflicts. They believe their children feel valued, accepted and safe, with the school actively addressing bullying and harassment. The school celebrates all cultures and ensures everyone is treated fairly, regardless of background or ethnicity.

Staff report that students feel a strong sense of belonging, are valued and accepted. They believe the school's vision and mission provides a clear framework for its priorities. Staff identified that opportunities to collaborate on teaching and assessment strategies offered various differentiated approaches to support students. As a result, parents are confident that their children's learning needs are being addressed and that staff are capable of supporting students on the autism spectrum. Students, parents and staff believe that Aspect Hunter fosters a culture that celebrates the unique strengths and interests of Autistic students and individual planning ensures key learning goals are tailored to each child, while ongoing professional development equips staff with the skills to provide high-quality support.

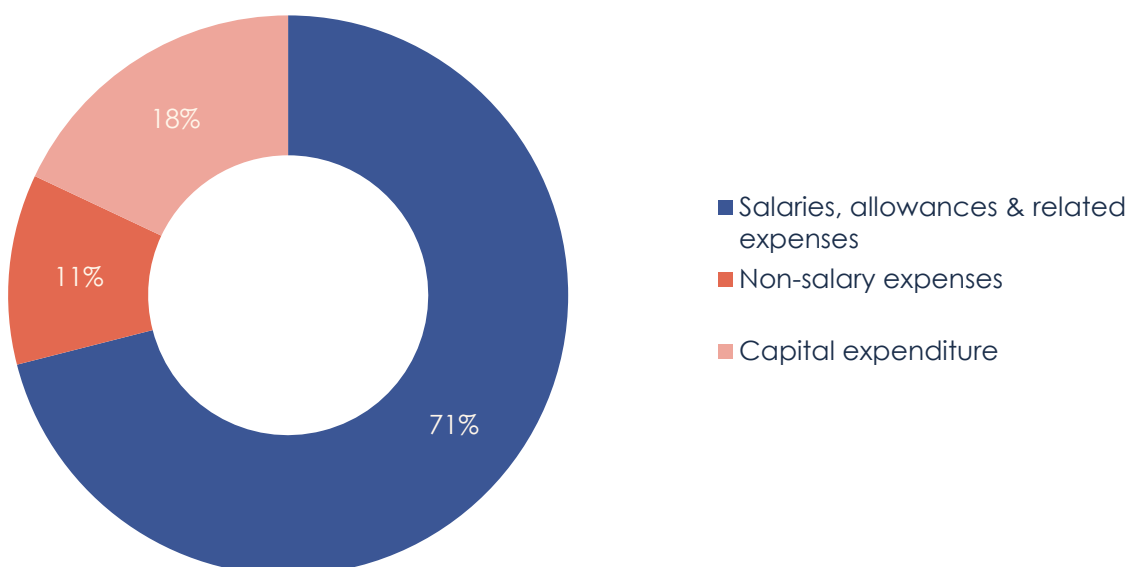


Financial information

Recurrent/capital income



Recurrent/capital expenditure





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