

Aspect Hunter School Annual Report

For the year 2016



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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

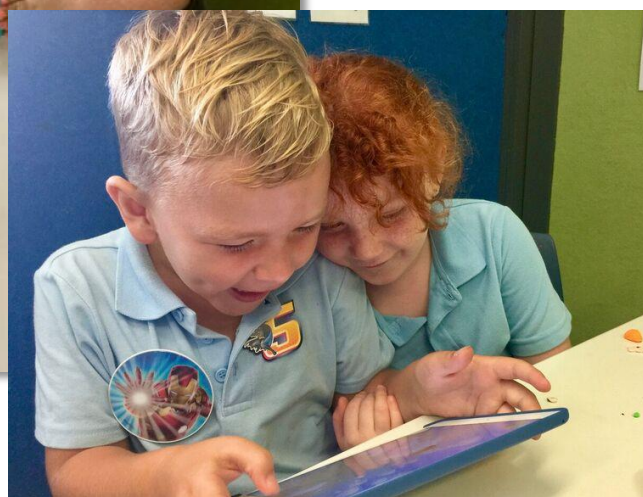
Aspect Hunter School caters for 129 students across the Hunter, Lake Macquarie and Port Macquarie areas. Our students range in age from 4 to 15 years at present. The school comprises an administrative base at Thornton which has infants and primary school classes and a range of satellite classes located in Tarro, Waratah West, Abermain, Cardiff, and Port Macquarie.

Approximately one quarter of our students transition to a less specialised setting each year. A detailed overview of our Comprehensive Approach for Education, and Aspect Mission, Vision and Values can be found on our website.

In 2016 we supported almost a quarter of our students to transition on to less specialised settings, most of them now attending their local mainstream school. We achieve this through our specialised evidence-based programs provided by staff who are passionate about people, about being positive and about what is possible.

A number of Continuous Improvement Projects were led by staff in areas related to self-regulation strategies, academic engagement building on the special interests of our students and their families, the use of technology as a tool for both instruction and therapy, and nature based play across the school.

We received fantastic support from our local community through a range of fundraising events and were able to provide a range of workshops and supports to parents, grandparents and carers. We provided educational outreach services for over fifty children in the Hunter Region, provided staff development for twenty local schools and conducted four Aspect Practice workshops relating to technology and autism education across the country. We are very grateful to our community partners for their generous support and involvement and to our very dedicated staff and families. building up our resources and improving our sites.



Message from the P&F

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 transdisciplinary 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

Record of School Achievement

Aspect Hunter School did not have any students that required the award of a Record of School Achievement.



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>CPR</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Asthma</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Anaphylaxis</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>NCI</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Aspect Comprehensive Approach for Education</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>KidsMatter: Component 1</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Child Protection Legislation</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Manual Handling</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>iPad Model Classroom</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Zones of Regulation</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Executive Functioning</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Growth Mindset</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Adaptive Coaching</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Well Being</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>New National Curriculum workshops</i>	45
<i>Maintenance of Accreditation at Proficient Teacher</i>	15
<i>Aspect Practice Structured Teaching</i>	10
<i>Aspect Practice LAMP</i>	8
<i>AIS Adaptive Coaching</i>	7

Composition of teaching staff

Composition of Aspect Hunter 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 Hunter 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.

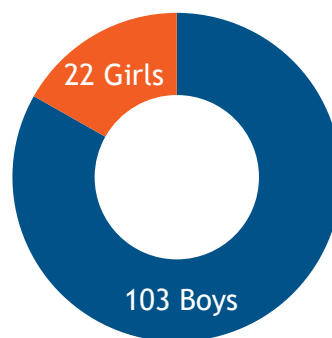
In 2016, 35 students transitioned from our school. 18 students transitioned to mainstream schools, 9 to support classes and 8 to special school settings.



Enrolment

In 2016 Aspect Hunter School had an average enrolment of

125 students, 22 girls and 103 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.

This meeting outlines the school program and application process.

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.

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-111, 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 school's 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 Principal one term 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

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 • Documentation • Supervision 	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

POLICY	CHANGES IN 2016
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

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.

Individual Planning and Review encompassing				Nil
• Guidelines	• Process	• Structure		
Incidents encompassing				Revised 2016
• Definition	• Guidelines	• Investigation Guidelines		No substantive changes made
• Procedures	• Documentation			
Illness and Infectious or Communicable Diseases encompassing				Nil
• Definition	• Guidelines	• Procedures		
Missing Persons encompassing				Nil
• Background	• Protocol	• Prevention	• Documentation	
Safe Administration of Medication encompassing				Nil
• Definition	• Asthma Plan and Student Asthma Record			
• Procedures	• Epilepsy Management			
• Guidelines	• Diabetes Management Plan			
	• Anaphylaxis Procedures			
Safe and Supportive Environment: Schools encompassing				Nil
• Child Protection	• Security	• Pastoral Care		
• Support	• Support	• Communication		
• Conduct	• Complaints			
Sun Smart encompassing				Nil
• Guidelines	• Procedures			
Student Attendance encompassing				Nil
• Guidelines	• Procedures			
Swimming encompassing				Nil
• Guidelines	• Procedures			
Visual Support encompassing				Nil
• Principles	• Guidelines			
WHS Work Health and Safety encompassing				Nil
• 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				
Working with Families encompassing				Nil
• Guidelines	• Process			

B. Discipline

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

• Guidelines	• Procedures	
Discipline: Schools		Nil
• Guidelines	• Procedures	

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	Engaging with the broader educational space where our students transition from and into.	Introduced curriculum outcomes relating to coding and maker spaces across classrooms in a manner that has helped us connect with other local school programs including combined robotics clubs and other academic and special interest areas.

	High School curriculum and planning.	High School programs were reviewed to ensure continual compliance with NESA and to reflect the goals and focus points of our ACAE across all years of schooling.
Family Support	Parent Engagement and Skill Development through connection and workshop strategies.	<p>Teachers provided many workshops to families across the year on topics relating to positive behaviour support, social stories, home routines, transition, technology and well being.</p> <p>School therapists provide training to families on topics relating to communication, sensory integration and play based strategies.</p> <p>Multidisciplinary teams conducted home visits to support families with Individual Plan goal acquisition.</p> <p>Our school ran NDIS information sessions for parents.</p> <p>Our school maintained an active Facebook community where information about school activities, workshops and regular student successes were shared.</p>
Staff Development	Kids Matter	Staff received training for the KidsMatter program which allowed implementation of the first component of the program across 2016.
	Emotional Regulation	Staff participated in school wide workshops to identify best practice utilising a number of programs, including Zones of Regulation, The Alert Program and our own Green Wall approach as part of the Positive Behaviour Support element of the ACAE.
	Technology	Staff participated in school wide workshops to identify continued ways of engaging academic and special interest areas using a range of technological responses, from iPads through to other hardware and software options.
	National Curriculum Outcomes	Staff received AIS training to support the implementation of new areas of our National Curriculum across our school scope and sequence areas for all years of schooling.

School-determined improvement targets continued

AREA	PRIORITIES	ACHIEVEMENTS
WHS Compliance	RiskMan	Aspect Hunter School began using RiskMan at the end of 2016 after consulting with our Aspect WHS team and the Aspect Central Coast School who were a pilot site for the new incident management system. A few classes were initially trained and began using RiskMan, with further classes continuing to be trained in the following year
	WHS Compliance Action	Updated our chemical register with a list of approved products for all campuses. Implemented new monthly

		checklists for all sites to check off on WHS compliance and site management points.
Continuous Improvement	ACAE	Aspect Hunter School participated in an ACAE audit with Aspect South Coast School wherein both schools visited each other and observed ACAE practice across a range of classes and sites.
	Inclusive Schooling (AIS)	Staff training and development and school wide and individual teacher goals to support increased inclusion opportunities for students and families. This project included peer coaching and collaboration between stage levels.
Student Achievement	Transition	35 students transitioned from our school to a variety of class placements at Catholic, Association of Independent Schools and Department of Education schools. The transition process included meetings with receiving schools, supported visits for students at new settings and tracking of student success for 12 months.
	IP Goal Process	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 years end.
Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorder	School Tours	Refined our school tour to show more examples of students across all settings engaging in ACAE.
	Community Events	Participated in twenty local community events.
	Educational Outreach.	Offered a variety of new educational outreach topics for schools who have received previous outreach services, including topics relating to universal design for learning, advanced utilisation of technology, whole school emotional regulation strategies and the utilisation of special interests.

Respect and responsibility

Aspect Hunter 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. The 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.



Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

2016 saw our Aspect Hunter School achieve a net promoter score of 90% satisfaction rate by our parents. The results were reinforced with some fantastic comments left by our parents:

The staff are so passionate and they do so much to help our children

*We only started with Aspect this year. The change in my son already is amazing.
The staff are wonderful*

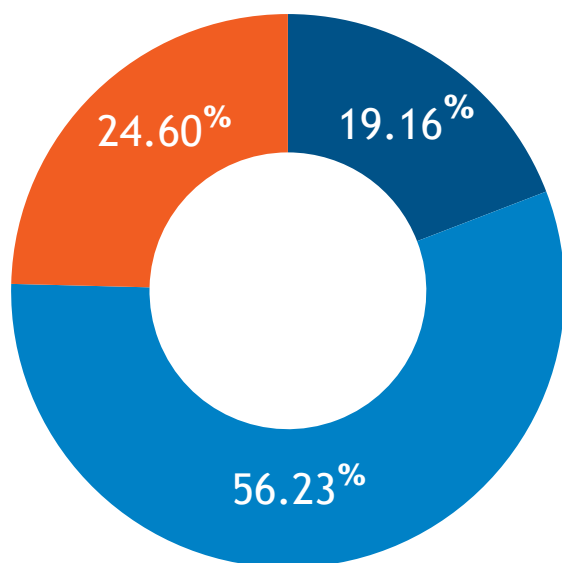
I love how genuinely passionate the staff are and that I can be confident in the knowledge that my son is being supported as an individual way.

The best decision we ever made was to send our foster son to your school. Love Aspect

Financial Information

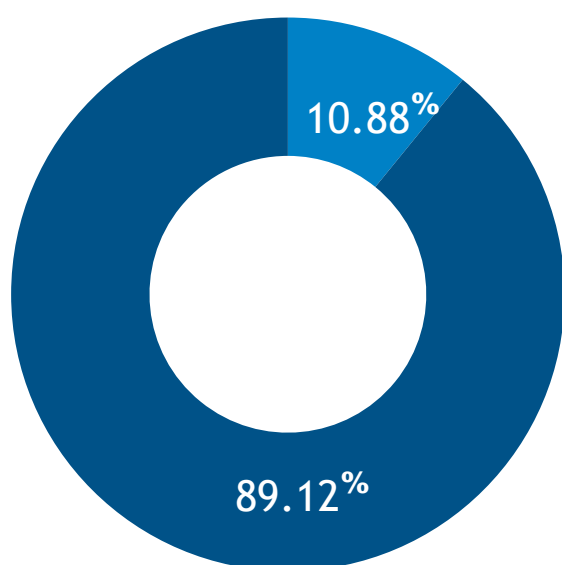
Aspect Hunter School

Recurrent/capital income 2016



- Fees and private income – 19.16%
- State Government recurrent grants – 56.23%
- Federal Government recurrent grants – 24.60%
- Government capital grant - 0%
(No government capital grant was received in 2016)

Recurrent/capital expenditure 2016



- Salaries, allowances and related expenses – 89.12%
- Non-Salary Expenses – 10.88%
- Capital expenditure – 0%



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