



Aspect Vern Barnett School Annual Report
For the year 2017

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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, Aspect operates one of the world's largest networks of schools and satellite classes for students on the autism spectrum with an enrolment of around 1000 students across the 9 Aspect schools in New South Wales and South Australia.

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 provide people on the autism spectrum with the opportunity to realise their unique potential, as well as providing much needed support to their families, carers, friends and colleagues. Aspect's vision is to provide the best possible opportunities for people on the spectrum. We believe that people on the autism spectrum are a different brilliant.

Our Vision *The best opportunities for people on the autism spectrum.*

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

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

Message from the Principal

Aspect Vern Barnett School provides specialised evidence-based programs for children aged 4 to 17 with ASD, who require an autism-specific program. The primary focus of the school is to equip students with skills to become as independent as possible and enable them to transition into more inclusive settings. Aspect Vern Barnett School caters for students across the north side of Sydney. All students have an Individual Plan (IP) developed collaboratively with stakeholders and reviewed regularly. The administrative base is at Forestville, along with classes for students from 4 to 17 years old. A range of satellite classes are located at Eastwood, Forestville, Lane Cove, Mona Vale and St Ives catering for students in Years K to 6. A detailed overview of our Comprehensive Educational Approach, Mission, Vision and Values can be found on the Aspect website www.autismspectrum.org.au

In addition to our highly competent teachers, who are experienced in curriculum delivery for students on the autism spectrum, each class is allocated a teacher aide to support the learning. A team consisting of a psychologist, occupational therapist and speech therapist also supports students at Aspect Vern Barnett, providing in-class support.

We take pride in our school on focusing on student's strengths and special interests to motivate learning and celebrate a diversity of talents. Our service delivery to our students is person centred and individualised which ensures we are innovative and providing the best learning opportunities for young people on the autism spectrum.

Fiona Dignan
Principal



Message from the P&F

Our objective as a P&F is to be open and welcoming to anyone who wants to help raise funds for our school. As we work towards a common goal, our families have the opportunity to share their experiences with each other and support each other on this journey that is autism.

Proceeds raised during 2017 were spent on outdoor lunch tables for junior and senior areas, new sandpit toys, refurbishment of gross motor area, grants to all satellite classes, a Halloween themed picnic/disco for all of our families and a jumping castle for the year-end student lunch.

We raised these funds through Run Forest Run cake stall, Rotary Spring Fair, Mothers' and Fathers' Day Raffles, Chocolate Drive and Entertainment Book to name a few.

We continued the P&F tradition of providing a celebratory cake for all students that graduated at the end of the year and a much deserved end of year lunch for our amazing teachers and staff at Vern Barnett.

We look forward to continuing to play an active role at the school during 2018 and more importantly its students, our children.

Rania Megally
P&F President



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, behaviour and sensory processing which are integrated into the NSW Education Standards Authority 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

Senior Secondary Outcomes

Record of School Achievement

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

Professional learning and teaching standards

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Pre-2004 teachers (accreditation not required in 2017)	13
Conditional	0
Provisional	5
Proficient Teacher	22
Highly Accomplished Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	40

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

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Aspect Professional Code of Conduct	All
Management of Actual or Potential Aggression - a framework for decision making and problem solving to prevent, de-escalate, and safely respond to disruptive or assaultive verbal and physical behaviours (2 day foundation course 1 day refresher course)	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
Aspect Comprehensive Approach for Education - workshop on developing student's Individualised Plan (IP)	33
Aspect Comprehensive Approach for Education - workshop on embedding the 5 point star	26
Staff Induction; New teacher mentoring meetings each term	2
Nationally Consistent Collection of Disability Data	31
CPR training - skills to provide Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	52
First Aid - knowledge and skills to help an ill or injured person until emergency help arrives	3
Creating Structured Learning Opportunities based on the methods of TEACCH	1
Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC 2017) - an international autism community conference focusing on the shift in autism research and practice to look beyond the early childhood and school years and focus on the whole lifespan for people on the spectrum	10
Asthma First Aid training session	35
NDIS; National Disability Insurance Scheme	28
Curriculum compliance	28
Communication Device; LAMP	32
Staff Wellbeing	30
Manual Handling	46
Emotional Regulation	23
Embedding Excellence (AIS Funded Support)	3
ACEL Disability Summit; Owning the Outcomes	1

Composition of teaching staff

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

No staff were of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

Student attendance

Student attendance rates

Year level	Attendance rate %
Kindergarten	87.1%
Year 1	91.4%
Year 2	89.6%
Year 3	88.5%
Year 4	88.3%
Year 5	82.9%
Year 6	90.4%
Year 7	86.7%
Year 8	93.1%
Year 9	88.9%
Year 10	92.4%

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

Non-attendance is managed by the Principal. Meetings with parents can be convened in view of developing necessary supports. Supports may include but are not limited to a behaviour support plan, behaviour contract, changes to program offered (i.e. incorporating more special interest project based learning), and school attendance improvement plan.

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 2017, 33 students transitioned from our school.

Enrolment

Aspect Vern Barnett School had an average enrolment of 137 students, 14 girls and 123 boys.

Enrolment Policies

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 Committee, convened by the National Director, Aspect Education that clarifies applications sent by the Aspect School Enrolment Committee.

Procedures

Each Aspect School Principal is responsible for:

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

a. This meeting outlines the school program and application process

b. Application for enrolment 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.

a. This committee determines if a child is eligible for placement in an Aspect School. To be eligible for placement in one of Aspect's schools, prospective students must have the following:

- a current diagnosis which clearly states that the child fulfils the criteria for ASD from a specialist medical practitioner or clinical psychologist, which is not more than 12 months old and

- a current standardised cognitive or developmental assessment (e.g. IQ Testing, Griffiths, WISC-IV, WPPSI-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.

a. 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 School 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 school's 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 Service Standards

Standard 5: Service Access

Other Relevant Policies

Complaints by People with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, Family Members and other Aspect Clients

Contributing to Decision Making

Fee Collection

Fee Reduction

Privacy, Dignity & Confidentiality

Registration & Accreditation Procedures: Schools

School Fees and Compulsory Building Levy

Working with Families

Policy - Service Exit: Schools

A student enrolled in an Aspect schools may leave because:

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

Policy purpose

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

Scope

All Aspect schools

Procedures

1. Transition

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

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

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

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

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

3. Safe working environment

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

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

and resolve the issue at the earliest indication.

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

4. Non-payment of outstanding school fees

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

Guidelines

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

Legislation

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)

Disability Standards for Education Act, 2005 (Commonwealth)

Education Act 1972 (SA)

Education and early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (SA)

Education Act 1990 (NSW)

Equal Opportunities Act 1984 (SA)

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

National Standards for Disability Services

Standard 5: Service Access

Other Relevant Policies

Complaints & Feedback by Aspect Service Users, Family Members & the Public

Discipline - Schools

Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk

Fees Collection

Individual Planning and Review

Positive Behaviour Support

Privacy, Dignity & Confidentiality

Prohibited and Restricted Practices

School Fees

Transition of students from an Aspect School

Working with Families

Other School Policies

Summary of policy	Changes in 2017	Access to full text
<p>Student welfare</p> <p>The school seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment to support the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of students through the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person centred approach and recognition of values - define and work towards achieving individual's goals and personal lifestyle choices with support and input from those who care about them • Risk management framework - 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 implement the principles of Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk, recognising the rights of the people we support to make informed choices and take calculated risks • 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 	<p>Approved by Aspect Governance committee as Aspect overarching policies.</p>	<p>The full text of Aspect policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person centred approach and recognition of values; • Risk management framework; • Duty of care and dignity of risk; and • Safeguarding the people we support <p>can be accessed by request from the school principal or from Aspect's website</p> <p>https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect</p>
<p>Anti-bullying</p> <p>For some young people on the autism spectrum, it can be very difficult to recognise bullying. The school seeks to develop supports to assist students to understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bullying is about the misuse of power in relationships • bullying is when someone experiences repeated verbal, physical and or social behaviour that causes harm • bullying is mean and can be very hurtful • there are different kinds of bullying • no kind of bullying is ever OK • bullying should always be reported • adults will do all in their power to take it seriously and deal with it 	<p>No changes were made in 2017.</p>	<p>http://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/sites/default/files/positive_partnerships_bullying_fact_sheet.pdf</p>
<p>Discipline</p> <p>Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) considers that the behaviour of children with autism spectrum disorders requires support and understanding. Challenging behaviours are best understood and responded to by applying a positive approach as outlined in Aspect's Positive Behaviour Support Policy.</p> <p>Positive Behaviour Support is a comprehensive approach to supporting situations where there is challenging behaviour and combines the science of learning (from Applied Behaviour Analysis) with human rights and values. PBS works in respectful collaboration with individuals and their families to use effective evidence based strategies to increase the quality of life for all involved.</p>	<p>The policy was reviewed in 2017 and was approved as an overarching Aspect policy. The policy was restructured to the new policy framework but there were no changes to the policy.</p>	<p>The full text of Aspect Positive Behaviour Support policy can be accessed by request from the school principal or from Aspect's website</p> <p>https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect</p>

Summary of policy	Changes in 2017	Access to full text
<p>Complaints and grievances resolution</p> <p>Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) values complaints about the quality of its service and communications to support the continuous improvement of services and management.</p> <p>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.</p>	No changes were made in 2017.	The full text of the Complaints Management Process can be accessed by request from the School Principal.

2017 school determined priority areas for improvement and comments on the achievements

AREA	PRIORITIES	ACHIEVEMENTS
Teaching and Learning	NESA inspection and registration process	Registration granted for the full five year period with commendation given to the school in regard to preparation and standard of evidence provided.
Family Support	Parent training	Parents were surveyed to determine areas of interest and need. In response to the survey parent information sessions were held twice a term.
Staff Development	Performance Plan and Review for teachers.	Teachers were supported to reflect on their teaching practice against their role description. Each teacher completed the performance plan and reflected on this with a member of the leadership team.
WHS Compliance	Monthly reports Committee meetings	All sites completed monthly site inspections for WHS. WHS committee met each term to prioritise and identify concerns.
Continuous improvement	Individual Plan (IP) ACAIE (Aspect Comprehensive Approach to Education) audit	Trialed new IP process in preparation for full implementation in 2018. Leadership team worked with another Aspect school to audit the elements of the ACAIE and reflect on identified areas for improvement.
Student achievement	Transition students to more inclusive settings	Supported students to new setting by providing 1:1 supported visits and facilitating meetings with receiving school. All students were tracked for success for 12 months after transition.
Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorder	Support schools through Aspect Educational Outreach services	The leadership team completed individualised outreach visits for students across the north of Sydney.

School determined priorities for 2018

AREA	PRIORITIES
Teaching and Learning	Adjust the Science and Technology scope and sequence to reflect changes to the syllabus for 2019. Literacy and Numeracy progressions.
Family Support	Support family understanding of Emotional Regulation strategies being implemented across the school.
Staff Development	Inclusion of AITSL standards into the Performance and Review process for teachers.
WHS Compliance	Incident recording and tracking of data using RiskMan.
Continuous Improvement	Embed 5 Point Star framework across the school.
Student Achievement	Implement the reviewed Individual Plan (IP) process across the whole school and for every student.
Extend services to reach more students with autism spectrum disorder	Work with host school staff to support students with an autism spectrum disorder within the host school.

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's value of "We are passionate about people, about being positive and about what's possible" mirrors 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

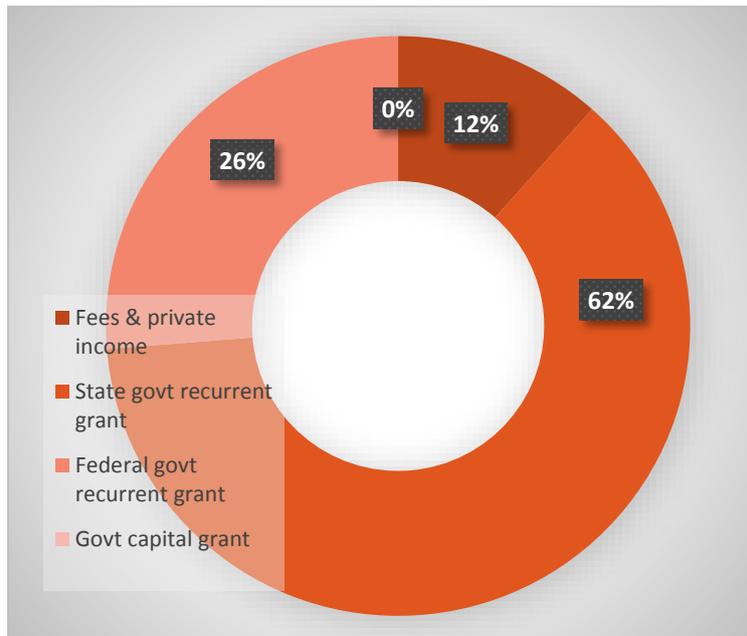
During 2017 Aspect schools surveyed families using the Net Promotor Score (NPS) survey. Aspect Vern Barnett School received a score of 75.5%, which is considered an excellent result. An example of the positive feedback from families is summarised by this parent comment: *We think Aspect Vern Barnett provide an incredible educational experience for our son. The dedicated staff are amazing and we are grateful our son has the opportunity to attend this school.*

Staff were surveyed in 2017 using the Voice Survey, this is conducted on a biennial basis. The survey shows that the

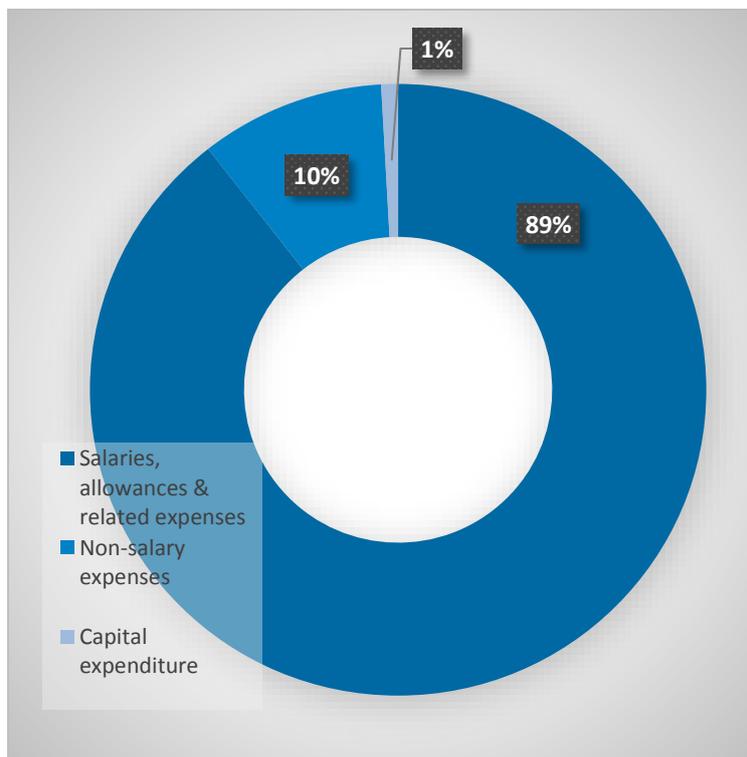
school continues to enjoy a high level of staff passion and engagement with a score of 83%. We also scored well in ethics (96%) and understanding our mission and values (94%). In response to the survey, an action plan was developed to continue the strong employee engagement currently shown at Aspect Vern Barnett School.

Financial Information

Recurrent/capital income 2017



Recurrent/capital expenditure 2017







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