



Aspect Vern Barnett School

2018 Annual Report



Annual Report

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Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is Australia's largest autism-specific service provider, with one of the biggest autism-specific school programs in the world. A not-for-profit organisation, we work in partnership with people of all ages on the autism spectrum, and their families to deliver evidence-informed solutions that are person centred family focused and customer driven.

Aspect's Purpose

a different brilliant®
understanding, engaging & celebrating the
strengths, interests & aspirations
of people on the autism spectrum

Our Vision

The best opportunities
for people on the autism
spectrum

Our Mission

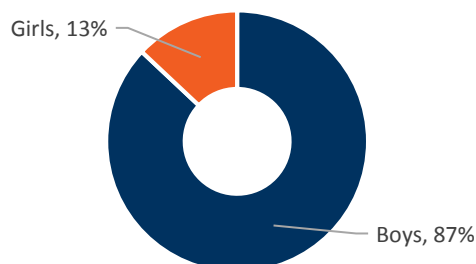
We work with people of all ages
on the autism spectrum, delivering
evidence-informed solutions
that are person-centred,
family-focused &
customer-driven.

Our Values

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

Message from the principal

Aspect Vern Barnett School caters for approximately 130 students across the northern region of Sydney. Our students range in age from 4 to 17, all with a diagnosis of autism.



The school comprises of an administrative site at Forestville and five satellite classes located in St Ives, Eastwood, Mona Vale, Forestville and Lane Cove. A detailed overview of our Comprehensive Educational Approach, Mission, Vision and Values can be found on the Aspect website www.autismspectrum.org.au

The teachers and students at Aspect Vern Barnett are supported by a psychologist, occupational therapist and speech therapist, providing in-class support. The curriculum is delivered by qualified teachers, who are experienced in curriculum delivery for students on the autism spectrum. Each class is also allocated a teacher aide to support the learning in the classroom and on the playground.

Our inspiration is 'A Different Brilliant', we focus on the strengths that each student brings to our school. Student learning is person centred and individualised, to ensure the best opportunities for young people on the autism spectrum. All students have an individual plan (IP) developed collaboratively with stakeholders and reviewed regularly. Aspect Vern Barnett school values working with the whole community.

Fiona Dignan

Principal

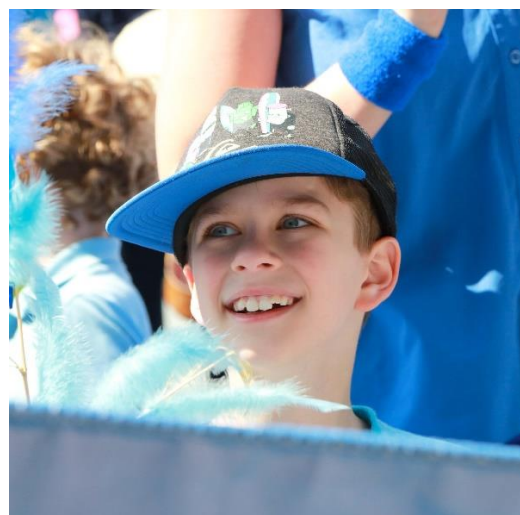
Message from the P&F

The Vern Barnett P&F committee is passionate in helping raise vital funds for our school. It is also an opportunity to get to know and support other families while on this interesting journey of autism.

We plan out how we can engage the families and communities to create event opportunities to fundraise. As we work towards a common goal, our families have the opportunity to share their experiences and support each other at various organised events.

Fundraising events this year included the Run Forest Run cake stall, Rotary Spring Fair, Mothers' and Fathers' Day Raffles, Chocolate Drive, Bunnings BBQ, Entertainment Book plus more. Not to forget the Gala dinner at The Spit which was a grand evening. We also proudly produced a magnificent cookbook filled with wholesome autism friendly recipes contributed by all the lovely families.

Proceeds raised during 2018 were spent on various teaching resources and technology for the school and the traditional end of collaborative staff and family function including 2018 graduation cake for all the students that left at the end of the year.



We look forward to contributing and playing an active role at the school in 2019 and providing the best possible environment for our students, our children, to learn.

Renata Tacadena

P&F President

Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

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 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 2 students.

Higher School Certificate

Aspect Vern Barnett School is not registered or accredited for the HSC. The reporting of the HSC results is not applicable.

Teacher professional learning, accreditation and qualifications

The following professional learning activities were undertaken by staff throughout 2018:

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Aspect Comprehensive Approach: includes individual planning, learning and participation, transition and inclusion, structured teaching, positive behaviour support, health and wellbeing, specialist collaboration, family and community engagement.	25
Creating structured learning opportunities based on the methods of the TEACCH program	27
Supporting people on the autism spectrum using the 5 Point Star	26
Staff Induction - new staff participated in the Aspect New Starters Day and onsite school specific induction programs.	4
Aspect Professional Code of Conduct - face to face workshop and online module.	50



Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (foundation and refresher courses) - a framework for decision making and problem solving to prevent, de-escalate, and safely respond to disruptive or assaultive verbal and physical behaviours	60
Child Protection - responsibilities related to child protection based on state/territory legislation, federal legislation and Aspect policy and procedures	82
Disability Standards for Education - overview of the Disability Standards for Education (2005) and the legal obligations of all education providers	56
CPR training - skills to provide Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	54
First Aid - knowledge and skills to help an ill or injured person until emergency help arrives	3
Paediatrician intervention supports	25
Jolly Phonics	36
Manual Handling	53
Anaphylaxis	0
Hand hygiene	62
Recognising Restricted Practices	68
Safeguarding the people we support	47
An introduction to autism	5

Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Pre-2004 teachers (accreditation not required in 2017)	0
Conditional	0
Provisional	4
Proficient Teacher	35
Highly Accomplished Teacher(voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	39

Teacher qualifications

Category	Number of Teachers
Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines, or	39
Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	0

Workforce composition

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

One staff member is identified as of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

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

Student attendance rates

Kinder	90.2%	Year 6	87.0%
Year 1	90.7%	Year 7	86.7%
Year 2	91.8%	Year 8	93.7%
Year 3	91.0%	Year 9	98.4%
Year 4	89.1%	Year 10	94.3%
Year 5	88.3%		

For the whole school student attendance rate, please refer to the school's data on the My School website www.myschool.edu.au

Retention of Year 10 to Year 12

Aspect Vern Barnett School had an enrolment of only up to Year 10 in 2018. This part of the report is not relevant to the school.

Post-school destinations

Two students who were over 17 years of age and who left school in 2018 transitioned to school leaver employment supports.



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-III, 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 schools 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 2018	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> <p>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</p> <p>Risk management framework - identifies risks and defines criteria for the assessment of consequence of those risks</p> <p>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</p> <p>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>	<p>No changes were made in 2018</p>	<p>The full text of Aspect policies</p> <p>Person centred approach and recognition of value status;</p> <p>Risk management framework;</p> <p>Duty of care and dignity of risk; and</p> <p>Safeguarding the people we support</p> <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> <p>bullying is about the misuse of power in relationships</p> <p>bullying is when someone experiences repeated verbal, physical and or social behaviour that causes harm</p> <p>bullying is mean and can be very hurtful</p> <p>there are different kinds of bullying</p> <p>no kind of bullying is ever OK</p> <p>bullying should always be reported</p> <p>adults will do all in their power to take it seriously and deal with it</p>	<p>No changes were made in 2018</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>No changes were made in 2018</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>
<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>	<p>No changes were made in 2018</p>	<p>The full text of the Complaints Management Process can be accessed by request from the School Principal or from Aspect's website</p> <p>https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/sites/default/files/Aspect-Feedback-Complaints-Brochure2019.pdf</p>

School determined priority areas for improvement

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	AITSL standards	Teachers used the AITSL self-review tool to set goals to improve student learning outcomes.
	Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA)	Staff trained across the elements. Autism specific supports audited across the school.
Family support	Parent network meetings	Parents were invited to join network meetings held each term. Presentations were given on topics of interest.
Staff development	Supporting people on the spectrum using the Autism Initiatives' (UK) Five Point Star	All staff were trained in the implementation of the Five Point Star student profiles. Embedded the Five Point Star student profiles into the individual plan process.
Continuous improvement	Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA) self-review	Collaborated with staff and families to determine priority focus areas for improvement. Focus areas will be included in 2019 strategic plan.
Student achievement	Transition students to more inclusive settings	Supported students to new settings by providing 1:1 supported visits and facilitating meetings with receiving school. All students were tracked for success for 12 months after transition.

Initiatives promoting 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'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.

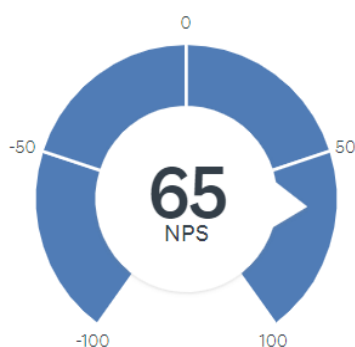


Parent, student and teacher satisfaction



Every student at Aspect Vern Barnett School has an Individual Plan (IP). The IP is developed in collaboration with the parents and student where a student's strengths, interests, goals and aspirations are expressed by both parents and the student and are incorporated into the plan. The school, student and parents work together to achieve the goals set in the IP.

Families were given formal and informal opportunities to provide their feedback to the school. One of the ways is through a customer satisfaction survey. The survey is sent to Aspect Vern Barnett School families asking them if they would recommend Aspect and what feedback or suggestions that they may have. 65% of the respondents to the 2018 surveys indicated they would recommend Aspect.



An example of the positive feedback from families is summarised by this parent comment:

Thank you for everything. We've had a fabulous year and are amazed at the growth and confidence in our son as a result of joining the school community. Thank you! You have relieved a lot of stress and pressure by knowing that my son is safe, supported and celebrated.

Employee Engagement Survey

Aspect holds a biennial Employee Engagement Survey. To note in the 2017 survey is the high result in Passion and Engagement category which is 8% higher than is typical for other non-profit organisations. This means that Aspect's staff love what they do.

Employee Engagement Survey Results



We believe in Aspect's values. (97%)



We believe in 'a different brilliant'. (96%)



We consider Aspect to be an ethical organisation. (91%)



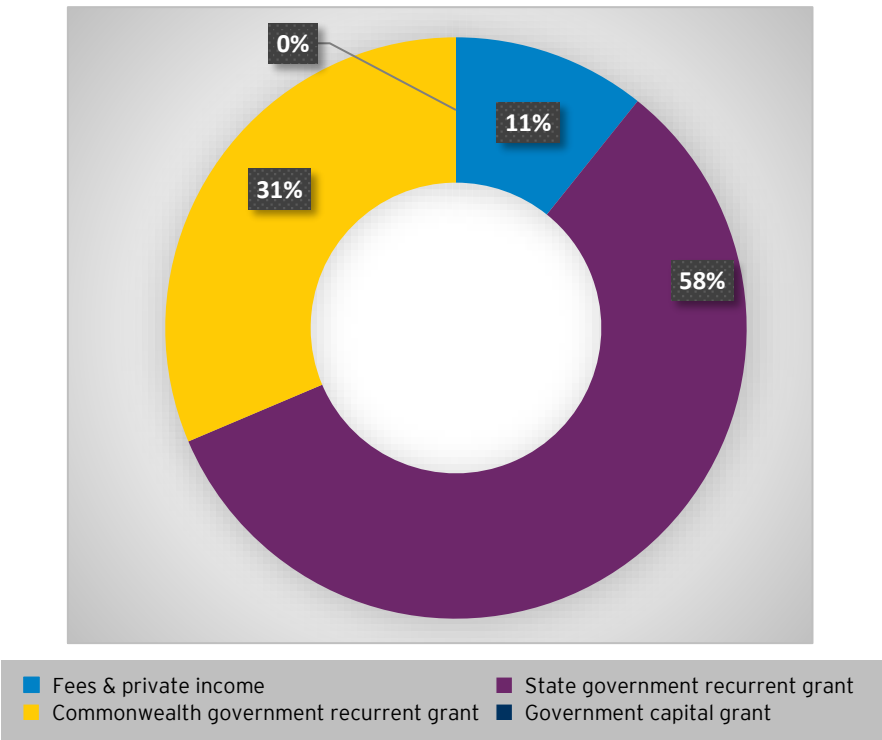
We value the help and support of our colleagues. (90%)



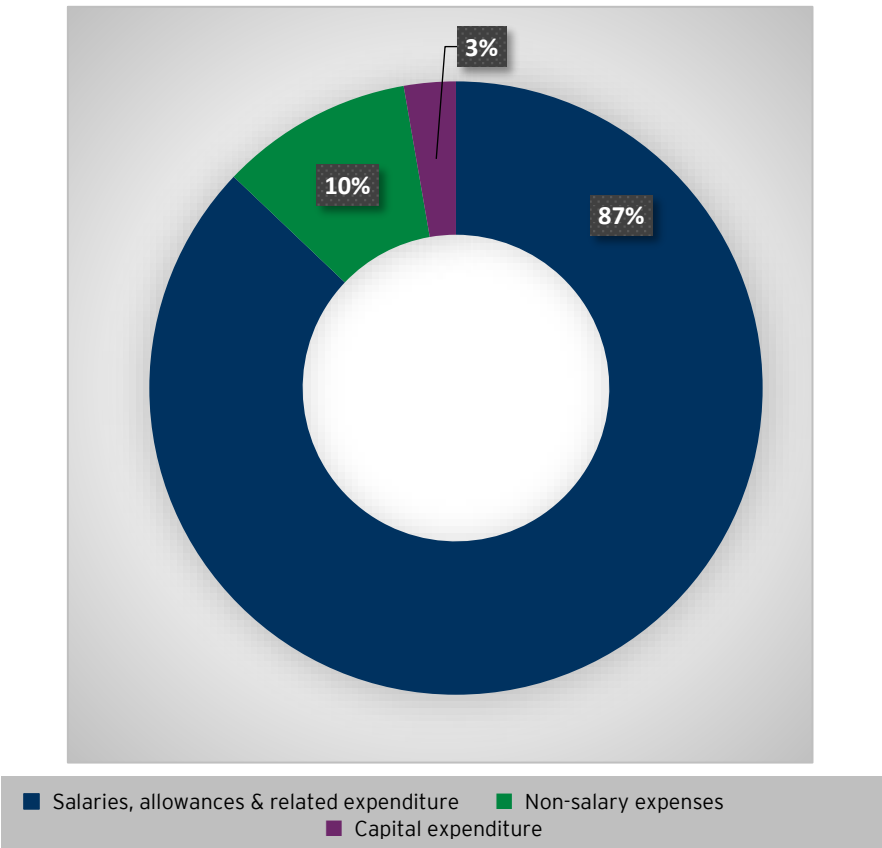
"Vern Barnett is an incredible school. We are grateful for every teacher and staff member there." (parent)

Financial information

Recurrent/capital income



Recurrent/capital expenditure





a different brilliant®

understanding, engaging & celebrating the
strengths, interests & aspirations
of people on the autism spectrum

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