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Senior playground at main campus

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional custodians of the many lands and cultures of the places in which we live and work.

**Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)** is the country's largest service provider for people on the autism spectrum. Our specialised, evidence informed schools program is one of the largest in the world, with additional services that include information and advice, diagnostic assessments, behaviour support, parent and family support, and adult programs. We share evidence-informed autism practice and applied research nationwide.

Aspect schools provide specialised evidence-informed programs for children aged 4 to 17 on the autism spectrum, who require an autism specific program.

The primary focus of the schools is to equip students with the skills to become as independent as possible and enable them to transition into more inclusive settings. This is achieved through the application of the Aspect Comprehensive Approach. At the centre of the approach is the Autism Initiatives' (UK) Five Point Star to support autism-specific person-centred planning and respectful and positive relationships between the educator and student. It also focuses on the following elements: Individual Planning; Family & Community Engagement; Learning & Participation; Positive Behaviour Support; Structured Supports; Transition & Inclusion; Specialist Collaboration; and Health & Wellbeing.



# Our Purpose

*a different brilliant®*

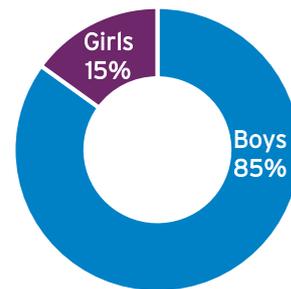
understanding, engaging & celebrating the strengths, interests & aspirations of people on the autism spectrum

# Message from the principal

Aspect schools all share Aspect's Vision to offer 'the best opportunities for individuals on the autism spectrum', through the delivery of evidence informed programs which are person-centred and family focused. At Aspect Vern Barnett School, we pride ourselves on our team work with families, students and professionals to create an individualised learning program for each and every student.

**Aspect Vern Barnett School** provides education for 114 students on the autism spectrum

across our six sites. Class groups are small, with a high teacher to student ratio and a teacher's aide appointed to each class. 51 primary age students are enrolled at the main school site at Forestville, with 54 primary school aged students enrolled in the surrounding satellite programs at Lane Cove, St Ives, Mona Vale, Eastwood, and Forestville. Additionally, there are nine students from years 7 to 10 enrolled in the High School Life Skills Program at the Forestville main campus.



Our aim at all our sites is to equip our students with the skills to become as independent as possible, within a safe learning environment, and provide them with a range of rich and meaningful learning experiences. We do this through focusing on their strengths and interests, and valuing that each student is a different brilliant®. We support our students to develop the necessary skills to experience successful transition and inclusion in their next educational setting, and within their local community. We provide support to students, families and schools with a robust transition program.

We place great value in professional learning that is focused on strengthening staff practices in autism and education provision. The focus of our professional learning this year has been on the curriculum and following the Aspect Comprehensive Approach, which maintains a lens of Individual Planning, Specialist Collaboration, Positive Behaviour Support and Structured Teaching Supports. To find out more about the ACA that underpins Aspect Education, please visit the Aspect website <https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/about-aspect/who-we-are/aspect-comprehensive-approach>



Aspect Vern Barnett School would like to thank everyone who supported the school by making a donation, taking part in fundraising or in volunteering their time. This has allowed us to enrich our students experience with us and provide more of the specialised resources they need. The school was able to upgrade our technology, install new playground equipment, buy literacy resources and provide new equipment for our student kitchen.

Thank you to our school community for the ongoing commitment to and support of our school.

Should you wish for any more information about our school you are welcome to make contact.

**Anna Brady**

On behalf of Acting Principal

# Message from the P&F

*The Aspect Vern Barnett School Parent & Friend committee* is dedicated to assisting with raising essential funds for our school. It is a great way to get to know and support other families while on this interesting journey of autism. In our regular meetings, we plan upcoming events that can engage families and communities which results in fundraising successes. Working towards a common goal, our families can share their experiences and support each other at various organised events.

Fundraising events this year included the Chocolate drive, Run Forest Run cake stall, Mothers' and Fathers' Day raffles, Bunnings BBQ, Westfield's Christmas wrapping event, Entertainment Book plus more.

Proceeds raised during 2019 were spent on playground equipment, teaching resources and educational materials for the school. Also a traditional end of year collaborative function including staff and family plus a 2019 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 2020 and providing the best possible environment for our students to develop and grow.

*Renata Tacadena*

P&F President



Part of the fundraising proceeds was spent on playground equipment



## Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

Aspect Vern Barnett School values the development of Literacy and Numeracy skills, and as such, we offer a quality education program that encompasses both the individual's areas of need from their Individual Plan, in conjunction with an academic program from the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). The school uses a multi-disciplinary team approach, working collaboratively with families to develop the best possible outcomes for the students.

Our students are encouraged to enjoy listening to and reading texts and using language to express themselves as writers and speakers. Reading programs are individualised to suit the needs of each of our students.

We also recognise that Numeracy skills are of vital importance for our students to develop the logical thinking and reasoning strategies they require to solve problems, make sense of numbers, understand time, and for everyday activities like cooking, reading receipts, reading instructions and even playing sport.

Assessment forms an integral role in developing a good understanding of how to approach each student's learning and is ongoing. We use a range of practical and formal assessments appropriate to the needs of each student. The NAPLAN (National Assessment Program) may be one such an assessment used amongst others to gauge the progress of our students and inform next steps in their learning journey.

### Literacy and Numeracy Assessments

For NAPLAN results, please refer to My School website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)

## Senior secondary outcomes

### Record of School Achievement

No student was awarded a formal Record of School Achievement credential in 2019.

### Higher School Certificate

Aspect Vern Barnett School was not accredited for the HSC in 2019. 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 2019:

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
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
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	All
CPR training - skills to provide Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	39
First Aid - knowledge and skills to help an ill or injured person until emergency help arrives	6
Staff Induction - new staff participated in the Aspect New Starters Day and onsite school specific induction programs.	All new starters

Description of professional learning activity	No. of staff participating
Supporting people on the autism spectrum using the 5 Point Star (adapted from Autism Initiatives UK) person-centred framework	All
Aspect Comprehensive Approach (ACA): Positive Behaviour Support	All
ACA - Individualised Planning	All
Workplace bullying prevention	18
Asthma Australia Training	40
Safeguarding the people we support	8
Positive Partnerships' Introduction to autism	14
Feedback & Complaints Handling	All
Anaphylaxis	43

## Teacher accreditation

Level of accreditation	Number of Teachers
Conditional	1
Provisional	7
Proficient Teacher	27
Highly Accomplished Teacher(voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	35

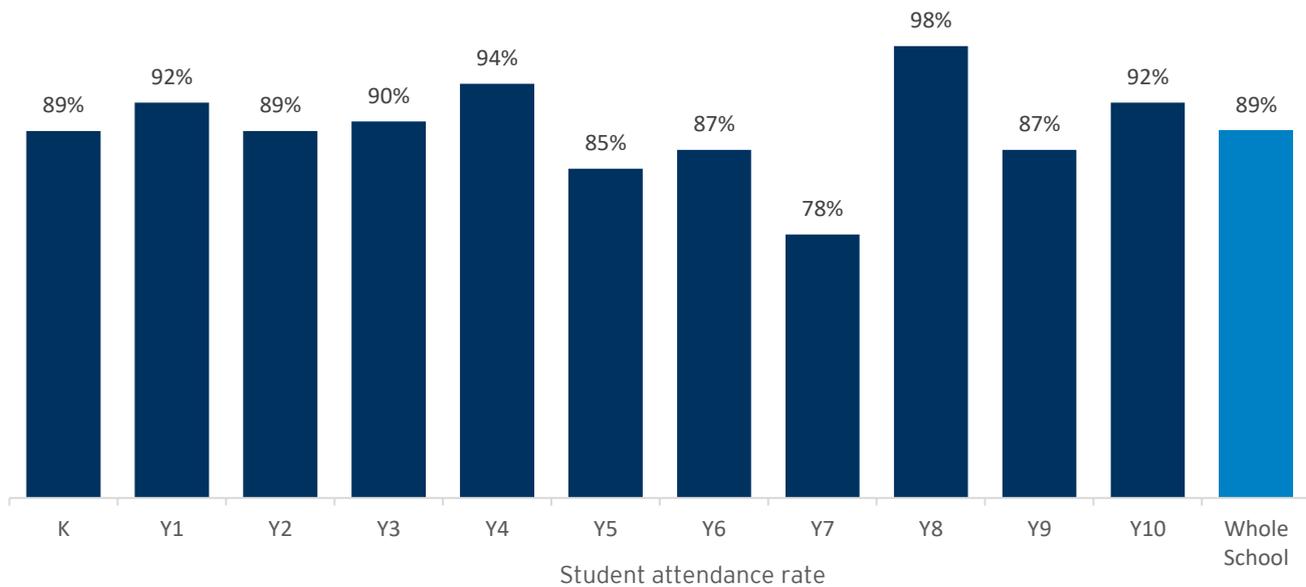
## Teacher qualifications

All teachers have teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines.

# Workforce composition

Composition of Aspect Vern Barnett School staff is documented on the My School website [www.myschool.edu.au](http://www.myschool.edu.au)

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



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

## Student attendance rates

Kinder	89.1 %	Year 6	86.6 %
Year 1	91.5 %	Year 7	78.0 %
Year 2	88.7 %	Year 8	98.4 %
Year 3	90.4 %	Year 9	86.5 %
Year 4	93.5 %	Year 10	91.9 %
Year 5	85.1 %	Whole School	88.9 %

## Management of non-attendance

Aspect Education has developed a work instruction to ensure compliance of the Aspect schools with school attendance requirements for compulsory school-aged students as outlined by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) or the South Australia Education Board.

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

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

## Retention of Year 10 to Year 12

Aspect Vern Barnett School has enrolment up to year 10 in 2019. This part of the report is not relevant to the school.



## 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

Aspect completed a review of all its policies in 2019 to update the references in the External Framework section. Previously the external framework had only referred to the Disability Standards for Education. With this review the relevant NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and South Australia Education Board standards are referenced.

The content of the policies/procedure itself have not changed significantly with the exception of the Safeguarding the people we support policy which was reworked. Following reviews by the Aspect Safeguarding Committee the 19 elements that underpinned the Aspect Culture of Safety and Wellbeing were reviewed and replaced with the 10 principles to align with the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Child Safe Organisation Principles. These 10 principles now guide the Aspect Culture of Safety and Wellbeing and the policy was updated to reflect this change.

Summary of policy	Changes in 2019	Access to full text
<p><b>Student welfare</b> 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. It is essential that each individual's dignity of risk is respected and supported in their decision making processes. Aspect facilitates each student's meaningful choice and control to maximise their independence; and minimises the risk to the individual or others wherever possible.</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>Nil significant changes were made in 2019 with exception of the Safeguarding the people we support policy which was reworked to align with the Australian Human Rights Commission's National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.</p>	<p>The full text of Aspect policies Person centred approach and recognition of value status; Risk management framework; Duty of care and dignity of risk; and Safeguarding the people we support can be accessed by request from the school principal or from Aspect's website <a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect">https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect</a></p>

Summary of policy	Changes in 2019	Access to full text
<p><b>Anti-bullying</b></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"> <li>bullying is about the misuse of power in relationships</li> <li>bullying is when someone experiences repeated verbal, physical and or social behaviour that causes harm</li> <li>bullying is mean and can be very hurtful</li> <li>there are different kinds of bullying</li> <li>no kind of bullying is ever OK</li> <li>bullying should always be reported</li> <li>adults will do all in their power to take it seriously and deal with it</li> </ul>	<p>No changes were made in 2019</p>	<p><a href="https://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/resources/practical-tools-information-sheets/bullying">https://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/resources/practical-tools-information-sheets/bullying</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/uploads/bullying_flyer-may_2018.pdf">https://www.positivepartnerships.com.au/uploads/bullying_flyer-may_2018.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>Discipline</b></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 (PBS) 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>Nil significant changes were made in 2019</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><a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect">https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/aspect</a></p>
<p><b>Complaints and grievances resolution</b></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>Updated in line with Education and NDIS Standards.</p> <p>Easy English resources and pictorial tool to support communication of feedback and complaints were developed.</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><a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/feedback-and-complaints">https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/feedback-and-complaints</a></p> <p>The Feedback and Complaints brochure can be downloaded from our website</p> <p><a href="https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/uploads/documents/Governance/Aspect-Feedback-and-Complaints-Brochure-Oct-2019.pdf">https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/uploads/documents/Governance/Aspect-Feedback-and-Complaints-Brochure-Oct-2019.pdf</a></p>



## School determined priority areas for improvement

Area	Priorities	Achievements
Teaching and learning	Continued implementation of the National Curriculum	Embedded curriculum across all learning opportunities.
	ACA	Embed the ACA Model across the school.
Family Engagement	Improve parent communication	Integrated a communication app for use between school, teachers and parents.
Staff development	Improve staff knowledge and skills in Positive Behaviour Support	MAPA training and PBS Plan report writing training and support.
	Improve staff understanding of curriculum and NESAs requirements	All staff improved skills in teaching to meet NESAs requirements.
Facilities and Resources	Improve the playground facilities	New senior playground, with more age appropriate gross motor equipment.
Student achievement	Improve individual planning processes	Review IP processes, and review of accurate assessments across the school.
Vocational Education/Work Education	Improve work education tasks to assist students in the development of skills required for future work placement.	Senior students taught skills in office work, filing, sorting, matching and processing.



## 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 promotes self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility.

The structure of the school's satellite program provides opportunities for students to participate in classes and cultural activities with host school students, particularly during Harmony week, National Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week.

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

### Student Individual Plans

Every student at Aspect Vern Barnett School has an Individual Plan (IP). The IP is developed in collaboration with each student and their family. It incorporates a student's strengths, interests, goals and aspirations. Students, parents and teachers work as a team to achieve the goals.

### Family & Student Feedback

There are other formal and informal opportunities to provide feedback to the school. One opportunity is an annual customer satisfaction survey sent to all families. Just under two thirds of respondents indicated they would recommend Aspect Vern Barnett School. Comments included that Aspect Vern Barnett is an "excellent school".

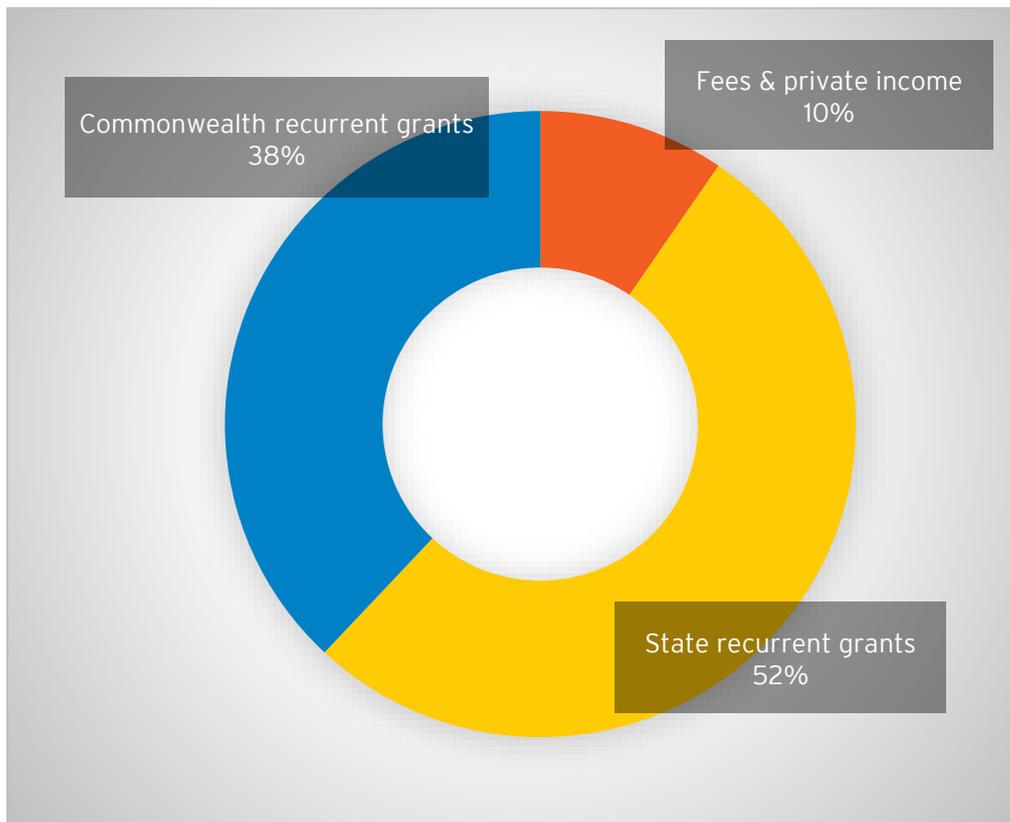
Informal feedback from families is received by email, in person and by letter throughout the year. These are well summarised by a comment from one parent about the "outstanding support" her son had received at Aspect Vern Barnett particularly mentioning the dedication of the teachers.

### Employee Engagement Survey

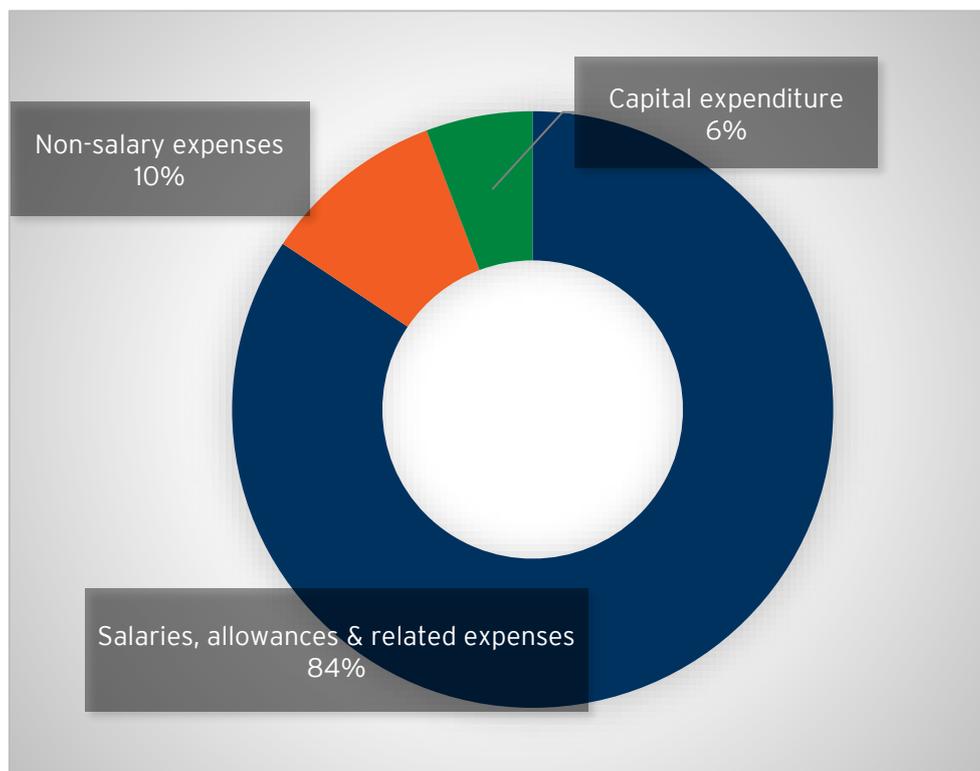
Aspect holds a biennial Employee Engagement Survey - that latest survey being held in 2019. Some areas of note from that survey was that 98% of Aspect Vern Barnett School staff felt supported by their colleagues and 98% were passionate supporters of Aspect's A Different Brilliant vision.

# 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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