



Forestville  
**MONTESSORI** School

*Thriving beyond...*



# *Annual Report 2018*

**FORESTVILLE MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

1 Angel Place,  
PO Box 55, Forestville  
NSW 2087

# Exciting times ahead for Forestville Montessori School

“We are the sowers-our children are those who reap. We labour so that future generations will be better and nobler than we are.”

Dr Maria Montessori

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# About FMS

## Message from the Chairperson and the Principal



### 2018 snapshot

Forestville Montessori School or FMS as we affectionately call our school, has been in continuous operation since 1980. In 2020, we will celebrate a significant milestone in offering world renowned Montessori education in Sydney Australia, for 40 years. Over this time, FMS has gained an enviable reputation for excellence in Montessori education that is marked by the School's commitment to employing the highest calibre of trained Montessori educators who turn their talents to inspiring and nurturing every child in our care.

Central to everything we do is our Montessori philosophy and our commitment to providing the highest quality of Montessori education through our Birth to age 12 programs. This is strengthened by our vision and our values.

2018 marked a significant year in establishing the School's strategic direction resulting in the publication of *Beyond Today*. This is our commitment to identifying opportunities that ensure we are dynamic and responsive to the ever-changing world we live in.

## Success highlights:

- Rich student experiences, enhancing the Montessori philosophy.
- Production of The Birth of the Universe- an original creative performance by the whole school inspired by one of the great Montessori stories
- Improving our student wellbeing and friendship program with the introduction of URStrong
- Offering the inaugural combined Montessori School Camp
- Furthering opportunities for staff in professional development
- Establishing the School's Leadership Team
- Introducing a new suite of community events
- Strategic planning project involving all stakeholders
- Designing and launching of our new website
- Continuously improving operational excellence
- Completing full scope Information Technology Review
- Welcoming Laurie Bimson, Guringai man, descendent of Bungaree and Elder of the Guringai tribe, as he led our students, parents and teachers through an Aboriginal Smoking Ceremony.

## Review of the school's constitution

Also in 2018, The Board of Directors finalised work to produce an updated Constitution. Members of the Peninsula Montessori Association Limited (PMAL) voted unanimously to accept the new constitution at the AGM.

## An end of year high

*The Birth of the Universe* finished the 2018 year on a high with the whole school united together to perform an original work inspired by one of the great Montessori stories. It was the culmination of a six-month project, a journey to bring together our whole school community in celebration of everyone's creative potential through music, dance and visual arts including digital animations. A standing ovation from our audience, joy and happiness all round.

*"Fantastic on all levels: music, performance, enthusiasm and engagement (from audience and performers). Congratulations on a terrific production."*  
Kareena Reidy, parent

*"I am so proud of the students for their performance tonight! And to the staff for adding their genius touches, especially tamlin for is video projections. It has been a truly amazing and creative production I am honoured to have been part of. Thank you for trusting me and giving me the chance to make the children flourish,"*

James Masden, Producer and Music Director



## Appreciation

FMS is a very special community and that means a lot in this day and age with hectic schedules and ever competing demands on people's time. We appreciate the contribution that each and every member of our community makes by bringing their own special skills, talents and their whole self to our school. To our parent Community Team, our Class Parents and parents who are involved in a myriad of ways, thank you. Congratulations to all our staff for successfully nurturing the children placed in their care by trusting parents. Your tremendous contribution never goes unnoticed, thank you. To our Board Directors who as volunteers donate significant time and expertise to FMS, thank you.

A huge vote of gratitude to Simon Harris who stepped down as Chairperson after the 2018 AGM following a significant tenure. FMS is indebted to Simon for his dedication, passion and strong governance/leadership. Simon presided over a significant period of growth and change.

A special thank you to all FMS parents who know the value of a Montessori education at FMS and partner with us, as together we strive to see every child *Thriving Beyond*.



**Chris Rehn**  
Chairperson, Board of Director



**Denice Scala**  
Principal



# About FMS

## Our identity

We are a Montessori School educating children for life and for peace.

## Our vision

To be the launchpad for every child to lead a fulfilling life.

## Our mission

To provide an exemplary Montessori education for all children by

- Presenting an enriched, intentionally prepared environment that embodies Montessori principles
- Nurturing individual growth and development
- Fostering independence, self-discipline, personal and social responsibility
- Enabling natural curiosity to thrive and develop into a love of learning
- Designing learning that promotes a child's own explorations, discoveries, imagination and creativity
- Making positive contributions to the world beyond school

## Our values

Our core values inform all that we do from our day to day practices to our decision making and long-term thinking, at every level of our school.

- **Respect** – Acknowledging, accepting and celebrating others' differences
- **Relationships** – Bonding with others, conducting ourselves with dignity and sincerity
- **Integrity** – Knowing right from wrong, taking responsibility for our actions
- **Scholarship** – Competent, confident and smart thinking that leads to empowered, capable doing
- **Citizenship** – Seeking ways to contribute to society locally and globally
- **Community** – Sharing a sense of belonging by connecting and collaborating







## Message from FMS community team

We kicked off 2018 with a BBQ in Term 1 to welcome all our families back to school and finished off the term with our annual Easter egg hunt and picnic in the park – a favourite amongst the children.

Term 2 was busy organising our movie night under the stars. After filling their tummies from the food stalls the kids kicked back on our school oval and watched Sing.

We also held our Book Fair which was very successful in raising much needed funds to re-stock the classroom libraries.

Our major fundraiser for the year was our annual Auction night. We held this in Term 3 and parents were treated to all you can eat wood fired pizza cooked on site while they browsed the many generous silent auction donations. The highlight of the evening was the live Art Auction of the amazing artworks lovingly created by our children. Overall we raised over \$12,224 towards our fundraising goals.

Term 4 is always a busy time so we organised a dinner for our lovely mum's and an end of year BBQ to celebrate another year complete.

We have a wonderful community at the school and many parents donated their time to help us, we couldn't have done it without them.

**Idette Warburton**

## From our students

“ Forestville Montessori is my favourite school for lots of reasons. I like it that in our school there are no uniforms, so you can wear whatever you want. You also get to choose where you sit, who you sit with and what you want to work on but also you have to manage your time properly, so you can get all your work done. We use materials, they help us understand the work that we’re doing. Our teachers guide us throughout the day and help us in transitioning to abstract concepts. .

Every day we do daily maths, practice with materials or abstractly, I do at least five sums, so I can sharpen my maths skills. Also, we do some reading, comprehension and spelling. We get lots of things to work on, so we never run out of stuff to do.

The classes are different to ordinary school class, because in our school we don’t put the one age group all in one, so it’s multi-age group classes.

The 9-12 class has camp every year. Camp is lots of fun, and we usually go to different places. For example, last year we went to Canberra and this year we went to Somerset Camp which is next to the Colo River, both very different places and experiences. The people there were really nice and helped you a lot.

We have Montessori trained teachers in our class, and specialised teachers like music, Japanese and art. We have lots of fun here and I’m sad that I’m leaving Forestville Montessori to go to High School next year. ”

**Jarrah Olsen – 2018 Forestville Montessori  
School Graduate**

“ I am a Year 6 student, I have come such a long way in Montessori, I started in the 0-3 classroom and worked my way up to the 9-12 classroom. Working here is such a privilege.

I love how we students can work together and have the freedom to sit where we want and choose which materials we would like to work with each day.

I love how I can use different materials to help me understand new or complicated works.

On a Wednesday during summer we go to Manly beach for Surf Education. We have grown a garden at the front of our classroom and we have produced a watermelon, (which was ruby red and delicious) corn, beans, figs and so much more. I love our fresh produce from the garden because we always get to eat and cook it!

We also learn Japanese, music and art. I remember one of my very first Japanese lessons with Lau Chi, Year 1 in the 6-9 class. We learnt the alphabet and wrote it in English, I remember playing lots of games.

I love FMS and the way we learn things and I’m definitely going to miss this school when I leave.

A massive thank you to all the people and teachers that have taught me through the years, I really appreciate it. ”

**Nina Terrey – 2018 Forestville Montessori School Graduate**



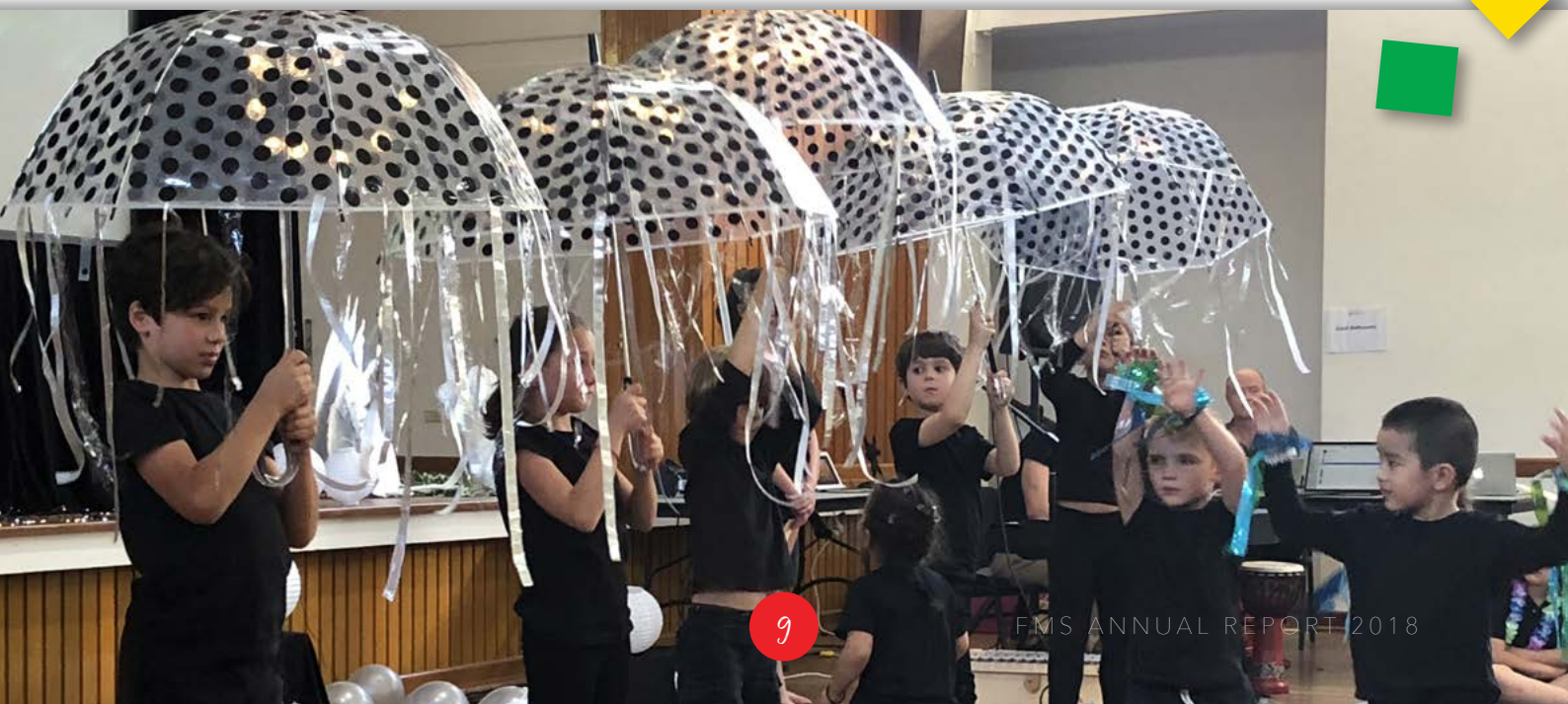


## Students at FMS

The school has approximately 156 students in total from the Birth-3 and Pre-Primary Programs (0-6 years of age) to the Lower and Upper Primary Programs (6-12 years of age). There are currently 84 students in Primary, 33 girls and 51 boys throughout the school. FMS students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, including many with language backgrounds other than English. Students with special learning needs are fully integrated into our program, accessing all aspects of the curriculum.

FMS operates a Birth-3 Program from 3 months of age, a Parent Toddler program from 18 months, a Toddler Program from 2-3 years and a Pre-Primary Program for 3-6-year old. The school attracts Pre-Primary students from its Parent Toddler and Toddler Program and Primary students from its three Pre-Primary Program classes. The school follows an authentic Montessori philosophy and practice of education, attracting families who wish to educate their children within this philosophy and methodology.

Our students mainly reside in the Northern Beaches and Upper and Lower North Shore in Sydney. During 2018, we also welcomed international students from New Zealand, America and Asia.





## Assessment in a Montessori School

### Student outcomes in standardised testing

“We continue to afford the children the opportunity to learn through the activity of the mind.”  
Maria Montessori

When it comes to assessments, Montessori teachers don't rely on standardized tests; they rely on the power of observation. They have notebooks brimming with evidence of what their students have mastered, need more support with, and are curious about. They are constantly recording what they notice children working on, how that work is being executed, and ideas they might have in anticipation of a child's next steps.

#### *Assidere: Latin meaning is to sit beside*

Montessori teachers exemplify the Latin meaning of assessment, *assidere*, which means to sit beside. **Assessment** in a Montessori school means to sit beside the learner.

They sit beside a child and determine exactly what they know about a wide range of content areas.

Performance on NAPLAN is documented on the My School website.  
<https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/43869/naplan>



“The greatest sign of success for a teacher...is to be able to say, ‘The children are now working as if I did not exist.’”  
Maria Montessori

## FMS teachers are highly qualified

### What is the role of the Montessori teacher?

What, exactly, is the role of the Montessori teacher? How is it so different from that of any other teachers?

Sometimes it's easiest to begin by explaining what a Montessori teacher isn't.

A Montessori teacher is less like the traditional idea of an instructor, and more like a gentle guide. They don't consider it their job to give a child information. They rather lead children in the general direction and give them the tools they need to find the information themselves.

### Montessori teachers cultivate independence

In a Montessori classroom, rather than seeing a teacher at the front of the classroom giving the same lesson to every child, the teacher will be working quietly with individual children or small groups. While that is happening the rest of the children are free to spend their time doing the work that calls to them. A Montessori teacher works hard to create structures that allow children to be independent and to trust themselves as learners.

One large part of what a Montessori teacher does is to intentionally prepare a classroom environment that is developmentally appropriate, is inviting to children, and supports them on their journey to work independently. This environment is constantly changing in tiny ways as the teacher notices new and evolving needs of the students.





## Montessori teachers are trained to think like scientists

Parents should know that Montessori teachers are exceptionally well trained. Most have recognized Montessori credentials in addition to their university degrees. Here at Forestville Montessori School, Sydney Australia, all of our teachers hold one of the most highly regarded Montessori credentials, an Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Diploma. To be a certified AMI Teacher means a teacher:

- **Understands** child development and acts as a guide to help children find their natural path
- **Creates** a hands-on, self-paced, collaborative and joyful classroom
- **Transforms** lives by implementing the principles of Montessori education
- **Believes** in education that meets the child's physical, emotional and intellectual development
- **Guides** children to enthusiastically follow their interests and passions whilst developing strong academic skills, leadership, self-discipline, responsibility and independence
- **Trains** rigorously and has graduated with a set of high-quality skills
- **Connects** to a global network across numerous countries with trainers and teachers to continuously develop their craft

Montessori teacher certification programs are intensive and demanding; one might compare them to the equivalent of another university degree. These training programs don't just teach Montessori educators how to use the specialised materials; there is extensive coursework about Montessori philosophy, child development, and integrating the arts.

All of our Teachers at Forestville Montessori School hold Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Diplomas, which means that we have a consistently high-quality approach to teaching from Birth to age 12, all of our teachers speak the same language about child development and pedagogy.



## Montessori teachers think long-term

Students remain with their teachers for a three-year cycle. This means that teachers have the unique ability to consider the big picture when working with students. There is a natural tendency to allow the children to genuinely learn at their own pace. Getting to know a child and their family well over the course of a few years really supports this approach.

## Montessori teachers are often called 'guides'

...and for good reason. While children in Montessori classrooms have an abundance of choice in their educational pursuits, Montessori is based on the idea of 'freedom within limits'. It's the Montessori teacher's job to carefully craft those limits. Children rely on having a certain amount of structure in place. This gives them comfort and a safe place in which they can take risks and try new things. Montessori teachers set boundaries and then carefully help students navigate within them.

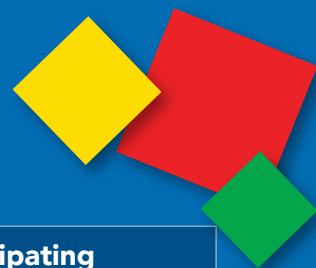
What if your child loves to read but tends to avoid mathematics? Their Montessori teacher will find ways to ensure the mathematics still gets done. Sometimes this involves a gentle discussion with a child about time management skills, priorities, or setting goals. We call these discussions, student conferences. Sometimes the teacher will find a way to integrate the child's interests into the less desirable work. Sometimes all it takes is a minor change in the environment. Montessori teachers gives children freedom, but they assist children in finding their way to success in this environment.

Montessori teachers value independence, self-reliance, and intrinsic motivation.

They also value cooperation, kindness, and strength in community.



## Professional Learning



Professional Learning	Staff Participating
Australian Museum Primary Science Workshop	3 educators
AIS Child Protection: Obligations in Identifying and Responding To Children At Risk	All staff – educators, administrators and leadership team
Allens Senior First Aid Course	All staff – educators, administrators and leadership team
URStrong	2 educators
MAF Montessori Refresher Course	15 educators
Primary English Teachers Association Australia "Writing the Future" Conference	1 educator
Montessori Geometry Workshop	14 educators
AIS NESA Registration and Accreditation Briefing: School Registration Update	2 educators
AIS NESA Registration and Accreditation Briefing: Curriculum	2 educators
Musically Montessori - online	3 educators
Autism Teaching Strategies and Behaviour Support	1 educator
Sporting Schools Workshop: Cricket	1 educator
Sporting Schools Workshop: Netball	1 educator
Sporting Schools Workshop: Football	1 educator
Munch and Move Workshop - online	2 educators
Early Childhood Australia Conference	1educator
Early Childhood Australia Leadership Conference	1educator
Museum of Contemporary Art Teacher Briefing	1educator
Assistants to Infancy Workshop	1 educator
MAF Montessori Workshop: Reading	1educator
Strategic planning - LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Workshop	16 educators and leadership team
Charge Syndrome Workshop	16 educators and leadership team
MAF Montessori Quality Assurance Workshop	16 educators and leadership team
Montessori Leadership Network	2 educators
MAF Montessori Innovation Summit: Montessori For the Digital Symposium	1 educator, 1 administrator and leadership team
MAF Montessori Childbirth & Parenting Workshop	1 educator
Magical Movement Course-online	2 educators
MAF Montessori Marketing Summit	1administrator
Head To Head Leadership forum (2 days)	Principal
AMI 6-12 Montessori Teachers Alumni Group Meetings	3 educators

The average expenditure on professional learning per staff member in 2018 was \$1,360



## Teacher Accreditation Authority – TAA

FMS has engaged the Association of Independent Schools of NWS as their teacher Accreditation Authority for Proficient Teacher. By way of background:

- NESAs has approved AISNSW as a Teacher Accreditation Authority to make Accreditation Decisions in accordance with Part 4 of the ACT
- The School may only engage teachers who have gained Accreditation
- The School has requested AISNSW to provide Accreditation Services
- AISNSW has appointed authorised Delegates to make Accreditation Decisions
- An Agreement sets out the terms on which AISNSW will provide the accreditation Services to the School through ISTAA.

## Teacher attendance and retention

Teachers at FMS are highly qualified, dedicated and committed educators. The teaching attendance rate is high and similar to previous years. FMS is known as a school that retains its excellent staff. Every year, of course it is natural for some staff to move to new positions, make changes in their lives, achieve promotions or retire. In 2018 FMS retained 89% of its teaching staff from the previous year.

## Staff performance and review

Teachers share a significant responsibility in preparing young people to lead successful and fulfilling lives. Both national and international evidence indicates that a teacher's effectiveness has a powerful impact on students, with a broad consensus that teacher quality is amongst the most important factor influencing student success. Regular staff reflection is therefore an ongoing part of our review.

We seek for staff to reflect in an open and ongoing way on their professional responsibilities and performance both towards their students and colleagues. 2019 will see FMS taking one step further as we align the Montessori standards with the Australian Professional Standards for teachers. This will be followed by the introduction of a formal feedback tool for staff to reflect on their practice.





## Staff benefits

FMS is known as a great place to work. Superior working conditions for staff mean that we continue to retain great teachers and attract talented educators when we are seeing to recruit. We actively strive to recruit educators with the highest standard of Montessori credentials.

The administration team is structured to ensure teaching staff are provided with support that reduces administrative loads in favour of time to plan and teach. Assistant educators work in every classroom from Birth to Year 12 providing ongoing support to prepare the environment and work with children.

In striving to provide benefits for our staff we offer:

- An attractive award rate that has seen year on year percentage increases above inflation
- Access to flexible remuneration packaging
- Human Resources practices to support different needs
- Complimentary, confidential Employee Assistance Counselling services
- Negotiated leave, long service leave provisions, external observations at other Montessori schools and regular social events

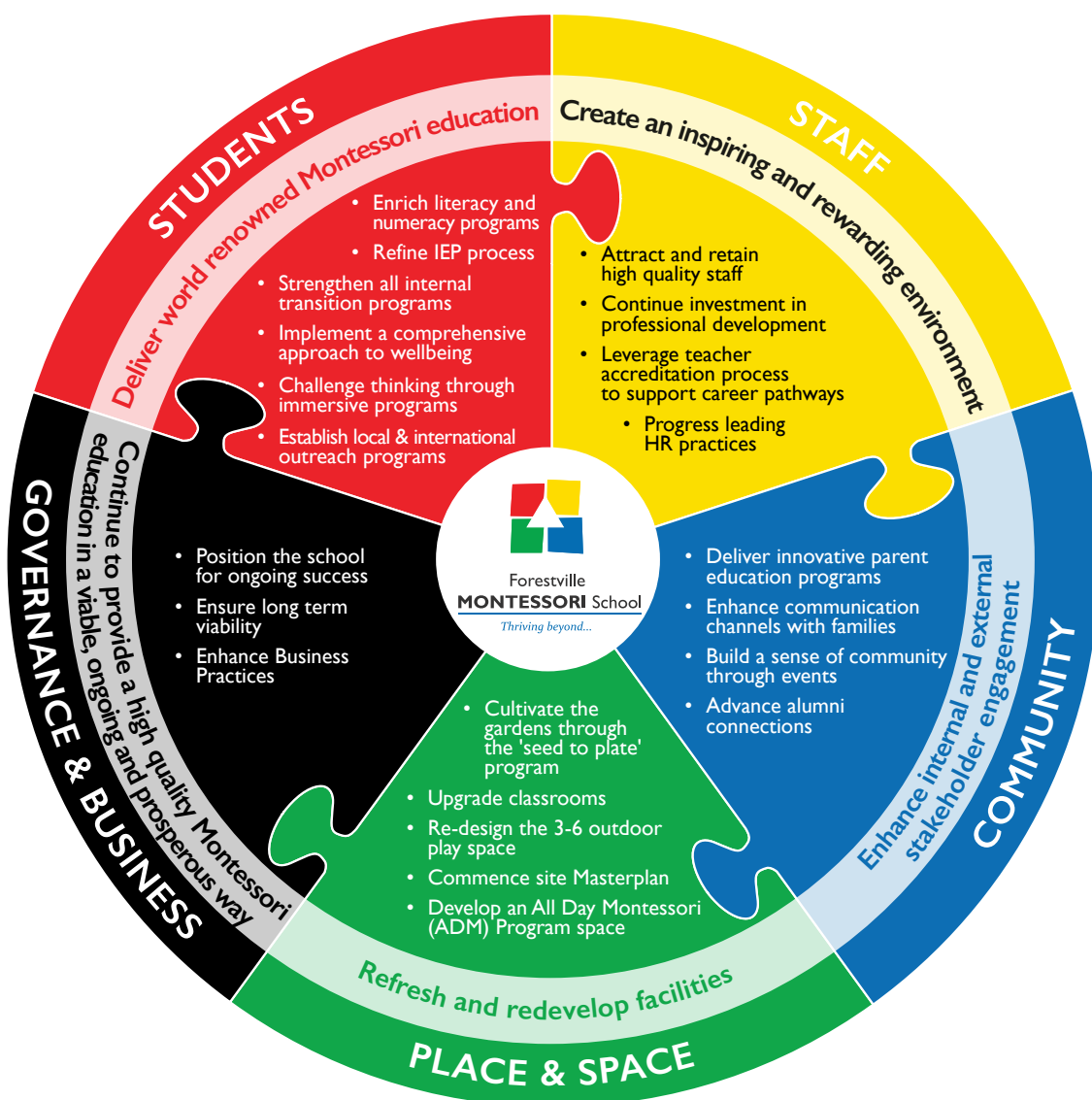
Thank you to the FMS staff who work tirelessly to see that our students are *Thriving Beyond*.



# Achievements, highlights and next steps

## Beyond Today

### Strategic Plan 2018-2023





## Exciting times lie ahead for Forestville Montessori School

Central to everything we do is our Montessori philosophy and our commitment to providing the highest quality of Montessori education through our Birth to age 12 programs. This is strengthened by our vision and our core values.

To make this happen, we focus on aligning all that we do in our day to day practices to support our students in their growth and development, our staff in their passion for education and our parents on their journey.

*Beyond Today*, the title of our strategic plan is our commitment to identifying opportunities that ensure we are dynamic and responsive to the ever changing world we live in.

Our whole school community, including our students contributed to the formation of the Strategic Plan, providing valuable insights. Importance has been placed on:

- Maintaining a genuine Montessori approach in our educational offering
- Ensuring we continue to provide a balanced, well rounded, nurturing learning environment
- Continuing to engage highly experienced staff
- Strengthening our communication channels
- Fine tuning our business processes including financial stability

### The strategic plan is organised under five key priorities:



## Tracking our progress – current priorities and improvements already underway

### Students

#### Deliver World Renowned Montessori Education

Focus	Action
<b>Inclusive Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive Education coordinator employed to work with staff</li> <li>• Individual Educational Plans were revised and upgraded.</li> <li>• Process for inclusion of specialists and parents in IEP meetings strengthened</li> <li>• Literacy levels – every student aged 5-12 was assessed using Fountas &amp; Pinnell Literacy benchmarking assessment; full reports provided to Families. With ongoing follow-up as necessary and changes to literacy programs embedded in classrooms as needed.</li> <li>• All new children now assessed using F&amp;P</li> </ul>
<b>Student Wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• URStrong Program introduced for students in 6-12</li> <li>• Train the trainer model adopted with two staff members trained in the URStrong program that aligns with Montessori Grace &amp; Courtesy programs and NESAs syllabus expectations</li> <li>• Sporting Schools Grant received in Terms 1,2 &amp; 3. Money used to employ professional soccer and basketball coaches, equipment and offer Before School sports program introducing cricket, soccer, basketball and tennis.</li> <li>• Sport mentorship programs introduced with 9-12 students mentoring our 5 year olds in their sporting program</li> <li>• 9-12 students offered opportunity to lead Before School Sport programs</li> </ul>





**Challenging Thinking:  
Designing and  
introducing immersive  
programs**

- Shakespeare's World – working with professional actors from Sport for Jove, 9-12 students were immersed in works by Shakespeare for 3 days culminating in a roaming theatre production for their parents. This will now happen as part of the three-year cycle for 9-12 students
- *The Birth of the Universe* – every student was involved in creating an original performance inspired by one of the great Montessori stories. The final performance was a culmination of a six month project, a journey to bring the whole school together in celebration of everyone's creative potential through music, dance and visual arts including digital animations. Using different media, a performance of this nature will now occur annually.
- Digital Media – iPads and digital SLR cameras introduced to 6-12 year students using photographs and videos to produce animations later projected as performance backdrop

**Citizenship endeavours:  
Collaborating with the  
Montessori schools**

- Students from 6-12 attended the inaugural combined Montessori School Camp, Kincumber







## Staff

### Create an Inspiring and Rewarding Environment

Focus	Action
<b>Widening professional development opportunities offered to staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 professional development courses undertaken by staff</li> <li>• Expenditure on professional learning per staff member has significantly increased. From an average of \$154 in 2017, to an average of \$1,360 in 2018</li> <li>• Netball Level 1 coaching Certificate</li> <li>• Cricket Level 1 coaching Certificate</li> <li>• URStrong Train the Trainer – Friendology 101 Summit attended by two staff members</li> </ul>
<b>Continuing to invest in AMI Montessori Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 staff attended the Montessori Refresher weekend</li> <li>• Staff attended the Montessori Innovation Summit</li> <li>• 14 staff participated in Montessori Geometry – our inaugural Montessori course with NESA accreditation</li> </ul>
<b>Establishing the School's Leadership Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment of a Business Manager</li> <li>• Restructuring Administration function aligned with day to day and strategic intent</li> </ul>

## Our Community

### Enhance Internal and External Stakeholder Engagement

Focus	Action
Seeing an increase in parent attendance at events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trialled events at different times to allow working parents or parents at home with small children to attend.</li> </ul>
Connecting with the local community to increase involvement and 'front of mind' school of choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Began the social media campaign aimed at targeting our local community.</li> <li>• Advertised on existing social media channels with strong influence over local community.</li> </ul>
Delivering innovative and comprehensive parent education programs including exploring more family friendly ways to offer parent education about the benefits of a continuous Montessori education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased the frequency of parent information sessions in the evenings and some also held in the mornings after drop off.</li> </ul>
Introducing a fresh selection of community events aimed at expressing our gratitude for our parents and their contribution to school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held our first Mother's Day &amp; Father's Day events with great success and feedback from the community.</li> </ul>
Strengthening Alumni connections through introducing Alumni Q&A sessions for current families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2019 and beyond focus</li> </ul>
Enhancing the communication channels with parents; including introducing new ways to strengthen student transition between cycles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters distributed to families informing them about the upcoming transition of their child; staff collaborated on updating student transition process.</li> </ul>
Expanding communication channels to parents by increasing the number and quality of parent interaction points; increasing information provided; re-structuring parent/teacher conference days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Magic of Montessori Maths workshop for parents held in the evening</li> <li>• Parent strategic planning and marketing workshops conducted</li> <li>• Regular Parent Morning Tea updates</li> <li>• Changed the structure of parent/teacher conferences allowing staff to continue meeting with parents during school day for extended times whilst children completed immersive programs</li> <li>• Introduced multiple parent communication channels via internal email groups</li> </ul>



<b>Introducing an online newsletter distributed each term, called InFocus to promote initiative and tell good news stories.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distributed an InFocus online edition for each term during 2018.</li> </ul>
<b>Designing and launching a new website helping to increase our reach and grow our reputation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New FMS website launched.</li> </ul>
<b>Developing a comprehensive marketing plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of marketing budget was allocated to website design.</li> </ul>
<b>Increasing our social media presence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased our social media presence on Facebook and Instagram, growing the audience reach by over 300%.</li> </ul>

## Our Place and Space

### Refresh and Redevelop Facilities

Focus	Action
<b>Creating a place of beauty: Continuing to enhance the gardens, food growing and sustainability practices.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident horticulturist worked with all students throughout the year; gardens and food from the gardens used by children for cooking</li> <li>• Composting continues</li> </ul>
<b>Upgrading immediate welcoming area to the school</b>	The inviting natural environment was enhanced with the introduction of new plants, a green wall and herbs that families can pick to take home for their cooking; a student sculpture found a new home here; outdoor seating has been added. All centred around the existing water feature where the children can daily touch the running water and make handprints on the walls.
<b>Providing sun safe play areas</b>	\$10,500 expenditure on a new, full sized shade cover for 6-12 play equipment.

## Our Governance and Business

### Ensure FMS Continues to Provide a High Quality Montessori Education in a Viable, Ongoing and Prosperous Way

Focus	Action
Positioning the school for Ongoing success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business plan prepared for future introduction of All Day Montessori program</li><li>• Constitution reviewed, updated and accepted as presented at AGM</li><li>• Board Secretary reviewed all governance policies and practices</li></ul>
Business Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fully scoped review of IT provision and services across the campus in preparation for capital investment in 2019</li><li>• Ongoing focus on continuous improvement in systems to improve operational excellence</li></ul>





“Character education cannot be taught. It comes from experience and not from explanation.”  
**Maria Montessori**

## Educating children for life and for peace

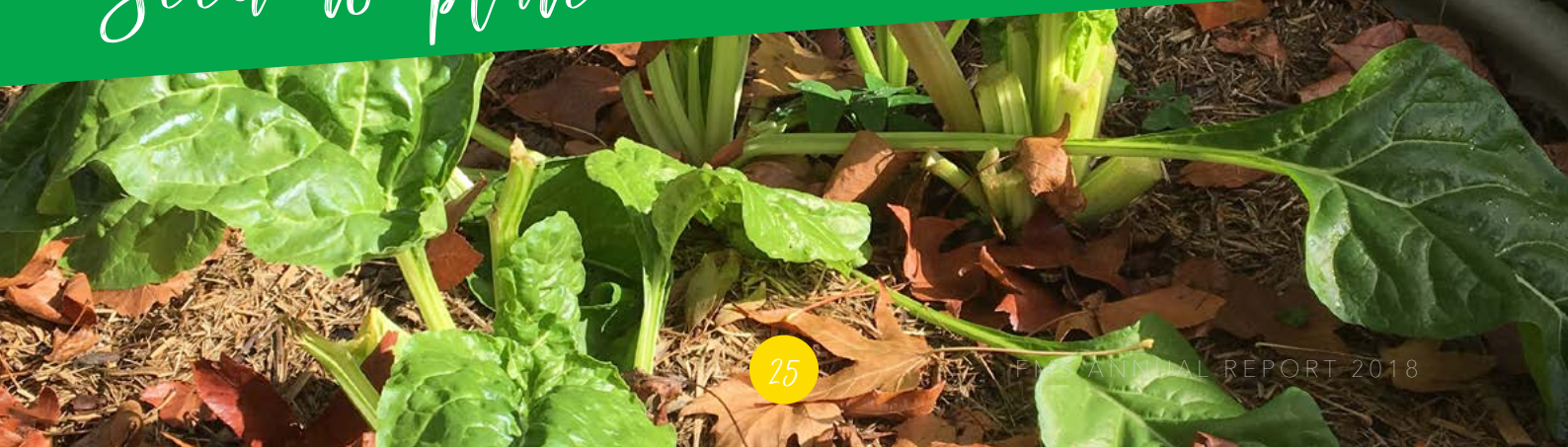
The Montessori method fosters respect and responsibility as well as social awareness in children. The critical three-year cycle and the integration of children with special learning needs offers a microcosm of society within which children have the opportunity to develop skills essential for interacting in the wider community. The environment promotes individuality, independence, interdependence, awareness of and consideration for the needs of other human beings, which leads to the appreciation of life.

A sample of the opportunities our students were offered during 2018:

*Seed to Plate* a program to grow food in our gardens and prepared healthy food celebrating the cycle from seed to plate.



*Seed to plate*





*Camp Quality* presented a puppet show to help dispel myths about children's cancer and bring laughter and positivity in support of a child with leukemia in the school.

*Sport for Jove* took up residency for three full days to bring Shakespeare alive for students in 9-12. This powerful and tailored Shakespeare experience for students and educators alike culminated in a roaming performance of multiple vignettes by students watched to the delight of parents and the wider community.

*UR Strong* was introduced as a whole-school friendship and emotional development strategy. The aim is to bring empowerment to students as they navigate their friendship scenarios with confidence and a focus on solution finding.

*A Combined Montessori Camp* was held at Kincumber, Central Coast, NSW Like a rite of passage, it was a wonderful opportunity for children to develop new skills, friendships and interests with other Montessori students from Canberra, Central Coast and Sydney schools. It was no ordinary camp with an emphasis on challenging outdoor adventures to build resilience and co-operation skills.



*Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN)* A group of students attended the conference in Rome, Italy. Communication, negotiation, leadership, social, and interpersonal skills whilst empowering them to make a difference towards a better world were all part of this experience.

*40 Hour famine* (World Vision) sees 9-12 students uniting with thousands of Australians to stand with young refugees around the world.

*Montessori philosophy and curriculum* including restorative justice, Cosmic Education, Grace & Courtesy, Timeline of Human Beings and Going Out opportunities.

*Aboriginal Smoking Ceremony and stone carving*  
Laurie Bimson, Guringai man, descendent of Bungaree and Elder of the Guringai tribe, led our students, parents and staff through a smoking ceremony. Then carved a tribal Totem – a butterfly stingray, with the students. See the finished stone carving in our outdoor reception area. Families walk past this space everyday.





*Maria Montessori's birthday* was celebrated by the whole school on 31st August to honour her significant legacy.

*Harmony Day* on 21st March is big day at FMS as we celebrate Australia's cultural diversity. Inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone is key to the day with parents joining us to share their cultures. Culinary delights from around the world are always a highlight.

*Jump rope for heart*, was once again a hit with students who participated in a fun, physical activity program focused on keeping kids healthy whilst raising funds to fight heart disease.

*Mother's Day & Father's Day* celebrations were introduced to show our appreciation for the achievements and efforts of mothers, fathers and carers. Handmade gifts from the children were given to families. High Tea was served for mothers, and fathers were treated to croissant and coffee for breakfast.

*Monti Market* was a student initiated event to raise money for the animals they would like to buy and care for in school.

Leadership opportunities are woven into the fabric of everyday life at FMS. Beginning in the Pre-Primary and continuing through the lower and upper primary, Montessori classes contain children of three age levels. This promotes leadership among the older children in the group and gives them the opportunity to become experts and share their knowledge and skills with the younger children who in turn, see the older children as their role models.





## What people say

### Feedback on our Parent Toddler Program



“What struck me the most when we joined the Parent Toddler Program, was being shown by Mairi exactly how much my small child was capable of. We really enjoy our weekly sessions at Forestville Montessori School, the calmness of the environment is perfect for Juliet, and for me, for that matter! The way the Montessori materials are set out encourages the children to make a conscious choice because they know where everything is located.”

**Genevieve Lang – Parent Toddler and Pre-Primary 3-6 Parent**



## Feedback from our Mother's Day high tea

“I'd been getting hints from my children in the days leading up to the morning tea about what we would eat and what might happen. When I walked in the array of delicious treats all lovingly cooked by the children looked even more amazing than I imagined. Jake had only told me that morning with great trepidation that he would be speaking, and it was so lovely to see the graduates speaking and getting involved. We learnt just how much they ALL love camp!

I don't think there were many dry eyes after we watched the wonderful video of some of our children talking about what they loved about their mums. It was a very thoughtful and touching tribute.

Most of all it was special to spend time with the other mums at the school and get to catch up over a nice hot tea, with some delicious treats. ”

**Idette Warburton – Lower & Upper Primary Parent**





“ The Mother’s Day morning tea was an enjoyable, social and almost tear jerking morning. The 9-12s, with the help of the staff, created a beautiful space with special China tea cups and delicious treats displayed beautifully, in a high tea fashion. Even a child care corner for the little ones, so all mums could truly relax.

The 6-9 class worked hard to create delicious lemon tarts and scones, complete with whipped cream and jam. The 3-6 classes added their touch with grown from seed snow pea plants and beautifully decorated paper doilies and even the 2-3 class joined in with biscuits. We were warmly welcomed in and the 9-12 children assisted with the preparing of our tea and ensuring the food on the table was kept supplied. The sandwiches and fruit as well as all the sweet treats were delicious and the morning was topped off by a lovely video of many of the children, telling why they love their mums. Thank you to all the staff who assisted. To all the children, Thank you! You all did a great job and based on how I felt and what I saw of the other mums, we all enjoyed ourselves and felt very special. ”

**Alexis Weidland – Pre-Primary & Lower Primary Parent**

## Feedback from our Father’s Day coffee and croissant morning:

“ The Father’s Day get together was a successful event. Congratulations to the staff involved & the children that participated! Dimitri enjoyed catching with other dad’s at the school, as the father’s don’t always get the opportunity to chat at school pick up / drop off.

I had lots of parents contact me and pass on positive feedback from the event!

The croissants and coffee were a hit! The favourite part of the event was the time spent in the class room with the children. Dimitri & I are looking forward to many more get together’s at FMS. ”

**Sabrina Domenis – Lower Primary Parent**







“Delightful well organised working class. Wish I was 20 years younger so I could undertake a career in Montessori 6-12. Lovely environment.”

**Sue Birdsall, Grandparent after a classroom observation**

“Students demonstrate excellent concentration/focus amidst the surrounding activity. Everyone knows what they are doing and get their work done without the teachers needing to push them.”

**Louise Arena, parent observation**

“Lovely interactions between students and between students and teachers. Students are engaged in their work.”

**Jessica Ip – parent observation**

“Wonderful morning. Loved the new immersive aspect to the observation. Thank you for the experience.”

**Nicole Sham – parent observation**

“What a beautiful class with a fantastic amount of space. I noticed a lot of communication, concentration and silence. As well as plenty of provisions for movement both inside and out. The adults were respectful and very accommodating for myself and the children. What a fanatically independent environment.”

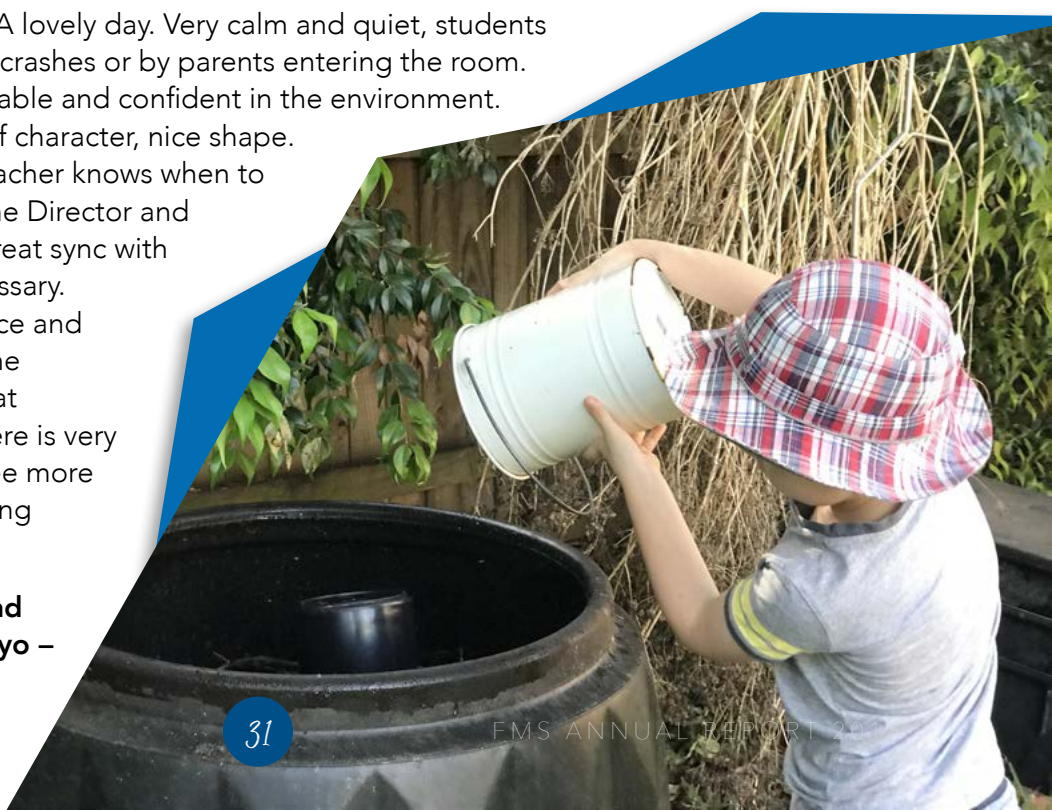
**Rebecca, Sydney Montessori Training Centre – student observation**

“Very peaceful environment. The student’s continual opportunity for choice was evident in the numerous activities I was able to see. The calmness and positive nature of the adults was reflective in the children’s communication with one another.”

**Ed Rasmussen, student observation**

“Thank you for having me! A lovely day. Very calm and quiet, students were not disturbed by bangs/crashes or by parents entering the room. Everyone seems very comfortable and confident in the environment. I love the classroom – loads of character, nice shape. It seems that the Assistant Teacher knows when to glide in, redirect students – the Director and the Assistant seem to be in great sync with minimal communication necessary. I appreciated the level of Grace and Courtesy, the refreshments, the greetings. It’s lovely to see that in the children. The atmosphere is very warm and caring – I love to see more children benefit from everything you do!”

**James Moore, Assistant Head at Montessori School of Tokyo – observation**



## What our staff say

“Working at Forestville Montessori School has been and continues to be a pleasure. The prepared environment for the children allows them to flourish personally and academically, helping them to realise their potential. The school's collegial environment encourages growth for everyone who is part of the school community; the teachers, the assistants, the administration, and office staff, are also allowed to grow personally and professionally.”

**Xarifa Gabales, 6-9 director**

“I feel very privileged to be a part of Forestville Montessori School for 22 years. As a parent, an assistant and now as a teacher. Denice Scala (our Principal) helps the professional, parents, co-workers join together for the development of the child. There is guidance in understanding and respecting of children and families from different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Being together in this specially prepared environment helps children to develop an awareness of their own rights, as well as the rights of others.”

**Christine Wright, 3-6 Director**

“I enjoy being a staff member at Forestville Montessori School. As Deputy Principal and Co-Director of the 6-9 I get to see the school as a whole and at the individual levels. It is great interacting with staff, children and parents across the whole school. I see the spirit of community in action on a day to day basis.”

**Anthony Milano, Deputy Principal and Head of Montessori Teaching and Learning  
Director 6-9 Environment**





# Our policies and procedures

## Enrolment

Forestville Montessori School welcomes children of all backgrounds and abilities. In the spirit of Maria Montessori, we provide child relevant programs to meet diversity, need and stage of development from 18 months to 12 years old. We are a non-selective, non-denominational school.

In 2018 we updated our enrolment policy to reflect the philosophical foundations of the School and appropriate pathways for every child. Applications are considered on a case-by-case basis.

There are no pre-requisites for continuing enrolment, provided school fees are paid and enrolment conditions are being met.

Our enrolment terms and conditions are available on our website.

## A safe and supportive environment

FMS wishes to promote a learning environment where teachers and students should be mutually supportive. Respect is one of our core values and we expect students and teachers to respect each other and not engage in conduct that undermines this mutual trust and support, and also reflects the philosophy and values of the school. FMS encourages consultation between all members of the community in matters which affect them.

## Conduct

FMS has in place a Code of Conduct for staff which may be supplemented from time to time by specific rules and directives. In 2018 it was updated to reflect the School's expectations of professional relationships between employees and families and appropriate use of electronic communications and social networking sites. Further updates will be made in early 2019 to reflect NESA expectations in relation to NSW Child Protection changes.



## Complaints and grievances

Processes for dealing with complaints and grievances raised by staff, students and/or parents are in place and available for community perusal. These processes incorporate, as appropriate, principles of procedural fairness.

## Policies supporting student well-being

Our Privacy Policy reflects the Australian Privacy Principles and other amendments made to the Commonwealth Privacy act. No other changes were made to our welfare or discipline policies in 2018.

Procedures in relation to the following policies and practices can be accessed via the School's mobile app or by contacting the school: 9452 2044

- Attendance and Absence
- Behaviour Management
- Communication Protocols
- Discrimination and Harassment
- Emergency Response Procedures
- Inclusive Education
- Privacy (which addresses the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 and Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012)
- Student Transitions

## Anti-bullying policy

Our Anti-bullying policy provides definitions and guidelines for responding to, and managing, allegations of bullying within the FMS community. The full text can be accessed via our website, mobile app and information booklets. No changes were made during 2018.

## Procedure for resolution of serious issues

We are committed to ensuring a harmonious, fair and just working and learning environment. We take our values seriously and uphold our conduct in all matters accordingly. Most issues raised can be readily resolved by direct contact with the relevant staff member.

From time to time, however, a significant issue, concern, grievance or complaint may arise. In this instance, please discuss the matter with the Principal who can advice and outline the process FMS will take to resolve the matter.



## Educational facilities and safe practices

FMS continued with a commitment to maintaining and enabling compliance with WHS Acts and Regulations, relevant council and government requirements and environmental and land use guidelines which include:

- The Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- The Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Privacy Act 1988
- Privacy Regulations 2013
- The Building Code of Australia
- The Environment Planning and Assessment Regulations 2000
- The Food Act 2003
- The Explosives act 2003
- Animal Research Act 1985

During 2018, our high level of compliance was achieved through procedures and activities including:

- First Aid Training and annual CPR refresher course
- Termly evacuation and lock-down rehearsals
- Staff follow-up on student incidents
- Annual Fire Safety audit conducted by qualified, independent professionals and Annual Fire Safety Statement produced annually



- All electrical equipment tagged and tested
- Further development to our staff induction processes
- Planned responses to serious incidents
- Regular updating of all first aid and student health records
- Access to optional flu vaccinations for staff during Term 2, introduced in 2017
- Further improvements to the collection of student medical information
- Injury management and monitoring of student incidents

## Safe and supportive environment – legislative requirements

Staff induction procedures for new staff and regular staff briefings throughout 2018, ensure our staff are aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to working with Children, Child Protection, mandatory reporting, reportable conduct, teacher accreditation and other FMs expectations.

Child Protection Policy and Procedures were again revised in 2018. A screening process (The Working with Children check) that is a prerequisite for all staff over the age of 18 who are engaged in paid or unpaid roles in child related employment must now be renewed every five years. FMS has a checking process in place. Updates were made to our Child Protection procedures in 2018 in response to the National Statement of Principles for Child-Safe Organisations.

Related compliance policies:

- Teacher Accreditation Act 2004
- Child Protection (working with Children) Regulation 2013
- Child Protection (working with Children) Act 2012
- Children and young Person (care and Protection) Regulation 2012
- The Ombudsman Act 1974





# Governance and business operations

## Governance

The School is owned and operated by The Peninsula Montessori Association Limited, a company limited by guarantee. In 2018 it had approximately 90 members. An invitation to become a member of the Company is provided to our parents annually.

There is a constitution for the School which complies with the Corporations Act. It sets out the objects of the company and provides provisions about membership, general meetings, voting, the appointment and removal of directors, audits and accounts, and other matters. Copies of the Constitution are available from our School's Business Manager.

## Business operations and financial summary

### Overall results

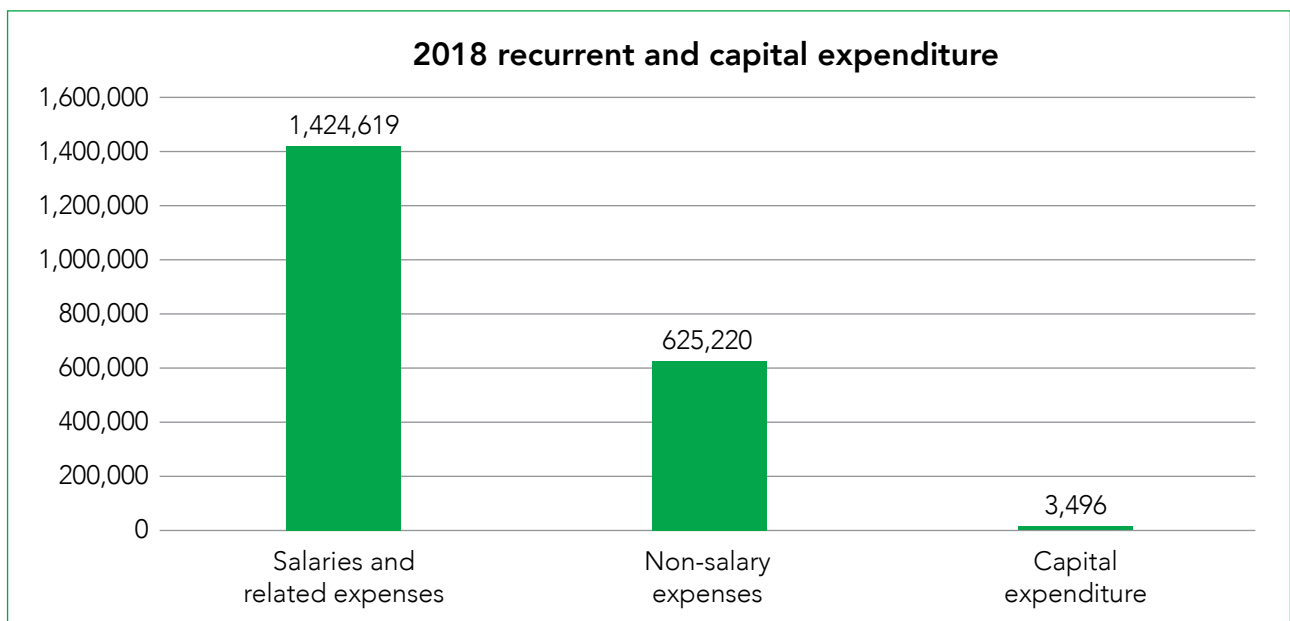
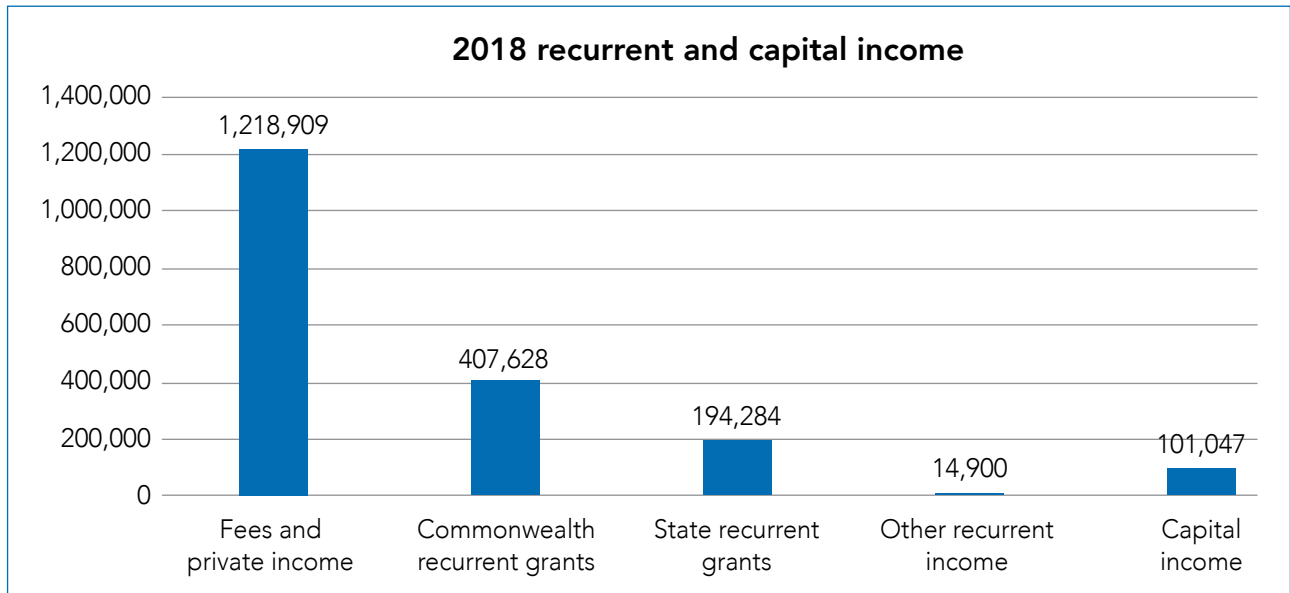
The School produced a healthy surplus of \$116k in 2018. The School's leadership team continues to work closely with the Board and Finance Committee to ensure sound financial practices and principles are in place to safeguard the ongoing financial viability of the school.

### Summary Income Statement

Income	2018	
Tuition and Other School Related Fees	2,168,656	72%
Government Grants	805,273	27%
Fundraising and Other Income	20,275	1%
	<u>2,994,205</u>	
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Employment Related	2,200,035	76%
Teaching Materials and Equipment	142,265	5%
Building and Grounds	145,511	5%
Office and Insurance	191,077	7%
Depreciation	147,429	5%
Interest and Bank Charges	46,568	2%
Fundraising	4,608	0%
	<u>2,877,493</u>	
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<u>116,712</u>	

## Australian Government reporting

These graphs depict income and expenses reported in the Australian Government's Financial Questionnaire for 2018. The School has used the overall audited financial results above, and followed the published guidelines relating to the classification, inclusion, and exclusion of income and expenses for this specific reporting.





Thank you to the FMS community of current and past parents, grandparents and friends who continue to fly the flag for FMS and the benefits of a Montessori education. We really do appreciate all that you do. To our Board Directors, who are volunteers giving an immense amount of time and expertise to FMS, thank you for your wise governance.

## ***Beyond Today***

In 2019, we look forward to the maturation of the strategic work underway. Planning has already commenced for the Inaugural Montessori Sports Carnival as part of our commitment to building relationships with the wider Montessori community. We will look to build partnerships with the Montessori Association of Thailand to offer global outreach programs for our students and staff. A new leadership role for a Head of Birth to 6 Community will be introduced. This role forms part of our commitment to focus on the all important early childhood years as well as expanding our offering in parenting programs.

In the response to the ever changing world we live in, we will be exploring ways to offer world class Montessori programs all year with a view to offering a new program: All Day Montessori

It will be a significant year for compliance as part of our five year school registration renewal with the NSW Educational Standards Authority. Curriculum work will focus on aligning the Montessori National Curriculum with the NSW outcomes. Staff planning and a way of tracking student progress will be greatly enhanced as we introduce an online tracking tool called Transparent Classroom.

There is much to look forward to as we strive ahead with our vision to be the launchpad for every child to lead a fulfilling life.

Forestville Montessori School is a thriving community with a very special heartbeat. We hope you enjoy reading this Annual Report and encourage you to contact the school on (02) 9452 2044 or visit our website [www.forestvillemontessori.nsw.edu.au](http://www.forestvillemontessori.nsw.edu.au) to find out more.

Follow us on social media



*The one thing we can  
never do is stand still.*

**Maria Montessori**



*Let us take your child  
above and beyond*

FORESTVILLE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

1 Angel Place, Forestville NSW 2087

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[www.forestvillemontessori.nsw.edu.au](http://www.forestvillemontessori.nsw.edu.au)