

Forestville
MONTESSORI School
Thriving beyond...

2019 Annual Report



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*“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

ABOUT FMS

Message from the Chair and the Principal



Photo: Chris, Denice & Anthony

2019 SNAPSHOT

What a wonderful time we all experienced at Forestville Montessori School (FMS) in 2019. Our Annual Report provides an overview of the achievements and progress of FMS during 2019. It was a year of joyful human endeavours, culminating in the management of weathering a fierce storm that destroyed many of our trees and resulted in the need to close the school for a day. This was followed by severe bushfire threats that saw us taking extra precautions to ensure our students' safety. We were all very grateful to the emergency services across NSW that assisted us and every organisation at this time.

SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

We have continued to enhance our exemplary Montessori education whilst also focusing on the rollout of our strategic plan, *Beyond Today*, with the following initiatives:

- Introduction of Transparent Classroom
- Planning well underway for the 2020 Graduates Journey of Service in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in partnership with the Montessori Thailand Association
- Partnering with Montessori schools to offer the inaugural Montessori Sports Day, which will continue in 2020
- Walking for Peace in a labyrinth built by students on-site
- Introduced Microeconomy units of work in 9-12
- Welcomed our chickens, Coicken, Cinnamon, Cackle and Caramel, to the FMS family
- Furthered professional development opportunities for staff including sponsoring Lauren Wright to complete her AMI 6-12 Diploma, and Ishbel Reich and Katrina McMurry also completing their Birth-3 AMI Assistants Courses
- Introduction of Grandparents' and Grandfriends' Day
- Increased our social media presence by over 500% on Instagram and 100% on Facebook
- Introduced a weekly blog, promoting thoughtful articles on all things Montessori, parenting and hot topics in education
- Hosted *Inside Montessori* screening at the Art Gallery of NSW, with over 90 guests in attendance and special guest, Associate Professor Bem Le Hunte, specialist in Creative Intelligence and Innovation, University of Technology, Sydney – part of our drive to bring the wider Montessori community together
- A bumper year for our Community Team with the successful introduction of initiatives including an organic fruit and veggie service for families, creating and selling beeswax wrappers, art auction, disco and book fair
- Obtained receipt of our Certificate of Registration from the NSW Education Standards Authority, granting registration under Part 7 of the *Education Act 1990* for Kindergarten to Year 6 from 1 January 2020 to 31st December 2024

"Imagination does not become great until human beings, given the courage, use it to create."

Dr Maria Montessori

This year saw us hosting the end of year performance on-site in a marquee. Being on-site made for easier logistics, although the space was more limiting. Nevertheless, our students once again delighted their audience with an original, creative performance inspired by Cosmic Education and the Great Stories and Lessons, **'Gifts of the Past: The Story of Civilisations'**. The hope of a peaceful future is drawn from the gifts of the past. The 'gifts' are all the things we have learned from humans who have come before us that strengthen our culture and society. Narrating, acting, dancing and singing as time travellers, students wove pre-historical times, ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, ancient Rome and ancient China into the finale of *A Thousand Years*.

APPRECIATION

FMS is a very special, vibrant community. We appreciate everyone's contribution. Thank you to our parent Community Team, our Class Parents and parents who are involved in so many ways. Congratulations to all our staff for their tireless dedication to our students. To our Board Directors, whose significant time commitment is often after hours, your donation of governance expertise is truly valued.

So all in all we stepped into the summer holidays with a joyful sense of achievement. A huge round of applause to everyone in the FMS community – we couldn't do this without you!

As we are writing the 2019 Annual Report in early 2020, it is impossible not to focus on the unfolding global pandemic triggered by coronavirus. Only time will tell how this health outbreak will unfold. One thing we do know for certain is the positive power of a strong community in times of crisis. FMS has a community that goes beyond strong and whatever happens, we will be there for our families.

"Of all things, love is the most potent."

Dr Maria Montessori

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 to find out more.

Follow us on social media.



Denice Scala
Principal

Chris Rehn
Chair, Board of Directors

Our Story

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



From our Community Team

“We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity.”

Dr Maria Montessori

2019 was a great year for the FMS community.

We started the year with our annual Welcome BBQ, and then held our first ever School Disco. We had 100 children from Birth-6 and 6-12 come along for a wonderful afternoon and evening of dancing. Term 1 finished off with our Annual Easter Egg Hunt at Poppy Park.

In Term 2 we held a Trivia Night, which was lots of fun for the parents and staff who attended.

In Term 3 we had our annual Auction Night, and for the first time we used an online platform for our silent auction. This meant people from far and wide could bid on silent auction items. We also held a raffle for the first time, we had stalls at local shopping centres in the lead up to our Auction Night and all our families sold (or bought) tickets as well. The live art auction was again a highlight, with some truly amazing artworks being auctioned off.

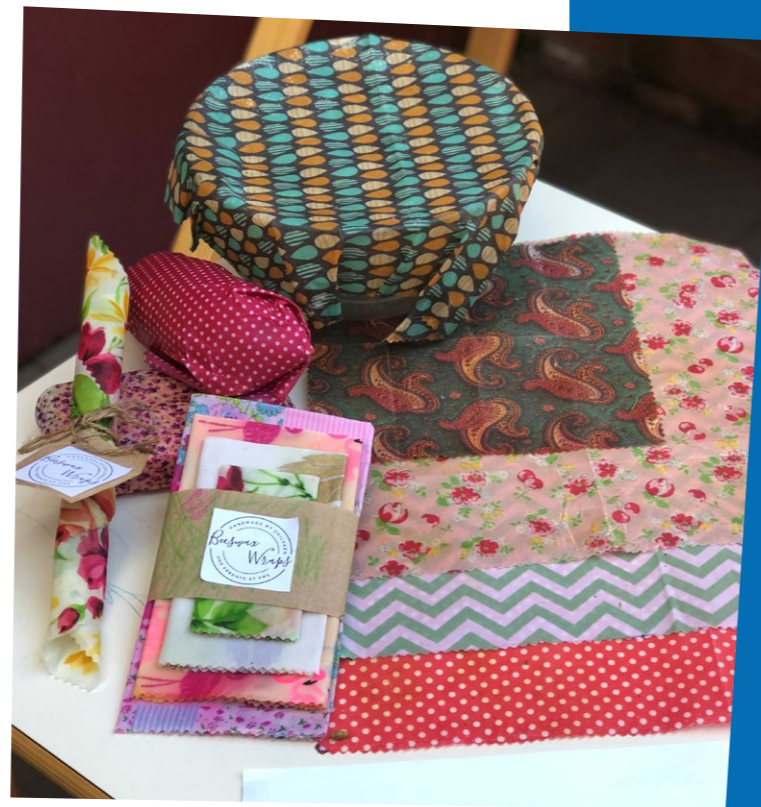
We finished off the year with a bang, holding a beeswax wraps fundraiser for the first time. This fundraiser was a beautiful example of the wonderful community we have at FMS. Children from 0-6 decorated the packaging, children from 6-9 packaged all of the wraps and children from 9-12 cut fabric and made the wraps in a series of working bees. A large number of parents also volunteered their time to cut fabric and make wraps.

Our last event for the year was our Book Fair, with lots of parents purchasing books and raising a very healthy amount for the school to purchase books as well.

Late in Term 1 we also established a Fruit and Vegetable Cooperative, run by parent volunteers with students from 9-12 assisting each week. Families are able to purchase a fruit and vegetable box on a weekly or fortnightly basis, filled with an abundance of organic produce at a seriously good price. A portion of the price is a donation and funds from this initiative were used to contribute to our Seed to Plate program. We also donated some of the funds to assist farmers who had been affected by the bushfires in late 2019.

We are so lucky to be part of such a wonderful community and we are so thankful for all of the contributions from FMS children, parents and staff throughout the year.

Anjali Sivapalan, Community Team Leader



From our Students

A collection of voices from current students:

“My family came to FMS because Maria Montessori was an Italian philosopher. I really like the way we learn. FMS is special because of the teachers and the environment.”

Daniel, 9-12 Years

“I came to FMS to learn. I really like the lessons and the teachers. FMS is special because everyone is kind and respectful to each other.”

Korbin, 6-9 Years

“We came to FMS because it is different and you are freer to make choices. The teachers are kind and easygoing. I like the company; the spirit and the way the teachers work with us. I like meeting my friends. The environment at school is very beautiful. The spirit of Montessori is very inspiring and helps children to learn the Montessori way.”

Maree, 9-12 Years

“We came to FMS because it seemed like a good school, and it is a good school. It is very friendly and nothing really bad happens. The community is very nice.”

Thomas, 9-12 Years

“FMS is a better school. You get the freedom to go to the toilet whenever you want. You can choose your own work.”

Leo, 6-9 Years

“I came to FMS to learn. I like the freedom and not having to worry about having friends in different classes as we are all in the same class together. At FMS we are surrounded by nature. We are not surrounded by concrete and metal. Every classroom has plants.”

Kayla, 9-12 Years

“I came to FMS because I wanted to make new friends. I like that we don't wear a uniform and we call teachers by their first names, choose what work we want to do, and when I'm the teacher I can help other children in my class. I love the school.”

Leia, 6-9 Years

Students at FMS

By the end of Term 4, 2019, the school has approximately 132 students in total from our Birth to 3 and Pre-Primary (0-6 Years) to the Lower and Upper Primary (6-12 Years). By the end of Term 4, there were 69 students in Primary (5-12 years), comprising 26 girls and 43 boys. FMS students come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, including many with language backgrounds other than English. Students with diverse learning needs are fully integrated, accessing all aspects of our programs.

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 olds.

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 of Sydney, coming from the following postcodes, in order: 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2071, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2090, 2092, 2093, 2095, 2096, 2099, 2100, 2154, 2570.

During 2019, we welcomed international students from America.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Average attendance for 2019:
Infant program 97%
Preschool 93%
Lower Primary 94%
Upper Primary 94% (Total Primary 94%)

MANAGEMENT OF NON-ATTENDANCE

Absences from students currently enrolled at the School will be identified and recorded in a consistent manner using the Minister's codes by the delegated staff member. Attendance is monitored daily by teachers and trained administration staff and recorded in digital records (ESR) or hard copy against student records.

The principal may exercise the Ministers delegation under section 25 of the Education Act in relation to granting and cancelling a certificate of exemption from being enrolled and attending school in certain prescribed circumstances.

REGISTER OF DAILY ATTENDANCE

The School maintains a register of daily attendance of all enrolled students which records information about each enrolled student in line with the *Education Act* and NESA requirements. Staff entering the details in the register of daily attendance enter compliant codes that align to the *Education Act* and AIS accordingly. The register of daily attendance is retained for a period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made.

Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

Performance on NAPLAN is documented on the My School website. FMS parents have consciously opted out of standardised testing for their children.



Assessment in a Montessori School

“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 standardised 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) 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.



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. Rather, they lead children in the general direction and give them the tools they need to find the information themselves.

Maria Montessori once said, "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.'"

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 recognised Montessori credentials in addition to their university degrees. Here at Forestville Montessori School, 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, with all of our teachers speaking 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 give 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 'grace and courtesy' – cooperation, kindness, and strength in community.



Professional Learning 2019

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	STAFF PARTICIPATING
AIS Governance Symposium	Chair, Board of Directors & Principal
AIS Annual General Meeting	Chair, Board of Directors & Principal
Educator Impact – Educators	20
Educator Impact – Administration Staff	4
Educator Impact – Leadership Team	5
Montessori Playbook	20
Teacher Standards workshop	20
Montessori Soccer Workshop	1
First Aid	All staff
CPR	All staff
Child Protection	All staff
Bushfire Emergency Training Update	1
Montessori Schools Learning Framework	1
Montessori Association of Thailand Refresher Course (guest speaker and participant)	1
AIS Orientation to PDHPE Syllabus online course	1
AMI 6-12 Diploma	1
AMI Birth-3 Assistants Course	2
Autism – Differentiating for children on the Autism Spectrum online course	3
Journey of Service: Orphanage & School Visits Thailand	2
Supporting the Dyslexic Child in the Montessori Environment – Sydney Montessori Training Centre	2
Janet Laurence: <i>After Nature</i> , Museum of Contemporary Art	1
School Sports Unit Hockey Level 1 Coaching Accreditation – Nepean Hockey Association	1
URStrong Friendship Summit – Croydon PLC	2
Montessori School Observations	4
<i>Inside Montessori</i> screening	6

The average expenditure on professional learning per staff member in 2019 was \$2,234.

TEACHER ACCREDITATION AUTHORITY (TAA)

FMS has engaged the Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW) as its Teacher Accreditation Authority for Proficient Teacher. By way of background:

- NESA 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.

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

SCHOOL STAFF 2019	
Teaching staff	17
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	14.5
Non-teaching staff	5
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	4

There are no Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.

TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION

Teachers at FMS are highly qualified, dedicated and committed educators. The teaching attendance rate is high at 99.35%, which is 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.

LEVEL OF ACCREDITATION	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
Conditional	1
Provisional	3
Proficient Teacher	8
Highly Accomplished (voluntary accreditation)	0
Lead Teacher (voluntary accreditation)	0
Total number of teachers	12

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

(Types of qualifications & Montessori qualifications)

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF TEACHERS	NUMBER OF ASSISTANTS
Bachelor Degree from an Australian University or overseas equivalent	10	3
Diploma qualified from an Australian Higher Education Institution or overseas equivalent	7	4
Certificate IV or III from an Australian Higher Education Institution or overseas equivalent	6	5
Montessori Qualifications – AMI Diploma or equivalent	8	2

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. During 2019, all staff participated in a formal feedback exercise called Educator Impact, affording staff the opportunity to collect data on their practice from colleagues, students and themselves. The school is provided with an aggregate of the data, allowing us to start preparing for subsequent professional development opportunities in 2020 and beyond.

Our educators regularly visit other Montessori schools to participate in observations.

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 seeking 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 12 Years, providing ongoing support to prepare the environment and work with children.

In striving to provide benefits for our staff, we offer:

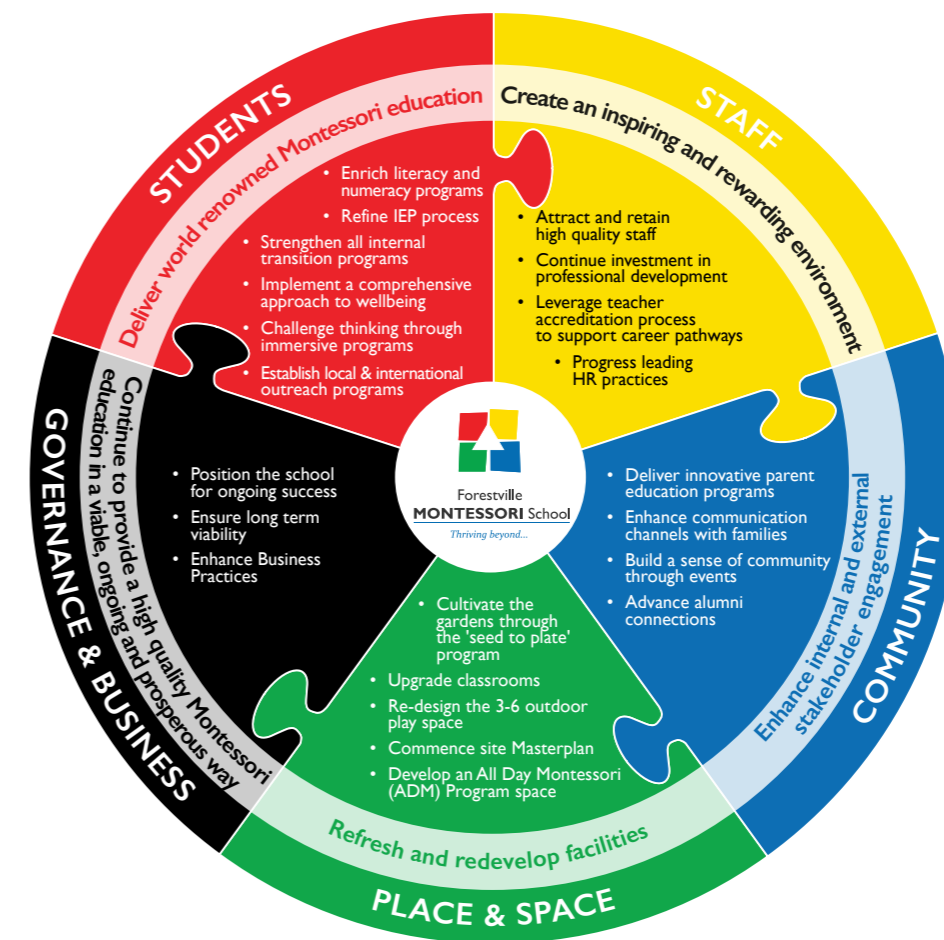
- An attractive award rate that has seen year-on-year percentage increases above inflation
- Access to flexible remuneration packaging
- Human Resources practices to support different needs
- Complimentary, confidential Employee Assistance Counselling services
- Negotiated leave, long service leave provisions, 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 & NEXT STEPS

“Our aim is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorise, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core.”

Dr Maria Montessori



Beyond Today is the title of our strategic plan, outlining five priorities from 2018-2023. 2019 saw us taking significant steps to achieving our goals.

Central to everything we do is our Montessori philosophy and our commitment to delivering world-renowned Montessori education. This is strengthened by our vision and values. Pivotal to FMS is our vibrant community.

The strategic plan is organised under five key priorities:



Tracking our progress: current priorities and improvements already underway

STUDENTS

Deliver world renowned Montessori education

“We do not want complacent students but eager ones.”

Dr Maria Montessori

FOCUS	ACTION
Inclusive education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All NESA curriculum updated Literacy continues as a focus Fountas & Pinnell Literacy benchmarking assessments ongoing Transparent Classroom introduced
Student wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> URSTRONG Program implementation continues All Kindergarten to Year 6 Programs and NESA syllabus expectations updated Sporting Schools Grant received in Terms 1, 2 & 3. Money used to employ professional soccer and basketball coaches, equipment and offer before-school sports program introducing cricket, soccer, basketball and tennis Introduced more caring for animal activities, with four chickens now housed on-site and cared for by students across the school
Challenging thinking: Designing and introducing immersive programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Gifts of the Past: The Story of Civilizations</i>: all 3-6 students were involved in creating an original performance inspired by Cosmic Education and the Great Stories and Lessons As part of their Economic Geography work, the 9-12 students are encouraged to look at the range of products that can be made from our school-based resources: eggs, fruit & vegetables, arts and crafts. This curricular opportunity provides students with the fundamental aspects of Montessori learning by giving the student independent choices, hands-on experiences, critical thinking opportunities, and purposeful work circumstances. This is the beginning of work in developing a micro-economy here at FMS. Throughout the year students work together to care for the chickens, gardens, and other endeavours to support FMS initiatives and raise funds for various causes. The students look at the net costs and track the profits of produce sold. Money raised is used to offset the costs of the production of goods. Students are helped to make decisions on how to reinvest or spend their profits. In Term 4 2019, the students studied and gained practical experience in food preservation techniques. The students made a variety of small batch organic jams, preserves and pickles. These were then sold for profit at our end of year ‘Christmas Market’. Walking for Peace Day: all 3-12 Years students participated in a day of creating labyrinths and walking meditations
Citizenship endeavours: Collaborating with Montessori schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established local outreach in partnership with Forestville Sub-Branch of the Returned and Services Leagues of Australia to provide Christmas gifts to Manly Warringah Women’s Resource Centre Partnered with Montessori schools north of the harbour to offer our inaugural Montessori Sports Day Initial visit to Thailand took place to establish a partnership for an international outreach experience for our graduates. Liaison with Thailand Montessori Association has commenced.



2019 OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTREACH AND SERVICE IN CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

With the following key goal in mind:

Establishing and partnering with the Montessori community to offer international outreach experiences to staff and children.

Denice and Anthony, with the assistance of Kannekar Butt (President, Montessori Association of Thailand) and the local Thai Montessori teachers, visited a number of educational settings implementing the Montessori method of education. It is important to note that the Thai Government has given full support for Montessori education to be implemented in its preschools.

Our view is that staff would assist with the implementation of Montessori programs and daily tasks. Our older students would be involved in assisting in the Birth to 3 programs, and involvement in cultural exchange activities such as cooking, arts and crafts, Thai dancing and drumming.

Viengping Children’s Home & Orphanage

- Montessori project implemented in 2013
- Staff trained in Birth to 6 programs
- 2 year olds: Child Development Room, 30-35 children
- 2-3 year olds: 12-15 children
- 3-6 year olds: 25-35 children

Banrongkheelek School, Doi Saket

- Government school
- Kindergarten to Grade 9
- 94 students, 11 teachers
- 80% Burmese / 20% Thai children
- Supporting the people of ethnic hill tribes
- Montessori program for 4-5 year olds only

Changkeang School

(three hours from Chiang Mai, mountains area)

- Government school
- Kindergarten to Grade 6
- 180 students
- 3 to 12 years of age
- Montessori program for 3-6 year olds only
- Birth to 3 program to start in 2020

GIVING YOUR CHILD THE WIDE VIEW OF THE WORLD

Experiences of relationships and participation in communities contribute to children’s belonging, being and becoming. From birth, children experience living and learning with others in a range of communities. Through the primary and secondary years, this is strengthened by children developing a positive sense of identity and experiencing respectful, responsive relationships. This strengthens children’s interest and skills in being and becoming active contributors to their world.

Over time, the variety and complexity of ways in which children connect and participate with others increases. When we create environments in which children experience mutually enjoyable, caring and respectful relationships with people and the environment, children respond accordingly. Children’s connectedness and different ways of belonging with people, country and communities helps them to learn ways of being which reflect the values, traditions and practices of their families and communities. Over time, this learning transforms the ways they interact with others.

We believe that through our school we can reach out to the local and international communities to bring to life our core goals of Respect, Relationships, Integrity, Scholarship, Citizenship, and Community.

“An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking; it involves the spiritual development of man, the enhancement of his value as an individual, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live.”

Maria Montessori:
Education and Peace, ch. 3, p. 30

STAFF

Create an inspiring and rewarding environment

FOCUS	ACTION
Widening professional development opportunities offered to staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 professional development courses undertaken by staff Educator Impact (phase 1) introduced. All educators, leaders and support staff participated in 360° collection of feedback on their practice from peers and students All primary staff involved in designing NESA units of work aligned with Montessori practices 100% increase in expenditure on professional learning from 2017
Leverage Teacher Accreditation process to support career pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIS appointed as TTA and consultant worked with staff undergoing accreditation
Continuing investment in Montessori training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sabbatical year sponsored by FMS for one staff member to undertake AMI 6-12 Diploma Two staff completed the AMI Birth- 3 Assistants Training Sports Educator completed Montessori Soccer



OUR COMMUNITY

Enhance internal and external stakeholder engagement

FOCUS	ACTION
Seeing an increase in parent attendance at events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held multiple parent events to bring families together. Parent feedback was very positive
Connecting with the local community to increase involvement and 'front of mind' school of choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted an FMS Open Day in March 2019 Continued to advertise on existing social media channels with strong influence over local community Began an outdoor marketing campaign, repeating the key messages, highlighting FMS Hosted the Inside Montessori documentary screening at the Art Gallery of NSW in Term 3, achieving maximum attendance. A second screening event was held internally at FMS in Term 4
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"> A variety of parent education events were held in 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Toileting Science in Montessori Independence – Positioning Children for Meaningful Lives Transparent Classroom Others aimed at informing parents about the benefits of each individual program were also held
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"> Held the second Mother's Day & Father's Day events at the school, with record attendance and overwhelmingly positive feedback The first-ever Grandparents' & Grandfriends' Day was held in 2019, a very special day for all involved
Strengthening alumni connections through introducing Alumni Q&A sessions for current families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2020 and beyond focus
Enhancing the communication channels with parents; including introducing new ways to strengthen student transition between cycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to promote weekly e-newsletters Introduced weekly blog Internal transition policy implemented
Expanding communication channels to parents by increasing the number and quality of parent interaction points; increasing information provided; and restructuring parent/teacher conference days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Parent Morning Tea updates Began weekly email to families, informing them about news and events for the coming week Parent/teacher conferences were held twice during the year
Designing and launching a new website helping to increase our reach and grow our reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted videos on our website of our parents and staff sharing their thoughts on FMS Constantly updating the website, promoting new staff members and new parent education events
Developing a comprehensive marketing plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoted the new 3 Day Pre-Primary Program for 3 and 4 year olds Began outdoor marketing campaign aimed at increasing awareness of FMS at high traffic areas
Increasing our social media presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to increase our social media presence on Facebook and Instagram, with more sponsored posts, expanding our reach capacity Continued to see a growth in our engagements across Facebook and Instagram

OUR PLACE AND SPACE

Refresh and redevelop facilities

“The child should live in an environment of beauty.”

Dr Maria Montessori

FOCUS	ACTION
Creating a place of beauty Continuing to enhance the gardens, food growing and sustainability practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seed to Plate Program continued for all primary students, with introduction of a 'Spring Lunch' cooked by parents and students in 6-12 Composting continues
Commence Masterplan for site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey of site completed in December 2019

OUR GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS

Ensure FMS continues to provide a high-quality Montessori education in a viable, ongoing and prosperous way

“Imagination does not become great until human beings use it to create.”

Dr Maria Montessori

FOCUS	ACTION
Positioning the school for ongoing success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced All Day Montessori program, offering three full days to 3 and 4 year old students
Business practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital investment in IT Ongoing focus on continuous improvement in systems to improve operational excellence



TRANSPARENT CLASSROOM

Designed by Montessorians for Montessorians, this online portal is a winner with staff and parents alike. Staff spend less time on administration and more time on planning their presentations and students' learning. Parents can see at a glance what their children are learning, who they are working with and what's next for their ongoing development. Now implemented across all programs from age 3-12 Years. Next phase will see implementation for our Toddler Program.

Educating children for life and for peace

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

Dr Maria Montessori

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 offer 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.

“When children come into contact with nature, they reveal their strength.”

Dr Maria Montessori

Students participated in the following opportunities to promote respect and responsibility:

- Ride2School
- Seed to Plate
- Combined Montessori Schools Sports Day
- Labyrinth: Walk for Peace
- Jump Rope for Heart
- Book/theatre visits
- Mother's Day High Tea
- Grandparents' and Grandfriends' Day
- Moni Market
- Animals in school
- National Young Leaders Day at the Sydney Convention Centre
- Harmony Day
- *Possum Magic* at Glen Street Theatre (3-6)
- 9-12 Camp Dubbo
- Book reading of *A Fearsome Beast and a Dumpling Feast* by Yves Stening
- 9-12 Bushwalk with Uncle Laurie
- National Simultaneous Storytime: *Alpacas with Maracas* by Matt Cosgrove
- *Big Dreams: Perform Education Book Week Show*
- *Picasso & His Dog* at the Glen Street Theatre (3-6 & 6-9)
- Father's Day Breakfast
- Maria Montessori birthday celebration
- Parent/child nights

What people say

MOTHER'S DAY 2019

"2019 was even better than last year, with allocated time in my daughter's 6-9 classroom to not only observe but also participate in her work cycle and have hands-on experience with the Montessori equipment (always a treat!)."

It was impressive how the whole morning was organised down to the minute, with 9-12 chaperones coming to the 6-9 classroom to escort the mothers to the music room for the morning tea. What followed was a special social gathering of delicious sandwiches, scones and the famous lemon tart I'd been hearing about all week and a chance to chat with mums who I hadn't been able to say more than 'hi' or 'bye' to for a while.

The mini-speeches by the 9-12s were very heartfelt and the videos from the other FMS children were sweet, funny and gorgeous.

I'm personally very grateful these morning teas are offered, and I know my husband felt the same way when he attended the Father's Day breakfast last year.

A sincere thanks to the coordinated effort between Denice, staff, teachers and students for making this possible."

**Karena Reidy, FMS Parent,
Lower Primary 6-9 Program**

"The Mother's Day High Tea was a wonderful, heart-warming celebration. I enjoyed visiting my children's classrooms and seeing them in action, proudly showing me their work. The high tea was a fun catch-up with the other mothers where we marvelled at the impressive baked goods and other handiwork of the children. All this, and the snuffles and laughter brought on by the videoed messages of love, made the morning a much-treasured memory."

**Katalin Othmer, FMS Parent, Pre-Primary 3-6
& Lower Primary 6-9 Programs**



"For me the most notable thing was how involved and excited everyone was. It was obvious that so much work and thought went into the event, by both the staff and the children, and it showed in the result. My favourite part was the short videos that really made it personal."

**Nitzan Ingber, FMS Parent, Birth-3 &
Pre-Primary 3-6 Programs**

GRANDPARENTS' DAY 2019

"Both grandparents had a wonderful time at Grandparents' Day. It gave them a good insight into Juliana's day and Juliana was very excited to have them there. One of Juliana's grandmothers is very involved and known at the school, but the other isn't, so it was particularly good for her."

**Esther Volpe, FMS Parent,
Pre-Primary 3-6 Program**

INDEPENDENT TOILETING WORKSHOP

"The workshop was incredibly beneficial to me and my family. Ferne was a wonderful speaker who gave clear strategies on how to approach toileting in a supportive Montessori manner. She also gave more wonderful tips on strategies to approach other aspects of parenting in a supportive Montessori way. I appreciated the time this workshop took to set up and expertise of the speaker. I look forward to more talks in the future."

**Amanda Veronesi, FMS Parent,
Birth-3 Program**

What people say

INSIDE MONTESSORI DOCUMENTARY SCREENING

"The Inside Montessori film is interesting at many levels, from affirming those who are already thoroughly familiar with Montessori to inspiring those who are completely new to it and anyone anywhere in between. It is particularly compelling for its portrayal of intellectual, emotional and social dynamics of Montessori that are applicable and unifying across cultural, social, economic, and political structures. Our challenge now is to figure out how to bring this hidden treasure to the wider society and in fact, to all the children and adults of the world."

**Rose & Reg Aung-Thein, FMS Parents,
Birth-3, Pre-Primary and Primary Programs**

"I thoroughly enjoyed the Inside Montessori screening. The movie covered all ages of Montessori education and was especially enlightening when it came to some of the programs they are running in the USA. It was inspiring to see Montessori having such a strong impact on lower socioeconomic communities, and being offered in the public system – something it would be amazing to see change here in Australia. A true celebration of what we all know is special about Montessori."

**Idette Warburton, FMS Parent and
Board Member**

"Fabulous, a very thought-provoking movie. It would be lovely to have a screening at our campus."

Christine Wright, FMS 3-6 Program Director

WHAT OUR STAFF SAY

"It is a pleasure and a privilege to work with children and families at FMS and share in the wonders and discoveries that children make every day. To see children reach their own potential, have the capacity to explore their environment and fulfil development

needs through the prepared environment at Forestville Montessori is an ongoing delight. I have enjoyed being part of the conversation about the growth embedded in the Schools Strategic Plan and look forward to continued development."

Natasha Williams, FMS 3-6 Program Director

"I feel very blessed to be a part of Forestville Montessori School for almost 17 years. It is a privilege to observe the children explore, learn and develop into inquisitive, confident and curious learners. It is truly rewarding to guide the children through their individual learning journey and watch them develop life skills and independence in their prepared environment. I enjoy building positive relationships with the children and families as this allows us to form a collaborative partnership where we share the decision-making about each child's learning and wellbeing. Working in partnership with Rosalie ensures this shared vision is being achieved. Being an inclusive community from different backgrounds and cultures allows children to learn about the history of their community, their families and their peers. I am honoured to be involved with a community that is respectful of Australia's Indigenous heritage."

Bonnie Chiu, FMS 3-6 Program Director

"After only a couple of days as a practical student at Forestville Montessori School, I knew this was a warm-hearted community, filled with only respect, care and love towards the children. The ethos of the school follows Montessori's philosophy and all the teachers care for each and every child's individual needs diligently. I feel so privileged to be working with the staff, parents and children every day, which goes far beyond any definition of 'school'. It is great to be a part of a like-minded community educating and fostering growth for intellectually and emotionally driven children, motivated to learn and discover!"

Carli Saber, FMS 6-9 Program Director



OUR POLICIES & 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 2019 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.

Code of 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 2019, 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 were made in 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 WELLBEING

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 on (02) 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 2019.

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 advise 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 Workplace Health and Safety 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 2019, our high level of compliance was achieved through the following procedures and activities:

- First aid training
- Annual CPR refresher course
- Termly evacuation and lock-down rehearsals
- Staff follow-up on student incidents, parental sign-off
- Annual Fire Safety audit conducted by qualified, independent professionals and all electrical equipment tagged and tested
- Further development to our staff induction processes
- Planned responses to serious incidents
- Review of Bushfire Emergency Procedures
- 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
- Security monitoring by external company.

Safe and supportive environment – legislative requirements

Staff induction procedures for new staff and regular staff briefings throughout 2019, to 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.



OUR GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Business operations and financial summary

GOVERNANCE

The School is owned and operated by The Peninsula Montessori Association Limited, a company limited by guarantee.

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.

In 2019 the Constitution was changed to make membership voluntary. An invitation to become a member of the Company is provided to our parents and stakeholders annually.

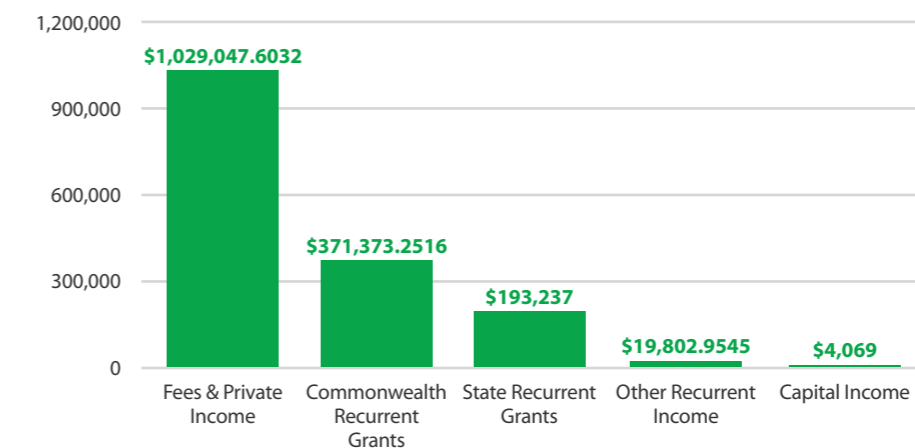
GOVERNING BODY	REQUIREMENT
	Consent to Act as a Director
NESA	
3.9.1 Responsible Persons	Statutory Declaration, sufficient competence and character
3.9.2 Refusal of Registration - Disclosure	Any refusal to register (or cancellation of registration) of the school is not the result of previous actions of responsible persons
3.9.3 Proper Governance	
3.9.3.1 Policies & Procedures	Code of Conduct for Responsible Persons Confidentiality Undertaking
3.9.3.2 Conflict of Interest	Covered by Consent to Act form.
3.9.3.3 Related Party Transactions	Covered by Consent to Act form.
3.9.3.4 Professional Learning	Evidence of 12 Hours of Professional Development over 3 years
3.9.3.5 Induction Process	Induction Process for Board members & new responsible persons
3.9.3.6 External Independent Audit	Annual external audit with auditor independence declaration
3.9.4 Financial Viability	Monitor financial results, provide info to NESA as requested, retain records
3.9.5 Notification of Matters	Notify NESA of certain matters

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

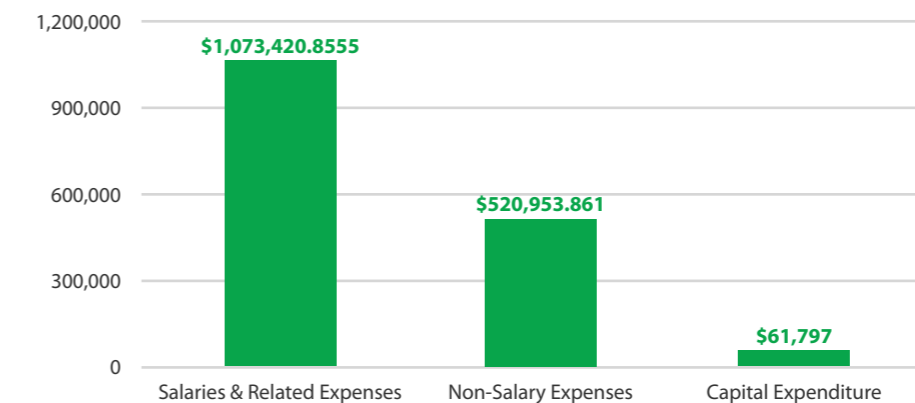
Australian Government reporting for the Primary School

These graphs depict income and expenses reported in the Australian Government's Financial Questionnaire for 2019. 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.

RECURRENT/CAPITAL INCOME



RECURRENT/CAPITAL EXPENDITURE



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 our wise governance.

Beyond Today

In looking ahead to 2020, the maturation of our strategic plan will continue as a focus. Planning is well underway in the establishment of our international outreach program in partnerships with the Montessori Association of Thailand. We will be offering our graduates a 'Journey of Service' in 2020.

In response to the ever-changing world we live in, we explored ways to offer world-class Montessori programs. All Day Montessori was a significant new offering introduced in Term 4, 2019.

2019 was a 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 move ahead with our vision to be the launchpad for every child to lead a fulfilling life and our daily work to see every child *thriving beyond*.

Forestville Montessori School is a vibrant 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 to find out more.

Follow us on social media.



“Only poets and young children can feel the fascination of a tiny rivulet of water flowing over pebbles.”

Dr Maria Montessori





Forestville
MONTESSORI School
Thriving beyond...

**Let us take your child
above and beyond.**

Forestville Montessori School
| Angel Place, Forestville NSW 2087
Phone (02) 9452 2044
www.forestvillemontessori.nsw.edu.au