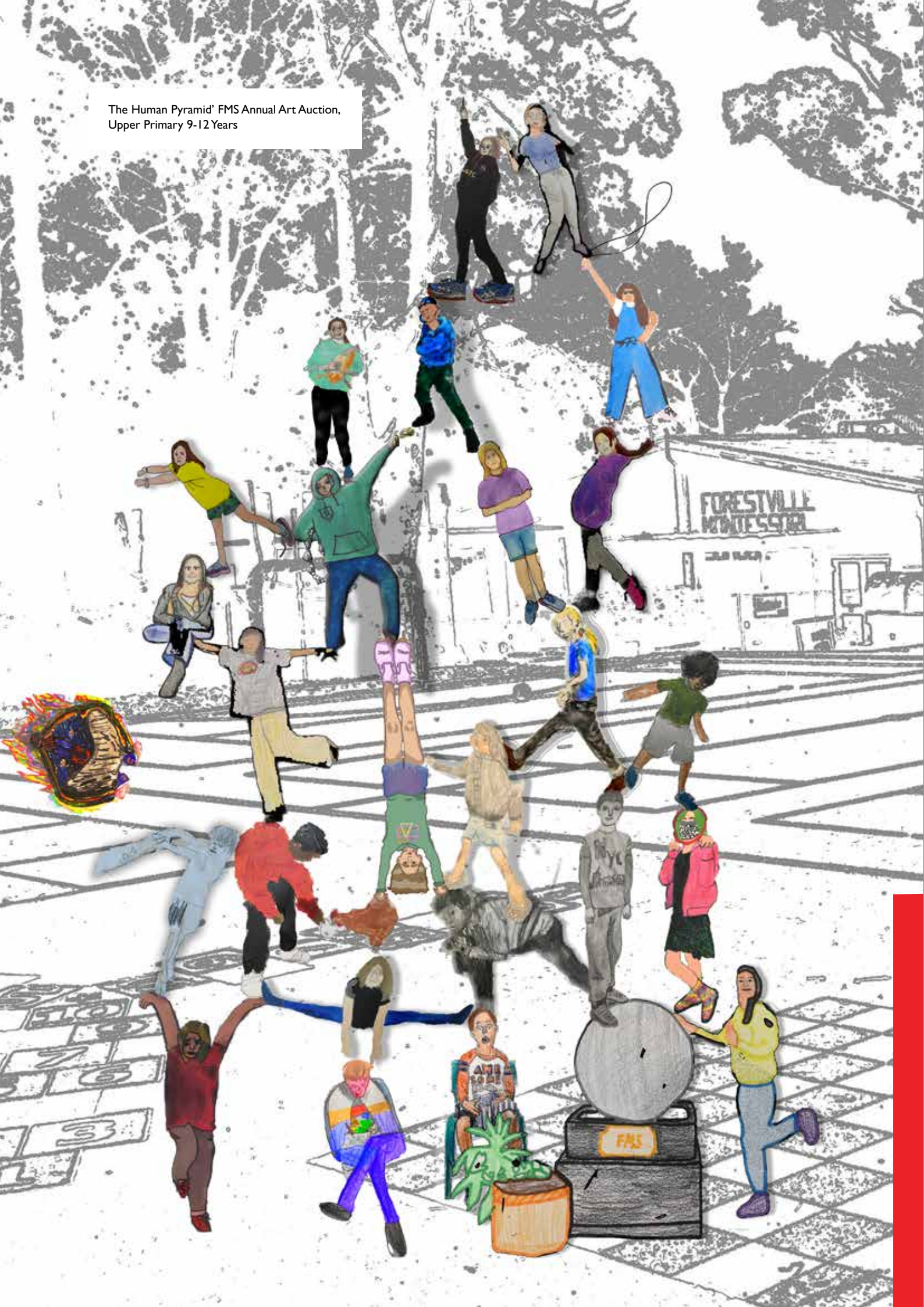


Forestville
MONTESSORI School
Thriving beyond...

2021 Annual Report

The Human Pyramid' FMS Annual Art Auction,
Upper Primary 9-12 Years



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“The unknown energy that can change humanity is that which lies hidden in the child.”

Dr Maria Montessori

ABOUT FMS

Message from the Chairperson and the Principal



Photo: Chris Rehn and Denice Scala

SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

Forty years is a significant milestone for FMS. The school opened on its current site in January 1981. It was started by parents who wanted a Montessori education for their children. FMS was initially a spin-off from Northside Montessori School, the first of its kind along with Castlecrag Children's House to open in Sydney. There was no internet in 1981 so the Founders relied on readings and word of mouth information.

The vision of our Founders made FMS what it is today. It's hard to believe that 40 years ago you had to look overseas to explore Montessori education. Our Founders stopped at nothing to make FMS a reality. Hank Van Gassett even travelled to Holland to find our first ever Montessori 6-9 Director. His name was Paul Seibel. He trained at The

International Centre for Montessori Studies Foundation in Bergamo, Italy which was the first centre established for Elementary (Primary 6-12 training) in 1961 by Mario Montessori, Maria's son. FMS's first Pre-School (3-6 Years) Directress was Dorothy Foenander.

In 2021, we started a new tradition, celebrating Founders' Day on 31 August. The day was chosen to coincide with Maria Montessori's birthday. We paid our deepest respect and appreciation to FMS Founders:

- Sue and Rodney Birdsall
- Jenny and John Williams
- Tineke Ripping and Hank Van Gasselt

Our Founders formed an Association called the Peninsula Montessori Society. They joined together with interested parents and together, purchased the land that FMS is situated on today. It had been a small Catholic school in Angel Place consisting of 4 classrooms. In no time at all, the divisions between the 4 classrooms were removed and the space rearranged as a Prepared Montessori Environment.

The rest, as they say, is history. A history we are all so proud to be part of today!

Despite the impact of the pandemic, we continued to enhance our exemplary Montessori education whilst also focusing on the rollout of our strategic plan, Beyond Today. One of the most significant achievements was the introduction of Phase 2 of our new program, All Day Montessori (ADM). This program is designed to honour the Montessori approach in the Pre-School (3-6 Years) whilst also responding to the needs of our working families.

THRIVING BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

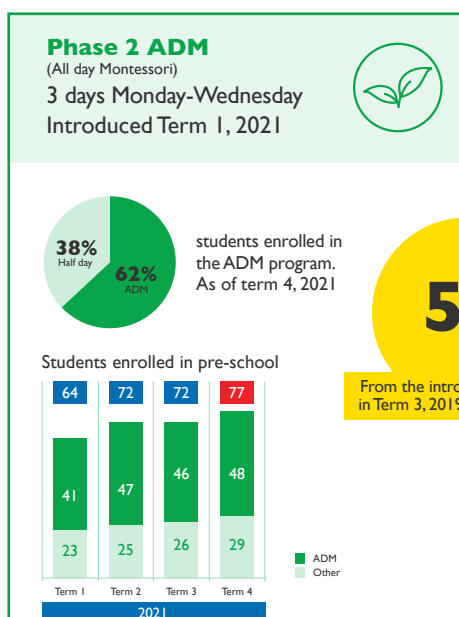
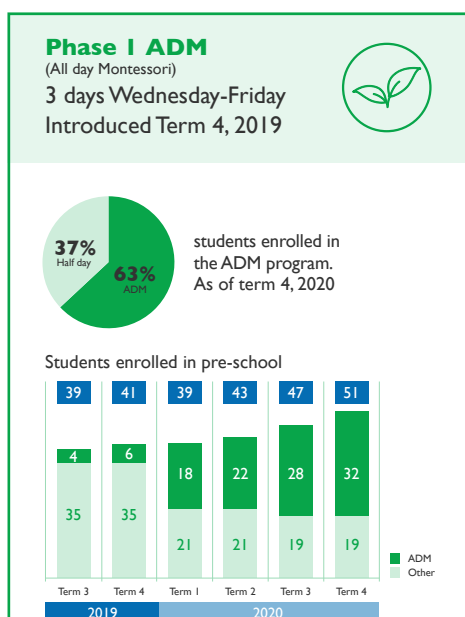
2021 was not without its challenges. After a highly successful Founders' Day, the Government mandated a lockdown for Term 3, 2021 through to week 3 of Term 4, 2021. We returned to providing a hybrid education, remaining open for families of Essential Workers whilst providing Learning from Home Packs for students studying at home. These packs stayed true to our Montessori philosophy and were well received.

We embraced the online world by providing students with regular check-ins via computer screen and a myriad of learning activities to keep the pace and interest level high. When we started to see energy levels dropping, we asked our parents for help. What novelty workshops could they provide? Read more on this in the 'Our Community' tracking update on the Strategic Plan further in this report.

We had a

- Harpy Half Hour – one of our parents is a member of the Sydney Symphony and Australian Opera & Ballet Orchestra, she played a few of her favourite pieces for our FMS families over dinner.
- FMS MasterChef – two of our parents are chefs, they provided our families with a live workshop on how to make delicious banana bread.
- Street Design – one of our parents is a Landscape Architect, he conducted a workshop encouraging our students to think outside the box and design their ideal street!
- Relaxation Yoga – one of our parents is a yoga teacher, she provided us with a relaxing session during a very stressful period.

SUCCESS OF ADM



51%
From the introduction of ADM in Term 3, 2019 to Term 4, 2021

APPRECIATION

It was with heartfelt thanks that the Board of Directors acknowledged staff's extraordinary work during the pandemic with gifts and personalised messages. This was followed by a beautiful tribute from the Community Team in the form of video messages from the children on International Teacher's Day. It is fitting that together, the FMS community always find a way to show gratitude.

The Montessori triangle of parents, staff and students working together for the benefit of all is well and truly alive at FMS. A big thank you to our Community Team and to all our parents for your support.

Thank you to the Board of Directors who work quietly behind the scenes supporting management and ensuring long-term strategic matters are proactively addressed.

"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

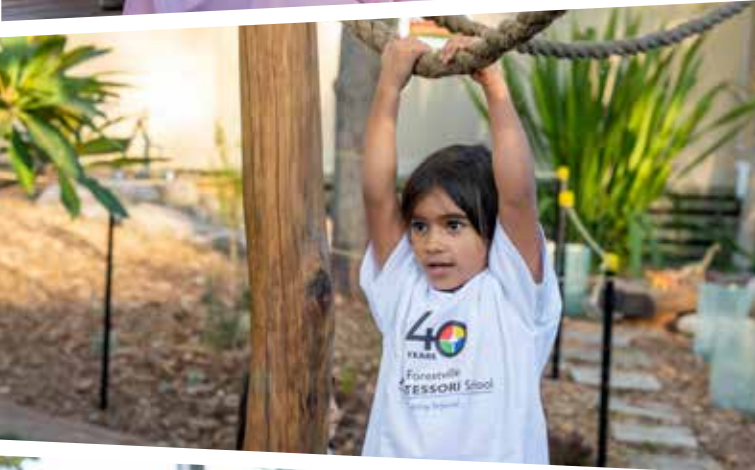
Integrity: Knowing right from wrong, taking responsibility for our actions

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

Founders' Day





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

For the FMS community and its team, it was a cautious but optimistic start to 2021. FMS had turned 40, the school adopting this created a theme for the year of ‘Thriving Together’ and planned some exciting events for the year ahead. The Community team looked at the potential to also do more activities and events than 2020 that would align and support the 40th Anniversary celebrations and theme for the year.

It started with the Easter egg hunt to end Term 1 at Poppy Park, representing a return to events where many families from the school were able to get together in person. So, the Community Team started to plan several events from Bunnings BBQs, clothes swaps and Art Auction night to School Discos and Camping Trip.

Term 2 began with the official launch of the school’s 40th anniversary year. Through this event the Community Team realised there were many new families who had not had many opportunities to meet current families. So, a Family Picnic Day in Term 2, was organised, on a Sunday so school families could meet outside of school and workday times. The event saw a wonderful turn out and a lovely day was had by all.

Along with these couple of community-building and school events the fundraising plans for term 3 and 4 were being finalised, with quite a few wonderful ideas gathering momentum. Then came the return of Covid and a strict lockdown. While this felt quite devastating for many on both a school community and personal level, the Team showed resilience by pausing, pivoting and taking a practical approach to what this might mean for the rest of the year.

So it was that the Team ended up with a singular focus to still have the annual Art Auction, online, with Artwork that could be commenced and potentially completed from home. The work produced by the children was still of an amazing quality and the event raised over \$7,000 - no small feat for this time.

Through the lockdown, the school took a wonderful approach of having events via Zoom that either continued to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the school or recognised talents from the families. It was with this in mind that the Community Team concluded that the school itself - teachers and staff - were the ones needing reward and recognition and organised a surprise video of families sharing their gratitude for their teachers and school. This was shared with the School on World Teachers Day.

So finally, I must recognise the amazing work of Rose, Idette, Anjali, Vanessa, Alex and Alena, with the support of the class parents, to have achieved all this in truly difficult circumstances. We remain optimistic that the new year will provide opportunities for the next Community Team to connect the school community through many social and fundraising events that have eluded us over the last couple of years.

Carl Birdsall, Community Team Leader



From our Students

A Snapshot from our 2021 Upper Primary Graduate's speeches:

"My time here at F.M.S has been an experience I will never forget. I have always enjoyed learning this way and have made countless friends."

Tully Birdsall

"I have had a really good time here at F.M.S and I have never cooked so much! It has been far much better than my old school, thank you to my teachers and the other students for making me feel so accepted and welcome."

Gabriella Broomfield

"Thank you to my teachers, Anthony, Lauren, Tamlin, Lau-chi and Tamara, you have taught me many easier ways to do things and many things that just make sense. You taught me, as the school's motto says, to thrive beyond, and that is something that I'll never forget. I have many memories here and I've met so many kind people along the way. This school is an inspiration for me, and I hope to return some day to give back to the school all that it has given me."

Sara Chander

"Over all my years at F.M.S I have had many wonderful teachers and friends. I will miss you all very much, along with all the happy memories and moments with you that have happened. I'm proud of everything I've learned. Unfortunately, a time comes when you must go to high school, I wish I could stay longer. Forestville Montessori school will always have a special place in my heart. I hope we meet again; I wish you all good luck, thank you and goodbye."

Daniel Morazzoni

"I've been here at F.M.S most of my life. I'm really going to miss all my friends and teachers. "Live long, love lot, and don't forget to laugh" I'm going to miss you all."

Ty Parisi

Zoe Prate moved overseas with her family before we held the official graduation. We held a special event just for her before she left.

Zoe Prate



Students at FMS

By the end of Term 4, 2021, the school has approximately 149 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 83 students in Primary (5-12 years), comprising 32 girls and 51 boys. FMS students represent a wide range of cultural heritage, 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-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 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 2021, we welcomed international students from the United States, France, Germany, India and Mexico.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE FOR 2020

Average attendance for 2021:

Infant program 71%

Preschool 78%

Lower Primary 71%

Upper Primary 69% (Total Primary 70%)

Student attendance was significantly impacted due to the COVID-19 lockdown in Term 3. During this time students of essential workers were onsite. Prior to COVID-19 lockdown, attendance was 89% (Terms 1 and 2). Lockdown was lifted in week 3 of Term 4. Attendance increased from 52% in week 2 of Term 4 to 87% in week 3 of term 4.

MANAGEMENT OF NON-ATTENDANCE

Absences from students currently enrolled at the School are 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 Xplore or hard copy against student records.

The Principal may exercise the Minister's 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. Daily attendance figures are viewed by the Principal, Deputy and Co-ordinator of Birth-6.

Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

Performance on NAPLAN is documented on the My School website. Many 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 our teachers hold one of the most highly-regarded Montessori credentials: 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 less desirable work. Often, all it takes is a minor change in the learning environment. Montessori teachers give children freedom, but they assist children in finding their way to success in every classroom endeavour.

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

They also value ‘grace and courtesy’ – cooperation, kindness, and strength in community.



Professional Learning 2021

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING 2021 (SCHOOL FUNEDED)	STAFF PARTICIPATING
Trillium Montessori 'Teaching Students with Special Needs	1
SMTC Reading 3-6	1
Positive Discipline in the Montessori Classroom	5
NESA 'Introducing the New NSW Primary Curriculum'	1
AMS 'Elementary Reading Certificate'	1
Trillium Montessori 'Elementary Montessori Bootcamp'	1
NESA 'NAPLAN Online SRT Training'	1
'Discovering the Child' – A Prepared Montessorian Global Conference	2
URStrong Training	1
Proficient Teacher Accreditation	4
AMI Montessori 3-6 Diploma	1
AMI Montessori 6-12 Diploma Audit	1
Heart First Aid Course	All Staff
'Emotional Facilitation' with Clare Jameson @ FMS	All Staff
Child Protection	All Staff
Montessori School Observations-postponed due to COVID	0

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING 2021 (TEACHER FUNEDED)	STAFF PARTICIPATING
Seven Steps to Writing Success Training	1
Apple Education 'Back to School Learning Series'	1
Trillium Montessori 'Designing a 3 Month Distance Learning Program'	1
AMI 'The Art of Storytelling'	1
PETA 'Inquiry into Teaching Spelling'	1
SMTC 'Montessori Language – Spelling in Montessori 6-12'	1
Apple Education 'Engaging Primary Learners with iPads'	1
Apple Education 'Getting Started with Apple Teacher'	1

The average expenditure on professional learning per staff member in 2021 was \$1,668. This was higher than the average in 2020 (\$744 per staff member) but lower than previous years as many courses were cancelled or provided online at a cheaper price.

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 2020	
Teaching staff	22
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	14.5
Non-teaching staff	5
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	4.4

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 97.16%, 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	0
Provisional	3
Proficient Teacher	9
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	12	3
Masters Degree from Australian University or overseas equivalent	2	0
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	5	5
Montessori Qualifications – AMI Diploma or equivalent	6	3

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 one of the most important factors 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. Work continued on mapping the Australian Professional standards for Teachers with the Montessori Assessment Playbook instrument designed for teacher appraisal.

Ordinarily our educators would regularly visit other Montessori schools to participate in observations however, that was not possible during 2021 due to COVID.

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.

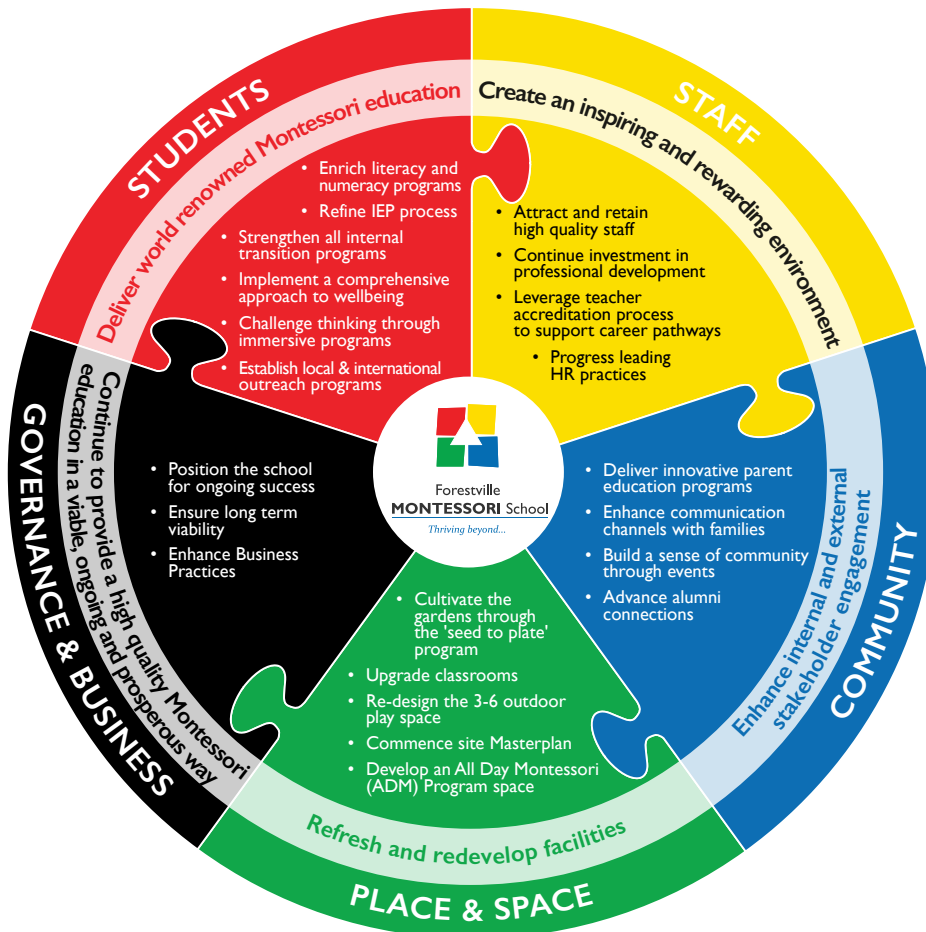
Thank you to the FMS staff who work tirelessly to see that our students are thriving beyond.



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. 2020 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"> • Transparent Classroom continued to offer families a 'look inside' the Montessori environment. Updated to include reporting • Checklist developed to strengthen internal transition programs
Student wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • URSTRONG Program implementation continues • Sporting Schools Grant received in Terms 2, 3 & 4. Money used to employ a professional Judo coach and purchase sports specific equipment for Table Tennis, Athletics, Badminton and Tennis. Grant assisted in the delivery of 6 different sports chosen by the children for the before-school sports program • Yoga and mindfulness activities offered during lockdown
Challenging thinking: Designing and introducing immersive programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New writing programs introduced in Lower (6-9 Years) and Upper (9-12 Years) programs • Enhanced focus on literacy programs in Lower (6-9 Years) • Sadly due to COVID, almost all of our planned activities were postponed • Throughout the year students worked 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
Citizenship endeavours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish local outreach programs • Partnering with the Montessori community to offer international outreach experience • Collaborating with Montessori schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 continued for a third year • Combined Montessori Sports Day held • International outreach to Thailand in liaison with Thailand Montessori Association postponed due to COVID





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">• Onsite professional development courses were postponed due to COVID. Staff undertook online courses• All primary staff involved in designing NESA units of work aligned with Montessori practices• Work commenced on designed a teacher reflection tool that aligns the Montessori Assessment Playbook with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
Leverage Teacher Accreditation process to support career pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School engaged AIS consultant to work with staff in the process of obtaining accreditation.
Continuing investment in Montessori training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sponsored 1 Pre-School (3-6 Years) educator to complete AMI Diploma- postponed due to COVID, will recommence in 2021



OUR COMMUNITY

Enhance internal and external stakeholder engagement

FOCUS	ACTION
Seeing an increase in parent attendance at events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions, events on school grounds were limited during the year.
Connecting with the local community to increase involvement and 'front of mind' school of choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our social media and outdoor marketing became the main way to reach prospective families within the local community.
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"> During the year, we called upon the 'Learning from Home' packs, which were available to all parents both internal and external. Delivered Creative Toolkits to all students providing them with ways to take part in the Annual Art Auction as they produced components of their class work from home. Also allowing them to be creative at home and have some fun! 'Learning from Home' packs, used as a way to show prospective parents what a Montessori education includes and also were valuable resources for our students who were home learning.
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 FMS Live Shows connecting families with each other and the School. A number of the shows were held during Home Learning and were well received by our families.
Strengthening alumni connections through introducing Alumni Q&A sessions for current families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed to hold our 2021 FMS 40th Anniversary Event at School, with attendance from FMS Founders and some of our Alumni. Developed FMS Alumni videos where we heard from some of our ex-students about their experiences at FMS and where they are today.
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 and the FMS Blog. Internal transition policy continued to work well.
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"> Continued to send the weekly newsletter to all parents. Parent/teacher conferences were held via zoom.
Designing and launching a new website helping to increase our reach and grow our reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The website was a main communication channel, used to house the 'Learning from Home' resource packs. Any COVID information relevant for our families was updated on the 'COVID-19 Update' section on the website.
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 Continued the 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

LET’S PLAY...

We undertook the development of a new playground for our Pre-Primary (3-6 Years) environment.

Long awaited pre-school play equipment opens

Cost of project	\$131,824
Community Team’s contribution	\$65,367
Government grant	\$15,000
School’s contribution	\$51,457

FOCUS	ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seamless indoor and outdoor learning Creating a place of beauty Continuing to enhance the gardens, food growing and sustainability practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Pre-School (Years 3-6) outdoor play space was designed and installed. Named in local aboriginal language by Uncle Neil- <i>Kurrun Karni</i>- A Place for children. Gardens upgraded. Total cost \$169,000. Capital grant received, \$20,000. Parents fundraising contribution, \$60,000. Composting continued and was increased. New recycling project was introduced.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term planning Ongoing maintenance and capital works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning commenced and budget approved for capital refurbishment work on the Studio and Upper Primary (9-12 Years) learning space. Full maintenance schedule in first year of three-year cycle scoped. Converted old wooden doors, windows and facades to aluminium on exterior of main building. New doors added to create a better indoor/outdoor flow. New automated retractable awning installed in one Pre-School (3-6 years) outdoor space. New external handwashing and drinking fountains installed. Full roof restoration of main building. Costing \$168,268. <p>There was a significant increase in capital expenditure in 2021 over the previous 4 years. Capital expenditure in 2021 was \$312,011 compared to \$21,702 in 2020.</p>





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"> Capital expenditure is forecast to increase in 2022 with the studio due for refurbishment to house a 3-6 classroom. This will align the Preschool to be centred around the new playground. Refurbishment to the media room will make way for a 9-12 space.
Business practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing focus on continuous improvement in processes and systems to improve operational excellence. Xplore installed.

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

As it was not possible to offer excursions due to COVID, staff offered alternative in-house programs and a suite of Learning from Home packs for all age groups.

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

Dr Maria Montessori

What people say

“Congratulations on your amazing resources in the Toddler Community - I’m writing to express my sincere gratitude for all the efforts that Emma & Ishbel have taken for looking after my son. This e-mail is way overdue, and I finally find my opportunity to deliver to you today. And thank YOU for creating this great community to embrace and support all the great teachers.

I have seen significant changes happen since my son moved from his previous day care to the Forestville Toddler community in every angle. He enjoyed every day and always looks forward to going to school. He is very engaged and motivated. He learns new skills and feels proud. His language has developed magnificently. He could barely speak a word before, and now he’s becoming a chatterbox like his sister. And, amazingly, he waves goodbye to me happily. There are many more to tell, but I’m sure you know them all.

I really appreciate the way and approach that Emma & Ishbel have taken in every aspect of the little one’s daily life. They are caring, loving and have principles.

I thank you again for all the wonderful work you and your team have done in educating the future.

FMS Parent

My daughter received her creative pack yesterday along with an FMS apron. The amount of joy that your thoughtful present brought to our household is beyond any words. We spent the whole afternoon unpacking and creating artwork and today we baked bread in the kitchen while my daughter proudly put her apron on and confidently mixed all the ingredients whilst telling me all about baking banana bread at school.

I thank you and the team so much for your continuous loving care and support of our most precious part. With much love and appreciation.”

FMS Parent

“We received the art box this week and we love it. It feels like opening a Christmas present. I think we all were very excited to open and see all the beautiful and useful materials. I noticed it was packaged

and created with love. Every single detail. The hand writing by the kids, every detail very well organised.

Thanks also for including materials for my younger son, we really appreciate that the school includes him. Thanks FMS.”

FMS Parent

“Thank you for the updates and for the incredible work you and the entire FMS team are doing to manage the current situation we have found ourselves in.

I’m sure not one of you signed up knowing you would be navigating something like this but your determination, thought and effort have gone well beyond the call of duty.

We’re thinking of you all during this time and look forward to coming out the other side so that our daughter and all of the other children can continue their development in such a wonderful environment with strong, compassionate and determined people such as yourselves.

Please pass on our gratitude to all of the FMS staff for their unwavering grit.”

FMS Parent

“My son is thoroughly enjoying coming to school at FMS. We feel very lucky that he has made some good friends and has settled in very well.

I would like to say a huge ‘thank you’ to all the teachers and staff that have made his transition so smooth.”

FMS Parent

“Your incredible care, kindness, guidance, and love have seen our daughter absolutely thrive this year, and we couldn’t be happier with every aspect of what the school have given her and us as a family. She talks so happily and lovingly about her friends and her teachers all the time.”

FMS Parent





What our staff say

"I have worked at Forestville Montessori School for the past five and a half years. I came from mainstream education and as you can imagine, my eyes were opened very widely when I started at the school.

As I work in the Toddler environment, I was amazed by how capable and independent they are. Our children use porcelain plates, metal knives, glass cups! Prepare fruit and bake every day as well as learning to work with Montessori materials.

Parents and teachers often comment on the amazing aroma coming from our classroom as the children bake daily. They set the dining room table and enjoy a shared fruit platter and our delicious soft warm bread.

I have also been very fortunate to help in the 3-6 classrooms where I always get a cheerful reception from both the teachers and children.

I feel very blessed to work in such a beautiful environment surrounded by beautiful parents, children and teachers who have become very dear to me."

**Ishbel Riach, Teachers Assistant,
Toddler Community**

"It has been nearly 8 years since I started working at Forestville Montessori. I have enjoyed my work and have gained invaluable experience. My role has changed along the way, but the friendship and support have always remained constant. I consider myself to be one of the lucky ones who look forward to going to work everyday thanks to the FMS community and the Montessori curriculum that has been the ethos behind it. As a strong believer in the Montessori philosophy, it is a fulfilling experience being part of the FMS team."

**Dharini Pararajasingham,
Inclusive Education Coordinator**

"I joined Forestville Montessori School as a casual staff member, then as an assistant and now as a Director. During my time at FMS, one of the first things that really stood out was that FMS has a sense of community and collegiality which made it a special place to work. Children are engaged in self-paced learning experiences and educators are supportive and respectful in each individual child's learning process. I am excited to continue my journey at FMS to see the continuous learning and growth in children and to be part of the community."

Ellen Kim, Director, Pre-Primary (3-6 Years)



OUR POLICIES & PROCEDURES

All Policies and Procedures were updated in 2021 to include COVID-19 safe practices. These included both ACECQA and NESA policies and procedures. A total of 44 policies were included in the update with further revision to be undertaken each year.

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 prerequisites 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 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. In 2021, policies were amended to reflect COVID safe practices.

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. No changes made since 2019 when NESA expectations in relation to NSW Child Protection matters were updated.

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. An update was completed in 2021 for whistleblowing procedures to provide a safe and confidential environment where students, staff and parents can raise genuine concerns regarding actual or suspected contraventions of our ethical and legal standards without fear or discriminatory treatment.

POLICIES SUPPORTING STUDENT WELLBEING

Our Privacy Policy reflects the Australian Privacy Principles and other amendments made to the Commonwealth Privacy Act. Updates were made to our welfare or discipline policies in 2021 in line with the normal review timeline. No significant changes were made.

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. While this policy was reviewed in line with normal review timelines in 2021, no changes were made.

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 2021, our high level of compliance was achieved through the following procedures and activities:

- Termly evacuation and lockdown rehearsals
- Staff follow-up on student incidents, parental sign-off
- Documentation and compliance of COVID risk management procedures
- 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
- Regular updating of all first aid and student health records
- 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 and current staff briefings throughout 2020, 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.



GOVERNANCE

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

Overall Results

The School produced a healthy surplus of \$810,356.

SUMMARY INCOME STATEMENT

INCOME	2021	
Tuition and Other School Related Fees	2,358,128	59.4%
Government Grants	1,552,908	39.1%
Fundraising and Other Income	60,975	1.5%
	3,972,012	

EXPENDITURE		
Employment Related	2,260,227	71.5%
Teaching Materials and Equipment	252,566	8.0%
Building and Grounds	209,159	6.6%
Office and Insurance	299,211	9.5%
Depreciation	123,584	3.9%
Interest and Bank Charges	15,492	0.5%
Fundraising	1,412	0.0%
	3,161,656	

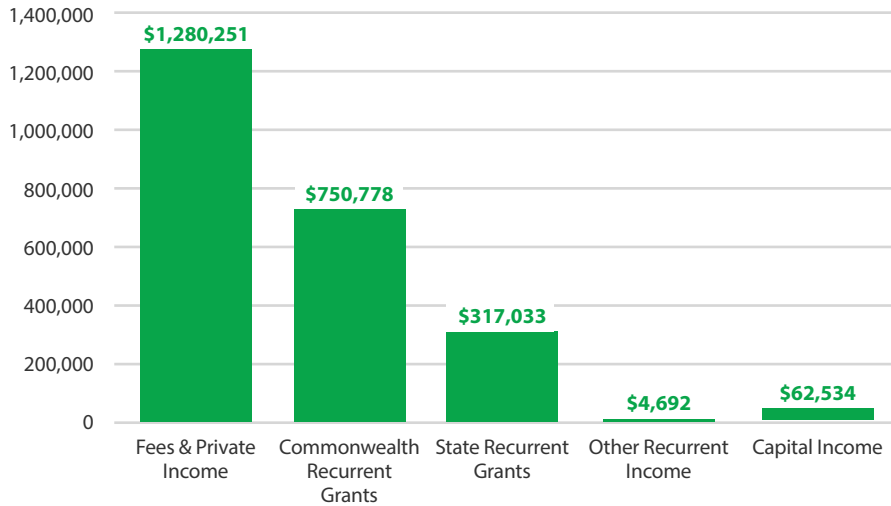
Net Surplus	810,356	
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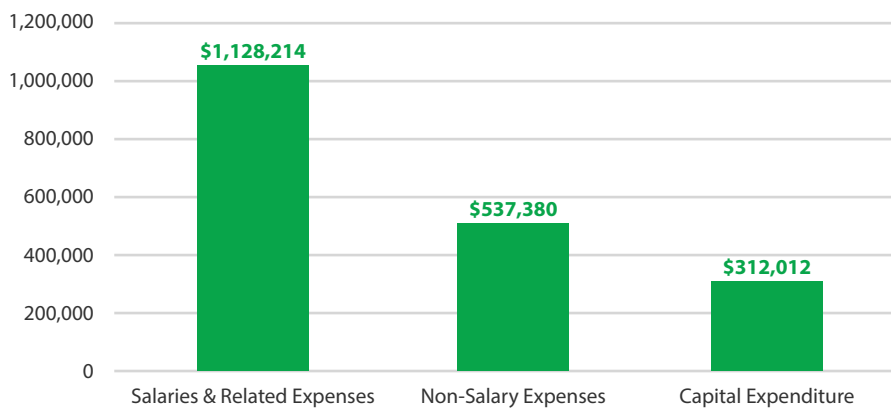
Australian Government reporting for the Primary School

These graphs depict income and expenses reported in the Australian Government's Financial Questionnaire for 2021. 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

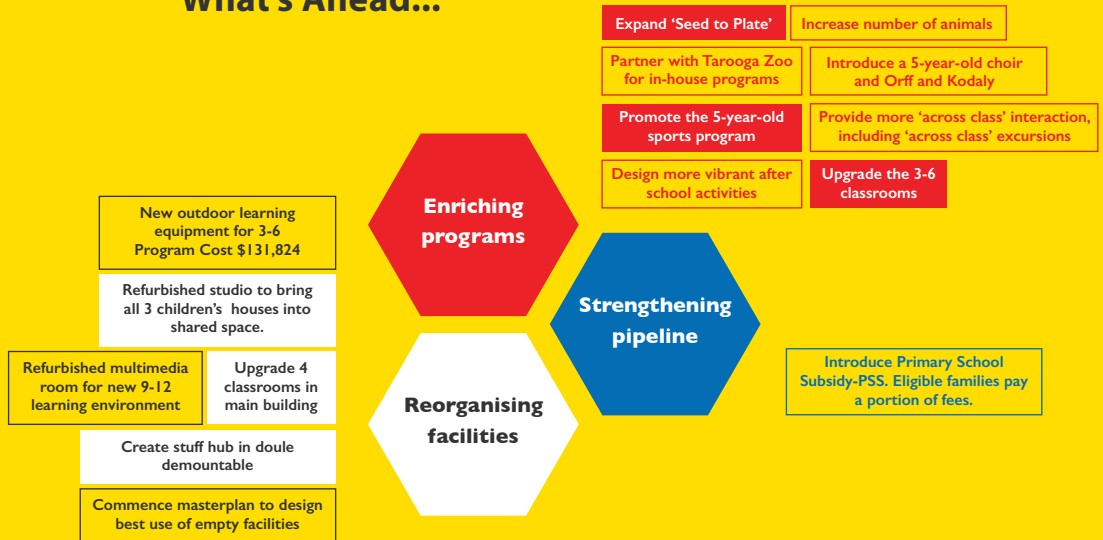


Thank you to the FMS community of current and past parents, grandparents and friends who continue to support FMS and the benefits of a Montessori education. We really do appreciate all that you do. To our Board Directors, who are volunteers giving an immense amount of time and expertise to FMS, thank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



Beyond Today

What's Ahead...



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

*He does it with his hands, by experience.
first in play and then through work.*





Forestville
MONTESSORI School
Thriving beyond...

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

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