Armenian General Benevolent Union
ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL REPORT
2016

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MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

AGBU Alexander Primary School continues to provide unique learning experience to primary age students in safe Christian family oriented environment. The school follows the NSW school curriculum with the added benefit of Armenian language classes. Thus, providing unparalleled opportunity to the Australian Armenian Community in developing primary school aged children in light of the school moto to “Grow and Serve”.

This year we have seen increase in student’s numbers that includes Pre-school students, which has become the norm over the last few years. We also continue to receive enrolment of students of Armenian refugee families who arrived from the war-torn Syria.

We are proud of our AGBU Alexander Primary School head teacher, teachers, staff, and students, and we would like to say big thanks for all their dedication, hard work and perseverance. We would also like to congratulate them, as the school continues to excel in the NAPLAN tests (well above the state average), interschool debating competitions, and several showcases, such as, Book Week, Cultural Day, and Palm Sunday Concert.

The Board actively support the school in its mission through volunteers that includes representatives from the AGBU Sydney Chapter, school parents and graduated school students. The Board meets monthly and its members visit the school regularly and follow up on actions.

The AGBU Alexander Primary School would like to also take this opportunity to express its gratitude to the founding members, AGBU Sydney Chapter, sponsors, parents, students and all the supporters from the Armenian community and the wider Australian society for their tremendous backing and support.

On behalf of the AGBU Alexander Primary School Board,

Yours Sincerely

Sossie Giragosian
Chairperson

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CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

AGBU Alexander Primary is a bilingual English and Armenian Christian school, dedicated to excellence in education and the realisation of each student's potential, providing a balanced curriculum, encompassing academic, spiritual, cultural, physical and practical areas of learning. The school's clear focus is the enrichment of the individual student. This is achieved by committing to the personal development of each student by individualising programs; small class sizes; monitoring of students' progress; recognising potential talents; facilitating a dynamic learning environment; encouraging active participation in school activities and performances. The school is open to all children. Parents need to show support for the Armenian heritage. It has strong affiliations with the wider community hosting cultural days and performing at community centres. The school is involved in many extracurricular activities, participating in interschool sporting and academic events such as debating. The students extend themselves in the performing arts by producing and performing in special event concerts held throughout the year. AGBU Alexander Primary School provides a safe, caring, nurturing, harmonious and conducive learning and working environment to support its motto to 'Grow and Serve'.

Further information is available at the My School website. (www.MySchool.edu.au)

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SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

NAPLAN

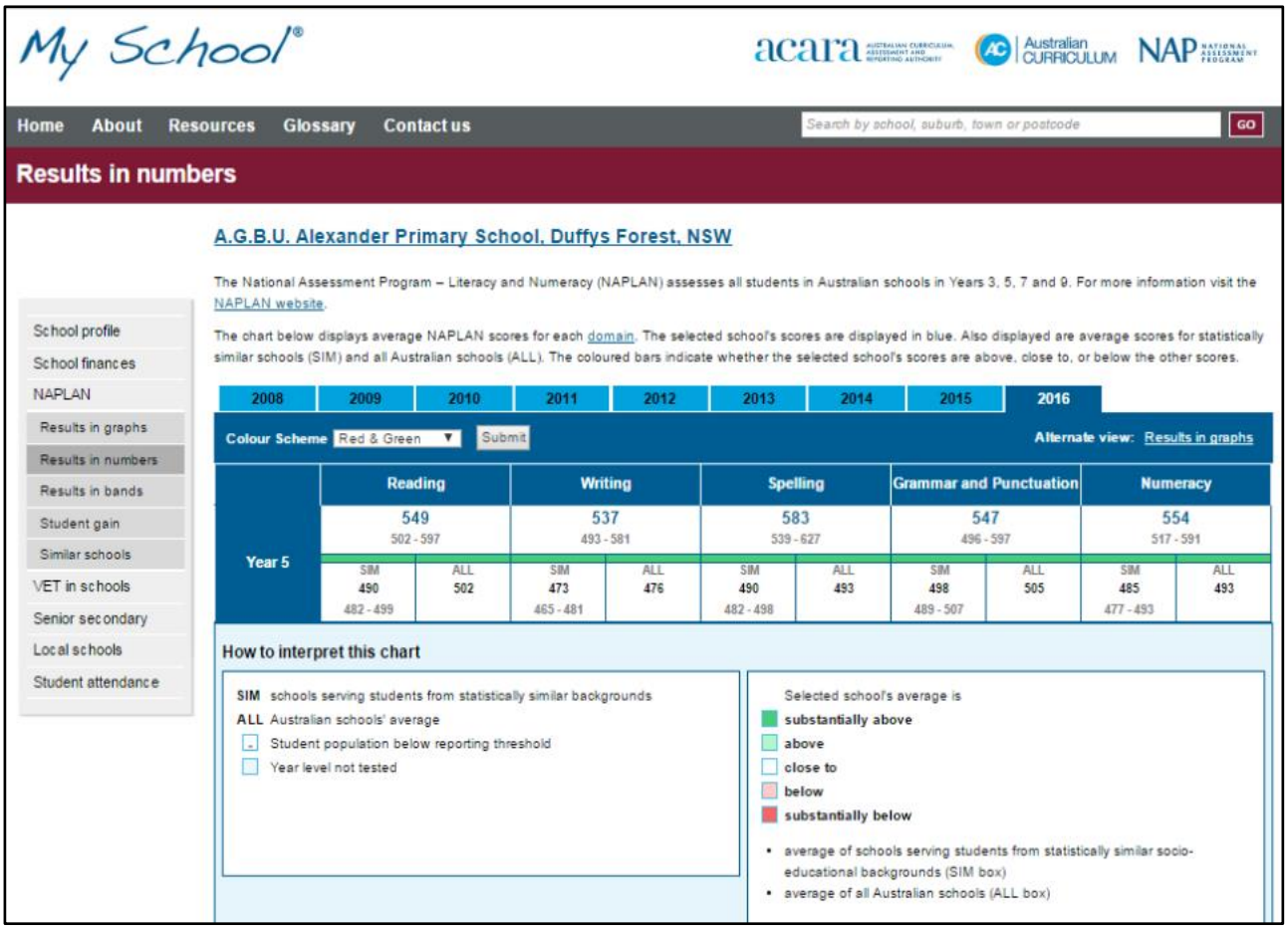
In 2016 all students in Year 3 and Year 5 participated in the National Assessment Program – Literacy And Numeracy (NAPLAN). This program assesses Literacy (Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy (Number, Patterns & Algebra, Measurement, Data, Space & Geometry).

The results of these tests can be found at the My School website: http://www.MySchool.edu.au

Search for *AGBU Alexander Primary School, Duffys Forest, NSW 2084* to access our school results for 2008 - 2016. My School data compares our school to the average scores for statistically similar schools nationwide, and the average scores for all Australian schools.

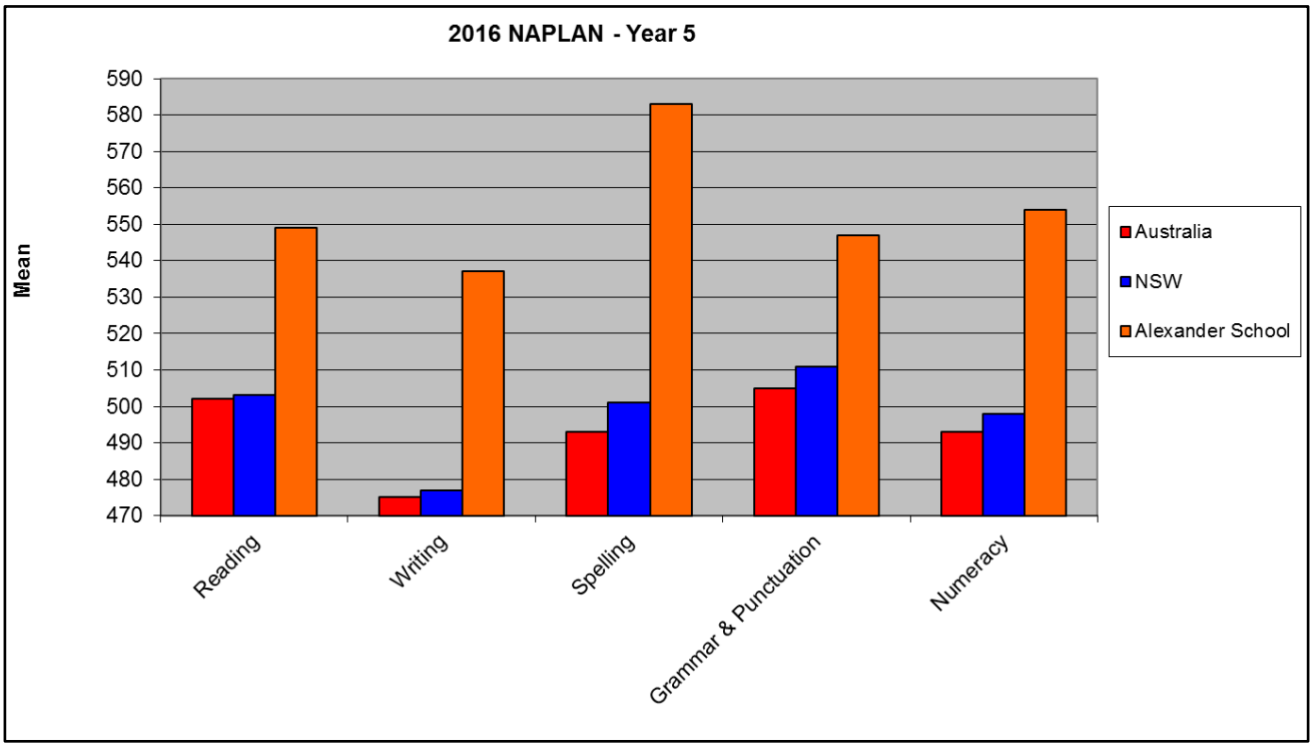
Statistically similar schools are schools across Australia with a number of factors in common such as the social and economic background of the students, whether the school is remote, the proportion of Indigenous students, or a combination of these factors.

In 2016 all students achieved above the national minimum standards in Literacy and Numeracy. The school averages were well above both the state and national averages. The charts below show the achievements of the school in comparison to the rest of the state and Australia.



We are extremely pleased to report that the AGBU Alexander Primary School average in Year 5 was outstanding in all areas. As the graph below shows, the mean score is high above the State and National averages.

We are not able to provide similar school comparisons for the averages in Year 3 as means are only compared for groups with five or more students. The other reason is to also protect the privacy of the Year 3 students.



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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, TEACHING STANDARDS,

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION & STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Professional Learning

The School Board and the School Executive participated in various seminars conducted by the Association of Independent Schools (AIS). All members of staff participated in professional development during the school development days in Term 1, 2 and 3. They were designed to increase staff understanding, awareness and review of their current responsibilities in each of these areas:

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF STAFF
CPR annual update and Emergency Care Training (HLTAID001)	**6**
AGBU Conference	**3**
Workplace Management Briefing 2016	**1**
Annual review and update of all school Policies including Child Protection	**6**
Review of student Assessment and Reporting	**4**

Teaching Standards

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
(a) Teachers who have teacher qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines, or	**4**
(b) Teachers who have qualifications as a graduate from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher qualifications, or	**1**
Teachers who do not have qualifications as described in (a) or (b) but who have relevant successful teaching experience or appropriate knowledge relevant to the teaching context. Such 'teachers' must have been employed - to 'teach' in NSW before 1 October 2004 (either on a permanent, casual or temporary basis) and - as a 'teacher' during the last five (5) years in a permanent, casual or temporary capacity.	**0**

Total teacher numbers are listed on the My School website.

Workforce Composition Including Indigenous

Information is available at the My School website.

Student Attendance

Year Level	Attendance Rate %
Kindergarten	94.82%
Year 1	94.54%
Year 2	96.35%
Year 3	96.57%
Year 4	94.81%
Year 6	95.91%

Students were expected to be at school for **191 days**.

The attendance rate for all classes in 2016 was **95.5%** and is consistent with 2015 where the whole school attendance was 95.06%

Unexplained student absences from classes or school will be followed up by the teacher in an appropriate manner. If a student has over three (3) days of unexplained absences, the teacher will notify the Principal who will in turn contact the parents in an appropriate manner to seek clarification. If the identified attendance issue is unresolved and unsatisfactory the Principal will inform the School Board. The Board will in turn take the necessary action, including the contacting and informing of the appropriate government authorities.

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ENROLMENT POLICY AND PROFILE OF STUDENT POPULATION

AGBU Alexander Primary School is part of the global network of bilingual Armenian schools established by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU).

Mission Statement

'AGBU Alexander Primary School is dedicated to excellence in education and the realisation of each student's potential, providing a balanced curriculum, encompassing academic, spiritual, cultural, physical and practical areas of learning.'

Policy

AGBU Alexander Primary School is a bilingual English and Armenian Christian school, dedicated to excellence in education and the realisation of each student's potential, providing a balanced curriculum, encompassing academic, spiritual, cultural, physical and practical areas of learning.

The School's clear focus is the enrichment of the individual student. This is achieved by committing to the personal development of each student by individualising programs; small class sizes; monitoring of students' progress; recognising potential talents; facilitating a dynamic learning environment; encouraging active participation in school activities and performances.

AGBU Alexander Primary School caters for students from Preparatory (Prep) to Year 6.

Enrolment is open to all children of primary school age and applications are accepted for entry at all year levels.

The age requirement for students entering **Kindergarten is 5 years by 31st July** of the enrolment year, while for **Prep it is one year prior to Kindergarten** enrolment.

Parents need to show support for the Armenian heritage of the School. The School has strong affiliations with the wider community hosting cultural days and performing at community centres.

The School is involved in many extracurricular activities, participating in interschool sporting and academic events such as debating. The students extend themselves in the performing arts by producing and performing in special event concerts held throughout the year.

AGBU Alexander Primary School provides a safe, caring, nurturing, harmonious and conducive learning and working environment to support its motto to 'Grow and Serve'.

It is a policy of the Armenian General Benevolent Union for no child to be denied an education in its schools for the sole reason that his/her parents are unable to meet all or part of the school fees. Assistance or relief request is made by written application. Substantiation documents may be required.

Children with special physical or intellectual needs will be accepted into the School if there is proof that the needs of the child can be catered for within the present staffing set-up. Information on the special needs of the child will be sought from outside professionals before enrolment is confirmed.

Individual Armenian programs are structured for children with little or no Armenian background. Eastern and Western dialect are catered for in the teaching of Armenian language, in single classes.

Procedures

1. Applications for enrolment are made through the School Office via the Registrar.
2. The Principal and/or the Curriculum Coordinator will carry out an interview with each Applicant and Parents.
3. During 'Orientation Days' students will have the opportunity to spend some time in the classroom with the teacher and other students.
4. In consultation with the teachers, the Principal will determine the suitability of the child for enrolment.
5. All applicants will receive a letter to inform them of the outcome of their application for enrolment.

School Population

The vast majority of students are from families of Armenian background. Most children travel to the school from either the Ryde/Dundas area or from the Chatswood/Willoughby area.

Further information is available at the My School website. (www.MySchool.edu.au)

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SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

Summary

AGBU Alexander Primary School will provide its students and staff with a safe, caring, harmonious and conducive learning and working environment. The fostering of relationships between all members of the school community will support such an environment. The school views productivity to be directly related to the morale of the work/classroom environment.

The focal point of AGBU Alexander Primary School is its students, their individual needs and well-being.

The School aims to:

- ensure the development of self esteem in all members of the school community.
- ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff members within the school environment through incidental activities and planned programs.
- establish and set standards of behaviour and disciplinary measures through policies and procedures.
- promote positive attitudes and actions towards issues of human rights.
- utilize external agencies as support networks to help accomplish these aims.

All of the following policies may be accessed in the School Office or Staff Room. Parents may request to use these at any time.

The following Policies were in place during 2016.

A - The School Welfare Policy

- **Health and Safety**
  Nutrition, Sun Safety, Classroom Safety, Bus Safety, Playground Safety and Supervision, Toilet Safety, Walkways, Stairs and Common Areas.
- **Strategies to Promote Good Discipline and Effective Learning**
  Assigning Special Responsibilities to Senior Students - The School Captain, House Captains/Bus Monitors.
- **Respecting the Rights of Others**
  Statement of Rights, Protection, Harassment and Bullying.
- **Communication**
  Home Liaison via the Diary, Weekly Newsletter
- **Students With Special Needs**
  Identification, Action, Remedial Support, Enrichment/Extension
- **School Medical Service**
  Vision, Hearing, Speech and Language, Behavioural /Emotional, Dental, Immunisation, Fine/Gross Motor Skills – Occupational Therapy, Head Lice, Asthma, Medication.

B - Critical Incident Policy

- Definition, Reactions
- Responsibilities
- Time Line Guides for Action

C - Emergency Procedures Policy

- Fire Safety Provisions
- School Emergency Team
- Standard Fire Orders
- Conduct during Evacuations / Drills
- Equipment in the School
- Bush Fire Evacuation / Drill Record
- Lockdown

D - The School's Code of Conduct

- The Legislative Context
- Duty of Care and Legal Liabilities
- General Guidelines
    - Supervision of Students
    - Relationships with Students
    - Discipline of Students
    - Communication Issues
    - Duty to Disclose

E - The Child Protection Policy

- **The Care and Protection Act**
    - Mandatory Reporting
- **The Ombudsman Act**
    - Responsibilities
    - Reportable Conduct
    - Risk Management
    - Disciplinary Action
- **Working With Children Act**

F - The Excursion Policy

- Duty of Care
- Authorisation of excursions
- Student Briefings and Preparation
- Planning Excursions
- Supervisor Responsibilities
- Changes to Circumstances
- Third Party Providers
- In the Event of Emergency
- Overnight Excursions
- Medical Information
- Student Discipline
- Parents/Volunteers
- Evaluation

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DISCIPLINE POLICY

Summary

It is expected that students attending AGBU Alexander Primary School will maintain an acceptable level of behaviour to ensure a happy, safe, interactive and cooperative environment. Students, staff and school community must each contribute toward creating a positive learning environment by preserving school rules and routine.

Rationale

AGBU Alexander Primary School believes in a positive approach to discipline. This is achievable by ensuring that:

- Rules and expectations are clear.
- Staff-members are positive, yet firm and consistent.
- Children achieve success from an interesting and stimulating program.
- Children are involved in constructive play at break times.

Rules

- We use our common sense
- We keep ourselves safe
- We respect other people, property and the environment.
- We strive to do out best.

Policy Sections

- **Classroom Management**
  Classroom Reward Chart, Encouragement Award, Teachers' Award, Honours Award.
- **Uniform Code**
- **Homework Code**
- **Detentions/Record of Misbehaviour**
  Detention procedure
- **Corporal Punishment**
  AGBU Alexander Primary School does not condone, permit nor exercise corporal punishment, as defined by the Education Reform (School Discipline) Act 1995. It also does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at the School.
- **Behaviour Levels**
- **Discipline Guidelines**
- **Bullying**

The full text of the School's Discipline Policy is located in the School's Policy Folder, in the Office and Staff Room. Parents may request access when required. An abbreviated form is circulated to parents at the commencement of every year. Staff members also check and rework any sections at the commencement of each year.

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COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES RESOLUTION POLICY

AGBU Alexander Primary School promotes an open and effective Complaints and Grievances Policy to ensure that all complaints are dealt with in an effective, fair and time efficient manner.

Communication on such matters is prompt and follows procedural fairness. The School Community is encouraged to treat all complaints with confidentiality and fair-mindedness.

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SCHOOL DETERMINED IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

Area	Priorities	Achievements
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS	Maintain standards set by previous years in State and National Testing in Literacy, Numeracy and Writing.	The students in 2016 maintained standards above the national minimum standard in overall literacy and numeracy in the NAPLAN tests given to Years 3 and 5. The Year 5 results were outstanding in all areas, with mean score high above the State and National averages.
	Give the students an opportunity to participate in external academic assessments.	Twelve students participated in the ICAS Digital Technologies, English, Mathematics, Science, Spelling and Writing assessments. Overall the school received 3 Distinctions, 13 Credits and 5 Merits.
	Maintain a high level of public speaking skills by participating in local Debating Competition.	In 2016 the students of Year 6 participated in the Forest District Debating Competition. The team finished as runners-up. All students in Year 6 participated in one or more debates. Some students from Year 5 were also given the opportunity to debate.
	Expand cultural understanding of students.	In 2016 the school held its sixth 'Armenian Cultural Day'. The theme for the year was *'Armenian Food Safari'*. The school invited a master chief, Mr Sedrak Mamulyan from Armenia for the occasion. The students discovered the variety and custom of traditional Armenian dishes during the year. They also showcased a wonderful musical performance on the day based on the theme. The school hall was set with a unique exhibition presenting traditional Armenian dishes served on special occasions.

TEACHING AND LEARNING	Continue Values Education in the ongoing social education of students.	The school has continued to focus on values awareness during assemblies, focusing on a new value every month. Values education has continued in the classrooms in conjunction with PDHPE, History & Geography and Science & Technology topics.
	Sports Program - Gymnastics - Swimming	The two well received gymnastics and swimming programs continued to be offered to all the students, with the support of *Sporting Schools* program. The weekly sessions were provided over a period of one term for each program.
	Managing composite classes across Stage Levels.	In 2016 the school had a P/K, 1/2, and a 3-6 class. These classes were managed well. Different levels of achievement were recognised and managed by teachers. Separate outcomes were achieved for each level and where appropriate students participated in activities with similarly aged students.
	Developing a Healthy, Active & Environmentally Sustainable School Environment.	The students were provided with hands-on gardening and environmental workshops, which enabled them to take on the responsibilities of maintain the garden in the Greenhouse and the chickens in the Chicken Coop.
	Music lessons with a specialist music teacher.	In 2016 the school continued to employ a specialist music teacher to provide the students with music lessons, help with musical items in school concerts, accompany musical items at assembly and give private piano lessons. Having the support of a specialist music teacher has given the students an opportunity to really shine at the many functions and concerts that they have performed in throughout the year. It has also given them a deeper knowledge of music theory.

RESOURCES	Teaching resources and Library Books.	New teaching resources and books for the library were purchased by the school and with the help of the school community.
	Student Laptops.	Fourteen new laptop computers with the latest software were introduced into the classrooms for student use.
	Microsoft Office Apps for Education	The school extended and complemented the use of the *Google Apps for Education* with the *Microsoft Office 365 for Education* applications. Together, they provide more opportunities for students and teachers to work effectively in a collaborative 'cloud' environment.
POLICIES	Updated: • Child Protection	Hard copies of all policies are located in the School's Policy Folder, in the Office and Staff Room. They are made available on request. Soft copies of all policies are shared with all members of staff on their Google Drive. Relevant policy documents are also shared with all parents and students through their Google Drive accounts.
FACILITIES	School Dam	A follow up maintenance and clean out of the dam area was made possible with the support of the Warringah Council. It is now possible to set up the area for study purposes, as a sensitive ecological site for wetland wildlife.
	New Lighting	The Board implemented the major task of replacing the old light fittings throughout the school with new LED light tubes that use less energy, last longer and have zero maintenance. The full metal chassis with screws on the end caps also made them safer and robust. A fresh coat of ceiling paint was also applied making the school more inviting.

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INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Efforts to continue education for respect and responsibility were continued in the following ways:

- The school rules include: We respect other people, property and the environment.
- The school respects and values each child as an individual and a member of the school community.
- Respect and responsibility are stressed in class and in everyday school life.
- There is an expectation of courtesy, good behaviour, care for the community they belong to and respect for all.
- At weekly assemblies, values are highlighted, two of which are Respect and Responsibility.
- In the classrooms as part of the PD units: Growth and Development, Interpersonal Relationships, Safe Living and Personal Health Choices.
- In the classrooms as part of the HSIE units: Communication, Australian Neighbours, Celebrations, People and Their Beliefs, Co-operating Communities, Australian Democracy and Global Environments.
- In the classroom as part of the Science and Technology units: Let's Communicate, Kid's Care, Keep In Touch, Environment Matters and Way Out Communication.
- The school carries out a buddy program where older children are responsible for younger ones.
- Year 5/6 are given responsibilities as bus monitors, house captains, library monitors and are also responsible for conducting weekly assemblies.
- Teachers and parents provide the care and support that engender self-esteem, mutual respect and responsibility.
- The school discipline policy upholds the values of respect and responsibility rewarding those following the school rules and addressing promptly any behaviour which comes into conflict with these rules.
- The students participate in interschool sporting, debating and multicultural days which promote the values of respect and responsibility.

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PARENT, STUDENT AND TEACHER SATISFACTION

Parents

- Are given the opportunity to provide feedback on children's Term 1 and 3 Portfolios. Parent satisfaction is shown when comments come back congratulating both the teachers and the children on their achievements. 100% of these feedback sheets are returned and the comments that are made are positive and supportive of the staff and school.
- Many parents involve themselves in P&C committee organising school functions and fundraising activities – showing their support and satisfaction in the job that the school is doing. Most school functions can boast 100% attendance from parents who not only come to support their children but help in the catering and providing of food at these functions.
- Parents are well represented at Working Bees, as canteen helpers, classroom helpers and drivers, showing their support and satisfaction.
- Two formal meetings are held at the school with the parents but parents are encouraged to contact the teacher or Principal when necessary with any concerns or comments.
- Use is made by parents not only in face to face interviews but by emails and telephone conversations as well as letters or notes in the students' diaries if they should wish to communicate with the school.

Students

- When students leave Alexander Primary School after Year 6, they frequently express the wish that there was a high school here as they are very sorry to leave.
- Graduates return to school on a school day on which they are not required to be at school (pupil free days at High School). They spend the day helping teachers and children in class.
- Graduates of Alexander Primary School also often return to see and participate in programs of the school such as Palm Sunday concerts and Presentations, Mother's Day Presentations, Christmas Concerts and Speech Nights.
- Older Graduates (current University students) are happy to be asked to present Awards during Speech Night.
- Being a small school the current students know all other students well and play and work in a family like situation. The older students take on the responsibility for the younger ones taking on their roles as buddies very seriously. Students are encouraged to include everyone in their play.
- Students are very supportive of their peers. This is shown in competitions where the students rally behind all students cheering them on even if they are on different teams.

Teachers

- Alexander Primary School has a very low teacher turn over and very low absenteeism.
- Staff members are supportive of each other and enjoy getting together socially.

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SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Chart 1: Income 2016

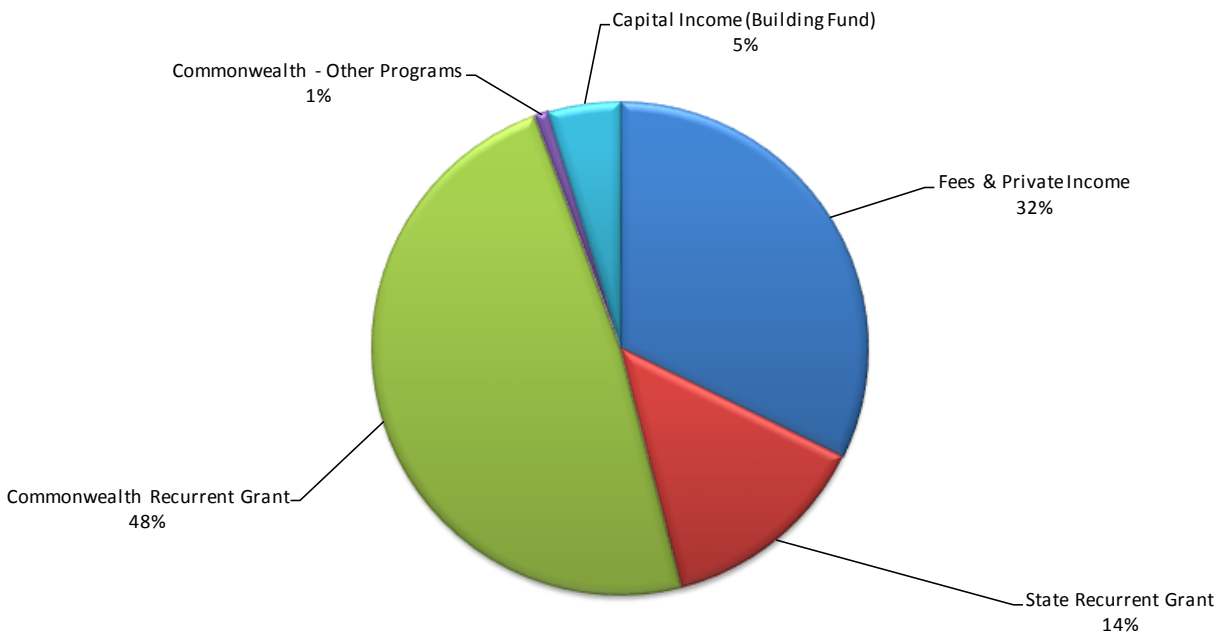
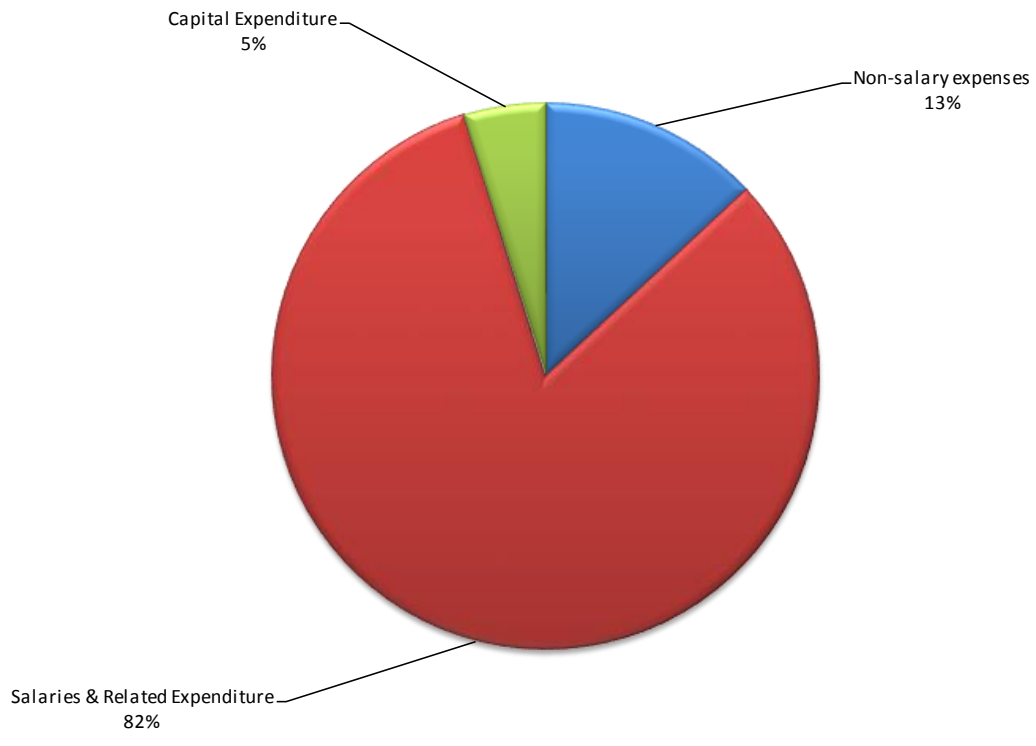
Chart 2: Expenditure 2016