Armenian General Benevolent Union
ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL REPORT
2017

This report has been prepared by

Mr Manoug Demirjian
Principal

&

Mrs Vicky Dernee
Curriculum Coordinator

and has been evaluated by the

AGBU Alexander Primary School Board

2 Namba Road, Duffys Forest NSW 2084, Australia
Tel: (+61 2) 9486 3266 Fax: (+61 2) 9486 3204
www.alexander.nsw.edu.au

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MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

The AGBU Alexander Primary School continued to fulfil its mission of providing young Australian Armenians with sound education based on the curriculum set by the NSW Education Standards Authority.

The school's Mission Statement:

> "*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.*"

is always at the forefront of each member of the teaching staff who diligently discharges his/her responsibilities by staying true to the mission statement.

The clear focus of the school is the enrichment of the individual student. This is achieved by committing to the personal development of each student by individualising programs and providing it in a caring, safe and nurturing environment.

Following on from 2016 theme '**Year of Growth**' and in line with our school moto '**To Grow & Serve**', 2017 was marked as a '**Year of Service**'. The year to 'serve' our physical, academic, social, spiritual & community needs. AGBU Alexander Primary School has a proud history of service to the community. Our students are active participants and contributors of the community.

Throughout the year, our students joined the after Church volunteer service of providing coffee/tea to parishioners, which included the Armenian Apostolic Church in Chatswood, the Armenian Evangelical Uniting Church, as well as the Armenian Catholic Church.

The students also visited the 'Alexander Nursing Home' on Armenian Independence Day and at Christmas time. They joined with the elderly at the 'Armenian Welfare Centre' for Christmas Carols and following an invitation from 'Scalabrini Village' at Allambie Heights, Alexander School students also visited the village for the first time to sing Christmas Carols.

The education provided at the AGBU Alexander Primary School does not end with the formal curriculum. The students at our school also receive **'life' education** to allow them to have a broader knowledge and understanding of life beyond the textbooks to empower our children to make safer and healthier choices during those important years. Therefore, during 2017 academic year, our students continued to receive instructions in the following areas:

- Staying Safe Online
- Junior First Aid Course
- Safety with Dogs - Visit by Guide Dogs
- Bike education program (CARES)
- Oral Hygiene (visit by Dentist)

In broadening the experiences of our students, the school organised '**Asia Day Celebrations**' as the culmination of **Asian Studies**, focusing on Vietnam, Bali and India. The students learnt about the culture, the food and traditional costumes of those countries. They were then able to share the knowledge they had gained about their Asian countries in our special assembly.

In keeping in touch with our faith, our students also took part in and embraced the theme of the 60th anniversary celebrations of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection by expressing their '**Faith, Hope & Love**' in their lives **through artwork**.

The **NAPLAN** results showed yet again the brilliant results our students continue to achieve. The 2017 results for our **Year 3 students** showed that they excelled in all **5 key areas of learning**, **Reading**, **Writing**, **Spelling**, **Grammar & Punctuation** and **Numeracy**, by recording well above average results when compared to the results of NSW and Australian schools.

The theme of the **Cultural Evening** this year was the Armenian poet and writer Hovhannes Toumanyan. Our students once again delighted those present with presentations of poetry, songs and five dramatic displays of our famous writer and 'Poet of All Armenians'.

During the year we enjoyed visits by

- Luys Vocal Quintet from Armenia
- Ara Gevorgyan - Renowned Armenian Composer
- Mrs Rakel Dink - Widow of Armenian Hero Hrant Dink
- Mr Tigran Zargaryan - Armenian National Library
- His Grace Bishop Haigazoun Najarian and
- Father Avetis Hambardzumyan - School Chaplain

Thanks to current & past parents and grandparents, as well as friends & neighbours of the AGBU Alexander Primary School who invested in the school grounds and upgraded the canteen. Thank you also for everyone who answered the call for a 'Working Bee' to maintain the school grounds.

The School Board would like to express its sincere appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the school Principal, Teachers, school staff, and the P&C who work throughout the year to organise fund raising functions for the school and look after the canteen. We take this opportunity to also thank the Australian & NSW governments for their continued support; as well as the AGBU Sydney Chapter, current & past parents and grandparents, and friends of the AGBU for continuing to provide the energy to allow the school to shine.

AGBU Alexander Primary School Board

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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

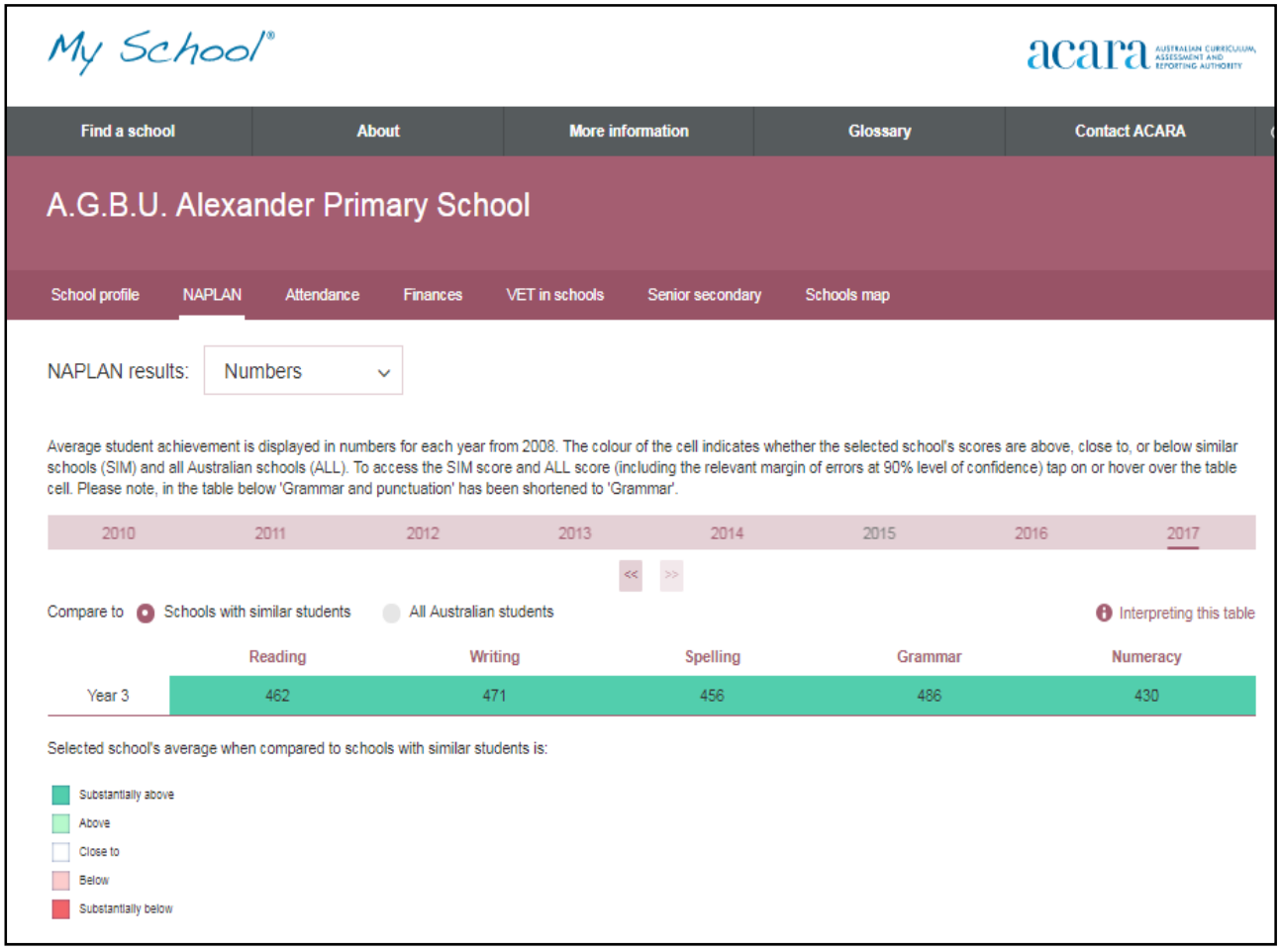
In 2017 all students in Year 3 and Year 5 participated in the National Assessment Program – Literacy And Numeracy (NAPLAN). This program assesses Literacy (Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy (Number, Patterns & Algebra, Measurement, Data, Space & Geometry).

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 - 2017. My School data compares our school to the average scores for statistically similar schools nationwide, and the average scores for all Australian schools.

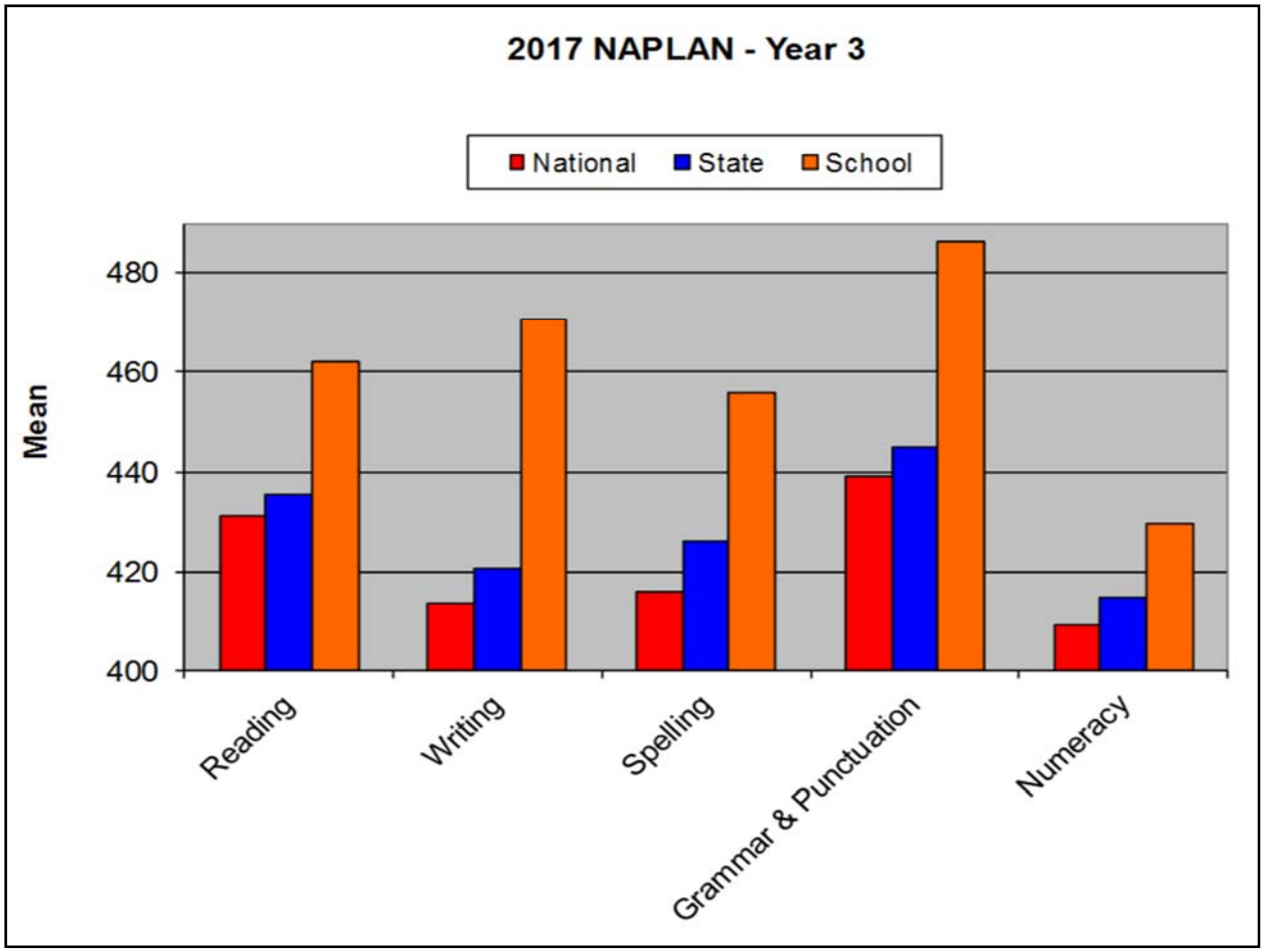
Statistically similar schools are schools across Australia with a number of factors in common such as the social and economic background of the students, whether the school is remote, the proportion of Indigenous students, or a combination of these factors.

In 2017 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 AGB U Alexander Primary School average in Year 3 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 5 as means are only compared for groups with five or more students. The other reason is to also protect the privacy of the Year 5 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**
Armenian Language Conference	**2**
Workplace Management Briefing 2017	**1**
Annual review and update of all school Policies including Child Protection	**6**
Live Life Well @ School (LLWatS) - A two-day workshop to enhance PDHPE	**1**
Literacy & Numeracy Learning Progressions	**2**

Teacher Accreditation

LEVEL OF ACCREDITATION	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
Pre-2004 teachers (accreditation not required in 2017)	**3**
Conditional	**0**
Provisional	**1**
Proficient Teacher	**1**

Teacher Qualifications

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
(a) Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) guidelines, or	**5**
(b) Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	**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	92.96%
Year 1	91.50%
Year 2	97.16%
Year 3	94.11%
Year 4	98.22%
Year 5	95.05%
Year 6	96.42%

Students were expected to be at school for **192 days**. The attendance rate for all classes in 2017 was **95.06%** and is consistent with 2016 where the whole school attendance was 95.5%

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 2017.

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 our 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 2017 maintained standards above the national minimum standard in overall literacy and numeracy in the NAPLAN tests given to Years 3 and 5. The Year 3 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.	On average ten students participated in each of the following ICAS assessments:- Digital Technologies, English, Mathematics, Science, Spelling and Writing assessments. Across all results, the students achieved:- 1 High Distinction, 4 Distinctions, 24 Credits and 8 Merits.
	Maintain a high level of public speaking skills by participating in local Debating Competition.	In 2017 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 2017 the school held another 'Armenian Cultural Evening'. The theme for this year was the Armenian poet and writer *Hovhannes Toumanyan*. All students were involved in delighting those present with presentations of five dramatic productions of the popular stories of famous writer and 'Poet of All Armenians'. The Armenian lessons were centred around the theme. Students were also instructed with drama and acting skills to enhance their performance.

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 - Yoga - Swimming	The gymnastics and swimming programs continued to be offered to all the students, with the support of *Sporting Schools* program. For the first time, Yoga was also introduced during Term 2. The sessions incorporated the 'Smiling Minds' program, which is a mental health and wellbeing program, being implemented in schools across Australia. All these weekly sessions were provided over a period of one term for each program.
	Managing composite classes across Stage Levels.	In 2017 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 2017 the school continued to employ a specialist music teacher to provide the students with music lessons, help with musical items in school concerts and give private piano lessons. Having the support of a music teacher has given the students an opportunity to really shine at the many functions.

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.	Extra number of laptop computers with the latest software were introduced into the classrooms for student use.
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 Grounds	Capital works and upgrades were carried out on the school grounds with the aim of resolving the drainage issue around the language and culture classrooms. As a result, the whole area around the building, including the back of the play equipment received new grass. This has revived the play area for the students, making it a more pleasant and fun experience.
	Canteen Upgrade	The Canteen was given a new facelift by tiling the walls. Apart from the amazing new look, the purpose was to also meet the new health and safety guidelines.
	External Doors & Play Equipment	All the external doors, including the frames of the classrooms and buildings were given a fresh coat of paint. The wooden posts of the playground equipment were also pressure cleaned and varnished for protection and longevity.

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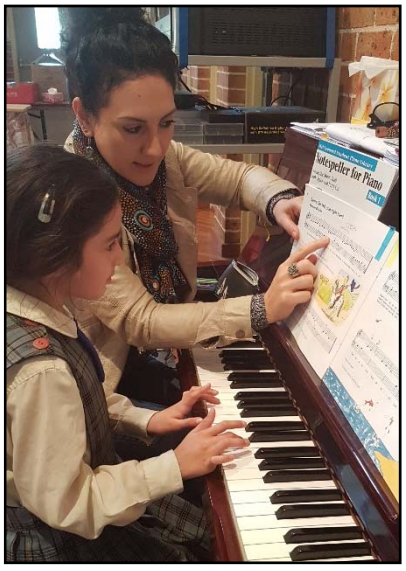
INITIATIVES PROMOTING RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

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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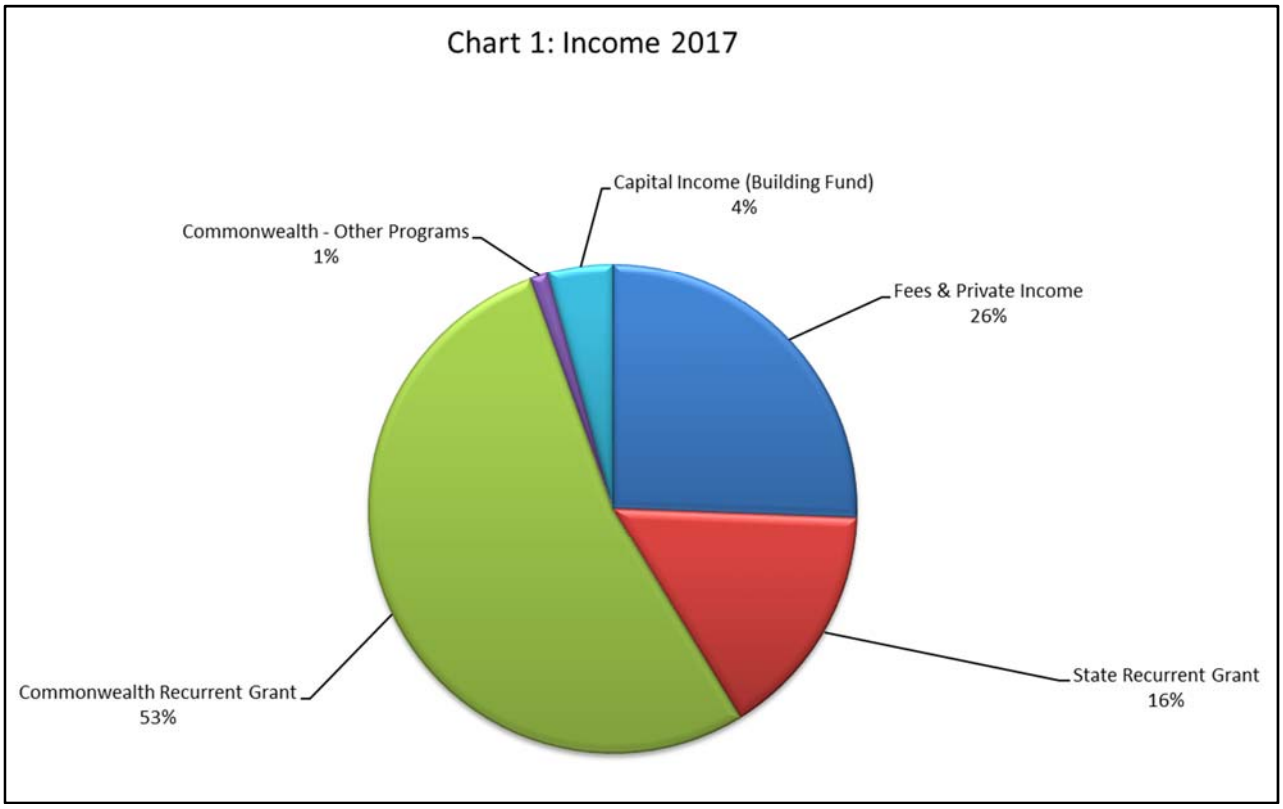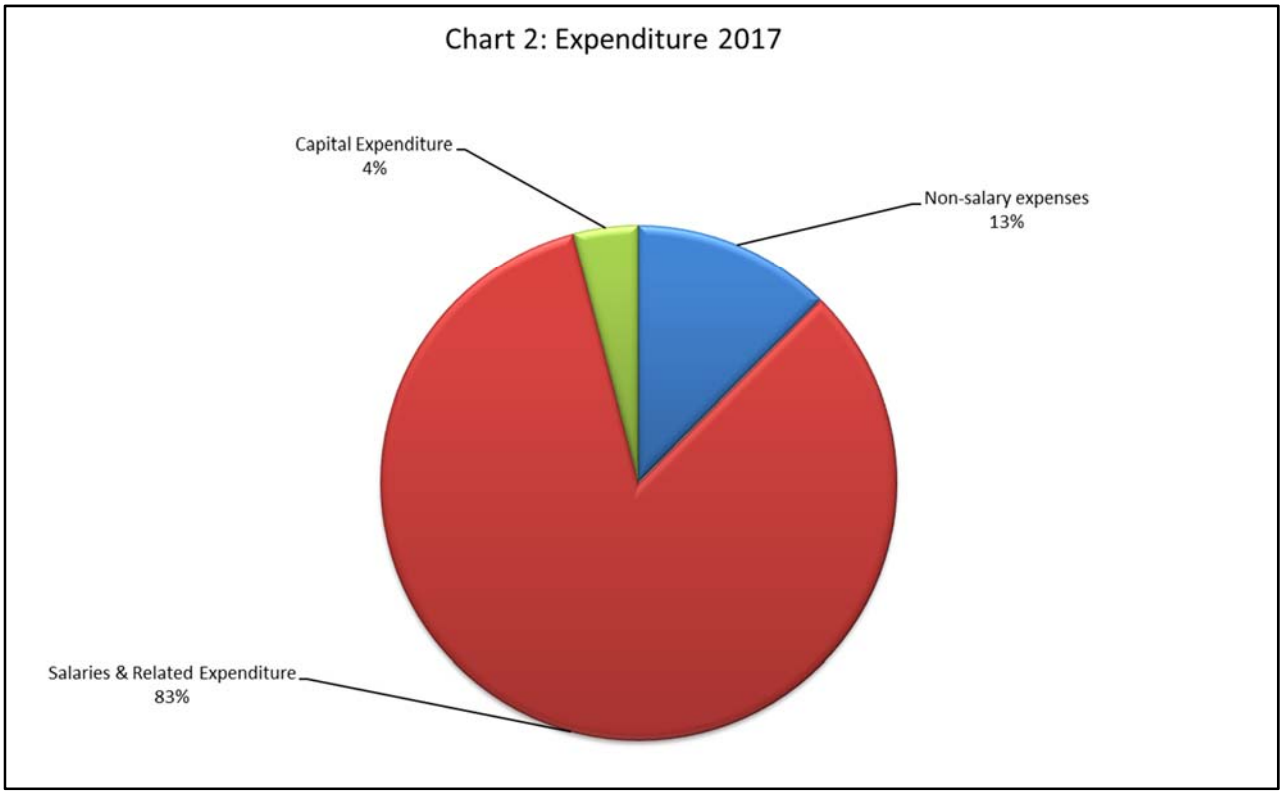
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