

# 2018 Annual School Report



## St Thomas' Catholic Primary School, Willoughby

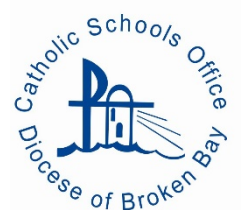
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## ABOUT THIS REPORT

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St Thomas' Catholic Primary School (the 'School') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO), Diocese of Broken Bay. The CSO as the 'approved authority' for the diocesan registration system formed under Section 39 of the NSW Education Act (1990), is responsible for monitoring the compliance of member schools in the manner that has been approved by the Minister of Education.

The Annual School Report (the 'Report'), approved by the School's Consultant, demonstrates accountability to regulatory bodies and the CSO. Additionally, the Report complements and is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the School community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students.

The Report provides parents and the wider community with fair, reliable and objective information about educational and financial performance measures as well as School and system policies. This information includes summary contextual data, an overview of student performance in state and national assessments, a description of the achievement of priorities in the previous year and areas for improvement. Detailed information about the School's improvement journey is documented in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) which is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders.

Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the School directly or by visiting the School's website. Information can be also be obtained from the [My School website](#).

### **Principal's Message**

2018 has been another highly successful year for the St Thomas Catholic Primary School community. This report provides an overview of activities and events during the 2018 school year which contributed to the achievement of our goals and the continued development of our Catholic school community.

2018 was a full and eventful year and we are proud of the broad range of our successes. These included excellent NAPLAN results, ongoing implementation of the inaugural *Signature Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)* units K-6, successful debating teams in the Independent Schools Debating Association and Sydney Debating Network competitions, sports representation at state level, and an outstandingly successful Art and Craft show.

The thoughtful, ongoing implementation of technology to maximise engagement and learning has been a notable success at the School which has incorporated a trial of in-class coding lessons for students in Years 2 & 3. Depending on the results of this trial the implementation will be extended across K-6 in 2019.

### **Parent Body Message**

The Parents & Friends Association (P&F) delivered on its objective to develop a strong school community and foster relationships between parents, School and Parish. With the Federal Government school funding challenges behind us, our focus returned to building deeper bonds amongst our community.

From social functions through to the various Masses, morning teas, welcome parties and fundraising events, the P&F's network of volunteers did an outstanding job of coordinating and supporting these occasions.

The pastoral care committee, supported by parent volunteers, continue to deliver on the core objective of caring for the community. The overwhelming volunteer assistance offered by families is a credit to the strength of the fabric of our community.

The annual Art and Craft Show held in October was once again a success. The show exemplifies the outstanding contribution and collaboration between parents and supporters and is a major financial benefit for the School, in addition to promoting an atmosphere for families to work together.

## **Student Body Message**

2018 has been a tremendously exciting year, from the school musical to the Art & Craft Show. In term 1 we had a Year 6 Camp at Narrabeen, our cross country, and our school leaders met with Bishop Peter Comensoli. The Social Justice team helped out with the Candela store, selling items crafted in Timor Leste where the money raised went directly to the people who crafted the items.

In Term 2, the Music Team held a song contest for students while Year 6 had their 100 days left of Primary school party.

Term 3 was busy for the teachers and students. We had our school musical, "Mystery at Magpie Manor" held at The Concourse, Chatswood in which all Year 5 & 6 students had a role. Each grade had their own song and dance in the musical. Kindergarten had their 100 days of Kindy party with their year 5 & 6 buddies and 8 Year 6 students had the opportunity to meet authors at Lunch with the Stars.

In Term 4, we had our 43rd Annual Art & Craft Show where every class made a class artwork that was auctioned at the Opening Night. There were rides and many local businesses had stalls. Throughout the year we also had many Sport Carnivals and Gala Days. Overall, 2018 has been a great year for everyone!

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## SECTION TWO: SCHOOL FEATURES

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### School Features

St Thomas' Catholic Primary School Willoughby, is a Catholic systemic co-educational school.

The School provides for the educational needs of children from Kindergarten to Year 6 and draws its enrolments primarily from the Catholic Parish of the Lower North Shore. The School is established in an attractive setting with a challenging and stimulating outdoor play environment.

The School was founded by the Sisters of Saint Joseph in 1928 and the School's recently developed vision statement draws on the Josephite charism: *St Thomas Catholic School, Willoughby, exists to educate and form students in Catholic discipleship by creating a place where students: grow in their relationship with God; strive for excellence in the development of the whole person in the context of contemporary life; and reach out through service to others.*

The School's rich and broad curriculum offers a diverse Creative Arts program including senior and junior bands and choirs, instrumental tuition, biannual whole school musical, inter-school debating and a variety of competitive and experiential sporting events. Students debate for Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney in the Primary A and Primary B divisions of competitions where primary teams are a prerequisite for inclusion. Lunch clubs include double dutch skipping, chess, library, jazz improvisation and sport; these activities provide additional stimulation for all grades.

A rich musical environment is provided through junior and senior choirs as well as recorder and keyboard lessons. Our training and concert bands are provided as extra-curricular enrichment.

The School has undergone a major upgrade over the last few years. All classrooms have large touchscreens, ipads and laptop computers. The School has an extensive playground and sports equipment with abundant shade provided by five magnificent Moreton Bay fig trees and two large, all-weather structures. The School's media centre, based in the new School library, has every facility to assist learning.

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## SECTION THREE: STUDENT PROFILE

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### Student Enrolment

Students attending the School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2018. Additional information can be found on [My School website](#).

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
172	163	53	335

\* Language Background Other than English

### Enrolment Policy

The School follows the *Enrolment Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools*. The policy encourages the local Catholic community, under the leadership of the parish priest and principal, to look upon the time of enrolment as a potential occasion for ongoing evangelisation. The policy calls upon parents to examine their present faith commitments, to develop their role as prime educators of their children in faith and to immerse themselves in the communal, liturgical, ministerial and service dimensions of the parish. Copies of this policy and other policies in this Report may be obtained from the [CSO website](#) or by contacting the CSO.

### Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for the School in 2018 was 94.36 %. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group						
Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
94 %	95 %	95 %	95 %	93 %	95 %	94 %

## Managing Student Non-Attendance

In order for students to reach their full potential it is of paramount importance that they attend school regularly. While it is the parents' legal responsibility under the NSW Education Act (1990) to ensure that their children attend school regularly, our staff as part of their duty of care, monitor all absences and work in partnership with parents to support and promote the regular attendance of students. In doing so, the School, under the leadership of the principal:

- provides a caring environment which fosters in students, a sense of wellbeing and belonging
- maintains accurate records of student attendance
- implements policies and procedures to monitor student attendance and to address non-attendance issues as and when they arise
- communicates to parents and students, the School's expectations with regard to student attendance and the consequences of not meeting these expectations
- recognises and rewards excellent and improved student attendance.

School attendance records also contain information regarding student absences including reasons for absence and documentation to substantiate reasons for absences. Teachers are required to monitor non-attendance diligently on a student by student basis and to bring to the attention of the Principal immediately any unexplained absences, non-attendance of a chronic nature, or reasons for non-attendance that cause concern. Matters of concern are referred to the Principal, the CSO and the relevant Department of Education officer where appropriate.

Where a student is not able to attend school for a prolonged period of time due to a medical condition or illness, the School in collaboration with parents, provides resources to contribute to the student's continuum of learning where possible. The CSO monitors each school's compliance with student attendance and management of non-attendance as part of the system's School Review and Development (SRD) processes. The School's attendance monitoring procedures are based on the [\*Procedures for the Management of Student Attendance in the Broken Bay Diocesan Schools System\*](#) (password required).

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## SECTION FOUR: STAFFING PROFILE

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### Staffing Profile

All teachers employed by the School are qualified to teach in NSW. Additionally, all teachers at this School who are responsible for delivering the curriculum are accredited with NESAs. Effective from October 2007, the minimum qualification for a teacher in a systemic school in the Diocese of Broken Bay is a four year teaching degree.

Teachers at this School are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the [NSW Teacher Accreditation Act 2004](#). Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher are voluntary. The number of teachers within the Diocesan Schools System (systemic schools) at these levels is as follows: Conditional 30 teachers; Provisional 60 teachers; Proficient 1,303 teachers. Additionally, there are approximately 25 teachers who are currently actively engaged in the submission process at the higher levels of accreditation. Teacher status at individual schools can be sourced directly from the School.

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2018:

Teaching staff breakdown at this School	Number
<b>Total number of staff</b>	25
Number of full time teaching staff	13
Number of part time teaching staff	8
Number of non-teaching staff	4

### Professional Learning

The ongoing professional development of each staff member is highly valued. Professional learning (PL) can take many forms including whole school staff days, subject specific in-services, meetings and conferences and a range of professional learning programs provided by the CSO. The School takes responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and tracking staff professional learning. Individual staff members take responsibility for their ongoing professional development. All teachers have been involved in professional learning opportunities during the year related to improving student outcomes. The following table provides specific information relating to the focus of three of these staff development days.

<b>Day 1</b>	MAI Assessment & Analysis - Analysed data and adapted programs to accommodate student needs. Collegiate discussion and collaboration to improve and strengthen practice and student outcomes.
<b>Day 2</b>	Sheena Cameron & Louise Dempsey - Developing an Effective Writing Program
<b>Day 3</b>	Spirituality Day - Sweeter than Honey



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## SECTION FIVE: MISSION

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As a Catholic community, the School shares in the mission of the local Church: “The Diocese of Broken Bay exists to evangelise, to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, gathered as friends in the Lord and sent out to be missionary disciples.”

In partnership with parents as the first faith educators of their children and the local parish community, the School seeks to educate and form young people in the Catholic faith. The School provides formal Religious Education as well as retreats, spirituality days and social justice opportunities in which students are invited to serve others, especially the poor and those who are marginalised.

The School’s Religious Education (RE) program is based on the Broken Bay K-12 Religious Education Curriculum and aims to provide students with meaningful, engaging and challenging learning experiences that explores the rich diversity of the Catholic faith and ways in which we live it.

Faith formation opportunities are provided for students, staff, parents and caregivers. Students regularly celebrate Mass and pray together. Students are invited to participate in age appropriate sacramental and missionary activities aimed at living out their mission as disciples of Jesus.

The Sisters of St Joseph from Mount Street, North Sydney were the foundational teachers at the School. Their continued presence until 1979 gave the School a charism that is still alive today. Therefore, St Mary MacKillop has a special place in the School's ethos and her feast day is celebrated every year.

The School has a rich liturgical and educational program for all students, staff and the community. Throughout the year the School gathers to celebrate feast days and special events in the tradition of our faith. Each grade has an opportunity to prepare one of the Masses or liturgies and to participate in a more active way. The celebration of whole School Masses and class Masses throughout the year provides opportunities for each child to contribute meaningfully and to respond to the call for Catholic discipleship. The opening School Mass and grade Masses are held on Sundays, while others are held on Thursdays or Fridays (such as Grandparent's day, Mother's day, Father's day). Attendance at weekday Masses with the Parish, to enable students to understand the different ways in which Mass can be celebrated, is also a feature.

Environmental teams, Liturgical teams and Social Justice teams are among the varied roles for leadership in Year 6, as well as opportunities for student voice to be heard and acted upon through the Student Representative Council (SRC) with representatives from Kindergarten to Year 6 led by the school captains.

The Parish based Sacramental Program is fully supported by the School, with many parents volunteering to lead groups. The School prayer is prayed on a regular basis and the [Ignatian Examen](#) is practised to help students to identify and strengthen their own relationships with God and others.

All staff are encouraged and supported to extend their religious and theological knowledge through further education. The School engages staff in ongoing adult faith formation through spiritual retreat days, attendance at a MacKillop Colloquium and staff meetings. The parent and Parish community are also invited to spiritual retreat days held once a year.

### Primary Curriculum

The School provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabuses for primary education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology (S&T), Human Society and its Environment (HSIE), Creative Arts (CA) and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE). In addition to this, the School implements the Diocesan Religious Education syllabus. Staff members are committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning in all facets of the curriculum.

The School Advisory Team continued their work of providing support to the school in order to foster an effective cross-curricular model for the provision of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). We are now in the final year of our three year strategy for further development of student engagement in quality STEM opportunities. In 2018 the team has reached out to outside agencies including the Australian Academy of Science and the Commonwealth Bank. We have successfully completed our second STEM week where female experts were recruited to provide master classes for students relevant to both their professional expertise and the student's area of learning. Using the Project Based Learning model, teachers designed and implemented a STEM unit. The School provides technology-rich, real-world, long-term problem solving opportunities across a wide range of skill areas to engage students in sophisticated, challenging learning. The School selected [Project Based Learning](#) because of its strong emphasis on developing students' capabilities in the areas of critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, curiosity, interpersonal and communication skills, self-regulation, grit, entrepreneurial skills, teamwork and craftsmanship. This culminated in a wonderful open classroom experience for students and parents alike.

In order to enrich the quality of pedagogy across all key learning areas, the School has commenced a project entitled - New Pedagogies for Deep Learning which focuses on character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking.

Each year, the School attends a Curriculum Focus Day (CFD) along with other schools in the Diocese. These days engage teachers in discussion not only about regulatory requirements but also about the quality of teaching and learning experiences. At each of these days, the School has received favourable reports with regard to its practice. One such comment is - tracking of student learning is thorough and consistent across the school.

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## SECTION SEVEN: STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS

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### NAPLAN

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN assessment results provide valuable information about student achievements in literacy and numeracy. An analysis of these results assists the School's planning and is used to support teaching and learning programs.

The tables below show the percentages of students who achieved particular skill bands in the aspects of literacy and numeracy compared to students nationally. Literacy is reported in four content strands (aspects): Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. Numeracy is reported as a single content strand. Students who were exempted from any test were deemed not to have met the national minimum standard in that test area and are not included in band distributions. Additional NAPLAN student performance information can also be accessed from the [My School website](#).

NAPLAN RESULTS 2018		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 3	Reading	82.14 %	53.20 %	0.00 %	8.60 %
	Writing	85.71 %	41.90 %	1.79 %	10.00 %
	Spelling	75.00 %	46.60 %	1.79 %	12.50 %
	Grammar	82.14 %	53.10 %	3.57 %	11.00 %
	Numeracy	77.19 %	39.20 %	1.75 %	11.50 %

NAPLAN RESULTS 2018		% of students in the top 2 bands		% of students in the bottom 2 bands	
		School	Australia	School	Australia
Year 5	Reading	64.86 %	38.60 %	5.41 %	12.60 %
	Writing	35.14 %	13.70 %	10.81 %	23.40 %
	Spelling	40.54 %	34.50 %	2.70 %	13.60 %
	Grammar	45.95 %	35.50 %	2.70 %	14.30 %
	Numeracy	54.05 %	27.60 %	0.00 %	14.00 %

### **Pastoral Care Policy**

The School's pastoral care and student wellbeing policies guidelines and procedures are informed by the *Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools*. This policy is underpinned by the guiding principles from the *National Safe Schools Framework (2013) (NSSF)* that represent fundamental beliefs about safe, supportive and respectful school communities. These guiding principles emphasise the importance of student safety and wellbeing as a pre-requisite for effective learning in all Catholic school settings. The *Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Framework for Learning for the Diocese of Broken Bay Schools System* (the 'Framework') utilises the NSSF ensuring that diocesan systemic schools meet the objectives of the NSSF at the same time as meeting the diocesan vision for pastoral care and wellbeing. The framework includes ten pathways that are intended to assist school communities create safe and supportive environments that foster positive relationships which enhance wellbeing and learning for all students. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the [CSO website](#) or by contacting the CSO. There were no changes made to this policy in 2018.

### **Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy**

The School's policies and procedures for the management of student behaviour are aligned to the Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools. Policies operate within a context of social justice, compassion, reconciliation and forgiveness. The dignity and responsibility of each person is promoted at all times along with positive student behaviours whilst ensuring the respect for the rights of all students and staff. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the [CSO website](#) or by contacting the CSO. There were no changes made to this policy in 2018. Note: the policy on the CSO website is the updated policy for implementation in 2018.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

The School's Anti-Bullying guidelines and procedures are based on and informed by the *Anti-Bullying Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools* and is aligned to the *Pastoral Care Policy for Diocesan Systemic Schools* and other related wellbeing policies and guidelines. All students, their families and employees within Catholic education have a right to a learning and work environment free from intimidation, humiliation and hurt. Anti-Bullying policies support school communities to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the [CSO website](#) or by contacting the CSO. Changes were made to this policy in 2018 to reflect evidence based practice and to clearly articulate roles and responsibilities of members of the school community.

## **Complaints Handling Policy**

The School follows the *Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures for Diocesan Systemic Schools*. A distinctive feature of this policy is to ensure that complaints are addressed in a timely and confidential manner at the lowest appropriate management level in order to prevent minor problems or concerns from escalating. The expectation is that complaints will be brought forward and resolved in a respectful manner recognising the dignity of each person concerned in the process. The policy recognises that a number of more minor or simple matters can be resolved without recourse to the formal complaint handling process but rather, quickly and simply, by discussion between the appropriate people. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the [CSO website](#) or by contacting the CSO. There were no changes made to this policy in 2018.

## **Initiatives Promoting Respect and Responsibility**

In response to friendship issues which arise in every cohort and every school the School implemented the URSTRONG: Friendology 101 program. All staff attended a full day professional learning course which led to in-class training of all students K-6. The resultant empowerment of students has diminished student friendship issues.

Student leadership continues to be a significant highlight of School life in 2018. The Year 6 cohort showed strong leadership, especially in their management of the Student Representative Council (SRC). Issues expressed by class groups in their class meeting are brought up for discussion at the monthly SRC meetings. Class representatives who attended the SRC meetings were selected for the term to give voice to any issues arising from class meetings.

Each Year 6 student had a leadership role with specific responsibilities as well as opportunities to make suggestions to further enhance their role. This on-going initiative, developed over the past six years, has promoted respect and responsibility among the group.

Respect and responsibility for students as learners as well as members of the School and Parish community is encouraged. One of the ways that this is demonstrated is through the fundraising for charitable organisations that occurs within the school student body and the awareness raising that occurs through these initiatives.

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## SECTION NINE: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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Strategic planning ensures a common purpose and agreed values are established. In Broken Bay systemic schools, this common purpose and agreed values along with goals, targets and key improvement strategies are documented in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). This SIP is a three year planning document and is used to record the School's progress in working towards priorities for improvement in three domains: Mission, Pastoral Care, Learning and Teaching. School improvement planning is supported systemically by the Diocesan *Leading Learning* initiative. This initiative is research based and has been developed in partnership with the University of Auckland. Building on *Leading Learning* in the Learning and Teaching domain, the Diocesan *Learning Principles* guide improvement strategies toward high quality contemporary learning.

### **Key Improvements Achieved**

In 2018, the School achieved the following improvements:

- The School's engagement with the LETS team in the Parish has been reviewed and extended with plans for 2019 to include a parent function to increase the speed of resource provision for boarding in the senior school.
- The leadership team have all participated in introductory professional learning in New Pedagogies for Deep Learning, resulting in planning for whole staff professional learning. Staff meetings commenced in Term 4 and generated considerable enthusiasm amongst staff.
- Implementing the URSTRONG program K-6 has resulted in much more successful navigation of complex social issues within the student body.

### **Priority Key Improvements for Next Year**

In 2019, the School improvement goals are:

- all students will be able to articulate how faith is linked to action in their lives aligned to the Scriptures through the STTD celebration activities.
- Students in Early Stage 1 to Stage 3 will independently and routinely apply problem solving techniques to address real-life challenges.
- Continued engagement of parents, teachers and students with the URSTRONG program will increase the social and emotional literacy of the community and decrease the level of self-reported or teacher and /or parent reported anxiety .

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## SECTION TEN: COMMUNITY SATISFACTION

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The opinions and ideas of parents, students and teachers are valued and sought. Their suggestions are incorporated into planning for and achieving improved outcomes for students. This year, a variety of processes have been used to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers.

### **Parent Satisfaction**

In 2018 the school participated in the 'Tell Them From Me' survey process. The results provided the school with some very clear positive feedback on existing priorities:

- School supports learning
- School supports positive behaviour
- Safety at school
- Inclusivity
- Parents feel welcome

The survey results for 'Parents Support Learning at Home' were surprisingly low. This anomaly will require further exploration with the parent body to determine if this is philosophical belief in action, a lack of confidence on the part of parents or a need for the school to provide further support for parents.

### **Student Satisfaction**

St Thomas students in Year 4 to Year 6 participated in the student component of the 'Tell Them From Me' survey in Term 4 2018. I feel the timing of the survey may have impacted on the lower than expected sense of belonging scores as many of the boys in Year 4 and all of the students in Year 6 were consciously attuned to their school for 2019.

Despite this, very positive results were reported for:

- Extracurricular activities the school provides
- Sporting activities
- Positive relationships
- Motivation and effort of students

Students reported high levels of confidence that there was someone at school they could turn to for advice and who consistently provided encouragement.



## **Teacher Satisfaction**

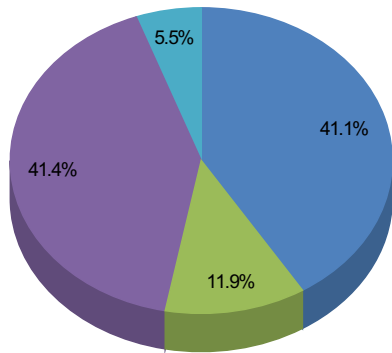
All teachers were given the opportunity to participate in the 'Tell Them From Me' survey in 2018. Strong positive results were reported for Learning Culture, Data informing Practice, Parental Involvement and Teaching Strategies.

Teachers expressed a desire to have leadership and peers observe their teaching and provide useful feedback to them. This will be a priority for 2019 in order to assist teachers to gain quality feedback from colleagues.

## SECTION ELEVEN: FINANCIAL STATEMENT

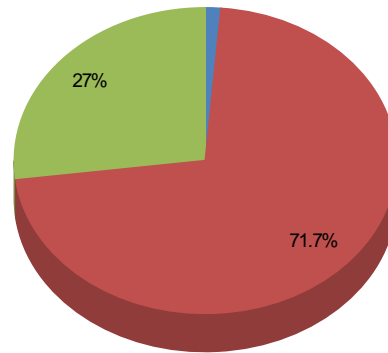
Consistent with the NESAs requirements, financial income and expenditure for the School is shown below. More detailed financial data is available on the [My School website](#). Diocesan system financial reporting can be found in the [Broken Bay Diocese Annual Report](#).

Income



- Commonwealth Recurrent Grants (41.1%)
- Government Capital Grants (0%)
- State Recurrent Grants (11.9%)
- Fees and Private Income (41.4%)
- Interest Subsidy Grants (0%)
- Other Capital Income (5.5%)

Expenditure



- Capital Expenditure (1.3%)
- Salaries and Related Expenses (71.7%)
- Non-Salary Expenses (27%)

RECURRENT and CAPITAL INCOME	
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants	\$1,649,197
Government Capital Grants	\$0
State Recurrent Grants	\$477,367
Fees and Private Income	\$1,662,292
Interest Subsidy Grants	\$0
Other Capital Income	\$222,096
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$4,010,952</b>

RECURRENT and CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	
Capital Expenditure	\$51,419
Salaries and Related Expenses	\$2,803,314
Non-Salary Expenses	\$1,056,882
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$3,911,615</b>