



Riverlands Montessori School

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ANNUAL REPORT

2016

Riverlands Montessori School is located in the Swan Valley with quiet surroundings, native gardens and a delightful atmosphere away from the bustle of the city. Our school community is positive and vibrant with experienced teaching staff and programs that promote involvement in the wider community. Children are encouraged to develop at their own pace in a creative environment incorporating Montessori Philosophy.

Riverlands' first home in 1991 was in historical "Cornwall House", Middle Swan. In July 1998, the school relocated to Whiteman Park for 5 years. In 2004, the dream of a permanent home was realized when the 6 acre property in Arthur Street, near Whiteman Park, was purchased.

We have a Playgroup, three Children's Houses (3-6 year olds), two Lower Primary classes (6-9 year olds) and one Upper Primary class (9-12 year olds). There is a Board of Governance and an active Parents and Friends Association.

Mission

Riverlands Montessori School's purpose is to provide an educational program in which foundations are laid for positive attitudes towards learning and life. It is a non-denominational school based on a commitment to social understanding and care of the environment. The school aims to educate the whole child within a Montessori environment, to develop in children the ability to accept responsibility for their own learning through choice, and to:

- ❖ encourage children to proceed at their own pace
- ❖ socialise children to prepare them for life
- ❖ nurture the intellect of the child in analytical, creative and emotional terms
- ❖ assist children to fulfil their potential and contribute positively towards society.

Goals

- ❖ To foster a positive school atmosphere, characterised by enthusiasm and a happy work environment.
- ❖ To develop a balanced, comprehensive and innovative curriculum that provides for individual learning, promotes educational excellence and is responsive to students' needs.
- ❖ To encourage a positive relationship between students, staff and the home so that children feel confident and excited about coming to school.
- ❖ To nurture a strong community spirit and involvement in the life of the school.
- ❖ To work towards improving the school's facilities and environment to enhance the image of the school.
- ❖ To increase the resources available to implement the curriculum.
- ❖ To maintain a high profile in the local community to encourage future enrolments.
- ❖ To build a collaborative team of staff who promote the ethos and philosophy of the school.
- ❖ To encourage and support staff to update their qualifications and to further their educational knowledge and skills.
- ❖ To provide effective communication within the school and seek feedback on the school's performance from its community.
- ❖ To promote public confidence in Montessori education.

Report from the Board

This is an opportunity to acknowledge the whole hearted and consistent contributions of all members of the Riverlands School community. As we draw near to the completion of another year it is with much gratitude that I wish to thank the members of the Board. This team provides a breadth of expertise and experience that governs with sound financial management, energetic strategic planning for the next building projects, varied networking within the wider community and always in a voluntary capacity.

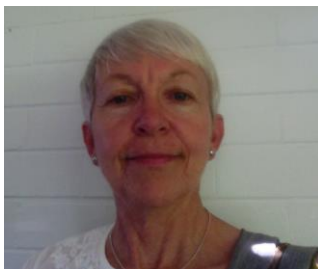
The Board is responsible for the strategic matters and oversee the Principal in her capacity to execute the operational matters of Riverlands. During the recent re-registration process it was highlighted that there is an excellent working relationship between Board and Principal. On behalf of the Board I would like to express appreciation and acknowledge the valuable contribution and high standard of all that Ineke Oliver brings to the school. We are indeed fortunate to have such a high calibre Principal.

Each member of the Riverlands Staff brings daily joy and care in the smooth running of classrooms and administration. The wonderful activities supported on special events such as the 25th Birthday celebrations are testament to the passion and commitment. It was especially enjoyable to catch up with past pupils and their parents and hear of the wonderful life opportunities experienced around the world. The Board thanks each staff member.

The school grounds are an appealing first impression as always. This was particularly noted during discussions on the re-registration visit in October. Thank you to the gardening and maintenance team.

This year a promotional video was produced to highlight the wonderful learning environment on offer at Riverlands. Thank you to the generosity of the producer, Geoff Oliver, and all the participants in its making.

It is a privilege and pleasure to serve on the Board.



Quona Litchfield
Chairperson

Principal's Report

2016 is my ninth year here as Principal and I would not want to be anywhere else. I came to this school with the knowledge that Riverlands is an established Montessori school in the Swan Valley with a strong reputation for innovative education programs and a committed school community. It continues to be a real privilege to carry on the traditions of this school and work together with the amazing staff and parents and in particular, the children who make up the fabric of Riverlands.

We will soon be burying time capsules which carry messages from children, parents, staff and Board members to be opened in 15 years' time. Will there be many changes in that time? We do know there will be houses close to our borders but with the consistent strong governance to drive the strategic plan, the school will retain its small community school ethos with wide open spaces for children to run free. The learning environments will continue to be places where children are given the opportunity to reach their potential and become positive active members of society with a keenness for lifelong learning.

This past year has been one no different to any other in that there is always something going on! Each term we have our regular events which are favourites where we dress up, or sleepover at school, or participate/view drama and music events, or welcome newcomers and guests to see what we do. We celebrate the children as they go through their cycles of learning and ultimately, the graduates who will be finishing their primary years this year.

Montessori education is still not well understood in the wider community, every year we work on strategies to educate the masses about our philosophy of education and life. This year our video was launched at the 25th Anniversary Expo. The feedback from people far and wide has shown it has been a very worthwhile effort and will hopefully help to enlighten the general public a little more about the best education program available to children today.

Our staff are people of high calibre, both personally and professionally. Their work ethic and commitment is clearly seen in their dedication to the children and the school as a whole. I want to express my appreciation to all staff members, past and present, they will always have a 'place' here at Riverlands.

The school commenced operation 25 years ago with a governance model that has remained in place today and is recognised as the best model for small independent schools. We have an independent Board made up of people of various expertise and includes parents of children who have graduated from the school. On behalf of everyone in the school I wish to thank Board members both past and present for their continued work and support, without which we would not be where we are today.

When I need a break from the bureaucratic work I must do, I walk through the classrooms and see the children focussed and engaged and know that this is why I am here at this school to help everyone have what they need to provide what I consider to be a school environment in which children can thrive and grow to be the best that they can be, both socially and academically.

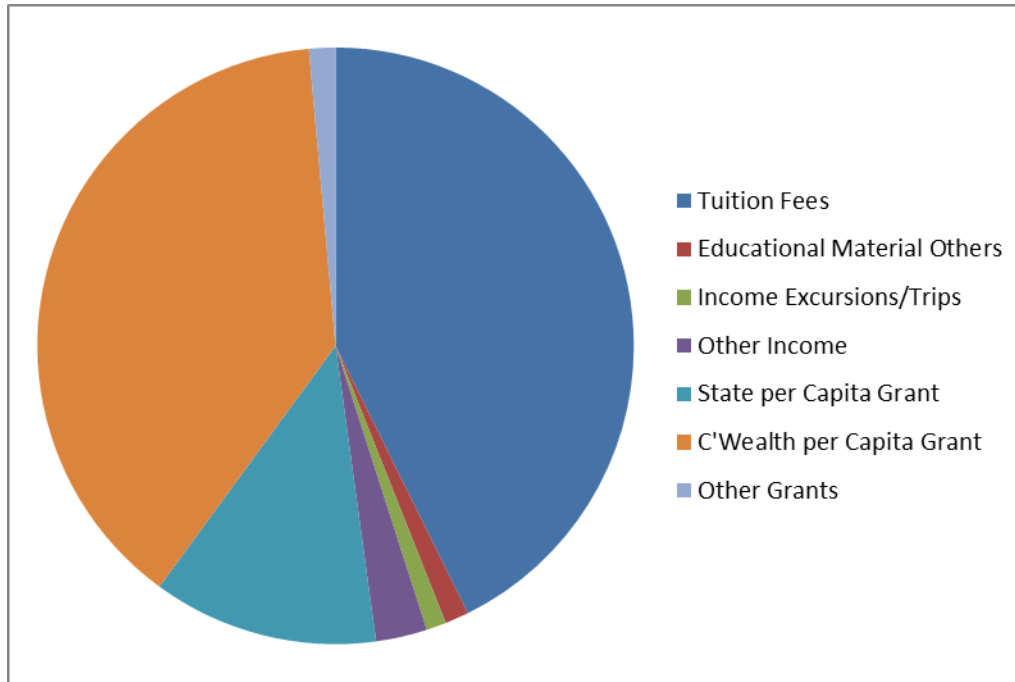


Ineke Oliver, Principal

Financial Information

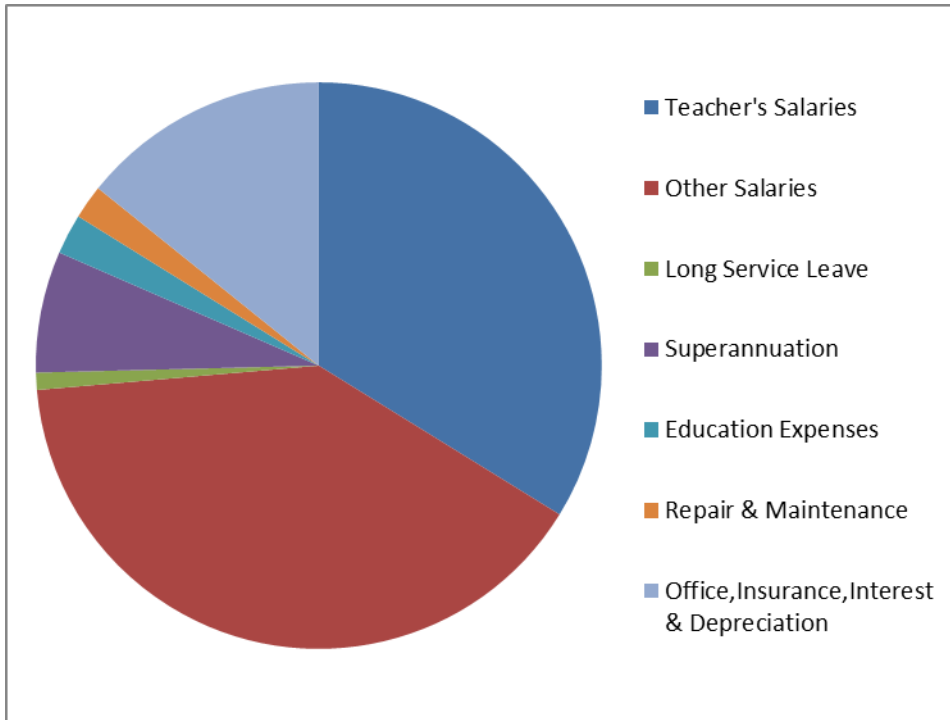
The School Board is closely involved in the annual budgeting process and reviews the School's performance compared to the budget on a monthly basis for the long term financial planning of the school.

Income



Tuition Fees	\$759,139.00
Educational Material Others	\$ 22,926.00
Income Excursions/Trips	\$19,248.00
Other Income	\$49,364.00
State per Capita Grant	\$217,394.00
C'wealth per Capita Grant	\$684,983.00
Other Grants	\$25,462.00

Expenditure



Teacher's Salaries	\$656,366.00
Other Salaries	\$773,241.00
Long Service Leave	\$19,000.00
Superannuation	\$134,444.00
Education Expenses	\$44,609.00
Repair & Maintenance	\$37,681.00
Office, Insurance, Interest & Depreciation	\$276,287.00



Robyn Hart
Business Manager

2016 School Events

- ☞ 25th Birthday Expo and Celebrations
- ☞ After School Sports
- ☞ Anzac Day Service
- ☞ Art Classes
- ☞ Board/Staff Breakfast
- ☞ Boomers Charity Day
- ☞ Bottomless Boat Race
- ☞ Camp for Upper Primary – 5 days
- ☞ Class Parent Events
- ☞ Corroborees
- ☞ Excursions for all classes each term
- ☞ Family Movie Nights
- ☞ Family Sleepover on campus
- ☞ Graduation Dinner
- ☞ Grandparents & Friends Morning Tea
- ☞ GRIP Leadership Conference
- ☞ Harmony Day Celebrations
- ☞ Indonesian Lessons for all full-time students
- ☞ International Peace Day Recognition
- ☞ Interschool Sports
- ☞ Jump Rope for Heart
- ☞ Lapathon
- ☞ Market Day
- ☞ Newsletters
- ☞ Student Progress Sessions
- ☞ Parent Information Sessions
- ☞ Parent Observations
- ☞ Parent Teacher Interviews
- ☞ Piano Lessons
- ☞ Physical Education Specialist sessions
- ☞ Pyjama Day
- ☞ Remembrance Day Service
- ☞ School Tours
- ☞ Silent Journey
- ☞ Sundowners each term for all families
- ☞ Upper Primary off-campus Sports events
- ☞ Yearbook

Staff Information

Qualification	Percentage of classroom teachers and school leaders who hold this qualification
Bachelor Degree	100%
Honours/Post Graduate Degree	17%
Diploma	85%

Staff Attendance:

Staff attendance rate for 2016 is 95%.

Staff Professional Learning:

The total funds expended on staff professional learning in 2016 - \$3,946.00. All staff participated in relevant professional development sessions during the year. The sessions were provided from a variety of sources including AISWA, Montessori Australia Foundation, Sonic Learning, Dyslexia-Speld Foundation, Kids Matter, Autism Association and Universities.

Staff Satisfaction:

Riverlands staff completed a satisfaction survey and almost 100% are satisfied with their workplace and conditions. There is a high level of obvious commitment to the school and to Montessori education. Social events are held during the year and are well attended.



Riverlands Montessori School
Staff - 2016



Back Row (L-R): Brianna Rose, Angela Howard, Treana Jones, Tamara Scott.
Middle Row (L-R): Leah Hampton, Wynona Campbell, Graham McMillan, Ian Chapman, Debra Beach, Kym Murphy.
Front Row (L-R): Jodie Cook, Marina Begovich, Leigh Franz, Ineke Oliver (Principal), Robyn Hart, Marie Chapman, Tess Gomes.
Absent: Marta Costa Schreyvogel, Farida Duncan, Ashlea Fuller, Naomi Nathoo, Brian Murphy, Jessica Plummer, Jessica Sturges.

Education Program

The Montessori National Curriculum is accredited by the Australian Curriculum Reporting and Assessment Authority (ACARA) as an alternative to the Australian Curriculum for Phase One (English, Mathematics, Science and History). Whilst not all subject areas of the Australian Curriculum have yet been endorsed, we have continued to deliver the Montessori Curriculum as it is mapped against the WA Curriculum Framework for those subjects not yet in the Australian Curriculum.

The school is part of the Montessori Australia Foundation's Quality Assurance Program. This means the school undergoes a rigorous examination of its teaching practices, equipment, physical and psycho-social environments together with the professional development and expertise of the teaching staff in accordance with Montessori philosophical aspects.

Classes are arranged in 3-year age spans, according to Dr. Montessori's scientific observations of the different developmental stages of children:

- Children House (3 to 6 year olds)
- Lower Primary (6 to 9 year olds)
- Upper Primary (9 to 12 year olds)

These groupings not only meet the needs of the children but also create a sense of community. The older child learns through teaching the younger. The younger child is inspired to do more advanced work by having the older children in the environment.

Each child's education program is individualised and carefully monitored and recorded. All children are assessed informally and formally in each phase of their education and we follow all mandated forms of assessment as directed by the government.

Throughout 2014 the teaching staff participated in workshops where student work samples were moderated in accordance with Australian Curriculum standards. The nexus between the Australian Curriculum, the Montessori National Curriculum and the Early Years Framework were also examined in-depth during workshops throughout the year with the whole teaching staff.

The Early Years Learning Framework has been examined in detail and implemented by the early childhood teaching staff and the National Quality Standards have also been included when deliberating about the school's programs.

The Upper Primary children again participated in the creative writing program, Born Storytellers. Their books were launched at the Perth Writers' Festival at the University of Western Australia and again were lauded by well-known authors and critics as being of a very high standard.



Key Student Outcomes

Student Attendance:

The average number of student enrolments in 2016 was 115 with 96.3% attendance.

National Assessment Program for Numeracy and Literacy:

We are obliged to participate in this national assessment but do not believe these results are a true reflection of children's academic achievements on their own. All assessment results, from a variety of sources, need to be taken into consideration when determining children's academic progress, NAPLAN is but one minor part of this assessment.

The NAPLAN results for 2016 were shared with the teachers and provided to the relevant parents.

In Year 3 we had 5 students and two were withdrawn at their parents' request.

In Year 5 we had 4 students who participated.

Due to the small number of students and to respect their privacy, results were not revealed and percentages would not be a valid reflection. We can say however that all results were as expected and will be considered as part of the suite of assessments carried out throughout the year and, as a result, impact on students' individual programs.

Reporting to Parents:

Written formal reports are provided to children and parents each semester.

Parent Teacher interviews are held at the end of terms 1 and 3 at which time teachers discuss the children's current progress and program for the future.

Sessions are held twice annually when children bring their parents to school to show them their work, both practically and by work samples ('Progress Afternoon/Evening').

Parents & Friends Association

My second year as President of the Riverlands Parents and Friends Association has seen a continuation of the wonderful community spirit at Riverlands Montessori school.

The upgrade and installation of the Riverdome kitchen has been the main focus our fundraising this year and it was kicked off with a Winter Market Day in the Riverdome. It was fantastic to see so many members of the local community supporting this fundraising effort and we were able to make a significant contribution to the Riverdome Kitchen. Many thanks to Guiliana Licastro and all members of the P and F executive.

We have had many successful events this year, all of which could not have been possible without the contribution of parents, teachers and students. From our annual movie night to the Mother's Day and Father's Day stalls, to our first Campout BBQ, the P and F have been able to make significant contributions to Riverlands' school environment.

The work and dedication of the P and F executive, must be congratulated. I am very grateful for their continued support and advice throughout the year. It has been my pleasure to work with such a dedicated group of parents, who not only volunteer their time, but work tirelessly to ensure all policy's and procedures are met. Deb Morley- Vice president, Bryn Stopp- Treasurer, Jasmina Purvis - Secretary, Guiliana Licastro and Aimee Barber- Fundraising Co-ordinators.

Many thanks also must go to the Class Reps who also provide appreciated support for the P and F activities, and of course our school Principal Ineke, who has provided much guidance and vision for the P and F.



*Cassandra Bull
President*

Memberships

School Memberships:

- ❖ Association of Business Administrators
- ❖ AISWA – Association of Independent Schools of WA
- ❖ Autism Association of WA
- ❖ Asthma Foundation
- ❖ Dyslexia-Speld Foundation
- ❖ Sunsmart School
- ❖ Wastewise School

Principal Memberships:

- ❖ Swan Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Early Years in Education Society
- ❖ Early Childhood Australia
- ❖ Australian College of Education
- ❖ Montessori Teachers' Association
- ❖ Rotary Club of the Swan Valley

School Community Satisfaction

Parents:

In 2015 the parent community demonstrated their satisfaction with the school through their participation in school events and responding to feedback on various school events and programs.

There continues to be an increased number of retained enrolments in the primary classes. More particularly, between the Children's Houses and Lower Primary.

Students:

This year the primary students participated in a survey seeking their feedback on how they feel about the school, including their level of safety and consideration and attention from staff. The results were a high level of satisfaction across the ages in all aspects.

Each formal report provides a place for children to comment on their learning experiences in the previous semester. These comments are written only by the children and where necessary, directly transcribed by the teachers. The comments are almost always positive and relate to both academic and social experiences.

We continue to get positive feedback from our parents that the children are always eager to return to the school after holidays. This is something of which we are proud, it proves we are providing an educational program that they feel they can enjoy and are keen to continue, we aim to foster this love of learning.

Behaviour management is not an issue at our school. Whilst children move through developmental stages where they test boundaries from time to time, they are managed in a caring supportive environment. The Virtues program and the Bounce Back social and emotional learning program is implemented throughout the school and complements the Montessori philosophy and ethos.

Teachers:

One of our teachers attended a Study Tour in Scotland sponsored by both the School and AISWA. One of our teacher assistants volunteered in a remote childcare centre providing a Montessori program, sponsored by the Montessori Childrens Foundation.

Regular staff meetings, the open-door policy of the Principal and the continued high level of professionalism by all contribute to the overall satisfaction of all staff in the school.

Teaching staff (and administration staff) all enjoy a high level of respect from both the parent and students in the school community. The Board of management also expresses its high level of satisfaction with the staff.

