

Assyrian Schools Limited

**Campus
of**

**SAINT HURMIZD ASSYRIAN
PRIMARY SCHOOL**



Annual School Report 2013

MESSAGE FROM KEY SCHOOL BODIES

Message from the Board of Directors of the Assyrian Schools

The Assyrian Schools Limited Board comprises of the Chairman and Director of Assyrian Schools, His Eminence Archbishop Mar Meelis Zaia, AM, and a body of directors including parents, professionals and educationalists from the local community. The Assyrian Schools Board is the designated governing body that oversees the operations of the St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School located at the site of the St. Hurmizd Cathedral, Greenfield Park; the Saint Narsai Assyrian Christian College, Edensor Park; St. Hurmizd Early Learning Centre, Greenfield Park and Grace Early Learning Centre, Bossley Park

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School operates under the auspices of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Assyrian Church of the East. The school was founded in 2002 to cater for the educational needs of the local Parks' communities within Fairfield City. In 2013 the student population was capped at 600.

The School shares its location with the St. Hurmizd Cathedral and is named after the seventh century Christian saint, *Rabban or Saint Hurmizd*. St. Hurmizd is recognised as one of the major saints of the Assyrian Church of the East and his feast day is celebrated on September 1st each year.

Message from the Principal

The publication of the Annual School Report is a New South Wales Board of Studies requirement for non-government schools.

The Report is a school's profile for public disclosure and includes information and data about the school's mission statement, policies and procedures, student achievements and performances in National tests, staffing and students, the curriculum, financial summary, goals and aspiration for the future.

St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School is located in Sydney's Metro South-West at Greenfield Park. The school has grown from 86 enrolments from its foundation year in 2002 to 597 students in 2013. It is a K – 6 Co-educational Christian-based independent school in the tradition of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Assyrian Church of the East.

The school draws its students from areas of low socio-economic status of Fairfield City NSW, and caters for the learning needs and cultural diversity of these local communities by providing a progressive, BOS-endorsed curriculum, based on high educational standards incorporating Australian values and attitudes.

In 2013 the school participated in the Low SES School Communities National Partnership (NP). Under this Federal Government Partnership, the school was granted \$560, 000 to:

- ▶ transform the way that schooling takes place in participating schools and to address the complex and interconnected challenges facing students in disadvantaged communities
- ▶ improve the educational outcomes of students, including literacy and numeracy outcomes, in targeted schools as well as to improve students' transition rates to further education and employment.

A collaborative strategic plan was developed with all stakeholders after an intensive situation analysis of the School. Priority areas and targets were developed and strategies were planned and implemented to achieve them

The priority areas identified in line with the partnership reforms were:

- Literacy
- Teacher Quality
- Leadership and Management
- Parental Engagement

Sargis Makko

Principal

The School

School Profile

Our Vision

Lighting the way - Preserving Our Faith, Culture and Heritage

Our school is dedicated to educational excellence, encouraging students to reach their potential in a nurturing environment to become productive citizens, reflecting the faith of the Assyrian Church of the East, Assyrian language and Culture.

Our Mission:

Centre of Excellence

- *To provide a continuum of education founded on a rich tradition of faith, family and community values.*
- *To strive for academic excellence embedded in a Christian faith-filled environment.*

Curriculum

- *To offer a broad and diverse curriculum endorsed by the NSW Board of Studies, based on progressive technology-enriched educational programs incorporating productive and coordinated planning.*
- *To continuously evaluate the quality of our courses to ensure their excellence is maintained, and enables holistic student development in spiritual, intellectual, physical and social aspects of being, reflecting the diverse needs of a life-long learning process.*
- *To provide a complete academic program in an environment that integrates learning, cultural heritage and religious instruction, Gospel values, and spiritual formation into all aspects of a comprehensive and challenging curriculum and the practice of faith lived out in the daily experience of our dedicated staff and students.*

Characteristics of the student body

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School has 597 students enrolled this year. There are approximately equal numbers of boys and girls throughout the school. The school draws its students from the local communities of the City of Fairfield. This is an identified area with a low Socio-Economic Status. The majority of students are of an Assyrian heritage and so English is not their main language at home so contributing to the high ESL factor of the school. The school has a number of students that experience learning difficulties and are regarded as Special Needs. The school runs an Intensive Language Course of 12 months for New Arrival refugee students.

Student outcomes in standardised National Literacy & Numeracy testing

NAPLAN 2013

In 2013, 82 year-3 and 65 year-5 students at St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School sat for the NAPLAN Tests. The majority of students (96%) at St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School come from backgrounds where a language other than English is spoken at home (LBOTE).

Performances in NAPLAN 2013 are reported on the My School website:

<http://www.myschool.edu.au>

Professional Learning and Teaching Standards

Professional Learning

At St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School we are committed to providing an education that fully develops the talents and capacities of all students. Professional development is valued and recognised as a major contributing factor for improving the learning outcomes for students. Teachers at St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School have the responsibility to undertake ongoing professional development that develops skills, knowledge and understanding in support of this goal.

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School identifies Professional Development as training and development opportunities, whether: formal or informal, individual or shared, that provides opportunities for professional discourse, interaction, practice, reflection and analysis. Professional development can occur face-to-face, online or through other modes of delivery. In 2013 staff members were encouraged to attend at least 2 off-campus In-services as well as participating in school organised professional development (6 days in 2013). In 2013, the average expenditure per teacher on professional learning was \$830.00. Five members of the executive underwent 3 days of training in preparation for the National Partnership in 2012.

New Scheme Teachers

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School is committed to ongoing professional learning of staff. We recognise the significance of particular periods in the professional life of an individual, these include at the outset of employment as a beginning teacher and on return to the profession following periods of extended leave or absence. We aim to provide specific support and opportunities for professional development at these transition points to assist in a teacher's accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers and for professional growth.

Teaching Standards

| CATEGORY | Number of Teachers |
|--|--------------------|
| Teachers who have teaching qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR) Guidelines | 34 |
| 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 education qualifications | Nil |
| Teachers who do not have qualifications as described in (a) and (b) but relevant to the teaching context | Nil |

Workforce composition

Staff at St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School, which is predominantly female, is made up of diverse cultural backgrounds with a percentage being of Assyrian heritage.

Student Attendance Rates

2013 Student Attendance Rates as a percentage

| Year Level | % Attendance Rate |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Kindergarten | 94.80 |
| Year 1 | 95.50 |
| Year 2 | 94.80 |
| Year 3 | 95.70 |
| Year 4 | 96.00 |
| Year 5 | 95.60 |
| Year 6 | 94.50 |
| School's Average | 95.30 |

Managing student non-attendance

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School implements policy and procedures for the management of student non-attendance.

The Principal, Stage Advisor or Classroom Teacher will contact parents of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences.

Ongoing unexplained absences or lack of cooperation regarding student attendance will result in a formal attendance conference being organised. The Principal may report unresolved attendance issues to the Assyrian Schools Board.

Student non-attendance is reported on student's half year and end of year academic reports.

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School Enrolment policy

PREAMBLE

Consistent with its Mission Statement, Assyrian Schools Limited (ASL) attempts to provide the best possible education and has as its focus, the Assyrian Church of the East ethos. It is vital that Assyrian Christian beliefs and ethics are integrated into the whole life of the school. In this regard, Assyrian Schools are committed to educating its students in an environment that strives to be faithful to the Church of the East, its traditions and teachings.

It is the aim of our schools to provide the choice of schooling to all those seeking an education in an environment formed by the teachings and traditions of the Church of the East. Notwithstanding this, enrolment of a student into an Assyrian Schools Limited school cannot be guaranteed.

[1.0] Principles

1.1 Assyrian Schools Limited schools (ASL schools) are open to all parents and students who are prepared to support the philosophy, values and objectives of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East.

1.2 ASL schools will endeavour to be inclusive of all students, consistent with the belief that all are equal before God.

1.3 ASL schools recognise that every student has a right to a complete education and in this regard shall offer students a curriculum that is not restrictive in scope and which is in line with New South Wales Board of Studies guidelines and syllabuses.

1.4 Parents who choose an Assyrian Schools Limited school for their children undertake to support the religious principles, traditions and practices of the school and the parish/s they serve. This includes but is not limited to full participation of their children in Assyrian Schools Limited religious education programs.

1.5 Enrolment of students at an Assyrian Schools Limited school obligates parents/guardians to accept and meet the school's fees and levies unless another agreement is reached with the Principal. Parents/guardians of those students who are marginalised and in most need shall not be refused enrolment merely because of an inability as opposed to unwillingness on their part to meet ASL schools financial requirements.

1.6 Enrolment applications will be determined by an Enrolments Committee which will consist of a Priest of the local parish (or his representative), and a representative of the School Board. The Enrolment Committee will meet from time to time and shall be chaired by the Principal.

1.7 The Enrolment Committee shall review all enrolments from time to time, but no less frequently than once per term. Continuing enrolment shall be conditional on students meeting ASL schools requirements.

[2.0] Enrolment Policies

2.1 General Enrolments

2.1.1 All parents seeking to enroll their children in an ASL schools must complete the application for enrolment form and return it to the relevant school office by 31 May in the year prior to enrolment. However, this does not guarantee enrolment of their child in the school.

2.1.2 Application for enrolment forms will be available at ASL schools offices.

2.1.3 Completed application forms should be returned to the relevant school office together with copies of the following documents:

(a) Birth Certificate;

- (b) Baptismal Certificate; and
- (c) Immunisation Record

2.1.4 The completed Parish reference which forms part of the application for enrolment will be returned to the relevant school office by the Parish Priest.

2.1.5 The Principal will arrange for an interview with the parents/guardians and the prospective students.

2.1.6 Parents will then be notified in writing of the results of their application by June 30 in the year prior to enrolment.

2.1.7 Where the number of enrolments in any given year exceeds the number of places available, the priority for acceptance shall be as follows:

- (a) Siblings of students presently enrolled in an ASL school whose parents/guardians have shown a commitment to meet their financial responsibilities to the school.
- (b) Children from Grace Child Care and Early Learning Centre.
- (c) Children from families affiliated with the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East.
- (d) Children from families affiliated with other Assyrian Churches.
- (e) Children from Christian families.
- (f) Children from non-Christian families.

2.1.8 Enrolment application received after the cut-off enrolment date, will be considered by the Enrolment Committee only if vacancies exist, regardless of where the application might be placed in the hierarchy of priority described in clause 2.1.7 above.

2.1.9 Parents must be prepared to meet the financial requirements for the ongoing enrolment of the child.

2.1.10 Parents acknowledge that acceptance of their children at the pre-school level does not confer an automatic entitlement to enrolment at the Primary School. Enrolment at St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School is a new process that requires students to complete and submit a separate school enrolment application form.

2.1.11 Parents acknowledge that acceptance of their children at the primary school level does not confer an automatic entitlement to enrolment at the secondary level. Enrolment at Saint Narsai College is a new process which requires students to complete and submit a separate school enrolment application form.

[3.0] Students with Disabilities

3.1 The Enrolment Committee shall follow the enrolment procedure detailed above when processing enrolment applications from parents/guardians of students with disabilities, within the context of Part 2, Division 2, Section 22 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, who seek to be enrolled into regular classes at St Hurmizd.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's annual review cycle.

School Policies

Policies and Procedures

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School has a comprehensive range of written Policies and Procedures to ensure that students are given the best possible education and that all activities comply with the NSW Board of Studies requirements.

Policies and Procedures include Student Welfare/Discipline, Anti-Bullying, Child Protection, WH&S, Medication, Enrolment, Grievance, Critical Incident and Evacuation.

Policies and Procedures are made available to parents through the Parent Handbook and during information/parent teacher meetings held throughout the year or simply the stake holders may contact the school's office for a copy of the desired policy.

All policies and Procedures have been sent to the NSW Board of Studies as part of the registration and accreditation process.

All staff has been supplied with a Staff Handbook which incorporates the School's Policies and Procedures. All staff receives regular training in these procedures and they are regularly reviewed to ensure currency and best practice. Electronic copies of all updated policies and procedures are accessible to all staff via the school's network.

Grievance Procedure

There will be times in any organisation where clients are not completely satisfied with products and services on offer. Within our school, we have procedures in place where parents can contact their child's teacher and make an appointment to discuss their concerns. If parents are still not satisfied with the answer, parents may take their concern to the Principal. If however, a grievance cannot be resolved with the Principal they can write to the Board to resolve the issue.

Student Welfare & Pastoral Care

The School's Welfare and Pastoral Care policy is based on positive reinforcement. Students are rewarded with merit awards for their academic efforts as well as for demonstrating positive behaviours and attitudes towards others and showing respect for their physical environment.

Students receive awards according to the following process, culminating with the School Medallion:

Students who earn 5 Merit Awards will receive 1 Assembly Award

Students who earn 5 Assembly Awards will receive 1 Gold Award

Students who earn 5 Gold Awards will receive 1 Principal's Award

Students who earn 5 Principal's Award will receive the School Medallion

Records of awards are kept throughout their time at school so while everyone is able earn a School Medallion it is not expected that all will.

For students who find it difficult to follow the school rules, there are a number of disciplinary measures that are used to address minor and major misdemeanors.

For serious or repeated incidents, students are given time out or detention during lunchtime. These students are also referred to the School Counselor to assist them with their behaviour. Parents' of students, who are placed on time out on more than three occasions, are notified by letter that their child will serve an in-school suspension in the first instance.

If their behaviour does not improve, the student's enrolment may be cancelled. While we hope we never have to cancel any student's enrolment, there may be a time when this is necessary for the sake of other students in the school.

St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School does not condone or allow the use of any form of corporal punishment. This includes corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline at school.

School-determined improvement targets

Achievement of priorities in 2012

| Area | Priorities | Achievements |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Improve Leadership Capacity | Using the school's Situational Analysis in formulating the National Partnership Strategic Plan, the school recognises the need to develop its leadership capacity for the future. | Improved leadership density by the appointment of a deputy principal and middle management staff as coordinators and grade leaders. |
| Focus on Reading | NAPLAN data points to a need to improve reading and comprehension at the school. While decoding is not the issue, reading for meaning and comprehension will be the focus for improvement in 2012. | Updated the school's reading resources, including the purchase of more home readers, new sets of <i>PM Readers</i> , replacing the superseded <i>Momentum</i> readers with the <i>Springboard</i> , the implementation of the <i>CARS</i> and <i>STARS</i> programs. |
| Parental Engagement | Parental engagement in the life of the school and in the education of children is seen as a priority for communities of Low SES such as ours. We will endeavour to seek ways of engaging parents in all aspects of school life to improve the learning outcomes for our students. | A school parent Action Group was formed to develop and implement a whole year program of activities for parents to attend. Parents' meetings are now being held every first Tuesday of the month and are well attended. Overall there has been a positive move toward more effective engagement of parents at the school. Parent surveys indicate that parents do want to get involved but also that the school needs to provide the necessary structures for this involvement to grow and to be effective. |

2013 Priority areas for improvement

| Area | Priorities |
|---|--|
| Numeracy | Priority exists in lifting the School's numeracy results across all grades as NAPLAN data shows that student performance can be significantly improved in relation to state and sector means for both the Year 3 and Year 5 cohorts. |
| Middle management and leadership development. | Priority is set to further improve school management opportunities and leadership development. Data shows some improvement in school leadership and management, however the overall capacity of school leadership needs improvement so as to promote and develop school vision, empowering stakeholders to build and maintain the conditions necessary for success for all students. |
| Gender-linked learning issues | Priority is set to identify causes affecting adverse effects on boys' education and develop a whole school plan to address the key issues of concern. NAPLAN data shows that gender equity is an issue at the school with results in both literacy and numeracy being significantly different for boys and girls. |

Respect and Responsibility

Valued education permeates all aspects of school life at St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School and respect and responsibility are important aspects of valued education.

As part of the NSW Government's action plan for values, respect and behaviour in schools, a number of school education initiatives were announced to promote the key community values of respect and responsibility.

Respect is having regard for yourself and others, lawful and just authority and diversity within Australian society and accepting the right of others to hold different or opposing views. Responsibility is being accountable for your individual and community's actions towards yourself, others and the environment.

At St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School Gospel values lie at the very heart of our pastoral care and welfare policy. Both staff and students demonstrate respect and responsibility through role modelling in the every-day life of the school.

Formal Religious Education

The study of Religious Education is a compulsory subject at St Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School. A team of Religion teachers form a committee whose role is to design and implement the Religious Education program at the school.

The content of the Religious Education program is based on the teachings of the Holy Apostolic and Catholic Assyrian Church of the East. Prayer is a fundamental part of the program.

All units of study within the Religious Education program aim to develop each student's knowledge and understanding of their faith including, beliefs, history, traditions and practices. The Christian values and commitment instilled in the students encourage them to demonstrate tolerance and treat all members of the community with dignity and respect.

Cultural Achievements

At St. Hurmizd Assyrian Primary School we have regular assemblies and combined assemblies with Saint Narsai Assyrian Christian College. The Archbishop of the Holy Apostolic Assyrian of the East and Director of the Assyrian Schools, His Eminence Mar Meelis Zaia is regularly invited as a special guest to address our school assemblies.

During each assembly, our school community will say the Lord's Prayer in the Aramaic Language followed by the Australian National Anthem and the Assyrian National Anthem.

All students are encouraged to find and develop their individual, creative and musical talents.

Students perform a drama and ethnic dances for the Assyrian New Year celebrations and school feast days.

To assist students with learning more about Australian history and society, day excursions are organised to local venues that demonstrate aspects of these important elements of what it means to be Australian. Students in year 5 spend a two-day stay at the Bathurst Gold Fields to learn about this important period in Australia's modern history. Students in year 6 spend a three-day stay in our nation's capital to learn about government and about Australia's war effort during the world wars as displayed at the Australian War Memorial.

The school organises cultural activities to educate the students about the Assyrian culture and history.

The Assyrian New Year is celebrated every year on the first of April as in ancient times.

The Assyrian Martyrs' Day is also commemorated to raise the awareness of the students about the sacrifices made by their forefathers for freedom and survival.

Parent, student & teacher satisfaction

The evaluation and development of Assyrian schools is an ongoing process. Through our regular communication and contact with parents we hear positive and constructive comments regarding our Schools. Modes of communication/contact include:

Newsletter every fortnight, hard and soft copies through website updates and school App.

Parent information Nights

Students Academic reports

Parent/teacher interviews

Parent survey

P&F fliers to parents

Local Parish announcements

Community radio announcements

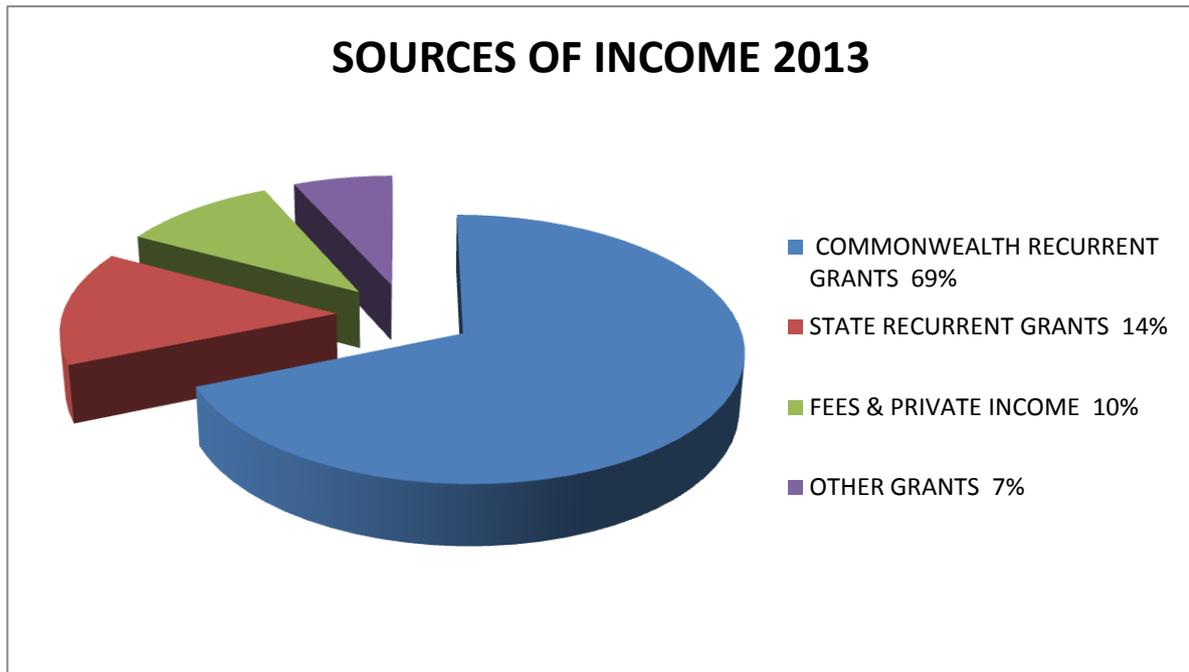
The school has an open door policy with parent involvement welcomed and encouraged. The Parents and Friends Association meets on a monthly basis and provides one of a number of avenues for parents to express their level of satisfaction. Throughout 2013 the level of participation in the P & F was high and parent feedback indicates a pleasing level of satisfaction with the school.

Areas of concern were mostly related to student WH&S issues on the school site during the construction phase of a new library and school hall on the premises. Parents, students and school staff are assured and informed of best practice procedures and of the stringent safety measures in place during this construction phase.

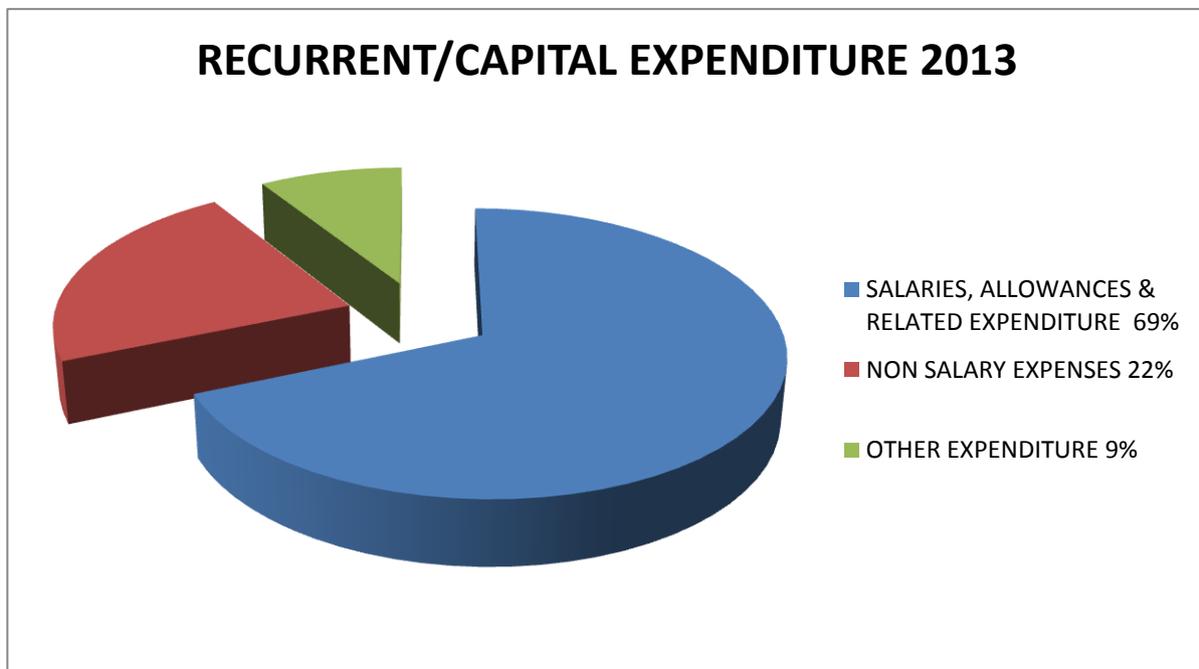
All staff members are formally interviewed by the principal as part of an annual self review to insure workplace efficiency and satisfaction are addressed.

Financial Summary

INCOME



EXPENDITURE



2013 and Beyond

In 2013 the school entered into the National Partnership for Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities. The 2013 National Partnership Plan can be view on our website at www.shaps.nsw.edu.au.