



THE  
NATURE  
SCHOOL



# 2021 Annual Report

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# Vision

A world where nature and learning create a sustainable future.

# & Mission

A community where children learn and shine through authentic experiences in nature to become engaged global citizens.

# Values

**Connect:** we value connected learning opportunities, connecting with our community, and connection with nature.

**Protect:** we value childhood, protect the rights of children, and advocate for protection of the environment.

**Respect:** we value self respect, respect for others, and respect for the natural world.



THE  
NATURE  
SCHOOL



# 1a. Chair Report

It is with great pride that I present the Chair's report for the 2021 calendar year. I would first like to acknowledge the Birpai people as the traditional custodians of the land on which The Nature School was founded and on which our community lives, learns, and grows – land that always was and always will be Birpai land. On behalf of The Nature School Board of Directors, I pay my respects to Birpai elders past, present, and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal peoples who live, learn, and grow in the spectacular Port Macquarie region.



Following from the floods and fires of previous years as well as the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, 2021 did not disappoint. Staff across our organisation stepped up to support each other and our community through yet another year full of challenges. However, just like in nature, when faced with immense pressures and heat, beautiful things are formed. Under the fantastic leadership of our executive team, Jacqui Leach, Catherine Oehlman, and Karen Marlin The Nature School Inc has had yet another successful year of growth, learning from and within nature.

Head of Early Learning and Play, Jacqui Leach, continued to work towards registration of the Early Years program, creating the full suite of policies needed to meet the extensive requirements of the early childhood education and care sector. On behalf of the Board, two Directors sat the Department of Education's fitness and propriety assessment and were successful demonstrating their knowledge of the National Law and Regulations and requirements of

employment in early childhood education and care services. It with sadness that we said farewell to Jacqui at the end of 2021. On behalf of The Nature School's Board of Directors and our community I thank Jacqui for the significant contribution to the growth and development of The Nature School's Early Learning and Play Programs and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

Head of Primary, Catherine Oehlman, led TNS Primary through NESAs registration for the fourth year running, again obtaining full 5-year registration for our current K- Year 5 and approval to extend to Year 6 in 2022. We are very excited to offer a full K- Year 6 primary school in 2022. Primary enrolments grew with a strong Kindergarten intake also projected for 2022. The Board of Directors also announced the intention to extend to secondary school with a Year 7 intake in 2023. Catherine has overseen the development of a secondary curriculum and other relevant documentation required for the Year 7 initial registration application.

2021 also saw several changes to The Nature School's Board of Directors, farewelling Megan Lawrance and welcoming Rhiannon Anderson. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Megan for her commitment and contributions to TNS, particularly in the development of our 2021-2024 strategic plan. I am excited to see TNS continue to grow as an organisation in 2022 and beyond, knowing that we have proven to have a dedicated Board, passionate and experienced staff, and inquisitive and resilient children and families. Together we can create a world where nature and learning create a sustainable future.

Eirwyn Davidson  
Board Chair  
The Nature School Inc





Learn & shine

THE NATURE SCHOOL Primary



# 1b. Head of Primary Report

As always, I begin this report by acknowledging the Birpai People, who are the Traditional Custodians of this land upon which we walk and we work, we learn and we play. I acknowledge their deep connection to Country and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



2021 was yet another unprecedented year for education. We could look back on it as the year of Covid complications and vaccination mandates... but pandemic aside it was still a year of learning, adventure and growth for students at The Nature School.

Student wellbeing was an important priority for us in 2021. Following fires in 2019, and the first wave of the pandemic in 2020, our community faced floods in March of 2021. Yet again our school was closed for several days as families mopped up the mess. Remote learning also returned in Term 3, and although we were swift to pivot and provide hands-on learning kits for home – we were acutely aware of the impact on our students. We applied for and were accepted into the Smiling Mind program for regional schools to support student wellbeing and mindfulness. We have found mindfulness to be a tool to help staff and students alike, and often now begin staff meetings with mindfulness too. We also applied for and were successful in receiving assistance from the Association of Independent Schools NSW (AISNSW) to engage an educational psychologist to support students in 2021/22.

There were many highlights throughout the year. Offsite Adventure Days took learning beyond the school grounds and out into the Mid North Coast's big beautiful classroom. Whether it was whale watching at Dunbogan, counting flying foxes at Koolunbung Creek or wandering the Cattai Wetlands, our minibuses allowed us to venture far and wide.

Our connection with the natural world continued to spark interest in the media locally and globally. When critically endangered Swift Parrots roosted in the trees surrounding our school grounds, birdwatchers from near and far gathered to catch a glimpse through their binoculars and scopes. The late afternoon gathering of twitchers in our school carpark as the sun set featured in Australian Geographic and ABC News. Internationally we featured in a student newspaper in Japan, in an article about our students locating koalas in the bush. Locally our students were covered in stories about conservation of Tree Kangaroos, and creating habitats for frogs. We even received wattle seeds from outer space, and asked the question, "What'll happen to the wattle?"

The Nature School is quickly being recognised as a leading school for curriculum development. This year our staff contributed significantly to Curriculum Reform in NSW. I was seconded for two weeks to work on rewriting the English Syllabus. One of our classroom teachers contributed to the review of the Science and Technology Syllabus, while another was selected to participate in NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Teacher Expert Network (TENS). This statewide network of 200 classroom experts across all sectors (Government, Catholic and Independent) will user-test the new curriculum and provide feedback to NESA. We are very proud to contribute at this level.

Again we saw significant growth in enrolments. We added Year 5 to our Primary School, and at Inspection received approval to continue with Year 6 in 2022. There remains a waiting list for most grades and a significant waitlist for our Kindergarten class. Excitingly, Honour Church who have been our gracious landlords since opening the school, this year offered us the property for purchase. With the



assistance of a BGA grant, we have been able to accept this opportunity to secure a permanent home for The Nature School. We are deeply grateful to Pastor Mark Van der Veer and the Honour Church community for their support since 2018.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of our staff, both teaching and non-teaching. Our classroom teachers are so dedicated to ensuring student learning, and student wellbeing. In yet another year of uncertainty they maintained their commitment to these two priorities. Our support staff (administration and teacher aides) worked incredibly hard, particularly during another year that prevented volunteers from contributing to our learning community.

My thanks especially to my fellow Executives. Karen Marlin has worked tirelessly as our Business Manager, particularly in overseeing capital works and the provision of facilities and resources for learning. Sadly we farewell Jacqui Leach at the end of 2021. Jacqui has had a significant impact on the Early Learning and Play division of our organisation, and will be greatly missed in our Executive team.

The Nature School continues to grow and go from strength to strength. We are building a reputation as a small school with big impact, and it is a joy and privilege to lead our learning community.

Catherine Oehlman

Head of Primary



## 2. Contextual information about the school

Based in beautiful Port Macquarie in regional NSW, TNS Primary strives to be a leading progressive independent school with a focus on nature. Learners at TNS are scientific thinkers, curious questioners, and articulate communicators, capable of affecting change now and in the future. TNS Primary opened initially for a small group of children across K-2 in 2018, and we have been continuing to add grade levels and additional staff year-on-year. Currently the school caters for 78 students from K-5. We will reach a full K-6 Primary School in 2022.

TNS seeks to employ highly qualified, experienced teachers whose educational philosophy and life experiences align with the vision articulated by the Board. While it is not essential that teachers have had professional experience in a progressive environment, a willingness to learn and an understanding of the educational philosophies outlined below are essential.

At TNS Primary learning is regularly taken beyond the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to take students outside on a daily basis during all KLAs, as appropriate to the lesson. Adventure Days are fortnightly offsite excursions into local natural habitats or the local community. Adventure Days are planned in conjunction with Integrated units of work and require a high degree of teacher planning and understanding of curriculum.

The following educational philosophies underpin teaching and learning at TNS Primary:

### **Innovative education**

TNS offers innovative education which uses an experiential, learner led approach with a 'green focus'. There is a de-emphasis on textbooks in favour of varied learning resources. Classes have a low student-teacher ratio that allows us to focus on the needs of the students as individuals. Teachers encourage students to take risks, make mistakes, persist, think outside the box, assess situations from different perspectives and work cooperatively. Creativity, problem solving, independent thinking, communication and collaboration are encouraged and fostered. TNS has strong community involvement. We engage experts in various fields from our community by inviting them to our school, or taking our students to them through regular Adventure Days and other excursions.

### **Connection to the Natural Environment**

The natural environment provides opportunities for challenge and experiential learning. Nature based education supports a child's development in social and emotional intelligence, problem solving and environmental understanding. In a world overloaded with virtual distractions, TNS students are given time and space to come down to earth and engage with the natural world. Nature offers children the chance to learn about themselves and the world around them, and builds emotional resilience they can use throughout life. Connection to nature and our environment allows us to teach the importance of our collective eco-footprint and the hope of creating respectful custodianship. Teachers incorporate learning from nature, about nature, or within nature when planning all units of work.

### **Inquiry based learning**

Inquiry based learning is facilitated by teachers who pose questions, problems or scenarios, rather than simply presenting established facts or portraying a smooth path to knowledge. As students develop skills and expertise through the primary years, they are increasingly capable of posing their own questions to investigate. At TNS, inquiry based learning:

- occurs both during planned units of teaching, and through multi-age interest groups
- focuses on scientific exploration through real world experiments



- emphasises learning by doing – often outside (hands on projects, expeditionary learning, experiential learning)
- may involve collaborative learning projects and the associated development of social skills
- may involve individual learning projects specific to the interests or learning needs of students
- should incorporate some form of presentation of findings at the conclusion of the investigation

### **Indigenous and cultural learning**

TNS seeks to foster authentic relationships with Birpai Elders and focus on local Indigenous knowledge through story, song and Language (Gathang), as appropriate. Ongoing points of connection with our Birpai community include visits from Aunty Ang (Birpai artist) and Arly McInerny (Birpai consultant) as well as occasional visits from Uncle Bill (Birpai Land Council). When possible, Indigenous consultants will be invited to join our learning on Adventure Days at places of cultural significance. Teaching staff also incorporate Acknowledgement of Country into all Adventure Days.

### **Place-based education**

At TNS we take advantage of our stunning location through immersive learning in the community and natural environment to create authentic, meaningful and engaging learning for students. Through place-based education we seek to engage students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, and connect these with learning outcomes across the curriculum. Regular visits to our local bushland at Innes Lake Nature Reserve are facilitated through a partnership with our National Parks and Wildlife Ranger. This allows students to intimately know one natural environment, including its seasonal cycles, flora and fauna, and experience changes there over an extended period of time.

### 3. Student outcomes in standardised national literacy and numeracy testing

Extract from TNS Assessment and Reporting Statement:

*The purpose of assessment is to gather valid, reliable and useful information about student learning. At TNS we adopt an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment, and as such assessment is an ongoing and integral part of the teaching-learning cycle. Quality assessment tasks enable students to demonstrate what they know and can do while providing teachers with opportunities to gather evidence about student achievement in relation to syllabus outcomes.*

*At TNS we are committed to standards-referenced assessment that:*

- *is based on syllabus outcomes*
- *enables students to demonstrate their learning in a range of task types*
- *is free from bias*
- *is inclusive of and accessible for all students, with appropriate differentiations or adjustments provided as necessary*
- *is part of an ongoing process where progress is monitored over time*
- *is respectful of each child and sensitive to their age and developmental stage*

*A range of strategies may be used to assess student learning. The type of assessment activity and the means of gathering evidence will depend on outcomes, context, and students' learning needs. At TNS assessment strategies include:*

- *teacher observations*
- *anecdotal records*
- *rubrics for rich assessment tasks*
- *checklists*

- *peer assessment*
- *self assessment*
- *learning portfolios (a growing collection of student work samples from throughout the semester)*
- *inquiry based research questions*
- *hands-on activities or practical demonstrations*
- *presentations*

***A 'test' should only be used when evidence of student knowledge and understanding cannot be collected any other way. At TNS we prefer authentic assessment tasks and work samples collected in the context of the usual school day and not under 'test conditions'. As such, we do not teach children how to perform in standardised tests or expect them to complete assessment tasks within strictly enforced time limits. While we fully cooperate with all legislative requirements regarding standardised tests, we are philosophically opposed to standardised testing and do not sacrifice valuable teaching time for practising past papers or teaching performance techniques.***

\* \* \*

In 2021, less than five students in the Year 3 cohort sat the NAPLAN tests. (Data is not collected where there are less than five participants). Most parents withdrew their children from testing on philosophical grounds. In the Year 5 cohort, some parents again withdrew based on philosophical objection to standardised testing, however 50% students sat the tests with results as follows:



|        | Reading | Writing | Spelling | Grammar | Numeracy |
|--------|---------|---------|----------|---------|----------|
| Year 3 | -       | -       | -        | -       | -        |
| Year 5 | 572     | 516     | 515      | 542     | 532      |

**Interpreting the table**

Selected school's average when compared to all Australian students

- Well above
- Above
- Close to
- Below
- Well below
- No comparison available

Students at TNS were well above the national average in all areas apart from spelling, which remains slightly above but close to the national average.

Year 5 data cannot be compared to previous years, as it is the first time we have had students in this grade level. Year 3 data cannot be analysed due to the small sample size.



## 4. Teacher Qualifications, Accreditation and Professional learning

### 4a. Teacher qualifications

| Category   | Number of Teachers<br>– as at end of 2021 |
|--|---|
| (i) Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognized within the National office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AE-NOOSR) guidelines | 8   |
| (ii) Teachers having a Bachelor Degree from a higher institution within Australia or one recognized within the AE-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications                        | 0   |

### 4b. Teacher accreditation

| Category   | Number of Teachers<br>– as at end of 2021 |
|--|---|
| Conditional  | 0   |
| Provisional  | 2   |
| <b>Proficient</b>                                    | <b>6</b>                                  |
| <i>HALT (Highly Accomplished / Lead – voluntary)</i> | <i>0</i>                                  |

## 4b. Professional learning

TNS Primary strives to have skilled, effective and professional teachers who are committed to improving the quality of their teaching in order to enhance student learning. There is a strong focus on the professional learning of all staff at TNS, and continuous engagement with informal and formal professional development opportunities is expected. In consultation with the Head of Primary, teaching staff are required to set professional learning goals that are connected to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) and aligned with the School's philosophy. Professional development days for staff are scheduled throughout the year. At the first Professional Development day in the academic year, new staff participate in an induction program as part of their learning. Weekly meetings provide an ongoing opportunity for collegial conversations, and for the Head of Primary to meet collaboratively or individually with staff members.

| Description of the Professional Learning Activity   | Staff participating |
|---|---------------------|
| Mandatory Child Protection Training   | All                 |
| CPR Training  | All                 |
| Anaphylaxis Training  | All                 |
| Asthma Training   | All                 |
| Professional goal setting and reflection  | 8                   |
| TNS Workshop: Individual programs (IPs) and documentation for Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) | 7                   |
| Seasons for Growth facilitator training (student wellbeing)   | 1                   |
| TNS Workshop: Seasons for Growth (student wellbeing)  | 7                   |
| Smiling Mind facilitator training (mindfulness)   | 2                   |
| TNS Workshop: Smiling Mind (mindfulness)  | 6                   |
| TNS Workshop: Spelling across the curriculum (introduction to metalanguage from new syllabus)                 | 7                   |
| Sue Larkey Autism workshop  | 4                   |
| Writing in English – online AISNSW  | 1                   |
| AISNSW Research Symposium   | 1                   |



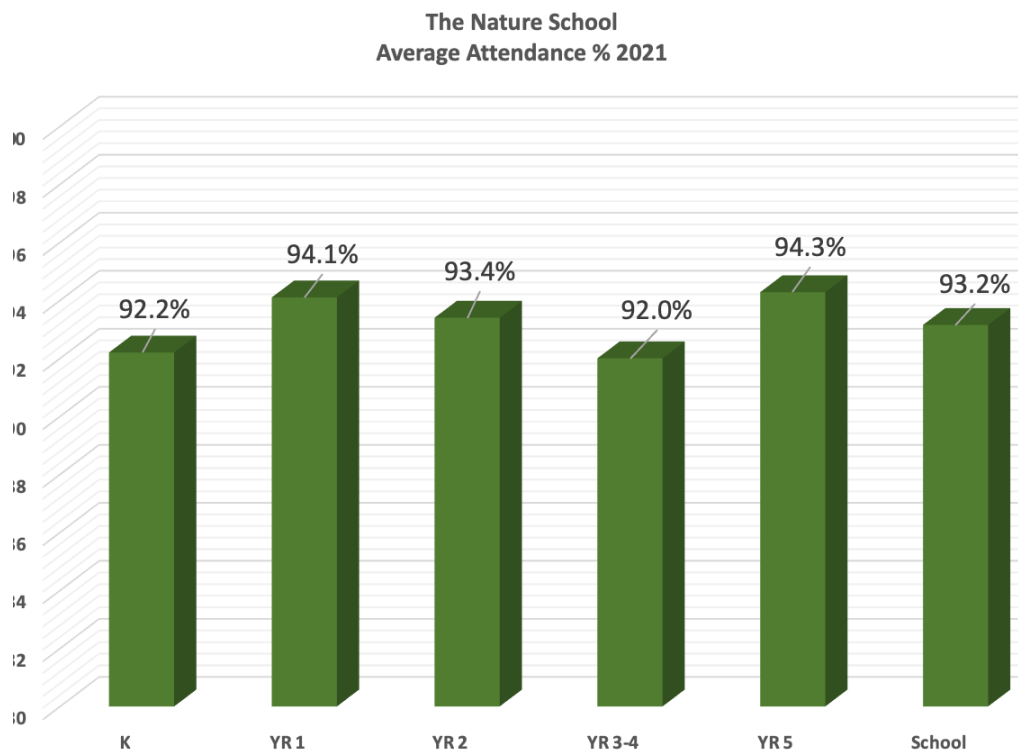
|   |   |
|---|---|
| NAPLAN training   | 1 |
| AISNSW / UTS Case Study   | 5 |
| NSW Sustainability Educators Conference online  | 8 |
| Curriculum Lead: TENS (Teacher Experience Network)  | 1 |
| Head: Syllabus Writer: English 3-6  | 1 |
| Head: SMH School Leadership Summit (virtual)  | 1 |
| Head: Koala Smart Strategy  | 1 |
| Head and Provisional Teachers: Attended Proficient Teacher Accreditation Orientation with AISNSW consultant                 | 3 |
| Head: AISNSW Annual Principals' Briefing  | 1 |
| Head: Presented "Words in the Weeds – Leading Literacy Outdoors" for Primary English Teachers Association Australia (PETAA) | 1 |
| Head: Principal presentation for graduating teacher education students (University of Newcastle Education Faculty)          | 1 |
| Head: Professional supervision of training Teacher  | 1 |
| Head: Professional mentoring  | 1 |

## 5. Workforce composition

| Primary School Staff – as at end of year 2021 |     |
|---|-----|
| Teaching Staff                                | 8   |
| Full time equivalent teaching staff           | 6.2 |
| Non-teaching staff                            | 6   |
| Full time equivalent non-teaching staff       | 4.4 |

Currently 1 staff member (Non-teaching) identifies as Aboriginal.

## 6. Student attendance and management of non-attendance



In 2021, average attendance for the whole school was 93.2%. The above graph also shows the attendance percentage breakdown by grade, ranging from 92% to 94.3%.

The school implements policies and procedures for the management of student non-attendance. A daily record of school attendance of each student is maintained throughout the term. Parents/guardians are asked to communicate directly with the class teacher/administration office if their child is not attending school for any reason. This is preferably done through email but can also be done either in person or by phone. Any unexplained absence is followed up with the parents/guardians, firstly, to ascertain the safety and wellbeing of the child and, secondly, to remind them of the necessity to communicate with the school.

Initially if there are concerns with poor attendance the Head of Primary will meet with the parents/guardians to identify and discuss strategies and possible support to address the attendance issue. If the problem continues, the Head of Primary may develop a School Attendance Improvement Plan for the student and their family or may need to work collaboratively with other government or non-government agencies including the AIS NSW to escalate or arrange for a Compulsory Attendance Conference. The parents/guardians will be informed that continued days of absence could result in a mandatory report being lodged. All meetings with the parents/guardians and student will be documented and kept in the student's file.



# 7. Enrolment Policy

This Version: 2.3

|                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Policy Reference | TNS-022                |
| Prepared by      | Head Teacher           |
| Approved by      | TNS Board of Directors |
| Approval date    | 29 March 2019          |
| Page numbers     | 8                      |
| Next review      | March 2022             |

Version history:

|     |                   |                       |
|-----|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1.0 | October 2017      | Final                 |
| 2.0 | 29 January 2018   | Draft                 |
| 2.1 | 26 September 2018 | Final (with mark-ups) |
| 2.2 | 26 September 2018 | Final                 |
| 2.3 | 29 March 2019     | Reviewed              |

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the enrolment criteria and procedures adopted by The Nature School Inc (TNS) for students at The Nature School Primary.

## 2. Context

The Nature School Primary opened in 2018 for students in Kindergarten to Year 2 and continues to grow each year. Through our enrolment process we seek to partner with like-minded families to create a community in which children learn and shine through authentic experiences from and within nature, becoming active global citizens for a sustainable future.

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Relevant legislation | Disability Discrimination Act 1992<br>Disability Standards for Education 2005         |
| Related TNS policies | TNS Disability Inclusion Policy<br>TNS Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy |

### 3. Policy

It is the policy of TNS that

- enrolment processes will be transparent, fair and equitable; and
- the School will fulfil all obligations under the law regarding anti-discrimination.

### 4. Definitions

**disability** – includes:

- total or partial loss of a person’s bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body;  
or
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought process, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour.

**reasonable adjustment** – a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students, while balancing the interests of all parties affected.

**on the same basis** – an education provider treats a prospective student with a disability *on the same basis* as a prospective student without a disability if the provider makes any decisions about admission or enrolment on the basis that reasonable adjustments will be provided in accordance with the Standards (Disability Standards for Education).

**unjustifiable hardship** – an exception to providing adjustments when complying with the Disability Standards for Education would pose an excessive burden on the education



provider, staff or other students, in line with Section 11 of the Act (Disability Discrimination Act).

## **5. Procedures**

### **5.1 Enrolment flow chart**

See Appendix A

### **5.2 Enrolment process**

Kindergarten will provide the usual entry point into the School, however enrolment at other grade levels will be considered provided places are available. Children who are five years old, or who turn five on or before 31 July in that year are eligible to start Kindergarten.

1. Enquiries are welcome at any time. The School administration officer will respond to all enquiries by providing:
  - TNS Primary Prospectus
  - TNS Fee Schedule
  - TNS Enrolment Policy
  - TNS Enrolment Terms and Conditions
  - TNS Register of Interest form
  
2. The School administration officer will enter information from the Register of Interest form into the register of interest list on the School's online student management software. The Register of Interest will remain open until the end of Semester 1 for the following School year.
  
3. Parents/carers of children on the register of interest list will be contacted for an enrolment interview in Semester 2 for the following School year. As only limited places are available each year, when interviewing priority for acceptance will be given to:
  - a. siblings of existing students

- b. children currently enrolled in The Nature School Early Years program, with a record of regular attendance and up to date payment of fees
- c. children of parents who are currently actively involved in The Nature School community in a paid or unpaid capacity
- d. children of parents who align with the attitudes, values and priorities of TNS

TNS has absolute discretion in determining the weight of each of the factors it takes into account in determining whether to offer both an enrolment interview and a subsequent place for the child.

- 4. Prior to the enrolment interview parents must submit to the School administration officer:
  - a. completed Enrolment Form
  - b. a copy of the child's birth certificate
  - c. all medical, psychological, or other reports about the child
  - d. a copy of the child's last report, for children entering grades other than Kindergarten
  - e. any other relevant information or documentation considered necessary, either by the parents/carers or the School, including evidence of Citizenship or resident status if a child was born overseas

Important note: Providing false or misleading information or failing to provide important information may impact on an offer of enrolment or lead to an offer being withdrawn.

- 5. At the enrolment interview the Head Teacher, or a school representative appointed by the Head Teacher, will:
  - a. establish that the expectations and commitments of the parents/carers are consistent with the vision and mission, resources, and policies of TNS; and inform parents/carers of their responsibilities regarding fees
  - b. for Kindergarten students, assess the child's readiness for formal schooling

- c. for students with identified additional needs, consider alternative or additional assessment processes that may be required. (See **5.3 Disability**)  
Any external assessments or reports required will be at the parents/carers expense
  - d. if necessary, seek permission to contact the child's preschool, previous school, medical or other personnel considered significant for providing information pertaining to the needs of the child. Where information suggests a profile of willful misconduct, bullying, strong anti-social behaviours, poor school attendance or any other behaviours that may be detrimental to the other students, staff, or the School, the Head Teacher may at their discretion decline to proceed further with the enrolment application.
6. Following enrolment interviews, formal offers will be made to successful applicants at the discretion of the Head Teacher, with priority given as outlined above (point 3 of the enrolment process).

The School administration officer will provide successful applicants with a letter of offer to be signed and Acceptance Fee invoice to be paid by the due date, usually within 14 days. Failure to reply within the required time may result in the placement being offered to another child. The School administration officer will also inform unsuccessful applicants regarding the outcome of their interview.

7. When the signed acceptance offer and Acceptance Fee have been received, the child's details are placed into the School's online student management software and the student is considered to be enrolled.

Continued enrolment at TNS Primary is dependent upon meeting a number of factors outlined below (See **5.4 Withdrawal and Termination**).

### **5.3 Disability**

Where parents/carers have indicated that their child has additional needs, or information has come to light indicating the possible need for learning support or other measures to assist the child to participate at the School, or to use the School's facilities or services, the Head Teacher will make an additional assessment of the child's needs. Where information obtained by the School indicates that the child has a disability, the Head Teacher will seek to identify the exact nature of the child's needs and the

strategies required to address them. The Head Teacher will determine whether reasonable adjustments can be made, taking into consideration:

- the child's disability
- the views of the child and/or the child's parents/carers
- the extent to which the adjustment would allow the child to participate on the same basis as a child without the disability
- the effect of the adjustment on the child
- the effect of the adjustment on other students and staff
- the costs and benefits of the adjustment

TNS is committed to providing reasonable adjustments required by children, provided such measures or actions do not create unjustifiable hardship to the School. The Head Teacher will consider the School's financial circumstances, the estimated expenditure required for the adjustment, and the availability of financial assistance to the School before declining to offer an enrolment place due to unjustifiable hardship.

#### **5.4 Withdrawal and Termination**

- If an offer of enrolment is made and accepted, and the parents/carers subsequently decide not to proceed with enrolment, no less than a full term's notice must be given or one term's fees will be charged. An exemption may only be granted in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Head Teacher.
- If parents/carers choose to withdraw their child from the School for any reason, one full term's notice must be given. Fees in lieu of notice will be charged if insufficient notice is received.
- A child's enrolment may be terminated at any time at the discretion of the Head Teacher, due to (but not limited to) the student not making satisfactory progress, students or the parents/carers not observing all behavioral codes of conduct, violent and aggressive behavior, bullying, causing considerable disruption to other students, consistent non-attendance, or failure on the part of the parents/carers to pay fees. If a student's enrolment is terminated, one full term's fees will be retained before any refund is given.

## Appendix A - Enrolment flow chart



Families enquire about TNS Primary

School administration officer provides prospectus, Register of Interest form, Fee Schedule, Enrolment policy, Enrolment terms and conditions

Parents complete Register of Interest form and submit to the School

School admin officer collects Register of Interest forms. Head Teacher selects families for interview. Admin officer requests completed enrolment application and other required paperwork prior to interview

Parents and child attend an enrolment interview

*No offer made*

Offer of placement

Parents sign offer and pay acceptance fee

Student enrolled at TNS Primary

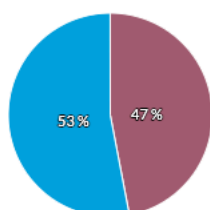


## 8. Characteristics of the student body

### Students

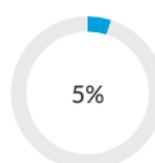
Total enrolments: 78

Boys 41  
Girls 37



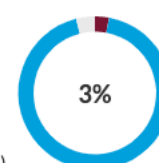
Full-time equivalent enrolments: 78.0

Indigenous students



Language background other than English

Yes (3%)  
No (94%)  
Not stated (4%)



## 9. Policy summaries

| Policy   | Summary  | Changes   | Availability   |
|--|--|---|--|
| TNS-003 Child Protection Policy                | The safety, protection and wellbeing of all students is of fundamental importance to TNS. The Child Protection Policy is an important document, as child protection is everyone's responsibility. In addition to the full policy being available on our website, we have also included extracts to ensure that all members of our community know what to do if they need to report misconduct. | V5.0<br>Reviewed and updated March 2021 to address legislative requirements | Publicly disclosed on School website, and available from the school office |
| TNS-004 Safe and Supportive Environment Policy | Policies TNS-004 and TNS-015 provide further procedures and guidelines to ensure the wellbeing of our students.  | V2.3<br>[no changes]  | Available from the school office   |
| TNS-015 Pastoral Care Policy                   |  | V2.3<br>[no changes]  | Available from the school office   |

|   |   |                         |  |
|---|---|-------------------------|--|
| TNS-035<br>Bullying Prevention Policy (Students)      | TNS is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, productive and harmonious educational environment for students, free from bullying.  | V1.2<br>[no changes]    | Publicly disclosed on School website, and available from the school office |
| TNS-012<br>Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy | TNS will deal with student disciplinary matters quickly and effectively, while ensuring procedural fairness and the right to an unbiased decision, in order that a positive and productive learning environment is maintained for all students. Parents are involved in the process as required. TNS does not permit or sanction corporal punishment of students by anyone. | V3.2<br>[minor changes] | Publicly disclosed on School website, and available from the school office |
| TNS-014<br>Grievance Resolution Policy                | TNS is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, productive and harmonious working and educational environment for students and employees. It is acknowledged that grievances may arise from time to time. Where grievances do occur, TNS is committed to prompt, impartial, fair and confidential resolution.  | V2.2<br>[no changes]    | Publicly disclosed on School website, and available from the school office |



## 10. School determined improvement targets

| Target   | Comments  | Achieved?           |
|--|---|---------------------|
| Secure permanent home site for TNS Primary                                       | Final stages of property purchase – settlement pending.   | ✓                   |
| Feasibility study for expansion to TNS Secondary                                 | Parents surveyed to determine demand, financial modelling to ensure viability.  | ✓<br>and<br>ongoing |
| Employ further staff   | Additional classroom teacher employed and TA hours increased  | ✓                   |
| Registration of Year 5   | Five year registration granted Year 5   | ✓                   |
| Initial Registration of Year 6   | Initial Registration granted for 2022   | ✓                   |
| Increase enrolments  | The school increased enrolments from 57 students to 78  | ✓                   |
| Teaching and learning: embedding nature pedagogy across curriculum areas         | TNS 'Learning Naturally' Framework implemented. Parents report increased satisfaction with connection to nature in annual survey.                             | ✓                   |
| Teaching and learning: focus on teaching strategies to improve learning outcomes | Instructional coaching by Head and Curriculum Lead, deeper feedback on teaching programs, critical reflection by staff, rollout literacy intervention program | ✓<br>and<br>ongoing |
| Facilities and resources: secure and fit out additional classrooms for 2021/22   | One new classroom completed for 2021. Two further classrooms require completion for 2022.   | ✓<br>and<br>ongoing |
| Strategic framework established by Board and Executive                           | Pillar 1: Flourishing Children<br>Pillar 2: Nurturing Nature<br>Pillar 3: Community Connection<br>Pillar 4: Sustainable Growth                                | ✓<br>and<br>ongoing |

# 11. Initiatives promoting respect and responsibility

Respect is a key value in our organisation and one of the three foundations underpinning everything we do at TNS Primary (Respect – Safety – Learning). From Kindergarten our students are taught to respect themselves, others and the environment as outlined in the school rules. All members of our school community are expected to do the same. Students are also given a great deal of responsibility from a young age, as they move towards becoming “engaged global citizens” as outlined in our Mission statement. Upper Primary students at TNS run our School Meetings, which includes sharing big ideas for the School, collecting maintenance reports, celebrating success and sharing gratitude.

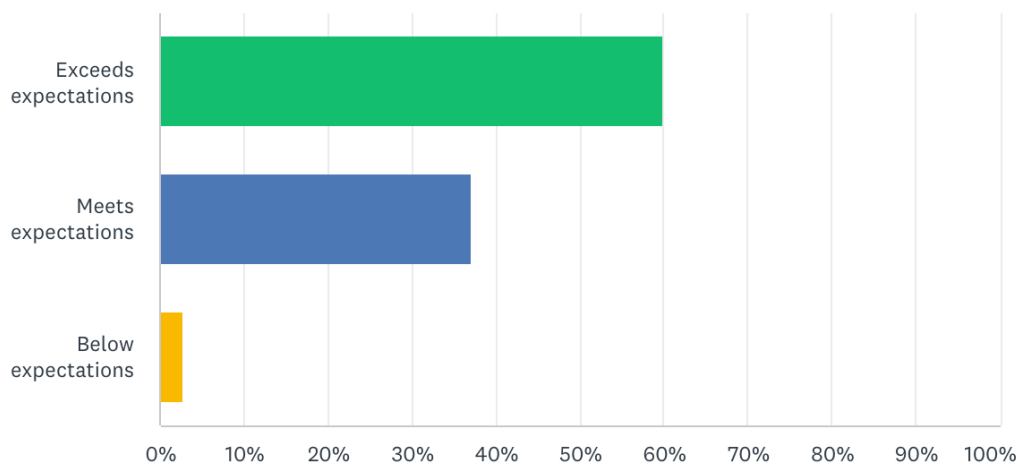
Some examples of ways we promoted respect and responsibility at The Nature School in 2021 included:

- Adventure days to a wide range of community locations
- Tree Kangaroo student led project
- Mayor for the Day – student winner
- Koala Smart program
- Harmony Day
- National Schools Tree Day
- Cleanup Australia Day
- Aussie Backyard Bird Count during National Bird week
- Great Southern Bioblitz
- Connection with The Lost Plot Community Gardens
- Caring for our own kitchen gardens
- Composting and worm farms
- Caring for school chickens
- Weekly Community Cleanup - school grounds

- Reconciliation Week activities
- NAIDOC Week activities
- Tree planting ceremony to celebrate students who exemplify safety, learning and respect
- Buddy reading
- Gratitude circles
- Smiling Mind – mindfulness program

## 12. Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

The annual survey provides an important avenue for families to give feedback on the school. Survey results highlight areas of strength, and opportunities for further growth. Our current parents continue to report high levels of satisfaction with the School overall, with 60% of parents reporting that the School ‘exceeds expectations’ and a further 37% reporting that it ‘meets expectations’. For the first time, one parent reported dissatisfaction.

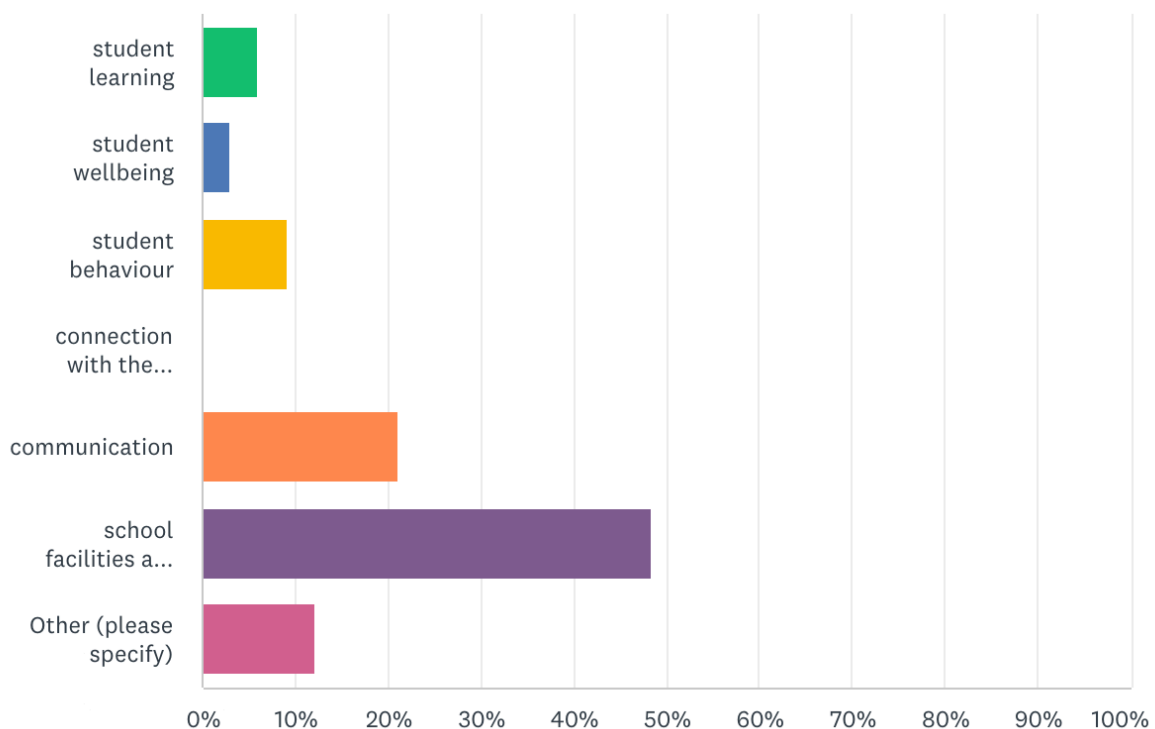


*How happy are you with TNSP for your child/ren?*



As with previous years, parents were asked to evaluate how well the School supports their children’s learning, wellbeing, and connection with nature. Consistent with the last survey, 97% of parents feel that TNSP supports connection with the natural environment extremely well (75%) or very well. 94% of parents reported that the school supports student wellbeing extremely well (58%) or very well. In considering student learning, while 77% of parents feel that their children’s learning needs are well supported overall, only 42% report being extremely satisfied. This was identified as a priority coming out of the previous survey, and will remain an important priority in 2022.

Parents again overwhelmingly highlighted facilities and resources as the priority growth area for the School (49%). It is interesting to note that despite parents reporting only moderate satisfaction with student learning, it was not identified as an area for growth. Only 6% parents identified learning as a priority. 21% would like a focus on improved communication between School and home, while 9% would like further emphasis on student behaviour. For the first time since the School opened, a small number of parents requested Sport to be a priority area (under Other).



*In which area do you think TNSP most needs to continue improving?*

The staff survey revealed similar results to parents, with greater emphasis on the two priority areas of Facilities and Resources, and Learning. 65% staff identified Facilities as the area requiring most improvement by the School. Staff also listed this as an area of frustration. Teachers reflected that overall they feel they are meeting children’s learning needs very well (65%) but only 10% feel they are meeting learning needs extremely well. This will remain a priority target area in 2022. Overall, staff are proud to work at The Nature School, as reflected in their comments below.

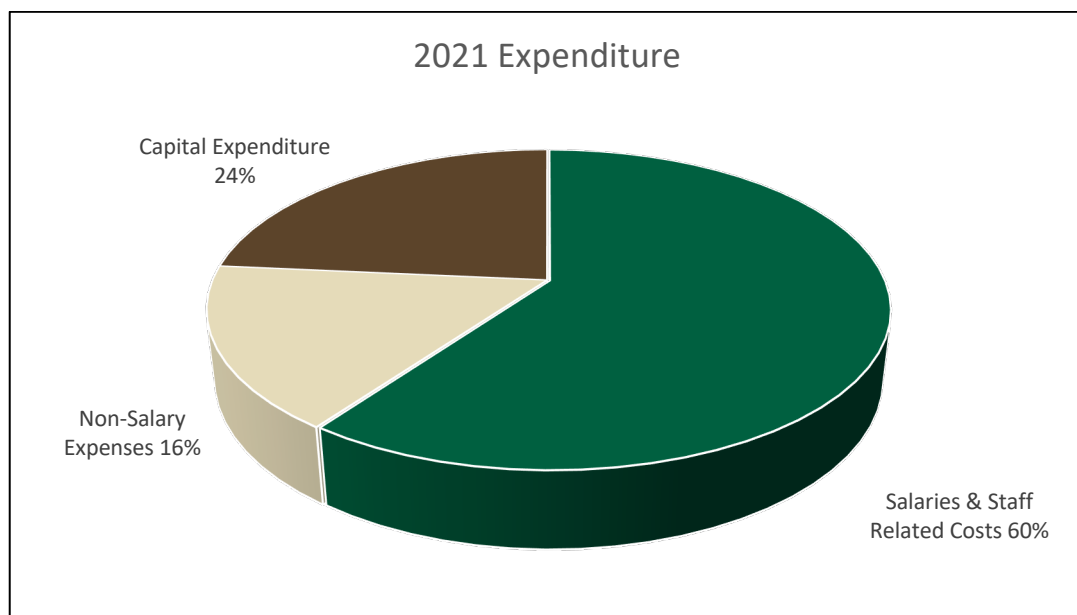
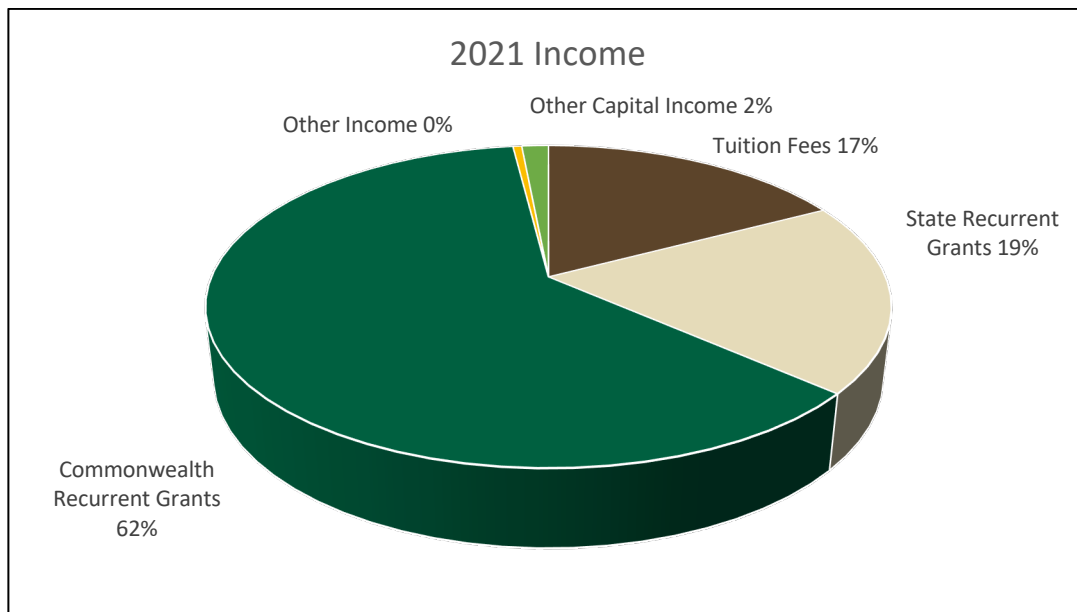
**Survey comments 2021:**

| Survey Comments 2021 |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Parents              | “Our kids have attended this school after beginning at a different school. Both children are happier learning and passionate about their education. Their progress has been leaps and bounds above our expectations and we couldn’t be prouder to say they attend TNSP.”   |
|                      | “TNSP is just the best school for our child. We wish there was another campus to make this way of learning available to more children. Every single child should have access to this warm, safe and nurturing place for learning.”   |
|                      | “This school provides a unique environment for our children and we’re so pleased to be part of TNS. The teachers, director and all staff members are very supportive. The school is continuously improving and the admin staff are very responsive. Inclusive environment, outdoors learning and curriculum perfectly balanced. My child is motivated and feels safe. We’re very satisfied and we would recommend the school to anyone who’s looking for a school that allows curiosity to be an important part of the child’s learning experience.” |
|                      | “It is always a blessing to bring my kids to school each day, to see them engaged by kind/invested teachers, knowing their day will include hands-on/practical learning, adventures around the Hastings, and on cooler days time by the fire with lemon myrtle tea in hand. It’s an absolute blessing to be part of the TNSP community.”   |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Students | "Tuesday Choosedays are the best because we all get to learn anything we want to, like how to ride a unicycle or how to get faster at speed cubing or even lead our own project group."  |
|          | "Adventure Days are the best because we go to so many cool places for our learning. Our school is wonderful. We get to do things other schools never do."  |
|          | "Our teachers are the best because they are kind and they really care about you. It's not strict here. You can call teachers by their first name and you can suggest ideas any time you want, like <i>Wheels on Wednesday</i> ." |
|          | "There is more play here than at other schools. We have rainy play, muddy play, play with kids of different ages, and three plays a day."  |
| Staff    | "We are taking learning back to how it should be for the students. We remember that they are young children who need to be outside and doing hands-on work to enjoy and absorb information."                                     |
|          | "Childhood is respected, student voice is heard and appreciated, and we link learning to nature. It truly is an amazing place to work!"  |
|          | "We are allowed to take chances or learning risks, and are always trying new things. I love the freedom to do what works best for the child."  |
|          | "I love working in a positive and committed team focused on providing authentic learning for the students."  |



# 13. Summary financial information



# 14. Publication Requirements

This Annual Report is available via The Nature School's website at:

<https://www.thenatureschool.org.au/primary-annual-report>

Hard copies are available in the School office.

It has been provided to NESA as required by 30 June 2022.

