

2022 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

I would 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 now lives, learns and grow - 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.

This has been the 5th year of TNS Primary and our first year catering for all Primary grades from Kindergarten to Year 6. 2022 also solidified The Nature School Primary program as we settled on purchasing the handmade mud brick building and land at 166 The Ruins Way from The Hope Community Church to make this our permanent home. We are grateful recipients of a wonderful place that was forged brick by brick from the red earth beneath and a passion to connect the community.

I would like to acknowledge Eirwyn Davidson for her dedication as Board Chair for the past 2 years as well as office bearer in various positions over the 5 years she served on the Board. We also said goodbye to several Board directors this year: Susan Ashcroft, Christi Dunkerton, Stefanie Barker, Alice Herbert and Rhiannon Anderson. I would like to thank and acknowledge each of them for the contribution of their combined skills, experience and insights.

The Nature School has seen the fruits of all who have laboured for the past 5 years come to fruition this year. We owe a debt of gratitude to all who contributed, you know the role each of you has played so far and we recognise that the achievements and milestones accomplished in this year have been the result of so many. Thank you!



In terms of tangible measurables this year here are the highlights:

- Settlement of the purchase of 166 The Ruins Way property for TNS Primary following receipt of \$500k BGA Grant
- \$75k technology investment, including new devices, new IT network, and Fibre installed to the building to ensure more reliable internet connectivity with greater bandwidth
- Completion of new classrooms for Y4-6 including breakout spaces
- Installation of temporary toilet block
- Completion of Development Application to increase enrolment numbers to 166 students to accommodate for future Secondary school intake
- Appointment of a part-time Counsellor
- Development of a new strategic plan for the organisation
- Commencement of the Year 7 building for Secondary school
- Registration of The Nature School Vacation Care program received late 2022

Total investment in Capital works \$358k plus the settlement of the new building

Upcoming 2023 planned Capital Works:

- Year 7 Classroom
- Reception area, dedicated sick bay, and reconfiguration of administration spaces
- New toilet block, outdoor classroom, Kindy deck roof and connecting walkways
- New library building, including staff room and amenities
- Concrete shed floor and new shed roof

Grants Received:

- 2022 - \$500k for the purchase of the building
- 2022 - \$56k for counsellor
- 2022 - Other grants received \$5k

Finally, I would like to thank our dedicated Executives. Business Manager Karen Marlin has not only contributed to securing vital grant funding but also stepped up to cover the valued Early Years program as well as the TNS Business Manager role. Catherine Shaw our Head of Primary has not only nurtured the School from its early beginnings but has also prepared for Secondary which commences in 2023, with a number of our Year 6 cohort progressing into Year 7.

Both of our Executives work tirelessly above and beyond to ensure that The Nature School children and facilitators flourish. The quality of our passionate team is a reflection of the culture that these Executives cultivate every day.

For a progressive independent school of humble beginnings, we are leading the way in the education sector. Our demonstration of a 'better way' has been recognised on multiple levels.

- 2022 National Outdoor Education Conference:
 - NSW Winner / National Finalist – Best Outdoor Education Program awarded to The Nature School
 - National Award for Service to Outdoor Education Australia awarded to Catherine Shaw (Head of School)
- 2022 Primary English Teachers Association Australia: inaugural PETAA School Award for Excellence in Primary English Teaching
- Port Macquarie Business Awards 2021/22
 - Outstanding Business Leader finalist – Catherine Shaw
 - Outstanding Young Business Leader finalist – Jacqui Leach (EY)
 - Outstanding Employee finalist – Belinda Castle (EY)

I am excited to see TNS continue to grow as an organisation in 2023 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.

Nigel Tang
Board Chair (Acting)
The Nature School Inc



learn & shine



THE
NATURE
SCHOOL

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.



After the bushfires a few years ago, I learned about **epicormic growth**. If you've ever seen the blackened trunks of eucalyptus trees looking furry with new shoots, you have observed epicormic growth. New shoots from epicormic buds lie dormant beneath the bark. It is a brilliantly designed response to stress which leads to a flourish of growth.

2022 was our year of epicormic growth. Though Covid shut down many of our annual events and traditions, there were dormant buds just waiting to burst forth and it was a delight to watch our School return to flourishing. Student numbers increased significantly. Parents were once again welcomed back onsite. Events returned to the school calendar. We all breathed a collective sigh of relief as a busy normality settled back over The Nature School.

Highlights included Adventure Days across the beautiful Mid North Coast, including to lighthouses, farms, wetlands, rockpools, rainforests and more. Our students are often recognised in their distinctive uniforms as they explore the Port Macquarie's stunning 'classrooms'. Tuesday afternoons were again reserved for student led learning (Tuesday Chooseday) where topics across the year included unicycling, photography, woodburning, skateboarding, slow stitching, paper planes, floristry, soapmaking, and break dancing! We love to learn.

One of the excellent changes we made this year was in relation to our timetable. After listening to student requests for more play, exploring play theory and investigating evidence to support the benefits of play – we adjusted our timetable to accommodate four learning sessions broken up by three play breaks. We also added a Playworks Area ('The Playstation') to provide more opportunities for the construction of large, child-built structures. The impact on student wellbeing and student learning has been sensational.

We participated in a number of exciting projects throughout the year with a focus on our local environment. Students contributed to and participated in Guula Barayn (Koala Day) in conjunction with our Birpai community. Year 5 environmental poetry featured in 'Our Place, My Story – a Bicentenary Year Storytelling Project' with Port Macquarie Hastings Council. A small group of Year 6 students accompanied me to Sydney to participate in the 2022 Swarovski Waterschool Program at the Georges River Environmental Centre. These students will lead the project next year, as they explore sustainable water management locally and globally. All students took part in National Schools Tree Day, and contributed to citizen science during Bird Week. We even hosted a birdwatching morning for families in collaboration with the Hastings Birdwatchers. One of our teachers, Shannon Kelly, was also recognised in the NSW Environmental Education Awards – Sustainable Schools NSW Teacher of the Year (Highly Commended). Across all ages, we are passionate about respecting and protecting our local environment.

2022 saw a significant milestone for TNS, as we completed our Primary grades and graduated our first Year 6 students. The Board also made the bold decision to continue into Secondary education in 2023. What an adventure that will be!

Our staff at TNS Primary work incredibly hard in living out our mission. The authentic experiences they provide our students create the ideal conditions for children to learn and shine. Our teaching and non-teaching staff are dedicated, diligent, and passionate professionals. My deep thanks to each of them for the work that is seen and unseen. Our Business Manager, Karen Marlin, has continued to grow our facilities and resources to match our growing student enrolments. Her incredible industry knowledge and financial acumen are invaluable assets to our organisation. My thanks also to our capable Board of Directors, who govern our School with courage, discernment, and strategic vision.

Eucalyptus trees survive, recover, and thrive. In the first five years of the School we have been through fires, floods, and a global pandemic. Like a resilient eucalypt, we too have been able to survive, recover, and thrive. Nothing has stalled our growth. 2023 will see new branches added to our tree as we embark on our Secondary journey, and I am so privileged to continue leading our School into the future.

From little things, big things grow...

Catherine Shaw (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 approximately 120 students from K-6.

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*

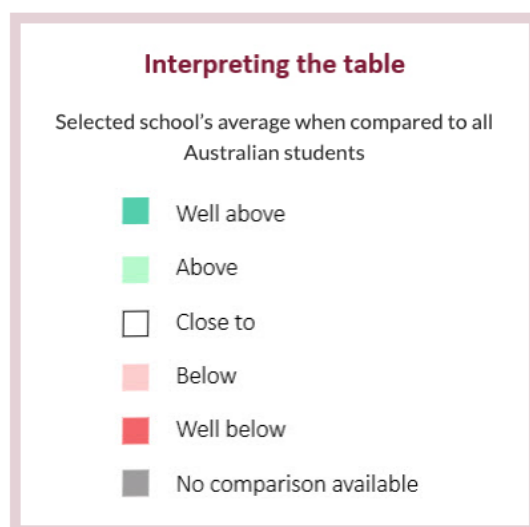
- *peer assessment*
- *self assessment*
- *learning portfolios (a growing collection of student work samples from throughout the semester)*
- *inquiry based research questions*
- *hands-on activities or practical demonstrations*
- *presentations*

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 2022, we had a small Year 5 class of 13 students. Most Y3 parents and some Y5 parents withdrew their children from NAPLAN testing on philosophical grounds. As a result, The Nature School did not meet the threshold for data to be publicly available in any area except Year 3 writing. Additionally, as a school’s NAPLAN test must have a minimum of 11 participants and 80% participation rate for a comparison to be available, this threshold was also unmet.

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
Year 3	-	414	-	-	-
Year 5	-	-	-	-	-



4. Teacher Qualifications, Accreditation and Professional learning

4a. Teacher qualifications

Category	Number of Teachers – as at end of 2022
(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	11
(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 – as at end of 2022
Conditional	
Provisional	1
Proficient	10
<i>HALT (Highly Accomplished / Lead – voluntary)</i>	0

4c. 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.

In addition to the scheduled weekly PL meetings, staff participated in the following during 2022:

Description of the Professional Learning Activity	Staff participating
Mandatory Child Protection Training	All
Child Protection Q&A with Dept Communities and Justice (DCJ)	All
CPR Training	All
Anaphylaxis Training	All
Asthma Training	All
Professional goal setting and reflection	11
Smiling Mind workshop (mindfulness)	9
National Outdoor Education Conference - presenters	2
Curriculum update workshops (NESA endorsed)	10
Playworks workshop (full day) including TAs	14
Australian Association for Environmental Education (AEEE) Nature Play workshop	2
Light Rigid bus licensing	4
NAPLAN coordinator training	1
Curriculum Coordinator: TENS (Teacher Experience Network)	1
Curriculum Coordinator: NESA Conference panellist	1
Head: AISNSW Annual Principals' Briefing	1
Head: Outdoors NSW Mentoring	1
Head: Principal presentation for graduating teacher education students (University of Newcastle Education Faculty)	1

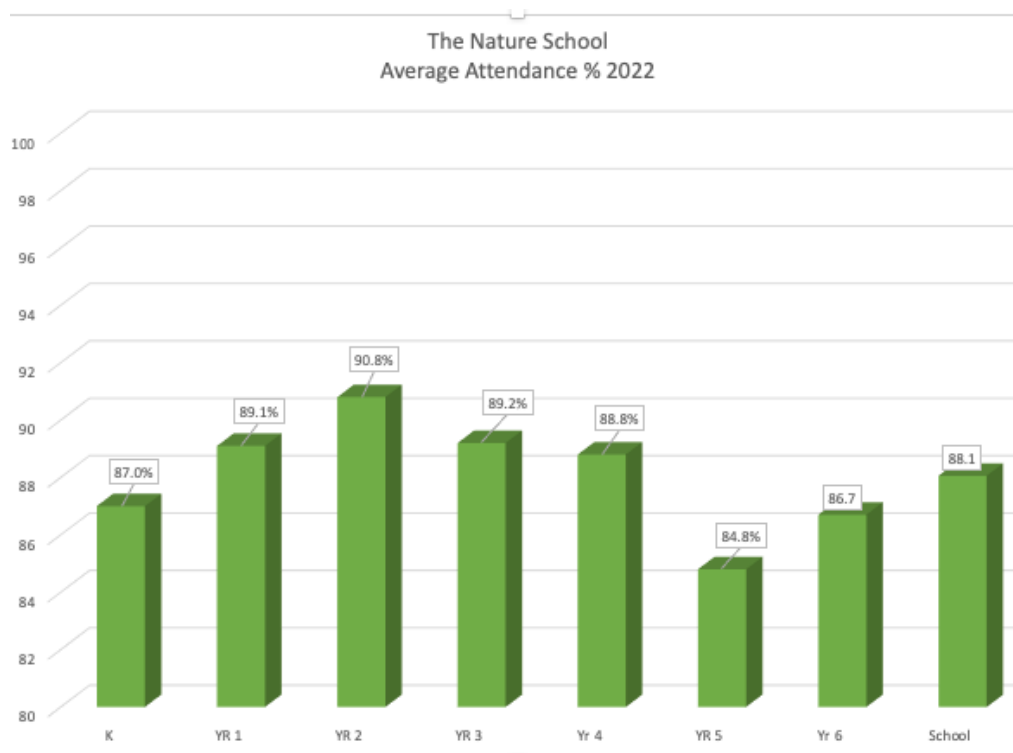


5. Workforce composition

Primary School Staff – as at end of year 2022	
Teaching Staff	11
Full time equivalent teaching staff	8.6
Non-teaching staff	7
Full time equivalent non-teaching staff	4.8

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

6. Student attendance and management of non-attendance



In 2022, average attendance for the whole school was 88.1%. This is a drop from 93.2% in the previous year. The above graph also shows the attendance percentage breakdown by grade, ranging from 84.8% to 90.8%. This is also a much broader range than in the previous year, where variation was only from 92% to 94.3%. The decline in attendance is likely due to two post-covid factors: the first being parents not sending children to school with any cold and flu symptoms, and the second being families taking up postponed travel plans.

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 Disability Standards for Education 2005
Related TNS policies	TNS Disability Inclusion Policy 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

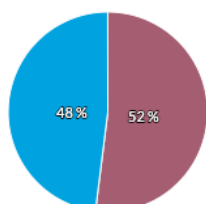
Student enrolled at TNS Primary

8. Characteristics of the student body

Students

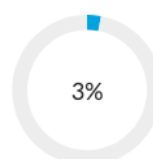
Total enrolments: 119

Boys 57
Girls 62



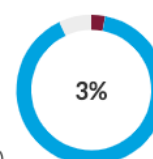
Full-time equivalent enrolments: 119.0

Indigenous students



Language background other than English

Yes (3%)
No (90%)
Not stated (7%)



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.	V5.1 Reviewed and updated March 2022 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 [no changes]	Available from the school office
TNS-015 Pastoral Care Policy		V2.3 [no changes]	Available from the school office

TNS-035 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 [no changes]	Publicly disclosed on School website, and available from the school office
TNS-012 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 [no changes]	Publicly disclosed on School website, and available from the school office
TNS-014 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 [no changes]	Publicly disclosed on School website, and available from the school office



10. School determined improvement targets

Target	Comments	Achieved?
Registration of Year 6	Five year Registration granted Year 6	✓
Initial Registration and Accreditation of Year 7	Initial Registration and Accreditation granted for 2023	✓
Increase enrolments	The school increased enrolments from 78 students to 119	✓
Employ further staff	Additional classroom teacher employed, librarian, school counsellor, and additional admin team member	✓
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, literacy intervention program	✓
Teaching and learning: focus on implementation of new syllabus documents	Professional learning by K-2 staff to familiarize new English / Mathematics curriculum	✓
Facilities and resources: secure and fit out additional Primary classrooms	Year 5 and 6 classrooms completed	✓
Facilities and resources: build and fit out Secondary classrooms	Year 7 building approved and will be ready for 2023	✓ and ongoing
Community partnerships to support Secondary	Agreements in place with Billabong Zoo and Charles Sturt University	✓
Strategic framework implemented by Board and Executive	Pillar 1: Flourishing Children Pillar 2: Nurturing Nature Pillar 3: Community Connection Pillar 4: Sustainable Growth	✓ and ongoing
New website	Under construction, will be ready for 2023 rollout	in progress

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.

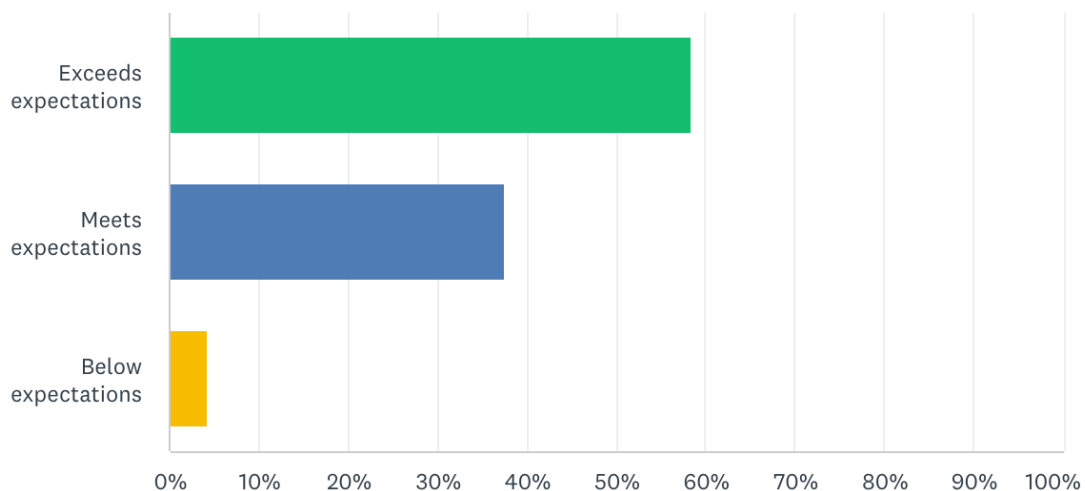
Some examples of ways we promoted respect and responsibility at The Nature School in 2022 included:

- Adventure days to a wide range of community locations
- Swarovski Global Waterschool program
- Koala Smart program
- Harmony Day
- National Schools Tree Day
- Cleanup Australia Day
- Aussie Backyard Bird Count during National Bird week
- Frog ID Week
- National Recycling Week
- Great Southern Bioblitz
- Connection with The Lost Plot Community Gardens
- Caring for our own kitchen gardens, worm farms, chickens, lizards and bees
- 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

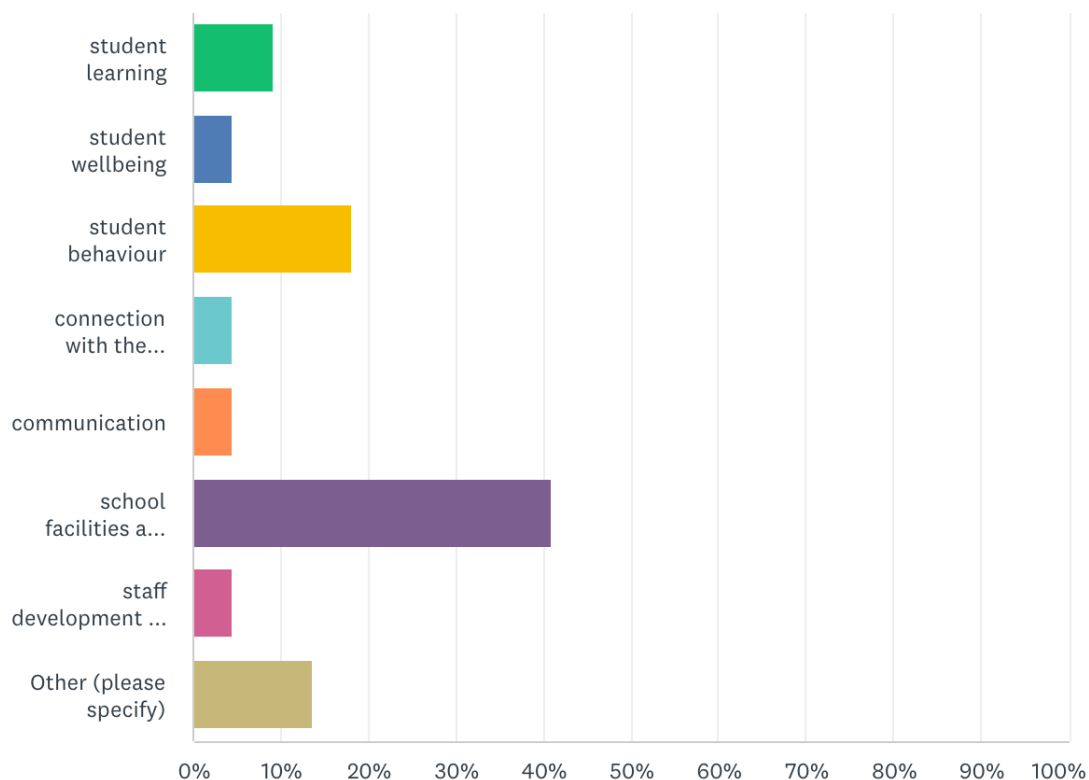
The annual survey provides an important avenue for families to give feedback on the school. Survey results highlight areas of strength, and opportunities for further growth. Our current parents continue to report high levels of satisfaction with the School overall, with 60% of parents reporting that the School ‘exceeds expectations’ and a further 37% reporting that it ‘meets expectations’. 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 previous surveys, 95% of parents feel that TNSP supports connection with the natural environment extremely well or very well. 92% of parents reported that the school supports student wellbeing extremely well or very well. In considering student learning, while 75% of parents feel that their children’s learning needs are well supported overall, 25% report that learning needs are only met ‘fairly well’. This remains an important priority moving forward.

Consistent with previous years, parents again overwhelmingly highlighted facilities and resources as the priority growth area for the School (41%). It is interesting to note that despite parents reporting only moderate satisfaction with student learning, it was not identified as an area for growth. 18% of parents identified student behaviour as an area for growth, up from 9% the previous year. 9% of parents identified learning as a priority.



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

The staff survey revealed similar results to parents, with even greater emphasis on the two priority areas of facilities and resources (58%), and student behaviour (30%). Teachers reflected that overall they feel they have greatly improved meeting children’s learning needs over the past year, with 54% reporting that we now meet them extremely well and 46% reporting that we do so very well. This is a marked improvement on the previous year, where only 10% of staff felt learning needs were met extremely well. Overall, staff are proud to work at The Nature School, as reflected in their comments below.

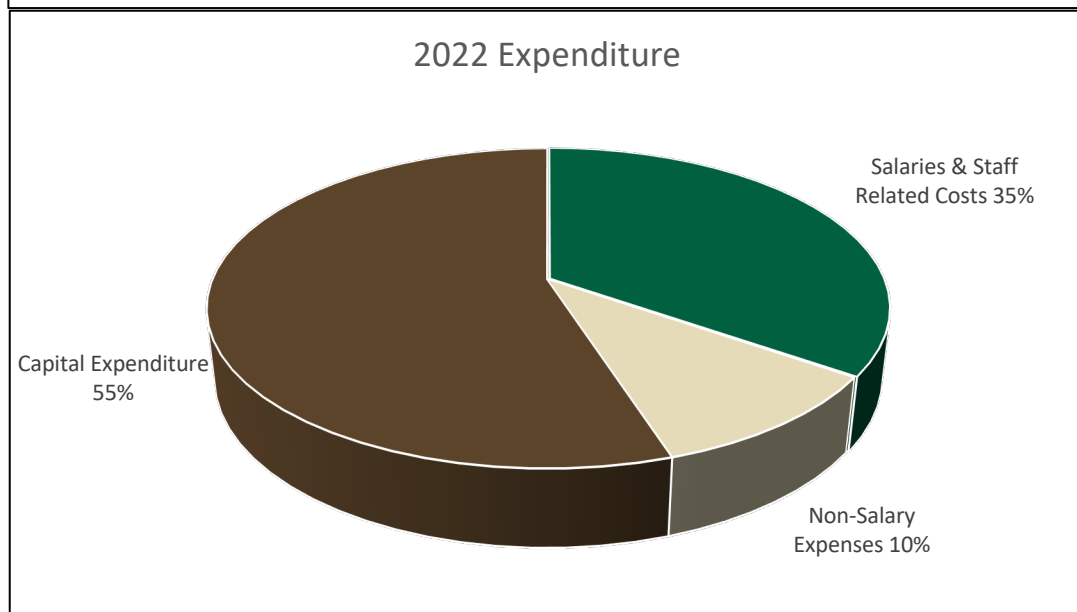
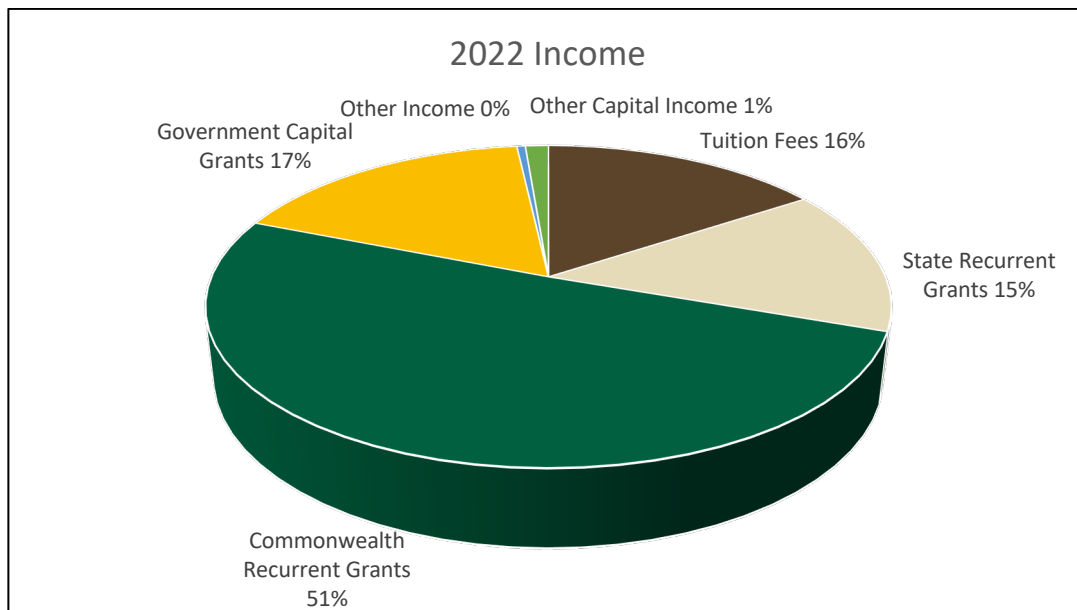
Survey comments 2022:

Survey Comments 2022	
Parents	The Nature School is exceeding our expectations as a family, fulfilling our children's needs and supporting us as a family to raise amazing children. The teachers and staff go above and beyond for every student every day.
	TNS has given our kindy child the opportunity to thrive in every way that matters to us in regards to learning, growing social kindness and connecting him to the world and community surrounding him. As a family we are incredibly settled at TNS.
	We feel very proud and thankful to be part of The Nature School community. The difference we have seen in our son’s learning and the growth in his self confidence in just two terms has been incredible. Thank you!
	Teachers and support staff are always welcoming and friendly. It's like one big happy family.
Students	“Tuesday is the best day of the week because it’s <i>Tuesday Chooseday</i> and you get to learn anything you want.”
	“The learning here isn’t like other schools. We actually learn some pretty complicated and interesting stuff and then we get to explore it in more depth on Adventure Days.”
	“Year 5/6 camp was epic. We have so many memories especially from the waterslide!”
	“Playworks is my favourite thing at The Nature School. Every play time you can use tools and build cubbies.”

Staff	I'm proud of who we are and how people are treated at TNS. Being kind/supportive is a culture at TNS not just lip service. This comes from the top and filters down through the school as a whole and is a testament to everyone who strives daily to maintain this culture.
	There is little ego among the staff and they truly care for one another and try to help each other. The school is changing the status quo by stepping back and critically thinking about aspects of schooling/education and deciding what is actually best for learners and the community, rather than just doing it because it's the way it's always been done.
	I think we are a very supportive team and encourage each other well. We all work very hard and keep up a high level of energy for our kids. I'm proud to be part of this team.
	I am proud to be a part of this amazing, groundbreaking, industry leading school, and proud of the way the staff support each other and the students.



13. Summary financial information



14. Publication Requirements

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

<https://tns.nsw.edu.au/policies-and-reports.html>

Hard copies are available in the School office.

It has been provided to NESA as required by 30 June 2023.

