

2025

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

SERVICE | LEADERSHIP | JUSTICE

TOGETHER IN CHRIST



St James Primary School

Vista Parade, KOTARA SOUTH 2289

Principal: Mrs Sonya Boslem

Web: <http://www.kotarasouth.catholic.edu.au>

About this report

St James Primary School (the 'School') is registered by the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) and managed by the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (CDMN) which forms part of the broader system of schools governed by Catholic Schools NSW. The Annual School Report (the 'Report'), provides parents and the wider community with fair, accurate and objective information about various aspects of school performance and development. Additionally, the Report complements and is supplementary to other forms of regular communication to the School community regarding initiatives, activities and programs which support the learning and wellbeing of its students.

Detailed information about the School's improvement journey is documented in the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) which is developed, implemented and evaluated in consultation with key stakeholders. Further information about the contents of this Report may be obtained by contacting the School directly or by visiting the School's website. Information can be also be obtained from the My School website.

Message from key groups in our community

Principal's Message

We, as a school community, acknowledge the Awabakal People as the Traditional Owners of the land on which our learning takes place at St James' School. A proud Catholic school founded by the Sisters of Mercy, we take great pride in our rich Mercy heritage.

Our core values of respect, courage, service, justice, compassion, and hospitality are embedded in our daily life and underpin our Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) framework.

We are a school with a strong connection to our parish of St Philip's, and we are committed to providing an inclusive Catholic education. Positive relationships among staff, students, and parents are evident throughout our community and make working together both harmonious and rewarding.

The staff of St James' are dedicated, hardworking professionals who strive to provide a nurturing environment where students can grow in all facets of life. We attend to their spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs, establishing a strong and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing.

St James' is a community deeply committed to continuous school improvement. We embrace change and embed up-to-date pedagogical practices to enhance learning outcomes for all students. Our well-established culture of professional growth is grounded in a shared understanding of how students learn. We seek to deliver academic excellence through the implementation of curriculum using contemporary, research-based pedagogy. We are proud to identify and support our High Potential Gifted students through targeted programs. St James' promotes Successful Foundations as children begin Kindergarten, implementing the Early Years Framework with a strong emphasis on the importance of play-based learning for a positive transition to school.

Our school is set among the trees, giving us a unique point of difference and providing a natural environment that supports local flora and fauna. Students and educators enjoy opportunities to learn and grow within our beautiful outdoor spaces.

Throughout the year, we came together to celebrate community events such as Harmony Day, Grandparents Day, NAIDOC Week, Mother's Day, and Father's Day—occasions that fostered fun, care, and a true sense of belonging within our school.

Reflecting on the past year, we are filled with pride as we acknowledge the growth and achievements of our students and staff. As we move forward, we remain committed to

continuing the good work and the meaningful relationships that define St James', knowing that together we are living our mission, vision, and values.

Parent Body Message

The parent body of St James' has enjoyed working positively and productively with school during 2025. We were supported and encouraged to organise activities that enabled us to raise and spend money on the grounds and resources used by the students. We are thankful for the partnership with the school to constantly improve facilities and resources for our children along with being able to attend events held by the school throughout the year.

We held the usual fundraising activities throughout the year, including the Easter raffle and our Mothers' and Fathers' Day stalls. We also coordinated the School Disco, an event that was thoroughly enjoyed by the children and staff who attended. These events provide opportunities for parents to gather and build networks within our community. We thank all of the parents and carers who gave their time to organising and coordinating the details of such events. Through these events we supported the school through the purchase of equipment designed to enhance and improve the learning resources available for our children. Equipment purchased included Sports Equipment, Class readers, outdoor seating, STEM resources and bubblers. We have been able to continue to offer parents the use of the school hall to cater for an onsite playgroup that provides a wonderful opportunity for children to receive an introduction to the school prior to formal school years.

Overall, a hugely successful year was had, and we thank the executive of our Parents and Friends' association for their service as we transitioned to the new Family and Community Engagement (FACE) model in early 2025. This transition provides a new path for families and community members to become involved in the school and the children's education, presenting a range of learning opportunities for parents and a forum for communication between parents and school staff. Through transition to this model we have been able to continue to successfully fundraise with the cation of a fundraising committee. We appreciate the efforts of our parents and recognise the cohesive school community that is developed through these partnerships.

Student Body Message

Last year at our school was truly something special, filled with numerous memorable events and activities. One of the standout moments was the Welcome BBQ. It was an afternoon of fun and community spirit. Where year 6 had lots of fun selling Lollies, chips, snow cones and doing face paint and tattoos. One of the most exciting additions to our school last year was the robotics program. It provided an incredible opportunity for students to engage in creative and critical thinking through STEM. Working together, we built amazing robots designed posters and to complete various challenges. The highlight was traveling to the Central Coast,

where we showcased our robots' capabilities and marvelled at the creations of other teams and having a sausage sizzle.

Another event that brought everyone together was the school disco. Held in the hall, it was a night of music, dancing, and excitement. Throughout the year, our school held several important liturgies and masses, marking significant occasions such as Easter, Good Friday, Ash Wednesday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Christmas, and the end-of-year Mass farewell for Year 6. We can't forget Grandparents' Day when the students put together pieces of music and dances to perform just for their grandparents and families. These events were meaningful and brought our school community together in reflection and celebration.

The Health and Wellbeing team also played a significant role in keeping us active and engaged. They set up fun obstacle courses that challenged us physically and mentally. Some parts were easy, while others were more difficult, making the experience both enjoyable and rewarding. These obstacle courses and fun runs were a fun out of class activity that all students loved and looked forward to.

The Choir had a significant achievement last year as well. They performed at the Civic Theatre, competing against 17 other schools. It was their first time performing at the Civic as a school, and they performed three beautiful songs. Our School Vocal Group participated in the Abermain Eisteddfod. Winning 6 out of 8 categories, they came 2nd in the other 2. The Year 5 Leadership Day was another memorable event. Students participated in various activities such as gardening, a scavenger hunt, team games, and creating a value shield. It was a day of teamwork, leadership, and fun. To top it off, we enjoyed delicious pizzas and juice for lunch.

Overall, last year was filled with unforgettable experiences and opportunities for growth, learning, and fun at St James'.

School Features

St James' Primary School, Kotara South, is a Catholic co-educational K–6 school in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and part of the Central Region of schools. Students typically continue to Trinity College, Adamstown. The school neighbours St Columba's, Adamstown, and St Kevin's, Cardiff, and belongs to the All-Saints Blackbutt South Parish within the St Philip's community.

The school began on 31 January 1961 in Garden Suburb, originally operating from former hospital buildings transported from the Greta Migrant Camp. In 1974, the parish purchased land opposite St Philip's Church, and the current school opened on that site in 1981. St James' has continued to grow, supported by a dedicated parent community through both the former P&F Association and the new FACE model, with events such as Mother's Day and Father's Day stalls and the Easter raffle remaining community highlights.

In 2025, the school hosted major celebrations including Harmony Day, Holy Week, ANZAC commemorations, NAIDOC Week, and the End-of-Year liturgy—strengthening community connection and faith life.

Students enjoyed a range of incursions, excursions, and camps, including a three-day Year 6 camp and visits to Tocal College, the Newcastle Museum, Hunter Valley Wildlife Park, the Wetlands, and Networld. St James' also participated proudly in Regional Public Speaking and Spelling Bees and the Diocesan Debating Competition.

Sport was a vibrant part of school life, with strong participation in the Swimming and Athletics Carnivals. Many students advanced to Central Region, Regional, and Diocesan sporting opportunities, representing St James' with enthusiasm, resilience, and pride.

Student Profile

Student Enrolment

The School caters for students in Years K – 6. Students attending this School come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities. The following information describes the student profile for 2025: Additional information can be found on My School website.

Girls	Boys	LBOTE*	Total Students
169	165	36	334

* Language Background Other than English

Enrolment Policy

The [Enrolment Policy](#) applies to all school enrolments within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese. School authorities manage local enrolment processes and procedures in a manner consistent with the rationale and guiding principles articulated in this Enrolment Policy.

Student Attendance Rates

The average student attendance rate for 2025 was 92.38%. Attendance rates disaggregated by Year group are shown in the following table.

Attendance rates by Year group						
Kindergarten	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
92.37	93.51	93.01	91.36	92.53	91.89	92.01

Managing Student Non-Attendance

All schools maintain an accurate register of their student's attendance. Any absences (part or full day) from school are recorded on this register and appropriate intervention strategies are implemented if required.

While parents/carers are legally responsible for the regular attendance of their child at school, school staff, as part of their duty of care, play a vital role in providing a continuum of active support including universal, targeted, and individualised strategies when supporting students with attendance concerns. Documented attendance plans may be developed to address the needs of students whose attendance is identified as being of concern.

Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile

Note: The data presented reflects the most current information available at the time of reporting. Variations in data currency may occur where staff updates are pending. Differences between tables are due to variations in staff inclusion criteria; therefore, minor discrepancies in reported numbers may occur.

The following information describes the staffing profile for 2025:

Total number of staff	50
Number of full time teaching staff	14
Number of part time teaching staff	19
Number of non-teaching staff	17

Total number of teaching staff by NESA category

Teachers are either accredited as conditional, provisional or proficient as defined by the Teacher Accreditation Act 2004 (NSW). Accreditation at the levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher is voluntary.

The following table describes the accreditation status of teachers at St James Primary School in 2025:

Conditional Teachers	2
Provisional Teachers	1
Proficient Teachers	30

Catholic Identity and Mission

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle participate, under the leadership of the Bishop and in partnership with parents and parishes, in the mission of the Church to provide quality education in the context of a living Catholic Christian tradition. Within this context, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle educate from and for vibrant, welcoming and diverse communities with a particular commitment to the poor; for justice, integrity and peace; and with hope for the future.:

At the heart of everything there is always Jesus Christ.

Catholic schools educate:

- From and for the community of faith
- From and for excellence in learning
- In a rigorous, creative and critical pursuit of truth

(Adapted from: The Catholic School's Office Diocesan Vision Statement, 2016)

St James' is a proud Catholic school grounded in faith and community. We acknowledge the Awabakal People as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we learn and gather, and this recognition forms an essential foundation for the Catholic life of our school. Our Acknowledgement of Country, shared each Monday at assemblies, reflects our deep respect for the Awabakal People and has become an integral part of our school culture.

Our school values, drawn from the Mercy Educational Values, are embedded throughout daily school life and reinforced through our Positive Behaviour for Learning framework. Students are encouraged to actively model and articulate these values in their interactions and actions. St James' maintains a strong and respected presence within the All Saints Blackbutt South Parish, where parish involvement in school life is highly valued. Each grade attends Parish Mass on a rotating Friday roster, strengthening our connection with the parish community.

The Parish Sacramental Program is supported closely through the school, with Religious Education lessons complementing the program. Many teachers volunteer as group leaders or members of the Parish Sacramental Team. This year, approximately 40 students participated in the program as they completed their initiation into the Catholic Church.

Our community came together throughout the year to celebrate Mass and major feasts with liturgies in our school hall. Significant events included Catholic Schools Week, Harmony Day, Holy Week, ANZAC Day, Mother's Day, NAIDOC Week, Grandparents Day and Father's Day.

We concluded the year with a Mass and Awards Ceremony, celebrating the gifts and contributions of all members of our school community.

Together with our parish, we share a unified mission to educate and form students as disciples of Jesus. Students are offered meaningful experiences that support their development as members of the Catholic community, supported collaboratively by staff, parents, our Parish Priest, and the Diocese. Our school actively participates in community outreach, particularly through Catholic agencies such as Caritas Australia, the St Vincent de Paul Society, and Catholic Mission. Led by the Year 6 Social Justice team, St James' supported initiatives including Project Compassion, Socktober, and the creation of food hampers for the Winter Appeal and Christmas. The Social Justice team also played a key role in raising awareness of the needs of marginalised people supported by Caritas and Mission Australia.

Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

The School provides an educational program based on and taught in accordance with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) are English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and its Environment, Creative Arts and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education and Languages.

The Curriculum is structured around the outcomes and content for each KLA and provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding through assessment. The curriculum embeds capabilities and priorities within curriculum content points in all KLAs. These include literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, intercultural understanding, and personal and social capability.

St James' provides an educational program based on, and taught in accordance with, the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) syllabuses for Primary Education. The Key Learning Areas (KLAs) include English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and Its Environment, Creative Arts, and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.

Our curriculum is structured around the outcomes and content for each learning area and the general capabilities that support learning across the curriculum, including literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, critical and creative thinking, ethical behaviour, personal and social competence, and intercultural understanding.

Throughout the year, St James' prioritised improving student achievement in Mathematics, with a particular focus on the Number and Algebra strand. This focus included strengthening students' mathematical literacy and enhancing assessment practices. Learning walks and talks provided targeted feedback to teachers on their use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria. Regular Case Management Meetings and Professional Learning Team (PLT) sessions continued to emphasise Mathematics and the implementation of the NSW syllabus.

To monitor growth across the 2025 school year, teachers administered Number and Algebra assessments developed by staff in 2023. These assessments align strongly with the revised syllabus outcomes and were delivered at the beginning of each term. The resulting data contributed to our data wall, enabling timely intervention, tracking of student progress, and comparison of achievement across the year.

Our Pedagogical Mentors (PMs) led fortnightly PLT meetings, using assessment data as the foundation for professional dialogue. These sessions engaged staff with new resources, pedagogical approaches, and opportunities to refine programming, assessment, and Mathematics vocabulary.

In addition, teachers worked collaboratively as part of the broader Curriculum Reform underway across NSW. Staff engaged in ongoing professional learning to deepen their understanding of the reformed syllabuses, reviewed and updated units of work, trialled new planning templates, and aligned classroom practice with the latest curriculum requirements. This collaborative work ensured that St James' remains well-prepared for the staged implementation of curriculum reform and continues to deliver high-quality, contemporary learning experiences for all students.

Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

NAPLAN

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 across Australia participate in the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

NAPLAN is a nationwide measure through which parents/carers, teachers, schools, education authorities, governments and the broader community can determine whether or not young Australians are developing critical literacy and numeracy skills. NAPLAN results allow parents/carers and educators to see how students are progressing in literacy and numeracy over time - individually, as part of their school community, and against national standards. NAPLAN is made up of four domains of:

- reading
- writing
- conventions of language (spelling, grammar and punctuation)
- numeracy.

NAPLAN results are reported against proficiency standards with four levels of achievement to give parents and carers, teachers and schools clearer information on how students are performing:

- Exceeding: The student's result exceeds expectations at the time of testing.
- Strong: The student's result meets challenging but reasonable expectations at the time of testing.
- Developing: The student's result indicates that they are working towards expectations at the time of testing.
- Needs additional support: The student's result indicates that they are not achieving the learning outcomes expected at the time of testing. They are likely to need additional support to progress satisfactorily.

The percentage of student achieving at Exceeding and Strong proficiency standards in NAPLAN at St James Primary School for 2025 is reported in the table below.

NAPLAN RESULTS 2025		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 3	Grammar and Punctuation	71%	54%
	Reading	84%	66%
	Writing	93%	76%
	Spelling	71%	62%
	Numeracy	86%	64%
NAPLAN RESULTS 2025		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 5	Grammar and Punctuation	65%	63%
	Reading	84%	73%
	Writing	86%	65%
	Spelling	81%	69%
	Numeracy	85%	69%

Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

Pastoral Care Policy

The School's approach to pastoral care and wellbeing is guided by the [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#).

This policy provides a framework for the development and implementation of policies, programs, resources, and practices at all school levels. Its purpose is to support and enhance the wellbeing of students and all members of the school community, fostering a climate of care within a Catholic educational context.

The School is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and academically rigorous environment. A strong emphasis is placed on nurturing and maintaining positive, respectful relationships among staff, students, and parents, with the wellbeing of all at the forefront.

Behaviour Management and Student Discipline Policy

The School's behaviour management and student discipline procedures align with the Catholic School's [Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Policy](#) and to the [Schools Behaviour Management Policy](#). These policies uphold the dignity and responsibility of each individual, promote positive student behaviour, and ensure respect for the rights of all students and staff. Corporal punishment is expressly prohibited at the School. The School does not permit or condone the use of corporal punishment by any School personnel or non-School individuals, including parents, as a means of discipline in the School. Further information about this and other related policies may be obtained from the School's website.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The School implements the Catholic Schools [Anti-Bullying Policy](#) which is adopted by all schools within the Diocese. This policy provides a framework for school communities to collaboratively prevent and address bullying, fostering respectful relationships and responding to individual needs with sensitivity and care. The Catholic Schools Leadership team monitors the implementation of this policy.

The full text of the Anti-Bullying Policy may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or on the Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle website.

Complaints Handling Policy

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) is implemented by the School and all schools in the diocese. This policy acknowledges that misunderstandings and differences of opinion may arise and provides a structured process for resolving such matters respectfully and constructively. By addressing concerns within a framework of dignity, respect and truth, the policy reflects the values of the Catholic faith and offers opportunities to model the love of Christ in contemporary contexts. The Catholic Schools Leadership team monitors the implementation of this policy in our schools.

The full text of the [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) may be accessed on the School's website, the administration office or on the Catholic Schools Maitland-Newcastle website.

Community Satisfaction

Consultation with parents, students and teachers is valued and sought. Their feedback contributes to the planning and the achievement of improved outcomes for students. This year, the School has used a variety of processes to gain information about the level of satisfaction with the School from parents, students and teachers. The school undertakes extensive surveying of all stakeholder groups every 2 years. This data is shared with the school community and contributes to the priorities for future planning.

Parent satisfaction

From the feedback obtained the school community feels that their children are safe and are supported at school. The report indicated that there is an improved sense of feeling welcome and inclusivity. Indicators of parent satisfaction is also evident by the attendance at events held at school. We had very high attendance rates for Welcome BBQ, Harmony Day, Holy Week liturgy, our Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations, Grandparents' Day, Christmas concert and our End of Year Whole School Mass and Awards ceremonies.

The Open Night in Term 1 for prospective families James' was a great success and at this community event we were able to showcase our school and extend an invite to new families.

Our school Parents and Friends association was well represented, and the monthly meetings were always productive and students/school focused. These members reported a keenness to help the school with purchasing resources and organising school events. It was a positive and smooth transition to a Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Group with a good representation of the school community at each meeting.

Student satisfaction

Students in the Year 6 Leadership team reported that the 2025 school year was productive, enjoyable, and filled with positive experiences. They noted significant growth in their confidence, particularly in running assemblies and speaking in front of an audience, and valued the opportunity to lead their school.

Across other grades, students completed surveys through online platforms to share their thoughts about their wellbeing and classroom learning. This feedback was later reviewed by staff to ensure that student voice continued to meaningfully shape teaching and learning.

Students were also offered a range of additional educational opportunities, including ICAS testing, chess teams, and Lego Masters and High potential and Gifted Education experiences among others. Play spaces were reviewed to support a variety of student needs,

and the Learning Support Area was made available to students to provide a calm environment for quiet play and activities during play time.

Students also expressed confidence that their peers, parents, and teachers would support them whenever needed.

Teacher satisfaction

St James' is blessed to have a highly motivated, dedicated, and professional staff whose stability strengthens the culture and success of our school. The consistently high level of pastoral care shown among staff members is to be admired and contributes greatly to the strong reputation our school holds within the Diocese.

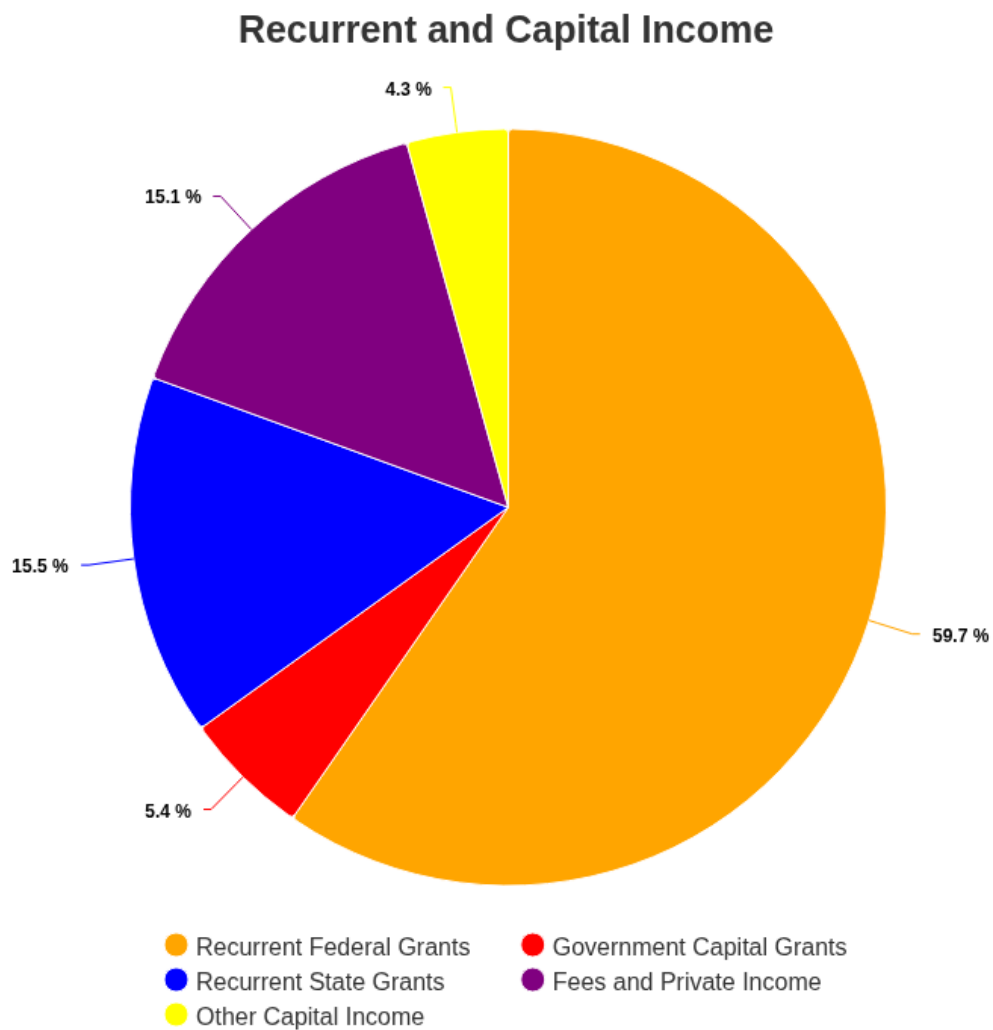
Our staff value the professional development opportunities offered to them and continually seek ways to enhance their teaching practice and pedagogy to improve student outcomes and wellbeing.

They work collaboratively as a team, supporting one another when challenges arise. St James' staff also value the partnership between home and school and recognise the important role that parents and carers play in the education of their children.

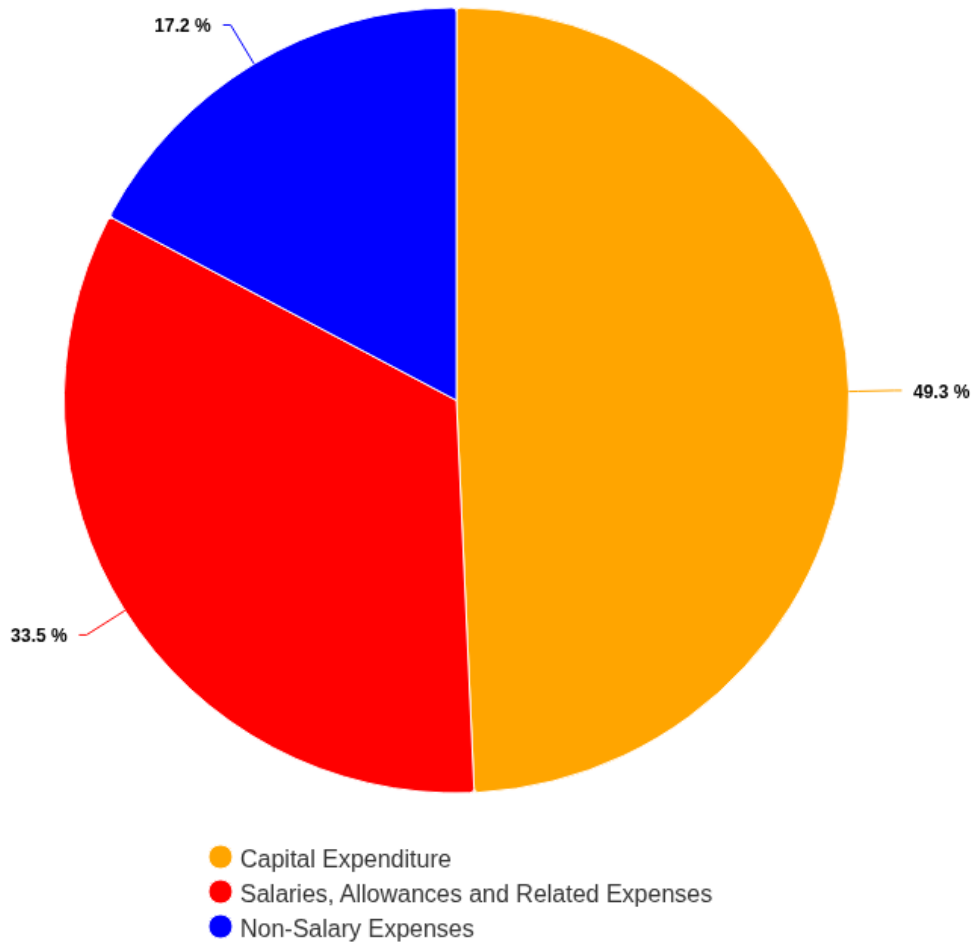
Financial Statement

This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for the 2025 year is detailed below:



Recurrent and Capital Expenditure



END OF 2025 REPORT