



**Catholic Schools**  
DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

# 2025

## ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

SERVICE | LEADERSHIP | JUSTICE

TOGETHER IN CHRIST



**St James' Primary School**  
MUSWELLBROOK

### St James Primary School

Skellatar Stock Route, MUSWELLBROOK 2333

Principal: Aaron Moon

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

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## About this report

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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

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### Principal's Message

2025 was a year of continued growth and renewed purpose for our school community.

We celebrated academic success with all students and proudly supported them on their individual learning journeys, while also maintaining strong involvement in a wide range of sporting activities. The completed Courtyard refurbishment continued to be a valued and well-used space, remaining a highlight for students, staff and families.

Throughout the year, we joyfully came together to celebrate Mother's Day, Father's Day, Holy Week, Easter, ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, the Feast of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, NAIDOC Week and Harmony Day.

2025 marked the first year of separating our Stage 3 excursions, providing age-appropriate experiences for students. Year 5 students attended the Great Aussie Bush Camp, while Year 6 students travelled to Canberra, both excursions offering rich learning opportunities and memorable experiences.

Our school continued to go from strength to strength as students and staff deepened their understanding and respect for the Traditional Custodians of this land. We remained steadfast in our commitment to Information Technology, ensuring students are well equipped for contemporary learning.

Our Mini.Vinnies group continued their wonderful work supporting those less fortunate, with our Year 6 leaders demonstrating service and leadership through their ongoing work at our local Vinnies.

In 2025, we were also proud to work collaboratively as a community to recreate our school's Vision and Mission, ensuring they truly reflect who we are and what we aspire to be. These will be formally released in 2026, marking an important milestone in our shared journey forward.

The continued confidence and trust shown by our parents and parish community remains a strong affirmation of the dedication, professionalism and care shown by the staff of this tremendous school.

### Parent Body Message

Throughout 2025, parents and families of St James' Muswellbrook continued to be actively engaged in the life of our school community. Families were welcomed to share in many significant events including the opening and closing Masses, school liturgies, Catholic

Schools Week Open Classrooms, Book Week celebrations, Cross Country and the Swimming and Athletics Carnivals.

This strong partnership between home and school remains central to building a sense of belonging and connection for our students and is one of the many blessings of being part of St James'.

2025 also marked the final year of our Parents and Friends Association, as we prepare to transition to a FACE (Family & Community Engagement) model. This new approach reflects our ongoing commitment to strengthening relationships, increasing engagement opportunities and working more collaboratively with families and the wider community to support student learning and wellbeing.

### **Student Body Message**

We hope that whoever next year's captains will be can have a great experience like ours. We wouldn't have been able to do all the things we've done for this school without our brilliant peers, Max and Kuan.

They have made our year so much easier and more enjoyable being alongside us these last four terms. Every assembly, podcast episode or special event has been an amazing time, especially alongside Mr Moon.

Most of the people here in year 6 will be going to St Joseph's next year but I will be moving to Newcastle at the end of the year. This is a new chapter for me, although I am extremely excited for this new opportunity, I will miss all my friends and the life I have here. It has been a huge part of me not only as the school captain but so much more. I am grateful for what my teachers Mrs Gehrig and Miss Somerville have done to help me these last two years of primary school.

I will miss all the wonderful teachers and kids at our school. The SJM community are always supporting each other. This school hasn't just taught me English or Maths, it has taught me life lessons that have made me able to do things I never thought I would be capable of doing. Both Caleb and I are the oldest siblings in our families, and we have learnt to be even more responsible as captains.

Year five and six are the greatest years of Primary school for everyone. We had the time of our lives at Great Aussie Bush Camp and Canberra. I guarantee that you will all make some of the best memories on these two excursions just like we did.

I know that my friends are going to make high school easier for me and so will the friends I make along the way. All I hope for is that I can have a teacher in high school almost half as brilliant as Miss Dafter. She knows how to be relatable and is always around to listen to whatever it is you want to talk about. On behalf of the school, I would like to congratulate her

since she will be getting married soon to the love of her life. We wish her an amazing partnership forever.

Well done to everyone receiving awards today and I hope this School can continue being as great as it is when we are gone. Thank you for giving us this opportunity and experience, we will miss you.

## School Features

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St James' School is a Catholic parish primary school within the Diocese of Maitland. Newcastle, located on the western edge of Muswellbrook on land traditionally cared for by the Wanaruah people. The school was first established in 1862 as a Catholic denominational school, serving a growing township.

Following the withdrawal of government funding in 1883, the Sisters of Mercy assumed responsibility for the school and continued to provide a strong Catholic education to the local community. As Muswellbrook expanded due to growth in the mining and power industries, increased enrolment demand led to the development of a larger school site. In 1983, one hundred years after the arrival of the Sisters of Mercy, the current primary school, comprising fourteen classrooms, a library and additional facilities, was officially opened.

The Sisters of Mercy served the school community until 1972, with the Sisters of St Joseph continuing this important ministry from 1973 to 1991. In that year, the school welcomed its first lay principal, marking a new chapter in its history.

Today, St James' School proudly honours its dual heritage and actively encourages students and families to live out the values and ideals of both charisms in their everyday lives.

## Student Profile

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### 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
155	190	26	345

\* 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 89.62%. 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
91.22	89.12	90.83	91.26	88.37	89.06	87.51

### 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/carer 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

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### 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	39
Number of full time teaching staff	17
Number of part time teaching staff	10
Number of non-teaching staff	12

### 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	4
Provisional Teachers	1
Proficient Teachers	23

## Catholic Identity and Mission

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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)

The Mission and Vision of St James' School reflect our shared role as a community of witnesses to the Catholic faith. We believe that the St James' community excels in education through living and learning in Christ. Inspired by the Gospel, we strive to nurture successful learners who are informed, compassionate and engaged global citizens.

During 2025, our school community worked collaboratively to review and re-envision our Mission and Vision. These renewed statements are currently in draft form and will be formally released in 2026, ensuring they continue to guide our Catholic identity, learning culture and future vision.

St James' School actively participates in the life of our parish and maintains strong connections with the Parish Sacramental Team. The parish-based Sacramental Program is delivered in partnership with the priest and the School Religious Education Coordinator, and is supported by the school's Religious Education curriculum. Ongoing communication between the parish team and classroom teachers ensures a cohesive and supportive approach for all students involved.

As part of the wider Diocesan community, St James' participates in significant Diocesan and regional events and initiatives. These include attendance at Diocesan celebrations and support of regional initiatives such as the Regional Teachers' Mass.

In addition, the school has implemented the Visible Wellbeing Program, supported by the Where There's a Will Foundation, further strengthening our commitment to student wellbeing and positive learning partnerships.

## Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

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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' Catholic Primary School is committed to promoting equity and excellence in learning.

We strive to achieve this by:

- Offering rich, challenging and engaging learning experiences that support every student to discover, develop and extend their individual gifts and talents.
- Providing equitable opportunities for all students to experience success through effective differentiation in teaching and learning.
- Fostering knowledge, understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, as well as global cultures and religions.
- Encouraging students to take ownership of their learning through goal setting, reflection and self-assessment.
- Explicitly teaching strong foundations in Literacy and Numeracy to support effective communication, collaboration and problem-solving.
- Applying best-practice pedagogy and resourcing learning environments that enable purposeful and creative use of technology.
- Supporting the development of personal values and attributes that build self-worth, resilience and positive, healthy lifestyles.
- Teaching and modelling Gospel values so that students develop respectful relationships and take responsibility for their actions

Our teaching and learning practices continue to be informed by the principles of the system's Leading Learning framework, with Dr Lyn Sharratt's work remaining a guiding influence in strengthening teacher practice, student engagement and learning growth across the school.

## Student Performance in Tests and Examinations

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### 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	42%	54%
	Reading	56%	66%
	Writing	73%	76%
	Spelling	58%	62%
	Numeracy	57%	64%
NAPLAN RESULTS 2025		Percentage of students in the top 2 proficiency standards	
		School	Australia
Year 5	Grammar and Punctuation	46%	63%
	Reading	58%	73%
	Writing	44%	65%
	Spelling	40%	69%
	Numeracy	58%	69%

## Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing

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### 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

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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

The 2024 Partners in Learning Parent Survey results for St James' Primary School Muswellbrook reflect a welcoming and supportive school community with strong foundations in communication, relationships and student wellbeing. Parents report feeling comfortable engaging with the school, with positive results for accessibility of staff, clear communication and a strong sense of being welcomed within the school environment.

Parents also indicate that they actively support their children's learning at home, particularly through encouragement, praise and regular conversations about school experiences. The school is seen to promote positive behaviour effectively, with clear expectations and a safe environment where most students feel secure both at school and travelling to and from school.

Teaching and learning are viewed positively overall, with parents acknowledging that teachers set appropriate expectations and support students to achieve their best. There is also evidence of strong community confidence in the school's inclusive practices and its commitment to fostering positive relationships and student wellbeing.

The data highlights opportunities to further strengthen communication around student progress and wellbeing.

Overall, the survey results indicate a positive partnership between school and home, with a strong platform to further enhance communication, engagement and student outcomes across the school community.

### Student satisfaction

The 2024 student survey results for St James' Primary School Muswellbrook reflect a positive and supportive learning environment, with strong foundations in student wellbeing, behaviour and participation. Students report high involvement in school sports, exceeding system norms, and demonstrate positive behaviour and strong effort in their learning. Relationships

are also a strength, with most students indicating they have trusted friends and experience a supportive peer environment.

Teaching practices showed solid results in areas such as effective learning time, rigour and teacher-student relationships, indicating that classrooms are structured and supportive of student learning. Students also demonstrate a strong understanding of others' cultures, reflecting an inclusive school community.

The data highlights opportunities to further enhance student engagement and wellbeing. While students value schooling, levels of motivation and positive homework behaviours are lower than expected, suggesting scope to strengthen engagement strategies.

Overall, the survey results demonstrate a caring and respectful school culture with strong participation and relationships. With a continued focus on student engagement, wellbeing and safety, the school is well positioned to further strengthen student outcomes and support all learners to thrive.

### **Teacher satisfaction**

The 2024 Focus on Learning Teacher Survey results for St James' Primary School Muswellbrook indicate a highly positive and collaborative professional culture, with strong performance across most drivers of student learning. Staff report particularly strong outcomes in leadership, collaboration and inclusive practices, all exceeding regional norms, reflecting a cohesive and supportive school environment. Teachers feel well supported by leaders, especially in monitoring student progress, improving teaching practice and maintaining a safe and orderly school.

A key strength is the school's inclusive approach, with very high scores indicating that teachers effectively support diverse learners and create opportunities for success for all students. Teaching strategies and the use of data to inform practice are also strong, demonstrating that staff use assessment effectively to tailor instruction and set meaningful learning goals. Collaboration is another highlight, with teachers regularly sharing strategies, discussing student progress and working collectively to enhance student engagement.

The data also suggests opportunities for further growth, particularly in the use of technology to enhance learning and in strengthening feedback practices, especially written feedback. While already strong, continued refinement in these areas will further enhance student outcomes.

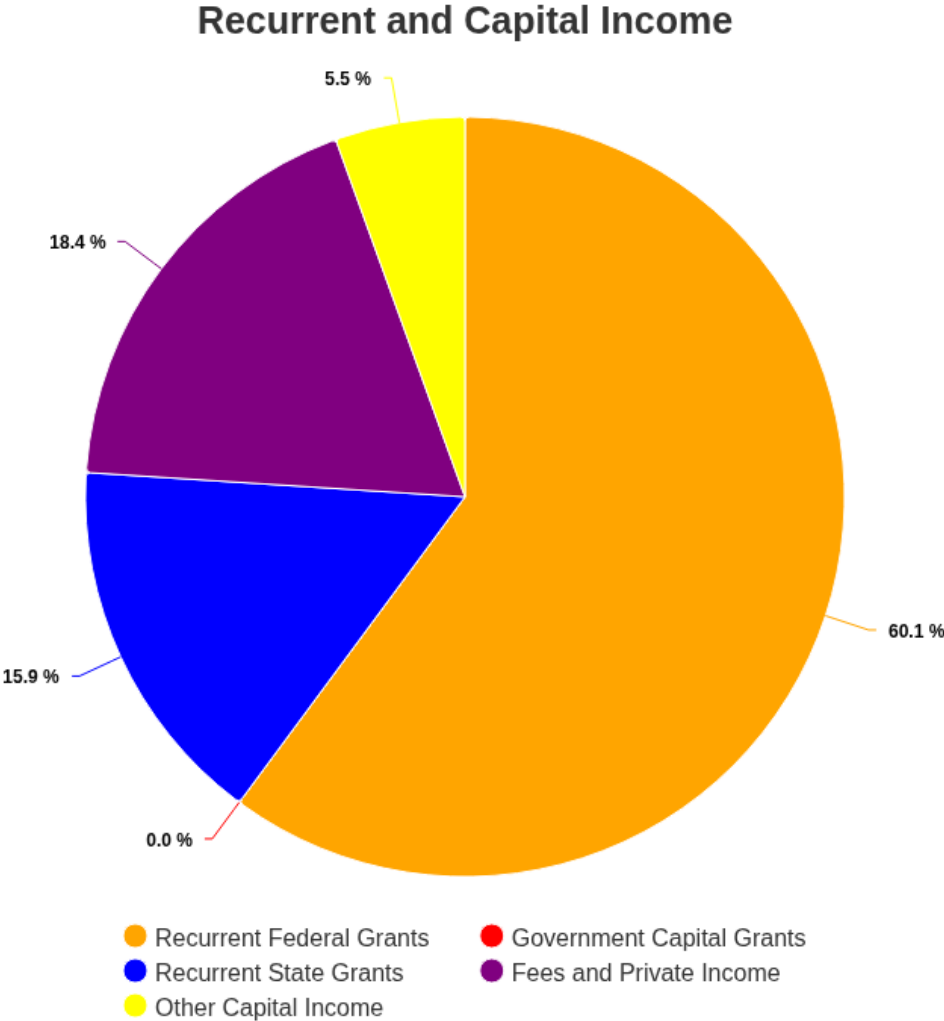
Overall, the results reflect a high-performing, reflective and collaborative teaching culture, well positioned to continue improving student learning and wellbeing outcomes.

# Financial Statement

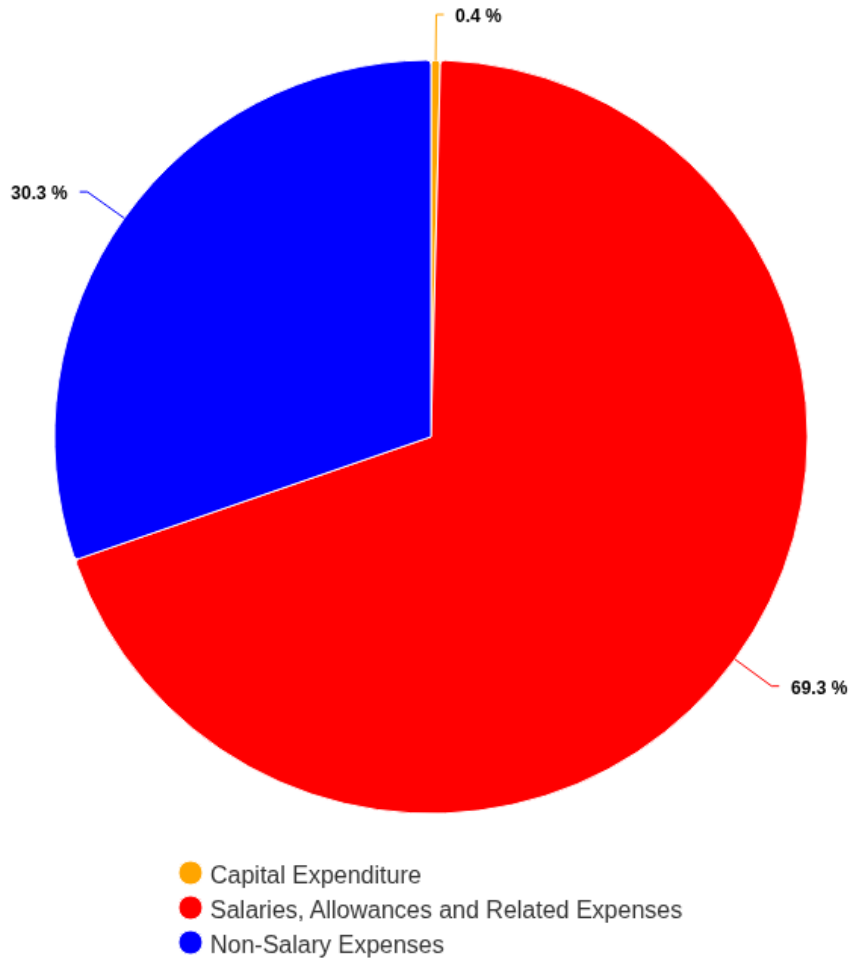
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This School Financial Information is based on the detailed information provided to the Commonwealth Government in the Commonwealth Financial Questionnaire.

School Financial Information for the 2025 year is detailed below:



## Recurrent and Capital Expenditure



END OF 2025 REPORT