



25th June 2012

SOUTHERN MONTESSORI SCHOOL NEWSLETTER Special Edition: School Performance Information Report for 2011

As part of our funding agreement with the Australian Government, we are required to ensure that specific "School Performance Information" is made publicly available to the school community. This information has been provided to the school community in other forms such as newsletters, the School Handbook and the Annual Report throughout the year. What follows is a collated version of this information under the headings specified by the Australian Government. The information relates to the 2011 school year. If you have any questions regarding this information please direct them to Julie Flack.

1. Contextual Information

At Southern Montessori School, we aim to know your children well and to nurture a love of learning that will last a lifetime. Our strengths include our dedicated staff, a wonderful Board of Management and a genuine sense of community amongst our member families. We are an independent, non-religious, low fee-paying organisation offering programs from Toddlers (20 months) and Preschool through to Year 7. Class sizes are kept deliberately small. Our curriculum strengths include numeracy, literacy and environmental education. As the School grows, so does our range of extra-curricular activities offered to students in the areas of the arts, sport and recreation, including a free Active After School Program twice a week. Southern Montessori strives to provide a challenging educational program that has Montessori principles at its core, is based on sound educational theory and practice delivered through small, multi-aged cycles, fosters the development of independence, self-discipline and a lifelong love of learning and promotes a culture of mutual respect, tolerance and encouragement to advance the diverse talents of each student. The School is affiliated with the Montessori Australia Foundation, the Montessori World Educational Institute and is a member of the AISSA.

2011 finished with a student base of 131 including 40 in our Reception Class. 10 students were from a non-English background, 2 from an indigenous background and 3 students had a disability.

The following information provides an example of activities undertaken during 2011 that added value to the educational experience at Southern Montessori School.

Curriculum Related Activities

Individualised Learning Programmes ICAS Competitions - Maths, English NAPLAN Testing Specialist PE and Sport Individual Music Tuition Student Run Assemblies 'Living Eggs' Green Day Italian Performance - 'Time Warp'	Premier's Reading Challenge Literacy & Numeracy Week Book Week Musical - 'Totally Amazing' Financial Literacy for Children Family Life Education Van Buddy Club Program Student Leadership Forum Delta Dog Safe
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Excursions

In 2011 students at various year levels went on a range of excursions and there were a number of incursions including:

SA Museum- Alison's Class Excursion to Bunnings-Tammy's Class Da Vinci Exhibition-Tammy's Class Environmental Youth Forum-Tammy's Class Italian excursion-'Carnevale' Botanic Gardens & Zoo-Heather & Karen's Classes Migration Museum-Judy & Maria's Class Concordia College Musical-'Wizard of Oz' Years 1-7 Local IGA Store-Judy & Maria'	Camp to Woodside - Years 3 & 4 Camp to Woodside Years 5, 6, 7 ASO Concert - 'Brass Zoo' Swimming Lessons - Cycles 1 & 2 Aquatics - Cycle 3 Labtronics Excursion - Tammy's Class Robotics Camp at the Royal Show SACOME Talk - Cycle 3 Visit from SA Police Visit from SA Fire Services
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Co-curricular Activities

Southern Montessori School offers a range of co-curricular activities including:

Netball, Cricket, Softball & Soccer Competitions Tennis, Netball, Cricket and Soccer Coaching Pancake Day KESAB Clean Up Australia Day Casual Days (to support our World Vision child) Harmony Games - Years 1-7-whole school fitness Primary School Sports Day	Leader's Program Remembrance Day Assembly City to Bay Fun Run Weetbix Triathlon Biggest Afternoon Tea Chess Club Combined Reception & Preschool Sports Day Active After School Sports
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Parent Involvement and Education

Parent Orientation Evenings School Bulletins & Notice Boards Information Nights for Parents Student Orientation visits Pre-school to school transitions Safe Food Handling Courses School Forums Parent help with 'Fruity Fridays' and Soup & Pasta Fridays	Montessori Information Booklets Communication Books Student Diaries Parent/Teacher Interviews Working Bee mornings Celebratory Assemblies Parent Volunteers to support Students Food Safety Workshop Parent Information Evening-Reading
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2. Teacher Standards and Qualifications

A list of teachers and their academic qualifications is available in the **Parent Handbook** and is published annually in the **Annual Report**.

In addition to these formal qualifications, all staff undergo training in Child Safe Environment (Mandatory Notification) and First Aid, and hold the necessary qualifications for Teacher Registration in South Australia. All teachers undertake a number of PD courses during the year.

3. Workforce Composition

Employed in our School for 2011 was the Principal, the equivalent of 7 Teachers, the equivalent of 1.8 Classroom Assistants, the Business Manager and the Administrator. This included 2 males and 15 females, none of whom were of indigenous extraction.

4. Student Attendance

The percentage figure for the average student attendance rate shows the proportion of days that each student, on average, attended school over the whole year. The larger the percentage, the less the number of days students are absent from school. In part, these figures reflect overseas and interstate travel by a number of our parents.

In 2011 the average student attendance rate was 93%.

Reception year attendance was 92%

Year 1 attendance was 92.5%

Year 2 attendance was 93.8%

Year 3 attendance was 91.8%

Year 4 attendance was 92.4%

Year 5 attendance was 91.8%

Year 6 attendance was 93.3%

Year 7 attendance was 93.1%

Student absences are recorded for each class each day and for any unknown absences, the parents are phoned that morning to confirm that the parents are aware that their child is not at school.

5. Student Outcomes

Each year, all students in Years 3, 5 and 7 are required to sit Australia wide NAPLAN tests in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation and numeracy to establish the proportion of students achieving national benchmarks. Data for 19 x Yr3, 13 x Yr 5 and 4 x Yr 7 students for 2011 are shown in the table below:

Percentage of Students at or above the National Minimum Standard

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011
Yr 3	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yr 5	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yr 7	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

6. Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Parent Satisfaction

Feedback from parents occurs through a number of sources, some formal and some informal. It includes responses to surveys, contributions to focus groups, comments through the School Board and various co-curricular parent support groups, and specific feedback to teachers and the Principal.

Such feedback is always welcome. The overwhelming message in this feedback is positive, supportive and appreciative. It manifests itself in the fact that 'word of mouth' accolades from our parents and our new website resulted in increased interest in our Centre for the 2011 year, as little or no advertising was done.

Of course, concerns are also expressed and this provides the school with the opportunity to enquire further and to address needs as they arise.

During 2011 very positive parent feedback was received about:

- Information sessions for parents
- Communications about success and achievements of students and staff, and the recognition given to individual contributions
- Support and direction given by the Board of Management to the vision for progressing to a Middle School with steps being taken to implement this in the near future
- The increasing interest in the Montessori methodology offered by the school
- The positive perception about the quality of students from the school
- The school as a desirable place to work
- Professionalism of staff
- Literacy/Numeracy programs
- Children's involvement in co-curricular activities e.g. sport, music, Lego League
- More access to IT for the students
- Community spirit/welcoming feel
- Overall teaching standards
- Student/teacher relationships
- Disciplinary standards & consistency
- Growing school/class sizes remain consistently below 24 students
- Tremendous support of the P&F with family and community events

Areas that have been identified for closer attention through parent feedback include:

- Interest in continuation to a Montessori Middle/High School as soon as possible
- More playground equipment and facilities
- The combination of a growing school (more classes) and several teachers away on maternity leave, meant an increase of new teachers with less Montessori experience

Student Satisfaction

Indicators of student satisfaction are derived from feedback from parents, issues that from time to time emerge through counselling processes, teacher observations and direct concerns from students.

The key areas of student satisfaction that emerged in 2011 included:

- Peer support - the senior students working together with the younger classes.
- The self-selection of the work which they do.
- More self-assessments
- Children's Representative Council
- Focus on the care of the individual – children learning to care for each other, to be independent and the challenge of being responsible for oneself
- Staff/Student relations (community service is encouraged, plenty of leadership opportunities, staff treat students with respect)
- The collection of donations of school and personal items for our World Vision child Afsana to be given to her personally by a school family
- Social Development (pleasant and helpful office staff, teachers have a positive attitude, school helps build self esteem, strong moral values are important, help with time management and organisational skills is given)
- Home/School Relations (communication between home and school is frequent and the relationships between teachers and parents are supportive)
- Student perceptions of their experience at school (strong friendships, known and appreciated by staff, feel part of a close and caring school community, intellectually stimulated at school, learning is fun)
- School camps and outdoor education experiences
- Gardens established for growing food
- Establishment of a chicken coop with the chickens from 'Living Eggs'

Some areas for concern or improvement which emerged in the student feedback related to:

- Providing more music opportunities
- Provision of more yard bins
- Perhaps more homework for the older children
- More playground equipment

Teacher Satisfaction

Teacher satisfaction is gauged from matters raised directly by individuals, discussions at various staff meetings, and items addressed by the Consultative Committee.

During 2011, Teacher satisfaction appeared very strong in regard to:

- evidence of school performance being collected and explained to parents, students and staff
- school consideration and implementation of new opportunities to develop areas of strength
- the acquisition of more student computers
- the level of interest in the school
- support for professional development both Montessori and general

- The implementation of an IT server with the PC School system gave much more access to classroom and financial detail for teachers
- Control of budget areas and accessibility of financial data became more transparent

School specific items which caused frustration or concern included:

- Parking for staff was an issue with the gates to the car park needing to be closed due to parents dropping off children inside the school grounds
- The number of car park spaces is at a premium

More broadly, concerns are sometimes expressed about the changing expectations of the teaching profession and the Principal. These relate to workload and extra-curricula expectations. Even so, overall satisfaction of teachers and other staff at Southern Montessori School appears very strong with nearly all Staff retained this year and the addition of extra assistance in the classrooms.

7. School Funding broken down by Funding Source

Along with the normal income for the School as in the Re-current Grants and Fees Income, there was also a Capital Grant bonus of interest accrued received from the Commonwealth Government through the 'Building the Education Revolution' and a Special Education Grant. The following is a summary of income to the School for the 2011 year.

Commonwealth BER Capital Grant Interest:	\$28,000
Commonwealth Special Education Grant:	\$6,595
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants:	\$749,324
State Government Recurrent Grants:	\$205, 676
School Fees & Related Income:	\$370 031

The total amount from Commonwealth Capital Grants (\$34,595) was spent on a concertina dividing wall in the Cycle 3 rooms, the purchase of a new septic pump for our waste system and a new verandah erected between the new Cycle 3 rooms and the original school. The monies from Commonwealth and State Recurrent Grants and School Income accounted for all other general expenditure incurred with the running of Southern Montessori School.