



Annual Report 2008

Section 1: Report from the School Board

This report reviews the most significant issues and achievements of the school over the last twelve months.

During 2008, the Board worked on continuing both strategic and process oriented tasks from last year. Our main priority was to continue the implementation of the School's Strategic Plan 2007 – 2009. The Strategic Plan outlines our shared purpose and values and provides the school community with a clear understanding of what we, as an association, are trying to achieve. In addition, the Board spent a good deal of time:

- Investigating policies and procedures to aid families having financial difficulties, with an eye to helping families onto payment plans which would suit their needs as well as ensure adequate cash flow for the school;
- Investigating issues of school structure in light of staffing issues and enrolment projections, including discussions of the optimal number of classrooms at various levels;
- Examining expansion opportunities, including a detailed discussion of starting a new school in the Googong township development project;
- A new public face for the school, including new school logo and expanded web-site.

The other primary focus of the Board's activity in 2008 was the recruitment and hiring of a new Principal. This process included a number of inputs from key stakeholders, including the community and the teaching staff, and candidates were not only interviewed by a selection panel but were asked to make presentations to the staff. The process revealed a number of excellent candidates, and the Board was extremely pleased to have Ms Tina Forsyth accept the role of CMS Principal from the start of 2009.

1 Capital Development Funding

One of our three applications under the Australian Government's *Investing in Our Schools Programme* (IOSP) was successful and a grant of \$15,000 was approved. Plans to construct a fitness track in the Cycle 2/3 playground in line with our Learnscapes plan have been underway throughout the year with construction commencing in 2009.

2 Other Grants

A Grant of \$13,314.15 was received under the DEST *Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs* (LNSLN) programme which aims to improve the literacy, numeracy and other learning outcomes of students and is available to all schools. We also received \$1314.78 from the DEST *School Languages Programme* to support our Korean activities and the Korean Education Centre in Sydney donated \$500 in recognition of our outstanding Korean Language Programmes. There has also been a donation from Telstra for a sandpit at the cost of \$1,200.

4 Building Fund Contributions

The Board greatly appreciates the contributions of all those families who donated to the fund in 2008. These contributions are significant in meeting our ongoing loan obligations. For 2009 the Board has maintained the (suggested) tax deductible donation for the Building Fund at \$200 per term per family.

4 School Fees and Bursaries

As always, the Board attempted to keep increases to a minimum for 2008, consistent with maintaining financial stability and the offering of the fullest possible educational experience for the children.

Salaries and employment costs form over 70% of the School's expenses and are the biggest influence on the budget. This year saw a new comprehensive employment agreement put in place, which included appropriate salary scales with built in incentives for staff maintenance and continuing development of skills and qualifications. In keeping with the School's continuing agreement with teaching staff, the agreed salary scales incorporate appropriate wage increases, as part of the process to bring our teachers' remuneration into line with that of their peers. Additionally, normal increases in general expenses were typically more than the CPI. To meet its costs, the School depends on fees for over half its income, and on Government recurrent funding for most of the remainder. Supplementation (indexation) of Australian Government funding in 2008 was 5.6%, while Territory funding was increased by CPI. In these circumstances, school fees unavoidably continue to bear the brunt of rising cost impacts.

Since 2004 a Bursary Scheme has been operating to provide partial fee relief to (up to two) families who meet the qualifying criteria and who have demonstrated their commitment to Montessori education. The Board aims to expand this support in the coming years and is committed to investigating ways to further develop schemes to bolster the school and Montessori philosophy by making available a range of options for the best interests of families, students and the school as a whole.

5 Staffing and Administration

During 2008, we saw a few changes in staff at the School. Most significantly the resignation of Christine Harrison, our Principal, at the end of the year. The Board have greatly appreciated Christine's guidance and professional management of Canberra Montessori School. We also saw the changes in staff with Glen Watson moving interstate after many dedicated years to Canberra Montessori School as the Cycle 3 Director and Michael Layden, our Business Manager, moving to Sydney to take up a role in an independent school, both at the end of the year.

The Board would like to highlight the immense contributions of all staff and, particularly in light of the highly positive feedback from staff members and the Society at large, the Board would like to acknowledge Christine's efforts and commitment to maintaining a happy and effective team of staff who support the values and objectives of the CMS.

6 Fundraising and Social Events

The Board acknowledges the excellent work undertaken by the Fundraising and Social Events committee during 2008, running several very successful social events and raising over \$58,500 (\$24,600 from Spring Fair). The Annual Spring Fair continues to be a highlight of the school year, with many local residents now having commented on how much they look forward to the event. As well as raising funds this is a great way to involve the wider community and build community spirit.

7 Effective Governance

Effective governance is vital to the CMS and continues to be a priority for the Board. The CMS has an elected Board that sets strategic directions, and a chief executive, the Principal, responsible for implementing policy and running day to day operations. For this model to operate effectively, it requires active participation by Board members and regular and effective communication between the Board and the Principal. It also requires community wide participation by members, particularly those with financial and management skills, to volunteer their time to serve on the Board.

A few of the current Board members have served on the board or been associated with the school for a number of years, and their knowledge and experience has been invaluable to the smooth running of the Board this year.

Section 2: Principal's Report

During 2008 the Canberra Montessori School continued to offer a high quality Montessori educational programme to families with children from 18 month olds in the Parent/Toddler Program to the students in Cycle 3.

The support, hard work and enthusiasm of the Montessori community – board, staff, parents and students – continues to give the school an excellent reputation in the broader education community and Montessori schools in Australia.

We held another very successful Grandparents and Extended Family breakfast in Term 1 and a Healthy Bones Breakfast in Term 3 as well as the now famous CMS Discos which were held at the school every term. We have been participating in the Australian Schools Sustainability Initiative and received accreditation for our waste wise activities. Working Bees were held every term and were very well supported. Once again, the annual Narooma Family Weekend was a great success and it was wonderful to see everyone enjoying themselves.

Cycle 3 students attended the annual camp, Science Festival and Big Splash and other excursions during the year for other Cycles included trips to a Musica Viva concert, "The Circus", "The Arrival", "Magic Words", "The Power of One", ACT Legislative Assembly, Kids Symphony, Mirinjani and many more. A highlight was student participation in the Pacific School Games.

The staff continued to work on the implementation of Every Chance to Learn as a precursor to the National Curriculum coming into effect over the next few years. The majority of staff attended the Annual Montessori Conference in Sydney in June and other

professional development opportunities offered by the Montessori Australia Foundation, the Association of Independent Schools ACT and in-school events.

An additional Cycle 3 class began in a new demountable classroom in 2008 in line with projected growth. The school continues to have a very healthy waiting list for both the Parent/Toddler Program and the school and with the government's focus on Building the Education Revolution the school is well placed to participate in this exciting initiative.

Tina Forsyth
Principal

Section 3: Student Performance in National Tests

The following information about student performance is based on the student's results in the 2008 National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

In 2008 11 students in equivalent Year 3 and 10 students in equivalent Year 5 undertook the compulsory NAPLAN testing.

Percentage of Year 3 Students in Bands

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
Band 6	55%	0	9%	36%	36%
Band 5	27%	45%	18%	36%	36%
Band 4	18%	36%	27%	9%	0
Band 3	0	9%	18%	18%	27%
Band 2	0	9%	27%	0	0
Band 1	0	0	0	0	0

Percentage of Year 5 Students in Bands

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar & Punctuation	Numeracy
Band 8	70%	10%	0	50%	30%
Band 7	10%	0	20%	20%	30%
Band 6	20%	40%	10%	20%	30%
Band 5	0	40%	50%	10%	10%
Band 4	0	0	10%	0	0
Band 3	0	10%	10%	0	0

In Year 3 all students achieved at or above the National Minimum Standard in Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation and Numeracy.

In Year 5 all students achieved at or above the National Minimum Standard in Reading, Grammar & Punctuation and Numeracy. In Writing and Spelling 90% of students achieved at or above the National Minimum Standard.

Student performance is particularly strong in Reading, Grammar & Punctuation and Numeracy. Spelling and Writing was shown to be an area for future focus for a small minority of students in 2009.

It should be noted that these results are a guide only to student proficiency in the areas assessed. Other factors, however, may have influenced students' capacity to perform to the best of their ability on the days that NAPLAN was administered.

Section 4: Professional Learning, Teaching Standards, Attendance and Retention Rates

Teaching standards

Category	Number of Teachers
Teachers who have a recognised teaching qualification from a higher education institution Australian tertiary institution or equivalent as identified in the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) guidelines.	9
Teachers who do not meet qualification standards but were employed as teachers prior to 1 January 2005 in an ACT Government School	3

Professional Learning

All the teaching staff participated in professional development during 4 pupil free days in 2008. In addition the following professional development activities were undertaken by staff during 2008:

Description of Professional Learning Activity	Number of Staff participating
THRASS Certification Course	3
Montessori Whole School Referresher & Conference	10
Goal Setting	22
Total Reading (Cheryl Ferreira)	14
Curriculum Renewal	2
AMI 6-12 Course in India	1
New Zealand Montessori Conference	1
National Gallery	4
Music Workshop at Canberra Grammar School	1
Sustainable Schools Workshop	1
Sue Larkey Autism Workshop	1

The average expenditure per teacher on professional learning in 2008 was \$2,302.00

Attendance and retention rate

In 2008 the average daily teaching staff attendance* rate was 95%. The proportion of teaching staff retained from 2008 was 100% with one staff member leaving due to ill health mid-year.

*For the purposes of this reporting area non-attendance of a teaching staff member is limited to periods of sick leave, family and community service, LWOP, special and Accident/Workers Compensation of less than 5 days. Non-attendance does not include

approved attendance at a professional learning event or approved leave such as long service leave, maternity leave or annual leave.

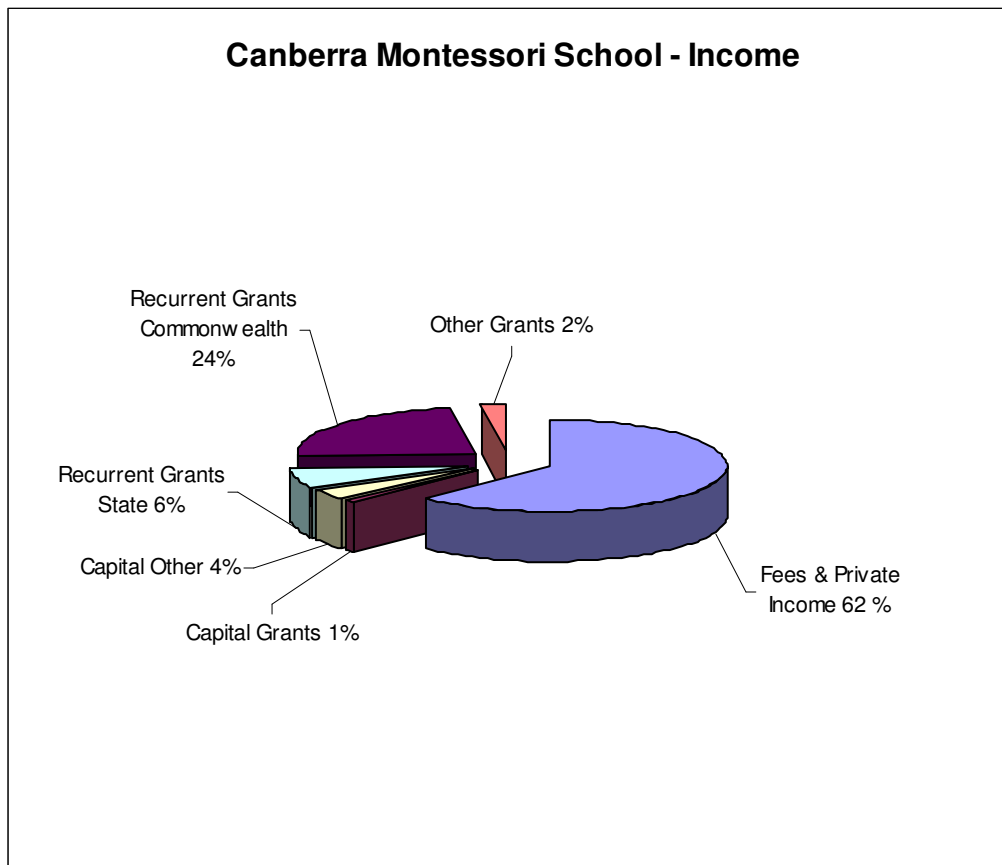
Section 5: Parent and Teacher Satisfaction

The school is very proud of its open door policy with parent involvement welcomed and encouraged. The Board is made up of existing parents and one former parent and there are opportunities through the Board Chairperson for parents to express their level of satisfaction. There is an extremely active Fundraising & Social Events Committee.

Informal feedback from teachers and discussions with Educational Coordinators indicates during 2008 staff were generally very satisfied in all areas of our school, particularly in terms of relationships, staff morale, school operations/work roles and work value/recognition.

A parent survey conducted in July indicated that parent satisfaction is extremely positive with a very high level of positive agreement regarding questions about satisfaction levels with child's progress, information about child's progress, the level of parent education provided, knowledge of school programmes and sense of community. The survey highlighted the need for the Board to disseminate more information about the strategic direction of the school and for the community to work on improvement of the school's external environment.

Section 6: Financial Information



Canberra Montessori School - Expenses

