

Newcastle Waldorf School Annual Report 2016



Available online at www.newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au or by contacting the School administration

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Messages from key school bodies

Message from the School Board

During 2016, the Newcastle Waldorf School Board commenced preparation of a specific long-term strategy to ensure the school continues to remain sustainable into the future. The Board's governance processes and documentation were inspected by the Board of Studies and Teaching Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) and were found to be fit for purpose; although the Board will continue to identify and implement improvements to these processes as appropriate. Work also commenced on development of a new enterprise agreement for staff. The School continues to maintain a sound financial position, despite rising costs, and continued to improve its capability with regards to long-term financial planning and modelling.

The Board acknowledges the contributions of the many parents who supported the School through a range of activities throughout the year. These efforts help created the wonderful atmosphere of the School that is enjoyed by everyone. The Board will continue to work with the parent body to facilitate their involvement in line with the long-term strategic direction of the School.

Message from the Co-Principals

The Co-Principals would like to thank the College of Teachers for their interest and hard work over the year as we continue to navigate the rapidly changing educational environment. Our work continues to be challenging and rewarding.

The Co-Principals would also like to acknowledge the Awabakal People, the traditional custodians of the land and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and future.

The School Context

The Newcastle Waldorf School values a culture that allows children to fulfil their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual potential in a way that will enhance them individually and as members of the community and society in which they choose to live as adults. The teachers of the School focus on this pursuit by nurturing the children according to the indications of Rudolf Steiner, so that all aspects of their development proceed in accordance with what is beautiful, good and true. The features of the School which aid in this pursuit are its beautiful grounds and buildings, which have been conceived, designed and in many cases actualised by the efforts of teachers, parents and former students of the School. The School's curriculum allows students to achieve a well-balanced and cultural education. For all students, this includes experience in the fields of music, visual and dramatic arts, handwork, design, gardening and cooking, as well as rigorous academic exercise. This wide curriculum allows for a range of future career choices.

Characteristics of the student body

Characteristics of the student body can be viewed on the “My School” website under the school name “Newcastle Waldorf School”, or found in more detail later in this report.

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

Student performance in state-wide examinations

NAPLAN

NAPLAN data is reported on My School website (<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>)

The school offers NAPLAN tests to all students in years 3, 5, 7 & 9. In 2016 most parents of the School elected to withdraw their children from NAPLAN testing for philosophical reasons. The My School website reports student data as “Student population below reporting threshold” when numbers of participants are low.

Record of School Achievement

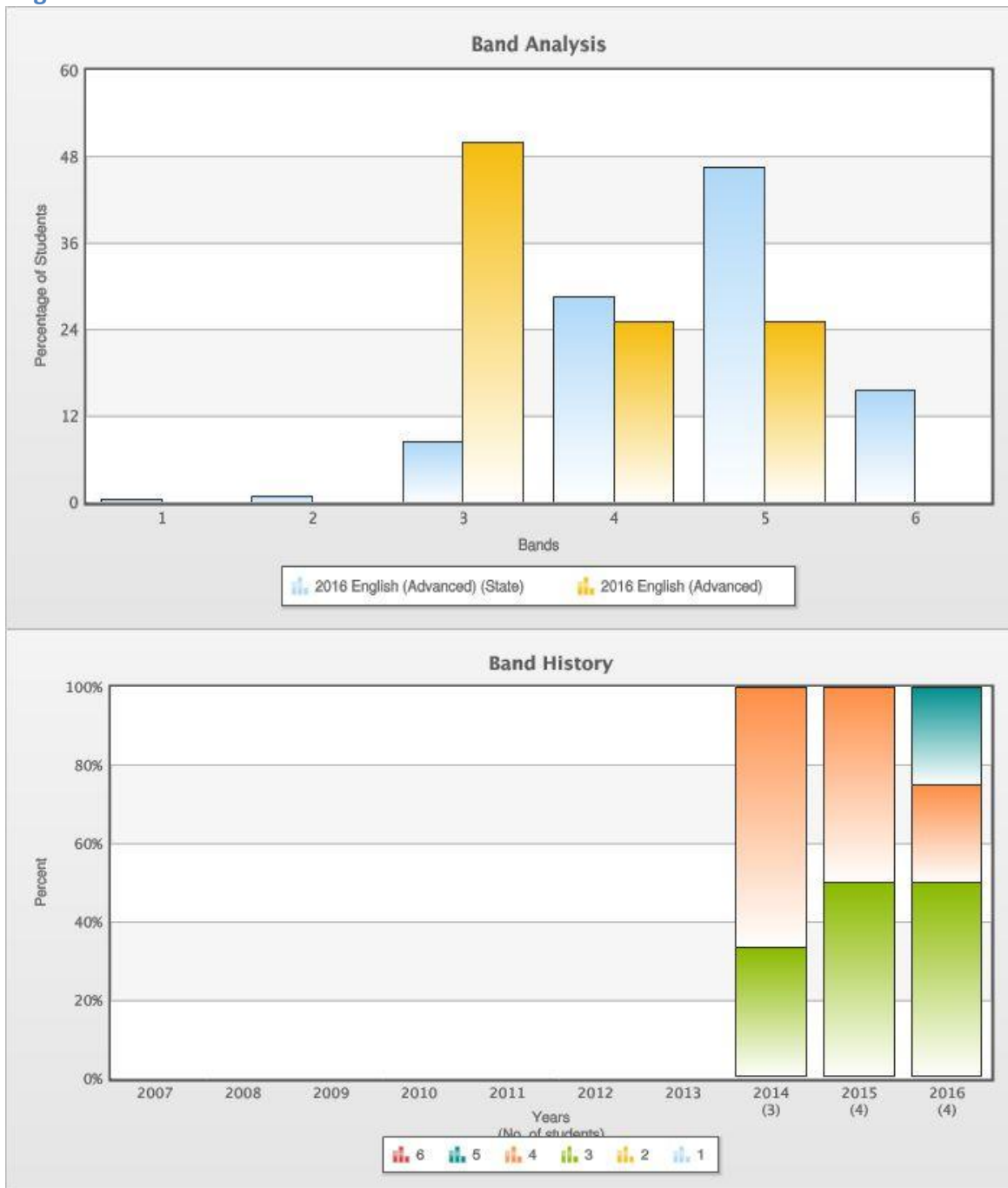
In 2016, 3 students left and were eligible for a ROSA.

Senior Secondary Results

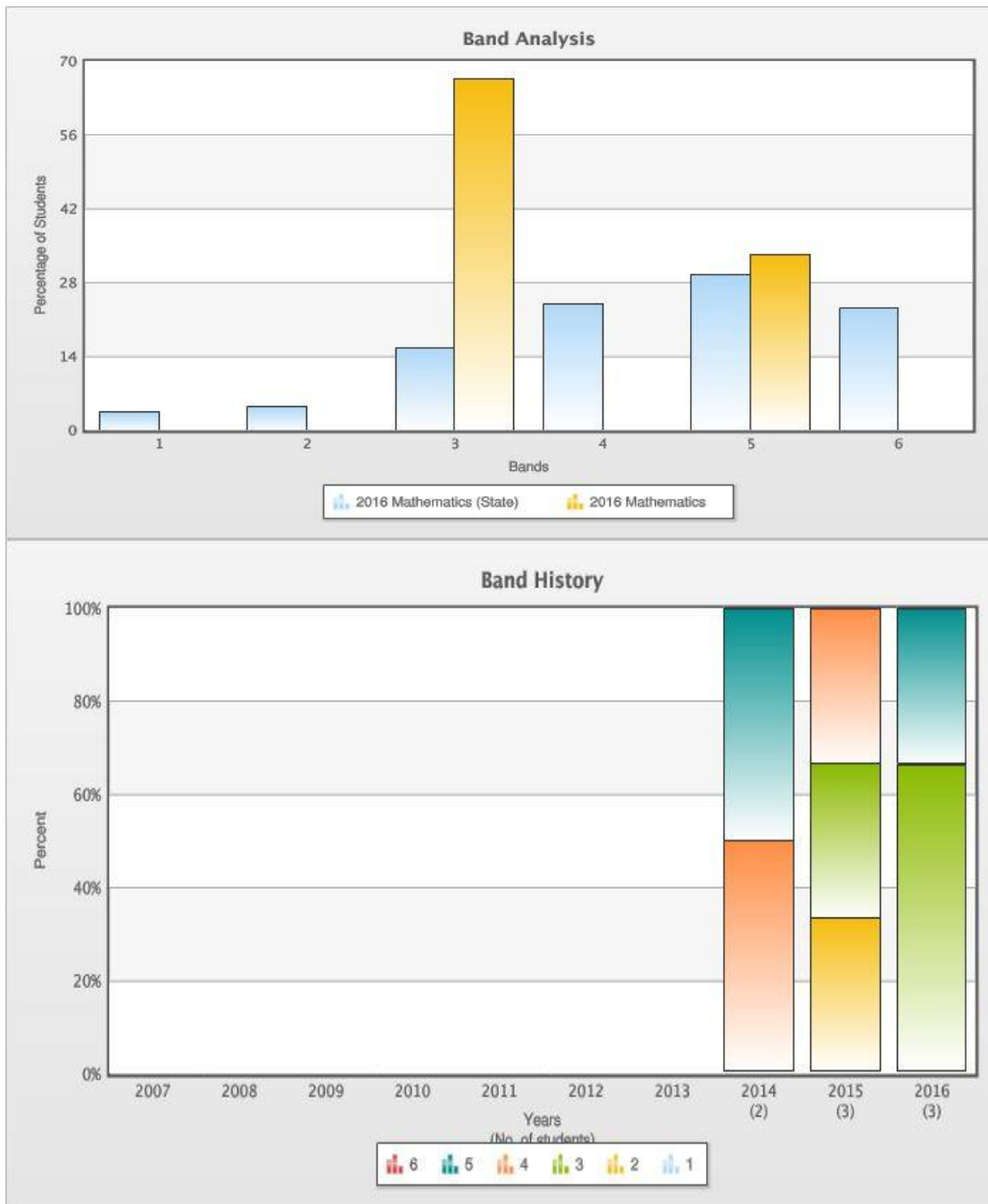
The following HSC results are displayed in two graphs for each subject

1. in Comparison to State (Band Analysis)
2. and over time (Band History).

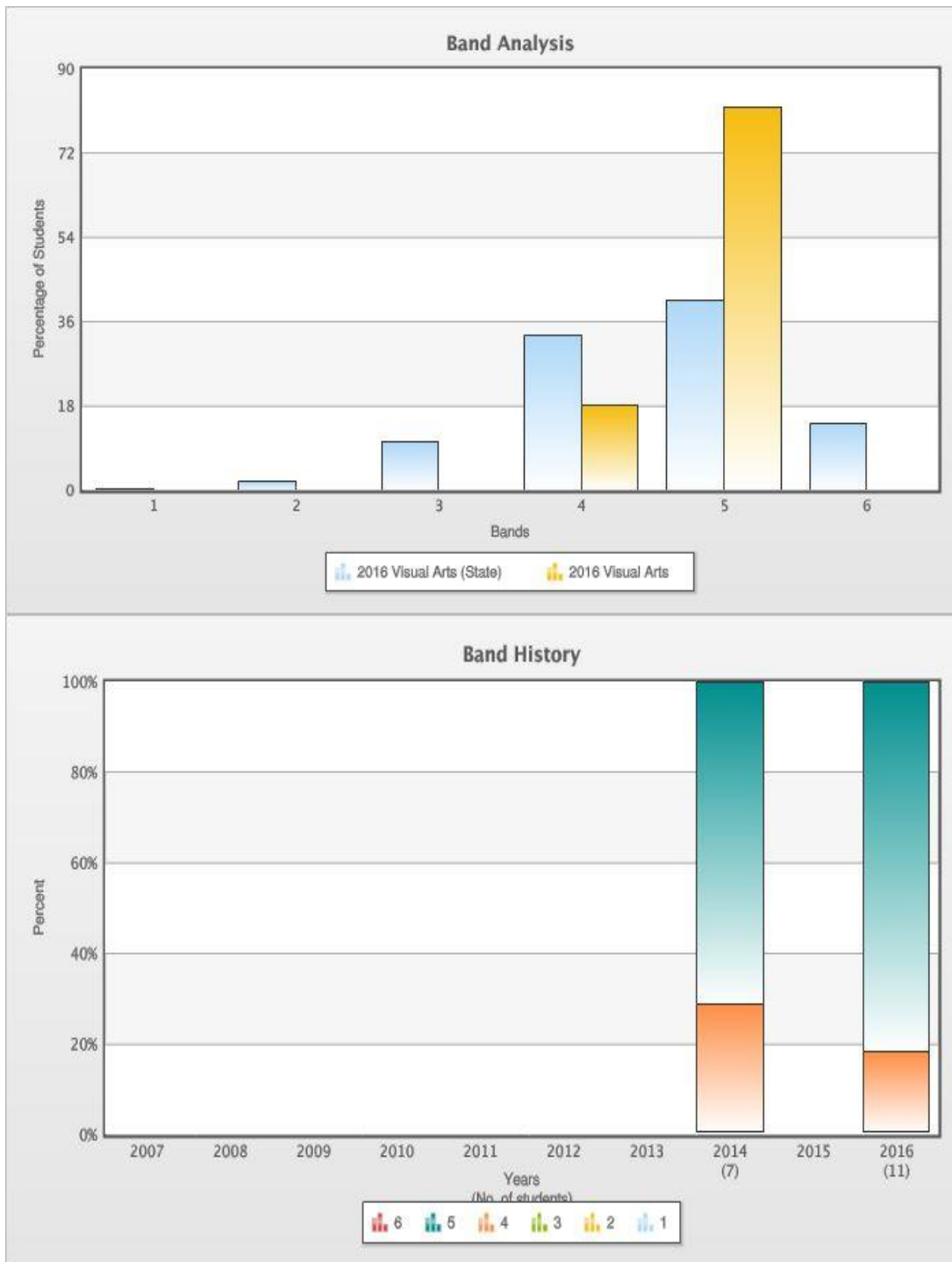
English Advanced



Mathematics



Visual Arts



Other Subjects

- Students in Biology, Music and Construction Studies achieved results in Band 5 or above. There were too few students to report graphically.
- Students in Extension 1 and Extension 2 English achieved results in Band 3 or above. There were too few students to report graphically.

Comments

- Visual Arts only runs every second year as a compressed course
- English results continue to be below the state average in Advanced English. This is the only English course offered by the School, so the results are in comparison to a significantly smaller percentage of the state.
- The school chooses the higher-level courses because the quality of the content is a stronger fit with the ethos of the school and the school doesn't have the resources or student numbers to offer both courses.
- The School's results (the averages) are heavily influenced by the nature of the particular cohort because the classes have been so small (3 or 4 students). This means that if a tight-knit group of students in a cohort are not "interested in academic results" The results are expected to be low in comparison to the state.

Vocational or Trade Training

In 2016, 9% of Year 12 students undertook vocational or trade training as part of their HSC course, and no year 11 students included trade training as part of their pathway.

In 2016, 66% of a small cohort of students who started the year went on to attain their HSC.

Professional learning, teaching standards and workforce composition

Professional learning

This list is not exhaustive, but comprises the main PD activities undertaken by more than one staff member. Individual staff members also completed PD in areas of eurythmy, overseas and local conferences, music, other school visits, disability legislation, AIS briefings, syllabus familiarisation, planning and programming, diversity in education, road awareness, sexual health education and blacksmithing.

Professional Learning Activity	Number of Teachers Participating
January, 3-day in school P.D. - Child Protection, Code of Conduct, Safe and Supportive Environment and medical treatment.	14
January, 5-day Glenaeon Intensives – Lectures, workshops and Primary Steiner Teacher collaboration run by Steiner Education Australia	3
February, 1 day, First Aid	17
April and September, 4 days each, Eurythmy Intensives with Dianne Tatum	2
May, SEA Governance Leadership and Management Conference	2 (Co-Principal and 1 other)
June, Gerd Kellermann “7 modes of learning”	17 inc. support staff
July, Lakshmi Prasanna 4-day visit – class visits and teacher appraisal, advice on individual students’ health and development, talks for all staff and parents on Steiner methodology	14
July, Patries Orange 3-day visit – class visits and teacher appraisal, advice on individual students’ health and development, talks for all staff and parents on Steiner methodology	14
July, Lakshmi and Patries 2-day workshop “Embryology” – lectures, workshop and eurythmy.	5
August, SEA Delegates Meeting – 3 day conference of Steiner school leaders.	2
September, 1 day, Sydney/Central Coast/Hunter Steiner Schools PD day at Glenaeon – workshops and presentations by teachers from all schools. Lakshmi presentation on ‘Foundations of Human Experience’ Lecture 2	17 inc. support staff
November, 1 day, Awabakal Aboriginal Cultural Tour	5
Nov-Dec, Delivering Teacher training in India, 7-14 days as well as attending workshops on child development and eurythmy.	2
December, Board of Directors Online Governance Modules AIS - all Board members are completing the four modules	8
Goethean Science Course – ongoing weekly study	14

Teaching standards

Category	No. of teachers
Teachers having teacher education qualifications from a higher education institution within Australia or as recognised within the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI- NOOSR) guidelines	14
Teachers having a bachelor degree from a higher education institution within Australia or one recognised within the AEI-NOOSR guidelines but lack formal teacher education qualifications	0

Workforce composition

(from My School website http://www.myschool.edu.au/)	
Teaching Staff	14
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	13
Non-teaching staff	15
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	3.5

There were no indigenous staff members in Newcastle Waldorf School in 2016

Respect, Responsibility and School Satisfaction

Respect and Responsibility

Respect is one of the key values highlighted by the School in its Supporting Positive Behaviour policy and procedures. The School teaches the value of respect in all areas of school life by modelling, telling relevant stories and positively acknowledging student effort.

The School provides creative activities in which all members of the School community can participate. These activities include playing and singing music, developing and performing dramatic pieces as well as appreciating the artistic endeavours of other students and teachers. These activities allow students to respect the efforts of their peers and take responsibility for their own contribution while sharing in something beautiful and worthwhile.

The School celebrates regular seasonal festivals where students are required to take responsibility for their individual part in building the School Community. Each class takes the responsibility for preparing a part of the meal or festival for the rest of the school.

Students and teachers participate in whole school excursions into nature where they can develop not only a sense of responsibility for their shared welfare, but also respect for the natural world and a feeling of responsibility for its preservation.

Students, Parents and Teachers work together to create gifts for each other and loved ones in a festival in November. High school students and teachers lead mini workshops teaching parents and younger children how create beautiful gifts.

Parent, Student and Teacher satisfaction

The degree of parent satisfaction emerges from twice-yearly one-on-one interviews with the class guardian. It is also gauged by the willingness of parents to participate in voluntary working bees, to attend talks, music and singing groups and cultural studies groups, which are offered throughout the year. This year attendance and participation in these activities was consistent with the previous year. The College of Teachers will continue to discuss and implement strategies to strengthen the connection between parents and the school.

Amongst students, the degree of satisfaction is evident in the way in which they engage not only in classroom activities, but also in music making, play and recreational activities with their classmates. The cheerful ambience of the School and its environs speaks of students who are happy to engage with their education. In 2016, most students continued to be actively engaged in the course work as well as extra curricular activities, depending on their preferences.

Year 11 and 12 students completed course evaluations to help teachers to know what is working and what may need improving. These surveys are part of a collection of data that we will use mid 2017 to make any adjustments to the senior secondary program.

The willingness of staff to be involved in all aspects of the life of the School and the long service of many of the teachers has demonstrated a high level of staff satisfaction. This year we have welcomed another new teacher who, while unfamiliar with our operations, has worked through our College of Teachers meetings and with mentors to develop their knowledge and understanding.

Student attendance, retention rates and post school destinations

Student attendance rates

The following data is from the first semester of 2016 as supplied to the STAT data collection.

K	94%
1	95%
2	88%
3	92%
4	94%
5	92%
6	95%
7	94%
8	95%
9	92%
10	93%
11	92%
12	91%
School	93%

Reporting year	2016	Reporting period	Semester 1	Submit
Student attendance rate				Percent ¹
All students				93%
Indigenous students				94%
Non-Indigenous students				93%
Student attendance level (Proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time) ²				Percent ¹
All students				79%
Indigenous students				100%
Non-Indigenous students				77%

Reporting year	2016	Reporting period	Term 3	Submit
Student attendance rate				Percent ¹
All students				93%
Indigenous students				94%
Non-Indigenous students				93%
Student attendance level (Proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time) ²				Percent ¹
All students				68%
Indigenous students				88%
Non-Indigenous students				66%

The average attendance rate is similar to that of 2015.

Management of non-attendance

The following information regarding the management of non-attendance is extracted from the Newcastle Waldorf School's attendance policy. The full policy can be viewed on request to the School's administration.

Poor Attendance and Unsatisfactory Attendance

- *The Class Teacher or Class Guardian will contact the student's parents/guardians to discuss poor attendance*
- *If the above communication is unsuccessful, a letter will be sent by the Principal.*
- *Unsatisfactory attendance information will be transferred to student reports.*
- *Students who are habitually absent may be reported to Community Services under the Keep Them Safe guidelines*
- *HSC Students will receive formal warning letters as per the NWS HSC Assessment Policy*

Strategies for Improving Attendance

The Newcastle Waldorf School has an average attendance rate of 93%. This is due to the following ongoing strategies.

- *Class teachers/guardians interview parents of students who have poor attendance, discussing the importance of regular attendance and the rhythm of the school week, term and year.*
- *Principal has a discussion with parents when granting exemptions, especially with regard to mid-term holidays.*
- *A section on attendance is included regularly in notes and newsletters, especially at the beginning of the year.*
- *Attendance is discussed at class talks.*

Student retention rates and post school destinations

Student retention rates are good through primary years. The classes often build in numbers in these years. The retention rate in the middle high school is the lowest over the school. This is attributed to families seeking schools that are more established in their delivery of the HSC. Reasons given by families changing schools at this time include:

- Variety of HSC courses offered by other schools
- Students wanting a larger peer/social group

The retention rate of students from year 10, 2014 through to completion of year 12 in 2016 was 40%. A number of students withdrew from their studies either in year 11 or year 12 to pursue other forms of senior secondary education or embark on apprenticeships or to work.

Post school destinations of students finishing their HSC in 2016 were:

- 50% university
- 50% full or part time employment, with or without an apprenticeship.

Policies

Enrolment policy

The following complete text of the Newcastle Waldorf School policy and procedures was current for 2016, but is due for review.

Policy

- 1. The Newcastle Waldorf School is comprehensive and coeducational from K to 12, providing an education based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner within the framework and regulations of the NSW Board of Studies.*
- 2. All applications are processed in order of receipt, and consideration is given to the applicant's support for the ethos of the school, siblings already attending the school, the applicant having attended another Steiner School and other criteria determined by the school from time to time.*
- 3. The School does not operate a waiting list. If classes are full, applicants are asked to contact the School regularly throughout the year.*
- 4. Once enrolled, students are expected to uphold the school's ethos and comply with the school's code of conduct as described in the NWS Prospectus and Handbook to maintain their enrolment.*
- 5. If the principal, or any person deputing for the principal, considers that a student is guilty of a serious breach of the rules or has otherwise engaged in conduct which is prejudicial to the school or its students or staff, the principal or deputy may suspend or expel the student permanently or temporarily at their absolute discretion.*
- 6. If the School Board, the College of Teachers or the Principal believes that a mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation between a parent and school has broken down to the extent that it adversely impacts on that relationship, then the School may require the family to cease enrolment at the school.*
- 7. The school will only exercise its powers under these clauses to expel a student permanently if it has provided the student and the parents or guardians of the student with details of the conduct which may result in a decision to expel the student and provided them with a reasonable opportunity to respond.*

8. *No remission of fees will apply in either case*
9. *The implementation of this policy statement will follow principles of procedural fairness.*

Procedures

1. *Process all applications within the school's enrolment policy.*
2. *Interview applicants if there is a vacancy in the class, or at the Class Teacher's discretion.*
3. *Accept an application form completed by the applicant.*
4. *Consider each applicant's interview responses and application form regarding their ability and willingness to support the school's ethos.*
5. *Consider each applicant's educational needs and requirements, by gathering information and consulting with parents/family and other relevant persons.*
6. *Identify any strategies or adjustments which may be required to accommodate the applicant before a decision regarding enrolment is made, taking into consideration the effect of the adjustment on the prospective student, as well as its impact on the School, its staff and other students.*
7. *Discuss the application at a College of Teachers Meeting.*
8. *Accept or reject the application.*
9. *Inform the applicant of the outcome.*
10. *The accepted applicant will receive a letter of offer, which they will sign to accept enrolment.*
11. *Applicant will fill in Data Collection form.*
12. *Applicant will pay the first term's fees on enrolment.*

Characteristics of the student body

The following table of information comes from the My School Website, which provides information based on the census.

<i>My School</i>	2014	2015	2016
Total enrolments	147	142	145
Girls	75	75	76
Boys	72	67	69
Full-time equivalent enrolments	147	142	145
Indigenous students	3%	6%	6%
Language background other than English	6%	8%	8%

Total enrolments fluctuated throughout 2016, but were 153 by December 2016

Other School policies

The following policies relate to student welfare, discipline, grievances and bullying.

Policy	Changes in 2016	Access to full text
<p>Supporting Positive Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy</p> <p><i>Newcastle Waldorf School aims to provide a warm, nurturing environment where individual students can learn. We aim to do this by teaching values of respect, reverence, truth, goodness and creativity where students are encouraged to share in a vibrant learning community. We encourage goodwill and empathy. We collaboratively set expectations and teach students positive behaviours across the different environments and different times of the school day. Students are expected to strive to meet these expectations and follow requests made by school staff. We endeavour to teach these behaviours through positively acknowledging students. We also endeavour to individualise acknowledgement and consequences for students that are related to the situations and contexts in which the behaviours occur. By doing this we aim to build resilience in our students.</i></p> <p><i>The School prohibits the use of corporal punishment in disciplining students attending the school.</i></p> <p><i>The School does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, for any reason at the School.</i></p> <p><i>For serious breaches of expectations it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student.</i></p> <p><i>The implementation of this policy statement will follow the principles of procedural fairness including parental consultation regarding suspensions and expulsions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations • Support • Consequences 	<p>This policy absorbed the positive peer relations policy in 2016 (see below).</p> <p>It is due for review this year</p>	<p>Full text available on request to the School Administration</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual planning • Suspension, expulsion and exclusion • Bullying 		
Child Protection Policy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention • Reporting • Risk assessment • Roles and responsibilities 	No changes	Full text available on request to the School Administration
Student Welfare Policy: <i>Newcastle Waldorf School Provides a safe and supportive environment for all students</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security • Supervision • Homework • Dress Code • Pastoral Care, Communication and Support • Student Leadership • Individual Planning • Medical Treatment • Excursions • Communication and Support 	No changes	Full text available on request to the School Administration
Positive Peer Relations, Anti-bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy: <i>Newcastle Waldorf School is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment that fosters respect and an environment in which genuine concern for each member of the School community is a priority. The School affirms that all members of its community have the right to feel accepted as worthwhile members of the School and seeks to prevent harassment and intervene effectively.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying Definitions • Prevention and Intervention Strategies • Responding and Reporting 	Absorbed by Supporting Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy in 2016.	n/a
Complaints and Grievances Newcastle Waldorf School acknowledges that from time to time parents and students may raise concerns, complaints or allegations about matters regarding their experiences with the School. The following policy and procedures outline processes that are designed to address concerns before they turn into complaints or allegations. If parents raise concerns early, and they are addressed informally by class and subject teachers or the Principal, the likelihood that they will turn into formal complaints is greatly reduced. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns • Complaints • Allegations • Procedures & flowcharts 	No changes	Full text available on request to the School Administration Full text available on the School's website

Determined Improvement Targets

Meeting 2015 target areas of improvement

The 2015 Annual Report identified the following areas for improvement in 2016:

Areas for improvement	Improved in 2016 by
Teaching and Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisiting expectations of students and how teachers effectively model, monitor and enforce these expectations. Introducing Biology and Music in the HSC courses. Continue discussion and implement ways to increase parent connection with the school. Improving student engagement and achievement in the senior high school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers completed self-evaluations based on the relevant policies. Staff meetings regularly dealt with these areas Successful introduction of both subjects Various attempts at starting an Aboriginal Cultural Group sowed the seeds for a great start in 2017. Parents were surveyed in late 2016 and the results are being used to develop other small groups and initiatives in the school including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal Care group Gardening group Carpark safety group Aboriginal Cultural group Land regeneration Repairs/carpentry group Ongoing. Attempts at regular meetings with students and teachers to discuss their progress and ways in which we could support them had mixed results. Art Exhibition showcasing Year 11 & 12 Visual Art projects in December was very successful. Future events will need to be better publicised to attract more public attention.
Facilities and Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritising maintenance and repairs to ageing buildings. Updating ICT facilities. Renewing animal enclosures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing. We engaged a builder for regular maintenance work throughout the year and one large job was completed. Unfortunately, this fell through, and we haven't yet found a replacement. Meetings continued about ICT upgrades and a consensus was only reached late in the year. Upgrades will happen in early 2017.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing discussion of potential facilities additions, such as kitchen, forging area and P&P storage and work area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal enclosures remain in need of upgrading. There were a number of repair jobs over the course of the year all of which helped to keep them serviceable, however, a long-term upgrade has not yet been agreed on. No new additions yet.
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Improvement Targets for 2017

This annual report identifies the following areas for improvement in 2017:

Teaching and Learning

- Revisiting expectations of students and how teachers effectively model, monitor and enforce these expectations.
- Reviewing the HSC program to promote student engagement and achievement in the senior high school and to make it viable in the long term.
- Planning for possible introduction of single stream classes
- To continue to support new teachers in the development of their understanding of the education philosophy of Rudolf Steiner
- Continue to monitor and review the plan for parent collaboration
- To encourage student participation in suitable community events.
- To promote our school more effectively to the wider community
- Establish a scholarship or bursary system.

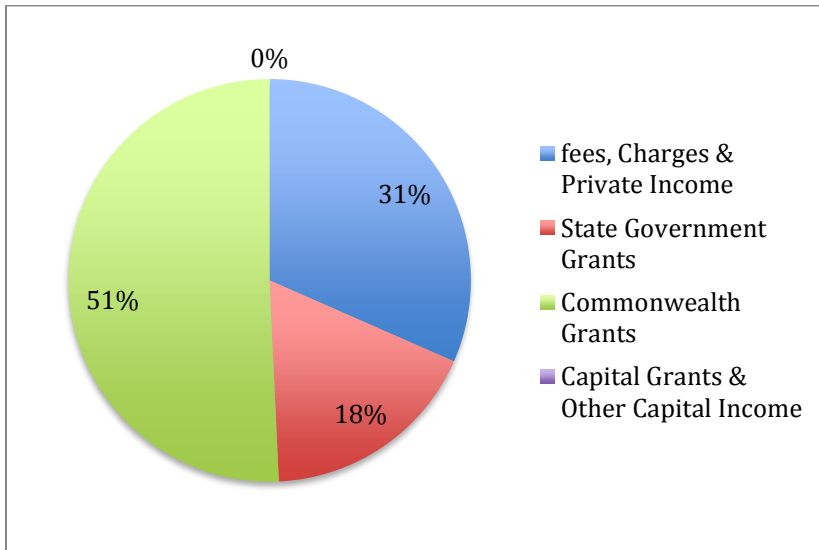
Facilities and Resources

- Establish Before and After School Care and Preschool facilities
- Prioritising maintenance and repairs to ageing buildings.
- Renewing animal enclosures.
- Continuing discussion of potential facilities additions, such as kitchen, forging area and P&P storage and work area.
- Planning facilities to potentially accommodate single streaming of classes

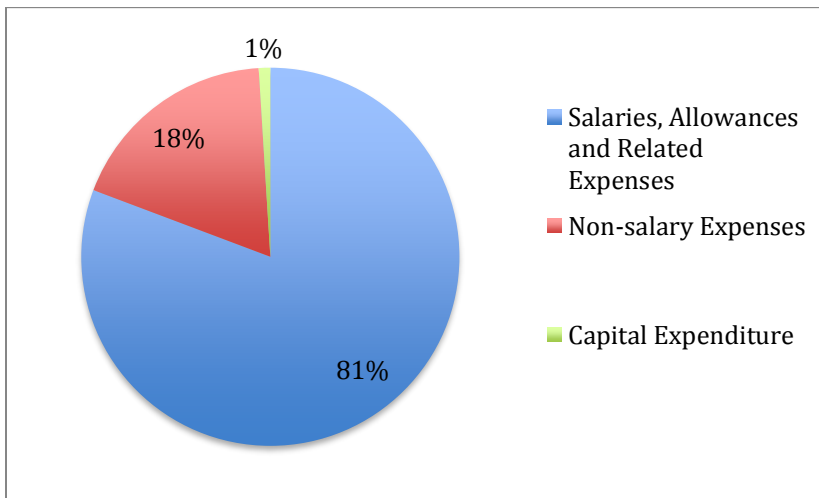
Summary of financial information

The Newcastle Waldorf School financial information is summarised in the following sector graphs of income and expenditure for the period of January 1 to December 31 2016, sourced from the School's audited accounts.

Income



Expenditure



Capital expenditure was relatively low this year after the completion of buildings in 2015.