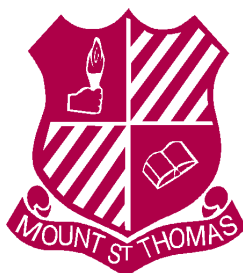


Mount St Thomas Public School

Annual Report



2018



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Introduction

The Annual Report for **2018** is provided to the community of Mount St Thomas Public School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

Ronda Moon

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School background

School vision statement

At Mount St Thomas Public School, we are committed to building a collaborative school-wide culture that demonstrates educational aspiration and provides a quality education for all. Through personalised learning we will develop the individual talents, interests and abilities of our students in an engaging, positive, and respectful learning environment.

This will be fostered within a dynamic culture of teaching and learning that sets high expectations for achievement and success. Every student will be empowered to reach their potential and become engaged, self-aware, productive and responsible, learners and global citizens.

School context

Established in 1952, Mount St Thomas Public School serves the community of this peaceful and picturesque suburb of Wollongong. Strong community links exist to support the ongoing highly successful programs in literacy and numeracy, student welfare, technology, sport, environmental education and the creative arts. The school has an enrolment of 350 students including 11 Aboriginal students.

The school structure consists of 12 multi-grade classes and 2 straight classes. The teaching staff is a mix of experienced and early career teachers, who are dedicated and regularly engage in a variety of professional learning opportunities to enhance their teaching practices. The school motto of "Facing the Future Together" underpins the ideals and practices of the whole school community. Teachers deliver high quality learning programs to maximise student learning in a supportive and safe environment. The community has high expectations for the school and its students and actively supports all aspects of school life.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

The results of this process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Learning:

In the the element of Learning Culture our school is Sustaining and Growing. At Mount St Thomas Public School, our staff and school learning community exhibit a demonstrative commitment to school learning priorities and strive to deliver a quality, inclusive and personalised education for every student. Professional learning opportunities, actively sought by staff, continue to strengthen teacher efficacy and impact in the classroom.

In the element of Wellbeing our school is Excelling. We believe that positive student wellbeing is integral and underpins all school life, allowing our students to learn and thrive, exceeding their potential. We proudly implement a whole-school approach at Mount St Thomas and, in addition to Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) practices, we have had great success in 2018 with the continuation of the Rock and Water program and the successful Mountso Growers program. This was supplemented with the volunteer gardeners group, including successful integration for our upcoming kindergarten children and their families to assist the successful transition to school. All teachers consistently exhibit a positive, respectful and personalised approach, with students always at the centre.

We continue to exhibit great strength in the area of Curriculum and as such are proud to be Excelling against the School Excellence Framework. This is demonstrative of continued commitment to quality curriculum provision for all students through proactive differentiated instruction and personalised learning practices. All teachers have implemented quality, inclusive and integrated units of work K-6 based on the NSW syllabuses, with a strong student-centred focus, ensuring all learning environments foster student self-regulation, visibility, negotiated learning goals and continue to promote learning excellence.

Focused professional learning and the implementation of evidenced-based practices across the school led to a judgement in the element of Assessment of Excelling and likewise in the element of Reporting of Excelling. We have clearly aligned processes and school systems for the collection and analysis of data and strive to incorporate new and innovative ways to share Assessment and Reporting information with our school community. This year saw the school-

wide introduction of a new Term 1 Application to Learning Report and new Semester 1 and 2 report templates. In addition, all classes employed Seesaw as a digital communication tool for teachers, students and parents. This encourages continuous feedback and has become a comprehensive digital learning record of the progress, improvements and achievements of our students. In addition, student friendly rubrics and assessment tasks designed and informed by qualitative and quantitative student achievement data, enable students to reflect on their learning and plan for their future learning. As a result of these practices and our continued growth in student results, Mount St Thomas Public School is Sustaining and Growing in the element of Student performance measures.

The results of this process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Teaching:

Mount St Thomas Public School is Sustaining and Growing in the element of Effective classroom practice. Formative assessment strategies are embedded in every classroom, across all curriculum areas with staff using formative assessment data to inform all teaching decisions, future planning for lessons and units of work. Feedback forms an integral part of all teaching and learning programs with feedback being timely, instructive and explicit.

In the element of Data skills and use, Mount St Thomas is Sustaining and Growing. We have used information from Scout as part of the analysis of current practice and to inform our school reporting and School Excellence Framework self-assessment. All teachers at Mount St Thomas Public School incorporate data analysis in their planning for learning by using a range of summative and formative assessment measures.

In the element of Professional standards, our school is Excelling. Teachers at our school actively engage in professional learning opportunities to deepen their syllabus knowledge, pedagogy and practice, and improve their performance. All teachers and leaders plan personalised Performance Development Plans(PDPs) that are aligned to the school strategic directions using tools such as; Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, Australian Professional Standard for Principals, NSW Quality Teaching Model, Classroom Practice Continuum and the Performance Development Framework. School leaders and teachers regularly draw on qualitative and quantitative evidence of teacher practice and student achievement through Action Research, Quality Teaching Lesson Study Rounds, formative and summative assessment, PLAN, NAPLAN and SCOUT data, to determine student goals for achievement and to inform the effectiveness of teaching practice and school performance. Two of our beginning teachers successfully completed their Accreditation in 2018 and were recognised as having met the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at Proficient level.

In the element of Learning and development, Mount St Thomas Public School is Excelling. Our staff have undertaken professional learning with a particular focus on developing teachers' knowledge and understanding of effective teaching practices in targeted aspects of literacy and numeracy, to ensure that teaching and learning is differentiated and personalised to meet students' learning needs. All staff are actively engaged in targeted professional learning to meet the needs of our diverse learning community, which is moving student learning to a higher level. In 2018, numeracy was the most targeted professional learning area, with all teachers engaged in Building Blocks 4 Numeracy, numeracy Action Research Projects, scope and sequence development, thorough personalised programming for learning, QTSS and Quality Lesson Study Rounds for feedback.

The results of this process indicated that in the School Excellence Framework domain of Leading:

In the element of Educational leadership Mount St Thomas Public School is Sustaining and Growing. The leadership team are responsive, strategic and communicative in their dealings with the school and broader community. They use internal and external performance measures and feedback to continually evaluate school programs and initiatives. Developing the capacity of both staff and students is central to the Mount St Thomas Public School motto of "Facing the Future Together."

In the School planning, implementation and reporting element, Mount St Thomas Public School is Sustaining and Growing. Our priorities have established an evidence-driven, dynamic whole school community, school planning and evaluation process, for the systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of internal and external data, school finances, school progress and improvement.

Mount St Thomas Public School is Excelling in the element of School resources. Our school is committed to continual improvement for all members of our community including staff and students. Leadership is transparent, inclusive and collaborative ensuring succession planning is implicit to all school programs. Mount St Thomas Public School distributes and uses resources strategically to ensure that financial and other assets are used to provide equity, drive improvement and leverage student learning. The school facilities are used purposefully by the school community with the community garden project providing more opportunities for the wider community to use Mount St Thomas Public School as a hub for community engagement and relationship building.

Mount St Thomas Public School values the feedback of our students and broader community on the school's practices and procedures. The Appreciative Inquiry process coupled with school evaluation practices such as the Tell Them From Me survey and other school-based reflection tools, provide opportunities for stakeholders to have their say about the school. As well as formal feedback opportunities, the staff and leadership team work closely and collaboratively with the students and community, bringing concerns and ideas to planning and communication meetings as needed. For these

reasons, in the element of Management practices and processes our school is Excelling.

Our self-assessment will assist the school to continue to refine our school plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability/sef-evidence-guide>

Strategic Direction 1

Excellence in Literacy and Numeracy

Purpose

The learning of every student is at the core of what we do, and is key to the development of individual potential, creating increasingly self-motivated learners, confident and creative individuals and productive global citizens.

Our purpose is:

To provide a school culture strongly focused on learning with a school-wide, integrated approach to: quality learning, quality teaching, evidence-based curriculum planning and delivery, assessment and reporting practices, and extra-curricular learning opportunities, to support the diverse learning needs of all students and promote learning excellence.

To provide a quality learning environment that promotes a culture of personalised learning where every student is provided with opportunities to be an engaged and successful learner (ESES), and promotes students' cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing, hand in hand with positive, respectful and caring relationships

Overall summary of progress

Our school-wide, consistent and integrated approach to implementing a quality evidence-based curriculum has enabled our teachers to design differentiated instructional strategies and personalise the learning processes to support the diverse learning needs of all students in an engaging, positive, flexible and respectful learning environment.

This student-centred approach to learning has ensured increased visibility and consistent use of learning goals in literacy and numeracy programs, as evidenced in action research results, observations, and student engagement results. Students' negotiated learning goals are continuing to show more awareness of their areas of need. Learning intentions, success criteria and assessment practices are visible in learning activities, to support students to set their own high expectations to plan their own learning paths.

Students are given the opportunity to analyse their progress, make informed judgements about their successes and future learning directions through feedback in formative and summative assessment practices. This is having a positive impact on student engagement across all areas of learning.

The design and implementation of a whole school systematic approach to collect, analyse, interpret, track, evaluate and report on school based and external data across the curriculum has ensured that students receive timely feedback, using a variety of visible learning strategies.

Student wellbeing strategies delivered through our Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program has ensured the use of a consistent approach to teaching and learning of appropriate behaviours in the various school contexts. There have been significant observable changes in behaviour featuring more positive and respectful relationships throughout the school community.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
We will have met or exceeded state targets for achievement in the proficiency band for literacy, as demonstrated by NAPLAN and school-based assessment measures. We will have met or exceeded state targets for achievement in the proficiency band for numeracy, as demonstrated by NAPLAN and school-based assessment measures.	Literacy and Numeracy Funding: \$8960 Low Level Adjustment Disability Flexible Funding-School Learning and Support Teachers \$72879 Equity Loadings: Socio-economic Background \$14157 Aboriginal Background	Average Scaled Growth for Year 3 to Year 5 in NAPLAN Numeracy in 2018 was 89.0 with 65.9% of students at or above expected growth. Average Scaled Growth for Year 3 to Year 5 in NAPLAN Reading in 2018 was 68.5 with 60.5% of students at or above expected growth. Writing Growth for Year 3 to Year 5 in NAPLAN Writing from was 42.8 with 60.5% of students at or above expected growth. Focus on Reading

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<p>Students tracked to map growth using PLAN, Beststart and NAPLAN. Students will achieve their year appropriate expected NAPLAN growth in literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>All staff utilising focused assessment strategies as evidenced in class programs. Refined assessment strategies reflected by a consistent culture of concise and clear expectations.</p>	<p>English Language proficiency \$9162</p> <p>P&C Funds to support student resources \$25000</p>	<p>Explicit teaching of Super 6 Comprehension Strategies, vocabulary development and strategies to improve fluency has increased students' ability to read and critically interrogate text.</p> <p>Mountso Writing Assessment Continuum (MWAC)</p> <p>The average growth in writing across K–6 in 2018 using the MWAC was 45%. Data incorporates aspects including sentence structure, grammar and punctuation.</p> <p>K–2 Literacy</p> <p>In 2018, the Synthetic Phonics program continued to be implemented in Kindergarten. 95% of Kindergarten students achieved at or above expected levels indicated by Hear and Record assessments.</p> <p>K–6 Numeracy</p> <p>Teachers consistently use:</p> <p>Formative Assessment practices to accurately identify individual entry levels and to drive personalised planning and teaching;</p> <p>TEN (K–2) and TOWN (3–6) numeracy practices, including individual assessment, student grouping and tracking of identified students learning needs;</p> <p>Best Start (K) and PLAN to plot, assess and personalise student achievement on the Numeracy Continuum;</p> <p>Problem Solving Scaffold as a student thinking tool;</p> <p>Mathematics Syllabus and school based scope and sequence to drive unit based learning.</p> <p>Wellbeing Initiatives</p> <p>Rock and Water program implemented across K–6; PBL practices reinforced and lessons explicitly taught across the school.</p> <p>Mountso Growers</p> <p>29 students involved in targetted Mountso Growers wellbeing program with all students having access to our school community kitchen garden.</p>

Next Steps

Professional Learning and QTSS support to understand and use the Literacy Progression in aspects of Writing. The Literacy Progression is used as an assessment tool to identify and measure student achievement and improvement. Ongoing data collection in PLAN2 informs the collaborative development of explicit programs in teaching writing K–6. Continued implementation of the Mountso Writing Assessment Continuum (MWAC) with explicit success criteria targeted to imaginative, informative and persuasive texts. Feedback (teacher to student, student to teacher, student to student) and student reflection will promote student achievement.

Continue K–2 consistent approach to code and collect Instructional Reading Tracking data to inform teacher practice and provide feedback for students.

Teachers will continue to engage with numeracy initiatives refined in Building Blocks for Numeracy professional learning modules in 2018, such as the Targeted Early Numeracy Intervention Program (TEN), Taking Off With Numeracy (TOWN) and Count Me In Too (CMIT) to support the planning and development of explicit teaching practices in numeracy, informed by formative assessment. Numeracy programs will align with and track students on the Numeracy Progression with personalised teaching and learning designed to increase numeracy proficiency. Professional Learning and QTSS support to understand and use the Numeracy Progression in aspects of Numeracy.

Cohesive programs to improve effective classroom practice and data skills and use to leverage intellectual capital and drive excellence.

Quality data available and used in day–to–day learning decisions.

Students demonstrating agency by choosing learning goals and pathways.

Improved value–added student performance against external performance measures.

Innovative and effective data sharing and use to make learning explicit and pathways clear for every learner.

Classroom teacher progression along the Formative assessment matrix.

Continue to build upon extra–curricular activities that reflect the vision, needs and interests of the school and its community.

Continue to expand Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) across all classes 3–6. Stage teams will collaborate to ensure that software, applications and tools selected enhance the learning.

Our commitment to Student Wellbeing will be strengthened through personalised learning practices K–6, explicit Learning and Support processes and practices to enhance student learning at all levels, Personalised Learning Pathways for Aboriginal students, continued implementation of the Rock and Water Program and through the continued school–wide environmental program in the Mountso Community Kitchen Garden using the student wellbeing funding.

Strategic Direction 2

Quality, Innovative and Reflective Pedagogy

Purpose

Teacher quality and instructional expertise are key to the building of educational aspiration through teaching excellence that inspires learning.

Our purpose is:

To ensure our teachers demonstrate deep pedagogical and curriculum knowledge, understand and implement effective explicit teaching methods and innovation in a shared and systematic approach across the school, through targeted professional learning, evidence-based teaching strategies, dialogue, feedback, action research, collaborative planning and systematic exchange of expertise, resources, programs and ideas.

To ensure our teachers have the capacity and opportunity to make informed decisions based on the analysis of collected qualitative and quantitative evidence about student achievement and their own teaching practices and to identify, understand, design and implement the most effective evidence-based, differentiated instructional strategies and practices.

Overall summary of progress

A collaborative and inclusive learning culture exists across our professional teaching community. It is founded on the development of deep pedagogical knowledge and enhanced by contemporary research (Timperley/Hattie/William) to maximise student achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy. High quality units of work are designed and refined to reflect new knowledge and skills required in addressing syllabi incorporating the Australian Curriculum.

Extensive use of data, internal and external, ensures that all teachers have extensive knowledge of each student and are able to personalise instruction to move learning forward. Teachers actively research their own teaching practices through cycles of inquiry, lesson study and action research protocols. Systems have been devised to more consistently track and monitor student progress and ensure learning is visible, feedback is timely and students reflect on and celebrate their learning.

All staff set and review ambitious goals aligned to our school's strategic directions and are supported through coaching and mentoring. The implementation of the Performance and Development Framework has been pivotal in personalising professional support for all staff. Professional tools, which include the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Classroom Practice Continuum, are key reflective tools in goal-setting and reflective practice.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<p>Increase of student achievement in literacy and numeracy tasks as informed by whole-school internal and external data, and Pre and Post Assessment data from Action Research Projects as a result of effective classroom practices.</p> <p>100% teachers use evidence, research and professional tools such as; Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, NSW Quality Teaching Model and the Classroom Practice Continuum to reflect and report on the achievement of their own learning and leadership PDP goals.</p>	<p>Professional Learning Initiative Funding 2018 = \$19972; 25 teacher days @ \$500 = \$12500, \$3000 course fees</p> <p>QTSS= 0.556 = 2 days per week Instructional Leadership (Numeracy); banked days for Action Learning Teams</p> <p>Literacy and Numeracy Funding 2018 – \$8960; 15 teacher days @ \$500 = \$7500, literacy resources</p>	<p>Teachers trained and effectively implementing TOWN, TEN and problem solving scaffold in classroom programs. All teachers using SENA to assess and inform planning and personalisation in numeracy.</p> <p>Teachers trained and effectively implementing Synthetic Phonics, L3, Focus On Reading Phase 1 and Phase 2.</p> <p>All teachers have developed a deeper understanding of Differentiated Instruction and personalisation strategies to support and engage all learners as evident from three action research cycles and Lesson Study Observations.</p> <p>Differentiated instruction, personalised learning and visible learning practices are evident in all teaching programs and class learning environments.</p>

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
<p>Increase of student achievement in literacy and numeracy tasks as informed by whole-school internal and external data, and Pre and Post Assessment data from Action Research Projects as a result of effective classroom practices.</p> <p>100% teachers use evidence, research and professional tools such as; Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, NSW Quality Teaching Model and the Classroom Practice Continuum to reflect and report on the achievement of their own learning and leadership PDP goals.</p>		<p>All teachers are able to reflect and gain feedback through the Quality Teaching Rounds and Lesson Study process to inform current and future practice to improve student outcomes in literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>Teachers plan collaboratively and give and gain feedback on practice using observation, feedback and tools of reflection to promote effective instructional expertise.</p>

Next Steps

All classroom teachers and support staff engage in further action research, centred on personalisation of learning. Staff will be encouraged to experiment with new learning initiatives and collect evidence to support this. 'Cycles of Inquiry' will form the framework for investigation.

A minimum of two formal lesson observations will occur. Lesson study protocols will guide lesson preparation and delivery and be informed by Quality Teaching elements. All staff will be given the opportunity to give and receive feedback through structured dialogue.

Revised data collection protocols will be implemented and monitored via electronic tracking. Data centralisation will ensure that all teachers have greater access and transfer of information.

All staff will continue to access a suite of professional learning options which reflect needs, career stage and development. Whole-school initiatives include; Literacy and Numeracy Progressions, ALAN or PLAN2 software PL and utilisation, SCOUT PL and utilisation for data analysis, Formative Assessment for Learning (Dylan William), inquiry-based learning, continued focus on Numeracy pedagogy and practice (TEN, TOWN, CMIT), continued focus on FoR pedagogy and practice and continued MWAC implementation.

Continue to use reflective professional tools to set, monitor and reflect on aspirational goals. Build associations with a range of professional networks. For example Community of Schools, Leadership-Illawarra Networks Key Stakeholders (L-INKS).

All staff will access professional learning in Building Blocks for Numeracy with a focus on Count Me In Too, TEN and TOWN initiatives and formative assessment practices. Continued professional learning in innovative teaching practices. NAPLAN task analysis to inform planning directions. PLAN2 and National Literacy and Numeracy Progressions professional learning. PDP and professional learning evaluation. Student mapped on PLAN2 using the National Literacy and Numeracy Progressions.

Strategic Direction 3

Creating a Dynamic Leadership Culture

Purpose

School leaders are key to leading school excellence.

Our purpose is:

To build a collective and collaborative approach to whole school planning for the achievement of excellence in learning, teaching and leading; at all levels, where planning and evaluative thinking processes are accountable, evidence-based, reflective, transparent and innovative, and reflect our school vision and strategic priorities. To provide leadership development and professional learning opportunities which build collective efficacy to lead curriculum innovation & sustain excellence in instructional and organisational practices across the school.

To build effective and meaningful relationships with key community partners, who can support the school with resources, expertise and experiences to enrich the school's standing within the local community and promote excellence in teaching, learning and leadership. Our school leaders are committed to achieving educational and organisational excellence to improve outcomes for our students.

Overall summary of progress

Our commitment to the establishment of an evidence-driven, dynamic whole school community has been achieved through an inclusive, school planning and evaluation process. Regular planning and evaluation meetings ensure that there is broad understanding, monitoring and support to uphold school expectations and aspirations for improving student achievement and engagement. All stakeholders are informed and there are clear processes to actively engage the school community in the decision making process.

School systems for the systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of internal and external data, school finances, school progress and improvement employ evidence-based strategy and innovative thinking.

We are committed to building the capability of all staff through personalised and targeted professional learning that supports our school's strategic directions and personal teacher goals. Engagement with a range of professional tools to reflect on practice, access to a broad network of support and seeking out community partnerships, strengthen our culture of continuous improvement.

Contextual implementation of a range of initiatives/reforms ensures staff at all career stages are challenged and supported with a GROWTH mindset. Aligned to school priorities, our school has formed strong links in and across our local community. We have taken a proactive lead in curriculum design and development across our community, with strong links to volunteers and business partners.

Ongoing, is our positive relationship with the parent community, which has seen exceptional participation and inclusion, particularly through the establishment of our Mount St Thomas Community Kitchen Garden and at a range of school events throughout 2018.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Funds Expended (Resources)	Progress achieved this year
Teachers use research and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and Principals', the Leadership Framework & School Excellence Framework to design, reflect & report on the achievement & impact of their PDP goals. Increase in parent participation in supporting classroom learning, school based initiatives and P&C activities.	Professional Learning Initiative Funding (as indicated in Strategic Direction 2) Coach in a Box professional learning = \$4800	Aspiring leaders have participated in and lead a range of meetings, PL or workshops within and beyond the school.

Next Steps

Completion of the community kitchen garden environmental sustainability program with the introduction of the Kitchen Kart and implementation of the cooking program. Program collaboratively planned to maximise student learning outcomes and engagement.

Milestones and school programs planned using data and reflections informed by the School Excellence Framework.

Effective financial management to support 2018 –2020 School Plan projects.

All stakeholders reflections and feedback on the current school plan, Appreciative Inquiry process evaluated and embedded in the 2018 – 2020 School Plan.

A scoped and resourced school milestones document, with continued focus on teacher efficacy and maximising the learning outcomes for every student.

Key Initiatives	Resources (annual)	Impact achieved this year
Aboriginal background loading	Aboriginal background equity funding \$6528	Reporting and feedback against milestones by LAST to whole school and community. All students with comprehensive PLPs and individual learning goals. All students are making progress across the literacy and numeracy progressions.
English language proficiency	English language proficiency equity funding \$9162	Review impact of support on student learning. Reporting and feedback against milestones by LAST.
Low level adjustment for disability	Low level adjustment for disability equity funding:– 0.7 FTE; \$27071 flexible	Learning and Support team reviews support needs across K–6, allocations and dispersal of resources. All students requiring adjustments and accommodations are catered for within class programs and other whole school strategies. School Learning and Support Officers (SLSOs) support students and classroom programs for students who are identified and assessed for immediate support. Eighty eight students were supported by the Learning and Support Team for additional support in 2018 (includes students on recurring monitoring and newly identified students).
Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)	Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS) 0.556 FTE	Professional Learning provided to all staff via Instructional Leadership model with a focus on pedagogy and practice in Numeracy. Supported by Building Blocks 4 Numeracy workshops. School executives mentor and support teachers to implement a whole school systematic approach to collect, analyse, interpret, track, evaluate and report on student learning and growth. Teachers have developed processes for students to give and gain feedback and reflect on assessment processes to plan their current and future learning.
Socio–economic background	Socio–economic background equity funding \$14 157	Review impact of support on student learning. Reporting and feedback against milestones by LAST.
Support for beginning teachers		
Targeted student support for refugees and new arrivals	New arrivals program funding 0.2 FTE	EAL/D program implementation by LAST. Reporting and feedback against milestones by LAST.

Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2015	2016	2017	2018
Boys	159	160	174	174
Girls	158	165	161	175

Student attendance profile

School				
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
K	95.9	95.6	95.7	95.4
1	93.5	94.3	94.7	95.3
2	95.1	94.5	94.6	94.5
3	96	94.6	95.6	93.7
4	93.8	95.8	96	94.2
5	95.6	94	95.3	94.3
6	95	94.3	94	94.2
All Years	95	94.8	95.1	94.5
State DoE				
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
K	94.4	94.4	94.4	93.8
1	93.8	93.9	93.8	93.4
2	94	94.1	94	93.5
3	94.1	94.2	94.1	93.6
4	94	93.9	93.9	93.4
5	94	93.9	93.8	93.2
6	93.5	93.4	93.3	92.5
All Years	94	94	93.9	93.4

Management of non-attendance

Regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential. Schools, in partnership with parents, are responsible for promoting the regular attendance of students.

Encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility. Class rolls are marked daily and monitored regularly by the class teachers for patterns of students' partial or non-attendance. The Learning Support Team monitors the attendance of students. If a concern is identified, the team works with the student, parent and class teacher to improve attendance. Parents are contacted by the school and informed of their responsibility to ensure children attend school regularly. The support of the Home School Liaison

Officer is sought if required.

School staff:

* provide a caring teaching and learning environment which fosters students' sense of belonging to the school community;

* recognise and reward excellent and improved student attendance;

* maintain accurate records of student attendance;

* implement programs and practices to address attendance issues when they arise;

* provide clear information to students and parents regarding attendance requirements and the consequences of unsatisfactory attendance; and

* keep notes and records of verbal explanations for absences and retain these for two years from the date of receipt.

Class sizes

Class	Total
KEIRA 3	19
KEIRA 2	22
KEIRA 4	19
OUSLEY 2	25
OUSLEY 1	24
KEIRA 1	25
DRUMMOND 1	25
NEBO 2	27
NEBO 1	26
DRUMMOND 2	22
NEBO 4	28
KEMBLA 2	28
KEMBLA 1	28
NEBO 3	27

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	3
Classroom Teacher(s)	12.74
Learning and Support Teacher(s)	0.7
Teacher Librarian	0.8
School Administration and Support Staff	2.92

*Full Time Equivalent

There are no staff with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander background at Mount St Thomas Public School.

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	2

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

All teachers were involved in a range of professional learning activities throughout the year. Professional development is strategically planned to meet the needs of all staff and is in line with whole school planning and departmental priorities.

The main areas of focus in 2018 centred on:

* The accreditation and support of beginning teachers with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA);

* The maintenance of all teachers at Professional Competence;

* Whole school analysis of NAPLAN, PLAN and school based data to identify areas of need in all aspects of literacy and numeracy;

* Using PLAN data to identify and track all students' individual learning needs on the learning continuums to inform teaching practices and the design of teaching programs and individual learning plans;

* Implementation of the NSW English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography Syllabuses, and the design of scopes and sequences and stage based units of work, for implementation;

* Cyclic assessment for learning strategy, to collaboratively plan literacy and numeracy assessment tasks, rubrics, and teaching programs, collect, analyse and consistently judge student achievement data aligned to NSW syllabus outcomes, and the NSW QTM;

* Focus on Reading Phase 1 embedding the Super Six Comprehension Strategies and pedagogies into a consistent, system wide guided reading framework;

* Action research was conducted by all staff, focusing on aspects of numeracy. Two cycles of inquiry occurred throughout 2018 and presentations with findings showcased;

* Explicit teaching of problem solving skills in mathematics with an emphasis on language;

* Use of technology in the classroom with an emphasis on iPads, Google Apps, Web 2.0 tools, interactive programs and websites;

* Emergency Care Update; Asthma Awareness Update; ASCIA – Anaphylaxis training; Code of Conduct; Child Protection Update; and

* Mount St Thomas Public School had two beginning teachers achieve accreditation as proficient.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2018.

	2018 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	119,584
Revenue	2,928,900
Appropriation	2,755,385
Sale of Goods and Services	2,842
Grants and Contributions	166,267
Gain and Loss	0
Other Revenue	1,611
Investment Income	2,795
Expenses	-2,791,932
Recurrent Expenses	-2,791,932
Employee Related	-2,462,046
Operating Expenses	-329,886
Capital Expenses	0
Employee Related	0
Operating Expenses	0
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	136,967
Balance Carried Forward	256,551

The financial summary consists of school income broken down by funding source and is derived from the school Annual Financial Statement. This summary covers funds for operating costs and involves expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance. A full copy of the school's 2018 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups.

An additional balance was carried forward at the end of 2018 but is reserved for allocation to unbilled staffing costs and unpaid invoices at the time of financial roll-over. The actual opening balance and available funds for 2019 will be similar to the previous year.

Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

	2018 Actual (\$)
Base Total	2,402,778
Base Per Capita	64,779
Base Location	0
Other Base	2,337,999
Equity Total	129,796
Equity Aboriginal	6,528
Equity Socio economic	14,157
Equity Language	9,162
Equity Disability	99,950
Targeted Total	37,492
Other Total	96,623
Grand Total	2,666,690

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance

NAPLAN

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10. The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in these assessments.

From 2018 to 2020 NAPLAN is moving from a paper test to an online test. Individual schools are migrating to the online test, with some schools attempting NAPLAN on paper and others online.

Results for both online and paper formats are reported on the same NAPLAN assessment scale. Any comparison of NAPLAN results – such as comparisons to previous NAPLAN results or to results for students who did the assessment in a different format – should take into consideration the different test formats and are discouraged during these transition years.

NAPLAN Year 3 Literacy

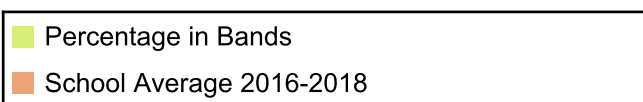
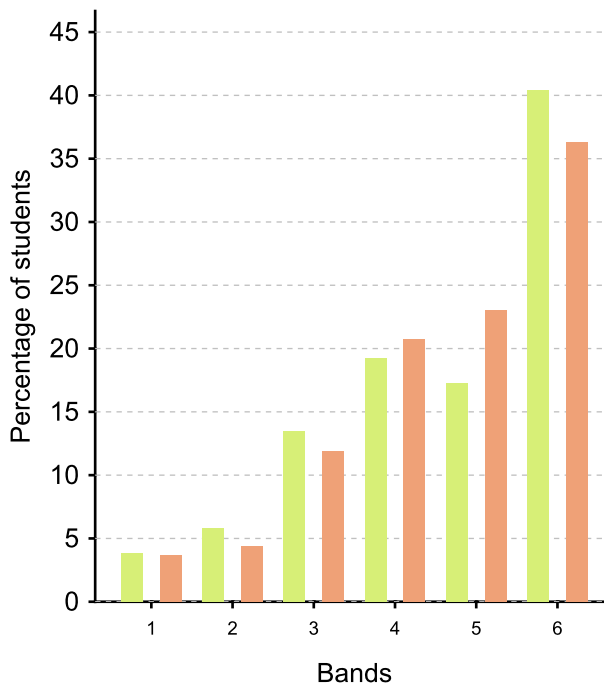
Fifty-two Year 3 students sat the 2018 NAPLAN test in literacy (26 boys and 26 girls). In reading, 57.7% of students were placed in the top two proficiency bands compared with 48.6% of the state. In writing, 59.9% of students were placed in the top two proficiency bands compared with 43.3% of the state. In spelling, 57.7% of

students were placed in the top two proficiency bands compared with 48.1% of the state. In grammar and punctuation, 55.8% of students were placed in the top two proficiency bands compared with 44% of the state. 94.2% of Year 3 students scored at or above the National Minimum Standard. Analysis of results has shown that students can identify information and main ideas and interpret information from pictures and text. A future focus area will be in analysing a writer's purpose when selecting specific language conventions and literary devices. In addition, there will be continued focus on improving and sustaining student growth data from Year 3 to Year 5, particularly in spelling.

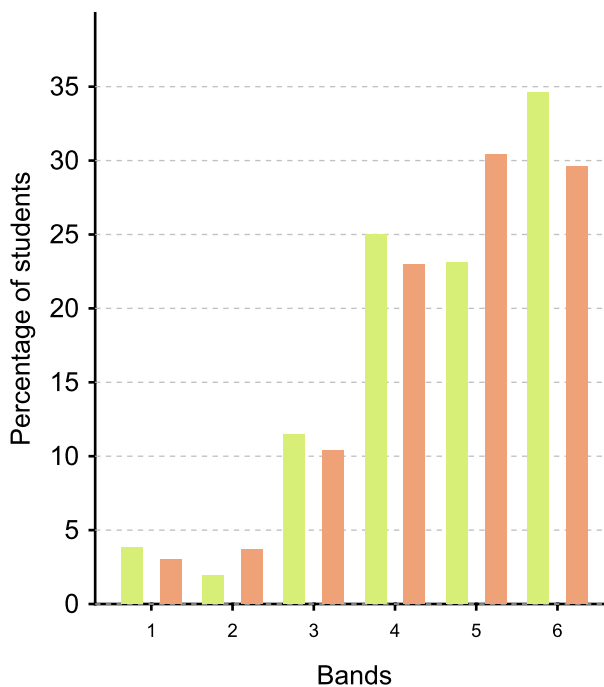
NAPLAN Year 5 Literacy

Forty-nine students in Year 5 sat the 2018 NAPLAN test in literacy (22 boys and 27 girls). In reading, 49% of students were placed in the top two proficiency bands compared with 14.8% of the state. This exceeded 31.4% for our students in 2017. In spelling, 32.6% of students were placed in the top two proficiency bands compared with 33.9% of the state. In writing, 20.4% of students were placed in the top two proficiency bands compared with 15% of the state. In grammar and punctuation, 32.6% of students were placed in the top two proficiency bands compared with 32.7% of the state. 100% of Year 5 students scored at or above National Minimum Standards in reading. Analysis of results has shown that students can identify events, purpose and main ideas, but need further development interpreting emotions, actions and opinion. In 2018, growth in writing exceeded the state average. A future focus area will be improving and sustaining student growth data from Year 3 to Year 5, particularly in spelling.

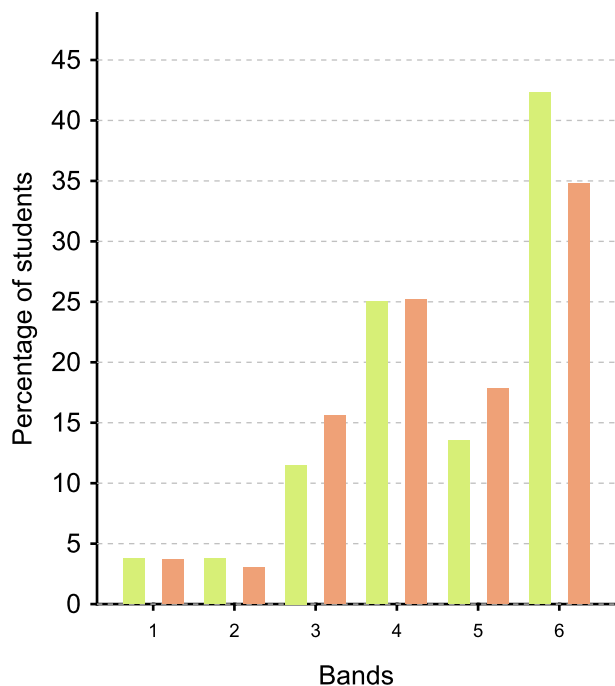
**Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Reading**



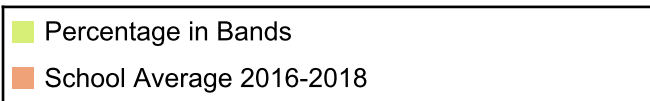
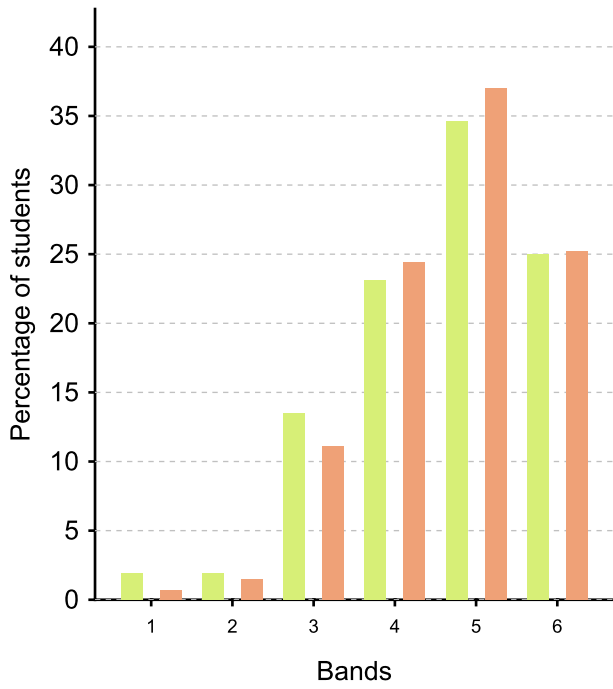
**Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Spelling**



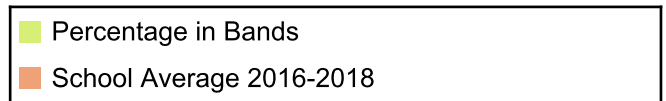
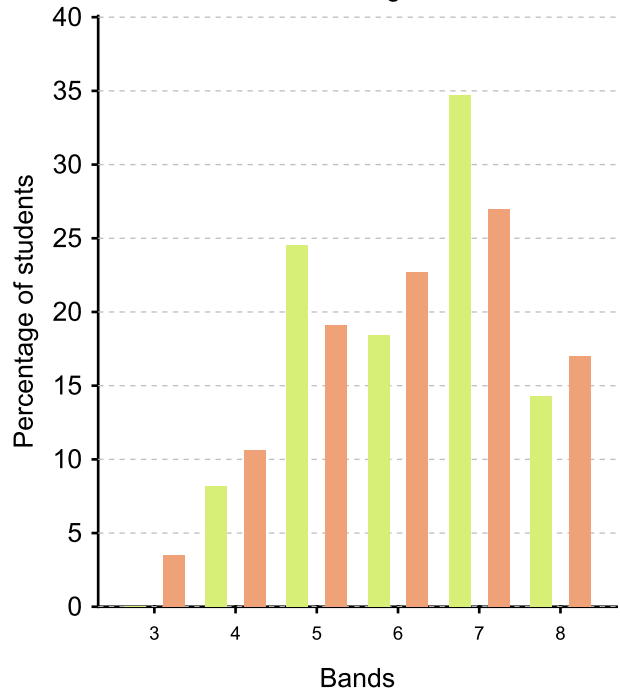
**Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Grammar & Punctuation**



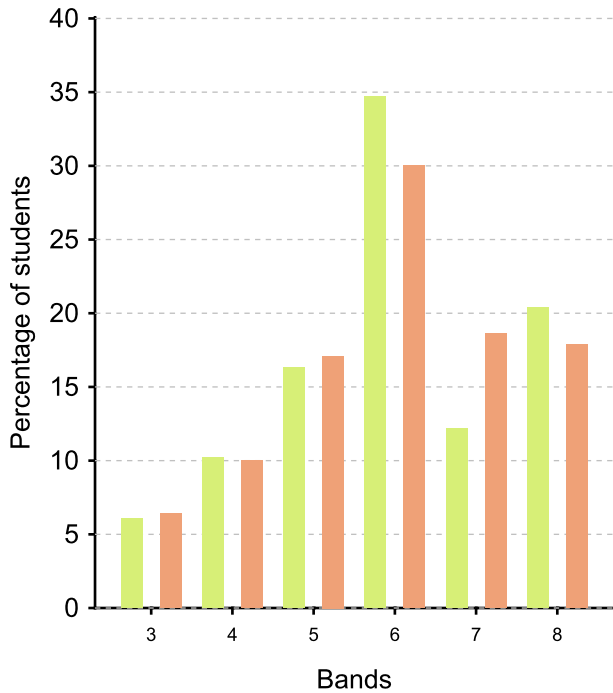
Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Writing



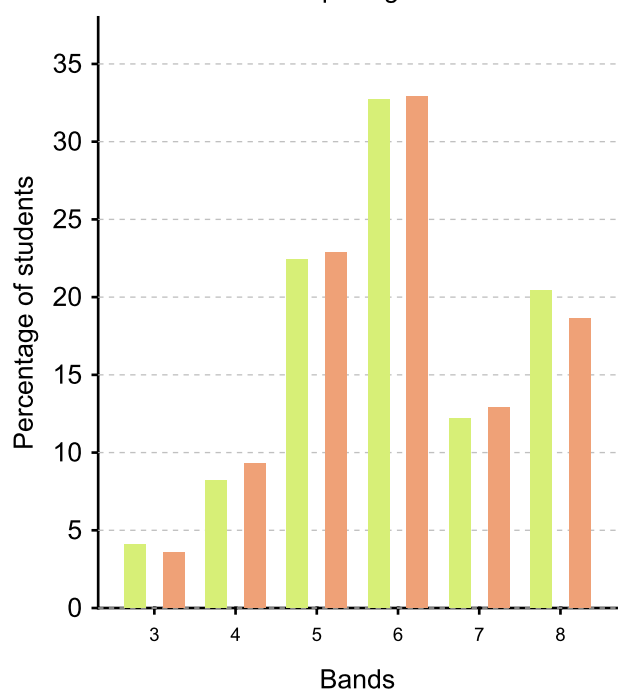
Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Reading



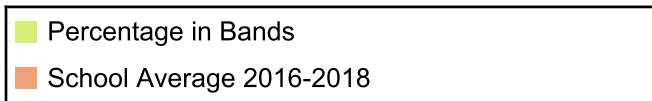
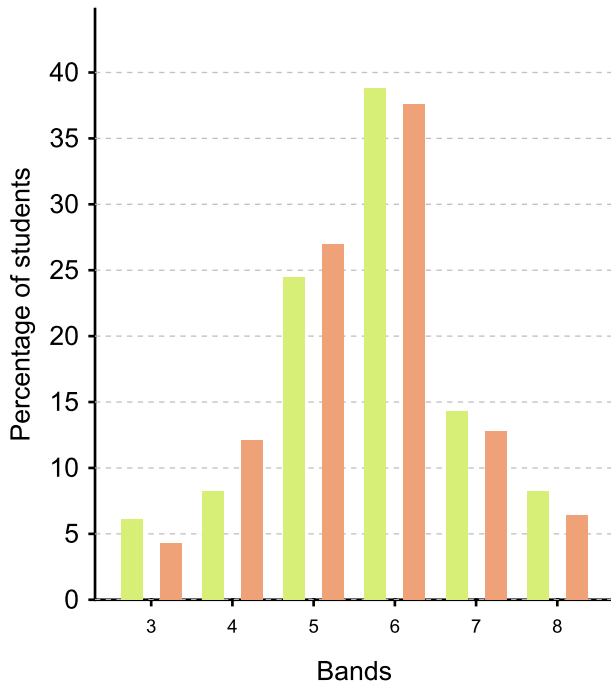
Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Grammar & Punctuation



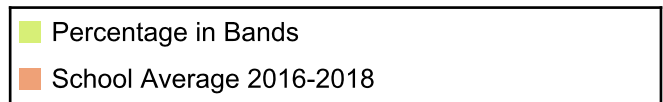
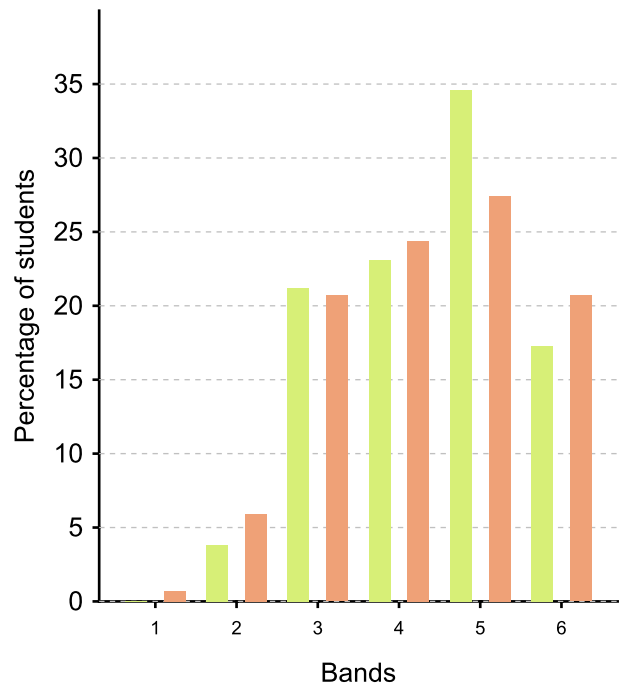
Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Spelling



Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Writing



Percentage in bands:
Year 3 Numeracy



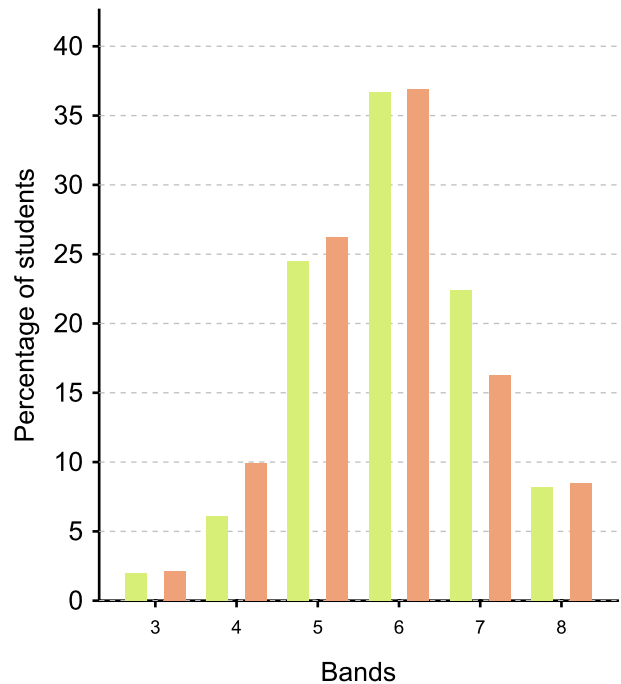
NAPLAN Year 3 Numeracy

Fifty-two Year 3 students sat the 2018 NAPLAN test in numeracy (26 boys and 26 girls). 65.4% of students were placed in the top two proficiency bands compared to only 38.5% in 2017. This also exceeded the state percentage by 23.2%. This is a huge improvement and testament to continued focus on improved pedagogy and practice in numeracy in the 2018–2020 School Plan. 96.2% of Year 3 students scored at or above the National Minimum Standards. Analysis of results has shown that students have sound number skills across each of the operations. A future focus area will be interpreting worded problems and metalanguage in order to identify the correct number process.

NAPLAN Year 5 Numeracy

Forty-nine students in Year 5 sat the 2018 NAPLAN test in numeracy (22 boys and 27 girls). 30.6% of students were placed in the top two proficiency bands compared to only 19.6% in 2017. This also exceeded the state percentage of 29.3%. 91.9% of Year 5 students scored at or above the National Minimum Standards. Analysis of Year 5 numeracy results indicated that our future areas of focus include multi-step problem solving; interpreting data in graphs and tables and some areas of measurement. In 2018, 65.9% of students achieved at or expected growth in numeracy, compared with 56.5% of the state.

Percentage in bands:
Year 5 Numeracy



The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing. Go to <http://www.myschool.edu.au> to access the school data.

One Aboriginal student participated in Year 3 NAPLAN in 2018. Two Aboriginal students participated in Year 5

NAPLAN in 2018. Numbers of Aboriginal students were too few to report on with validity in this section.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Each year schools are required to seek the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below:

93% of parents agree that they receive adequate notice of school events;

88% of parents agree that the school has high expectations of its students;

94% of parents agree that the school provides helpful information about their child's progress;

89% of parents agree that teachers provide a stimulating and challenging environment for their child/ren;

94% of parents agree that the school has a safe and secure environment;

96% of parents agree that the school regularly praises and rewards students when successful; and

95% of parents agree that the school values their support and that they can talk to their child's teacher.

In addition, quantitative and qualitative data was collected during our school evaluation of merit and discipline procedures; through our uniform community consultation survey and also throughout the year after school events via exit tickets.

"I think the school is doing an excellent job. There are regular awards and sports awards but also art, public speaking, music etc.. are all encouraged and rewarded. Assemblies are a great showcase of all the achievements of the school not just the smart or sporty kids!"

"With both my child's teachers I have no problems approaching them at any stage to discuss progress."

"We're very happy with teacher communication."

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Mount St Thomas Public School continued to develop Aboriginal programs to enhance the learning outcomes of our eleven Aboriginal students in 2018. These programs have been achieved through the implementation of Personalised Learning Pathways (PLPs) for each of our Aboriginal students. PLPs support students in developing a strong commitment to learning, with clearly identified personal learning goals and increased engagement between home and school. The PLPs were designed for each Aboriginal student with specific learning goals aimed to target each

student's academic, social and behavioural needs.

Mount St Thomas Public School continues to focus on the teaching of Aboriginal Education across the curriculum. Teachers provide students with experiences to develop a deep understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal culture. Human Society and Its Environment, History, Geography, Creative and Performing Arts, and Science and Technology units allow for the study, celebration, appreciation and understanding of Australian Aboriginal culture.

In 2018, our Aboriginal students participated in the Reconciliation Walk with 3000 other students and families. NAIDOC week celebrations involved a special day of activities, with storytelling, singing, painting and boomerang throwing. All students K-6 contributed handprints to a combined school canvas that we proudly display.

Our Aboriginal students participated in the Mountso Growers program, contributing to and enhancing our community garden and outdoor areas. Students also collaborated with Koomurri to paint a beautiful mural representing native animals from the area to share with the wider school community.

Two of our Aboriginal students received Deadly Awards in 2018, presented in affiliation with many community groups and our combined AECG's.

As a sign of respect, students commence assemblies with the traditional Acknowledgement of Country and our National Anthem is sung to Aboriginal music.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

Mount St Thomas Public School continues to actively promote multicultural education through a range of initiatives and events.

Through teaching programs, school systems and a range of events throughout the year, we strive to promote a shared vision of Australia based on cultural understanding and community harmony. Multicultural education aims to equip all students with the necessary skills, knowledge and values to participate successfully in our diverse society.

Teachers recognise and respond to the cultural needs of the school community and work collaboratively to develop strategies to meet the individual needs of students.

Tolerant attitudes and understanding towards cultures were promoted through our school Harmony Day activities and in speeches written by students as part of the Multicultural Perspectives Public Speaking Competition.

In classrooms, students are presented with inclusive teaching practices that recognise and value the backgrounds and cultures of all students. Teaching and learning programs support the particular learning needs of targeted students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We also run a comprehensive

EAL/D program with our newly arrived students, supported by funding from the New Arrivals Program.

At Mount St Thomas Public School, we have two staff members trained as Anti-Racist Contact Officers. The school is committed to the elimination of racism and discrimination through our school's curriculum, policies and working environment.

Other school programs

Leadership

School Leaders – Grip Leadership

In 2018, four students were elected as School Captains and Vice-Captains, six were elected as House Captains and Vice-Captains and twenty eight students were voted by their peers as representatives on the Student Representative Council.

During Term 2, our four School Captains and eight Stage 3 SRC leaders attended an intensive all day workshop, building leadership skills. They participated in purposeful and practical activities that promoted leading and supporting their peers using everyone's unique strengths and skills. These students were then able to return to school with their newly acquired leadership skills to better carry out their roles in 2018.

Student Representative Council

The Student Representative Council consisted of twenty eight students from Years 1 to 6. The SRC is involved in school decision-making, fundraising and community initiatives. Involvement in our SRC develops leadership skills, social awareness, communication skills and a sense of responsibility. In 2018, the SRC held a blue mufti day to raise funds for a staff member receiving stem cell treatment in Russia for MS and also held a 'Dress as a Farmer Day' to raise money for the farmers experiencing significant hardship due to drought in areas of the country.

PSC Learning to Lead Day

Nineteen students from Years 5 and 6 attended the Premier's Sporting Challenge Learning to Lead day at Figtree High School. Students participated in activities such as soccer, dance, initiative games and golf, which were expertly led by high school students. Our students were excellent ambassadors for our school in their enthusiasm, behaviour and cooperation. It was a hugely successful and fun day for all.

Arts

Creative and Practical Arts is a key learning area that allows children to express themselves as creatively, freely and enthusiastically as they wish, in the form that best suits them. Artistic expression encourages students to use life skills, and creates opportunities for cooperation, risk taking, tolerance and inclusion. In 2018, our students enjoyed great success in all areas of the arts.

Visual Arts

Every school in New South Wales is invited to participate in Operation Art, an initiative of The Children's Hospital at Westmead in association with the New South Wales Department of Education. The Operation Art Competition provides a forum for schools and students to demonstrate their visual arts achievements through exhibitions, at the Newington Armory Gallery, Sydney Olympic Park and the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Every year Mount St Thomas PS selects children's works to enter the Operation Art Competition in Sydney. To choose our pieces of art to represent Mount St Thomas Public School, we select some works from each class across the school.

Mount St Thomas Public School has also participated in the Young Archies Competition since 2017. This is a portrait competition in four age categories. As well as online, all finalists are displayed at the Art Gallery of NSW held in conjunction with the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes exhibition. Artworks receiving an honourable mention are also displayed online and, since 2014, at Sydney's SH Ervin Gallery.

Each Monday we have a specialist art teacher run art classes at lunch time with students who nominate. These classes teach a range of art techniques and explore the use of different materials and artist tools.

Band

Mount St Thomas Public School, in conjunction with the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, continued the Years 3–6 Band Program in 2018 with two bands – a beginner band and a senior band. Twenty eight students participated in music lessons each week. The school band had many opportunities to perform at school and community events, including the 49th Combined Schools Instrumental Festival, BandFest, where they achieved a Silver Award, and Bands in the Mall. Many thanks to our Wollongong Conservatorium of Music teacher, Jenny Cook, and the many parents who have supported their children to participate in this exciting music program.

Choir

Mount St Thomas Public School had 2 choirs again in 2018, a Junior choir made up of 25 enthusiastic students from K–2 and a Senior choir made up of 32 talented students from Years 3–6. Both choirs gave up their lunchtimes to rehearse and enjoyed performing at school assemblies and events. The Senior choir participated in the Southern Illawarra Music Festival which culminated in a beautiful performance at the University of Wollongong grand hall. They also participated in the Choirly Loud choral festival performing in Wollongong City Mall. The students in the choir displayed great commitment and a love of the performing arts and worked together as a team to produce quality performances.

In August, 24 students from years 3–6 performed as part of a mass choir of over 400 students in Southern Stars at the Wollongong Entertainment Centre. The

choir prepared at school and at 2 mass rehearsals in the lead up to performance dates. Each student enjoyed the opportunity to perform and be part of such a large scale production. Mount St Thomas Public School students represented their school with pride.

Southern Stars Choir

Nineteen students from Years 3 to 6, enthusiastically performed in massed choir items as part of Southern Stars at the Wollongong Entertainment Centre. The theme for the show was 'Iconic', which took the audience on a colourful tour through different iconic moments in time accompanied by iconic songs. They performed in multiple massed choir items with The Southern Stars Performing Company. In addition to the massed choir, one of our students was selected to perform in the SSPC Vocal Company.

Southern Stars Dance

Twenty-nine students from Years 3 to 6, enthusiastically performed in massed dance items as part of Southern Stars at the Wollongong Entertainment Centre. The students danced in the 'All Things Aussie' segment and in the finales. In addition to the massed dance, two of our students was selected to perform in the SSPC Dance Company.

Southern Stars Drama

Forty students from Years 3 to 6, enthusiastically performed in drama items as part of Southern Stars at the Wollongong Entertainment Centre. The students performed in the 'All Things Aussie' segment and in the finales.

School Production – 'The Adventures of SuperStan'

Stage 3 students, combined with Year 4 from Nebo 4 formed the cast of 'The Adventures of Superstan', totalling 115 students. They worked tirelessly throughout the year to bring this amazing show to life in December 2018. It was an exploration and adventure into the world of musical theatre; singing, dancing, acting, learning lines, storytelling, expanding literacy and music skills… and everything else that a production involves. Held at Figtree High School Auditorium, 'The Adventures of Superstan' was an exceptional performance where parents and community members were treated to an amazing show at a professional standard.

Public Speaking

Students from K–2 participated in an annual Public Speaking Competition again this year with nominated representatives from each class participating in the final. The winners of these finals then presented their speech at our Education Week Assembly. Students also had the opportunity to participate in the K–2 Community of Schools Public Speaking Competition held at Figtree Public School.

Four students from Stage 2 and 3 also represented our school in the Multicultural Perspectives Public Speaking Competition, winning their heats at school before

competing in their nominated heat with students from schools across the region.

Debating

Eight students formed two debating teams in 2018, participating in an inter-school debating competition.

Premier's Reading Challenge

Mount St Thomas Public School has been participating in the PRC for a number of years and it has become an important part of our ongoing promotion of literacy within the school community. This year, fifty four students from Kindergarten to Year 2, completed their challenge of reading twenty five books. Students in Years 3 to 6 had to complete twenty books up to and including quite difficult novels. Sixty three children completed this challenge.

CBCA Literary Lunch

Eight of our avid readers and committed library monitors, participated in a Literary Lunch with Author, Sue Whiting.

Sport

Mount St Thomas Public School had a very successful and rewarding year in sport in 2018. Students took part in the three major carnivals for the year – swimming, cross country and athletics, and participated in various in-school programs.

Swimming

One hundred and eight students competed in our 2018 school swimming carnival. Another thirty six students then went on to represent our school at the Central District Swimming Carnival. Mount St Thomas swimmers were well placed throughout the day. Overall our school came ninth. Four students then competed at the South Coast Area Swimming Carnival.

Cross Country

Over 240 Students participated in the school Cross Country Carnival, with the 8/9 and 10 years running two kilometres and the 11, 12 and 13 years running 3 kilometres.. Following our school cross country, fifty six students represented our school at the Central Wollongong PSSA Cross Country Carnival, held at Kembla Juggers track and two competed further at the South Coast Regional Carnival.

Athletics

We held our first K–6 Athletics Carnival for many years at the Kerry McCann Athletic Centre, where students participated enthusiastically in a range of athletics events and races. It was a fabulous day celebrating the sporting efforts and achievements of every student with their families. Fifty students then went on to participate in the District Athletics Carnival, and seven students competed further in the Regional Athletics Carnival.

District Sports Trials

Thirty-seven students nominated to try out for selection in Central Wollongong District sports teams. Sports included Soccer, Tennis, Cricket, Hockey, Basketball, Rugby League, Touch Football, Softball, Netball, AFL and Rugby Union. Of these selection trials, two students were selected into Central Wollongong PSSA Soccer teams; two students were selected into Central Wollongong PSSA Hockey teams with one attaining further selection into the South Coast Hockey team that competed at the State Championships; five students were selected for Central Wollongong PSSA Basketball teams with one attaining further selection into the South Coast Basketball team that competed at the State Championships; one student was selected for the Central Wollongong PSSA Cricket team; seven students were selected for Central Wollongong PSSA Touch Football teams and two students were selected for the Central Wollongong PSSA Rugby League team. This was a brilliant effort and a fabulous achievement for our school.

Premier's Sporting Challenge

All classes 3–6 participated in the Premier's Sporting Challenge in 2018. Nineteen students from Years 5 and 6 attended the Premier's Sporting Challenge Learning to Lead day at Figtree High School. Students participated in activities such as soccer, dance, initiative games and golf, which were expertly led by high school students. Our students were excellent ambassadors for our school in their enthusiasm, behaviour and cooperation. It was a hugely successful and fun day for all.

Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton Relay

Sixty of our students travelled to Stuart Park in February to see the landing of the Queen's Baton for the 2018 Commonwealth Games. With a spectacular entrance via parachute to a cheering crowd, the ceremony had the 'Wow' factor. This was an amazing experience for our students and certainly an event to remember.

Basketball

We had continued success in basketball in 2018. Our boys knockout team reached the quarter finals of the NSW PSSA Boys Basketball Knockout.

Swimming Scheme

In December 2018, ninety three students from Years 2–6 participated in the School Swimming Scheme. This is a long running Department of Education program that is free for all students. As Australians who live close to the coast and water, it is important that every student in our school has the opportunity to learn water safety and survival skills. Students made impressive gains throughout the 2 week program and we will continue to monitor the growth of these students in future swimming programs, as well as offer opportunities to new groups of students.

Code Club

Code Club met once a week at lunch time. Students participated in programming activities from the Code Club Australia curriculum. As part of the curriculum, students completed set tasks using Scratch. Coding strengthens problem solving skills and logical thinking, and supports key academic subjects such as Science, Mathematics and Technology. Students thoroughly enjoyed this extra-curricular opportunity and their skills are advancing rapidly.

Techsperts

Techsperts met once a week at lunch time. Students participated in learning activities linked to technology use that is planned for classroom teaching and learning programs. Techsperts familiarised themselves with new skills and then played a leadership role in class to support their class mates and the teacher. This year, techsperts have been working on Adobe Spark, computational thinking, Google Apps, iMovie and Dolnkgreenscreen app. Students' skills and dedication to learning new things is commendable and their enthusiasm is infectious.

Minecraft Education Edition

Mount St Thomas Public School students participated in the pilot of the Minecraft Education Edition, where they were asked to create a range of 3D worlds. Deploying key mathematical skills of scale and measurement at the same time as unleashing their innovation and creativity potential. Water parks and parkour courses were just some of the way-out designs that had grounding in mathematical reality.

Life Education

Happy Harold came in the Life Education Van to visit our school in Term 4. Students learnt about nutrition, drug education, cybersafety and anti-bullying strategies.

Environment

This year Mount St Thomas Public School has continued to maintain their environmental initiatives:

Community Outreach

Our school has a strong community link with volunteers of all ages, who form our school Garden Group. The volunteers are from the school community and surrounding suburbs. Their collective commitment is to maintain and improve our beautiful school environment. The volunteers work every Wednesday, with Mike coming in 3 days a week, on weekends and school holidays to continue maintenance and improvements. Our school gardens look absolutely spectacular from their efforts, and their ability to propagate and access a wide range of plants from Wollongong City Council and donations from the community.

Mountso Community Kitchen Garden and Mountso Growers

Our Mountso Community Kitchen Garden programs, well supported by our school Garden Group, continued

to develop and thrive in 2018. This beautiful, lush garden area was host to several preschool groups and little visitors throughout the year, assisting with transition and community engagement. Preschoolers planted their own tree for 'National Tree Day' and will have the next seven years to watch their young trees grow. Our garden was also host to budding local gardeners, newcomers and existing families at our Community Garden Days on the first Saturday of each month.

Mountso Growers was a group comprised of avid gardeners from years 2 to 6 who spent scheduled time each week tending to the garden, planting, harvesting and maintaining the beautiful school surrounds. This time spent was rich, with purposeful hands-on learning to contribute to the culture of our school. It afforded these students a clear sense of purpose and belonging, and their contributions were widely acknowledged. A huge achievement for them, a process also well supported by our school Garden Group, was the attainment of the Research Award and a massive \$1000 prize through the Wollongong Council Rise and Shine Competition. We were all so immensely proud of their achievements.

Class Gardens

Classes take time out of their busy schedules to plant and water the class gardens in the school grounds. Everyone regularly enjoys the fruits of their labour at harvest time.

Chickens

Our school chickens are looked after by volunteer Keith, who has an extensive knowledge and experience with poultry. At times during the year school families have volunteered to feed and care for the chickens when needed.

The Garden Group

The school Garden Group now in its 11th year, runs plant stalls at school community events such as Family Fun Night, Smart Start BBQ and Election days with money raised funding purchase of tools, equipment, seeds, plants, stakes and soil. There are always plants for sale at the front office. This amazing group cooks BBQ lunches at school events such as the end of Year 6 sausage sizzle.

Members of the Garden Group have been involved in many school and community activities including:

Ongoing collection and storage of donated items for the school fete, and organising and running 3 stalls on the day;

Cleaning out and reorganising storerooms and storage areas;

Using recycled materials in the school environment;

Organising World Tree Day at school where our preschoolers planted native bushes on the bank;

Completing major projects around the school including rejuvenation and renovation of the huge bank area adjoining the black playground, the garden outside the school hall, areas behind and adjacent to Ousley and a huge amount of work near Kembla as part of the Community Garden;

Two working worm farms have been located in a shaded position near Ousley building and Drummond; and

Maintaining the School Archive Room in Nebo building where extensive archives are accessioned and stored as valuable records of our school's history.

The hundreds of volunteer hours committed regularly by our Garden Group affords our school, community and students many opportunities to learn and engage in the environment that is Mount St Thomas Public School. These hours and expertise are immeasurable and we proudly affirm to all that our Garden Group are integral to our school and a cornerstone of our community culture.