

**Gisborne Montessori School**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2019**



## About Us

Gisborne Montessori School is a small, coeducational school of approximately 150 students, educating children from birth to age 12, nestled at the foot of Mount Macedon. The school offers facilitated Playgroup sessions, Early Learning sessions, Pre-school and Primary education through to Year 6.

## Governance

The Gisborne Montessori School Ltd is a non-profit Company created to establish and manage the business affairs of the educational facility known as Gisborne Montessori School. Gisborne Montessori School Ltd is managed by a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is responsible for the total governance of the School and delegates responsibility for the daily management of the School to the Principal.

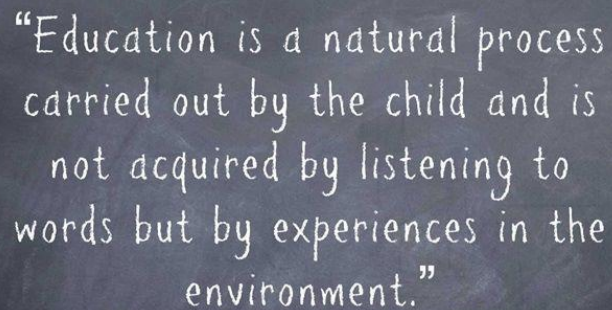
Gisborne Montessori School is a funded primary school and preschool. As such it is accountable to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and the Department of Education and Training (DET) for curriculum, assessment and facility provision.

The school is compliant with the Child Safe standards prescribed in Ministerial Order 870 – Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in Schools.

Gisborne Montessori School supports and promotes the principles and practices of Australian democracy, including a commitment to:

- a) elected government; and
- b) the rule of law; and
- c) equal rights for all before the law; and
- d) freedom of religion; and
- e) freedom of speech and association; and
- f) the values of openness and tolerance.

**Kindness**  
**Respect**  
**Gratitude**  
**Nature**  
**Creativity**



“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment.”

## About Montessori

Montessori is an approach to supporting the full development of the human being. As an educational system, it is used in over 22,000 schools worldwide, and has a longer track record of success than any other educational approach in the world.

The Montessori approach to education, inspires children towards a lifelong love of learning, by following their natural developmental trajectory. Children become confident, responsible, independent learners, who trust in their own abilities.

## Gisborne Montessori School Community

Gisborne Montessori School provides many opportunities for families to participate in school events. These include information sessions, cultural events and fundraising. School information has been promoted via newsletters and the Skoolbag app.

Information sessions are offered regularly throughout the year. These comprise of formal presentations regarding the principles and practice of the school and an informal component where parents and family members are invited to appraise classroom materials and activities.

The Gisborne Montessori School 2019 Annual Report contains all the information required under regulation 60 of the Australian Education Regulations 2013. The Gisborne Montessori School 2019 Annual Report can be accessed through the VRQA state register <https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/StateRegister/Home.aspx> and at the School Reception.

This has been my final year as the principal of Gisborne Montessori School and what an honour it has been to lead this wonderful organisation. At the annual school concert this year, my heart swelled with pride for all we have collectively achieved. To see two concert events completely packed out with the hall full to overflowing was a joy to behold as this was indicative of how far we have come. The first year I was here we had an audience of less than 30 people!

The year has been jam packed with so many wonderful experiences for the children. The introduction of lunchtime clubs has added another layer to what we are able to offer our children who seek out quieter play opportunities and I sincerely thank staff who actively volunteer their time to provide these amazing experiences. Every day there is an option for a quieter lunchtime activity – Lego Club, Active Brain Club, Building with Slats, Social Skills Games, Working with and Leading the Animals, PE Games, Choir, and Movement and Relaxation.

The animal program continues to delight all of us. Children not only love having them out at lunchtimes, but they find comfort in them if they are upset or anxious, they discover important lessons in responsibility and learn patience and kindness through their association with them. An added benefit this year was when one student attended the Royal Melbourne Show with Cathie and exhibited one of our sheep, Dolly May. What an incredible experience, as Ava was responsible for all her training prior to the show. These sorts of additional benefits allow a child to grow in confidence that no other program can offer.

We have made significant investments in 2019 in developing a strong STEM program, with the introduction of coding and robotics. This has added a further dimension to our science and technology programs which the children are loving. Our reading schemes have also undergone a transformation with the induction of many more readers across the school, something all students have benefited greatly from. Our IT capability has also had a big injection of funds, lifting it to another level with all teachers now having laptops, improved Wifi capability and the introduction of Ipads in all classrooms. Adam has continued to work with the children on our Kitchen Garden program, providing some of the best zucchinis ever to supplement our lunchtime menu.

We have continued to extend Berry Street Education Model training for staff who have not received this training over the past two years and have also been able to offer this to parents at four very successful Parent Education sessions. Parents have also been provided with a variety of resources to manage digital health in their home environments, meaning the school and families are working together to assist our young people to navigate this challenging social environment.

I must thank all my dedicated staff team as it would be wrong of me to single out any people as everyone works together to provide an outstanding Montessori education for all of the children in our care. I can honestly say, I have not worked with a more dedicated, harmonious team. Thank you one and all.

The children in our school have all worked so hard to not only improve their academic skills, but have worked especially hard on developing themselves as better people, through honest discussions when conflict arises, through sound self-reflection and through developing abilities to empathise with one another – well done to all of you.

Parents, I need to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your unwavering trust in my decision making, your loyalty to the school and for your unwavering support. I have loved working with each and every one of you.

To the School Board – we have come from humble beginnings of just 2 Board members to a wonderful group of 6 who gift the school with a diverse range of special skills. This group works tirelessly for the school and deserves a HUGE thanks for the enormous amount of work that it took to select our new Principal, Frayal.

I leave at the end of my term with a very satisfied feeling and I know you will all continue to support Frayal and her hard work as the school continues to flourish. Having Frayal full time as Principal will allow the school to continue to reach for further improvements. Welcome, Frayal as I hand over the reins to you. Enjoy every minute as I have done!

Dianne Davis  
(Past Principal)

## Chairperson's Report

As the chair of the Gisborne Montessori School Board, I am pleased to provide this report for the 2019 Annual Report.

The year has been one of steady improvement and consolidation, while concluding with the beginning of our transition into the next generation of GMS.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the hard work and dedication of our staff spent creating such a wonderful environment for our children to attend each and every day. Furthermore, a thank you to our many families for their support and voluntarism in making such valuable contributions toward the smooth operation of the school as well as the enrichment of our programs.

2019 provided an opportunity for the school to invest in many upgrades and improvements but especially in technology. Laptops for staff and iPads for students as well as the underlying network infrastructure, such as cabling and Wi-Fi.

The school started working towards items on its Vision Document and made preparations for future VRQA audit as well as (successful) grant applications for an upgrade to the junior years playgrounds.

Perhaps the largest single change was to recruitment of a new Principal to take over the reins from Dianne Davis. The recruitment process took 6 months and concluded with the appointment of Frayal Wahid to the position, beginning the transition in November.

The school year also saw many successful events, not least of which were the school production of *The Greatest Showman* and the School Concert.

I would like to sign off with a thank you to our outgoing Principal, Dianne Davis, for her many years of amazing service to the school, she will be greatly missed by everyone.

Dez Stallard  
GMS Chairperson





The programs offered in the primary classrooms meet the guidelines of the Australian Curriculum and the Montessori National Curriculum. Through the continual process of development and review of our Curriculum Framework, the school ensures that our curriculum is thorough, developmentally appropriate and in accordance with both Montessori educational standards and current Government educational standards.

Curriculum specialist areas of Art, Music, LOTE (Auslan), Animal Husbandry, Cooking, Sustainability, Library and PE form a vital component of the school curriculum. Our various gardens are utilised as outdoor classrooms and students enjoy completing their classwork surrounded by nature.

Opportunities to perform at the Annual Concert and other school events enhance the Performing Arts program. The whole school assembly is an opportunity for our Graduates to showcase their leadership skills. It gives the children a strong sense of identity as they realise they are part of a bigger whole.

The students put on a fantastic performance of "The Greatest Showman". Students take the lead in developing the script and making props and costumes. The production was a big success with two sell-out shows over two nights.



Incursions and excursions provide opportunities for students to enrich the learning through real experiences. Regular activities include cultural performances, Responsible Pet Ownership, Wild Action Zoo and visits by Authors. All Primary students participate in the annual swimming classes at Kyneton Aquatic Centre. Students enjoy lunchtime bike riding around the large grounds. Annual events including Book Week and Science Week provide opportunities for students to have fun while also enriching the curriculum.



Years 1-3 extended their learning through an overnight camp in Bendigo. Highlights included visits to The great Stupa of Universal Compassion, Bendigo Botanical Gardens, Confectionary Capers, Discovery Centre, Bendigo Pottery, & the Deborah Mine.

Years 4-6 attended Campaspe Downs where they participated in a variety of fun adventure activities with physical challenges which required cooperation and participation from everybody.





The children continue to enjoy their interactions with the animals and learning the responsibilities that come with having them. Students participate in feeding, grooming, maintenance of fences and paddocks and the collection of eggs for sale. The children were excited to welcome three lambs to the school.



A range of lunchtime clubs were introduced to provide opportunities to practice social skills and extended learning. In 2019 the clubs included Playground Network (social skills), Lego, Literacy, Choir and Movement.

The Kitchen Program continues to be a core program within the school and provides opportunities for students to prepare morning tea for their class and attend cooking classes. In 2020 this program will extend as our kitchen garden develops.



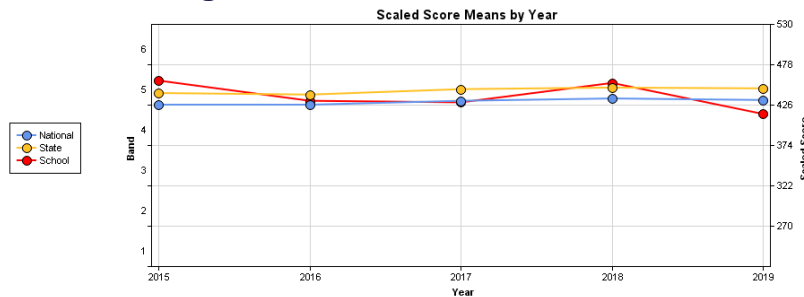
The NAPLAN results for 2019 show that several of the children in this cohort of assessed children have diagnosed learning difficulties and for them, the results are what we would have expected and follow similar trends to what we have seen in classroom assessments.

### Students at or above the National Minimum Standards

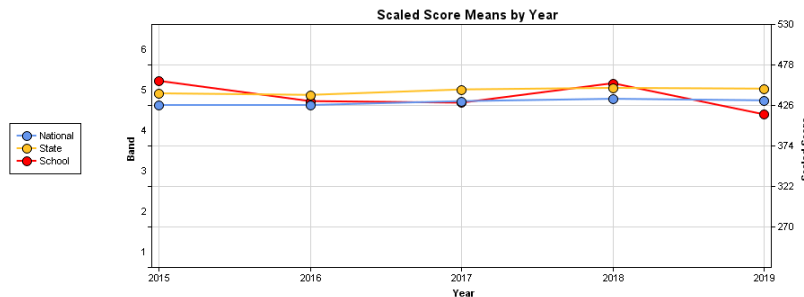
|        | Reading | Writing | Spelling | Grammar & Punctuation | Numeracy |
|--------|---------|---------|----------|-----------------------|----------|
| Year 3 | 100%    | 100%    | 100%     | 100%                  | 100%     |
| Year 5 | 100%    | 60%     | 80%      | 60%                   | 71%      |

At GMS we provide students with an environment where they learn at their own rate in a supportive and non-competitive way. Students have a diverse range of skills and abilities. NAPLAN is just one method of assessment used to support students. GMS has a small number of students who sit the test and the results will vary depending on the student cohort.

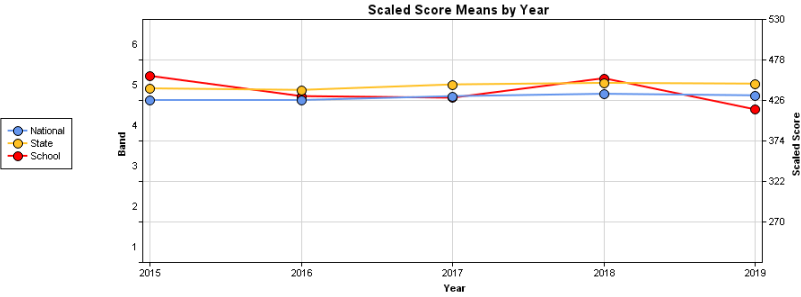
### Year 3 Reading



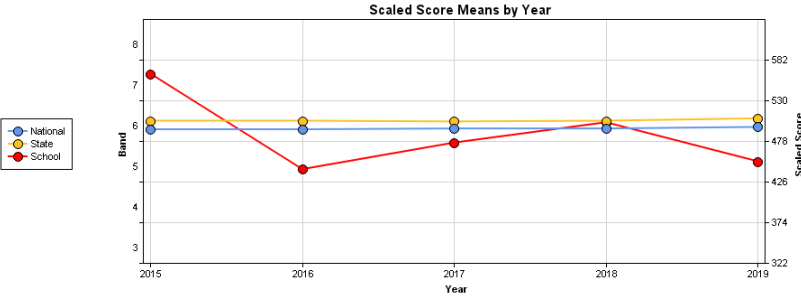
### Year 3 Numeracy



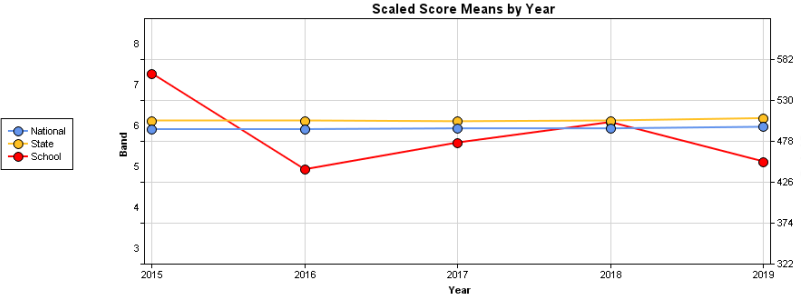
## Year 3 Grammar and Punctuation



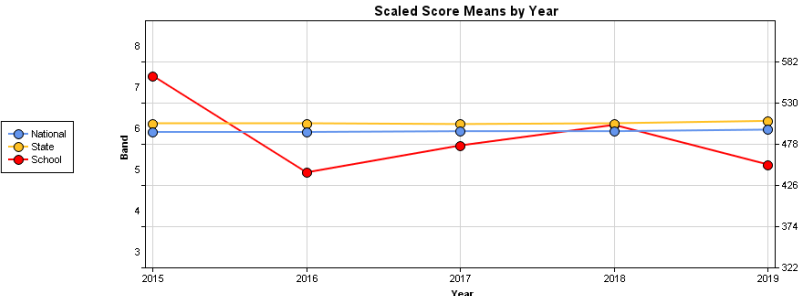
## Year 5 Reading



## Year 5 Numeracy



## Year 5 Grammar and Punctuation



The anomaly in the 2019 results are consistent with the learning cohort for that year.

## Student Attendance @ GMS

On Census Day, the Primary School had an enrolment of 87 students of whom 41 were boys and 46 were girls. Year 6 Students graduated to schools including Gisborne Secondary College, Sacred Heart College, Braemar College and Red Rock College.

### Student attendance rate

Semester 1: 84%

Term 3: 84%

### Student attendance level (proportion of students attending 90% or more of the time)

Semester 1: 43%

Term 3: 38%

Attendance rates per year level are shown below.

| Year | Attendance rate |
|------|-----------------|
| 1    | 89%             |
| 2    | 80%             |
| 3    | 84%             |
| 4    | 83%             |
| 5    | 80%             |
| 6    | 85%             |

Low attendance can be partly attributed to some families travelling a long distance to our rural school, up to 45 km away. Students requiring additional support often attend appointments during school hours.

The Passtab system tracks students arriving late or leaving early. Families are required to notify the school when students will be absent and provide the dates of absences and reason. Families can notify the school via the Skoolbag app, email or phone. Non-attendance without an explanation is followed up by Administration via phone calls. Attendance issues by a child of compulsory school age will be addressed with the family and if necessary reported to the School Attendance Officer.

All teachers are full Victoria registered (VIT) with a Bachelor of Education qualification as well as their various Montessori qualifications adding a further layer to their expertise. We also do ongoing training as a staff team to refresh and add new ideas to how we work with the Montessori equipment as well as attending training on a broad range of other educational topics.

Our team comes from a variety of cultural backgrounds (including Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent) adding interest and diversity to our team. The composition of the work force in 2019 was an average of 34 staff members. In 2019 our gender ratio of employees was 30 females and 4 males.

Professional development included:

- Child Protection
- First Aid
- Berry Street Education Model
- Digital Technologies Curriculum
- Smart Spelling
- Understanding Autism

Staff undertook professional development in the Montessori philosophy and practice.

GMS supports all staff in their commitment to pursue further studies and provides regular Montessori training after hours for staff.

| Qualification   | Number of staff |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Certificate III | 12              |
| Certificate IV  | 2               |
| Diploma         | 11              |
| Degree          | 10              |
| Post Graduate   | 0               |
| Masters         | 1               |



## Attitudinal Data – Families & Staff

Feedback from the 2019 annual survey was overwhelmingly positive. In 2019 the annual survey was completed internally and in 2020 the school will participate in the LEAD surveys by Independent Schools Victoria.

### *Feedback from families*

- Families were happy with the Montessori program and the learning environment provided. They believe that students are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Respondents believe that the Montessori program offered by the school is excellent.
  - 67% strongly agreed
  - 22% agreed
  - 11% (2 families) were neutral
- Families believe that the school provides an excellent environment in which to learn.
  - 67% strongly agreed
  - 22% agreed
  - 11% (2 families) were neutral
- Suggestions for the future included landscaping the large grounds.

“I have found that the Montessori system is a very nurturing and caring environment. It has given both my children an excellent foundation.”

### *Feedback from staff*

- Staff provided positive feedback, particularly regarding the provision of an authentic Montessori program.
- All respondents believe that GMS does a good job developing the thinking and reasoning skills of students.
  - 32% strongly agreed
  - 68% agreed
- All respondents believe that staff provide excellent help and support for students.
  - 40% strongly agreed
  - 60% agreed
- Suggestions for the future included outdoor shade and additional resources for classrooms and the library.

## Attitudinal Data – Students

### *Feedback from students*

Requests for the future included additional sports equipment, a slide and a cubby. Comments included “I love all the animals” and “I love GMS and I don’t want to leave for high school!”.

Staff provide excellent help and support when needed

Students felt that staff provide excellent help and support when needed.

- 58% strongly agreed
- 42% agreed

I am encouraged to be responsible for my learning.

- 42% strongly agreed
- 58% agreed



