



# 2023

Annual report



# Head of School message

The NextSense School - Spoken Language Program takes great pleasure in presenting its Annual report for 2023, providing a comprehensive overview of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year. This report offers an in-depth account of the significant progress made by the school in delivering exceptional educational opportunities to all students and celebrates another remarkable year of growth, learning, and achievement within our unique community of hard of hearing students.

Throughout the year, our dedicated team of educators and staff continued to uphold our commitment to providing an inclusive and supportive environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We have embraced the diversity of our student body, nurturing each child's individual strengths and talents while ensuring they receive the specialised support they need to succeed.

I am immensely proud of our students, whose determination and enthusiasm for learning have been truly inspiring. They have consistently shown resilience in overcoming challenges and have demonstrated outstanding progress across all areas of their development. Whether in academics, arts, sports, or advocacy, our students have strived with courage and perseverance.

Our partnership with our parents and guardians, remains fundamental to our success. Their unwavering support, collaboration, and feedback continue to guide our efforts to provide the best possible educational experience for your children. Together, we have created a nurturing community where every child feels valued, understood, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Looking ahead, we are committed to building on our achievements and further enhancing our programs and resources to meet the evolving needs of our students. With the continued support and involvement of all stakeholders, I am confident that we will continue to achieve new heights and create even more opportunities for our students to shine.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. Your passion and commitment to our students are truly commendable and have been instrumental in creating a positive and enriching learning environment.

As we reflect on the past year's successes and challenges, we remain optimistic and steadfast in our pursuit of excellence. NextSense will continue to foster a school community that celebrates diversity, embraces inclusivity, and prepares our students for a future full of promise.

We look forward to another year of growth, achievement, and meaningful collaboration with our NextSense community.

Antonella Dolores

Head of School Services

# School context

NextSense School – Spoken Language Program is an independent school that caters for children from Kindergarten to Year 6 who are Deaf or hard of hearing. The school has a strong focus and reputation for quality, innovative teaching and learning across all areas of the curriculum, as well as the ongoing development of spoken language. The school is designed to ensure a student has access to our high-quality curriculum in an inclusive environment. Students are taught in small classes by Teachers of the Deaf in consultation with speech pathologists, audiologists and educational psychologists. With a highly motivated and committed team, this program nurtures and supports each student to reach their goals.

In 2023 a school and preschool operational review took place and a restructure of leadership was established to reflect the contemporary vision of NextSense and its strategic priorities. Three key leadership roles were developed: Leader of Pedagogy, Leader of Partnerships and Advocacy and Leader of Research. Our leadership team prioritised the adoption of research based contemporary approaches to learning and assessment to develop a new approach for 2024.

## How we promote respect and responsibility

The wellbeing and pastoral care at NextSense School aspires to enhance the wellbeing of students, staff and parents within our school community. Student wellbeing, learning and safety are reinforced by procedures, resources, communication and values that create a safe and inclusive learning environment and positive and caring relationships.

Some Wellbeing programs in 2023 included:

- Professional development for all staff on the Child Safeguarding Framework
- The introduction of the Be You Framework to all members of the school community
- A wellbeing survey to all members of the school community
- Student voice at assemblies to discuss school initiatives
- Zoom meetings every term for parents to improve communication between home and school
- School psychologist to support student learning and behaviour
- Opportunities to live out the school's values of empowerment, communication, community, collaboration and integrity.

An ongoing focus on building each student's social and emotional skills is a priority in each child's Individual Education Plan. These Plans can also include the transition to high school or into mainstream schooling.

## Student population

In 2023, the school had 25 students enrolled—ten girls and fifteen boys. Our students come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, with approximately 76% of enrolments coming from a language background other than English. An examination of the enrolment patterns across the grade levels illustrates the effects of the movement of students out of the program and into regular mainstream classes. All students have been fitted with and wear assistive hearing technology such as hearing aids and cochlear implants.

## **Student outcomes**

In the National Assessment Program, student results in literacy and numeracy assessments for Years 3 and Year 5 are reported on a scale ranging from Band 1 to 6. This achievement scale represents ascending levels of skills and knowledge demonstrated in these assessments.

In 2023, the school achieved a 100% participation rate for NAPLAN testing. Detailed information and data regarding these assessments can be accessed on the My School website at [myschool.edu.au](https://myschool.edu.au).

## **Our staff**

All teachers at our school, whether they are casual, temporary, or permanent, possess the necessary approval to teach from the NSW Department of Education and are accredited by the NSW Education Standards Authority. Additionally, every teacher holds a recognised teaching degree, ensuring a high standard of educational expertise among our staff.

Furthermore, our entire staff, including teachers, hold valid NSW Working with Children Check clearance and have undergone Criminal History clearance, so we can provide a safe and secure environment for our students.

A significant number of our teaching staff have pursued or are currently undertaking specialised teaching qualifications in addition to their initial teacher qualifications. We value the continuous professional development of our staff and actively monitor their accreditation status. We encourage and support our staff in seeking higher levels of accreditation, fostering a culture of ongoing growth and expertise within our school community.

## Staffing composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Deputy Principal	1
Classroom teacher(s)	5
School psychologist	.3
Leader of Advocacy and Partnerships	.2
Leader of Pedagogy	.2
Leader of Research	.2
School assistants (support staff)	4
Librarian	.3
School administration	.6

## Teacher accreditation

The following table provides details of the accreditations of teaching staff who were employed in 2023.

Level of accreditation	
Provisional teachers	1
Proficient teachers	4

In 2023, there were no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff members. The teaching staff remained stable throughout 2023.

The School psychologist has a recognised university qualifications and professional accreditation.

## Excellence in teaching and learning

Building on the achievements of the previous year, the NextSense School community remained dedicated to fostering active student engagement, setting high expectations, and providing unwavering support to help each student reach their personal best. A systematic approach to evaluation ensured continuous monitoring of student learning and growth. The collection and analysis of data were embraced as a collective responsibility of the entire school community, informing the next steps in student learning. Establishing strong foundations in literacy and numeracy continued to be a paramount objective.

NextSense School - Spoken Language Program, has a strong emphasis on students striving for their personal best and cultivating a culture of dynamic learning, innovation, and future-oriented practices that promote excellent teaching. This dedication is evident in the design of teaching programs, where teachers outline learning outcomes, deliver quality curriculum content, and employ formative and summative assessments to gauge students' knowledge, understanding, and skills. Differentiation is integral to this approach, with personalised language and literacy goals developed for every student, catering to the varying levels of achievement through diverse learning intentions and success criteria.

The school places great importance on supporting the wellbeing of all students, enabling them to forge connections, achieve success, thrive, and learn. Strong emphasis is placed on promoting student inquiry, fostering classroom engagement, and granting students a sense of purpose and agency in their learning journey. Student learning needs are carefully considered and developed in consultation with parents, ensuring a collaborative approach. Teachers, students, and staff consistently engage with parents through Class Dojo, using direct messaging to address individual needs and the 'Stories' function to share success stories.

### **Professional learning**

Professional learning workshops are aligned with our school's strategic direction projects. As a result of regular professional learning meetings, all staff are inspired to trial and implement innovative teaching strategies in their classroom. Team meetings promote collaborative practice and consistency in teaching across the classes. Through team meetings and professional learning meetings, teachers collaborate and share feedback to sustain quality teaching practice in their classroom.

Six complete days were allocated to professional development activities for all school staff. In addition, teachers, teacher's aides, and specialist staff had significant access to additional professional development in weekly staff meeting workshops. Teachers are also actively engaged in planning their own professional development to improve their performance by driving the development of their professional development plan. Staff are guided to professional learning opportunities to fulfil and develop their skills to ensure the very best learning outcomes are available for students.

Throughout 2023 we continued the approach taken by our school leaders in developing a new K-2 Scope and Sequence for mathematics and English. To support the successful implementation of these new syllabuses, the leadership team organised and facilitated extensive professional development opportunities for our teachers.

These sessions equipped them with the necessary skills and strategies to effectively deliver the revised curriculum. Additionally, our leadership team actively participated in courses offered by the Association of Independent Schools Leadership Centre, further enriching their leadership skills and knowledge.

Our dedicated staff also engaged in a range of activities throughout the year, contributing to our students' educational experience and overall growth. Some of these activities included:

<b>Professional learning</b>	<b>Staff attended</b>
Mathematics K-6 Scope and Sequence (6 Days)	2 teachers and leadership team members
NCCD Knowledge and understanding and data evaluation	5 teachers and leadership team members
Review of English Scope and Sequence	5 teachers
New school site and resources	All staff members
Mathematics Scope and Sequence and Content	2 teachers and leadership team members
Mathematics Curriculum and Resources	5 teachers
NextSense Organisation Review	All staff members
Manual Handling	All staff members
Prowise Touchscreen Professional Learning	5 teachers
Years 3-6 New English Syllabus	5 teachers
CPR Refresher	All staff members
Safeguarding Training	All staff members
Spelling Mastery	All staff members
Warden Training	2 teachers
Workshop: An explicit approach to teaching and revising the components of reading.	5 teachers
School Pedagogy - Mathematics Structure, Scope and Sequence review	5 teachers
School Pedagogy - English Structure, Foundations, Reading and Explicit Teaching	5 teachers
Code of Conduct	All staff members

# Student attendance

Ensuring regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility between parents and schools, as we recognise the positive impact it has on supporting our students. We foster a collaborative approach where teachers and parents work together to promote and monitor regular attendance. We have implemented effective measures to accurately record attendance and promptly address student absences. The school has established structures and policies to ensure strict compliance in tracking and improving student attendance, and all staff are well-informed about the attendance policy and their role in monitoring student attendance.

We continue to implement a school-wide SMS system that enables us to promptly address daily non-attendance. Our class teachers and administrative staff diligently record follow-up information for tracking purposes. It is through these measures that we strive to maintain a high level of student attendance.

Our whole school attendance average rate for 2023 was 89.59% with an improvement of nearly 3% from the previous year.

Year level	Attendance rate %
Kindergarten	82.00%
Year 1	88.72%
Year 2	89.05%
Year 3	92.30%
Year 4	93.66%
Year 5	92.60%
Year 6	87.80%
Whole School	89.59%

We remain committed to working closely with parents and implementing strategies to improve attendance rates and ensure that every student can fully engage in their education. The school will continue to prioritise the importance of regular school attendance for the academic and personal development of our students.

The school rigorously implements policies and procedures for the management of non-attendance. All cases of unsatisfactory attendance and unexplained part or full day absences from school are investigated promptly.

# School policies

The following school policies are publicly available on the NextSense website

- Enrolment policy
- Child protection policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Discipline policy
- Complaints policy

## Stakeholder satisfaction

The school highly values and actively encourages feedback from parents and families, as it plays a crucial role in improving our school community. In 2023, we conducted parent Zoom meetings each term, to gain ongoing information regarding the key priorities for 2023 and assess the level of parent satisfaction. We also gathered feedback from our partner schools and the Department of Education to improve integration into mainstream and transition into high school.

In comparison to surveys that were sent in 2022, the Zoom meetings offered an ongoing form of involvement and voice and had a higher number of parent participation. Parents were informed of the progress of the new site at Macquarie, curriculum development, wellbeing and the restructure of leadership.

The use of Class Dojos has continued to have a positive impact between home and school. Class Dojo has allowed for positive communication between students and parents about learning and open communication between staff and parents.

## Parent, student and teacher satisfaction

NextSense School values the input and perspectives of parents, and their satisfaction and engagement are fundamental to our commitment to providing a supportive and enriching educational environment for all students. To gather comprehensive input, the school conducts annual surveys of parents and partner schools. The written feedback from both groups is analysed to identify emerging themes and areas in need of improvement. These become integral to our plans for enhancing the quality of our services in the coming year.

The use of Class Dojos has continued to have a positive impact on communication between home and school, opening up positive communication between students and parents about learning and between staff and parents.

We conducted a wellbeing survey for staff, students and parents on the five domains of Family partnerships, Early support, Responding together, Learning Resilience, and Mentally Healthy Communities. The key findings were:

- Staff, parents and students identified Mentally Healthy Communities as our highest scoring domain.
- Staff and parents identified the Responding Together domain and the students identified Family Partnerships as areas to be further explored and developed.
- Key stakeholders averaged the school wellbeing as four out of five.

The survey results indicate that staff, parents and students feel well-informed about their child's social and emotional development, as well as their progress at school. This open communication and transparency is vital to ensuring parents are actively engaged in their child's educational journey.

In our school, we strongly encourage students to express their opinions and share their perspectives on all aspects of their learning and school life. Here are some examples of the feedback we received from our students:

- I feel accepted at my school and I belong.
- My teacher helps me take on new challenges.
- My teacher and my family want me to be the best that I can be.
- I enjoy playing handball and soccer with friends that are older and younger than me.
- I like the touch screens.
- Listening and focusing on the teacher will help my learning to the teacher.
- I am becoming more responsible and respectful.
- I like teaching the little kids how to be responsible and nice to each other.
- It is important to look after our environment.
- We take care of each other.

We greatly appreciate the feedback provided by parents, students and staff as it helps us continuously improve and create a supportive and collaborative learning environment. We remain committed to fostering open lines of communication and collaboration between all members of our school community.

## School determined priorities for 2024

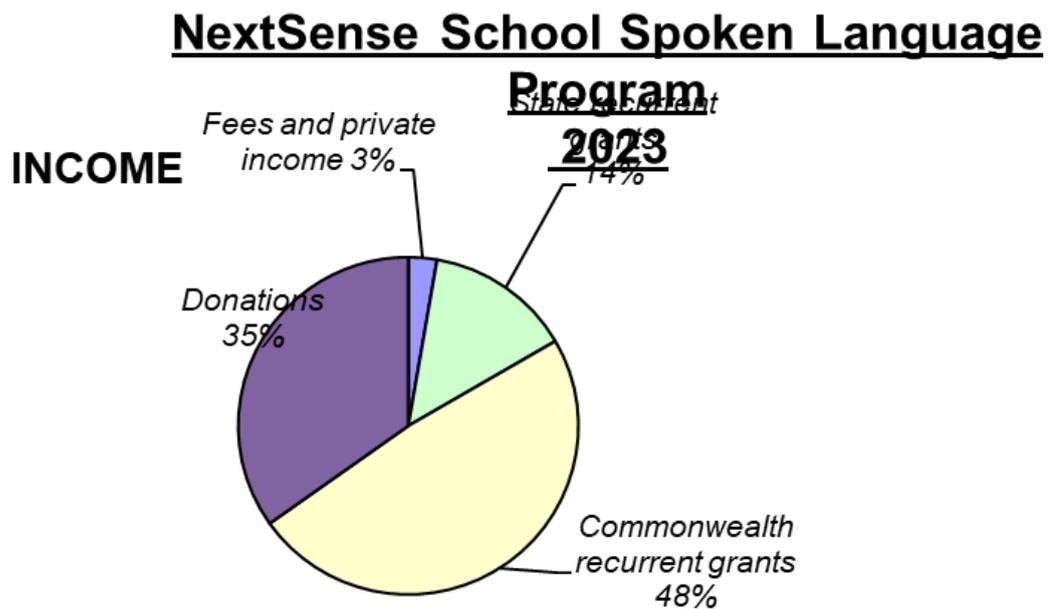
Priority	Key actions
Transition to our new home on the Macquarie University precinct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure policies and enrolment processes reflect name change.</li> <li>• Macquarie move process is clearly documented and shared across the school with all key stakeholders</li> <li>• Review school policies &amp; procedures to reflect Macquarie site school environment.</li> <li>• Develop orientation to new site process for staff, student, and parents</li> </ul>
Sustain whole school processes for improving English and Mathematics outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current research is implemented and continually reflected upon for a K-6 approach to teaching literacy in the school.</li> <li>• Teachers and Teacher Aides are supported in implementing Spelling Mastery.</li> <li>• Teachers are implementing effective structures for a literacy and numeracy block</li> <li>• Teachers take part in modelling and constructive feedback in developing the skill of explicit approach to teaching.</li> <li>• Teachers have a deeper knowledge and understanding of the 3-6 English and mathematics Syllabus.</li> <li>• Teachers are effectively analysing data and continually implementing effective intervention programs in language, literacy and numeracy.</li> <li>• Teachers take part in ongoing reflective conversations on student learning and addressing student needs through case management.</li> <li>• Resourcing is a priority to effectively implement programs in language, literacy and numeracy.</li> <li>• Throughout the year Teacher Aides received professional development in implementing intervention programs.</li> </ul>
Improve well-being practices and initiatives following a consistent approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be You consultant and framework is utilised</li> <li>• Wellbeing Action Team has been established.</li> <li>• Wellbeing data analysed to create a wellbeing action plan.</li> <li>• Wellbeing action plan is shared and implemented</li> </ul>
Continuous development in Auslan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Onsite Interpreter is employed to provide equity in access to all education stakeholders</li> <li>• Auslan classes are available for all staff across the organisation.</li> </ul>

Assess, select and deploy a new Student Knowledge Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compass training available for all stakeholders</li> <li>• Compass is the main form of communication between school and home.</li> </ul>
Succession planning and enterprise agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have a clear view of possibilities and actions to advance career options.</li> <li>• Enterprise Agreement represents clear and transparent processes for staff career paths.</li> </ul>

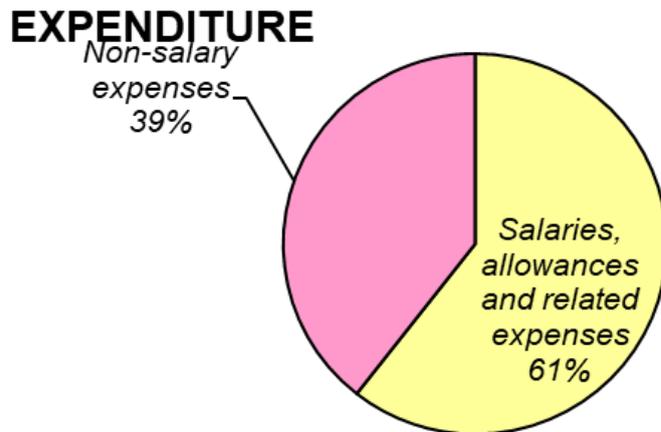
## Financial reporting

### Income and Expenditure Statement - Year Ended 31 December 2023 Spoken Language Program

Description	\$ AUD
<b>Income</b>	<hr/>
Fees and private income	48,762
State recurrent grants	249,948
Commonwealth recurrent grants	872,259
Donations	<hr/> 625,649



# NextSense School Spoken Language Program 2023



## The preparation of this report

Procedures for preparing this report include:

The Head of School is the person responsible for coordinating the final preparation and distribution of the Annual Report to the Board and other stakeholders as required.

- For the first eight areas of reporting, the Head of School is responsible for the collection, analysis and storage of the relevant data and for inserting the relevant information into the report. The Accountant of Financial Corporate Services is responsible for the collection, analysis, and storage of the financial data and for providing this to the Head of School for inclusion in the report.
- The Head of School is responsible for determining the specific content to be included in each section of the report and reviewing this annually to ensure ongoing compliance, relevance, and usefulness.
- The Head of School is responsible for the preparation of the report in an appropriate form to send to NESAs.
- The Head of School is responsible for setting the annual schedule for:
  - preparation and publication of the report; and,
  - distribution of the report to the Board of Studies and other stakeholders.

# **Requests for additional data from the NSW Minister for Education and Training**

To ensure that any requests from the Minister for additional data are dealt with appropriately, the Head of School is responsible for coordinating the school's response. The Head of School is responsible for the collection of the relevant data and for ensuring it is provided to NESAs.

The Head of School and Accountant from Financial Corporate Services are responsible for completing the questionnaire. The Accountant of Financial Corporate Services is responsible for the collection of the relevant data and for ensuring it is provided.



















