



# CASA MIA MONTESSORI SCHOOL

**ANNUAL REPORT 2017**

# CASA MIA MONTESSORI SCHOOL 2017

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Attachment : Audited Accounts 2016/17

## Board Chair Report

The last year was one of change and growth for our school as our Principal Janet, working with the Board, rolled out several strategic initiatives to ensure the sustainability of our school.

Firstly, we continued to work with the Town of Bassendean Council to ensure the future of the school by negotiating a further extension to the lease of our property of 5 years with an option for a further 5-year extension. The discussions with the council have been very positive and really highlights their commitment to our school and the Montessori philosophy and demonstrates in practical terms that we are a valued member of the community we live in.

Whilst negotiating the lease extension, we simultaneously applied for a capital grant to allow us to purchase the crown land which forms a part of our grounds. The capital grant does not require repayment and by owning part of the property, it allows us a stronger argument to be able to eventually purchase the remainder of the property using the State Government's Low Interest Loan (LIL) facility. However, we were unsuccessful in our application and have decided that we will revisit the grant application after we have grown the school a little further and can show more consistent yearly performance.

We have introduced an international student program, catering for students on short stay to ensure they remain in a school environment whilst in Australia. The program offers a wonderful opportunity for our kids to gain insights into the schooling and cultural habits of kids from other countries and vice versa and forms an important additional revenue stream for the school. With the students being predominantly Chinese, it allows our children to put into practice some of the new Mandarin lessons they have been taking.

In 2016, we invested out of the school's savings to build the Playgroup Piccola Casa, and in 2017 we quickly saw positions fill and so extended the number of days on offer. At the time there was some concern around the rationale for spending almost 45 thousand on the facilities, considering it took us from a break even position to a loss, but after a single year in operation, the merits for this initiative have begun to show as it has resulted in a number of children feeding through into the school, given us another tool through which we can engage and promote ourselves within the community and has helped to beautify our school entry. A playgroup is an essential part of a school's ability to market itself and to increase enrolments, to that end we reached out to the Casa Mia Playgroup (which despite being setup by our school has no official affiliation with us) to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in an effort to create another avenue through which we can attract students and we are looking at options on how we can work better together to introduce families from their Playgroup and into our school.

It's important at this point to acknowledge the efforts of previous Boards in building up a cash reserve for the school. The current economic environment in Western Australia is challenging and last year was the first in recorded history where enrolments in the private school sector declined year on year and we have been caught up in this environment and so having a cash

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balance to fall back on until conditions improve is vital to ensure the sustainability of our community.

As a small independent school, we have also noticed an increased administrative and regulatory burden being placed on our school by regulators and so as a Board we are exploring opportunities to work with other similar schools to develop a share administration operational model. The premise being that administrative functions would be set up independently of the schools involved and the one service would assist all schools operating under the model. To highlight why we are doing this, currently we are paying close to three thousand dollars per student on administrative expenses and with other schools facing a similar cost burden its clear there may be opportunities to work together to lower this cost and in turn redirect those funds back into the school.

Our Principal Janet continues to build on the work started upon joining the school in 2016, you will have noticed to a change in how the grounds and class rooms look and has worked hard on our educational offering, with the Dandelion program, the systematic implementation of the maths programme and performing arts programme already showing considerable improvement in student outcomes. In all we have in this past year developed a more holistic approach to our children's education. We have introduced fitness classes and yoga as well as Mandarin which for Western Australians is a language which should have many practical applications in the future

Janet also developed a marketing plan with the help of the P&F which was reflected on at the end of 2017 to determine which elements of that plan were a success so that we may better focus our attentions and resources in this space.

The P&F did an exceptional job again in 2017, rolling out several fund-raising initiatives which culminated with an incredibly successful garage sale brilliantly bringing the community together and raising funds for both the school and community and helped put together a lovely graduation evening on the grounds with live music and food. I thank them for their efforts and the work they put in toward fostering a close community.

To close, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight that if anyone is interested in joining the Board then we do currently have a position available, so if you feel you have the skills and time to be able to make yourself available then please consider applying for a role.

**Nijaz Brkich**

**Chairperson Casa Mia Community Montessori School Board**

**March 2018**

## Board Treasurer Report

### Strategic Highlights

The focus for the year was on containing costs, looking at options for alternative revenue streams and implementing a Marketing plan to increase enrolments. For the Calendar Year 2017 the School produced a surplus of \$633, while this would be best described as a break-even performance, it was well ahead of the initial loss we had budgeted.

### Building Capacity

In 2016 the Board made the decision to invest in building the playgroup facilities at a cost of approximately \$45,000. This was a difficult decision at the time as it meant we were funding the investment out of savings because the investment basically represented the entirety of 2016's deficit. Operationally, the Playgroup operates at a small loss year on year as the fees for the service do not cover the cost of staff to operate the facility, this was understood and accepted as it is common practice, because ultimately the intention of the Playgroup is to secure future students into the school and therefore future revenue and government grants.

We highlighted at last year's AGM that it might be some time before we saw a return on this investment as it would take time to build up numbers, but as the year started we very quickly filled spaces and had to extend the number of days on offer. More importantly we have already secured three enrolments into the school from the Playgroup, should these children stay on for just 2 years then we will have already paid back the initial investment.

Due to the initial concern around being able to fill numbers, we accepted all offers for enrolment into the Playgroup which as a result meant we took in some children who were still almost 2 years away from being at enrolment age, so this year now that we have tested the market so to speak we are targeting children who are closer to enrolment age so as to ensure a greater conversion rate into students.

### The Challenges

We continue to operate in a challenging economic environment, in 2016 the private school sector recorded their first ever decline in enrolments since records began some 35 years ago. This trend accelerated into 2017 with further declines in the sector meaning we must increase our marketing efforts to secure enrolments due to an increasingly competitive environment whilst keeping a keen eye on expenses.

To that end, toward the end of 2017 the Board began looking at our main services expense lines in order to obtain quotes from several providers to ensure that we were receiving the most cost-effective service available. Through this process we were able to negotiate a new cleaning contract and change our internet and phone arrangements, which resulted in savings of \$14,210.

### Financial Highlights

#### Overview

The purpose of this report is to present the School's financial position for the Year Ending December 31, 2015.

The financial results have generally met most of our expectations for this particular year, with mixed results across all key performance indicators.

## Income position

The school produced a small surplus for calendar year 2017 of \$633. Non-grant revenue for the year was 5.27 percent ahead of last year's position which was driven primarily by the introduction of foreign visiting students into the classroom. This was a new initiative introduced by the school in a bid to build cultural bridges for our students and develop additional revenue streams outside of our traditional fees. As this was a new initiative introduced in 2017, we hadn't budgeted for it and therefore any revenue received was a positive impact to our performance. This program also helps the school to address the 70/30 funding ratio as it represents revenue outside of government grants. We also received greater than budgeted for State government grants, so our final revenue position was 8.2 percent ahead of budget.

Tuition operating expenses were impacted by the departure of several staff resulting in the need to pay out entitlements and as such this expense line was almost 3 percent higher than budgeted. In terms of year on year changes, operating expenses were 8.7 percent higher due to changes to staff pay increments and because we hadn't adequately budgeted for salaries attached to running the Playgroup.

Typically, there is little we can do as a Board to improve on our tuition expenses as it relates largely to salary lines, so instead the Board monitors monthly our admin expense line. To that end admin expenses posted 6.5 percent below budget and 12 percent lower than calendar year 2016.

Our largest expense lines were for Repairs & Maintenance, which we now budget more generously for to ensure we maintain the standards of the school and then cleaning, which as mentioned before will be materially lower this year as a result of putting the contract out to tender and receiving several materially lower quotes.

## Balance Sheet position

Our Total Asset position increased in 2015 by 1.1% at \$453,913. This was predominantly made up by our cash in the bank of \$414,432, with our primary savings account sitting at \$300,485.62. Our fixed asset position sits at \$20,869 which reflects the fact that we do not own our current property. Our fixed asset position continues to decline due to depreciation of the buildings we do own

## Financial Statements

### Statement of Financial Position

- Liabilities total \$109,365.94 well up on last year's \$80,645 due to payroll and GST liabilities at year end
- Assets total \$453,913.10 made up primarily of cash equivalent deposits
- Equity totals \$331,774.13 which is down on previous years primarily due to the investment in the Playgroup but is sufficient enough to continue to sustain our foundation to meet our future needs

### Statement of Comprehensive Income (Profits and Losses)

- Income totaled \$892,219 with the majority obtained from grants

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- Expenses totaled \$891,586 with the majority attributed to direct educational functions and relocation expenses
- Net surplus of \$633.00

## Statement of Changes in Equity

### Update

#### Retained earning

Balance at 31 December 2016	\$398,467
Surplus attributable to the equity	\$16,122
Balance at 31 December 2017	\$414,589

#### Statement of Cash Flows

Operating surplus	(\$633)
Depreciation	\$11,981
Provision for doubtful debt	\$3,464
Net receivables	\$1,132
Net prepayments	(\$3,008)
Creditors and accruals	\$7,738
Provisions for leave	(\$1,678)
Refundable bonds	(\$4,140)
Surplus cash	\$16,122

## Summary of Financial Statements

### Summary of significant accounting processes

The financial statements are special purpose financial statements prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Association Incorporation Act (WA) 1987 and the constitution of Casa Mia Montessori Community School Inc. The Board has determined that Casa Mia Montessori Community School Inc. is not a reporting entity.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated current valuations of non-current assets. The accounting policies adopted are consistent with those in the previous year, except where otherwise stated.

### Conclusion

Overall, while we have had a challenging year, this year's results will continue to demonstrate the resilience of the school. The next twelve months will present new challenges around the economic environment and its impact on enrolments. With a healthy bank balance built up over time, from a financial standpoint the school is ready to meet the challenges that lay ahead and to build a larger and more sustainable school.

**Nijaz (Neeaz) Brkich**  
Treasurer

## Principal's Report

At Casa Mia Montessori School, it is very important to us that our children know who they are, what makes them happy, what makes them sad and when they are sad what they are going to do about it.

To this end, during the 2017 year, the staff reviewed and worked on setting the scene for positive behaviours in the school. They identified the principles for managing behaviour in a school setting beginning with a strong focus on setting up a whole school environment which encourages good behaviours. They further analysed the tools that contribute to establishing the tone of behaviours at Casa Mia; how to communicate the expectations; expressing appreciation of positive behaviours and finally celebrating great behaviours.

This work progressed over the year with the staff first identifying and clarifying the school values and what these looked like in the school setting. They determined the rights and responsibilities of the students, parents and staff; they revisited the School Code of Conduct; worked on understanding behaviour and developed guidelines for managing behaviour for 3-6 year olds and 6-12 year olds. The single most important work the staff did was regenerating the school and the classroom environments using Montessori principles— often referred to as the 'hidden curriculum'.

In the Montessori setting the 'hidden curriculum' is of particularly significant importance. Dr Montessori was one of the first educationists to recognise that a child's ability to learn is linked to their emotional development. To support the development of social skills, emotional intelligence and academic wellbeing, Dr Montessori designed the concept of a classroom community to support the development of these skills over time.

The importance of community has continued to be an essential component of the Montessori Method of education since those early days. Dr. Montessori called her earliest early childhood classrooms 'Children's Houses', being a place where children belonged and felt comfortable and also a place where they were responsible.

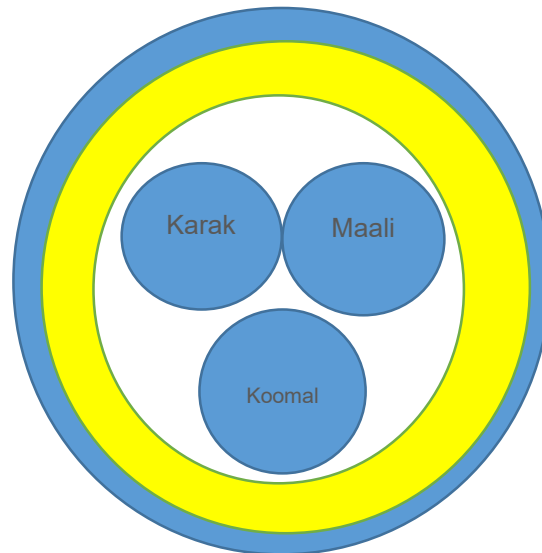
During the 2017 year, the teachers worked on strengthening the children's practical life tasks and in particular the grace and courtesy activities such as greeting each other; shaking hands; waiting for a turn; tucking chairs under tables; using work mats to denote work space to both the worker and the observer; using their words to tell others how they feel, and caring for the environment both internal and external; sorting the waste into organic, recyclable and landfill; watering the pot plants, scrubbing tables and laying out table mats for snacks and meals to name a few. These tasks and conventions are crucial to building up the community mores and have been part of the Montessori Method of Education in one way or another since the inception of the method.

To further support the community setting, each class is made up of three age levels creating a family group which is consolidated further as the children remain together for several years. Only the eldest move into the next class at the year-end leaving two year groups who are joined by a younger group.

As the children grow older and more capable, they assume a greater role in helping care for the environment and meeting the needs of the younger children in the class. Increasingly, over the year, the class becomes a community of children and adults much like a real family.



As the principal, I often describe the Casa Mia community as a collection of micro communities being the classes organised by the teachers, around which is wrapped the macro community for which I am responsible and around all of us is the mantle of the parents organised by the P&F (Parents and Friends)



These relationships provide the foundation of a successful school community through the families who are involved and interested and the teachers who are committed Montessori educators with a genuine interest in each child's well-being.

This combination gives the children the opportunity to make friends and build positive relationships with the other students providing the foundation for a positive learning environment.

The word building somehow indicates a structure with a measure of inflexibility. This is in stark contrast with the flexible delivery of the curriculum; the flexibility of the delivery of the curriculum is one of the defining features of the Method. Teachers are charged with 'following' the child through the prepared environment as they chose the order in which they undertake their daily activities and at their own pace. This 'freedom of choice' in the highly structured environment contributes to the creation and preservation of community in two key ways,

Firstly, it empowers children to make their own decisions; work at their own skill level and to personally conquer challenges. Koomal (3-6yrs old) being a highly structured class with concrete tasks needed little adjustment. Karak (6-9yrs) and Maali (9-12Yrs) began the process of setting up a range of tasks in different levels aligned to the curriculum, in each of the learning areas. This work is ongoing in 2018. This means that all the children in the rooms can participate and contribute in the classroom whilst working on different levelled tasks. Everyone can be accommodated at the same time and children need not be separated from their peers if they need special attention or are behind their peers in one particular area or another. The prepared environments give strong positive messages of fairness and supportiveness and opportunities to make choices and decisions leading the children to become more engaged and with this the outcomes rise significantly.

Secondly, the arrangements of the school and the classes in our Montessori environment encourages and supports sociability. The children have the opportunities to explore, experiment and to create with other children of different age groups thanks to the mixed age classes. There are singular sets of equipment which require either team work or patient waiting and organising oneself to undertake other work until the piece of equipment is free. Dr Montessori noted that 'important social qualities derive from this. 'The child comes to see (they) must respect the work of other not because someone has said (they) must but because this is a reality that (they will meet) in (their) daily experiences. This reality referring to the collaboration and communication needed in any community setting.'

It is not unusual to walk into a Casa Mia Montessori setting and find children working in pairs; working on more challenging tasks and one sometimes guiding the other to find a solution.

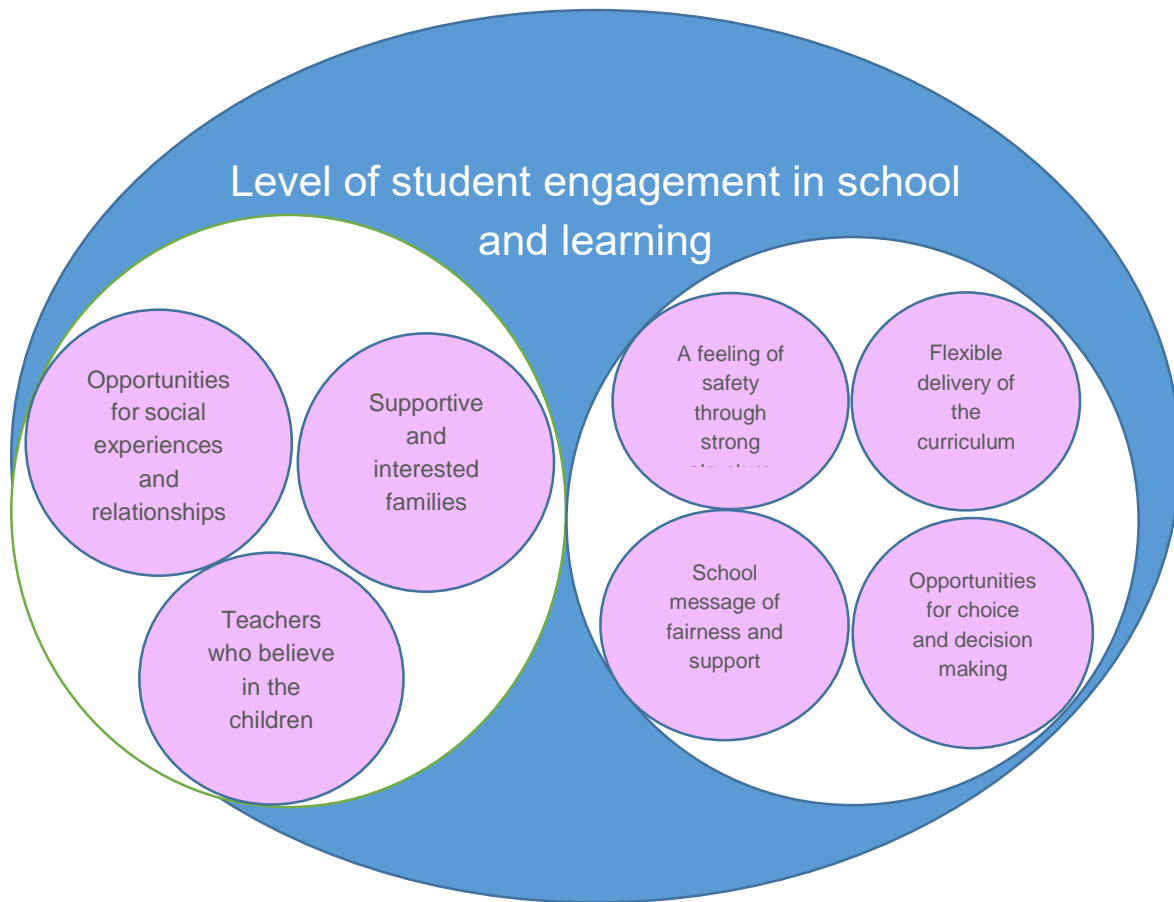
After the Montessori cycle (three hours) the teacher gathers all the children in the class together for circle time. Educator Lori Bourne sees this practice as being a 'powerful way for a group of children to build a sense of family – to really bond together.'

In this circle time, the teacher and children will sing, have lessons and stories or celebrate a birthday with the Montessori birthday celebration ritual. Over the course of time, all the children in the classroom benefit from the social cohesion and the idea of a classroom community transferring into actuality.

The Montessori classroom setting is a unique educational setting. The children are actively challenged to collaborate and contribute to the class community life meaning that every individual is important to the class community.

By being inclusive through design, the Montessori classrooms are safe places where the child can belong and grow, surrounded by peers and adults whose goal is to help them thrive.

These environments ultimately nurture the children's social and emotional well-being and this further translates into strong, engaged students.



Acknowledgments: Speaking Out About School and Learning, Commissioner for Children and Young People, January 2018

Through these efforts, the Casa Mia staff have seen an increase in the children’s motivation and effort in understanding that they must interact with the environment, knowing they will make many mistakes along the way, repeating the experiences until they have mastered a skill or concept. The children’s confidence and resilience building has been a joyful experience for all involved.

## The Children

### Enrolments

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total Enrolments	61	65	61	54	53
3-6 years	25	29	30	23	19
6-9 years	21	20	17	17	18
9-12 years	15	16	14	14	16
Number of families	46	50	40	35	36

The School has accommodation for 70 students.

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During 2017, children began to feed through from the playgroup into Koomal, the 3-6yrs old class.

## Attendance

Families are reminded in writing that attendance at school age is compulsory. All families are given activities to do with their children to ensure their child's learning requirements are not interrupted. On their return to school the child is expected to present their 'holiday work' to the teacher and the class.

Should a student and their family persist in non-attendance practises the School will follow the School Attendance policy and procedure.

Average attendance rate	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	96.42%	96.67%	94.01%	96.16%	93.05%

Attendance by year level	P-K	K	PP	Yr.1	Yr.2	Yr.3	Yr.4	Yr.5	Yr.6
2015	96%	95%	93.33%	91.43%	93.47%	92.69%	93.88%	97.96%	95.41%
2016	94.25%	79.45%	89%	95.31%	95.83%	97.50%	97.08%	97.08%	94.27%
2017	85.11%	94.45%	89.79%	93.72%	93.98%	93.34%	96.58%	93.14%	90.90%

## Post Casa Mia Montessori School

The five 2017 Graduates at Casa Mia, one of whom had been at the school since they were three years old, all gained the places of their choice. The graduates went to Helena College, Mt Lawley (Music Programme), John Curtin (Soccer Programme), St Bridget's College and Hillside Christian College.

## Student Satisfaction

CASA MIA MONTESSORI SCHOOL STUDENT SURVEY 2017

Karak and Maali (Yr1 – Yr6)

29 of the 33 primary students completed the student survey.90% of the students felt the statement "I have the opportunity to work at my own pace and am encouraged to consistently to do my best 'to be true and 72% considered the statement 'I am encouraged to develop my joy of learning and sense of discovery to be true.

86% of the students indicated they felt safe at school with 93% saying they have friends at school. 86% felt that 'the adults take great care and support all the students'.

Only 45% felt that the students help with keeping the environment clean, tidy, orderly and beautiful and 65% considered that teachers help students who are worried and upset.

The staff noted the improvement on feeling safe at school and will be working towards recognising and helping children who are worried and upset.

## Student results

The children at Casa Mia Montessori participate in the NAPLAN assessments. They and their teachers take time to learn the practical life skill of how to sit a test.

In 2017 the number of children sitting the assessments was below the reporting threshold. For privacy reasons, the results are not published in the open domain.

NAPLAN 2017

Yr. 3	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy
2013	372	414	338	375	401
2014	483	407	431	469	479
2015	501	447	458	455	441
2016	Student nos. below reporting threshold				
2017	Student nos. below reporting threshold				

Yr.5	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar and Punctuation	Numeracy
2013	Student nos. below reporting threshold				
2014	682	556	553	576	561
2015	Student nos. below reporting threshold				
2016	Student nos. below reporting threshold				
2017	Student nos. below reporting threshold				

Casa Mia's commitment to the children's education in 2017 was demonstrated by the staff's considered observations, assessments and analysis of the children's work leading to identifying the areas to be strengthened and the improvements that were seen particularly in the literacy areas.

## Educational Programme

The main focus in 2017 as described in the introduction, was on developing positive behaviours throughout the school. Staff focused on two areas – social development and engagement in the educational programme. This was done without losing focus in the literacy and numeracy skills throughout the school.

### Social Expectations

The expectations for social behaviours are positive interactions with peers; resolving conflicts peacefully; caring for others; courteous behaviours; accepting differences in others; and participating in group activities. In the classroom the expectations are positive responses to requests; requesting help when needed; self-regulation and self-motivation

### Engagement Expectations

The expectations in this area were for the children to help care of the internal and external environments; to offer to peer teach; to complete the three-hour work cycle; to organise their

work in this time; to select challenging tasks; to work independently and without disturbing others; complete tasks; maintain concentration and actively participate in lessons.

## Value Adding

### Yoga

In 2016, Della Yang (educational assistant with Montessori experience) arrived from China and joined Casa Mia. Della 's hobby/passion is Yoga. She underwent training in teaching Yoga to children. Della presented a yoga class to Koomal and Karak class each week helping the children to develop their mindfulness.

### Mandarin

In Koomal (3-6yrs) a Mandarin by immersion programme commenced. Della Yang attended professional development training to deliver a second language programme.

### Fitness

In mid-2017, Casa Mia engaged the services of Dr MJ Ong. Together with James King (Physical Education and Science) the 9-12 year olds attend a half hour fitness and education session four mornings a week and one and a half hour sports tuition once a week. All the primary children attended swimming lessons at Bayswater Waves in Term 1 and had athletics coaching in Term 3.

James also delivers a perceptual motor movement session to the Koomal class once a week helping the little ones establish their motor skills and balance.

### Library

Casa Mia Montessori School is located within a short walking distance of the Bassendean Town Library. The primary children walk up to the library each fortnight to exchange their reading books and spend time perusing books in the peaceful setting

### Excursions and incursions

Excursions ranged from watching the play 'Lighthouse Girl', to trips to Whiteman Park, Landsdale Farm, Caversham Wildlife Park, Brick4Kids and competing in the Somer Team Sprint cup.

Maali children attended their annual camp out at New Norcia as part of their history and Aboriginal studies.

### Visual Arts and performing arts

All classes continued with the weekly music classes that include the skills of performing, showcasing their items at the termly whole school get together. One of the highlights was the drumming incursion arranged and run by James King (Science and Physical Education)

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## French

All the children have a weekly class in French culminating in a performance in French in the end of year graduation concert.

## Science

In the primary classes, James King provides a weekly traditional science lesson. This work is complemented by the cosmic programme delivered by the class Montessori teachers and helps with the preparation of the children for the transition to traditional schooling in Year 7.

## Waste wise

Casa Mia is a committed waste wise school. All classrooms sort the rubbish into organic to go into the compost bins and worm farms, landfill and recyclable to go to the town's rubbish collection.

The community collect cardboard, cards, magazines, plastic bottles and lids, and paper for art and craft projects; print cartridges and batteries for recycling; ring pulls and soft toys for the Wheelchairs for Kids Project.

## Loose parts programme

The Loose parts programme in the playground continues with the staff consistently on the lookout for items the children can move around to create their own environment. Tree trunk rounds started as walls, moved to a form of the Giant's Causeway and will undoubtedly be used in another form. The 'mud kitchen' was an instant hit with the children role playing families or mixing magic potions.

## Outreach to parents and the community

Casa Mia continued to support the Wheelchairs for Kids Project run by Rotary in Wanneroo. Besides supporting children in developing countries with the wheelchairs and soft toys, this project is run out of the Men's Shed by a group of retired people making up the wheelchairs and the knitted blankets sent out with each wheelchair.

The soft toys not suitable to send with the wheelchairs due to the need for batteries etc., are repurposed and send to Parkerville Children's Home. For Easter, the school collected Easter eggs for the Parkerville children.

## The Staff

Casa Mia Montessori School has a team of committed educationalists who are keen to uphold and strengthen the Montessori Method of Education in the School.

The annual staff survey indicated that internal communication and support of staff is strong with 90% of staff considering Casa Mia being a happy place to work.

There were three areas of concern indicated in the annual survey.

- ❖ The level of parent understanding of the Montessori Method of Education was considered by the staff to range from some to little.

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- ❖ The support provided to the staff by the parents was considered to range from extremely supportive at 9.09% to very supportive 18.18%, moderately supportive 63.64% and slightly supportive 9.09%
- ❖ The majority of the staff consider the provision of work space to be insufficient.

The parent understanding of the Montessori Method of Education will be addressed by

- ✓ in increased articles in the school newsletter about topics that were mentioned in the parent survey responses
- ✓ termly parent evenings to demonstrate aspects of the curriculum
- ✓ increased parent visits to the classrooms at whole school events such as Harmony Day
- ✓ increased invitations for parents to observe in the classroom settings
- ✓ increased communication by the teachers via the email with parents of their child's engagement in the first 6 weeks in the classroom setting

It is anticipated that parent support of staff will increase as the parents' knowledge of the education activities in Casa Mia is deepened.

The staff have developed a vision for Casa Mia that has been presented to the School Board. The vision increases the working/activity areas for the children and themselves.

All the teachers are registered with the Western Australian Teacher Registration Board and all staff hold a current Working with Children Check and First Aid certificate.

## Montessori training

Casa Mia Montessori School has a commitment to employing staff with training in the Montessori Method of Education and to provide continuing training in the method. Regular in house training is done at the staff meetings and staff development days.

	Montessori training
Zara Grassick	3-6 years
Katja Bertazzo	3-6 years
Yogini Desai	3-6 years
Sandra Johnston	6- 12 years
Janet Laing	2 ½ - 12 years

## Education Staff

### Koomal (3-6)

Teachers Katja Bertazzo and Yogini Desai  
Education Assistants Della Yang, Astrid Piller

### Karak (6-9)

Teacher Sandra Johnston  
Education Assistant Karen Yazdani, Robyn See



## Maali (9-12)

Teacher Lucia di Crescenzo, Janet Laing, Clare McCaskie

## Specialist teachers

Physical Education	James King
Science	James King
French	Pascale Henrion
Music	Kirsty Ploeg
Curriculum Support	Yogini Desai

## Administration

Principal	Janet Laing
Administration Officer	Lynette Bosch
OH&S Officer	James King

## Playgroup

Playgroup coordinators Kylie Outram, Zara Grassick, Stephanie Crewe

## Staff Retention and Satisfaction

Despite the staff satisfaction indicated in the annual survey, the School did experience a high turnover of staff in 2017. One primary teacher went on unpaid leave for one year. Her replacement worked for nearly two terms before resigning for personal reasons. A second teacher was employed in this position, completed the year and signed up for 2018. A second teacher resigned to move to a school closer to home. The third teacher resigned for personal reasons. Both teachers have been replaced with Montessori qualified trained teachers.

The vision, mission and values of Casa Mia were regularly revisited in 2017 at the fortnightly staff meetings and in house professional development days. The staff explored and embedded activities into the school activities that helped the children embrace the school values.

All staff undertook Performance Management in Term 4, 2017 identifying areas they would like support in to develop their performance. These processes consolidated staff as a team working independently to achieve a whole.

## Professional development

In house professional development was ongoing. The two major topics for the year were the Montessori Method of Education and preparing the educational environment for positive behaviours, engaging students and supporting the students in having friends and positive relationships. Amongst a range of internal and external professional developments, one member of staff attended Many Languages – One Methodology and Yoga for Children. A number of staff attended courses on defining features and effective strategies for dyslexia and all teachers attended the Dyslexia SPELD TalktoWrite course.

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Casa Mia was invited to showcase the work done on implementing STEM to other schools and all staff attended a workshop 'The stairs to elegance and effectiveness' to help them in developing relationships and communication skills.

In total \$4 071.37 was spent on professional development in the year.

## Staff Attendance

Staff attendance was 97.07% averaged out over the 2017 year.

## School Community

Casa Mia Montessori School continued to receive strong support from the families of the school. The Parents and Friends, under the auspices of the School Board continued to offer Friday Slushies, hot meals on Fridays in winter and children's activities in the holidays.

The P&F took on the task of organising a uniform for the school, consulting the families and reaching a consensus. As a Montessori school the children do not have to wear a uniform each day. They are required to wear the uniform when going on excursion to make for easy and quick identification and when they are representing the school at functions outside the school grounds or on school grounds with visitors.

The grand finale of the year is the community supper organised by the P&F after the Graduation Concert.

The Community thanks go to Rebecca Brown, chair of the P&F and her committee and helpers.

The School Grounds Coordinator, Rachel Seeds continued to ensure the children and staff enjoyed the lovely cottage gardens and playground. She was also responsible for running the busy bees before the start of each term as parents cleaned up and spruced the gardens for the start of term.

Behind all these activities is the School Board. Chaired by Claudio Pelligrini until October and then Nijaz Brkich, the Board is responsible for ensuring Casa Mia Montessori School adheres to all regulatory requirements; maintains duty of care for the children, staff and parents; the School remains financially sustainable and last but no means least prioritises the educational programme for which Casa Mia has permission to deliver the Montessori Australia National Curriculum and reports against the Western Australian Curriculum.

All this work is by volunteers. On behalf of the children, the staff and each other, thank you for your time, expertise and commitment in these voluntary roles.

## School Community Satisfaction

The School Community survey 2017 focused on the School services and the children's enjoyment at school and the communication between the School and the families.

## CASA MIA MONTESSORI SCHOOL

There was a respondent rate of 92% from the 36 families.

96% of parents echoed their children's sentiment (86%) that they feel safe at Casa Mia. 86% of the children felt that staff provide a caring and inclusive atmosphere and their parents polled 85%.

31% of parents considered that they do not have ample opportunity to communicate with staff about their child and development through parent teacher meetings. Staff offer meeting times after the classroom sessions and at the end of Term 1 and 3. The staff may be contacted directly through their school email addresses. Reminders of these arrangements will be put into the newsletter and the mini class hand books.

39% of parents felt that staff sometimes or seldom provide useful feedback. Staff will be providing more information for parents on the Montessori Method of Education through the newsletter, parent information evenings and emails in the first six weeks of term about their children's activities and through feedback from the On Entry assessment data. In the Primary years, the children will have individual green files in which a record of their activities is kept. These files will be available for parents to see when visiting their child's classroom.

2017 was a year of many adjustments as the staff guided the students towards respecting themselves, taking responsibility for their own learning, developing self-discipline and self-motivation, organising themselves, collaborating with each other and finding creative and novel ways to carry out tasks. As these qualities have been growing, the students' levels of self-esteem have been rising so have their abilities to take up leadership roles.

My thanks go to the educational team who believe in the children and their innate gifts and to the parents who put their trust in the staff.

**Janet Laing**  
**Principal**

For further information, visit:

[www.casamiamontessori.wa.edu.au](http://www.casamiamontessori.wa.edu.au)

[www.myschool](http://www.myschool)