

Merriwa Education Support Centre

Annual report
for 2023



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Principal's Message

We continue to focus on providing meaningful programs and on building our resources, to ensure the excellent education for students with specific and additional learning needs at Merriwa ESC. The whole school approach to teaching numeracy and literacy continues to have remarkable success and provides much needed confidence in our students.

The challenges faced during 2023 included finding qualified teachers to replace staff on parenting leave. We celebrated the birth of nine babies throughout the year! While this was an exciting time, it certainly provided a challenge for the Administration team to ensure quality education for all students. We are very grateful to our regular casual, and relief staff for supporting our school and ensuring consistency in teaching practices.

The Education Support Centre curriculum has a strong focus in emergent literacy, numeracy and communication skills, while building independence and self-management skills for all students. The students' individual needs are a major consideration in all programs. Specialist classroom teachers manage the learning programs and planning for the individual is integral to the success of students with special learning needs. We are proud of our reputation in offering a diverse range of programs including Fundamental Movement Skills, Movement and Music, Sensory Learning, School Readiness, Life Skills, Protective Behaviours, Recreation and Community Access programs. A small number of ESC students benefited from the specialist subject teachers in the primary school who provide instruction in Science and Physical Education, through an application process with our co-located school.

Building upon Merriwa ESC's reputation as a great facility for students with special needs has been our focus. Student success, as confirmed by achievement of individual outcomes, is due to the hardworking teams who ensured that all students are engaged in authentic and purposeful educational programs. ESC staff are actively engaged in training and mentoring to develop teaching skills in the areas of early literacy and numeracy learning. Explicit and intentional teaching methods have again proved beneficial and ensured student achievement against their individual programs. Merriwa ESC has professional staff that work in collaboration with various therapists to ensure success for all students. We expect high standards in learning and behaviour and design programs to enable all children to achieve according to their capability.

Staff continue to be engaged in rigorous self-reflection practices to review our programs, policies and whole school plans to maintain best practice and a consistent approach to teaching. Staff are able to supply various forms of evidence to support our claims that we are meeting our expectations at High to Outstanding levels. This was verified in our successful Public School Review in October and also in my Principal Performance Review in April.

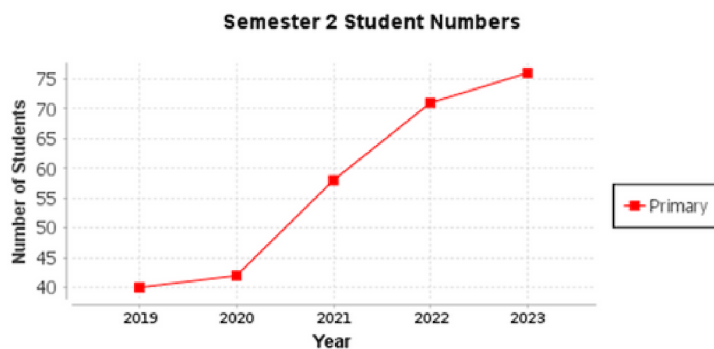
The ESC has a substantial number of students in the junior grades and has a significant focus on meeting sensory needs and learning through activity-based tasks, as outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework. We embrace the facilitation of various communication methods in order to provide all students with a voice. Our newly appointed Speech Therapist assisted staff to support students, training staff to embed the use of AAC in daily routines. Students have the opportunity to participate in appropriate learning groups created across the Centre and build on their social skills. There is a greater sense of belonging and an increased opportunity to form friendship groups and buddy sessions between classes.

The ESC has experienced a constant increase in enrolments over the past few years and have welcomed the installation of early childhood classrooms and additional toilet blocks. Plans are in place to install another two classrooms in 2024. Our newly installed Reception office has allowed for the effective management of school operations.

As always, I extend my heartfelt thanks to my dedicated staff for their outstanding efforts and to our parents and students whose positive contribution ensures that our school is such a vibrant place of community learning.

Karen Mann

Student Enrolments and Attendance



Student Numbers (as at 2023 Semester 1)

| Primary | Kin | PPR | Y01 | Y02 | Y03 | Y04 | Y05 | Y06 | Total |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Full Time | (6) | 10 | 16 | 13 | 3 | 19 | 7 | 8 | 82 |
| Part Time | 11 | | | | | | | | |

Note: The Kin Full Time student figure represents the Full Time Equivalent of the Part Time students

| | Kin | PPR | Pri | Sec | Total |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----|-----------|
| Male | 6 | 6 | 55 | | 67 |
| Female | 5 | 4 | 11 | | 20 |
| Total | 11 | 10 | 66 | | 87 |

| | Kin | PPR | Pri | Sec | Total |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----|-----------|
| Aboriginal | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 6 |
| Non-Aboriginal | 9 | 9 | 63 | | 81 |
| Total | 11 | 10 | 66 | | 87 |

ENROLMENT

Our enrolment numbers continued to increase steadily over the year, from 79 in Semester 2, 2022 to 88 in December, 2023. Students with a diverse range of disabilities and special learning needs from Kindergarten to Year 6 access the ESC. Our cohort includes students with Intellectual Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Vision Impairment and various medical needs. Students are eligible to enrol at Merriwa ESC when diagnosed with a disability which impacts their ability to access learning in a mainstream setting.

Combined with the student cohort of our partner Primary School, the cultural and ethnic mix at Merriwa contributes to our inclusive and welcoming environment.

| | Attendance Category | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------|----------|--------|
| | Regular | At Risk | | |
| | | Indicated | Moderate | Severe |
| 2021 | 25.4% | 33.9% | 32.2% | 8.5% |
| 2022 | 23.3% | 30.1% | 28.8% | 17.8% |
| 2023 | 38.8% | 30.0% | 15.0% | 16.3% |
| WA Public Schools | 61.0% | 25.0% | 10.0% | 4.0% |

| | Non-Aboriginal | | Aboriginal | | Total | |
|------|----------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|--------|-------------------|
| | School | WA Public Schools | School | WA Public Schools | School | WA Public Schools |
| 2021 | 80.5% | 92.4% | 64.6% | 76.8% | 79.4% | 91% |
| 2022 | 77.8% | 88.3% | 62.5% | 69.5% | 76.6% | 86.6% |
| 2023 | 81.2% | 90.3% | 84.3% | 74.3% | 81.4% | 88.9% |

ATTENDANCE

Attendance rates are gradually improving as the community eases back to the new normal of managing the impact of the pandemic. While families are still cautious, and are keeping sick children at home, we can see that a steady improvement is underway. Merriwa ESC continues to work closely with families to re-engage vulnerable students. Student attendance is further impacted by ongoing therapy and medical needs of students whose condition determines their ability to attend regularly.

Workforce

Staff Numbers

| | No | FTE | ABL |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| Administration Staff | | | |
| Principals | 1 | 1.0 | 0 |
| Associate / Deputy / Vice Principals | 2 | 1.6 | 0 |
| Total Administration Staff | 3 | 2.6 | 0 |
| Teaching Staff | | | |
| Other Teaching Staff | 18 | 12.6 | 0 |
| Total Teaching Staff | 18 | 12.6 | 0 |
| School Support Staff | | | |
| Clerical / Administrative | 3 | 2.8 | 0 |
| Other Allied Professionals | 34 | 32.3 | 1 |
| Total School Support Staff | 37 | 35.1 | 1 |
| Total | 58 | 50.3 | 1 |



All teaching staff meet the professional requirements to teach in Western Australian public schools and can be found on the public register of teachers of the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia.

QUALIFICATIONS

In accordance with Department of Education requirements, all staff have Working with Children Checks and National Police Clearance. Teaching staff have experience with working in an Education Support Setting. Graduate teachers are supported with a mentor and encouraged to attend graduate modules throughout the year. Education Assistants are qualified with Special Needs certificates and are provided with additional training as identified. MESC has employed five Lead EAs and eleven Advanced EAs. There has been an intentional focus on recruiting and retaining high quality, skilled teaching and support staff.

WORKFORCE PLANNING

The majority of staff at MESC are permanently employed to the Department of Education, having been appointed through the public service merit selection, recruitment process. With increasing enrolments and movement of staff through transfer, extended leave, or maternity leave, it has been necessary to recruit new teachers and education assistants each year. In 2023 various merit selection processes were completed to appoint staff to vacated and new positions and to establish additional classrooms, to accommodate the increase in student numbers. Lead Education Assistants facilitate mentoring and training programs for newly appointed EA staff.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Staff at MESC are encouraged and supported to engage in collaborative practices to build the capacity of their colleagues.

- All staff have participated in ongoing, relevant performance management processes and required professional learning to build strength in performance.
- Staff meetings, Collaborative workshops and Professional Development days focus on student improvement and teacher development.
- Professional Learning opportunities relate to improving curriculum knowledge, self-development, increasing knowledge and understanding of disabilities and medical management procedures, pedagogy development and school targets, and are guided by performance management.
- Staff have embraced improved reflection on performance using a collaborative approach, sharing expertise and participating in peer observation.

Student Achievement and Progress

Progress towards targets outlined in 2020 - 2023 Business Plan

| TARGET 1 | TARGET 2 | TARGET 3 |
|--|--|---|
| All students to demonstrate tangible improvement in individual goals in curriculum priority areas | ABLEWA comparative data indicates progression of achievement annually for 80% of students | 80% of students will achieve 80% of their IEP goals in each Semester report |
| <i>Achieved.</i> Overall, 96.7% achievement in Letters and Sounds and 89% achievement in Maths Number knowledge | <i>Achieved. 81% overall progress</i> A small percentage of students remained constant or showed some regression in one or more of the ABLEWA domains | <i>Not achieved.</i> 69% of students achieved higher than 75% of their IEP goals |
| TARGET 4 | TARGET 5 | TARGET 6 |
| 90% positive rating from staff, students, and parents/carers in biennial community survey | Student attendance rates will be higher than 90% with authorised absences factored into the rate | All students will participate in PBS 'Passport' initiative with 75% reaching 'Gold' level by the end of term 4 |
| <i>Not Achieved.</i> Average ranges from 75% -100% satisfaction rating across the community in the 2022 Survey | <i>Not achieved.</i> 83% of students achieved an attendance rate of 75% and higher | <i>Achieved.</i> The goal is less relevant to younger students but well utilised by students from Year 3 to Year 6 |

Abilities Based Learning Education WA (ABLEWA) Assessment Data

The assessments have been designed to describe skills and abilities that teachers can observe in everyday school and classroom contexts and interactions with students. Therefore, teachers don't need to test students before completing the online assessments, nor do students participate directly in the assessment. The assessments are in the form of an observational survey that takes approximately 20 minutes for teachers to complete for each student. Teachers are required to complete the assessments for each student in Term 3 for the following learning domains; Digital Literacy, English – Speaking and Listening, English – Reading and Writing, Mathematics and Personal and Social Capability. Student achievement in each domain will guide the teacher to the appropriate curriculum level and teaching and learning strategies used to develop an individual education plan.

The ABLEWA platform produces graphs based on classroom data, allowing teachers to analyse student progress and compare levels of students across all learning areas for grouping. This assisted with planning. It is important to note that some changes have been made to the tool, questions were adjusted, so some comparative data is still slightly inaccurate. Teachers were able to work together to analyse data together, identify reasons for a student's decline, for example, medical issues, and assist in cross classroom planning.

Behaviour Data

Teachers record behaviour incident information on the INTEGRIS data system as required. Risk Management Plans and Individual Behaviour Management plans are consistently followed and reviewed to ensure the safety of students and staff. Critical incidents, including physical assault, accidents and injury to students or staff, are reported online as they occur.

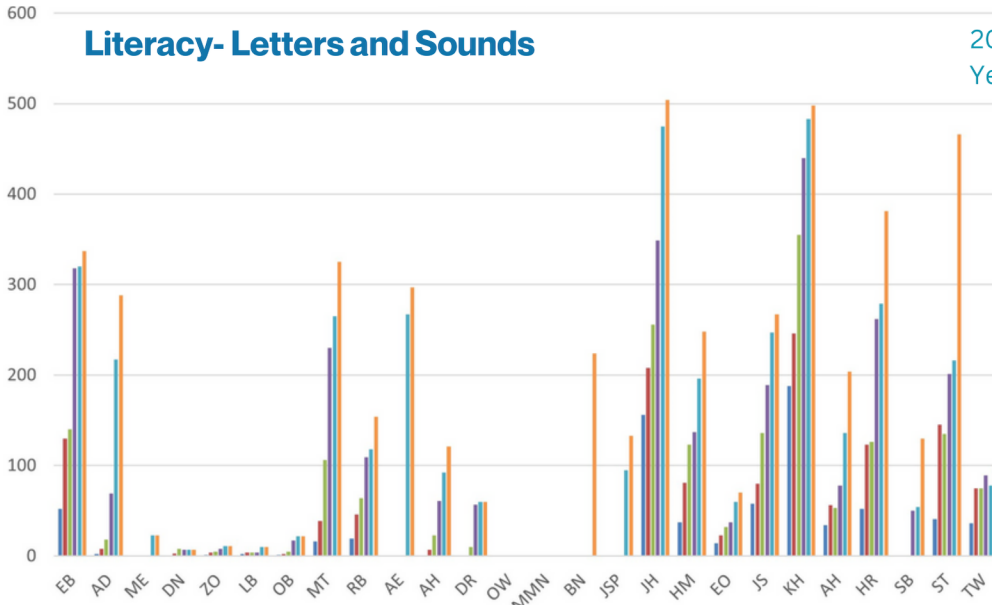
Merriwa ESC has clear procedures for reporting and managing behaviour incidents.



Student Achievement and Progress

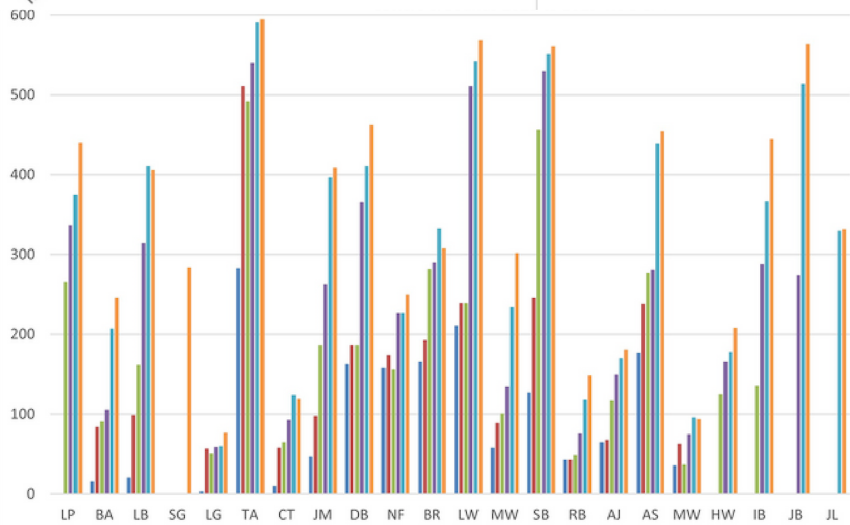
Literacy- Letters and Sounds

2021 to 2023
Years 1 and 2

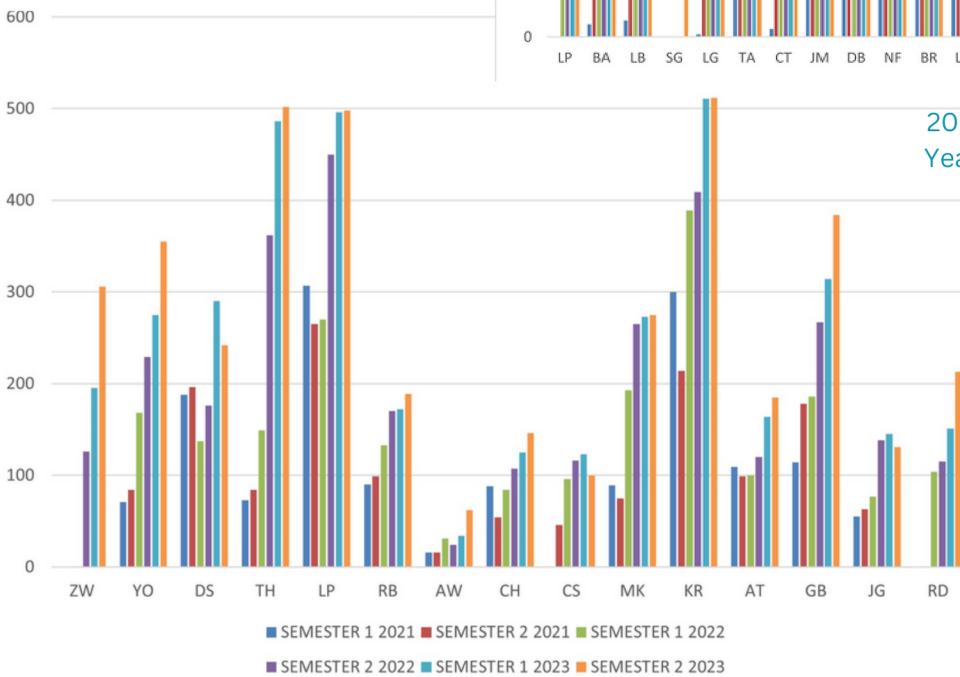


2021 to 2023
Years 3 and 4

100% of junior students (K-Yr 2) have made gains against their individual level of understanding of letters and sounds while 94.87% of senior students (Yr 3-6) have shown steady progress over the year. Overall 96.74% of all students have made gains in Letters and Sounds in 2023. This meets our desired 80% target.



2021 to 2023
Years 5 and 6

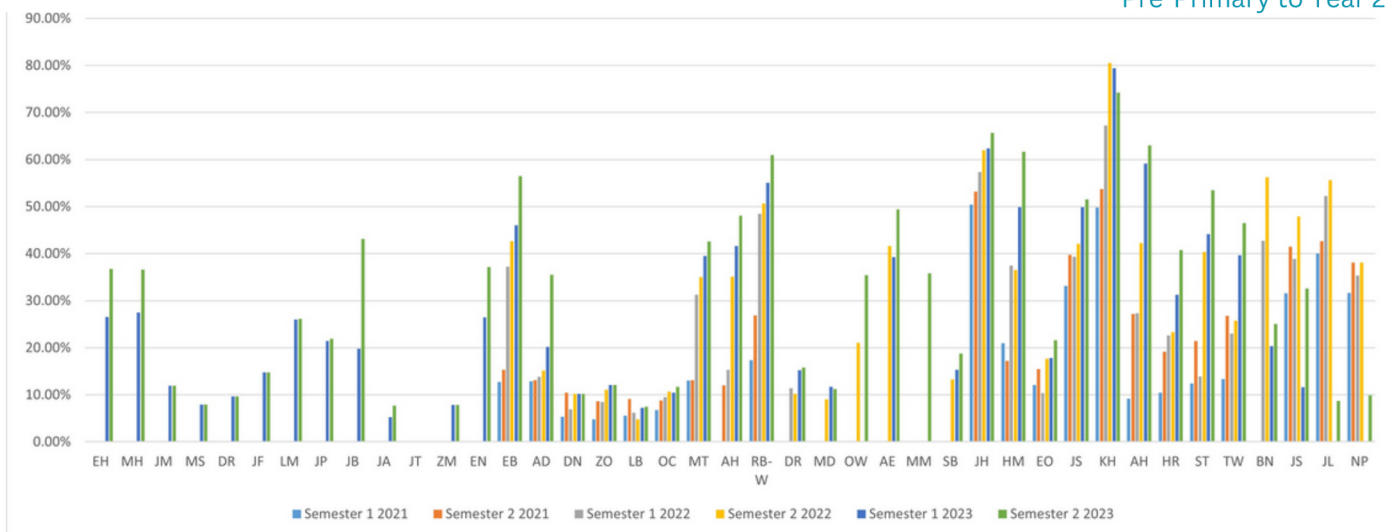


Students are assessed to identify their starting point in the Letters and Sounds program. Explicit teaching within each phase, according to the whole school Literacy plan, provides the child with the skills to move into subsequent phases over time. Results show considerable progress for some individuals over the years. Letters and Sounds program is appropriate and an effective strategy in developing literacy skills. Students have demonstrated gradual improvements in understanding the basic skills of literacy learning and their progress is documented using the Letters and Sounds Tracking Tool throughout the year. Teachers use a variety of strategies including an explicit teaching approach, drills, and hands-on learning tasks to develop these fundamental skills of literacy to facilitate reading and writing.

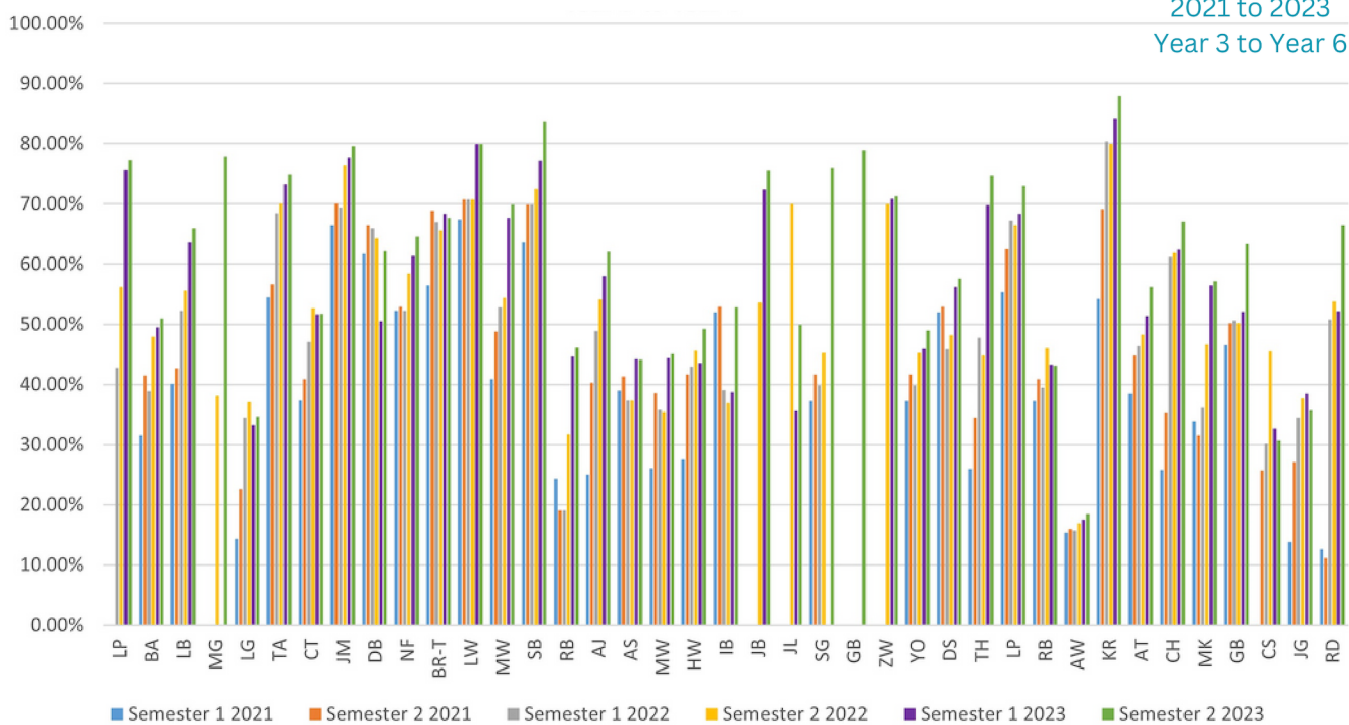
Student Achievement and Progress

Numeracy - Number Knowledge

2021 to 2023
Pre-Primary to Year 2



2021 to 2023
Year 3 to Year 6



MESC has developed a whole school approach to ensure that students practise basic skills in Numeracy. A program of drills, rotational activities, hands-on learning using concrete and abstract materials, explicit teaching and regular revision is implemented in all classrooms. The whole school data collection tool allows for staff to assess achievement during hands-on experiences. A comprehensive maths assessment tool aligns seamlessly with our whole school plan. The tool is a continuum of learning written against ABLEWA and WA Curriculum performance descriptors. Teachers work collaboratively, utilising data to group students according to level of ability for more efficient teaching and learning. Each class has a Maths kit of resources to ensure consistent delivery of concepts from class to class, year to year. 93.34% of junior students (K-Yr 2) have made gains against their individual level of understanding of numeracy skills while 82.05% of senior students (Yr 3-6) have shown steady progress over the year. Overall 89.13% of all students have made gains in Numeracy in 2023. This meets our desired 80% target. With a whole school approach, it is expected that levels of numeracy will continue to improve over time.

Student Achievement and Progress

Student assessment is a key aspect of the school's learning model. The school has a strategic data collection/assessment process that allows us to make judgments about our performance in student achievement, both academic and non-academic, and school operations. The assessment process has a focus on relevant and meaningful data that enables future planning.

A focus on establishing consistency with whole school assessment allows staff to track student progress over time. Classroom based assessments and whole school testing requirements are administered early in Terms 1, 2 and 4 to determine the student's baseline and to follow incremental progress annually. Diagnostic assessment tools inform teaching and learning programs. Each student has an education program designed to meet their individual need with a focus on the student's level of ability, provides a challenge and allows for successful achievement of goals.

Assessment data is entered in a student tracking spreadsheet to illustrate student achievement and progress but also to identify areas of concern. Teachers utilise the Letters and Sounds Tracking Tool and have implemented a comprehensive assessment tool for Maths.

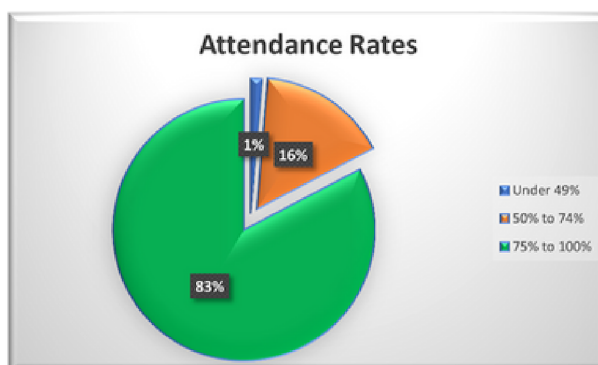
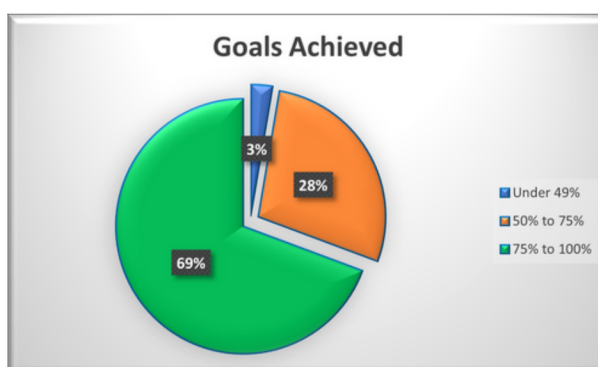
The Abilities Based Learning Education WA (ABLEWA) assessment tool is endorsed by School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) and is available for use by all WA schools where an alternative tool to track the progress of students with special educational needs is required. Merriwa ESC teaching staff have completed training and utilise this tool annually to track progress of students, as part of their routine planning.

School staff are committed to improving the children's competencies in Literacy, Communication, and Numeracy to enable children to develop educational outcomes and life skills. Developing these competencies have links in all curriculum areas.

Individual student goals are set and are addressed through individual education plans using the SEN framework and ABLEWA tools. These are consistently tracked and monitored for formal reporting each semester.

Teaching staff utilised the planning tools on the Reporting to Parents platform, setting appropriate goals against the curriculum content descriptors to design student individual education plans (IEPs) throughout the year. Teacher moderation and discussion around consistency in our IEP requirements resulted in agreement to identify an appropriate number of content descriptors (CD) under the report headings. The MESC Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting (CAR) policy outlines the agreed expectations. This was implemented in 2022, and reviewed in 2023, resulting in a more consistent approach.

Overall data analysis shows a clear correlation between high IEP goal achievement and high attendance rates. While attendance rates improved for Semester 2, this graph illustrates the average attendance for 2023.



National School Opinion Survey

Our last Community Survey was conducted in 2022.
The next survey is due mid 2024.

Parents and Carers Response:

An overwhelming vote of confidence for our school is provided through feedback, with the majority of parents/carers indicating their satisfaction with learning programs and support for their child's overall progress. Respectful relationships with parents/carers, listening to their concerns and opinions is paramount for successful partnerships and better outcomes for students.

Staff Response:

Staff morale is high considering the challenges experienced during a pandemic and the complexities of this occupation. They have indicated by majority, that they feel valued for the work they do, are satisfied with the quality of education provided for the students and believe that the staff care about the students. Staff have indicated that they would recommend Merriwa ESC to others and agree that the school is well managed by an effective leadership team.

75% to 90% high satisfaction rating.

86% agree that their child likes being at school and feels safe at MESC.

93% agree they can talk to the staff in their child's room about any concerns.

89% agree that MESC is well led and would recommend our school to others.

89% agree that the teachers are good and that staff care about their child

84% to 100% high satisfaction rating.

100% agree that MESC staff expect students to do their best and treat the students equitably.

97% are satisfied with the overall standard of education achieved at MESC and believe that the teachers are effective.

100% would recommend MESC to others and believe that staff are skilled professionals who care about the students.

School Priorities and Milestones

At Merriwa ESC we have a strong focus on student achievement and wellbeing. It is our priority to create conditions to develop each child's independence and to provide opportunities for each child to experience success in achieving their individual goals. We know that student success is reliant on collaborative partnerships between educators, parents and carers, and external agencies to support the 'whole child'.

The Business Plan 2024 - 2026 articulates our intention for progress.
The priority areas are outlined under the following focus areas:

Focus 1: Student Achievement and Quality Teaching

- Students will achieve progress against their individual learning goals as evidenced by longitudinal tracking data.
- Staff will be reflective and identify skill deficits which require development.

Focus 2: Student Engagement

- Student achievement data aligns with attendance trends.
- Students will show progress in their individual goals around Personal and Social Competencies.

Focus 3: Partnerships

- High rates of parent/carer interaction will be evident via communication platforms, including Dojo.
- Community survey results will reflect positive interactions with key stakeholders.

Whole school approach to meet expectations:

- Upskilling staff and resourcing classrooms to enable all students to communicate effectively.
- Providing students with the tools and opportunities to achieve their goals and experience success.
- Students achieving at their level of ability, gaining independence and learning to self-regulate.
- To ensure that our community feels welcome in our school and that their needs are recognised and supported.
- Making operational decisions which are informed by authentic, systemic data collection.
- Embed consistent and collaborative approach to whole school practices for learning and positive behaviour support.



Financial Statement

The Manager of Corporate Services (MCS) carefully manages the school budget and efficiently demonstrated accountability for income and expenditure according to our obligations to the Department of Education. A finance report is prepared for the School Board each term for approval.

Budgets are devised by curriculum area leaders and approved by the finance committee and align with the focus areas and broader needs of our school. All staff have access to whole school plans and are aware of the focus areas, action plans and deadlines, and processes for budget spending.

Before allocating cash to the budget, careful consideration is placed around human resources and the staffing budget in order to effectively resource classrooms with a 1:2 ratio for optimal student outcome success.

In recent times, considerable funds have been required for infrastructure and associated projects to accommodate the inclusion of new classrooms and play spaces.

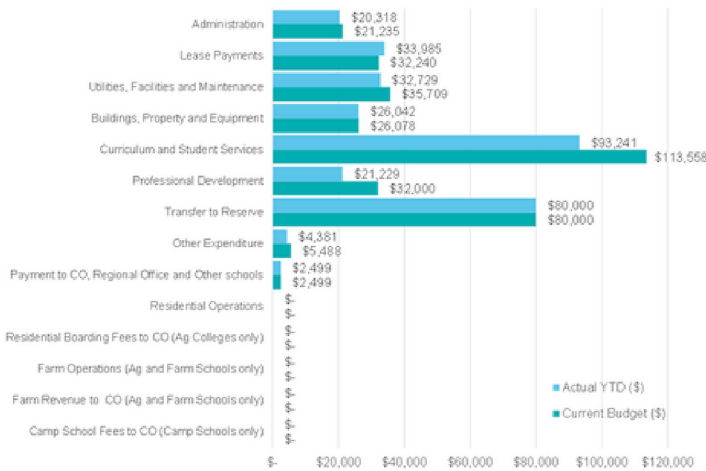
| INCOME - Dec 2023 (Verified Dec Cash) | | |
|---|---------------------|------------------|
| | Current Budget (\$) | Actual YTD (\$) |
| Carry Forward (Cash) | 12,291 | 12,291 |
| Carry Forward (Salary) | 113,716 | 113,716 |
| STUDENT-CENTRED FUNDING | | |
| Per Student | 704,335 | 704,335 |
| School and Student Characteristics | 4,030,297 | 4,030,297 |
| Disability Adjustments | 60,810 | 60,810 |
| Targeted Initiatives | 72,667 | 72,667 |
| Operational Response Allocation | 26,460 | 26,460 |
| Total Funds: | 4,894,569 | 4,894,569 |
| TRANSFERS AND ADJUSTMENTS | | |
| Regional Allocation | 0 | 0 |
| Transition Adjustment | 0 | 0 |
| School Transfers – Salary | (459,894) | (459,894) |
| School Transfers - Cash | 280,869 | 280,869 |
| Department Adjustments | (28,688) | (28,688) |
| Total Funds: | (207,713) | (207,713) |
| LOCALLY RAISED FUNDS (REVENUE) | | |
| Voluntary Contributions | 1,295 | 1,295 |
| Charges and Fees | 10,221 | 10,338 |
| Fees from Facilities Hire | 0 | 0 |
| Fundraising/Donations/Sponsorships | 800 | 1,420 |
| Commonwealth Govt Revenues | 0 | 0 |
| Other State Govt/Local Govt Revenues | 0 | 0 |
| Revenue from CO, Regional Office and Other scho | 0 | 0 |
| Other Revenues | 3,997 | 3,998 |
| Transfer from Reserve or DGR | 0 | 0 |
| Residential Accommodation | 0 | 0 |
| Farm Revenue (Ag and Farm Schools only) | 0 | 0 |
| Camp School Fees (Camp Schools only) | 0 | 0 |
| Total Funds: | 16,313 | 17,051 |
| TOTAL | 4,829,176 | 4,829,914 |

| EXPENDITURE - Dec 2023 (Verified Dec Cash) | | |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|
| | Current Budget (\$) | Actual YTD (\$) |

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| SALARIES | | |
| Appointed Staff | 3,905,219 | 3,905,219 |
| New Appointments | 0 | 0 |
| Casual Payments | 514,771 | 514,771 |
| Other Salary Expenditure | 15,910 | 15,910 |
| Total Funds: | 4,435,900 | 4,435,900 |

| | | |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| GOODS AND SERVICES (CASH EXPENDITURE) | | |
| Administration | 21,235 | 20,318 |
| Lease Payments | 32,240 | 33,985 |
| Utilities, Facilities and Maintenance | 35,709 | 32,729 |
| Buildings, Property and Equipment | 26,078 | 26,042 |
| Curriculum and Student Services | 113,558 | 93,241 |
| Professional Development | 32,000 | 21,229 |
| Transfer to Reserve | 80,000 | 80,000 |
| Other Expenditure | 5,488 | 4,381 |
| Payment to CO, Regional Office and Other schools | 2,499 | 2,499 |
| Residential Operations | 0 | 0 |
| Residential Boarding Fees to CO (Ag Colleges only) | 0 | 0 |
| Farm Operations (Ag and Farm Schools only) | 0 | 0 |
| Farm Revenue to CO (Ag and Farm Schools only) | 0 | 0 |
| Camp School Fees to CO (Camp Schools only) | 0 | 0 |
| Total Funds: | 348,807 | 314,424 |
| TOTAL | 4,784,707 | 4,750,324 |

Dec 2023 (Verified Dec Cash)



ONE LINE BUDGET - Dec 2023 (Verified Dec Cash)

| | Current Budget (\$) | Actual YTD (\$) |
|--|---------------------|------------------|
| Carry Forward (Cash): | 12,291 | 12,291 |
| Carry Forward (Salary): | 113,716 | 113,716 |
| INCOME | | |
| Student-Centred Funding (including Transfers & Adjustments): | 4,686,856 | 4,686,856 |
| Locally Raised Funds: | 16,313 | 17,051 |
| Total Funds: | 4,829,176 | 4,829,914 |
| EXPENDITURE | | |
| Salaries: | 4,435,900 | 4,435,900 |
| Goods and Services (Cash): | 348,807 | 314,424 |
| Total Expenditure: | 4,784,707 | 4,750,324 |
| VARIANCE: | 44,470 | 79,590 |





MERRIWA
PRIMARY SCHOOLS

MERRIWA
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