



**HELENA RIVER STEINER SCHOOL
PERFORMANCE INFORMATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**



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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF 2024

INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report highlights significant performance indicators, academic results and directions for Helena River Steiner School for 2024.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

In gratitude and reflection

The year 2024 has been one of profound growth, transformation, and shared endeavour for our school community. As the wheel of the year turned, so too did our school continue its journey, deepening roots, expanding spaces, and nurturing the hearts and minds of the children in our care.

We began the year with 114 children enrolled and concluded with 135 - evidence of growing trust in our school. New enrolments rose by 33% compared to the previous year, while student withdrawals dropped by 57%, reflecting a deeper sense of belonging and continuity among our families.

One of the most significant transitions this year was the relocation of our Primary School from Spring Park Road to our Hazelmere campus. This was no small undertaking. During the 2023 December holiday break, an incredible amount of work was being done at our school. The two leased properties at Spring Park Road (31 and 35) were vacated, classrooms were relocated, and new learning spaces were prepared in readiness for the children.

Faced with unexpected delays in securing development approvals, we sourced and erected two yurts as temporary classrooms. These beautiful circular spaces were made ready just in time for the new school year, thanks to an extraordinary effort from Board members, staff, and community volunteers.

Over the holidays, the school was abuzz with purposeful activity. The new administration office was set up, fences were constructed, and the classrooms for Class 3/4 and Class 5/6 were set up in the yurts at Hazelmere. New play equipment was installed, including a ropes course for our older students and an outdoor chess board.

Through the course of the year, three new classrooms were built, paths were laid, boundaries secured, and the gardens were landscaped to meet the growing needs of the school.

While these outer changes were visible, the inner work of the school continued. Our focus was on developing a whole-school approach to literacy and a focus on deepening Steiner pedagogy. All our teachers were able to attend the national Steiner Intensive in Newcastle during the January break, an opportunity for renewal, connection, and shared vision. The spirit of camaraderie that emerged during this time has strengthened our collegial bonds and helped align our pedagogical compass.

Leadership, too, was nurtured this year. Together with Yvette and Kat, I attended the Governance, Leadership and Management Conference in Bellingen. These days offered not only valuable insight and inspiration but precious uninterrupted time to connect as a leadership team. We returned with renewed clarity and creative energy.

Our work with literacy evolved into a shared approach to phonics teaching across the classes. Staff wellbeing remained a guiding principle. The result was the successful retention of nearly all our team, with only a 10% staff turnover compared to last year's 50%.

In 2024, we also turned our gaze to the future, crafting a new Strategic Plan to guide us through 2025 to 2029. With guidance from Virginia Moller and input from across the community - teachers, parents, and Board, this document has emerged as a living expression of our shared vision.

Throughout the year, our school life was rich and full. Class 4 and above experienced the joy of school camps, while our Class 5 children participated in the Steiner Olympic Games, a rite of passage held with reverence and joy. Excursions and class plays enlivened the calendar, allowing the unique gifts of each class to shine.

With heavy hearts, we made the decision to close our High School at the end of the year. This was a decision made with deep reflection and a sense of responsibility to both our students and the long-term flourishing of the school. We supported each of our High School students to transition to other settings, and we ended the year with a heartfelt farewell as they stepped toward new chapters in their lives.

As I look back on the year, I am filled with gratitude. None of what we achieved would have been possible without the devotion and care of our staff, the wisdom and service of our Board, and the steady, capable presence of our Education Coordinator, Yvette, whose partnership has been an anchor throughout the year.

Our school stands now as a vibrant centre of warmth and wisdom for the families of Midland and its surrounds. We walk forward with hope, ready to meet what lies ahead with strength, clarity, and anticipation.

Blessings on our school!
Rensché Diggeden
Principal



SECTION 2: ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Helena River Steiner School began its journey in 2013 as the Guildford Steiner Playgroup. In response to growing interest from educators and families inspired by Steiner education, the **River Blossom Education Association Inc.** was formed in 2014. That same year, the Playgroup found a new home at 39 Spring Park Road, Midland - part of the former Midland Primary School site.

Throughout 2015, the Playgroup flourished and evolved. New educational offerings emerged, including home-schooling workshops, early childhood programs, and curriculum support initiatives. In 2016, the first mixed-age Kindergarten (ages 3–6) began operating as a registered Education and Care Service, while preparations for formal school registration were underway.

In **June 2016**, we received our registration as a non-government school, approved to offer education from Pre-Kindergarten to Year 6. That December, our name officially changed to **Helena River Steiner School**, and a lease was secured for the adjoining property at 35 Spring Park Road to accommodate the school's first Primary class beginning in 2017.

In 2020, we were granted approval to expand into secondary schooling. The following year, our Middle School opened with a combined Class 7/8. We also purchased our Hazelmere site at **Lot 13 Stirling Crescent** through a Low Interest Loan from the Department of Education and gained development approval from the City of Swan to build a permanent school there.

During 2022, we introduced separate classes for Years 7, 8, and 9, operating initially from the Swan Valley Adventure Centre while renovations at Hazelmere were completed. By Term 2 of 2022, the High School had successfully transitioned to the Hazelmere site. In 2023, we added Class 10, establishing a full Class 7–10 program on the new campus.

Later that year, we received approval to build three new classrooms at Hazelmere to house our Primary classes (Years 3–6). While waiting for construction to finish, we installed two yurts as temporary learning spaces for Class 3/4 and Class 5/6. This was a wonderful community effort, as staff members, parents and board members worked alongside each other to construct the yurts. Once the classrooms were completed, we were also able to relocate Class 1 and 2 to Hazelmere, leaving only our Kindergarten at the original Spring Park Road site.

In Term 3, the Board made the difficult decision to close the High School at the end of 2024. This was a heartfelt choice made with the long-term wellbeing of the school community in mind. As a result, the school returned to its focus as a Kindergarten to Class 7 provider from 2025.

Looking ahead, our vision is to continue developing the Hazelmere campus to include an additional three classrooms, a PnF shop, and a purpose-built Kindergarten, bringing our entire school community together on one site.

OUR VISION

On Whadjak Noongar boodja, guided by love for all life on earth, we strive to foster clear, enlightened thinking, warmth of feeling and strength of will for good deeds and life-long purpose.

OUR MISSION

Helena River Steiner School aims to provide education based on the principles of Rudolf Steiner to children and families in the Swan Valley.

We will do this by:

- Fostering the healthy unfolding of each unique individual in a creative, nurturing and respectful community.
- Providing a curriculum and pedagogy appropriate to the developmental stage and needs of the learner. We educate the whole human being in thinking, feeling and willing through learning experiences which engage the head, heart and hands, guided by a sense for goodness, beauty and truth. We seek to inspire love of learning, curiosity for life and moral engagement with the world that will carry on throughout the lifespan.
- Striving to engender care, respect and reverence for the natural and spiritual worlds.

OUR VALUES

The Helena River Steiner School provides an education of the child that engenders:

- **Wonder:** We cultivate a sense of wonder and reverence in the child by encouraging the child's innate affinity with the natural world. We stimulate curiosity and love for other beings and natural phenomenon.
- **Compassion:** Our teaching staff provide an example through their actions and deeds with clear thinking, balanced emotions and unconditional love for the children, other staff, the community and nature. This assists the children to develop into confident adults who care for others.
- **Creativity:** We provide a wide-ranging curriculum that includes a balance of academics and arts with physical, social and emotional development. By encouraging creativity and imagination students develop a capacity to think laterally in later life.
- **Authenticity:** We will strive to allow the child to seek and value truth, individuality, integrity and authenticity. We provide guidance on moral courage to stand up for what is good, true and beautiful.
- **Wellness:** We value and foster wellness in body, soul and spirit. We do this by providing a holistic education and environment that develops the whole child. We acknowledge and celebrate others through collaboration, tolerance and inclusivity.



OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Curriculum and Pedagogy

Deliver high quality Steiner, student-centred education with a developmentally appropriate curriculum, which grows organically with the community we serve.

2. People

Become an employer of choice through an empowering and well-planned recruitment and human resource management process to ensure quality staff are attracted and retained.

3. Environment

To relocate the whole School to our Hazelmere campus.

4. Community

To enhance the engagement of the school with the community it serves ensuring that it is recognised as a quality based educational facility which caters honestly and openly to community needs.

5. Governance

To actively improve and develop the Governance of the School.

6. Finances

To deliver financial sustainability to the school.



SECTION 3: STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT

Helena River Steiner School Community Association Incorporated is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Organisational Structure



GOVERNANCE

1. Board Of Governors and Operational Management

From the very beginning, our school has grown through the shared commitment of teachers, parents, and community members working together in service of the children.

In 2015, our newly incorporated Association gathered a group of dedicated Steiner teachers to help guide the vision and direction of the school. The following year, parents joined this circle, bringing the voice of families into the heart of our planning. Together, teachers and parents reflected on the qualities and skills needed for wise and balanced governance and began inviting members who could bring those gifts to the table. During this time, a new Constitution was crafted to reflect the life of a working school community.

By 2017, this guiding circle had naturally evolved into the School Board. From there, clear structures were established to support healthy governance, nurture collaboration, and ensure that we met the responsibilities required of a registered non-government school.

The Principal stands at the centre of the school's life as both educational and operational leader, supported by a capable and committed team. This team includes the Education Coordinator, Finance Officer, Administration staff, teachers, and assistants. Each brings their own skills in service of the children, and together they work with the Principal, who carries overall responsibility for the life of the school.

2. Board Members 2024

Name	Position	Date Joined Board	Date Left Board
Peter Fern	Board Chair	April 2016	
Adam Lee	Member	December 2020	September 2024
Boris Krestelica	Member	November 2021 Rejoined November 2024	Left July 2024
Gladstone Davies	Member	October 2022 (rejoined)	December 2024
Lisa Liu	Board Treasurer	January 2023	January 2024
Glynis Preston	Board Secretary	October 2023	
Eugene Hooks	Member	February 2024	
Yoshi Takashima	Board Treasurer	March 2024	
Marijanna Smith	Member	August 2024	

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I present the Chairman's report for the calendar year 2024.

The school ended 2023 with the challenge of moving the primary school from Spring Park Road to the Hazelmere campus. Due to time pressures and delays in receiving approvals, the primary school classrooms were not ready to start the year. The decision was made to build two yurts on site to accommodate the immediate needs of the teachers and students. Parents, teachers and Board members constructed these yurts in four days!

Early in Term one the instalments of three transportable classrooms began. Over the course of the year, Classes 1 to 6 moved across from Spring Park Road to Hazelmere, leaving only our Kindy classes at the Spring Park Road site. Through the year, major work was done to landscape the school and develop our vegetable garden. By the end of the year, the Hazelmere grounds were transformed with gardens and the vegetable garden was overflowing with food and flowers.

During Term 3, 2024, we made the difficult and painful decision to close the High school from the end of 2024. We did our best to ensure that all students had places available to them at other high schools of their choice.

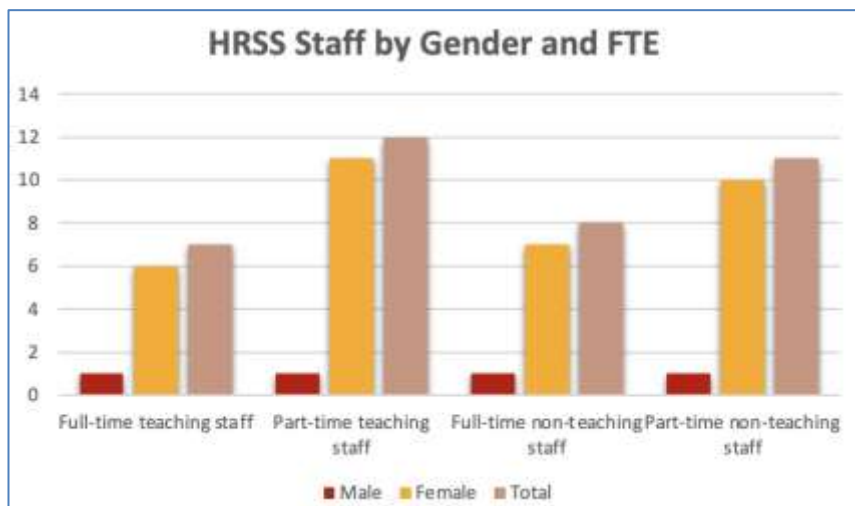
The Board has met regularly and has ensured that the school complies with all regulatory and statutory requirements. The leadership group of Rensche and Yvette have led the school in an exemplary manner. The teaching staff are stable and committed to the children. The Board has balanced capital expenditure needs with our income stream and we are growing at a steady pace.

In closing, I would like to thank all the staff members of the school for their dedicated hard work. The Board acknowledges that the staff, both admin and teaching staff, hold the students and the school together; helping to make it the very special community that it is. I also acknowledge the continuing support of our school community, which we greatly value. Personally, I would also thank all the Board members for volunteering their precious time for the School.

Thanking you,
Peter Fern
Board Chair

SECTION 4: OUR PEOPLE 2024

STAFF COMPOSITION



STAFF TURNOVER

The staff turnover during 2024 was 16%. This is significantly reduced from previous years.

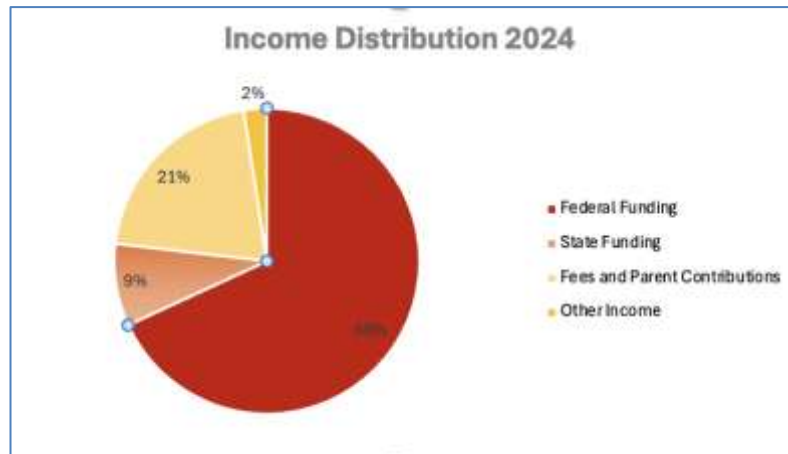
STAFF DISTRIBUTION

	Female	Male
Primary School Teaching Staff	10	1
High School Teaching Staff	5	2
Early Childhood Teaching Staff	3	0
Early Childhood Education Assistants	3	0
Primary School Education Assistants	5	0
High School Education Assistants	1	0
Finance	0	1
Administration	5	1



SECTION 5: FINANCES

INCOME FOR THE YEAR



EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR



TREASURER'S REPORT

Dear staff, teachers, parents and community members of Helena River Steiner School,

On behalf of the Board, I am pleased to present the annual financial results for Helena River Steiner School for the financial year ending 31 December 2024.

In summary, the school delivered another year of healthy financial results, ending the year with a net profit figure of \$145,000 and a closing cash balance of \$160,000. What was especially pleasing to see is that the school achieved this result despite making significant operational and capital investments to support the relocation of the Primary school from Spring Park Road to the Hazlemere Campus.

In terms of revenue, the school achieved a total income of \$35.5 million for the year, representing a 32% increase compared to 2023. This growth came from an increase in student enrolments, which boosted all three of the school's key income streams: federal funding, state funding and net student fees. Of the three streams, the largest contributor was federal government funding, which rose 40% from \$1.62 million to \$2.29 million, accounting for nearly 70% of total income. Overall, this strong revenue performance gave the school the ability to make key capital investment decisions during the year.

While the school performed very strongly on the revenue front, it also saw increases in both capital and operating expenses. With the move of the Primary School from Spring Park Road to the Hazlemere Campus, the school invested around \$800,000 to support this transition. This was a major project and a key area of focus in 2024 for the school, covering infrastructure upgrades, classroom installations, and other site improvements that will serve the school well into the future. On the operational side, total operating expenses rose by 32% compared to 2023, from \$2.4 million to \$3.2 million. The main drivers were maintenance and OHS costs, staffing and increased marketing spend.

The school's balance sheet remains in a strong position, closing the year with net assets of approximately \$750,000, a 25% increase from 2023. This growth was mainly driven by investment in property, plant and equipment, which rose more than \$800,000 during the year. These additions included new infrastructure, classrooms and other site improvements to support the campus transition. The school also finished the year with a cash balance of around \$160,000, down from \$328,000 in 2023. This reduction was anticipated, given the level of capital upgrades made during the year. Total liabilities increased from \$2.4 million to \$3.4 million, largely due to an increase in lease-related obligations associated with the expanded use of the Hazlemere site.

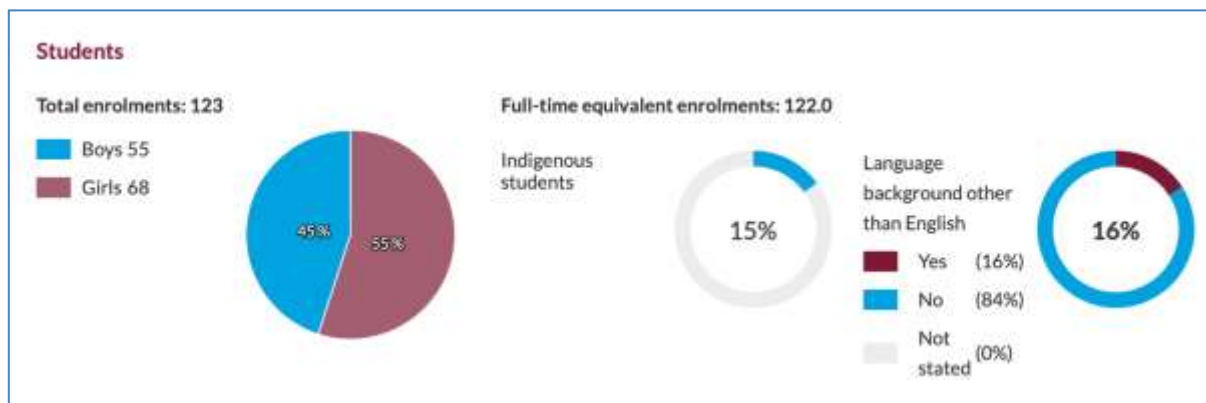
To close, I'd like to acknowledge that 2024 was a transformational year for our school. The strong financial performance gave us the opportunity to reinvest meaningfully back into the school, in line with our strategic plan and long-term vision. Looking ahead, we are well positioned to build on the foundations laid in 2024 and continue supporting the growth and sustainability of the school into the future. I would also like to thank all of our staff members for their dedication and hard work throughout the year, and the Board for their ongoing support and commitment.

With warm regards,
Yoshi Takashima
Board Treasurer



SECTION 6: STUDENT INFORMATION

STUDENT NUMBERS AND ATTENDANCE



Class	Student Numbers	Average Attendance
Kindy 4	9	97%
Kindy 5	3	93%
Kindy 6	24	92%
Class 1	11	83%
Class 2	18	88%
Class 3	7	90%
Class 4	15	84%
Class 5	9	89%
Class 6	7	81%
Class 7	11	74%
Class 8	5	77%
Class 9	6	56%
Class 10	6	80%

The school monitors attendance by following up all cases on non-attendance to request a reason for absence. Absences are monitored and discussed with parents/carers if a concern arises, as per the school's Attendance Policy.

Mandatory reporting procedures may apply where there are high levels of absenteeism.



NAPLAN RESULTS

NAPLAN is a national literacy and numeracy test undertaken by all children in Class 3, 5, 7 and 9. It is the only national assessment that all Australian children undertake.

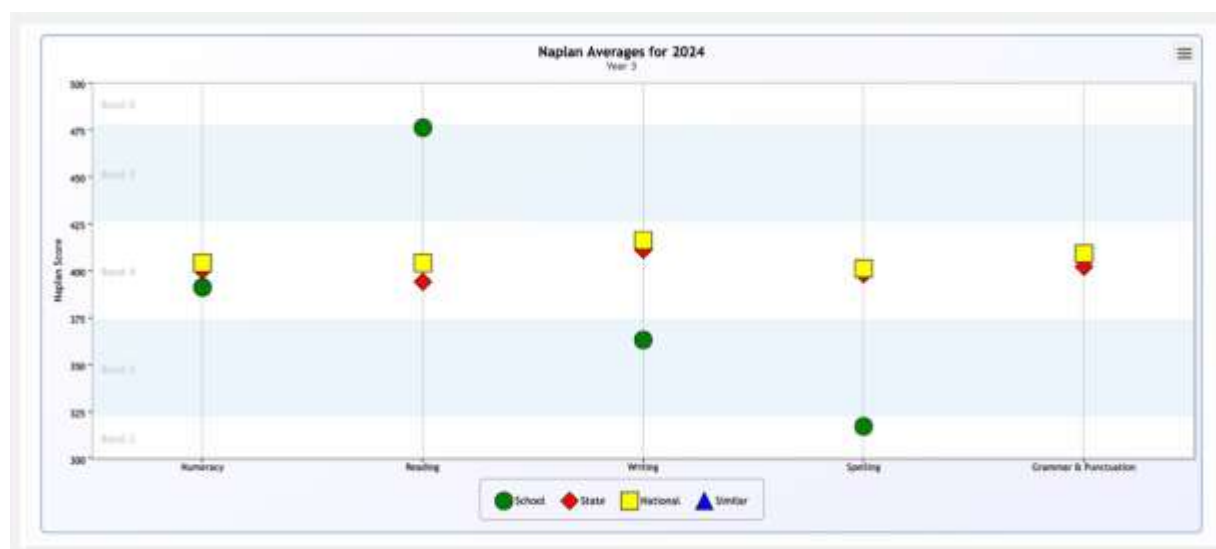
At Helena River Steiner School, our teaching and learning is guided by the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework, which offers a rich, holistic, and creative approach to education. While our daily practice is centred in Steiner pedagogy, as a registered independent school we also meet all government requirements, including the completion of NAPLAN testing. NAPLAN provides one of many tools we use to track student progress, and results are considered alongside our broader observations, assessments, and deep understanding of each child's development.

1. NAPLAN Key Findings 2024

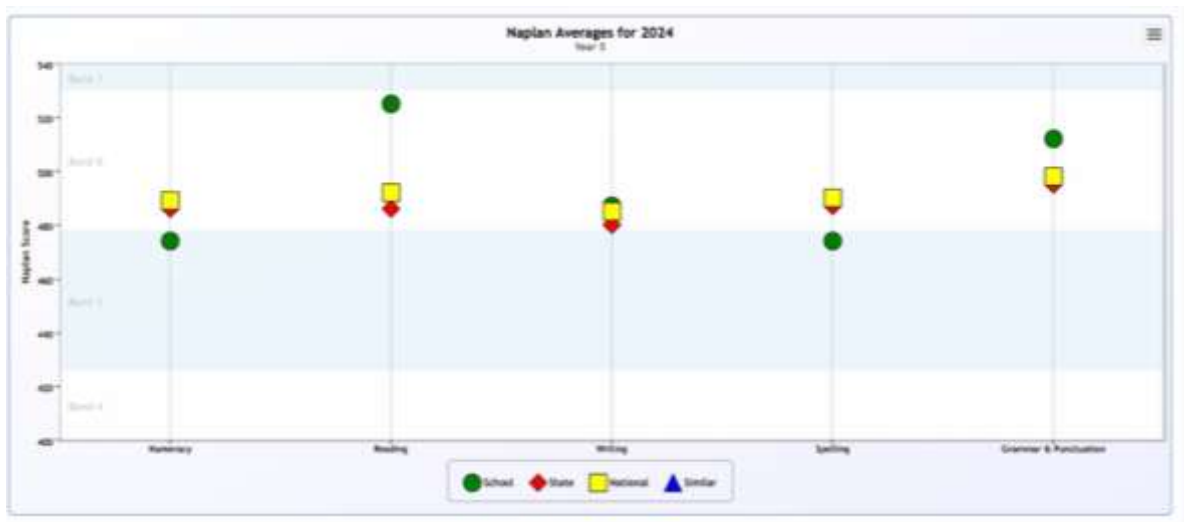
In 2024, student achievement was strongest in Reading and Writing. Spelling and Numeracy remain key areas of focus for improvement. To strengthen spelling outcomes, the school will introduce a whole-school phonics program in 2025. Teachers will also be supported with additional resources to enhance the delivery of Numeracy and Spelling programs.

To further support student learning, a Learning Support teacher will be appointed in 2025, with a particular focus on improving outcomes for students requiring additional assistance.

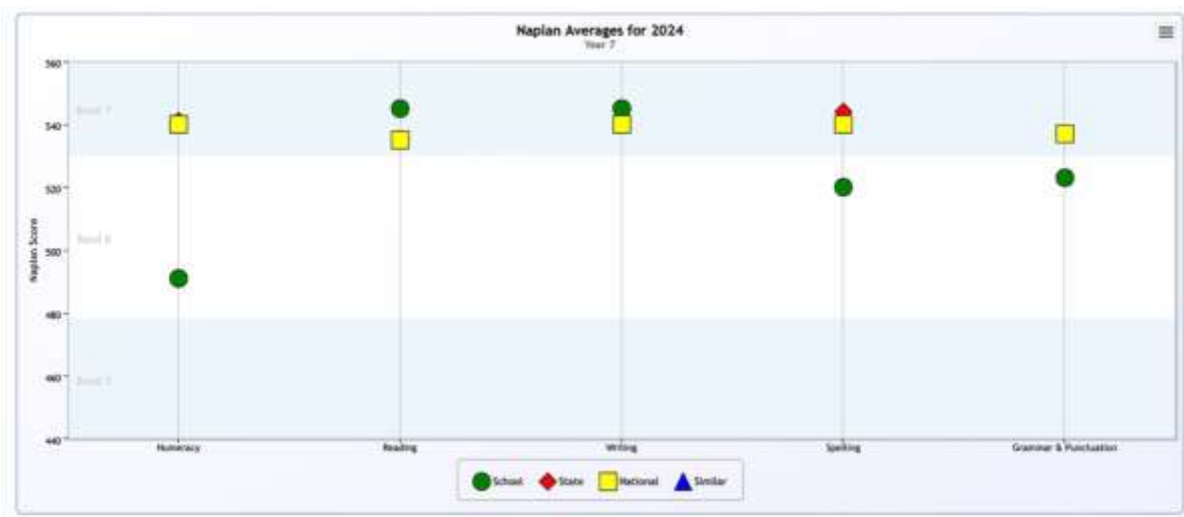
2. Class 3 Results



3. Class 5 Results



4. Class 7 Results



SECTION 7: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We take the opportunity to thank the following groups who support us on this journey:

1. Donors

Board members, staff, parents, local businesses and other community organisations.

2. Grants and funding

1. Department of Education (State and Federal)
2. AISWA
3. Sporting Schools (sports grants)

3. Volunteers

Board members, parents, staff and other community members.

4. Board Members and Staff

All the Board Members and employees current and past who contributed their valuable time and efforts to support us in different aspects.

CONTACT US

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