



2024 Annual Report for NSW Education Standards Authority







**We are a school chosen for our difference of child-centredness.**

**We acknowledge the opportunities given to us from our rich, natural environment.**

**We maintain strong leadership and effective governance.**

**We are a community built on real and open relationships.**

**We acknowledge magic happens at Kinma.**

# Kinma School's Annual Report for 2024

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## Kinma School Information



Kinma School was created by forward thinking parents in 1972 who were using concepts such as critical thinking, self-determination, child-centred and supporting the emotional wellbeing of children fifty years ago. Today, these core values continue to underpin our learning and relationships with each other and ourselves.

Kinma is set in a stunning bush environment and the community collaborate in being custodians of the Gaimariagal land that Kinma sits on, respecting those past and present that have connections to the land and the values of looking after each other.

Kinma is a vibrant community of learners that see the children at the centre of decision making, involving them in areas that will impact their learning and understanding of the world around them. The respectful relationships that are facilitated through reciprocity are the centre of learning, where educators and staff know the children and their families and communicate together about their learning and development.

Kinma children have agency over their learning and through the thematic learning that takes place which incorporates the Key Learning Areas. The individualised style of teaching where the children are viewed from a strength basis and their furthering development understood through the lense of stage rather than age, this understanding of the children forms the innovative and engaging planning for each day, which meets the curriculum in a unique and inviting way.

Kinma children are viewed as capable and as a 'whole child' placing emphasis on their wellbeing and connections with themselves and others as a core part of their learning to be who they are. It is through these relationships that children leave Kinma with the confidence and understanding of who they are as people and as learners and they step into a multitude of high schools with many comments from their future high school teachers such as 'Kinma Kids are engaged and love to learn.'

## Message from key school bodies

### Chairperson's Report

Reflecting on my first year as Chair and the year that has been for Kinma, I am constantly grateful for the decades of experience, wealth of knowledge, and depth of passion and dedication shown by Felicity Brandon as she beds down her place as Head of School. Felicity's depth of connection to all things Kinma is most important amongst the backdrop of change we still experience – losing the long-term administrative guidance of Office Manager Claire Hickson; disruptions in staffing for the key role of Education Leader; loss of long-term Board members Steve Dixon, Keith Mason and Amy Webster; as well as teacher movements and student attrition.

The year saw us draw on the pillars of our refreshed Strategic Plan as we continued to focus on reconnecting community and reinvigorating our voice internally and externally as a lighthouse demonstrating the full possibilities of our progressive and holistic approach to education. Strong investment in mentorship for our teachers initiated a pro-active shift back to our progressive roots, supporting more overtly open-ended, self-directed learning environments and an evolution in the approach to class groupings. This evolution has come with its own set of challenges and learnings as we navigate the most effective ways to connect with and communicate individual children's needs, whilst holding and honouring the complexity of inputs from parents, teachers, classroom dynamics, and our financial and governance requirements.

I am grateful for the dedication and support of our Board members who have taken on additional roles devoting time and resources leading the various Action Groups that are bringing our Strategic Plan to life. I also acknowledge with gratitude the tireless efforts of the Green Umbrella Board and associated volunteers, as well as the successes of securing a crucial grant to allow the continuation of this important service of out of hours school care to our school community.

Our goal remains to honour the intentions of our founders over 50 years ago, creating a learning environment where children can thrive through self-directed, and non-competitive, child-centred education. At the same time balancing the impact of social, environmental, and pedagogical evolution as we continue to establish the best processes, resources, and personnel for our school and community to flourish.

Madeline O'Donoghue

Chairperson

## Treasurer's Report

Kinma concluded 2024 in sound financial health. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our Head of School, as well as our dedicated Administrative and Teaching staff, for their ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality education while operating within the financial constraints of a small independent school.

Special acknowledgement must go to Felicity Brandon and Nick Callas, who have worked tirelessly in their roles as Head of School and School Accountant. Their close monitoring of financial performance throughout the year and proactive management of emerging issues were key in maintaining the school's financial stability.

As reflected in the audited accounts, the school recorded a modest surplus of approximately \$70,000. This result was achieved through disciplined cost management despite lower enrolments and, consequently, reduced revenue.

During 2024, staffing remained our largest operational expense, as is typical. Inflation, loan repayments, and increased utility and maintenance costs also significantly influenced our financial performance.

Looking ahead to 2025, with rising operational costs and differences in incoming and outgoing funds, the prediction is less favourable. In such times, the support of our school community is more important than ever - whether through fundraising, advocacy, or other means. School Management is working diligently to address this, and they have my full support.

I would also like to thank the Board and Management team for their support during my first year as Treasurer. I look forward to continuing our work together to guide Kinma toward a bright and sustainable future.

**Nick Brischetto**

Treasurer

## Education Committee Report

Over the past year, the Education Committee has worked to uphold and advance Kinma's educational philosophy—one centred on curiosity, respect, inclusion, and holistic development. This report outlines the committee's key activities, reflections, and outcomes throughout 2024.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Feedback from the recent parent survey reaffirmed families' deep appreciation for Kinma's teachers and the relationships they build with students. At the same time, families expressed a desire for clearer communication about how foundational academic skills are taught at Kinma, given its non-traditional methods. In response, we are updating our assessment policy, improving how we explain learning approaches to families, and planning to highlight alumni stories and teacher achievements through newsletters and social media.

A significant portion of committee time was devoted to considering primary groupings for 2025—a topic that generated lively discussion across the school community. While contentious at times, this process demonstrated the value of collaborative, transparent decision-making and reinforced the committee's role as a key forum for continual reflection on the implementation of Kinma's personalised educational philosophy.

### **Learning Support and Enrolment**

With an increase in enrolment inquiries from families whose children have additional learning needs, we've evaluated our learning support frameworks and enrolment processes to balance Kinma's inclusive ethos with staff capacity and resource sustainability. A trial period has been introduced for some enrolments—particularly children transferring from other schools—to assess mutual fit in a structured, transparent way. Legal frameworks were considered to ensure this process maintains fairness and avoids potential discrimination.

We also finalised a change to the ceasing enrolment policy, transferring final decision-making from the Board to the Education Committee (based on recommendations from the Head of School). This strengthens procedural fairness while maintaining confidentiality in sensitive situations.

Additionally, to support after-hours logistics, all families will now be asked to arrange enrolment with Green Umbrella (GU) after school care upon admission, ensuring coverage in the event of late pick-ups.

### **Reflective Practice and Research**

A research project led by a PhD candidate investigating the impact of teacher language on memory and learning was approved. The voluntary, play-based study supports Kinma's culture of reflection and continuous improvement. Staff participation in this research underscores our commitment to examining and evolving educational practice through inquiry and evidence.

### **Governance and Strategic Planning**

The Committee has reviewed and updated its Terms of Reference, reinforcing its purpose as a steward of Kinma's educational philosophy and strategic direction. We're supporting clearer channels for teacher feedback, and improving Board-Committee communication so that educational thinking remains integral to decision-making.

Another major initiative is the Education Action Group, driven by the Kinma Board and which is helping guide our strategic goal of articulating Kinma's complex model of education in ways that are consistent and accessible both internally and externally.

### **Policy Development and Regulatory Readiness**

This year, the Committee undertook extensive policy work, including:

- **Emergency procedures:** Updated and communicated to families; RFS consulted for incident planning.
- **Parent Code of Conduct:** Revised and shared in the parent handbook; a separate version for visitors is being finalised.
- **Health and Safety:** Comprehensive updates to medical, hygiene, illness and infectious disease policies.
- **Excursion and supervision:** Policy updated to include emergency contacts and risk management protocols.
- **Policy access:** A consolidated digital suite of the latest policies was made available to staff for greater transparency and consistency.
- **Registration with NES:** We received our Primary registration certificate, and staff and Board are preparing for spot inspections as per the new regulatory model. We are working closely with AIS to ensure full compliance with curriculum and non-curriculum expectations.

The work of the Education Committee continues to evolve in support of the school's vision, balancing philosophical integrity with practical realities. We thank all staff, families, and committee members for their contributions.



## Contextual information

Kinma School embraces the diverse cultural, linguistic, and personal backgrounds of its students, families, and staff. This diversity is actively celebrated through inclusive cultural events and community gatherings, which create opportunities for students and families to share their traditions, languages, and stories. Approximately 30% of families speak two languages. These celebrations help foster a sense of belonging and promote a genuine appreciation for difference.

Children's voices are central to the life of the school. Students are encouraged to express their perspectives, contribute ideas, and participate in shaping the community, reinforcing their sense of agency and inclusion. At Kinma, all individuals are acknowledged as unique, and differences—whether cultural, neurological, emotional, or physical—are respected and valued.

The school's inclusive practices ensure that children with additional needs are supported through flexible, individualised approaches that allow them to participate fully in the learning community. Kinma's bushland setting and independent ethos provide a nurturing environment where creativity, curiosity, and connection thrive, and where every member of the community feels welcomed, respected, and empowered to be themselves.

## Priority areas for improvement

Our priorities for 2025 are based on core educational practices and income goals.

Priorities	Strategies
Philosophical connection with internal and external communities	Working Group of parents, past parents, staff to further define our core and guiding principles.  Current staff and current community defining our overarching values at Kinma that are alive now.
Celebrating Progressive Education and Inquiry Based Learning	Working closely with Nikki Brunker to investigate progressive education practices through teacher inquiry processes.  Priorities staff attending ADEC to network and continually improve our practices that align with democratic principles and inquiry based learning.
Increasing our Enrolments	Utilising input from Torrens University Industry Consulting Project to enhance social media content and connectivity.  Reviewing Kinma Website to be modern and easily accessible.
Increase Fundraising efforts and grant applications.	Form a Fundraising Working Group of board members and parents to encourage different fundraising events.  Board supporting management to apply for applicable grants and other opportunities for raising funds.

## Actions taken to promote respect and responsibility

Kinma School demonstrates a strong commitment to fostering respect, responsibility, and community through a range of embedded practices and purposeful activities. These values are evident in both classroom environments and whole-school initiatives, supporting student wellbeing, social development, and positive relationships.

### Respect and Responsibility

Respect and responsibility are cultivated through student-centred learning and a culture of mutual respect. Key strategies include:

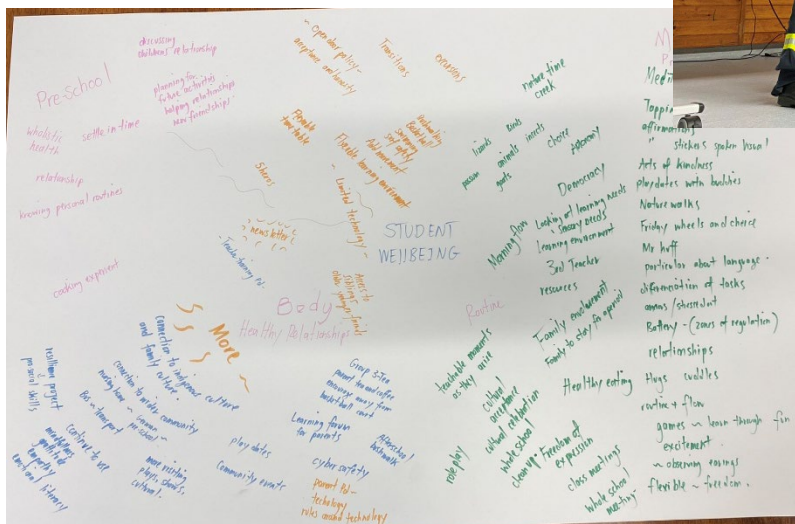
- **Student Voice and Participation:** Regular class meetings and Yarning time provide structured opportunities for students to express their views, engage in decision-making, and collaboratively resolve conflicts. This encourages active citizenship and personal accountability. The eldest group have been using a parliament style class meeting inspired by their trip to Canberra to have all voices heard and opinions considered.
- **Mixed-Age Grouping:** The school's mixed-age classes promote mentoring relationships and reinforce empathy and care among students. Older students often support younger peers, modelling respectful behaviour and leadership. This is regularly seen in buddy reading, outdoor play time and within each group.
- **Restorative Practices:** Restorative approaches are used to address interpersonal issues, promoting responsibility for one's actions and a commitment to repair and growth. These practices contribute to a calm, inclusive school culture.

### Community and Class Engagement

Kinma places a strong emphasis on community-building and connection, both within the classroom and across the broader school community. Key initiatives include:

- **Whole-School Events:** Creativity Festival, Disco, Gratitude Gathering, Bush Dance, Children's Markets, Tinkering Days, Progressive Lunch are all gatherings that provide meaningful opportunities to bring families and staff together, honouring diversity and shared values. We also had Learning Events such as a visitor who has worked at NASA to share insights from outer space. Whole community learning event on the "Kinma Way" delivered by our experienced teachers to enhance a shared understanding of our philosophy and practice.
- **Community Participation:** Events such as Kinma Care, reading with groups, going on excursions and Snack Attack (Parents cooking a meal for the whole school each week) encourage collaborative involvement in school projects. These occasions strengthen relationships between families and staff and promote shared responsibility for the school environment as custodians of this beautiful bush setting.
- **Collaborative Learning Projects:** Inquiry topics such as the topics that stretched the year for the youngest group about Who Am I as an individual, Ways to Support and Be Part of Our School, Community Awareness Beyond Kinma. These topics saw the youngest group as well as other groups visit our local Nursing home, library and shops as being responsible and connected with our local community.

- Class-based activities regularly include inquiry-based learning, environmental stewardship, and creative expression, designed to encourage cooperation, personal responsibility, and mutual respect among students.





## Outcomes and results

Assessment activities at Kinma are thoughtfully designed to:

- Allow students to demonstrate their learning in diverse contexts, moving beyond the snapshot provided by NAPLAN and other standardized tests.
- Ensure reliability, impartiality, and accuracy in reflecting each student's unique knowledge, understanding, and skills, fostering a deep understanding of their individual progress.
- Promote inclusivity and accessibility for all students, accommodating diverse learning styles and needs.
- Form an ongoing process that monitors students' progress over time, supporting their learning journey without relying on comparative measures against their peers.

## Staffing

### Teacher Accreditation Status

Level of Accreditation in 2023	Number of Teachers
Conditional	1
Provisional	1
Proficient Teacher	5
Total number of teachers	7

### Workforce Composition

Staff	Number
Teaching Staff	7
FTE Teaching Staff	6
Teacher's assistance	2
FTE Teacher's assistance	1.2
Non-teaching staff	4
FTE Non-teaching Staff	2.6
Staff that Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1

# Attendance

## Student attendance rates

for each Year level and the whole school

Year Group	Attendance %
Kindergarten	93.0%
Year 1	86.7%
Year 2	87.9%
Year 3	87.2%
Year 4	82.5%
Year 5	88.6%
Year 6	90.9%
Whole School	88.11%

## How Kinma manages student non-attendance.

Kinma keeps attendance records electronically in accordance with the NSW Register Codes. The records reflect the following information:

- Daily attendance
- Non attendance
- Reasons for non-attendance
- Documentation to substantiate the non-attendance
- Late arrivals – including reasons
- Early departures – including reasons
- Exemptions for non-attendance

For instances of continued non-attendance, defined as frequent unexplained or non-illness-related absences, Kinma staff take proactive steps. These will be reported to the Education Leader and Head of School to discuss strategies to support regular attendance. Meetings with a student's family are arranged when required to develop effective attendance improvement plans.

For frequent absences due to illness, Kinma will request medical certificates and discuss with the parents any health care needs for the child.

Any concerns for student safety will see prompt reporting with Department for Communities and Justice and the Child Wellbeing Unit will be contacted for safety, welfare or wellbeing concerns in relation to attendance.

## School policies

Kinma's Policies that are publicly available are on our website under the tab "About Kinma" and then "Information for Parents"

Here are the direct links:

[Kinma Child Protection Policy](#)

[Kinma Complaints Management Policy](#)

[Kinma Enrolment Policy](#)

[Kinma Social and Emotional Learning Policy \(anti bullying and discipline\)](#)

[Kinma Whistleblower Policy](#)



## Stakeholder Satisfaction

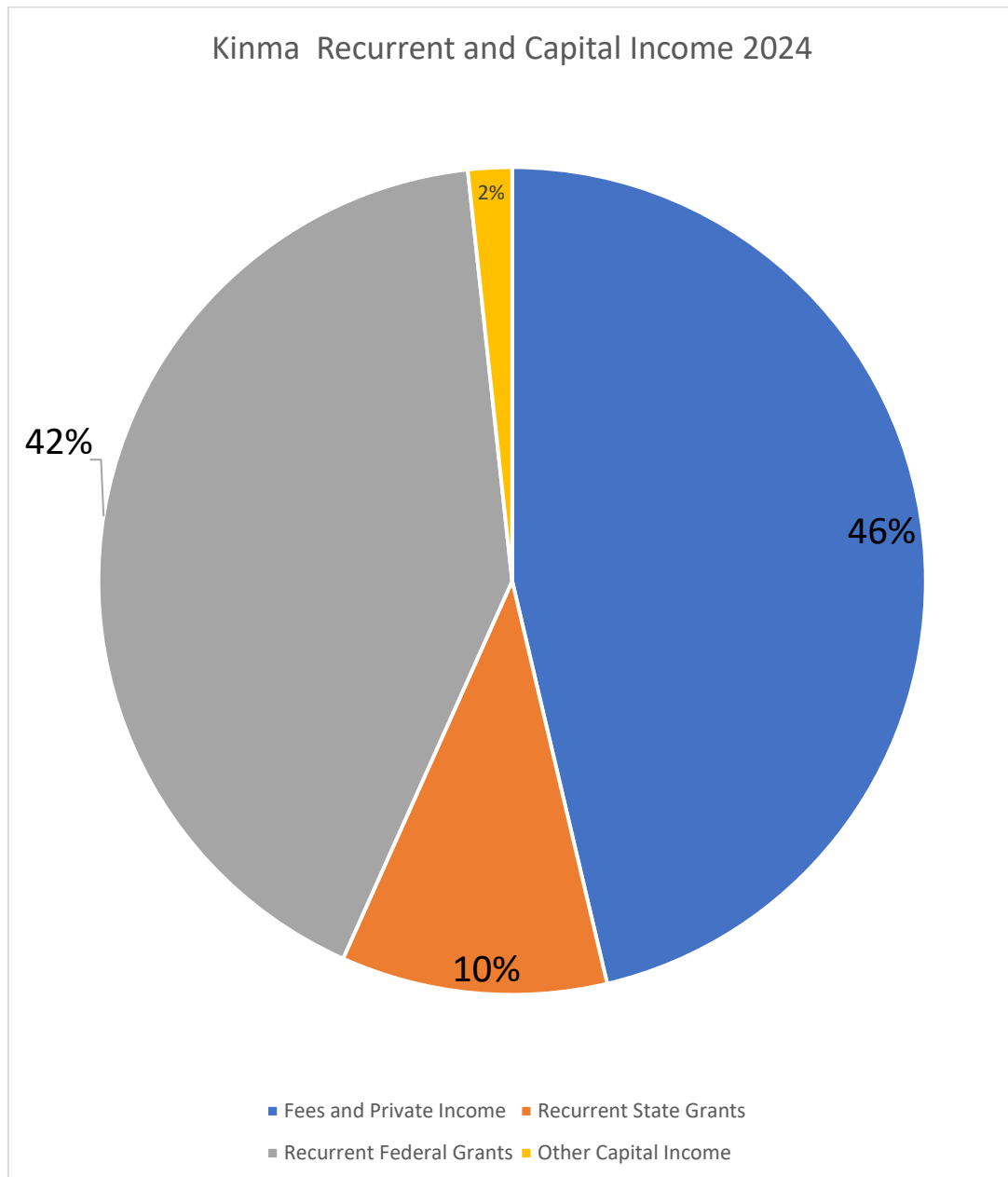
Family survey was completed at the end of the year. There were approximately 50% of family responses.

- The majority of families describe Kinma as a bush school or community school.
- Majority of families value the sense of community.
- There are 80% of parents feeling positive about learning areas, maths was an area for improvement.
- There was neutral response to the learning being aimed appropriately.
- There was a very broad mix of skills to be shared, building and academic research were leaders.
- The administration team are positively approachable, there was an equal response that messaging is clear and informative.
- Vast majority of families receive information by school stream and would prefer after school or after 6pm for events/information sessions.
- 65% of responses agree that board members are approachable.
- Teachers, other families, community, Bushdance are all valued by families.
- 70% would recommend Kinma to others.

## Financial information

Income from all sources

Graph 1: Recurrent/Capital Income



Expenditure on all purposes

Graph 2: Recurrent/Capital Expenditure

