



Ghilgai Steiner School

Performance Report 2019

- Our Vision Statement
- Quality Teaching
- Student Learning
- Assessment and Reporting
- Student Attendance
- Summary of Income and Expenditure 2019
- School Structure
- School History

- ***Our Vision Statement***

Ghilgai School reflects the values of Steiner Education. We endeavor to educate the children wholistically in a safe nurturing environment via a balanced curriculum, which fosters clarity in thinking, depth in feeling and strength of will; in order to empower students, so that in adulthood they may be able to contribute to society as creative, ethical and responsible citizens. We strive to build confidence, initiative and responsibility, seeking to maintain balance between growth of the individual and that of the group identity. We actively work towards an accepting and compassionate community, founded on an harmonious union between school and home

- **Quality Teaching**

At Ghilgai School the Class Teacher moves through the class levels with the children in order to provide a stable and secure environment for the child. This continuity from year to year enables the teacher to develop insight into the full potential of the child and deepens the teacher/student relationship. Class teachers make a firm commitment to accompany the child throughout the six primary school years. This is always a freely-given commitment — with a clear understanding that life's circumstances may unexpectedly change and necessitate departure. Should this happen, the transition is carefully managed by the College of Teachers Executive. The Class Teachers at Ghilgai have generally achieved this span

The work of the Class Teachers is enriched by Specialist Teachers in a broad range of subject areas: Craft, Eurythmy, Music, LOTE, and Physical Education and German.

We also have Specialist Teachers who give one-to-one learning support in Literacy/Numeracy. Two part-time classroom aides give students extra support within the class setting in Literacy and Numeracy. Our PE teacher also works remedially with individual children on coordinative activities. A Psychologist visits weekly to support students via counselling and assessment where needed.

Our Bursar and our Education Coordinator are part-time administrators — the latter is an experienced Steiner teacher who can also offer support to teachers, parents, and children. Our valuable ancillary staff members cover first aid, library, reception duties and general assistance for teachers.

Ghilgai School provides an ongoing Professional Development programme for teaching staff on a weekly basis and hosts regular in-house in-service days.

Professional development opportunities renew and enrich practising teachers. Teachers are funded to attend 2 external PD days per year.

Through an internal PD Support scheme, teachers are also encouraged to visit other classrooms to observe lessons.

New teachers are mentored. Peer networking opportunities provide an opportunity to share experience and skills – both formally and informally.

Ghilgai conducts an annual Teacher Performance Review that supports the growth and development of all teachers. All teachers also participate in a Self-Review annually.

- **Student Learning**

Ghilgai offers a wholistic education, under the umbrella of the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework (ASCF).

We strive to educate the students towards academic excellence and towards resilience and kindness. We actively work to foster the development of emotional and social intelligence; and towards the acquisition of high level practical skills.

A vibrant and healthy school tone must be sustained by all members of the school community — teachers, children, and parents in order to provide foundations for a productive learning environment. Our comprehensive Codes of Conduct for teachers, students and parents lay down clear guidelines for all parties. They provide guidelines for clear communication and map effective resolution procedures.

We have set a maximum of 20 students per class, so that we can nourish each child and cater for individual differences. At times the College of Teachers may close enrolments into a class with fewer than 20 children for pedagogical reasons.

- **Assessment - Literacy and Numeracy**

The Steiner curriculum unfolds to meet the child's developmental stages. Teaching matches the "optimum time" — ie when the child is developmentally ready, in both intellect and inner life, to take the next step in learning. This approach provides fulfilment for the child and engenders confidence.

Our curriculum is carefully structured in the way it introduces and develops Literacy and Numeracy. We do not call upon analytical skills until there is an appropriate readiness in the older classes. Both Literacy and Numeracy in the early years are grounded in reality, rich language experiences and visual imagery. Abstract concepts are avoided in these early stages.

Ghilgai School does not overtly and formally test children before Class 6 because we are striving to build confidence and joy in the learning experience itself. Ghilgai believes overt testing situations imposed in the primary years negates this striving and weakens the confidence of many children — not necessarily via "failure", often just by the comparisons that the child inevitably makes of him/herself with others.

In following Steiner's principles, we believe overt testing moves the child's focus away from personal growth and personal "best" and promotes a subtle competitive element within the individual. At Ghilgai the emphasis is on enabling a learning process to be experienced as a natural process of growth and as a lifelong process.

Through overt testing results are valued more than a growth mindset. Then, as the challenged child struggles towards this new point of external acceptance, confidence is eroded. On the other hand, capable children may shine because they have been accepted in a new way — ie their test results are above the norm and/or above those of other classmates. Their focus shifts then to "good results", and the wholesome learning experience is for them subverted.

And yet each teacher needs to know whether a child has retained previous learning and is independently able to demonstrate particular essential skills. Teachers are accountable to parents, and schools are accountable to government authorities that need to overview the effectiveness of the education provided in each school, on behalf of future generations and society as a whole.

Some form of structured evaluation is clearly necessary - Ghilgai has a multifaceted approach. The major components are Ghilgai Minimum Standards Class 1- 6 and Ghilgai Standardized Assessment Tasks.

Ghilgai offers NAPLAN tests annually at Class 3 and 5 levels in accord with Government policy. In 2019 Ghilgai had 98% withdrawal of students by their parents, who in choosing this education do not want to place their children into formal testing situations in the primary years. The parents do so because they see that, if the school were to restructure the teaching of Literacy / Numeracy to accord with NAPLAN progressions, this would breach the Steiner curriculum that unfolds stage by stage in relation to ongoing child development. The child must have time to grow within each stage, and each stage is foundational for the next.

Also, parents see that by the end of Class 6 Ghilgai students are strong in all aspects of Literacy / Numeracy, and well-equipped for secondary schooling.

As part of Ghilgai's formative and cumulative assessment procedures we use our Standardized Assessment Tasks in Classes 1, 3 and 5 in Literacy and Numeracy, these have been developed in relation to VELS and ASCF. They are administered to children gradually from June to November in discreet yet formal ways during our Practice Lesson times. They appear to the children to be simply another revision exercise and therefore do not have the hallmarks of a test.

The table below provides a simple overview of essential learning areas that are targeted by our standardized assessments, progressively in Class 1, 3 and 5.

	Reading	Writing	Maths	
Cl 1	Reading Foundations	Three letter words -write and -sound Blends Phonograms Writing Foundations	Recording numbers Counting skills Simple problems	
Cl 3	Reading ability (Jun/Oct) Comprehension -oral -pictorial	Written Expression (Mar/Jun/Oct) Spelling Dictation (Jun/Oct)	Oral Number System Money Establishing tables Mental Maths	Written Number system Addition Subtraction
Cl 5	Reading (Jun/Oct) -ability -comprehension – text -comprehension – maps -vocab development	Written Expression (Mar/Jun/Oct) Spelling Dictation (Jun/Oct) Editing (Jun/Oct)	Money Time Weight Length Capacity Mental Maths	Our number system Number facts Place value Equations Fractions Spatial awareness Basic Operations

Statement of Accountability for Literacy and Numeracy Results 2019

The College of Teachers Executive at Ghilgai Steiner School has reviewed the results of our Class One, Class Three and Class Five Standardised Assessments in Literacy and Numeracy and is satisfied that each class group has attained benchmarks set for that year level.

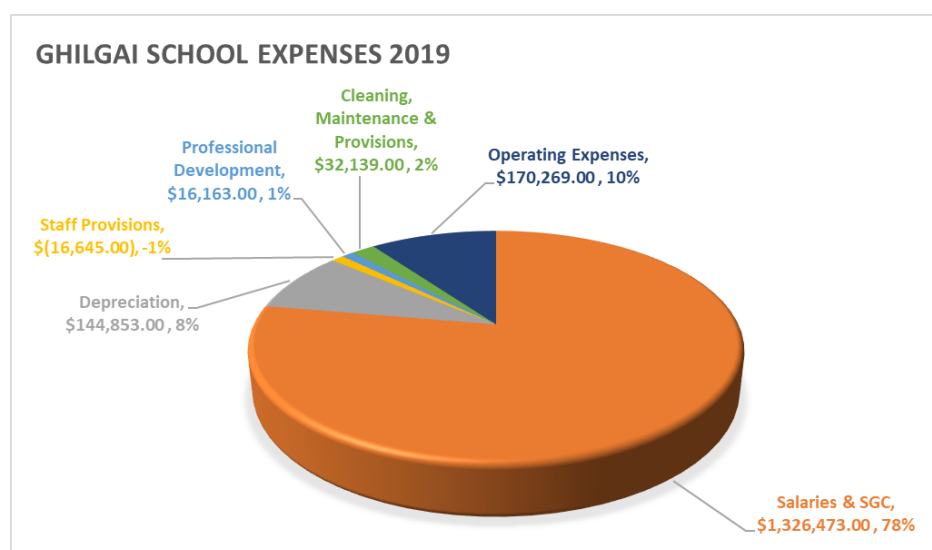
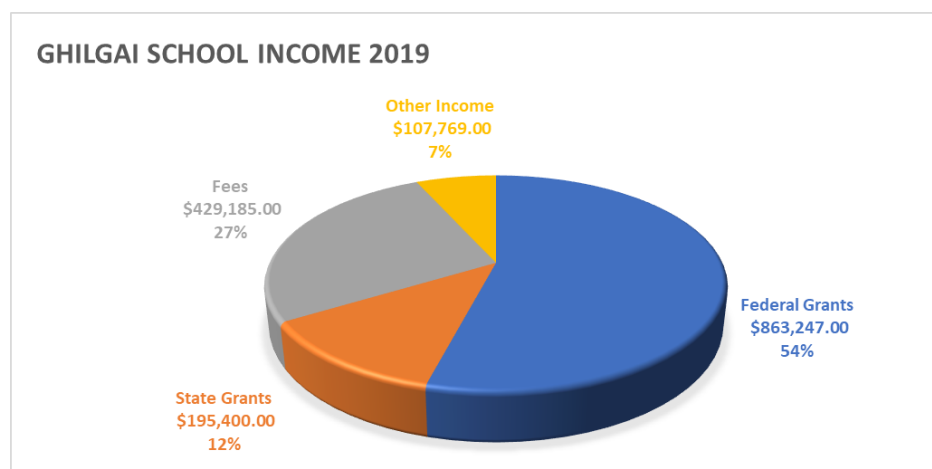
Dec 2019

- **Student attendance 2019**

Student attendance is closely related to learning outcomes and carefully monitored at Ghilgai. Student absence is mainly limited to the usual patterns of childhood illness.

2019 Average Attendance = 90%

- **Summary of Income and Expenditure 2019**



- **School Structure**

We are a Steiner School and our management structure reflects this.

The Teachers

The teacher who makes a commitment to the task is called upon to immerse his/her whole being — thinking, feeling, willing — into his/her work and grows with the children across the years. Teaching is more than “just a job”. Our teachers need dedication and vision, and so one may more appropriately speak of a “vocation” or a “calling”.

Every day we live with the children and share their scene. The to-and-fro contact with you, the parent body, is also stimulating. Daily we see the needs of the school around us and feel its energy moving through us. We do not hibernate or migrate to a staffroom away from the ebb-and-flow of the school community life.

Individually we spend long hours in preparation in order to enable our vision for each class to be realised, and together we share a common vision for our school and work hard to uphold it. We nourish and support one another as we journey through the class levels. We meet regularly as a staff to deal with practicalities, to consider issues, to grow in education.

The College of Teachers Executive

The College of Teachers is more than just a collection of teachers in discussion on school issues. It is a strong entity with the responsibility of principal-ship, where the capacity of each person is expanded by the potential of all the others. The life of the school, the classes and the class communities nourish it.

The College of Teachers Executive at Ghilgai School meets fortnightly — and otherwise as frequently as necessary when urgent matters arise. Decisions arise from consensus. When working on a difficult or delicate issue the College may have to meet on several consecutive days in order to gain resolution and at times they may have to work on a major issue over several weeks — treading deliberately with love and care and respect, secure in confidentiality.

One can look upon the College of Teachers as the sensing heart of the school — the place where responsive energy is generated. This energy pulses through the individual teachers and moves throughout the school and into the school community.

The Parents

The role of the Parent Body is, in the first place, to nurture the children and to sustain the true image of childhood within the community. Ghilgai asks parents to support the College of Teachers and the Teachers, and thus enable the realization of Ghilgai’s vision for Steiner education to come to fruition - parents are asked to engender goodwill and understanding in our community, to make suggestions, to communicate concerns, to offer time and work. The results of this communal work will nourish the present students and seed the future of the School.

The Parent Seed Group consists of representatives from each class. It nurtures the School community, hosts events to raise funds for the School.

The Board of Directors

The role of Board of Directors is foundational. The Board supports the College of Teachers Executive and like the parent body also contributes in practical ways to sustain the vision of Steiner education that is enacted by the College of Teachers Executive. The Directors are responsible for the legal and financial accountability of the School.

- The Directors wish to honour the seminal work done by Alex de Podolinsky in our pioneering years. We value his ongoing commitment to Steiner Education and to Ghilgai. Alex died on the 30th June 2019.

The four bodies - The Teachers, the College of Teachers Executive, the Parents and the Directors form a living whole, they are bound together by cords of love – love for our children.

The School Structure is free and fluid. It is not dependent on any single person, it is enriched and strengthened by the many people who flow through it. It is a strong, firm structure.

College of Teachers 2019: Veronica Cooney, Ruth Wittig. Paul Barton.

Board of Directors 2019: Veronica Cooney, David Hubbard, Lisa Bell, Ruth Wittig.

Greg Brady is Chairperson.

Katrina Heuskes attended meetings in her role as Bursar.

• School History

Ghilgai began in February 1982 in a private house in Mt Evelyn with a handful of children spanning Foundation Year, Class 1 and Class 2. We moved to our present site in September 1982 and continued as a multi-age group in our first room. By February 1983 we had another room ready — we were then a dual stream Kindergarten/Foundation Year with Nila Chambers, and multi-age Class 1 – 3 with Ruth Wittig.

Each year after that we built a new classroom and received a new intake of Kinder/Founders children. Nila moved on to Class 1 and so our class teaching programme began to unfold. The first multi-age group increased in numbers and continued on to Class 6.

Today Ghilgai is a vibrant school for children from playgroups to Class 6. In September 2012 we celebrated our 30th birthday on this site. We continue to develop our original vision — to nurture the lives of the children via the richness of Steiner Education.

In this regard, we seek to fulfil the meaning of our name. “Ghilgai” — is an aboriginal word meaning “water hole in a dry-ish country”. We interpret this image broadly and hope that our school may indeed be a watering hole for our students, teachers, parents and the wider school community; recognising that in each one of us there is a space — a “water hole” — that is able to receive the nurturing rains that replenish body and soul and spirit.

Rudolf Steiner gave a contemplative verse to the teachers of the first school; that reflects the striving of our community towards the ideals articulated in the Vision Statement:

*May there reign here spirit-strength in love;
may there work here spirit-light in goodness;
born from certainty of heart,
and from steadfastness of soul,
so that we may bring to young human beings
bodily strength for work,
inwardness of soul and clarity of spirit.
May this place be consecrated to such a task;
may young minds and hearts here find servers of the light,
endowed with strength, who will guard and cherish them*

This report was prepared by the College of Teachers Executive

