



Annual School Report 2024

(Based on 2024 Data)



The River School is a Government approved, independent, co-educational Primary School and Early Childhood Centre (ECC) located in a beautiful, rainforest valley in Maleny, Queensland. The school began as a service project of Ananda Marga, a global organisation for self-realisation and service to all.

Our school is a loving community for 112 primary students from Prep to Year 6 (60 girls and 52 boys). We also operate a Long Day Care Centre for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children and are licensed to take up to four students in our *After School Hours Care Program* within the ECC.

The guiding philosophy of *The River School* and Early Childhood Centre is Neohumanism. Neohumanism takes the inner spirit of humanism (love of humanity) and expands it to embrace all beings — plants, animals, and the entire universe. Neohumanism recognises diversity but also emphasises the interconnectedness of all things on a universal level. A Neohumanist education seeks to nurture in children their already innate capacity for love and compassion.

History of The River School

The community land on which the school is situated was purchased in 1984. It comprises a total of 52 acres and a community of five families. In 1987, the community decided to set aside a portion of the land (some 15 acres to the south of a gully which divides the property) for Ananda Marga projects. This portion of the land was named Ananda Kamala meaning “Bliss of the lotus flower”. The first project, the *Ananda Marga River School*, opened in 1995 with 23 students. The school’s name was decided by the children who enjoyed playing in beautiful Bridge Creek that runs through the school.

The dedication and passion of the Prout Community, Ananda Marga Education Ltd and numerous Dada's and Didi's have shaped *The River School* to become a world leader of Neohumanist educational practices. Some of the original founders of the school remain on the Prout community and continue to be significant contributors to the school culture and environment. Pepa (Prabha) Demasson, a co-founder and major contributor to the development of the school, served 16 years as Deputy Principal, and 3 years as Principal before retiring in 2013. At this time, Jenny Oakley was appointed as the new Principal to continue guiding the Neohumanist vision of the school founders. In 2017 Anne Donoghoe, who has been with the school since 1997, was appointed Principal of The River School.



School Mission

- Nurture each child’s highest physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual potential,
- Encourage a deep Neohumanist understanding of the interconnectedness of all things, embracing humanity, animals, plants and the entire universe,
- Model love and cooperation throughout the school so that children develop a compassionate heart with a clear moral compass, and the skills and confidence to put their love into action,
- Create a supportive learning community encouraging diversity, unity and service to all.

School Vision

The River School is a world leader in Neohumanist Education contributing to a future of compassion, joy, justice and universalism



Social Climate

Based on our Neohumanist philosophy, the school works to foster a sense of family in the school. This family feeling extends beyond the school to all humanity and the knowledge we are part of a bigger family that includes plants and animals. Children develop this understanding both intuitively and rationally. In meditation they are guided to experience their oneness with all things. Rationally they learn to respect and appreciate the diversity and unity of our universal family.

Service projects are encouraged in every class, in each phase of learning, so that children can act on their understanding of connectedness and develop confidence and skills to make meaningful changes in the world around them.

The school also runs “Buddy Programs” between our youngest and oldest classes which is a valuable mentoring program for all the students involved. Furthermore, lunchtime clubs offer students a variety of extra curriculum activities.



Academic Focus

The River School offers a unique educational experience designed to give children the best possible start to their schooling years. Our Neohumanist philosophy of love, respect and kindness to all beings and the environment, ensures that all learning areas of the Australian Curriculum are delivered within a meaningful framework that nurtures each child's development to its highest mental, spiritual, emotional, social and physical potential. Students are encouraged to question, to challenge themselves and be peacemakers who understand their connection and responsibility as global citizens. The River School is a Government approved, independent Primary School that recognises education must be relevant, engaging and purposeful.

The Curriculum

We offer a robust curriculum, balancing formal and informal learning styles that include inquiry-based approaches such as Walker Learning – play and project based holistic pedagogy in the younger years, and integrated units in Yrs. 2 – 6. Our English program is underpinned by scientific evidence-based practice comprising of *InitialLit*, *MiniLit Sage* and *Spell-Ex*. Numeracy learning is bolstered by the use of the PAT Maths program, as well as Mathletics in the upper primary. Our children's social, emotional, and spiritual growth is supported by daily yoga, meditation, and weekly virtue practice.



Distinctive Curriculum Offerings and Extra-Curricular Activities

Celebration Circle

On Monday afternoons the whole school participates in a Celebration Circle. This includes a candle-lighting ceremony, blessings by the students, singing, meditation, small performances, an introduction to the week's virtue, school playground code and general announcements. Parents are welcome to attend these gatherings, which nurtures our sense of community.

Meditation and Yoga

These important practices are part of our daily *Inner Me* time. Children benefit from early use of their imagination and intuition in creative visualisation activities and meditation exercises. Yoga exercises help children stretch and relax, meditation centers them, and discussions involving the *Getting of Wisdom*, focus on our virtues and social, emotional learning.

The Arts

We have specialist teachers in Music as well as Arts and Cultural Studies. Students have the opportunity to learn a range of instruments through classroom Music and our upper primary students (Year 3-6) are able to join small, specialist guitar groups. Media Studies is offered to our students through our Arts and Cultural Studies Program, which also includes Indigenous studies and a strong environmental focus.





Sport

During 2024, the school participated in several sporting activities.

In Term 1 our upper primary students learned and practiced the martial art skills of taekwondo which was led by Australia Taekwondo.

In Term 2 our lower primary students took part in the sport of football/soccer hosted by Football Australia. Over a five-week period, students engaged in a range of activities that enhanced gross and fine motor skills.

We held our annual **“Friendly Olympics”** in Term 3 and in the summer season, students of all ages cooled off in our freshwater creek at the school. Students practiced field events weekly to determine their personal best scores for the Olympic Day.

Year 2 to Year 6 students enjoyed swimming lessons at the Maleny Pool during Term 4, which focused on water safety and swimming skills.

Grants from *Sporting Schools* (Australian Sports Commission) increased our ability to provide students with a greater variety and depth of sporting skills as we were able to pay professional coaches.



Empowerment Centre

Our Empowerment Centre offered one-on-one and small group learning support in literacy to supplement classroom programs. The Empowerment Centre is a place of learning where students at The River School are provided with intensive, literacy tuition to ensure they reach their full potential in the classroom. Programs run at the Empowerment Centre are individually tailored to meet the needs of each student and are underpinned by the support literacy program *MiniLit Sage* and *MacqLit* for older students.

The Empowerment Centre maintains a close relationship with all classroom teachers. This in turn guarantees that learning activities completed at the Centre support the students' classroom learning.



Building Memories and Skills through School Annual Camps

The River School believes in the power of experiential learning, and that's why annual school camps are a cherished tradition! In 2024, students across all year levels embarked on exciting adventures designed to foster growth and connection.

Younger Years: Building Community and Teamwork

Our Year 2 & 3 campers journeyed to the House of Happiness on Bribie Island, where the focus was on "community and connection." This unique experience, open to many parents, fostered a

wonderful family atmosphere. Students explored the beach, swam together, and strengthened their bonds as a group.

Year 4's "Wattles" class headed to Noosa Northshore for a 3-day adventure centred on team building and connectedness. Through activities like archery, body surfing, and the thrilling Giant Swing, students built stronger relationships with their teacher and classmates.

Year 5: Local Explorations

Our Year 5 Regent adventurers delved into a variety of local treasures, including exciting beach trips and explorations beyond the school grounds. These experiences offered a chance to learn and connect with the surrounding environment.

Year 6: Fostering Trust in Friendships

In 2024 the Red Cedar Leaders attended camp at Alexandra Park, which gave them the opportunity to try a number of team building exercises. Together they rowed kayaks, traversed high ropes, learned archery and battled against each other on both the giant chess board and the volleyball court.



Energising Young Bodies and Minds: A Healthy Approach

The River School prioritises student well-being, and that extends to healthy eating habits. Our tuckshop, open two days a week, offers delicious vegetarian wholefood meals for purchase.

Growing Together: The Tuckshop Garden

We believe in fostering a connection with nature and food sources. All classes have access to a dedicated tuckshop garden. Here, children get hands-on experience in growing vegetables, fruits, or herbs. This not only provides fresh ingredients for the tuckshop but also becomes a valuable learning resource. Students gain practical knowledge about sustainability and the journey from seed to plate. The garden additionally supplies ingredients for classroom cooking classes, further promoting a well-rounded understanding of healthy eating.

The River School provides healthy, vegetarian food at its tuckshop and parents are asked to provide only vegetarian food in school lunches. Why? Most people, when they consider healthy eating habits, are concerned only for their physical health. However, the Ayurveda tradition (a system of traditional Indian medicine) also promotes *eating for mental health*.

Ayurveda places foods into three categories, *sentient*, *mutative* and *static*. Sentient foods are good for the body and calming for the mind. A sentient diet consists of a balance of fruit, vegetables, grains and pulses. Mutative foods may or may not be good for the body but make the mind restless (examples: coffee, tea and carbonated soft drinks). Static foods are bad for the body and mind (examples: meats and alcoholic drinks). It is well established that junk 'foods' (high in sugar, colourings and preservatives) make it difficult for children to concentrate. Hence, Neohumanist schools encourage children to eat sentient foods.



Parental Involvement

Nurturing a strong parent community, our school welcomes parent volunteers to engage in many activities at school including participating in art projects as a way of sharing their expertise with our teachers and students. Parents and families are an integral part of The River School.

Families are encouraged to stay connected and to seek ways to contribute to the school community through working in our gardens, our classrooms, school fundraising events and our tuck shop.

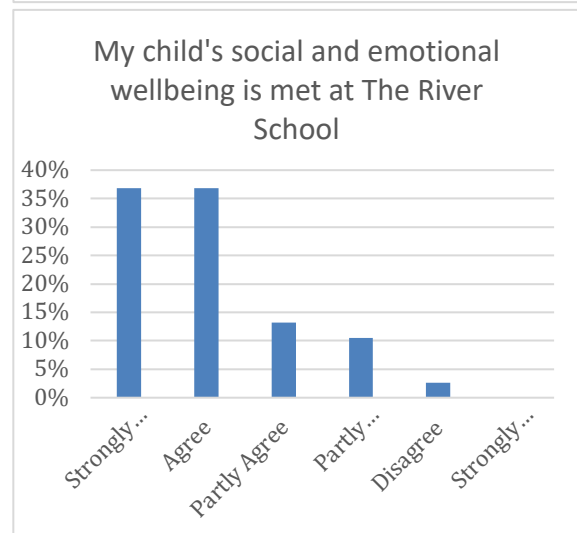
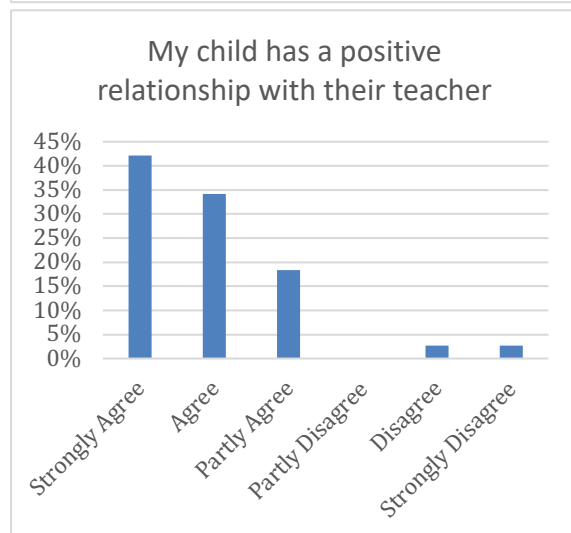
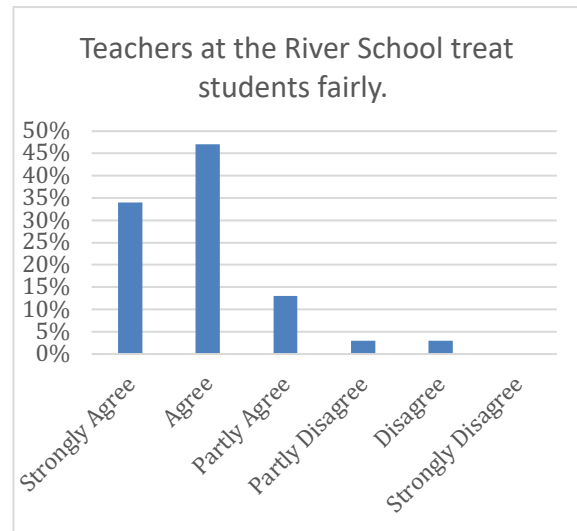
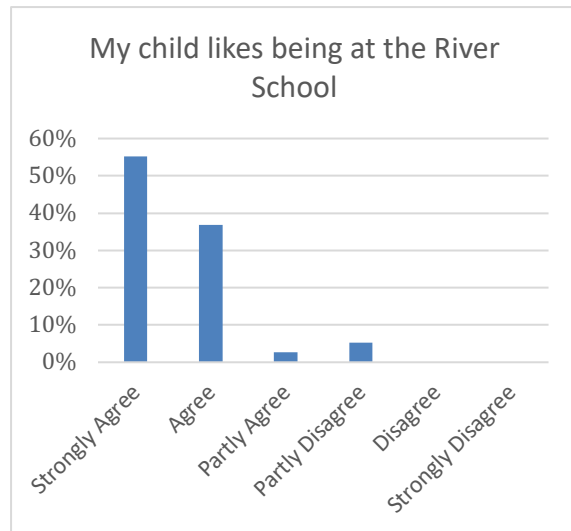


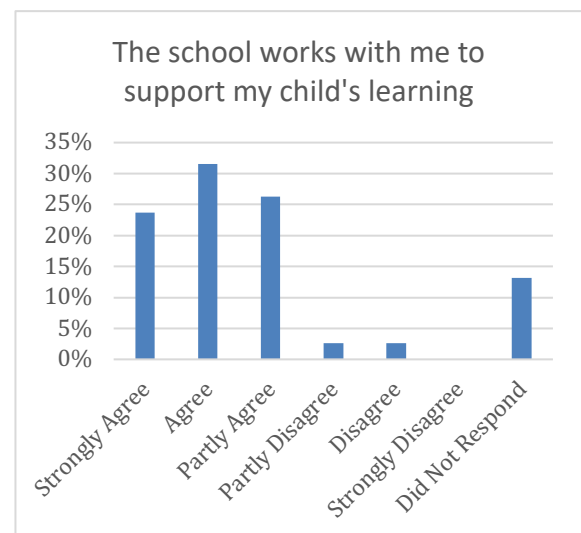
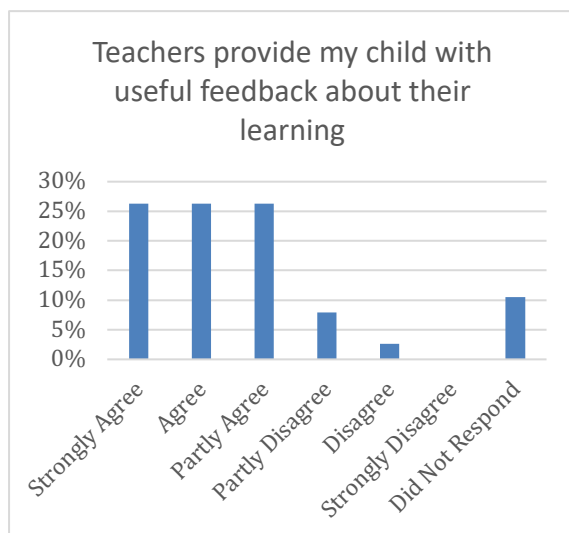
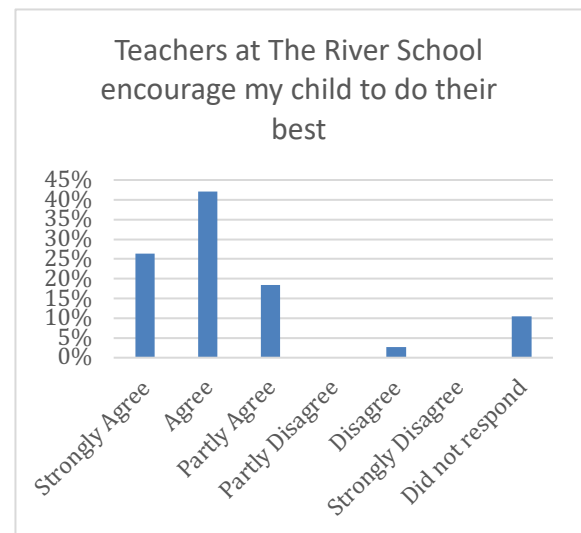
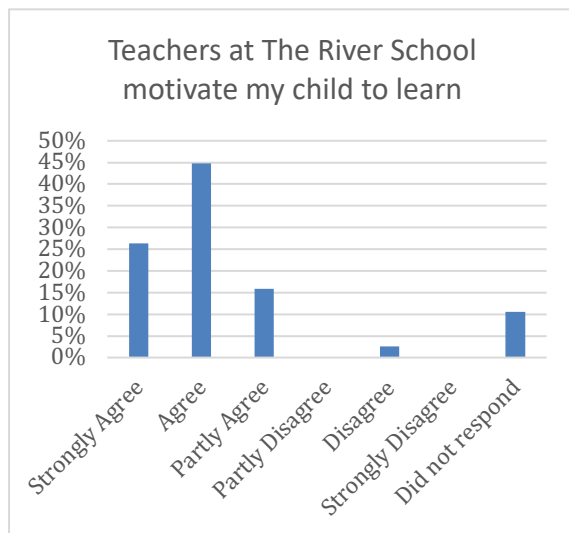
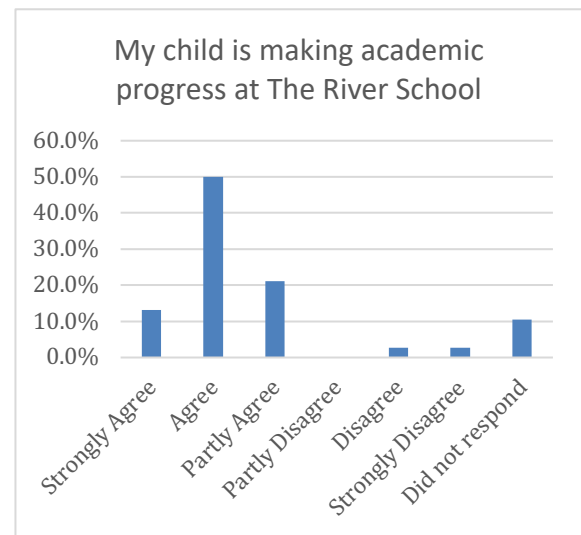
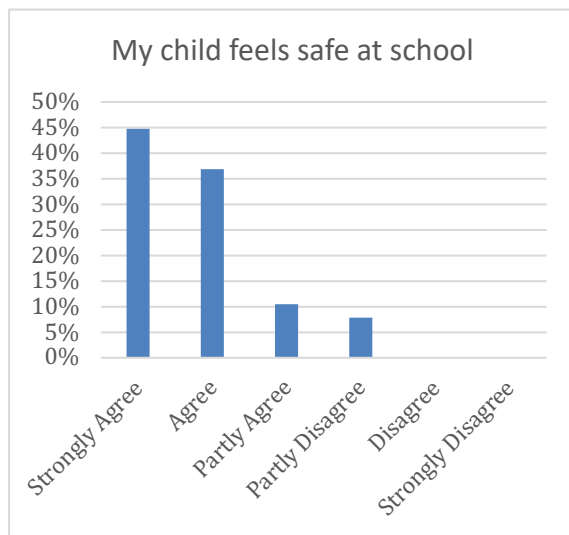
Parent and Friends Committee (P&F)

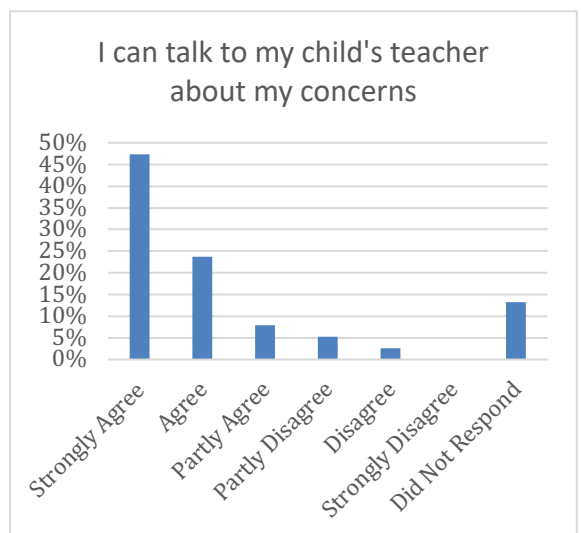
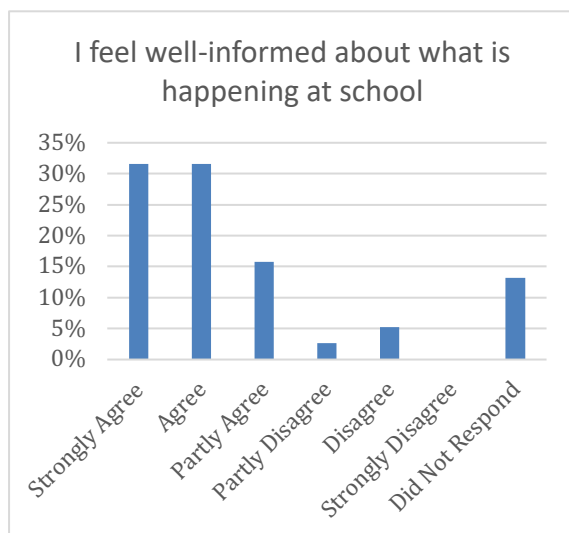
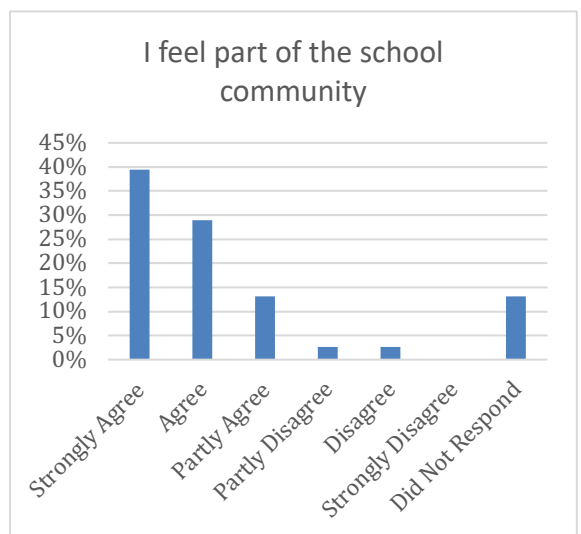
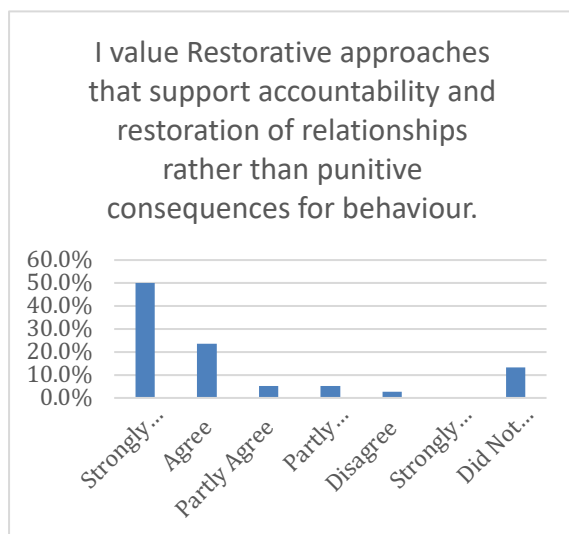
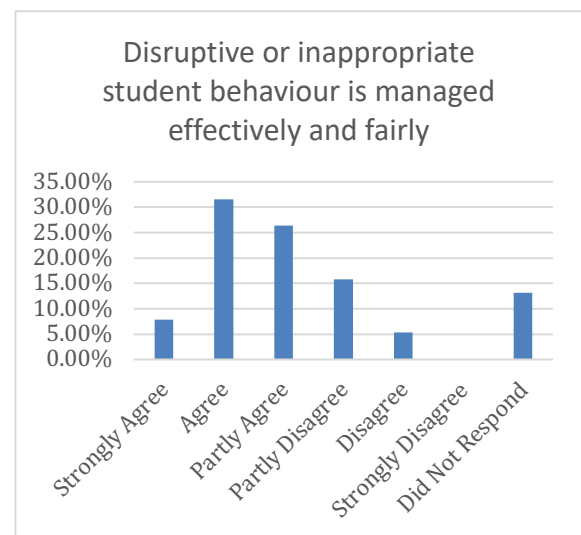
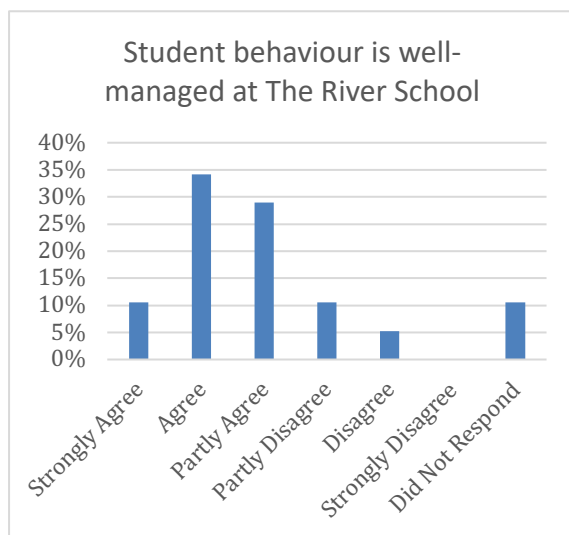
In 2024 there was an active River School Parent & Friends Committee. Their focus was to serve as a conduit between the school and the parent community. They successfully hosted school Café Nights, the annual Spring Fair, and fundraised for the school. Our P&F joined forces with the Maleny State Primary school committee to execute a combined schools Country Fair. 2024 P&F allocated the profits made from fundraising to replacing the oven in the tuck-shop and installing a new dishwasher. Funds were also allocated to library resources, as well as the Year 6 “From Little Things, Big Things Grow” project, in which students designed and built raised garden beds.

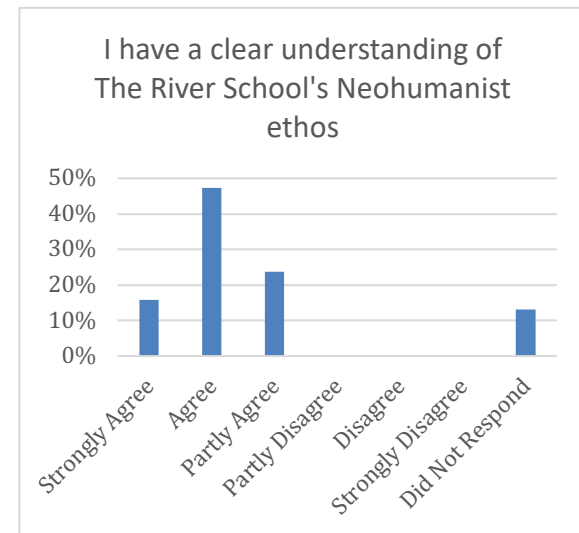
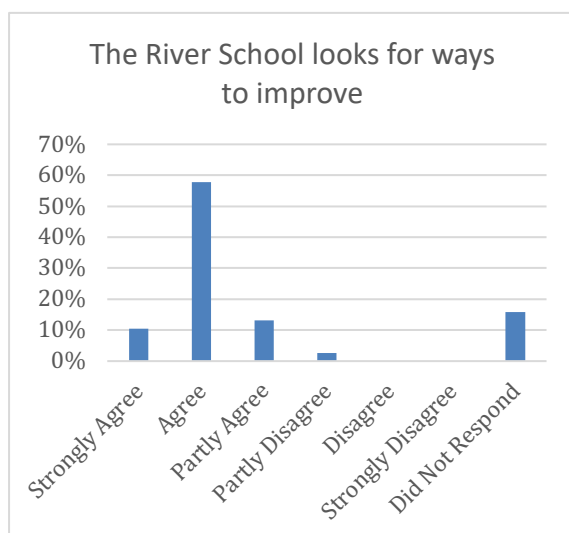
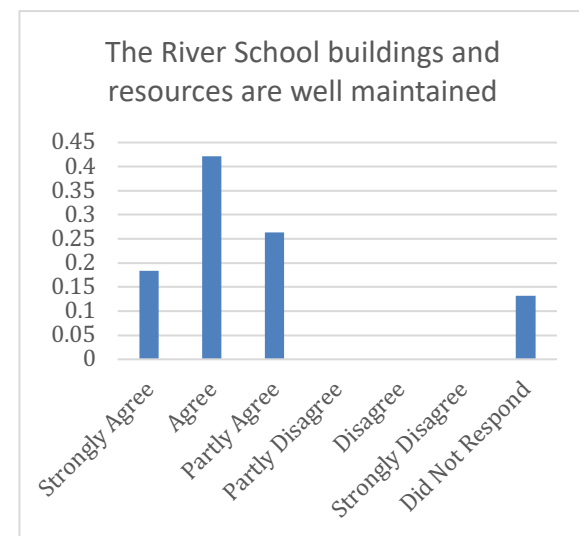
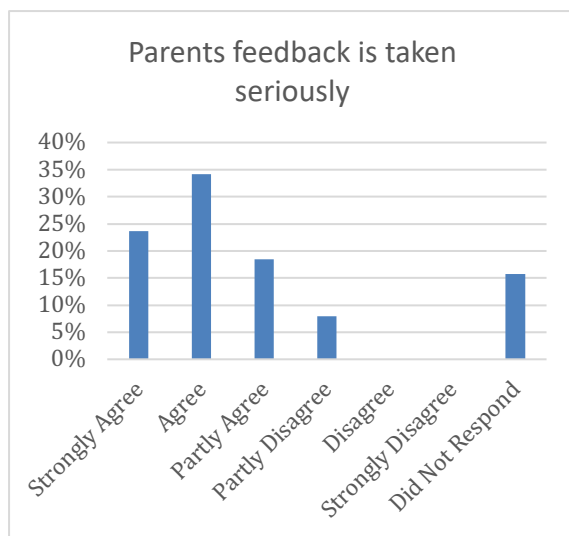
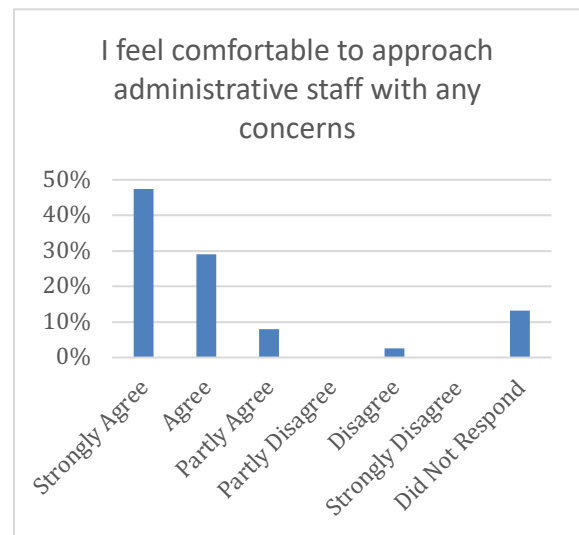
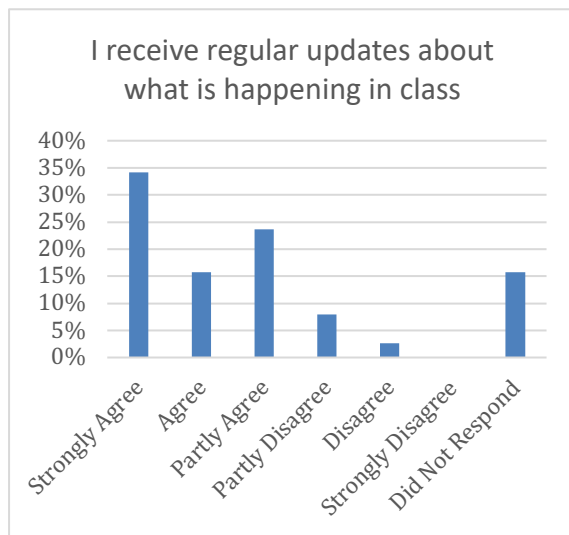
Parent satisfaction and feedback about the school

In our commitment to providing the best possible learning experience, The River School conducted a confidential parent survey in 2024. We received valuable feedback from over half (39 out of 72) of our families. Parents shared their insights by rating statements on a scale as per the details below.









School Income - Funding Sources

The River School receives funding from a variety of sources including Federal and State funding, Grants, school fees and parent contributions. Details of funding sources can be found on the *MySchool* website.

<http://www.myschool.edu.au/>



Staffing Information

In 2024 our school employed:

- 13 Teaching staff
- 9.3 FTE Teachers
- 23 Non-Teaching staff
- 9.8 FTE Non-Teaching staff

All of our classroom teachers hold a Bachelor's Degree in Education. All of our classroom teachers participated in Professional Development opportunities in 2024, which included curriculum development, school policy updates, restorative practice, Neohumanist Education, behaviour support and embedding Indigenous curriculum. The school spent \$6,228.16 exc. GST on Professional Development during 2024.

Average staff attendance based on unplanned absences of sick and emergency leave periods (teaching staff only) of up to 5 days:

Proportion of teaching staff retained from the previous year:

Number of permanent teaching staff at end of previous year	Number of these staff retained in the following year (the program year)	% Retention rate
12	10	84.1%

Number of Staff	Number of Staff School Days	Total Days Staff Absences	Average Staff Attendance Rate
13	2483	105	96%

Key Student Outcomes

Student attendance

The Average Student Attendance Rate as a percentage in the reporting period was 84%.

BENCHMARK DATA FOR 2023 (based on NAPLAN results)

Reading

Year	Average Score (School)
Year 3	399
Year 5	540

Writing

Year	Average Score (School)
Year 3	392
Year 5	471

Spelling

Year	Average Score (School)
Year 3	368
Year 5	469

Grammar and Punctuation

Year	Average Score (School)
Year 3	403
Year 5	480

Numeracy

Year	Average Score (School)
Year 3	393
Year 5	485

Benchmark data is available in detail at the My School website <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>.

For further information about The River School, or for a copy of our Parent Handbook and enrollment information, please contact reception on 07 5494 3559 or email admin@riverschool.com.au



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