

2023 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Mount Eliza Primary School (1368)



- all teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the [Victorian Institute of Teaching \(VIT\)](#)
- the school meets prescribed Minimum Standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#) (this includes any exemption granted to this school by the VRQA, for the most recent calendar year, in relation to minimum student enrolment numbers and/or the curriculum framework requirement to deliver a languages program)
- the school meets the requirements of the Child Safe Standards as prescribed in [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools \(PDF\)](#).

Attested on 15 April 2024 at 03:08 PM by Kim Wheeler (Principal)

- This 2023 Annual Report to the School Community has been tabled and endorsed at a meeting of the school council and will be publicly shared with the school community

Attested on 19 April 2024 at 09:53 AM by Dean Charge (School Council President)

How to read the Annual Report

What does the 'About Our School' commentary section of this report refer to?

The 'About our school' commentary provides a brief background on the school and an overview of the school's performance over the previous calendar year.

The 'School Context' describes the school's vision, values, and purpose. Details include the school's geographic location, size and structure, social characteristics, enrolment characteristics, and special programs.

The 'Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes, and student engagement' section allows schools to reflect on highlights related to implementation of and progress towards the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan, and efforts to improve student learning, wellbeing, and engagement.

What does the 'Performance Summary' section of this report refer to?

The Performance Summary includes the following:

School Profile

- student enrolment information
- the school's 'Student Family Occupation and Education' category
- a summary of parent responses in the Parent Opinion Survey, shown against the statewide average for Primary schools
- school staff responses in the area of School Climate in the School Staff Survey, shown against the statewide average for Primary schools

Learning

- English and Mathematics for Teacher Judgements against the curriculum
- English and Mathematics for National Literacy and Numeracy tests (NAPLAN).

Wellbeing

Student responses to two areas in the Student Attitudes to School Survey:

- Sense of Connectedness
- Management of Bullying

Engagement

- Student attendance at school

Results are displayed for the latest year and the average of the last four years (where available).

Key terms used in the Performance Summary are defined below:

Similar Schools

Similar Schools are a group of Victorian government schools with similar characteristics to the school.

This grouping of schools has been created by comparing each school's socio-economic background of students, the number of non-English speaking students and the school's size and location.

NDP and NDA

'NDP' refers to no data being published for privacy reasons or where there are insufficient underlying data. For example, very low numbers of participants or characteristics that may lead to identification will result in an 'NDP' label.

'NDA' refers to no data being available. Some schools have no data for particular measures due to low enrolments. There may be no students enrolled in some year levels, so school comparisons are not possible.

Note that new schools only have the latest year of data and no comparative data from previous years. The department also recognises unique circumstances in Specialist, Select Entry, English Language, Community Schools and schools that changed school type recently, where school-to-school comparisons are not appropriate.

The Victorian Curriculum

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 sets out what every student should learn during his or her first eleven years of schooling. The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship.

The Victorian Curriculum is assessed through teacher judgements of student achievement based on classroom learning.

The curriculum has been developed to ensure that school subjects and their achievement standards enable continuous learning for all students, including students with disabilities.

The 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum' is integrated directly into the curriculum and is referred to as 'Levels A to D'.

'Levels A to D' may be used for students with disabilities or students who may have additional learning needs. These levels are not associated with any set age or year level that links chronological age to cognitive progress (i.e., there is no age expected standard of achievement for 'Levels A to D').

Updates to the 'Performance Summary' in the 2023 Annual Report

Reporting on the following measures has been updated in the 2023 Annual Report to align with changes to departmental and public reporting products.

NAPLAN

In 2023 NAPLAN was updated to report against proficiency standards. For further information on the changes to NAPLAN reporting in 2023, please refer to the National Assessment Program ['Results and Reports'](#) page.

In line with these changes, the NAPLAN section of the Performance Summary includes data on both 2022 and 2023 NAPLAN results. Please note that results from 2022 and 2023 are not comparable.

The 2023 NAPLAN section reports on the percentage of students in the Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels. The 2022 NAPLAN section reports on the percentage of students in the top three bands.

The previously reported NAPLAN 4-year average will not be available until 2026, when there will be 4 years' worth of NAPLAN data available under the new methodology. Similarly, 2023 NAPLAN Learning Gain data will not be available until 2024 as the measure requires a comparable two-year prior result as a point of comparison.

Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey, School Staff Survey and the Attitudes to School Survey

The calculation of the percentage endorsement for all survey measures has been revised to no longer include skipped responses. This applies to all survey measures reported in the Performance Summary. The change to the calculation reduces the negative impact of skipped responses on school results, particularly where there were a small number of respondents to the survey.

Additionally, the Parent Satisfaction measure has been revised to use the percentage endorsement of the 'General School Satisfaction' factor of the Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey only. Previously, this measure reflected an average of multiple factors in the survey. The change to reporting a single factor is consistent with how Parent Satisfaction is reported to schools and in other public reports.

About Our School

School context

Mt Eliza Primary School (MEPS) is situated on the Mornington Peninsula approximately 50 kilometres from Melbourne. MEPS provides a dynamic learning environment that engages students to work to achieve their personal best in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation. Respect, responsibility, resilience, connectedness and challenge are values that are promoted through every aspect of school life. The school values form the pillars of all learning and wellbeing expectations. The demographic is reasonably stable in Mount Eliza with most available land having already been established for housing.

The school's population is predominantly Anglo Saxon or second generation European. In 2023, the SFOE (Student Family Occupation and Education) index was low, which represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage. The school had a population of 471 students in August 2023 which rose to 478 by the end of the school year. A small number of students were identified as having English as a Second Language (EAL) and a handful of Koorie students attended MEPS in 2023. During 2023, the school transitioned from the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) to the Disability Inclusion Profile funding (DIP). This saw the school completing a number of successful DIP applications which resulted in an increase in support, both human and resourcing, for these students. A very small number of students remained on the PSD funding stream. Across the school, 167 students were identified under the NCCD (National Consistent Collection of Data) for students with a disability.

The school's staffing profile in 2023 consisted of an aggregate of 39.39 full time equivalent (FTE) positions of which 28.6 were teaching staff and 9.79 were non-teaching staff. The breakdown of our profile was as follows: Principal, Assistant Principal, Leading Teacher, one Learning Specialist, one Acting Learning Specialist, 20 full time teachers, 6 part time teaching staff, 9 part time integration aides, 1 x 0.8 Library Technician, 1 x .37 Counsellor, one full time Business Manager, one full time and 2 part time office staff.

Everything we do at MEPS is guided by our Vision, Mission and Philosophy, underpinned by our five values that are the 'root system' for our 'Together we grow' motto.

Our MEPS Vision:

A community connected in kindness through relationships, learning and values.

Our MEPS Mission:

Improving the quality of student outcomes and teaching practice by:

- Promoting and maintaining healthy and productive relationships
- Balancing explicit teaching and guided inquiry to build the capacity of learners
- Creating a culture of collective responsibility

Our MEPS Philosophy:

We believe all children have the capacity to be competent, capable and sophisticated thinkers with endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.

Our MEPS Values:

Our five values underpin the way in which we approach learning, relationships and collaboration. These definitions are a culmination of comments from students, staff and community members during the Review Focus Group discussions:

- Respect - We use kind words and actions.
- Resilience - We bounce forward when things don't go to plan.
- Responsibility - We make good choices and are accountable for our actions.
- Connectedness - We belong, and feel safe and valued in our community.
- Challenge - We use energy, effort and determination to give everything a go.

Research shows that strong school values have a positive impact on the attainment of high expectations so, as such, we strongly promoted our MEPS Values Statements that were developed collaboratively from the various responses of students, parents and staff from the 2022 School Review focus group discussions. In 2023, these statements were on display in all classrooms, utilised to develop classroom essential agreements and discussed regularly at assemblies.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

In addressing the school's Annual Implementation Plan, there were many areas in which we achieved our goals in 2023. There was an equal focus on Learning and Wellbeing, as per FISO 2.0. We considered Learning in multiple ways - organisational structures to leverage increased student learning outcomes; and a focus on curriculum areas and evidence based learning programs.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY (PLC)

A stronger focus on the PLC structure (Professional Learning Community) led to developing a PLC forum to bring together year level leaders and build the capacity of these middle leaders. This included consistent meeting norms; embedding datasheets and developing common planning expectations.

A targeted focus on data included data triangulation as a common protocol, engagement in Bayside Peninsula Professional Learning, school based Professional Learning and use of MEPS Datasheets as a platform from which data began to be centrally stored and used.

MEPS 2023 NAPLAN Results

We were excited to share that our 2023 NAPLAN results were extremely positive and we were very proud of our students' achievements.

YEAR 3 - The percentage of students achieving in the strong and exceeding levels outperformed similar and network schools across all subject areas: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation and Numeracy.

HIGHLIGHT: Most notably was the achievement in Writing with 92% of students performing in strong or exceeding levels and 82% in Numeracy.

YEAR 5 - The percentage of students achieving in the strong and exceeding levels equalled or outperformed similar and network schools in Reading, Writing, Spelling and Numeracy.

HIGHLIGHT: Significant performance by 94% of Year 5 students who achieved in the strong and exceeding levels for Reading and 83% in Writing.

In unpacking the student results and supporting our spirit of continuous improvement, staff at MEPS used the data to inform their planning and in doing so, identified areas for celebration as well as areas for on-going attention. Congratulations to all our students and staff, as NAPLAN is a collective responsibility and forms one piece in the summative assessment puzzle.

LITERACY

Research into the Science of Reading and Reading Instruction at MEPS

The ability to read proficiently is fundamental to a student's success at school and in later life. Over the last few years at MEPS, we have been undertaking research into the best way to teach reading. This led in 2019, to the introduction and implementation of the Multisensory Structured Language approach (MSL) with a particular focus in our Early Years cohorts. Our high achievement in Reading, as evidenced by our NAPLAN results, has well supported our application of this approach. During 2023, staff considered the latest research regarding the Science of Reading to further support our students' literacy development. The Science of Reading informs an evidence-based approach to teaching reading that draws upon research from various fields, including cognitive science, linguistics, psychology and neuroscience. It aims to understand how reading is processed in the brain and to apply this understanding to effective reading instruction methods. This approach emphasises the systematic teaching of foundational skills that are crucial for successful reading development. For younger children, it is about 'cracking the code'.

In order to embed evidence-based approaches across the school, our Literacy AIP Team began to develop the framework for a school-wide instructional model for Reading, with the support of our Head of Inclusion and Intervention and expertise from the Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA). Considerations for developing a consistent model revolved around a variety of factors, including the continuity of our MSL success; the continued use of data to determine trends across students and/or year levels so as to identify and target specific areas of instructional need; and rich literature opportunities to continue to enhance oral and written language skills. This is an area of continued focus for 2024.

Premier's Reading Challenge

During Term 3, the Premier's Reading Challenge was launched to shine a spotlight on the joys of reading in our school community. In the first year of this initiative at MEPS, we had 20% of our school successfully complete the challenge and in doing so they read a

grand total of 7250 books. This was a great achievement and wonderful way to engage in reading at school and at home. We proudly presented 101 certificates to students from the Premier and had 20 students who logged 70 or more books during the challenge.

NUMERACY

Mathematics at MEPS

Throughout 2023, teachers at MEPS continued to work on a research project to develop a high impact Numeracy Instructional Practice Model to be used when teaching Mathematics at school. Led initially in 2022 by the STEM Priority Team, work centred around research into evidence-based practices. We were also fortunate to have had the expertise of Education Improvement Leaders (EILs) working with us to develop an instructional cycle to ensure consistency in implementation across the school. A graphic was created to visually explain how our Numeracy Instructional Practice Model builds on our school's mission to 'balance explicit teaching and learning with guided inquiry'.

ASSESSMENT

A transition to the Compass platform in 2023 was the catalyst for an overhaul of our reporting process. Based on feedback from staff, students and parents, student reports were changed to reflect the students' achievements and areas for future learning. A greater emphasis on student voice through individual reflections also added depth and personalisation.

Wellbeing

INCLUSION AND INTERVENTION

Through the increased focus on Wellbeing, as per FISO 2.0, inclusion and intervention were front of mind in 2023. Upleveling staff knowledge and skills in this area included our Head of Inclusion and Intervention (HII) completing the Master of Inclusion through the University of Melbourne. We took every opportunity to continue the conversation around disability and build on our inclusive practices. This included building awareness and understanding of the unique experiences of our school community members with disability, as well as the ways in which individual strengths help to make MEPS a great place to be. The Head of Inclusion and Intervention kept the community informed via our weekly newsletter featuring some of the inclusive approaches used at MEPS.

A number of initiatives were adopted to assist with the tracking of students' needs and growth, including:

- Completion of Student Support Towers and use of these to identify students for whom it would be appropriate to apply for Disability Inclusion Profile (DIP) funding;
- Embedding of Individual Support Plans and Behaviour Support Plans to support students consistently and assist in transition;
- Clearer parameters regarding the collection of NCCD data and identification of students with disability (167 students in 2023)
- Beginning the transition to a more collective responsibility approach to student support; and
- Upskilling of Education Support staff to make adjustments for students in all DIP domains

With a shift from PSD funding to the new DIP funding model, the Assistant Principal and Head of Inclusion and Intervention worked tirelessly in the successful applications for 11 students. This increased funding stream has made a significant difference to the support that we can offer these Tier 3 students at MEPS.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR DEVELOPMENT

Rollout of Friendology

At our curriculum day in Term 1, staff undertook professional learning about the URSTRONG Friendology 101 program. This new initiative was rolled out across our school in Term 2. Research tells us that relationships are at the heart of social and emotional wellbeing. Just as we teach students skills in literacy and numeracy, we must also explicitly teach them the skills to make friends and cultivate healthy relationships with others. These skills are skills for life. The URSTRONG Program is used by private and public schools across Australia and overseas. It is a recognised program on the Department of Education's 'Mental Health for School Menu' and is a Social and Emotional Learning tool.

In rolling out this initiative, parents also gained access to a free parent membership that provided them with resources, information and videos. This supported a strong connection to the program, and consistency of language and messaging between home and school as we taught all students to become 'friendship ninjas'. Key lessons from the program were shared by the Assistant Principal at assembly and in the weekly newsletter in Term 2. We also hosted a 'Day of Friendship' in Term 2, during which students from all year levels had the opportunity to attend an incursion facilitated by the staff at URSTRONG. The sessions reinforced the key messages and learning taught by our staff through the weekly program. Feedback from families, students and staff at the end of the year indicated

that the rollout of this program had an overwhelmingly positive impact, providing the language around friendship building and maintaining as well as for conflict and conflict resolution. It was heartening to also read that many students reflected on their developing 'Friendship Ninja' skills in their student comments on their Semester 2 reports.

Behaviour Management

Throughout 2023, our consistent approach to the management of student behaviour in our classrooms through the use of routines and procedures, provided a predictable teaching and learning environment for both students and teachers. When responding with processes and expectations that are reasonable and just, we gave 'life' to our school values and the beliefs enshrined in our Vision Statement: A community connected in kindness through relationships, learning and values.

As part of our wellbeing focus, staff aimed to improve the engagement of all students by focusing on relationships and responsive regulation of behaviour at all levels of the school. Staff developed a plethora of strategies that they could employ throughout the arc of a lesson and/or school day to enhance engagement and learning; this was considered a continuum of interventions. There were times, however, when individual student behaviour became more insistent and disruptive, or required a more formal approach. For these situations, we trialled the 4Rs Behaviour Intervention Steps. It is important to note that individual student plans took precedence, and any core correction of student behaviour was done with the knowledge of the child and their specific needs. The 4Rs model was based on a set of values and beliefs that included:

- Recognition of student and teacher rights and responsibilities;
- Need for the teacher to teach and students to learn;
- Values driven practice including our school values of responsibility, resilience, connectedness, challenge and respect;
- A code of cooperation that drives and makes expectations clear and achievable;
- A relational approach to developing healthy connections to minimise mistakes and wrongdoing;
- A restorative approach to inappropriate behaviour.

As we trialed this plan in the latter half of the year, we gathered data and sought feedback to improve the process for future implementation.

SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Drumbeat Program

As a collaboration between the Mornington Peninsula Shire and Mt Eliza Primary School, a number of students in Years 4 and 5 were invited to participate in an engaging and fully funded in-school program run by the Shire's Youth Services, facilitated by a Shire youth worker. Drumbeat is a structured, evidence-based learning program combining music, psychology and neurobiology to build social and emotional resilience, healthy relationship skills and leadership opportunities. Each session combines hand drumming, rhythm games and discussion. Analogies are drawn from the drum circle to prompt self-reflection, with themes including peer-pressure, values, emotional regulation and control, teamwork, social harmony, identity, bullying, leading by doing and communication. During Terms 2 and 3, the Shire facilitator led two Drumbeat sessions each Tuesday with a number of Years 4 and 5 students. The final performance at the End of Term Assembly provided an authentic opportunity for the students to demonstrate their learning, newfound skills, confidence and to share their progress with the school community.

Year 4 Chatty Café Initiative

As they learned about different ways that wellbeing can be enhanced through their inquiry unit, our Year 4 students shared that they have a better day when they have somebody to talk to. However, sometimes they didn't get the opportunity to sit down and have a good conversation. Perhaps their families were busy, their friends were playing really active games or maybe they just hadn't met that person yet that they could really connect with. The MEPS Chatty Café initiative became a place where students were able to meet new people. Trialled and rolled out in Term 3, our Year 4 Chatty Café hosts were really interested to get to know children from other year levels and listen to whatever they wanted to chat about. It became a meeting place of friendly people. Year 4 volunteers participated in training by the Mornington Peninsula Chatty Café coordinator, and they adapted the Chatty Café model to suit our primary school setting. Although they weren't chatting over a 'cuppa', they created a student-led safe and inclusive environment for our community to come together and connect.

TRANSITIONS

'Movin' on Up at MEPS' - Supporting statewide focus on transition pathways

As students make their way through the school, there are many year level events to look forward to - special moments, learning opportunities and rites of passage - as students grow at MEPS. At the Term 4 assembly, we spoke about the three sub schools at MEPS and how each of these sub schools is guided by a theme that drives much of the learning. Early Years - Prep to Year 2 are 'Powered by Play' and they use nature play, in particular, as a lens through which a lot of their learning happens. Middle School - are 'Future Focused', and you see that highlighted through their OzHarvest Kitchen Garden Program and many of these students also graduated for the first time through the Children's University program at Swinburne University in November. Senior School students

are 'Leaders of Today and Tomorrow' and they had the South East Phoenix players come to MEPS to share their experiences of being leaders on and off the court.

For many students, moving to the next year level can evoke a range of emotions including excitement and some nerves. The Department of Education recognises transitions as an opportunity to build and enhance at every school a positive culture and climate for learning. We are proud that at MEPS, we embed our school value of 'Connectedness' all year long. We define this value as 'we belong and feel safe and valued in our community'. This community extends beyond each classroom to each year level, then to our Early Years, Middle Years and Senior Years Sub Schools and our entire school. Throughout the 2023 school year, we also cultivated positive cross-age peer relationships with our Buddy Program and each of our year level teams worked closely together as a cohort to support students' sense of belonging. In 2023, we launched 'Movin' on Up at MEPS' as an additional initiative to support student transitions. At assembly, students shared things that they enjoyed in their year levels and special events for the younger students to look forward to as they highlighted their sub school themes. Posters were created as a visual for new and existing families and students to reference as they prepared for Up Day and the new 2024 school year.

Engagement

ATTENDANCE

On average, student engagement with school in 2023 from an attendance point of view improved from the previous year by 14% with 32% of students with 20 or more absence days across the school year as opposed to 46% in 2022. The majority of absences were due to illness (COVID-19 and other) and family holidays. A large number of families taking holidays during the year can be attributed to lockdowns in previous years as many reported taking advantage of overseas travel that had opened up during 2022/23. Students with long-term absence concerns were identified and plans put in place to support these students and their families, including Student Support Group (SSG) meetings, attendance plans and consultation with the Department's Senior Wellbeing and Engagement Officer.

RELATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The Environment as the Third Teacher

Throughout 2023, further improvements were made to the school facilities to develop physical spaces for learning that were inspiring and catered for student needs. It has been clear that our students flourish when being more 'hands-on' in their learning. At MEPS, this might look like building and constructing things; it might look like role play and acting things out; it might look like being a scientist and using curiosity and wonder to make learning more fun; it might be getting into nature and learning from the environment like our Early Years students in their Beyond the Gates Program - in this case we call the environment the 3rd teacher. And when considering the celebration of student voice, we reflect on all the opportunities for our MEPS children to take responsibility for their own learning, to share their ideas and thoughts and have a say. This happens in many ways across the school; from grades developing their own Essential Agreements; to teachers using talking sticks or popsicle sticks to determine who will be speaking rather than always choosing the students with their hands up; students creating their own lunchtime clubs; and student leaders sharing their reflections in assembly.

RECOGNISING FIRST NATIONS CULTURE

Womin Djeka Festival

In Term 1 we joined local community groups, who promote caring for Country, at the Womin Djeka Balnarring Ngargee (Festival) held at Emu Plains in Balnarring. It was wonderful to welcome many of our MEPS families as we shared the incredible work from our 'Beyond the Gates' nature immersion program, as well as a variety of artefacts, stories and artwork in which the children have engaged over the last 12 months. Front and centre was the picture story book written and illustrated by a proud First Nations student whose beautifully written book drew on the stories of her ancestors and was a feature of our display. The festival provided the opportunity to make connections, to learn and to honour and celebrate First Peoples' cultures.

Celebrating Our Diversity

Although First Nations culture is embedded in our curriculum, we used opportunities such as NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week in 2023 as a chance to engage our First Nations families to share their knowledge with the school. Every week at assembly we pay our respects to Elders past and present through our own school Acknowledgement to Country. In keeping with the 2023 NAIDOC Week theme 'For Our Elders' in Term 3, we took extra time to respect our Aboriginal elders and to learn more about Aboriginal culture through them. For example, our Prep students sang a song of respect 'For our Elders' while playing clapping sticks that they had made with one of our First Nation's dads. To pledge our respect to our Elders, and to thank them for the work they do sharing culture, knowledge and advice, all students created and signed a petal that became part of a whole-school artwork and demonstration of respect. To mark National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day we came together at assembly to honour and celebrate the rich cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Our Head of Inclusion and Intervention shared a story, and we all had a go at representing Australian animals through actions and dance. This occasion provided us with the opportunity to come

together to rejoice in the vibrant presence of all our children, while also inviting our MEPS community to join in and learn about the richness of our diverse cultures.

MEPS Meeting Place

Following a number of teachers and the Principal attending the Reggio Emilia Conference during the Term 2 holidays, it was decided that we would be open to opportunities to develop a community project that linked students and the wider community. This was the beginning of our MEPS Meeting Place initiative. The original idea for this meeting place came from a discussion with some of the Year 6 students whose job it was to put up the flags each day. They mentioned that the area really needed fixing up. Further discussions with our 'Beyond the Gates' collaborator, Ranger Kim Schroeder, led to the beginnings of a project - a First Nations inspired place to gather, discuss, reflect and learn. The 'MEPS Meeting Place' was constructed at the front of the school, in the space surrounding the existing flag poles and along the side of the Old School House. Ideas from the children resulted in plans of a nature circle for gathering and discussion, native plant gardens and a sensory walkway area. Thanks to one of our First Nations fathers and our network Koorie Education Support Officer (KESO) for their ideas and support for this project. This initiative was led by our Early Years team including the ideas of our Prep to Year 2 students, and collaboration by a number of our families and community businesses. Many thanks to Prep parents who also helped us to get the structural work started and some external funding sought. When our community works together, we get things done! It was great to get the log seating and learning stone in place ready for the children from Prep to Year 2 to lay their beautifully hand painted rocks along the pathway and to create a Bunjil's nest structure near the front entrance. This really was a community project, with students, staff and families from our Early Years area getting involved.

COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT

'Beyond the Gates' Nature Program

In Term 2, we launched our 2023 nature immersion program in collaboration with the YMCA Camp Manyung commencing with Year 2 students spending three full days onsite. This is a program unique to Mt Eliza Primary School. We know that our young people have been through a lot in the past couple of years and current research is telling us that being immersed in nature is the best remedy for trauma and anxiety, as well as being the best way to promote curiosity, deep learning and the cultivation of prosocial behaviours. Working with Kim Schroeder, the YMCA Ranger, students explored the local bush and used their senses to investigate and work like scientists. This program developed throughout the term with each class spending three full days each at Camp Manyung under the three lenses: bush, beach and indigenous culture. Year 1 and Prep students also had the opportunity to enjoy this program in Terms 3 and 4. Since developing our collaboration with Camp Manyung, taking our children beyond the gates to immerse them in nature has been an incredibly valuable experience that we hope will have a far-reaching positive impact on their development and wellbeing.

OZHARVEST FEAST PROGRAM

In 2023, the OzHarvest FEAST program continued into its third year at MEPS, a wonderful initiative that aims to support students' understanding about eating sustainably by offering our Middle School students nutrition education and cooking classes, as well as teaching students to be aware of food sustainability. The program is designed to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills to make healthy, affordable and sustainable food choices and welcomed families throughout the year to share in the kitchen garden experiences. Yet again, a number of OzHarvest Ambassadors proudly represented our school at The Little Food Festival during the Term 1 holidays. They cooked on stage at Federation Square in front of a large audience and answered questions at the same time about how to eat and cook food sustainably. This experience led to our school being nominated to participate in the filming of an episode of the ABC's Youth Waste Warriors series, a companion program to Craig Reucassel's 'War on Waste' series. Students involved proudly demonstrated their passionate promotion of the OzHarvest program and sustainability. The ABC team filmed students cooking, gardening and participating in FEAST theory lessons at school and the film crew also visited students' homes to show how their learning at school had had an impact on their lives outside of school. This was a wonderful experience for the school and we thank the OzHarvest coordinator for her passion and dedication to this program which has resulted in a number of unique experiences for our children.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our Senior Students joined together to participate in the ASPIRE Higher Leadership workshop in Term 2 and again in Term 4. Linking perfectly to our Senior School theme of 'Leaders of Today and Tomorrow', this high energy, high impact training called upon every student to contribute through their influence, strengths, teamwork and actions. These Student Leadership incursions were facilitated at MEPS by the experienced UPP (Unleashing Personal Potential) team, and it was great to see the cohort enjoying themselves and getting involved in the activities. The sessions were engaging, interactive and designed to unite our Year 5 students to have a positive and lasting impact in our school community. ASPIRE is an acronym that is a 'call to action', and a memorable way for students to understand that leadership starts with themselves and how they respond to both small and big issues. In addition, Years 5 and 6 students engaged with the Phoenix SOAR leadership program which leveraged basketball and the dedication and determination it takes to be an elite athlete to the leadership skills imparted in the program over 5 weeks. In Term 3, three of our Year 6 students entered the 'Raise our Voice in Parliament' program, where they addressed an issue facing our country. In Term 4, Zoe McKenzie,

Member for Flinders read out the students' speeches in the Federation Chamber which was a fitting way to share their 'voice' on a wider scale.

Other highlights from the school year

EVENTS @ MEPS

Events at primary schools play a vital role in a child's overall development. Over the arc of the 2023 school year, events at MEPS promoted social development, allowing our students to interact with peers, teachers and sometimes even the wider community. They learned social skills like teamwork, cooperation, and communication. Experiences such as the Year 5 Asian Expo and our End of Year Concert enabled us to celebrate different cultures, traditions and historical events. This exposure fostered an appreciation for diversity and promoted cultural understanding. Participation in events, whether in performances, sports like our House Swimming Carnival or presentations, also helped to build confidence. Standing in front of an audience or performing fosters self-assurance, which is what we saw in abundance at our Semester 2 End of Year Concert. Events involving parents or the local community created a strong bond between the school and the community. This involvement encouraged support for education and the school itself.

EXTENSION AND ENRICHMENT

Student Excellence Program

The Student Excellence Program and funding has enabled our school to cater for a variety of students who are demonstrating high achievement in selected areas. We have had over 35 students invited in the past year (2023) to participate in the Victorian High Ability Program (VHAP) which is a program delivered by Virtual School Victoria in the areas of English and Mathematics. The students are from Years 5 and 6 and are invited to join the program by the Department of Education. Many students have been invited to participate in both the English and Mathematics programs and receive a certificate of participation at their completion of the unit. Our High Ability Practice Leader continued to offer onsite programs for our students as well – noting that the online teaching platform wasn't engaging all of our high ability students. In 2023 we had one targeted onsite program running; Mathematics with Mr Peter Skelton (BSc, PGDMME, GDAHW (Melb), B.Ed (SCV) HDT(S), TSTC). All students were invited to join our MEPS onsite program by utilising teacher judgement data, online testing data (such as NAPLAN and PAT) and teacher/parent agreement in that the student was ready for the challenge and was prepared to engage in the program. The study of Mathematics is extensive and likely limitless and covers a multitude of areas which are continually expanding. It is impossible to cover all the areas in a normal school curriculum. This extension program allows for those who are coping well with their regular classroom Mathematics instruction to explore problems, techniques and puzzles without drawing on work from subsequent years. Some of it embraces the history of Mathematics and the work of early scholars whilst some involves an understanding of how current mathematicians are using technology to aid their investigations. Much of it incorporates what might be considered elementary number theory and can bring about some surprising results when very large numbers are considered.

Children's University

34 students from Years 3, 4 and 5 graduated from Swinburne University's Children's University in 2023. This was an incredible feat as it meant that each of these students had earned and completed a minimum of 30 hours of learning outside of school through the Children's University program. It was so exciting to know that such a large group of MEPS students achieved their goals by taking their learning beyond the gates. That is our purpose - encouraging our students to be agents of their own learning. Our MEPS Children's University participants were encouraged to earn stamps in their passports by completing learning tasks through the online portal, visiting learning destinations or logging their extracurricular activities such as music lessons, sports training or volunteer work. At the end of the year, we proudly witnessed our students step on stage for the Graduation Ceremony at Swinburn's Hawthorn Campus to receive their certificates.

Chess Club

The Chess Club opened up to more students in 2023, with up to 40 students attending most weeks. It was the first time that we had entered Chess competitions, such as the Primary Interschool Chess Competition where nine students made it to the next round, and the Chess Tournament where MEPS came 8th overall out of 21 schools. We were so proud of the students' achievements, particularly one student who made it through to the State Finals. This is an area of continued focus into 2024.

SPECIALIST PROGRAM

Introduction of STEM as Specialist Class

In 2023, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) was added to the specialist offerings. In STEM sessions, students were actively involved in 'hands-on' learning activities. For many of our students, STEM class was a highlight of their week and skills practised included: collaboration and teamwork, problem solving, creativity, critical analysis, independent thinking, initiative

and communication. To support STEM learning and promote Science Week, the Great MEPS Science Fair was an opportunity for budding scientists to demonstrate their design thinking skills. We couldn't have asked for a better display of our future scientists than at our 2023 MEPS Science Fair in Term 3. A number of students shared their inventions at assembly, then students and parents had the opportunity to participate in the expo which had us leaning into new information, amazed by the ingenuity of our students and 'oohing and aahing' as experiments exploded!

Financial performance

In 2023, the school had a slight reduction in enrolments from 482 in 2022 to 476 in 2023. As is obvious in these figures, we had a similar number of students leave over the school as a whole, including Year 6 as to those that entered in Prep and other year levels. As Mount Eliza has an ageing population and is not in a growth corridor this trend in enrolments is not unexpected.

The school carried forward a surplus of \$69,599 from the 2022 SRP staffing budget which was due to staff being in 'acting' roles as opposed to substantive positions. However, due once again to our staffing profile, an increase in illness and the school's need to support a number of integration students who were not funded we ended the year with a deficit of approx. \$33,569. The Department will deduct this deficit from our Quarterly Grant (cash budget) later in the 2024 year.

The school has a Principal and Assistant Principal (non-teaching). The school also has a highly experienced staffing profile of which 82% of classroom teachers are at a Classroom Teacher Level 2 (the majority at the highest level of Classroom Range 2-6) plus a Leading Teacher and 2 Learning Specialists. We also have a full-time Business Manager, two office staff, library technician, school counsellor and 9 integration aides.

The fact that 82% of our classroom teachers are at a Level 2 has a major impact on our staffing budget as the difference between a Classroom teacher 2-6 compared to a Classroom Level 1-1 teacher is nearly \$45,000. Schools are funded per student regardless of how many staff we have at the highest salary level. Also due to our low Student Family Occupation Status and English as a Second Language we only receive \$16,577 Equity Funding which is utilised as efficiently as possible to have a positive impact on student outcomes.

Together with our staffing budget deficit, and minimal Equity Funding we rely heavily on the generosity of our parents in paying their voluntary parent contributions. In the past we have been fortunate to have most parents contribute however we found that with the changes in the way we have been able to ask for contributions it has had a negative impact on the contributions this year.

The school has worked closely once again this year with its OSH provider, Camp Australia, to add an additional revenue stream. Camp Australia is collaborating with the school to develop its program and further engage the community.

The school is also very lucky to have a small group of very dedicated, hard working parents who make up our Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). The PTA together with our school community raised approximately \$40,000 this year. \$10,000 was put towards the Discovery Garden.

The school received \$25,000 as part of a Commonwealth Grant to purchase furniture and equipment to set up part of the Discovery Garden as an outdoor learning space. Parents were invited to donate money towards the Library Learning Hub which has now been completed and our new project is STEM alley – funds were raised by holding a fun run with a view to inviting parents as part of their 2024 parent contributions to donate so that we can begin this project next year.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://mtelizaps.vic.edu.au/>

Performance Summary

The Performance Summary for government schools provides an overview of how this school is contributing to the objectives of the Education State and how it compares to other Victorian government schools.

All schools work in partnership with their school community to improve outcomes for children and young people. Sharing this information with parents and the wider school community helps to support community engagement in student learning, a key priority of the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes 2.0 (FISO 2.0).

Refer to the 'How to read the Annual Report' section for help on how to interpret this report.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Enrolment Profile

A total of 478 students were enrolled at this school in 2023, 203 female and 275 male.

3 percent of students had English as an additional language and 1 percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Overall Socio-Economic Profile

The overall school's socio-economic profile is based on the school's Student Family Occupation and Education index (SFOE).

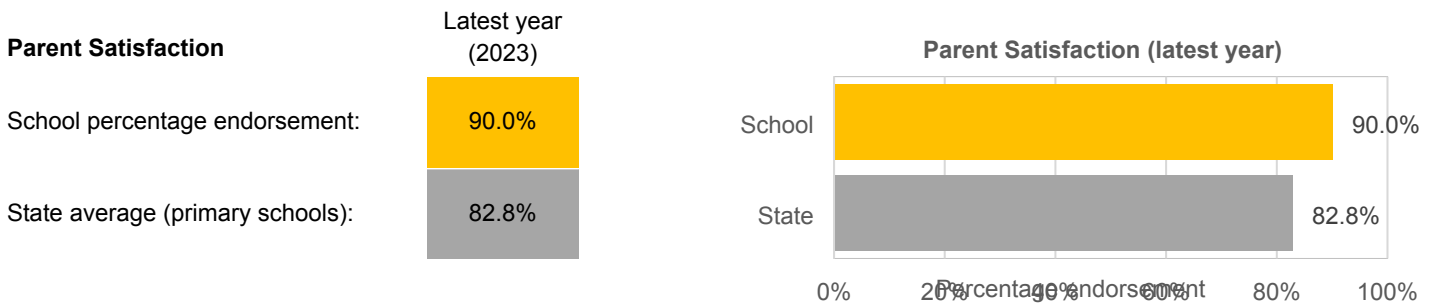
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage, a 'High' band represents a high level of socio-educational disadvantage.

This school's SFOE band value is: Low

Parent Satisfaction Summary

The percentage endorsement by parents on their General School Satisfaction, as reported in the annual Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey.

Percent endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from parents who responded to the survey.

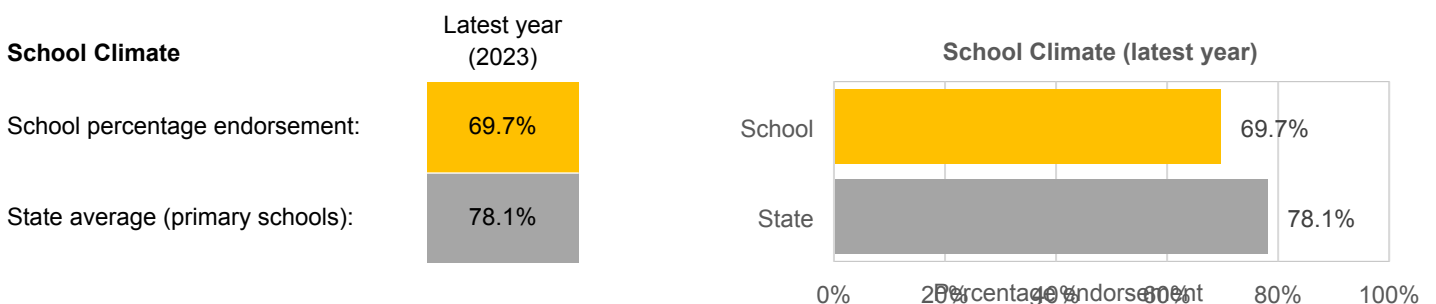


School Staff Survey

The percent endorsement by staff on School Climate, as reported in the annual School Staff Survey.

Percent endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from staff who responded to the survey.

Data is suppressed for schools with three or less respondents to the survey for confidentiality reasons.



LEARNING

Key: ‘Similar Schools’ are a group of Victorian government schools that are like this school, taking into account the school’s socioeconomic background of students, the number of non-English speaking students and the size and location of the school.

Teacher Judgement of student achievement against the Victorian Curriculum

Percentage of students working at or above age expected standards in English and Mathematics.

English Years Prep to 6

Latest year
(2023)

School percentage of students at or above age expected standards:

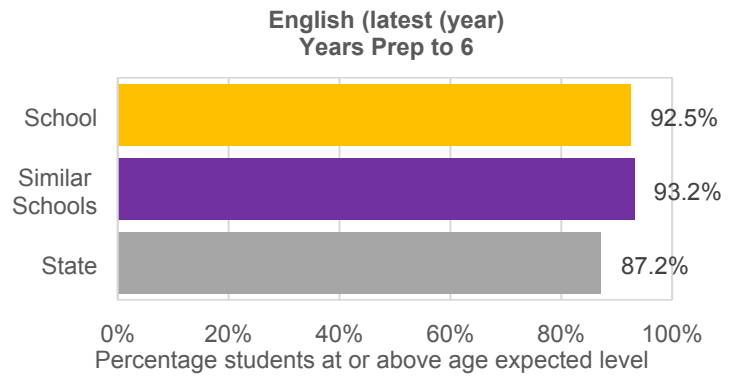
92.5%

Similar Schools average:

93.2%

State average:

87.2%



Mathematics Years Prep to 6

Latest year
(2023)

School percentage of students at or above age expected standards:

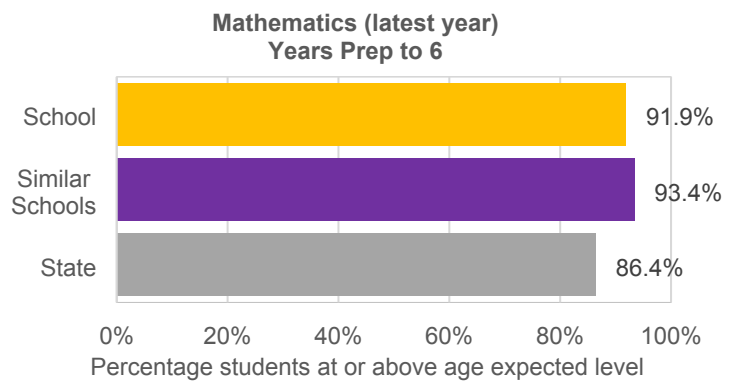
91.9%

Similar Schools average:

93.4%

State average:

86.4%



LEARNING (continued)

Key: 'Similar Schools' are a group of Victorian government schools that are like this school, taking into account the school's socioeconomic background of students, the number of non-English speaking students and the size and location of the school.

NAPLAN

Percentage of students in the Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels in NAPLAN.

Note: The NAPLAN test was revised in 2023 and the results are no longer comparable to previous years. Hence, the 4-year average has been removed until 4-years of data is available.

Reading Year 3

Latest year (2023)

School percentage of students in Strong or Exceeding:

84.6%

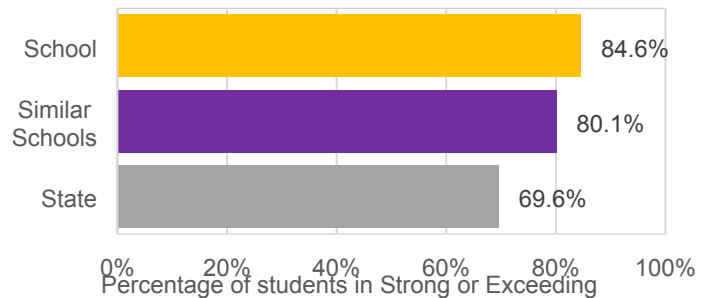
Similar Schools average:

80.1%

State average:

69.6%

NAPLAN Reading (latest year) Year 3



Reading Year 5

Latest year (2023)

School percentage of students in Strong or Exceeding:

93.6%

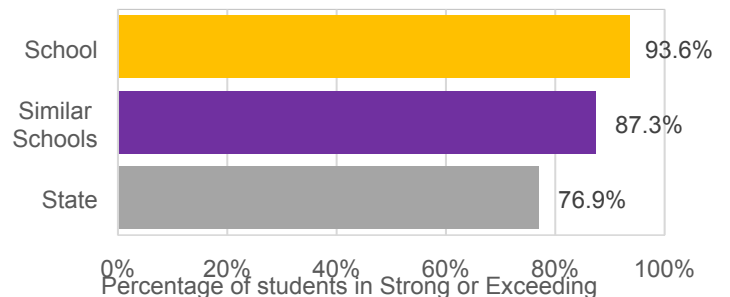
Similar Schools average:

87.3%

State average:

76.9%

NAPLAN Reading (latest year) Year 5



Numeracy Year 3

Latest year (2023)

School percentage of students in Strong or Exceeding:

81.5%

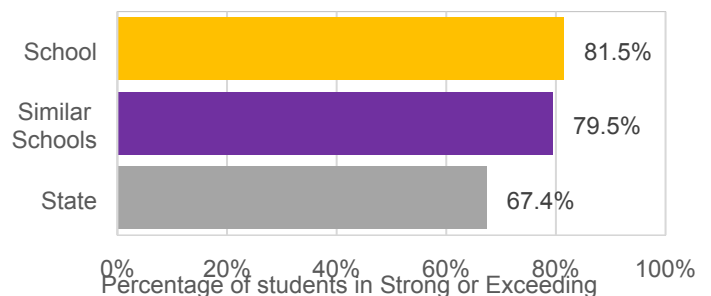
Similar Schools average:

79.5%

State average:

67.4%

NAPLAN Numeracy (latest year) Year 3



Numeracy Year 5

Latest year (2023)

School percentage of students in Strong or Exceeding:

77.2%

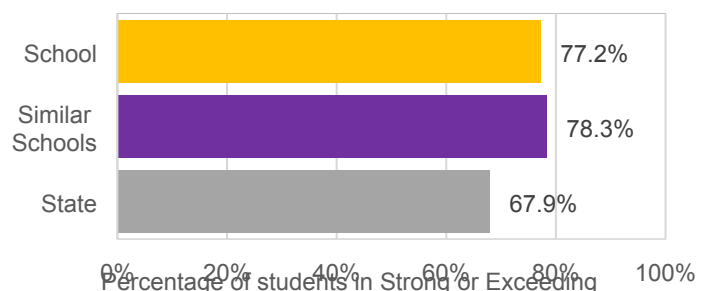
Similar Schools average:

78.3%

State average:

67.9%

NAPLAN Numeracy (latest year) Year 5



LEARNING (continued)

Key: ‘Similar Schools’ are a group of Victorian government schools that are like this school, taking into account the school’s socioeconomic background of students, the number of non-English speaking students and the size and location of the school.

NAPLAN 2022

Percentage of students in the top three bands of testing in NAPLAN.

Note: The NAPLAN test was revised in 2023 and the 2022 results are not comparable to the new methodology.

**Reading
Year 3**

Latest year
(2022)

School percentage of students in the top three bands:

88.2%

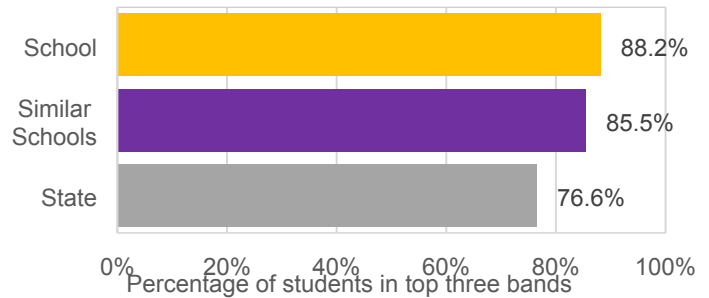
Similar Schools average:

85.5%

State average:

76.6%

**NAPLAN Reading (2022)
Year 3**



**Reading
Year 5**

Latest year
(2022)

School percentage of students in the top three bands:

88.6%

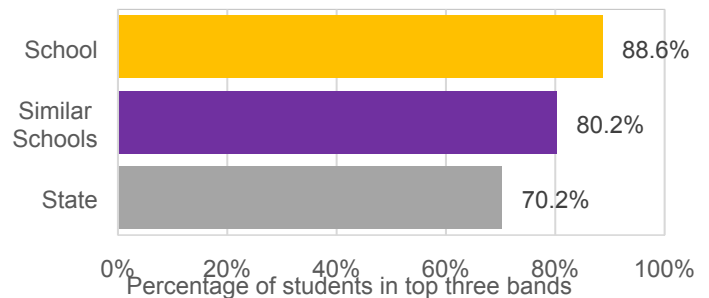
Similar Schools average:

80.2%

State average:

70.2%

**NAPLAN Reading (2022)
Year 5**



**Numeracy
Year 3**

Latest year
(2022)

School percentage of students in the top three bands:

79.6%

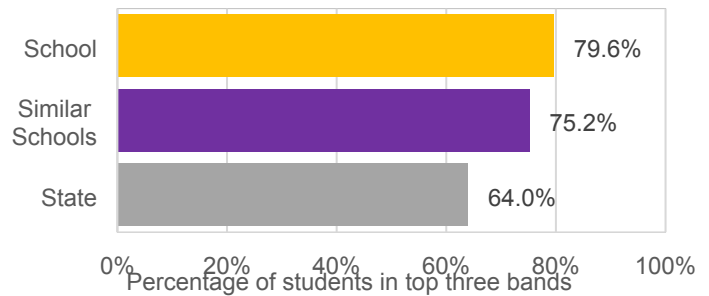
Similar Schools average:

75.2%

State average:

64.0%

**NAPLAN Numeracy (2022)
Year 3**



**Numeracy
Year 5**

Latest year
(2022)

School percentage of students in the top three bands:

70.0%

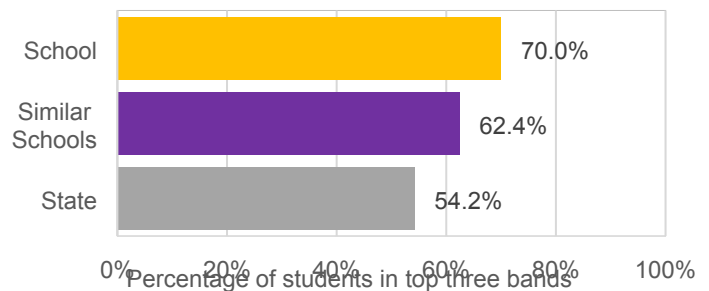
Similar Schools average:

62.4%

State average:

54.2%

**NAPLAN Numeracy (2022)
Year 5**



WELLBEING

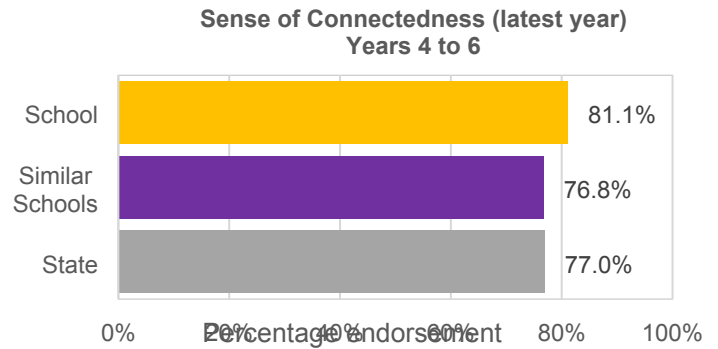
Key: *‘Similar Schools’ are a group of Victorian government schools that are like this school, taking into account the school’s socioeconomic background of students, the number of non-English speaking students and the size and location of the school.*

Student Attitudes to School – Sense of Connectedness

The percentage endorsement on Sense of Connectedness factor, as reported in the Attitudes to School Survey completed annually by Victorian government school students, indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree).

Sense of Connectedness Years 4 to 6

	Latest year (2023)	4-year average
School percentage endorsement:	81.1%	79.1%
Similar Schools average:	76.8%	78.2%
State average:	77.0%	78.5%

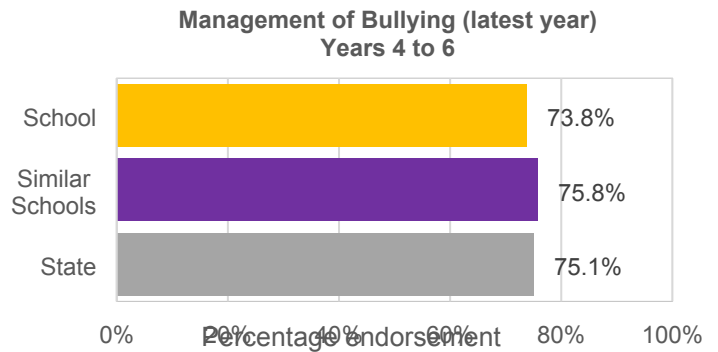


Student Attitudes to School – Management of Bullying

The percentage endorsement on Management of Bullying factor, as reported in the Attitudes to School Survey completed annually by Victorian government school students, indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree).

Management of Bullying Years 4 to 6

	Latest year (2023)	4-year average
School percentage endorsement:	73.8%	75.8%
Similar Schools average:	75.8%	77.4%
State average:	75.1%	76.9%



ENGAGEMENT

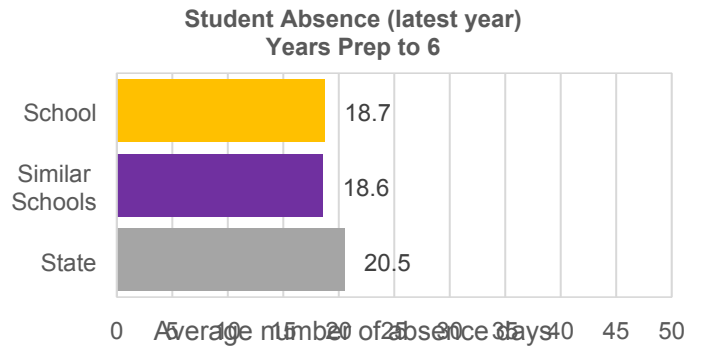
Key: ‘Similar Schools’ are a group of Victorian government schools that are like this school, taking into account the school’s socioeconomic background of students, the number of non-English speaking students and the size and location of the school.

Average Number of Student Absence Days

Absence from school can impact on students’ learning. Common reasons for non-attendance include illness and extended family holidays.

Student Absence Years Prep to 6

	Latest year (2023)	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	18.7	14.5
Similar Schools average:	18.6	15.7
State average:	20.5	18.1



Attendance Rate (latest year)

Attendance rate refers to the average proportion of formal school days students in each year level attended.

	Prep	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Attendance Rate by year level (2023):	94%	91%	91%	89%	91%	90%	88%

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2023

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$4,373,129
Government Provided DET Grants	\$588,401
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$6,600
Government Grants State	\$0
Revenue Other	\$24,221
Locally Raised Funds	\$558,530
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$5,550,881

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$16,577
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$16,577

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$4,386,782
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$1,758
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$186,891
Communication Costs	\$5,982
Consumables	\$106,774
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$27,294
Professional Development	\$23,745
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$112,326
Property Services	\$121,543
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$344,277
Support Services	\$121,734
Trading & Fundraising	\$30,434
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$78
Travel & Subsistence	\$0
Utilities	\$39,853
Total Operating Expenditure	\$5,509,471
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$41,409
Asset Acquisitions	\$0

- (1) The equity funding reported above is a subset of the overall revenue reported by the school.
- (2) Student Resource Package Expenditure figures are as of 16 Feb 2024 and are subject to change during the reconciliation process.
- (3) Miscellaneous Expenses include bank charges, administration expenses, insurance and taxation charges.
- (4) Salaries and Allowances refers to school-level payroll.

FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$143,353
Official Account	\$61,188
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$204,541

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$171,985
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$0
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$9,598
School Based Programs	\$15,096
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$44,443
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$5,042
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$84,726
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$330,890

All funds received from the Department of Education, or raised by the school, have been expended, or committed to subsequent years, to support the achievement of educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school, consistent with department policies, School Council approvals and the intent/purposes for which funding was provided or raised.