

2022 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Nepean Special School (4290)



- All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (www.vit.vic.edu.au).
- The school meets prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the Education and Training Reform (ETR) Act 2006. This includes schools granted an exemption by the VRQA until 31 December of the previous calendar year from the minimum standards for student enrolment numbers and/or curriculum framework for school language program.
- The school is compliant with the Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in School.

Attested on 03 April 2023 at 10:15 AM by Claire Toohey (Principal)

- This 2022 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 27 April 2023 at 11:46 AM by Rebecca Eakins (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 Specialist schools
- school staff responses in the area of School Climate in the School Staff Survey, shown against the statewide average for Specialist schools

Learning

- English and Mathematics for Teacher Judgements against the curriculum

Engagement

Student attendance and engagement at school, including:

- how many exiting students go on to further studies or full-time work

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

Considering COVID-19 when interpreting the Performance Summary

The Victorian community's experience of COVID-19 had a significant impact on normal school operations over the past three years. This impacted the conduct of assessments and surveys. Readers should be aware of this when interpreting the Performance Summary, particularly when interpreting trend data.

For example, in 2020 and 2021 school-based surveys ran under changed circumstances, and NAPLAN was not conducted in 2020. Further, absence and attendance data during this period may have been affected by the level of COVID-19 in the community and may be influenced by local processes and procedures adopted in response to remote and flexible learning.

Readers should keep this in mind when viewing and interpreting the data presented in the Annual Report.

How to read the Annual Report (continued)

What does 'NDP' or 'NDA' mean?

'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.

What is the 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum'?

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

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

'Levels A to D' 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').

About Our School

School context

School vision

Our vision and purpose is to provide an innovative, inclusive and supportive learning environment for students with physical disabilities and complex health needs.

We are committed to working with students towards their individualised learning goals to realise their potential.

We aim to provide students with opportunities to build independence and resilience so they can experience and contribute to society in meaningful and rewarding ways.

We offer comprehensive individualised learning for all students, across all curriculum areas, from students in the early stages of learning development through to students accessing Year 10, work in partnership with Virtual School Victoria (VSV) and the current Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC). Our ongoing commitment to individualised learning enables students to access the options of either full time school enrolment or dual enrolment with a range of settings depending on their learning needs. Where students are palliative or spending long periods hospitalised or extremely unwell, our Connections to School Teacher, maintains home school communication with families including visiting and coordinating learning in the home or hospital.

The culture and ethos of Nepean School is constantly nurtured to ensure that our vision and values are embraced and respected by our school community.

Our school rules, focused on kindness, are the foundation of our classroom agreements, student leadership roles and student led activity days.

School Motto

Together we Achieve the Extraordinary

School Rules

- Kindness to Ourselves
- Kindness to Others
- Kindness to the Environment

Values

- Kindness
- Love
- Empathy

Context

Nepean School is a government funded specialist school for students aged 5 to 18 years, with a physical disability and/or complex health impairment. The school first opened in 1925 and moved to the current, purpose built site in 1980.

Our students present with a wide range of disabilities and impairments, with 60.87% of our students having more than one disability/impairment. These disabilities, impairments and neurodevelopmental disorders affect all aspects of a student's life, from their physical and gross motor development to their communication and language development, play and social skills. To best meet the diverse range of learning needs of our students, we have developed a transdisciplinary teaming model which draws on the expertise of special education teachers (including early childhood, primary and secondary trained teachers) physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, music therapists, wellbeing officers and registered nurses. Our transdisciplinary teaming model blends the knowledge and skills of our staff to provide holistic and integrative educational experiences for all our students.

Our upward enrolment trend continues, with enrolments currently sitting at 149. Our student demographic continues to diversify bringing multicultural richness to our school community. We have students from England, Fiji, New Zealand,

China, Afghanistan, India, Samoa, Egypt and Germany included in our school student population. Four of our student population identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

As one of only four schools that cater for students with physical disabilities and complex health impairments in Melbourne, we have an extensive Designated Transport Area which includes the suburbs from Mentone to Mt Martha, Somerville to Tooradin, Koo Wee Rup to Pakenham, Berwick through Narre Warren to Cranbourne, Frankston and Seaford with a large percentage of students who catch DET provided buses to and from school each day.

The staffing profile of our school continues to diversify, as we seek expertise required to help meet our students learning, communicative, physical, social and emotional needs. The school staffing profile consists of -

- 24.8 FTE teachers, including 3 Principal class
- 3.8 physiotherapists
- 5 occupational therapists
- 4.2 speech pathologists
- 2 music therapists
- 2 registered nurses
- 44 education support officers
- .8 psychologist
- .8 ICT Manager

We remain committed to a distributive leadership model and developing the leadership capacity of all staff. On our staffing team we have a Leading Teacher (Literacy), Leading Teacher (Transitions) and two Learning Specialists in the areas of Information Technology and Movement for Learning.

We continue to strive for high quality, exceptional learning opportunities for all our students.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

In 2022 our Leading Teacher for Literacy and our Senior Speech Pathologist worked alongside classroom staff to maximise student Literacy growth across the school. Building on our work from the Literacy PLC in 2021, staff attended a whole school Curriculum day in February with experts in the field of the Science of Reading, Professor Pamela Snow and Tanya Serry from Monash University. The sessions allowed teaching staff, therapists and educational support staff to increase their collective knowledge of the Science of reading and phonics-based approach to reading.

Based on the investigations and work in our Literacy PLC staff chose to implement two evidence-based phonics programs across the school to support students reading skills including the Little Learners Love Literacy program for our Primary students and the Read Write Inc and Fresh Start program for our Middle and Secondary learners. We employed the skills of an external Speech Therapist to support our work in adapting the summative assessments for these programs to ensure our students had the means to access these assessments in a meaningful way.

The work in PLC's saw staff working collaboratively to adapt and create resources that suited the varying needs of our student cohort. For the students in our school population who use non-verbal communication, this meant providing them with digital resources including head switches and a voice output system to support their access to the assessment questions. The program itself was individualised and differentiated to meet students at their 'point of need' according to assessments undertaken. At mid-year, we launched the programs for our Middle and Secondary students with a similar process with regards to adaptations to assessments and resources. To support the success of these programs and to build excellence in teacher capacity across the school, teachers underwent peer observation cycles in Term 3 which focused in on the Literacy work we had been implementing across the school. This program saw teachers engaging in collaborative discussions about planning and the implementation of high impact teaching strategies used in lessons to support and scaffold students learning and progress. PLT meetings across the year included staff 'delving deeper' into our whole school data collection. This included robust discussions about student's Literacy data, moderation of student work samples and building of staff's capacity in planning to support and raise attainment and confidence in students reading skills.

Data walls reflected the incredible growth students made across the year as a result of the unrelenting focus on excellence in teaching and learning and professional development for all staff. Students achievement from their starting points was exponential and is a reflection of Nepean's collective focus on all students as learners.

Wellbeing

During 2022 we had a strong focus on supporting staff's professional development in the area of mental health and wellbeing. Three members of the Wellbeing team attended the Wellbeing Lab's PERMAH professional learning program and brought this back to school to develop staffs understanding of the tools to support their wellbeing to boost their resilience in the workplace.

Wellbeing activities and strategies were shared with staff at regular staff meetings with a strong focus on being proactive when it comes to looking after our wellbeing. This was conducive to supporting staffs wellbeing after the long return to school since the pressures of Covid in the workplace.

All staff underwent training at our Whole school curriculum day with Pediatric psychologist Mona Delahooke on her book Beyond Behaviors, which describes behaviors as the tip of the iceberg and encourages staff to identify the important signals that we should address by seeking to understand a child's individual differences in the context of relational safety. This work continued across the year with staff looking at individual student case studies to identify patterns in behaviour to support the development of strategies to use in class.

Our Learning Specialist for ICT and the Wellbeing team organised for Brainstorm Productions to present to students on cyber safety during 'Week for Daniel' to develop students understanding around cyber safety and how they can best handle themselves in the digital world. This is something we will continue in future years to support students learning in this area.

Our registered nurses organised for both parents and students in our Middle and Secondary departments to attend an Information session from the Australian Pelvic Pain Association which incorporated the modern neuroscience of pain, which was of benefit to all students, particularly the 1 in 4 girls and people assigned female at birth with severe period pain. This session was both informative and supportive for young female staff, students and parents of the school.

The focus in classrooms and in the playground includes consistent visuals, consistent communication and visible behaviour expectations related to our school rules of Kindness to Ourselves, Kindness to Others and Kindness to the Environment made accessible to all across our school community.

Part of our work this year was inviting parents and carers back into the learning environment post home learning and the significant challenges this brought to this work. Each term we invited parents to share in their child's learning by attending class sessions to work alongside their child. These sessions were very beneficial in developing home school partnerships and communication about student learning. We will continue to build on this in the coming year to include parent and carer learning sessions.

One of the key highlights for us this year was students having increased learner agency and student voice throughout the school. To do this students worked in class to set one of their own learning outcomes for their ILP's. These were created and displayed for students to see and work towards throughout the year. In Term 4 students welcomed their families into school to present their goals and their work to them during an SSG. This was a beautiful celebration of students work and display of confidence in their learning. In 2022 we plan to put a spotlight on collecting and understanding behaviour data and using this to inform our work moving forward. We are also looking to develop our Relationships and Sex Education curriculum as well as working with an outside agency to further build and develop our whole school culture and approach to behaviour management.

Engagement

Our strong commitment to student literacy and believing in the power and opportunity for 'all students to learn' led to our work in implementing a transdisciplinary teaming approach to our work means students have the benefit of a range of expertise from both teachers and therapists who know their individual needs well. We have embraced a new model for our Whole school Literacy approach which now incorporates bespoke pathways for learners including a balance of both phonemic and phonological awareness and the whole language approach to reading and writing.

We have begun work on building teachers capacity and understanding of strategies for teaching Numeracy in our setting by exploring the 'Birth to Level 10 Numeracy Guide', looking at ABLES data and starting to develop a PLC to investigate programs that will be suitable for our setting.

As a leadership team, the Principal class team underwent professional learning with international facilitator, coach, author and presenter Gerard Penna. This work involved looking into high performing teams, building collective staff wellbeing, reflecting on our unique leadership styles and what we bring to the organisation. This work is a core part of the way we lead our teams and has had a direct impact on the way we developed our wider SIT team as a result.

Our student absence data made a slight jump in 2022 to 43.94%. Of these students 15.65% of students were absent due to medical reasons and illness which is reflective of the nature of the fragile health and complex physical needs of our students, which often result in significant surgeries such as the rodding of spines, tendon releases, significant orthopedic surgeries and botox. Our Connections School Teacher is essential in ensuring these students remain connected to school, during their hospitalisations, recovery and return to school.

Other highlights from the school year

With our first year back at school full time onsite since the Covid 19 pandemic we had lots to celebrate across the year. We set off on our first camps for three years where our Secondary and Middle students attended both Camp Munyung and Somers Camp. The camps involved a range of our staff and students participating in bush cooking, tree rolling, archery, bush craft, orienteering, the giant swing, night walks and craft activities including creating their own prints for t shirts. This was extremely valuable experience for students for whom some have never stayed outside of their own homes. The camps gave students the opportunity to develop their skills of independence, experience new environments and activities and acquire new friendships. With the introduction of Health and PE to our Specialist teaching schedule this year, the teacher for this program organised a range of extra-curricular activities to promote student's physical health and fitness. These included workshops with Frankston district basketball Association, AFL Victoria workshops at school, trips to Gravity Zone with our Secondary learners and a soccer competition and clinic at Casey Fields Sports ground.

Each term we invited parents and carers to attend our whole school sports days which involved students participating in activities on behalf of their Nepean House colours team. These were an incredible celebration of team work and school spirit. We celebrated a number of graduating students at our end of year Graduation ceremony and farewelled some of our Secondary students who left Nepean in 2022.

Students in our Secondary 15+ program enrolled and completed a year of VCAL at TAFE which included offsite visits to complete units of work. Teachers and leaders in our Secondary department attended professional development through VCAA at the end of 2022 to learn about the new Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) which is set to take on the work of VCAL for students in schools from next year. One of our experienced teachers in this cohort has formed a relationship with Monterey Secondary College where a greater number of our 15+ cohort will attend VET next year as part of the new Secondary curriculum at the school. In 2022 we also employed a Secondary Transitions Lead Teacher who will work to redevelop our Secondary curriculum for our 15+ cohort with the hope of creating bespoke pathways for our complex, functional and independent cohorts at this stage in their schooling and in preparing them for post school life.

Financial performance

Surplus

The nature of our school and the fragility of our students, means it is always critical to maintain a surplus to ensure we have the funds to buffer the costs of running a school like Nepean; with many additional and hidden costs relating to the purchasing and servicing of equipment such as hi lo beds, hoists, standing frames and slings, along with contracted services for sanitary and medical equipment. As such Nepean School finished with a surplus in 2022.

Professional Learning

Our continued focus on best practice saw targeted spending on professional learning across 2022. We had a staff member responsible for developing our Professional Learning calendar and creating opportunities for professional learning which included -

- Beyond Behaviours: online session with Dr Mona Delahooke for all staff
- Science of Reading 1 day workshop for all staff
- Bobath Introduction to Typical Movement 2 day training for all our therapists and Learning Specialist
- DIR Floortime 101 2 day training for a group of staff
- Little Learners Love Literacy and ReadWrite Inc/FreshStart training for teachers
- CPR and First Aid training for teachers and therapists

The school also took advantage of professional learning provided by the Department of Education and included -

- Cultural Understanding and Safety training for all staff
- PLC training with our School Improvement Team

Camps

With the support of School Council, we continued to run and subsidise camps for students in 2022. We trialled a new venue for camps at Lord Somers Camp, which proved more expensive than other venues we have previously used. Transport to and from the camp venue was also more expensive than originally budgeted for and will need to be a bigger focus in pre-camp planning.

Grants received

In 2022 the school was successful in receiving a grant from the Cassandra Gantner Foundation for an inclusive seesaw. The grant of \$25,160 covered the cost of the seesaw, and the school intends to use its Special Projects budget to cover the cost of installation (due mid June 2023).

Staffing

The most significant costs experienced in 2022 were related to staffing. Despite using a combination of local relief staff and an agency (ANZUK), it was difficult to find appropriately experienced and knowledgeable staff which impacted the school from day to day. Our challenges moving forward will be retaining staff.

Disability Inclusion Profiles

Nepean was a Year 1 school in the rollout of the Disability Inclusion Profile. Despite completing 11 profile meetings and all these students being allocated Tier 3 funds, these were not received by the school in 2022 which had a significant impact on the school.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
nepean.ss@education.vic.gov.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 137 students were enrolled at this school in 2022, 61 female and 76 male.

11 percent of students had English as an additional language and 3 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).

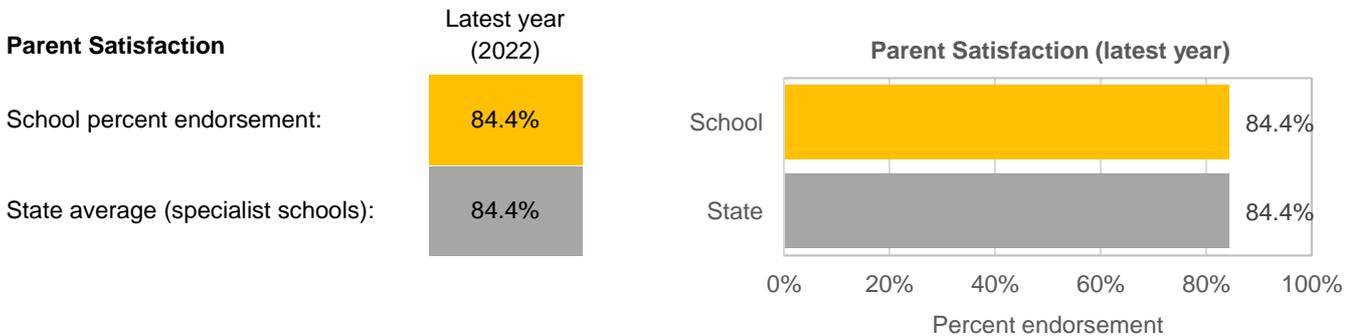
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

This school's SFOE band value is: Medium

Parent Satisfaction Summary

The percent endorsement by parents on their school satisfaction level, as reported in the annual Parent Opinion Survey.

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

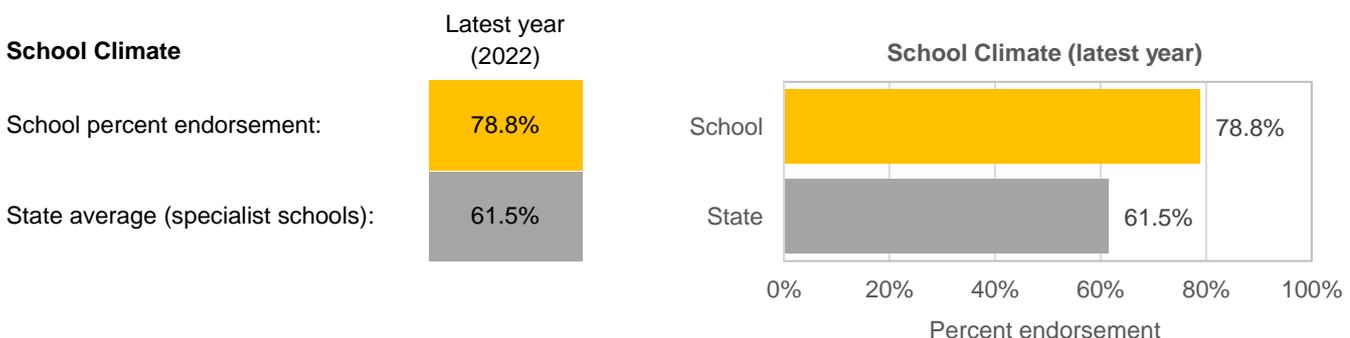


School Staff Survey

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.



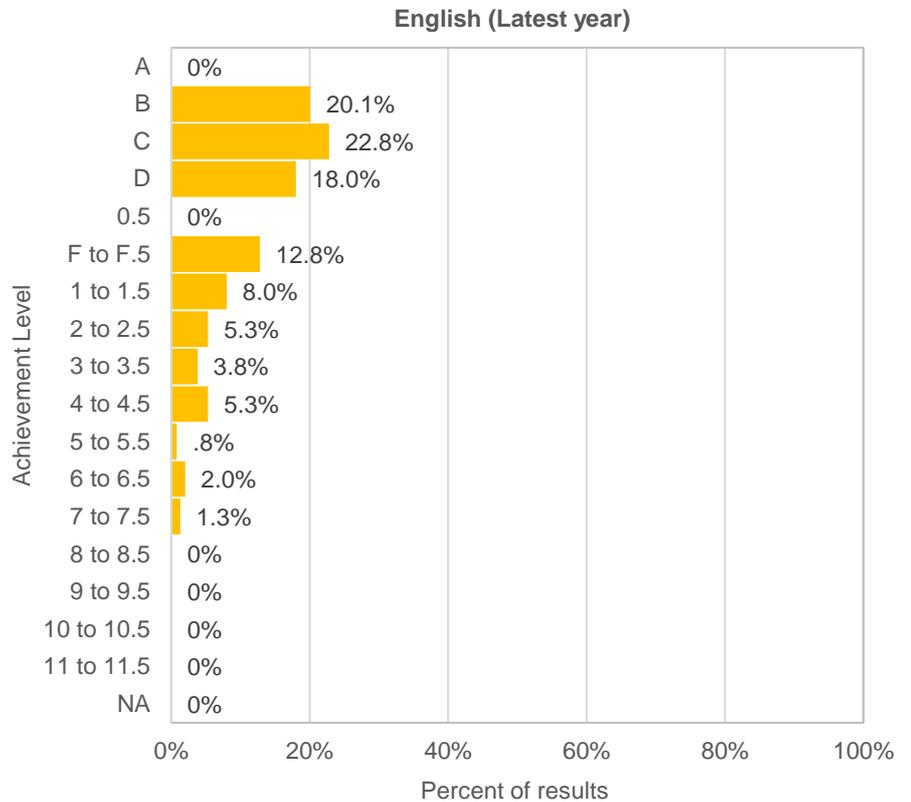
LEARNING

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

Percent of results at each achievement level in English and Mathematics.

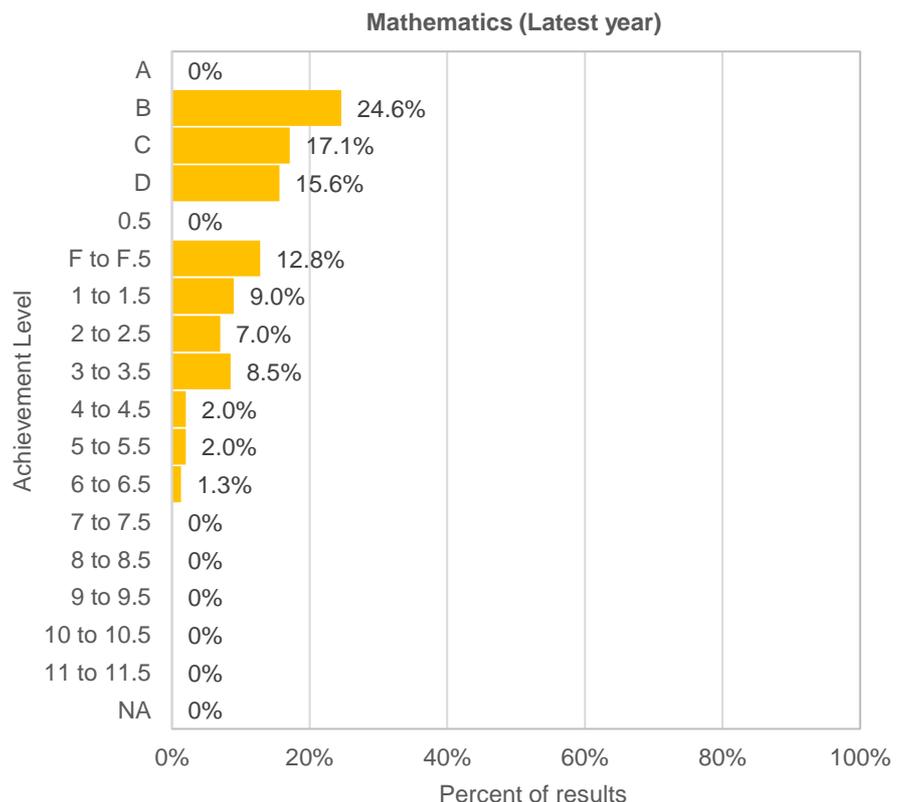
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2022)
A	NDA
B	20.1%
C	22.8%
D	18.0%
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	12.8%
1 to 1.5	8.0%
2 to 2.5	5.3%
3 to 3.5	3.8%
4 to 4.5	5.3%
5 to 5.5	0.8%
6 to 6.5	2.0%
7 to 7.5	1.3%
8 to 8.5	NDA
9 to 9.5	NDA
10 to 10.5	NDA
11 to 11.5	NDA
NA	NDA



Mathematics

Achievement Level	Latest year (2022)
A	NDA
B	24.6%
C	17.1%
D	15.6%
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	12.8%
1 to 1.5	9.0%
2 to 2.5	7.0%
3 to 3.5	8.5%
4 to 4.5	2.0%
5 to 5.5	2.0%
6 to 6.5	1.3%
7 to 7.5	NDA
8 to 8.5	NDA
9 to 9.5	NDA
10 to 10.5	NDA
11 to 11.5	NDA
NA	NDA



ENGAGEMENT

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	2019	2020	2021	2022	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	35.3	32.1	29.7	43.9	35.3

Students exiting to further studies or full-time employment

Percentage of students going on to further studies or full-time employment.

Note: This measure refers to data from the previous calendar year. Data excludes destinations recorded as 'Unknown'.

Student Exits	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year average
School percent of students with positive destinations:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	NDP	100.0%

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2022

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$7,797,941
Government Provided DET Grants	\$2,717,606
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$6,486
Government Grants State	\$10,000
Revenue Other	\$37,818
Locally Raised Funds	\$41,283
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$10,611,133

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$35,116
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$35,116

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$7,806,113
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$0
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$37,722
Communication Costs	\$7,731
Consumables	\$56,844
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$67,994
Professional Development	\$64,466
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$248,329
Property Services	\$71,030
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$384,035
Support Services	\$199,000
Trading & Fundraising	\$6,087
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$4,036
Travel & Subsistence	\$0
Utilities	\$73,996
Total Operating Expenditure	\$9,027,382
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$1,583,751
Asset Acquisitions	\$171,223

- (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 24 Feb 2023 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 2022

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$1,440,845
Official Account	\$23,832
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$1,464,677

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$198,407
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$0
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$0
School Based Programs	\$0
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$300,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$600,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$300,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$1,398,407

All funds received from the Department, 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.