

2022 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Emerald Primary School (3381)



- 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.

- 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

About Our School

School context

Emerald Primary School (EPS) was established in 1879, and is located in the Dandenong Ranges, 54 kilometres east of Melbourne. The school buildings include an indoor multi-purpose stadium, three main buildings which include an Art Room, Music Room, Library, administration areas and open learning spaces. There are six portable structures, which house classrooms, a Japanese classroom and a Reading Room. The grounds include football and soccer ovals, four adventure playgrounds and a basketball court. Enrolments are stable at approximately 490 students. In 2022, the school had 22 classes, with three classes at each level from Prep to Year 6, and a Grade 5/6 composite class. The Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index is in the Low-Medium band. The staffing profile of Emerald Primary School consisted of 27.8 equivalent full-time teaching staff including one part-time Tutor Teacher, two Principal Class and 18 Education Support staff. There were four Specialist Teachers, two office staff, a Business Manager, a computer technician and a library technician. The Leadership Team consisted of the Principal, the Assistant Principal and three Learning Specialists. There were curriculum leaders for Literacy, Numeracy, Sustainability and Communication and Technology (ICT).

The school provides an approved curriculum framework differentiated to meet student needs. Digital technologies, such as ipads and netbooks, are utilised within all classroom programs and the whole school search engine and learning platform allows for students and teachers to engage in collaborative planning, teaching and learning - this came to the fore during the period of flexible learning. Specialist programs include Physical Education, Japanese, Performing Arts and Visual Arts. A library is housed in the main building, where classroom teachers are supported by the library technician. Students are also supported in their learning by intervention and extension programs, in 2022 this included the Tutor Learning Initiative staff and Student Excellence Program teacher

All students are active in their learning and collaboratively work with their teachers to set goals in Literacy, Numeracy and Personal Learning. The school conducts Choir, a Ukulele Band, Garden and Sustainability programs, food technology, swimming and community links with a local retirement village, the local U3A and the Emerald Village Association. Many students access private instrumental classes in woodwind, keyboard, drums and guitar. The Student Action Team provides student voice opportunities across the school and this team of students demonstrated their agency by enacting change and improvements around the school (eg. playground additions). There are lunch time clubs and activities, sometimes run by the students themselves. The school also utilises the services of a Chaplain and has access to Psychologist, who operates onsite 2 days a week, from the local Emerald Psychology Practice.

Emerald Primary School's vision endured strongly once again, as we provided a quality educational program with our goal for each student to achieve personal success and learning growth across all areas of the curriculum. Our focus is on continuous improvement where we cater for individual abilities, experiences and interests. Our mission is to deliver a high-quality educational experience for all students where they, their parents/guardians, and the wider community feel included, supported, and encouraged to openly share their ideas – knowing they have authentic voice and impact over the school environment around them and beyond.

Emerald Primary School's values are Respect, Friendliness and Success. We respect ourselves, our school community, and the world around us, and acknowledge that our behaviour and attitudes have an impact on those around us. We model and demonstrate friendliness to all, and take every opportunity to befriend others and develop and maintain authentic friendships.

We work hard every day in our pursuit of success and greatness in everything we do, which involves our consistent effort, ability to take on feedback, and the ability to support the success of others.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

The plan for continued improvement according to the Strategic goal-setting is driven by the School Improvement Team (SIT), which consisted of the Principal, Assistant Principal, English Learning Specialist, Mathematics Learning Specialist, Student Data and Engagement Leader, Student Wellbeing Leader, Literacy Leader, Numeracy Leader and High Achiever's Program Leader. During a year where the "shadow of COVID" could be said to be present, we maintained our school improvement priority of Excellence in Teaching and Learning and our key strategies centred around Curriculum Planning and Implementation that engages and challenges all students. The main focus strategies were: Strategy 1: Teachers place the student needs at the centre of program planning and delivery. Actions here have included placing an emphasis on collaboratively designing and implementing a scope and sequence of learning. Strategy 2: Rigorous assessment practices and feedback that informs teaching and learning. This focus sees teachers designing authentic purposeful assessments to reflect the learning program and objectives. Teachers then use the data to plan, provide feedback and diagnose student learning needs and develop individual learning goals. This is evident in our Professional Learning Community team structures. Strategy 3: Evidence based strategies that drive professional practice improvement where actions involve teachers evaluating the impact of teaching on learning by analysing multiple sources of data. Leaders identify and target areas for professional development and teachers draw on best practice research, implementation of the current instructional models and utilisation of the school's improvement model. Continuous improvement is planned in the following focus areas for 2023: - The embedding of the whole-school instructional models in Reading, Writing and Mathematics - Ongoing formative assessment being used to direct planning and meet the needs of students, particularly through the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) process. - Students are to be articulate about their learning and understand what they are learning and what their goals are in some areas of curriculum. An area of development will be for this to occur more broadly across other learning areas and moving towards students self-assessing against goals and understanding next steps in their learning. - The whole school assessment schedule will be evaluated during the process of developing scope and sequences in Spelling/Vocabulary and Number and Algebra. Along with this, the school will start to use the Compass online platform for communicating student learning and assessment to parents in a manner which is useful, engaging, timely and transparent. - A priority for Writing, Reading and Numeracy student outcomes is to sustain high learning growth from Grade 3 to 5, with particular reference to students in the top two bands in these areas. Hence, the focus on improving outcomes in these areas using extensive work on curriculum documentation and using the PLC planning processes to be responsive to student learning needs across the school. We believe that all of the achievements detailed in this Annual Report and plans for next steps to continuously improve at Emerald Primary School, have led to our outstanding results in the School Performance Report previously, which indicated we moved from being a "Transform" school in 2018, to an "Influence" school (highest level school) in 2019. There was no data available for this report in 2020, however, in 2021 we received the assessment as a "Renew" school and a "Recharge" school in 2022. This helps us to re-focus our efforts after the challenges of COVID. Highlights for Emerald Primary School in 2022 also included continuing as a Lead School for Respectful Relationships and a school of choice for other schools to seek out professional learning advice in the areas of the Tutor Learning Initiative, Professional Learning Communities, Maths and English teaching.

Student achievement as recorded in teacher judgements were above the State Means in English, and Maths, across all grade levels in the school.

In terms of learning growth, our students achieved high growth gains in Reading, Spelling and Grammar/Punctuation between Grades 3 and 5. The 2022 NAPLAN results show that there was an increase in the percentage of Grade 3 and Grade 5 students achieving in the top 2 bands in Numeracy, Reading and Writing, compared to 2021, and that there was a higher percentage of Grade 3 and 5 students achieving in the top 2 bands in these areas, than Similar Schools and across the State.

We believe the key to maintaining our high standards and positive student engagement levels centres around developing and delivering a curriculum based on students' interests and previous learnings. Our key improvement strategy focused on making sure teacher instruction and student learning tasks are based on each student's point of need, using the collaborative PLC approach.

Wellbeing

2022 Achievements in the Wellbeing area included: - The continuation of a leadership position for Student Voice and Agency and the implementation of a Student Action Team. This group of students followed a cycle of improvement, looking into problems the students had identified in the Student Attitudes to School survey. - Students have increased agency in the classroom, with more students able to articulate their learning goals, assess their own work and be more in control of their learning (this occurred even during remote learning). - Although these activities were minimal last year, at the whole school level, student leadership has been built through student-led assemblies, fundraising, clubs, Buddy Grade activities, Human-Powered Vehicles Program and STEM activities. The Sustainability Squad in the Senior School and Junior School Environmental Leaders had continued to demonstrate student agency and leadership. From the 2022 Student Attitudes to School Survey key data for students in Grades 4-6, we found that the students' Sense of Connectedness in the second year of remote and flexible learning was down somewhat to 75.8% - this has been a focus for when students returned in 2023. The 4 year average in this measure from the Student Attitudes to School Survey is still higher than Similar Schools and the State Mean, at 81.8%. There was 77.8% endorsement of Management of Bullying, higher than the State Median. The Staff Survey, which was conducted in 2022, showed that staff were at a level of 88.8% endorsement of the positive school climate, which was higher than the State Median, and improved from 2021. The Parent Survey indicated 79.9% school satisfaction level, equal to the State Average for primary schools. Student support is provided by a number of specialist services such as a part-time Chaplain, as well as access to a psychologist onsite via mental health care plans, through a local practice. Student Support Group meetings are held regularly and Individual Education Plans formulated to maintain the home-school partnership in educating our young people and to set them up for success. Students are provided with opportunities to express their ideas, thoughts, reflections, suggestions and concerns through Student Action Teams, student surveys, Circle Time discussions and reflective writing. They have also been encouraged to organize and participate in a range of lunchtime clubs and activities. Student safety is paramount. We maintain up to date records of all students with serious medical conditions and ensure all staff are aware of them. Appropriate first aid training is maintained, including specialised training where necessary. Extensive transition programs are run to support students coming into Prep, new students to the school at all grade levels and those exiting the primary school to begin their secondary education.

Some of the major highlights in the Wellbeing area for 2022 were:

Worked as Lead School in the Respectful Relationships (RR) program implementation with the Emerald-Badger Creek Cluster, and conducting information sessions for parents/families and a local community group (Rotary Club)

Appointment once again of a Student Wellbeing Leader to support Assistant Principal in introducing the Disability Inclusion model, followed by professional learning for staff and beginning

the processes necessary for applying for funding in Disability Inclusion approach; reviewed EPS IEP structure to make them clearer and better able to reflect goal progress and the discussions in student Support Group meetings
NAIDOC Week celebration and worked with Murrundindi, met with all Koorie students to hear their voices, appointed a Marrung Lead
Reviewed the Buddy Circle program and to become Buddy Grades program, with a more targeted whole school approach to Wellbeing; Wellbeing newsletter written by each grade level; Use of "Strength Cards" each fortnight for whole school to focus on, discussed at assembly
Bystander training with staff as part of RR
PL on dealing with trauma-impacted students

Engagement

Student leadership roles include School Captains, House Captains, Environment and Sustainability Managers, ICT Leaders, Grade 6 Buddies, and Art, Music, Physical Education and Library Captains, along with the Student Action Teams. These are just some of the programs encouraging student voice, agency and opportunities to show initiative and responsibility. Student attendance showed an average attendance rate of 88% and we have been consistently similar to the State Mean in this area. Connections and communications were maintained via emails, Class Dojo, Compass (whole school learning and communication platform), Google Classroom and video conferencing (WebEx). Staff analysed grade data and made Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) where required. Engagement plans may include individual and team rewards, special roles in class and notes in newsletters and grade projection sheets around the importance of attendance at school. Teachers meet regularly with parents, carers, support workers and members of the EPS Wellbeing Team regarding students at risk and their support plans. At EPS we regularly have high levels of parental involvement in many aspects of the school, including classroom support, fundraising activities, organisation of school events, involvement in committees and support of working bees. In particular, our regular highlights have included the School Fair and a Colour Fun Run event. These events focus on team-building and student participation.

Other highlights from the school year

The following activities and programs ran in 2022, designed to further engage our students and build connectedness:

Grade 4 Camp to Sovereign Hill

Grade 5 Camp to Phillip island

Grade 6 Camp to Coonawarra

EDEC Sporting competitions for grades 3 to 6 students

Chess Club and Games Club at lunchtimes

Come Sit By Me project, between Grade 3 students and senior citizen volunteers from around the community

The Hills Ukulele Festival

Grade 6 School Production
Various dress-up days to celebrate Harmony Week and Being Active
Celebrating Literacy and Numeracy Weeks
Working bees
Kitchen-Garden Program
New school website launched at end of 2022

Financial performance

Major expenses from the 2022 year continued to be employing replacement staff to supervise students with increased levels of staff illness and absence, as an after-effect of the pandemic. Another major expense, which was planned for in our ICT budget, were the leases for sets of laptops and ipads - so that more students could access the digital technology curriculum and learning tools more often. Locally raised funds also provided 3 teacher aides to provide support in classrooms where there was no funding for integration aides. EPS received \$41,996 in Equity Funding in 2022 and it was used to employ Education Support Staff to run an intervention program to improve literacy levels for approximately 50 equity funded students across the school. Fundraising from the annual EPS Fair and other Parent Fundraising activities was able to occur again and raised money for playground improvements.

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