2025 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Heathcote Primary School (0300)



- 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 07 April 2026 at 04:23 PM by Carolyn Crowther (Principal)

- As executive officer of the school council, I attest that this 2025 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 07 April 2026 at 04:23 PM by Carolyn Crowther (Principal)

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
  - responses to the General Satisfaction area of the Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey
  - school staff responses to the School Climate area of the School Staff Survey
- Learning
  - English and Mathematics for Teacher Judgements against the curriculum
  - Reading and Numeracy proficiency levels for National Literacy and Numeracy tests (NAPLAN)
  - Reading and Numeracy relative growth for National Literacy and Numeracy tests (NAPLAN)
- Wellbeing
  - student responses to the Sense of Connectedness area in the Student Attitudes to School Survey
  - student responses to the Management of Bullying area in the Student Attitudes to School Survey
- Engagement
  - average absence days per student
  - student attendance rate

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 2025 Annual Report

NAPLAN relative growth data has been included in the 2025 Performance Summary as there is sufficient data available for the comparison.

About Our School

School context

Heathcote is a small rural community of around 3000 people, some 100 kilometres north of Melbourne and is part of the City of Greater Bendigo. There are two primary schools in the town; Heathcote Primary School and a Catholic primary school.

Heathcote Primary School strives to provide a safe, inclusive and engaging learning environment in which each student can achieve their personal best in a secure, caring environment. Individual differences are celebrated and respected with the diverse range of interests, skills, and experiences reflected in the school community acknowledged.

The following values are central to the philosophy of the school and express how all members of the school community are expected to conduct themselves and interact with others:

• Respect— treating people well, recognising and accepting individual differences, valuing other students, our environment and belongings

• Learning – developing the skills, values and attitudes to become a lifelong learner

• Teamwork – learning together to achieve the best possible outcomes for all

• Responsibility – being accountable for our own actions, what we say and what we do and accepting the consequences for our behaviour.

In 2025, the staff consisted of a principal, 0.8 leading teacher, 1.0 business manager, 1.0 administration support, 4 fulltime classroom teachers, 6 part time job share classroom teachers, 4 part time specialist teachers. The Education Support team fluctuated in size throughout the year, reaching a maximum 12, consisting of both full time and part time staff members. The school had weekly coaching from an Inclusion Outreach Coach, complementing the staffing profile for the year.

During the 2025 school year there was an average of 145 students enrolled, with students transitioning into and out of the school during the year, with the main reason related to families relocating into or out of the town. There were seven classrooms; Foundation, two Grade 1/2s, two Grade 3/4s and two Grade 5/6s. The average class size across the school was between 21 and 22 students (depending on the time of year). Staff worked in unit teaching teams, with allocated time to meet both during the school day and after school. 45% of students are included in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD). The percentage of EAL students has seen a consistent increase since 2021.

In 2025, the school formally began to formally implement the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) program, working alongside a regional SWPBS coach. Additionally, 2025 was the first of a three year partnership with Real Schools.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

The 2025 School Performance Report identified a move from the ‘Developing’ category to ‘Improving’ (the second highest category). This outcome was determined using a combination of NAPLAN achievement data, relative growth and teacher judgement data.

English continues to be a strength with both teacher judgement and NAPLAN data identifying higher levels of achievement school wide in English when compared with numeracy achievements. Teacher judgement data indicates that the percentage of students at or above age expected standards in 2025 was 80.7% which is above Similar Schools average (76.5%) although below the state average of 86.5%. Being above Similar Schools and below State has been a trend over the past years.

Within the area of English, NAPLAN reading achievement is stronger than NAPLAN writing achievements in Grade 5 with the reverse true for Grade 3 students. Grade 3 writing maintained the 2024 trend of more than 90% of students identified as working in ‘developing’ or ‘strong’ (95% in 2024, 96% in 2025).

A highlight was Grade 3 students matching those in Similar Schools in terms of NAPLAN ‘high’ and ‘medium’ relative growth in reading (67%).

Teacher judgement data in the curriculum area of mathematics indicates 76.4% of students are achieving at or above the age expected level, an increase on 2024 achievement of 73.4%. In 2024, the percentage of Heathcote Primary School students achieving at or above expected standard was slightly lower than Similar Schools. In 2025, it was slightly above Similar Schools (74.9%). Like English, the mathematics achievement is below State (84.4%).

The trend of Heathcote Primary School students achieving above Similar Schools yet below State, was also reflected in the Department’s new Phonics Check assessment with Grade 1 data showing that 48% of students were at the expected level, 3% above Similar Schools and 10% below State. The Department does not provide data for other junior year levels (Foundation and Grade 2 students at Heathcote Primary School also participated as part of the school’s revised assessment schedule.

Working with the Small Schools Community of Practice, staff professional learning focused on the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model 2.0 and numeracy. Unit teams have weekly scheduled time to plan collaboratively. The assessment schedule was further refined, student growth monitored and student goals developed with students. The school worked with an Education Improvement Leader to support both numeracy and assessment.

As part of the Department's Tutor Learning Initiative, the school employed one part time tutor who worked collaboratively with classroom teachers. Students from the junior school mainly accessed the program showing growth in the focus area of literacy.

Wellbeing

As per the Department of Education rollout, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader (MHWL) role was introduced at Heathcote Primary School in 2025. The MHWL attended professional learning, sharing knowledge with staff and developing resources to support student and family wellbeing. From MHWL training, the school was able to engage the services of a provisional psychologist one day a week.

The school appreciated the support provided through fortnightly Health and Wellbeing Key Contact (HWKC) meetings with regional colleagues, including a social worker, occupational therapist, speech pathologist and psychologist. These have been attended by the school's leading teacher (wellbeing, inclusion and support) and principal. Agenda items prioritised Disability Inclusion Profile (DIP) funding, students with complex needs and referral pathways.

The school continued to partner with local community groups who provided donations for families, including the provision of food packs. Additionally, fruit was provided during the school day. Each classroom had a fruit bowl along with fruit being cut up and shared twice a week at break times. Breakfast Club continued to be a popular part of the before school routine for students twice a week.

The introduction of 'Partnership Powwows' at the start of the year was well received by families with 100% of families who completed the post feedback survey responding positively to how well the powwows met their goal of sharing information to set students up for a successful year. Additionally, 100% of respondents said the powwows built positive partnerships between home and school. The partnership powwows provided an opportunity to meet family members and learn about the family's expectations of the school year. A template was provided to support the conversation and was sent home prior to the meeting and provided an opportunity for family and student voice. The timing will be modified slightly for 2026, bringing them forward to the very start of the year whilst also tweaking the template.

Attitudes to School Survey (AtoSS) data demonstrated an increase in 21 of 22 framework factors from 2024. A highlight was student voice and agency. Not only did it increase by 20%, it also exceeded Similar, Network and State results. Other notable achievements in terms of growth included teacher concern (+21%), life satisfaction (+18%), advocate at school (+8%), effective classroom behaviour (+11%). AtoSS data along with data from the Parent Guardian Caregiver Opinion Survey (PCGOS) identifies stimulated learning, motivation and interest as being areas of future focus.

The Inclusion Outreach Coach (IOC) partnership agreement prioritised social and emotional learning in the senior school through the introduction and implementation of Zones of Regulation. Data was tracked to monitor its impact and a reduction in major incidences was noted. Interestingly, close analysis of minor and major incidences identified the need for moderation in order for data to be accurate. For example, inconsistencies between how the same incident is recorded by different staff was noticed which impacts the fidelity of the data. This finding was not unexpected as the school revised its major and minor flowchart process at the start of the year with 2025 the first year of implementation. It is due to be reviewed further as part of the school's participation in School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) professional learning. 2025 saw input from students, staff and families to create the school’s expected behaviours matrix.

Engagement

In 2025, the average number of absence days per student was 34.3 days. This was higher than the four year average (29.9 days) and above the state average of 21.5 days. This increase followed the trend of 2023 and 2024 which also saw an increase from previous years in the average number of school absences days per student.

The Grade 5 cohort had the highest attendance rate of any year level with 86.5% of formal school days attended by students. The majority of other year levels were between 82% and 83%, with the exception of the Grade 6 cohort whose attendance rate was 78.1%. The most common reason for absence was categorised as medical/illness. Other common reasons included extended family holidays and health care appointments offsite.

Students with 95% or higher attendance in 2025 was 15%, slightly lower than 2024 (18%). There was an increase in students with below 70% attendance (15% in 2025 from 9% in 2024). An inquiry into attendance identified reasons for all students in this category.

Strategies to increase attendance included contacting families to learn the reason for unexplained absences and developing attendance plans and individualised strategies to support a student to return to school. The Attendance Award continued, with the winning class the one with the least unexplained absences.

Attitudes to School Survey data indicated an increase in ‘sense of inclusion’ to 78% in 2025, from 71% in 2024. Increasing the percentage of positive responses in ‘sense of connectedness’ will be a priority in 2026 as although there was an increase in 2025 from 2024, it was marginal (1%). Stimulated learning increased by 8% and student voice and agency by to 69% (exceeding Network, Similar and State). These factors, along with an increase of 3% in ‘attitudes to attendance’ indicate the school is tracking in the right direction, although there is still work to do to increase engagement as 'motivation and interest' was the only framework factor out of 22 which did not increase in 2025.

Increasing attendance will continue to be a priority in 2026, including exploring options for onsite allied health appointments to reduce the need for students to leave school to attend them.

Other highlights from the school year

Highlights from 2025 included:

- An increase in 21 out of 22 framework factors in the Attitudes to School Survey.
- Successful grant applications: The school received funding to participate in animal assisted learning to the value of $50 000. Funding of $30 000 was also received through the Active Schools grant to the update priority areas in the school yard.
- Extracurricular activities: Students participated in a variety of excursions and incursions, including Boys to the Bush, Girls in STEM, Sovereign Hill, Passions and Pathways, interschool sports (with the football team making the grand final in their debut at interschool sports), Feathers, Fun and Fin incursion, F-2 end of year celebration, STEM

incursion and excursion, small group enrichment program and Grade 6 Funfields end of year excursion

- Community events: An increase in the number of school events and opportunities for families to attend and participate in activities alongside their children. For example, the Science Fair, Mother's Day, Father's Day breakfast, Grandparent's Day, parent information session focusing on literacy.
- Student Leadership: The introduction of peer mediators, an expanded student leadership team to include School and House Captains along with the naming of the four Houses (as a result of students researching notable people connected to Heathcote)

Financial performance

At the time of writing this report, the final financial position for 2025 is not reflected in the financial performance operating summary in its entirety. This is due to Disability Inclusion Profile (DIP) funding being successful late in 2025 and early in 2026 which will be backdated to the start of 2025. Additionally, staff leave arrangements and reimbursements from late in Term 4 are not yet reflected in the reports included in this annual report. It is predicted that once amendments are made, there will be a surplus for the 2025 school year.

The school continues to be efficiently financially managed endeavouring to take into account all possible outcomes. The school received $164,862.17 in equity funding, $118,212.49 in Tier 2 funding and the Mental Health Fund and Menu provided the school with $30,362.75. Equity funding was used to staff and run the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program along with STEM, Art, Library and AUSLAN along with Real Schools professional learning for all staff. Tier 2 funding helped to provide Education Support Staff across the school. The Mental Health Fund Menu funded a speech pathologist who support the SPAides program, building staff capabilities and supporting at parent information sessions. Additionally, the Mental Health Fund Menu partially funded the Wellbeing and Inclusion Leading Teacher role.

The school was successful with multiple grant applications; animal assisted learning ($50 000) and Active Schools ($30 000). The school received smaller community grants, enabling a reduced cost for students to participate in Somers Camp and Boys to the Bush whilst also reducing transport for excursions and sports events along with receiving Sporting Schools grants.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at https://www.heathcoteps.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 148 students were enrolled at this school in 2025, 63 female and 85 male. NDP had English as an additional language and 7% 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 **High**.

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.

		2025
% positive endorsement General School Satisfaction (Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey)	**School**	**70.2%**
	Similar schools	77.5%
	State	82.0%

School Staff Survey

The percentage endorsement by staff on School Climate, as reported in the annual School Staff Survey. Percentage endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from staff who responded to the survey.

		2025
% positive endorsement School Climate (School Staff Survey)	**School**	**62.1%**
	Similar schools	73.7%
	State	77.4%

LEARNING

Teacher Judgement of student achievement against the Victorian Curriculum

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

		2025
English Prep - 6 % of students at or above age expected standards	**School**	**80.7%**
	Similar schools	76.2%
	State	86.3%
Mathematics Prep - 6 % of students at or above age expected standards	**School**	**76.4%**
	Similar schools	74.9%
	State	84.2%

NAPLAN

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

		2025	3-year average
Reading Year 3 % of students Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels	**School**	**52.4%**	**51.8%**
	Similar schools	57.5%	57.8%
	State	69.5%	69.3%
Reading Year 5 % of students Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels	**School**	**47.6%**	**52.5%**
	Similar schools	62.8%	62.7%
	State	73.9%	74.6%
Numeracy Year 3 % of students Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels	**School**	**36.8%**	**38.5%**
	Similar schools	57.8%	56.7%
	State	66.2%	66.4%
Numeracy Year 5 % of students Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels	**School**	**50.0%**	**56.1%**
	Similar schools	56.6%	53.9%
	State	69.1%	68.1%

NAPLAN relative growth

The percentage of students in the High and Medium relative growth categories.

Relative growth is determined by comparing a student's current year result relative to the results of all 'similar' Victorian students (i.e., students in all sectors in the same year level who had the same score two years prior). If the current year result is in the top 25 percent, their gain level is categorised as 'High'; middle 50 percent is 'Medium'; bottom 25 percent is 'Low'.

A multi-year average for NAPLAN relative growth will be included in future years as data becomes available.

		2025
Reading Year 3 to 5 % of students High or Medium relative growth	**School**	**66.7%**
	Similar schools	67.1%
	State	74.7%
Numeracy Year 3 to 5 % of students High or Medium relative growth	**School**	**47.4%**
	Similar schools	67.3%
	State	74.0%

WELLBEING

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).

		2025		4-year average
Years 4 to 6 % positive endorsement	**School**	**58.4%**		**67.0%**
	Similar schools	71.6%		74.5%
	State	77.1%		77.3%

Student Attitudes to School – Managing 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).

		2025		4-year average
Years 4 to 6 % positive endorsement	**School**	**59.7%**		**71.1%**
	Similar schools	73.1%		75.8%
	State	76.4%		75.8%

ENGAGEMENT

Average absence days per student

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

		2025	4-year average
Prep - 6	**School**	**34.3**	**29.9**
	Similar schools	24.4	24.5
	State	21.5	21.7

Attendance rate

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

		2025
Prep	**School**	**83.7%**
Year 1	**School**	**82.7%**
Year 2	**School**	**82.6%**
Year 3	**School**	**83.1%**
Year 4	**School**	**82.1%**
Year 5	**School**	**86.5%**
Year 6	**School**	**78.1%**

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND POSITION

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025

Financial figures are as of 18 March 2026.

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	$1,948,669
Government Provided DET Grants	$506,167
Government Grants Commonwealth	$4,065
Government Grants State	$5,100
Revenue Other	$11,294
Locally Raised Funds	$57,114
Capital Grants	$0
Total Operating Revenue	**$2,532,408**

Equity	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	$164,862
Equity (Catch Up)	$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage - Extraordinary Growth)	$0
Equity Total	**$164,862**

The equity funding reported above is a subset of the overall revenue reported by the school.

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package[1]	$2,118,181
Adjustments	$1,339
Books & Publications	$145
Camps/Excursions/Activities	$33,742
Communication Costs	$1,995
Consumables	$40,528
Miscellaneous Expenses[2]	$14,055
Agency Staff	$0
Professional Development	$766
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	$34,347
Property Services	$92,885

Expenditure	Actual
Salaries & Allowances[3]	$214,567
Support Services	$89,453
Trading & Fundraising	$27,559
Motor Vehicle Expenses	$67
Travel & Subsistence	$0
Utilities	$22,725
Total Operating Expenditure	**$2,692,354**
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	**($159,945)**
Asset Acquisitions	**$455**

[1] Student Resource Package Expenditure figures are subject to change during the reconciliation process.

[2] Miscellaneous Expenses include bank charges, administration expenses, insurance and taxation charges.

[3] Salaries and Allowances refers to school-level payroll.

FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

Funds Available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	$299,513
Official Account	$20,914
Other Accounts	$0
Total Funds Available	**$320,427**

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	$95,472
Other Recurrent Expenditure	$235
Provision Accounts	$0
Funds Received in Advance	$0
School Based Programs	$70,635
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	$0
Cooperative Bank Account	$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	$0
Repayable to the Department	$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	$11,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	$100,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	$36,921
Total Financial Commitments	**$314,263**

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.