2024 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 26 March 2025 at 10:50 AM by Carolyn Crowther (Principal)

- As executive officer of the school council, I attest that this 2024 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 30 March 2025 at 07:55 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
- 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 2024 Annual Report

Reporting on the following measures has been updated in the 2024 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 NAPLAN data from 2022 to 2024. 2022 NAPLAN data is presented separately as this is not comparable with 2023 and 2024.

The NAPLAN section has been updated to include a 2-year average (2023 and 2024) for the percentage of students in the Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels. The 2022 NAPLAN section continues to report on the percentage of students in the top three bands.

Please note 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, NAPLAN Learning Gain data will not be reported until 2025 as the measure requires at least 3 full years of data 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. The past few years have seen new arrivals to Heathcote from Melbourne as people seek a tree change along with the ongoing transition to small towns experienced in the past five years.

At Heathcote Primary School, our mission is to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment in which each and every student can achieve their personal best in a secure, caring environment. We celebrate individual differences and respect and acknowledge the diverse range of interests, skills, and experiences reflected in our school community.

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 2024, the staff consisted of a principal, 0.8 leading teacher, 1.0 business manager, 0.4 administration support, 4 fulltime classroom teachers, 6 part time job share classroom teachers, 4 part time specialist teachers. The Education Support team grew throughout the year, reaching a maximum 12, consisting of both full time and part time staff members, including a 0.4 and then 0.6 wellbeing worker. The 2024 school year commenced with 139 enrolments across six classrooms and peaked at 150 students. The school's Student Family Occupation and Education band is categorised as High, representing a high level of socio-educational disadvantage.

At the start of the 2024 school year, the school was organised into two team teaching units; F -2 and 3 - 6. A seventh classroom was created at the start of Semester 2. With the addition of the seventh classroom, three teaching units were established; F-2, 3/4 and 5/6. The teaching and learning programs were based on the Victorian Curriculum. The school has developed and implements instructional models in maths, reading and writing. These models support continuity in teaching and learning across core aspects of curriculum in years Foundation to Year 6.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

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. The percentage of students at or above age expected standards was 80.8% which is above Similar Schools average (and marginally higher than 2023), although below the state average of 86.4%.

Teacher judgement data in the curriculum area of numeracy indicates 73.4% of students are achieving at or above the age expected level, slightly lower than Similar Schools.

In the area of writing, Grade 3 and Grade 5 students with ‘exceeding’ or ‘strong’ results in NAPLAN (79% and 67% respectively) exceeded Similar schools (70% and 58%) and Network schools (70% and 64%). In numeracy, Grade 5 students with ‘exceeding’ or ‘strong’ results (75%) exceeded Similar schools (53%) and Networks schools (60%). In reading, both Grade 3 and Grade 5 results indicated a greater percentage of students working in the 'exceeding' or 'strong' bands compared with 'Similar School' achievements.

The percentage of student demonstrating 'High' growth in numeracy was 19%, an increase of 2% from 2023. Additionally, the percentage of students demonstrating 'Low' growth was 25%, a reduction of 8% from the previous year.

Instructional models for the teaching of English and Mathematics were reviewed, with ongoing work planned for 2025. The school worked with the regionally based Educational Improvement Leader to explore the new Victorian Mathematics Curriculum along with reviewing teaching and learning documents including scope and sequences and term planners.

As part of the Department's Tutor Learning Initiative, the school employed two part time tutors. Tutors worked collaboratively with classroom teachers and students across all year levels accessed the program.

Wellbeing

A wellbeing room was established in 2024. This provided a space for students to use during learning time if they required additional support outside of their classroom. Additionally, the space was utilised at break times and accessed by 10 - 12% of students daily. The school continued to employ a Wellbeing Worker who provided support to students, staff and families. The Wellbeing Worker worked both 1:1 with students and families, ran small groups focusing on specific areas of need, facilitated fortnightly lessons alongside classroom teachers in the senior school and also worked with local organisations to further support students. In Term 2, a leading teacher - wellbeing, inclusion and support was recruited to work in a 0.8 position. A key piece of the leading teacher's work was to support staff through the Disability Inclusion Profile (DIP) process, provide support and guidance in relation to reasonable adjustments and liaise with external organisations. Together, the leading teacher and wellbeing worker supported staff to build social skills and self

regulation strategies of students whilst also teaching strategies for students to engage in school life successfully. Students were additionally supported through the regional Student Support Services team, external agencies and allied health services.

In 2024, students in Grades 4, 5 and 6 completed the Student Attitude to School survey. The participation rate was 95%, an increase of approximately 20% from the previous year. Overall, Grade 4 responses were more positive than other year levels, along with female responses from Grade 4 and 5. In the 'Sense of Connectedness' factor, all Grade 4 responses (male 70% positive and female 80% positive) were above the schoolwide average of 57%. Female Grade 6 students were the least connected. However, their responses, along with Grade 5 females, showed the highest positive response rate (61%) for student voice and agency with male Grade 5 student responses reflecting the lowest positive endorsement for student voice and agency. Attitudes to School Survey (AtoSS) wellbeing measures were generally below that of similar schools.

The school partnered with local community groups who provided donations for families, including the provision of food and fuel vouchers. Additionally, fruit was provided for 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.

Engagement

In 2024, the average number of absence days per student was 29.1 days. This was higher than the four year average (26.9 days) and above the state average of 20.1 days. This increase followed the trend of 2023 which also saw an increase from previous years in the average number of school absences days per student. School, similar school and state data in 2024 is above the four year average in all categories.

The Foundation cohort had the highest attendance rate of any year level with 89% of formal school days attended by students. All other year levels ranged from 83% (Years 5 and 6) to 87% (Years 2 and 4). The school experienced multiple outbreaks of COVID and gastro-like illnesses during the year, especially at the end of Term 1 when some classes had 50% of students unwell. Additionally, there were multiple extended family holiday absences registered throughout the year. Students with 95% or higher attendance in 2024 was 18%, slightly lower than the percentage for similar schools (21%). The attendance rate of 95% or higher for 2024 (85.4%) dropped from 2023 (87.3%) and aligned more closely with 2022 (84.5%).

Strategies to increase attendance included contacting families when students were away to check in and offer support along with the option to wear casual clothes for birthdays to reduce the amount of students who stayed home on their birthday. With the goal of reducing unapproved and unexplained absences, the weekly Attendance Award presented at assembly is for the class with the least amount of unexplained absences. It is a much anticipated part of assembly with the winning class erupting in cheers as they then have the opportunity to choose a 30 minute reward as a grade.

For the first time, the school participated in a community engagement program, Boys to the Bush. Attendance rates of students who participated showed an increase on the days the program ran.

Analysis of attendance rates, identified a correlation between higher absence rates on the days of the swimming program. Prior to the 2025 swimming program being confirmed, feedback from students and families will be sought to maximise participation rates.

Other highlights from the school year

Highlights from 2024 include:

- Whole School Colour Run fundraiser: The main aim was to bring the school community together for an afternoon of fun and fitness. The bonus was raising money toward the construction of a sensory playground.
- Participating in Boys to the Bush: A number of senior school students attended the engagement program over a five week period.
- Community Links: The school strengthened connections with community organisations including the CFA, Men's Shed, Heathcote Health and attended Smiles Day.
- Student Leadership: Grade 6 school captains met weekly, attended community events, ran assembly, led initiatives, presented reports to School Council. Junior School Council organised school wide events and raised money for local organisations.
- School Camp for 5/6 students along with excursions and incursions across all year levels.

Financial performance

The school continued to have a positive surplus in 2024. It was reduced from previous year's surpluses due to the need to employ additional staff and complete minor maintenance works. The school continues to be efficiently financially managed endeavouring to take into account all possible outcomes. The school received $163 794 in equity funding, $108 426 in Tier 2 funding and the Mental Health Fund and Menu provided the school with $30 753. Equity funding was used to staff and run the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program along with STEM, Art, Library and AUSLAN. A speech pathologist was also funded using Equity resourcing. The School Wellbeing Worker was fund through the School Mental Health Fund and Menu. Tier 2 funding helped to provide Education Support Staff across the school.

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 141 students were enrolled at this school in 2024, 61 female and 80 male.

NDP percent of students had English as an additional language and 6 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.

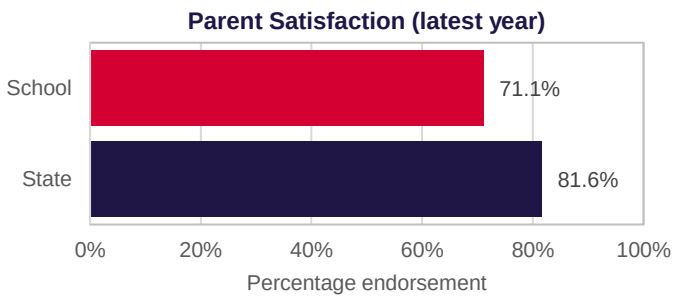
This school's SFOE band value is: **High**

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.

Parent Satisfaction	Latest year (2024)
School percentage endorsement:	71.1%
State average (primary schools):	81.6%



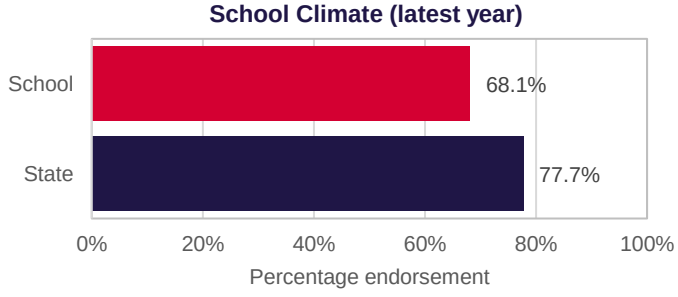
School Staff Survey

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.

School Climate	Latest year (2024)
School percentage endorsement:	68.1%
State average (primary schools):	77.7%



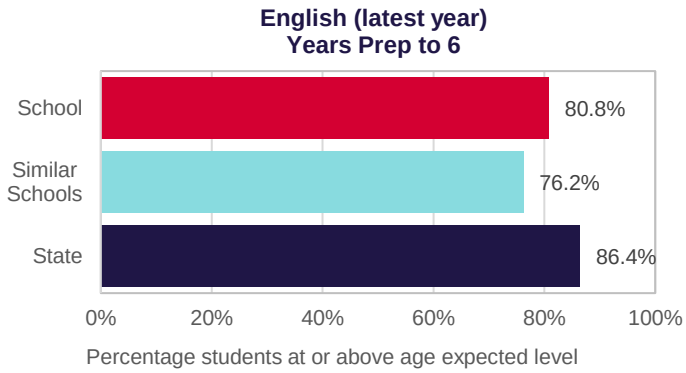
LEARNING

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.***

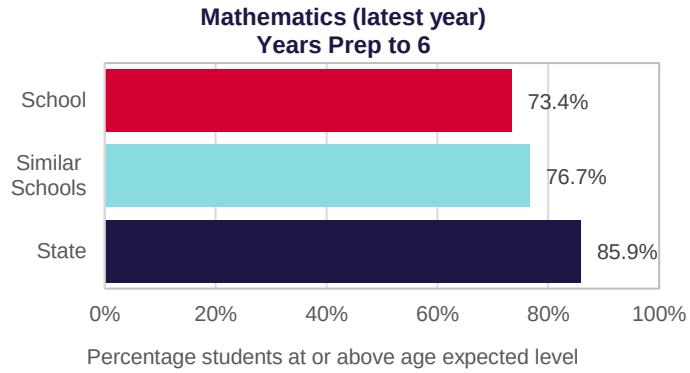
Teacher Judgement of student achievement against the Victorian Curriculum

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

English **Years Prep to 6**	Latest year (2024)
School percentage of students at or above age expected standards:	80.8%
Similar Schools average:	76.2%
State average:	86.4%



Mathematics **Years Prep to 6**	Latest year (2024)
School percentage of students at or above age expected standards:	73.4%
Similar Schools average:	76.7%
State average:	85.9%



LEARNING (continued)

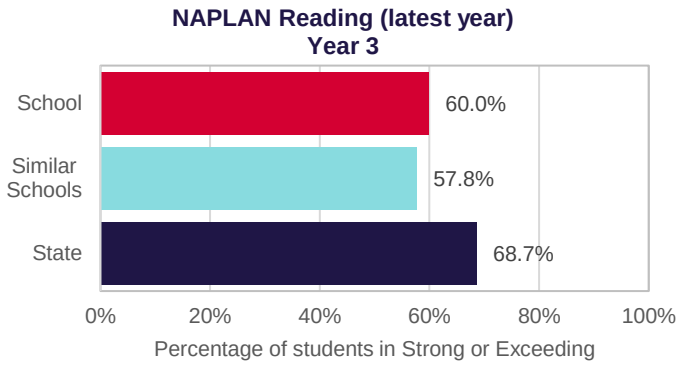
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NAPLAN

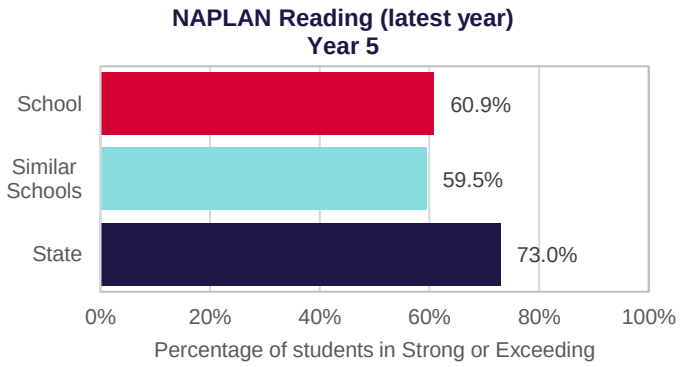
Percentage of students in the Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels in NAPLAN.

Note: The NAPLAN test was revised in 2023. As a result, a 2-year average has been provided for 2024.

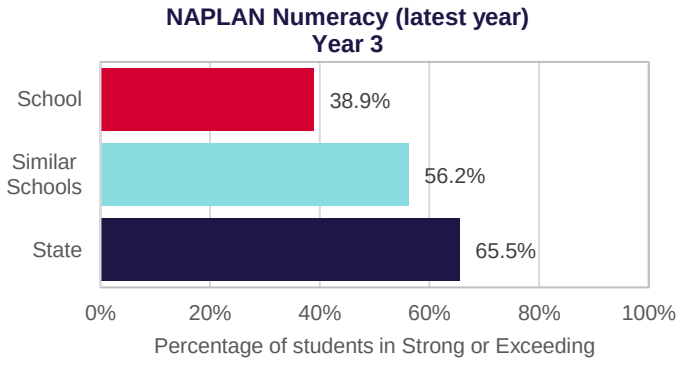
Reading Year 3	Latest year (2024)	2-year average
School percentage of students in Strong or Exceeding:	60.0%	51.4%
Similar Schools average:	57.8%	57.9%
State average:	68.7%	69.2%



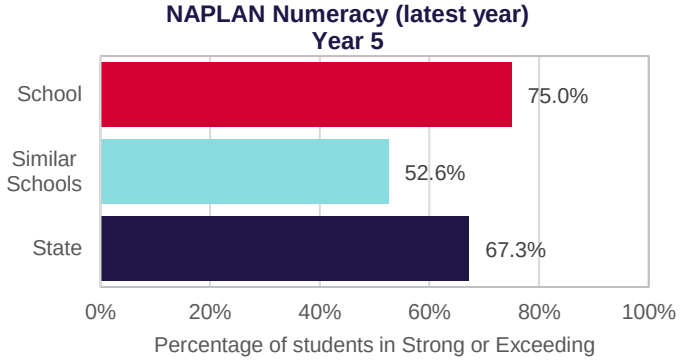
Reading Year 5	Latest year (2024)	2-year average
School percentage of students in Strong or Exceeding:	60.9%	55.0%
Similar Schools average:	59.5%	62.6%
State average:	73.0%	75.0%



Numeracy Year 3	Latest year (2024)	2-year average
School percentage of students in Strong or Exceeding:	38.9%	39.4%
Similar Schools average:	56.2%	56.1%
State average:	65.5%	66.4%



Numeracy Year 5	Latest year (2024)	2-year average
School percentage of students in Strong or Exceeding:	75.0%	60.0%
Similar Schools average:	52.6%	52.6%
State average:	67.3%	67.6%



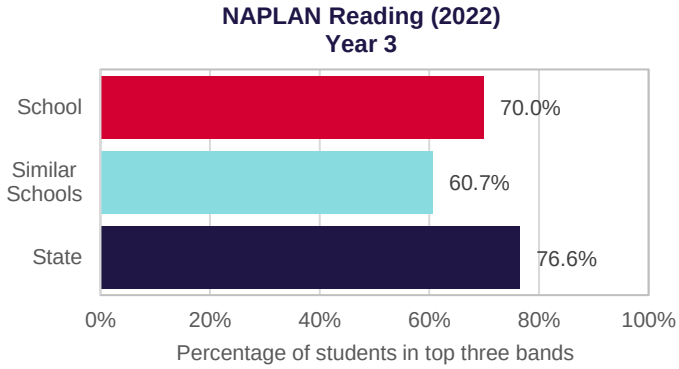
LEARNING (continued)

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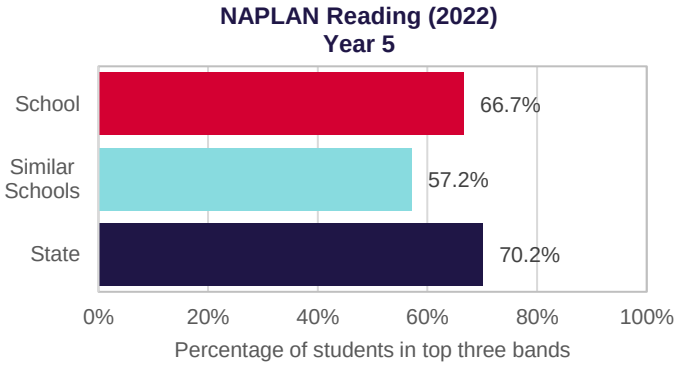
NAPLAN 2022

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

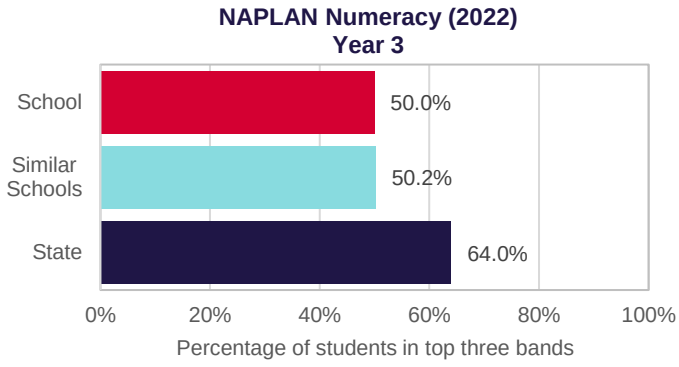
Reading Year 3	(2022)
School percentage of students in the top three bands:	70.0%
Similar Schools average:	60.7%
State average:	76.6%



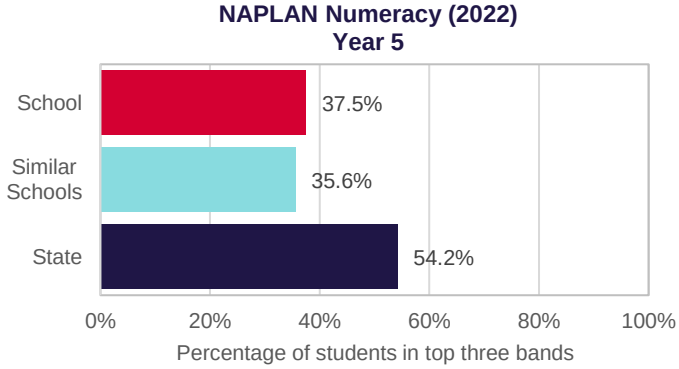
Reading Year 5	(2022)
School percentage of students in the top three bands:	66.7%
Similar Schools average:	57.2%
State average:	70.2%



Numeracy Year 3	(2022)
School percentage of students in the top three bands:	50.0%
Similar Schools average:	50.2%
State average:	64.0%



Numeracy Year 5	(2022)
School percentage of students in the top three bands:	37.5%
Similar Schools average:	35.6%
State average:	54.2%



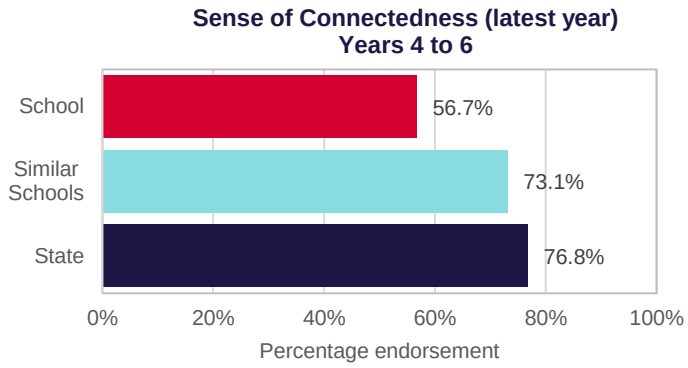
WELLBEING

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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).

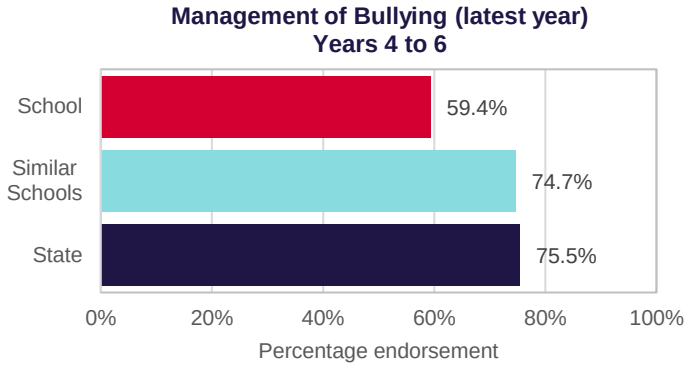
Sense of Connectedness Years 4 to 6	Latest year (2024)	4-year average
School percentage endorsement:	56.7%	72.5%
Similar Schools average:	73.1%	75.2%
State average:	76.8%	77.9%



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 (2024)	4-year average
School percentage endorsement:	59.4%	77.0%
Similar Schools average:	74.7%	76.5%
State average:	75.5%	76.3%



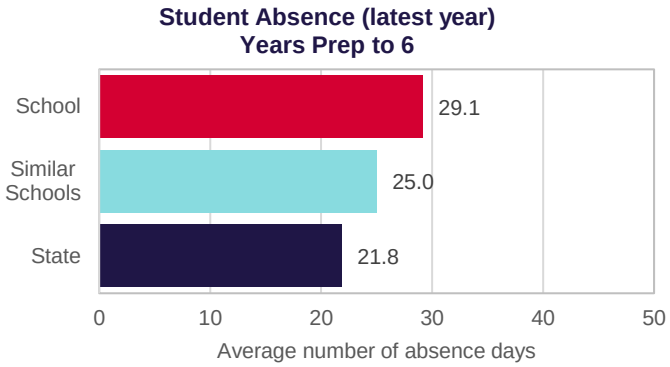
ENGAGEMENT

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 (2024)	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	29.1	26.9
Similar Schools average:	25.0	23.1
State average:	21.8	20.1



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 (2024):	89%	86%	87%	84%	87%	83%	83%

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2024

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	$1,902,942
Government Provided DET Grants	$652,952
Government Grants Commonwealth	$5,558
Government Grants State	$0
Revenue Other	$32,165
Locally Raised Funds	$41,117
Capital Grants	$0
Total Operating Revenue	**$2,634,733**

Equity [1]	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	$163,795
Equity (Catch Up)	$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	$0
Equity Total	**$163,795**

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package [2]	$1,831,282
Adjustments	$0
Books & Publications	$1,662
Camps/Excursions/Activities	$31,880
Communication Costs	$2,976
Consumables	$54,787
Miscellaneous Expense [3]	$7,494
Professional Development	$858
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	$51,046
Property Services	$58,599
Salaries & Allowances [4]	$256,398
Support Services	$30,487
Trading & Fundraising	$12,557
Motor Vehicle Expenses	$59
Travel & Subsistence	$0
Utilities	$19,148
Total Operating Expenditure	**$2,359,234**
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	**$275,499**
Asset Acquisitions	**$134,426**

(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 2025 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 2024

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	$304,836
Official Account	$97,604
Other Accounts	$0
Total Funds Available	**$402,441**

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	$88,113
Other Recurrent Expenditure	$2,239
Provision Accounts	$0
Funds Received in Advance	$0
School Based Programs	$25,000
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	$0
Cooperative Bank Account	$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	$0
Repayable to the Department	$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	$155,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	$19,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	$0
Total Financial Commitments	**$289,352**

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.