

# 2020 Annual Report to The School Community



School Name: Vermont South Special School (5025)



- All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching ([www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://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 2020 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 27 April 2021 at 12:44 PM by Clare Merison (Principal)

The 2020 Annual Report to the school community:

- has been tabled and endorsed at a meeting of the school council
- will be publicly shared with the school community.

Attested on 27 April 2021 at 03:09 PM by Graeme Herft (School Council President)

# How to read the Annual Report

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## What has changed for the 2020 Annual Report?

### Improved appearance

The appearance of the Performance Summary has been updated to more clearly represent information and to assist interpretation and comparison of individual school's data with state averages.

### School performance data

The Victorian community's experience of COVID-19, including remote and flexible learning, had a significant impact on normal school operations. This impacted the conduct of assessments and surveys. Readers should be aware of this when interpreting the Performance Summary.

For example, in 2020 school-based surveys ran under changed circumstances. Absence data may have been influenced by local processes and procedures adopted in response to remote and flexible learning.

Schools should keep this in mind when using this data for planning and evaluation purposes.

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## What does the 'About Our School' section refer to?

The About Our School section provides a brief background on the school, an outline of the school's performance over the year and future directions.

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 'Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)' section includes the improvement initiatives the school has selected and the progress they have made towards achieving them.

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## 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

### Achievement

- 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).

## How to read the Annual Report (continued)

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### 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. For the 2020 Student Attitudes to School survey, specifically, the similar school group averages are replaced by 'NDP' where less than 50% of schools in a given similar school group did not participate in the 2020 survey.

'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.

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### 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 a disability 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

Our vision is to empower students to reach their personal best.

Our core values are learning, respect, responsibility and resilience. We are student centred, we respect ourselves and each other, and understand that our attitudes and behaviours have an impact on the people around us. We are responsible and we take care of our school and the property of others. We are resilient and persistent even when things are difficult.

At Vermont South Special School (VSSS) we are intent on engaging students in their learning through providing highly qualified teaching staff, proactive leadership and a safe and inclusive environment. It is our mission to provide students with the best possible foundation in life through a well-rounded education. Our school's strategic goals are to improve student achievement in reading and viewing, to maximise student engagement in learning and to strengthen students' sense of inclusion, safety and wellbeing.

Vermont South Special School is located in Vermont South in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne in an attractive residential area that is in close proximity to a variety of community facilities. The school is a primary specialist setting for students with an intellectual disability (Full Scale Intelligence Quotient of between 50 - 70), aged between 5 - 12. Many students also exhibit other diagnosed disabilities and medical conditions, with 65% of students with ASD. Students come from seven local government areas and are transported to school by bus. In 2020, 138 students were enrolled, with 3% identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and 7% coming from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Our Student Family Occupation and Education Index (SFOE) was 0.4314, which is in the medium band. The school had 53 staff members: 3 Principal Class, 22 teachers (FTE 19.9) and 29 Education Support Staff (FTE 21.06).

The school is divided into four sections; Foundation, Juniors, Middles and Seniors. Class sizes are small, ranging from 6 - 7 students in Foundation to 12 - 13 in Seniors. A qualified Special Education teacher, together with a teacher assistant in every class, ensures that students' individual needs are catered for. Students are further supported by specialist subjects; Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Physical Education and the Healthy Kitchen Program. An occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech pathologists, nurse and re-engagement officer also support students' additional needs.

We have a holistic approach with high expectations for all students. We maintain a positive, inclusive, respectful and safe learning environment through the implementation of School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) which builds a positive culture and promotes academic and social success for our students. Our daily assemblies promote a sense of school pride as we celebrate students' efforts and achievements.

Our pedagogical model is based on the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Fischer & Frey, 2012) and Explicit Instruction (Archer & Hughes, 2011), where students are guided through the learning process, moving from teacher centred whole group delivery to student centred collaboration, and independent practice. Lessons include clear learning intentions, explicit modelling, supported practice and specific feedback. This model allows for targeted teaching that caters for individual needs, and supports our focus on the acquisition of early literacy and numeracy skills and improved student outcomes.

Teachers work collaboratively to analyse student and cohort data, developing Individual Education Plans for each student, and units of work based on the Victorian Curriculum. The use of digital technology, concrete materials and visuals support student learning. Science, camps, excursions, bike education and specialist subjects (visual arts, performing arts, physical education, the Healthy Kitchen Program, occupational therapy and speech) provide opportunities for students to generalise their skills and develop personal and social capability. Every opportunity is taken to foster a love of learning and support and challenge students to put in a maximum effort.

**Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)**

Our 2020 Annual Implementation Plan focused on Building Practice Excellence, Curriculum Planning and Assessment, and Engagement and Wellbeing from the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO). The Key Improvement Strategies (KIS) included:

- utilising the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process to improve Reading and Viewing outcomes through collaborative planning and assessment processes
- using peer observation, reflective practice, mentoring and coaching to build the capacity of staff
- building teacher understanding to assess, and use data and evidence to inform point of need teaching and learning
- ensuring curriculum planning and implementation engages and challenges students
- strengthening students' sense of inclusion, safety and wellbeing
- embedding the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework to deliver support to students, staff and families.

The school received excellent feedback from the parent opinion survey, with parent satisfaction results at 89.89% compared with the state average of 83.5%. In the 2020 staff opinion survey, the school's overall score on school climate was 81.9% compared with a state average of 68.8%.

In 2020, with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the leadership team communicated a clear plan that harnessed the skills of staff, and enabled the school to deliver an innovative online teaching and learning program. During this time staff felt supported, as reflected by 95% positive response to the statement , 'My school's leadership team supported innovative approaches to instruction during remote learning'. Ongoing adjustments were made based on feedback from staff and parents, and vulnerable students and the children of essential workers were supported to learn at school. Assessment results confirm that students progressed and all staff reported professional growth. There was an incredible sense of achievement and comradery amongst staff, and we are very proud of what was achieved. Leadership continued to attend PLC meetings throughout online learning, robust professional learning continued to be delivered, and adjustments were made to support the ongoing implementation of our key improvement strategies.

The school's positive culture was evident during this time. The staff's commitment was clear as they went above and beyond to care for the students, families and each other, and produce an outstanding online learning program and continue their own professional learning.

**Achievement**

Focused, collaborative planning underpins all programs at VSSS. During 2020, whole school professional learning was delivered and this continued during lockdowns with all staff completing the DET "Managing Challenging Behaviour" modules and "Mandatory Infection Control". The learning specialists continued to run professional learning through our PLCs covering topics such as, differentiation, report writing, maths games and warm ups, guided reading and making good instructional videos. Learning specialists and section leaders attended online regional capability days, and online Maths and English courses.

During lockdown, teachers used their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to gain a deeper understanding of Science in the Victorian Curriculum, and they used their practice days and a curriculum day to collaboratively develop a science curriculum based on "The Primary Connections" science units. A two year scope and sequence was developed. Teachers were not able to participate in onsite peer observations but observed their colleagues' online lessons. There was significant collaboration amongst staff to improve the quality of their online instructional videos.

The online learning program was designed to meet the needs of families with special needs students. We delivered 140 resource packs, on two separate occasions, to families and provided videos for English, maths, science, personal and social capability, visual arts, performing arts, "Healthy Kitchen", occupational therapy and speech therapy. Weekly assembly videos were produced and ability based groups for maths and English continued, with videos and learning activities designed for each group.

As a Special School, all our students are on the Program for Students with Disability (PSD) and have an Individual Education Plan. In 2020, despite lockdown and remote and flexible learning, the majority of students achieved their goals by the end of the year, with some students exceeding their goals. Students who did not make the expected progress have been identified for the tutoring program in 2021. We continue to refine our assessment practices to ensure that each child is assessed according to their need, to establish where they are on the Victorian continuum of learning and what to teach next. During term 4, teachers worked collaboratively to develop a moderation task for number which was delivered across the school. From this, a maths number moderation folder has been developed to improve teachers' judgements.

During 2020, our staff played an active role in the North Eastern Victorian Region (NEVR) and Riversdale networks. We presented our 'PLC journey' at the NEVR forum and also presented our work on 'Assessment and Monitoring of Student Progress'. The assistant principal continued to lead the Respectful Relationships Community of Practice.

As we move forward, our focus will be on improving teacher capacity to write targeted goals, to differentiate learning and to provide tutoring to students who did not progress due to lockdown.

### Engagement

Our families come from 41 different postcodes which can cause social isolation for parents and carers. In 2020, many of our planned events did not occur due to COVID-19 restrictions. We ran a modified Athletics Day and Footy Day for students, recorded the Foundation Christmas concert and carols. We used the online communication tool, Webex, so that parents could watch student leadership speeches. During lockdown, class Webex meetings provided an opportunity for families to gain an understanding of where their child was in their learning, and to connect through participating in Kahootz, dress up days and pet shows. At the end of the year, we were able to run a socially distanced onsite graduation. It was a wonderful night of celebration and thoroughly enjoyed by the parents, staff and students.

Many students successfully engaged with the online learning as evidenced by the work that they showed to their class teacher, through the photos they sent in and through year end assessment results. The learning specialists provided additional English and maths work for families who requested it. Students who were not engaged in home learning were supported through online learning onsite. The Assistant Principal responsible for student wellbeing connected families to support services and organised supports for vulnerable students.

Student Support Group meetings took place over Webex during lockdown and due to favourable parent feedback, the final 2020 Student Support Group meeting also took place on Webex. This resulted in increased participation with many fathers attending for the first time. At the end of the year, the Liaison officer was able to accompany parents of transitioning students to their secondary settings.

Our focus for the future will be to continue to engage students by:

- providing targeted teaching at students point of need
- continuing SWPBS to support students to follow behavioural expectations
- building teacher capacity to differentiate and provide visible goals to help students keep track of their learning and increase their motivation.

### Wellbeing

During remote learning student wellbeing was a huge focus. Teachers connected with students daily through a class Webex meeting, and with each student and their family on an individual basis three times per week to support student learning, as well as wellbeing. The school provided an on-site program for 30% of students who were identified as either of children of essential workers or vulnerable, with an average of 25 students attending each day. The program was staffed with our Education Support staff and casual relief and specialist teachers.

The SWPBS team continued to drive projects throughout the year to engage students. During remote and flexible learning the SWPBS PLC supported parents at home to manage their child's behaviours by providing each parent with an 'Awesome at Home' tick chart. When students received 25 ticks for following the home rules they were sent an "I am

awesome at home" wristband. In addition, food parcels and Easter eggs were delivered to families. During 2020, it was wonderful to be recognised for being one of the first schools in the Eastern Region to achieve Bronze Level SWPBS status.

Our relationships with families remained very strong during lockdown and feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive. We produced a book called '2020, What an Extraordinary Year' which includes photos of every student during remote learning. Each family received a copy of the book as a memento of 2020. The School council was very responsive to families' needs and wellbeing during this time.

Student wellbeing was supported on their return to school. Students were welcomed back with a balloon arch and a banner that read 'One Step at a Time, Welcome Back'. Staff went over routines with students to ease them back in to school and in the first few weeks students enjoyed a whole school reward and footy day. A risk assessment tool was introduced to identify students at risk. Staff wellbeing was supported on their return to school through a welcome back breakfast, and a thank-you note and small gift to acknowledge all their efforts. COVID-19 safe practices, infection control professional learning, and opportunities to connect safety also enhanced staff wellbeing.

Our liaison officer organised virtual tours for prospective families during lockdown and continued to coordinate funding applications for the PSD program through connecting with the regional therapists' team on Webex.

Student and staff safety is diligently monitored and the school environment is maintained to the highest standards.

### **Financial performance and position**

Vermont South Special School ended 2020 with a surplus of \$618,803. This is made up of the surplus carried forward from 2019 of \$491,604 and a reduction in expenditure in 2020 due to COVID-19. Strong financial management continued to occur throughout 2020. Additional resources were used to support the online learning and provide hands on materials and basic resources to every student. Technology was provided to families who did not have technology. We moved from 15 classes in 2019 to 14 classes in 2020 due to a reduction in enrolments from 150 in 2019 to 140 in 2020. Classroom teachers took over the teaching of science which ensured that the school would remain in a surplus position. One of our school buses was sold in 2020 and will be replaced by a new bus in 2021.

At the beginning of term 4, we launched our new website, logo and school uniform. The virtual tour and short movies on the website have been favourably received. We are conscious of constantly improving every aspect of our school and plan extensively to ensure that resources are used to improve the physical environment as well as the teaching and learning program. The leadership team, with the support of the business manager, continued to ensure that school facilities were well maintained and refreshed for when the students returned back to school after lockdown. An additional resource room was added in the Junior and Foundation building during 2020, to provide teachers with resources at the point of need. Equity funding was used to partially support a full time ES in every classroom.

We do not charge school fees but voluntary parent contributions continued in 2020 to support a range of programs.

As we look to the future our aim is to build enrolments, particularly in the lower part of the school. It is pleasing to report that we have begun 2021 with an additional foundation class, taking our total to 15 classes in 2021. In addition, at the end of 2020, we received the exciting news that our school would receive \$10.108 million dollars from the state government for an upgrade and modernisation. Architects have been appointed and Master planning is in its early stages. This upgrade will make a significant difference to our school.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at**

**[www.vermont-south-ss.vic.edu.au](http://www.vermont-south-ss.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.

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 138 students were enrolled at this school in 2020, 43 female and 95 male.

7 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) which takes into account parents' occupations and education.

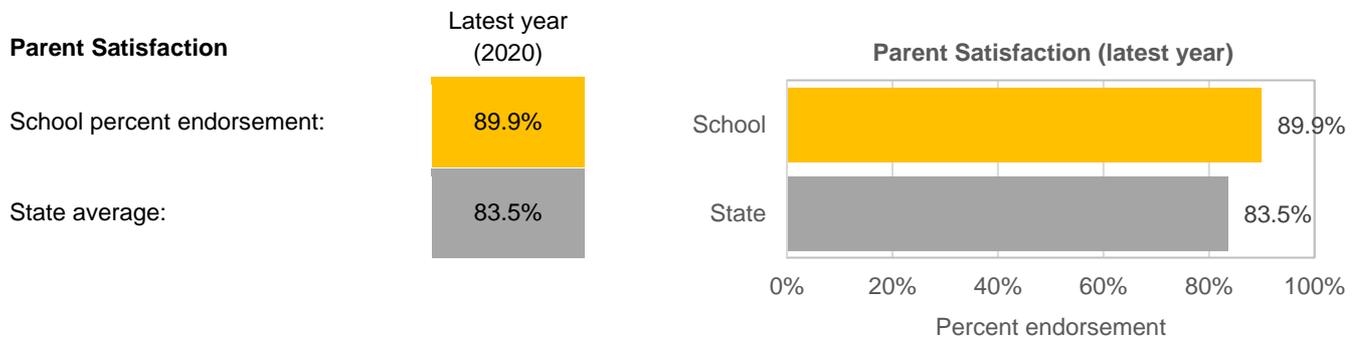
Possible socio-economic band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High.

This school's socio-economic 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.

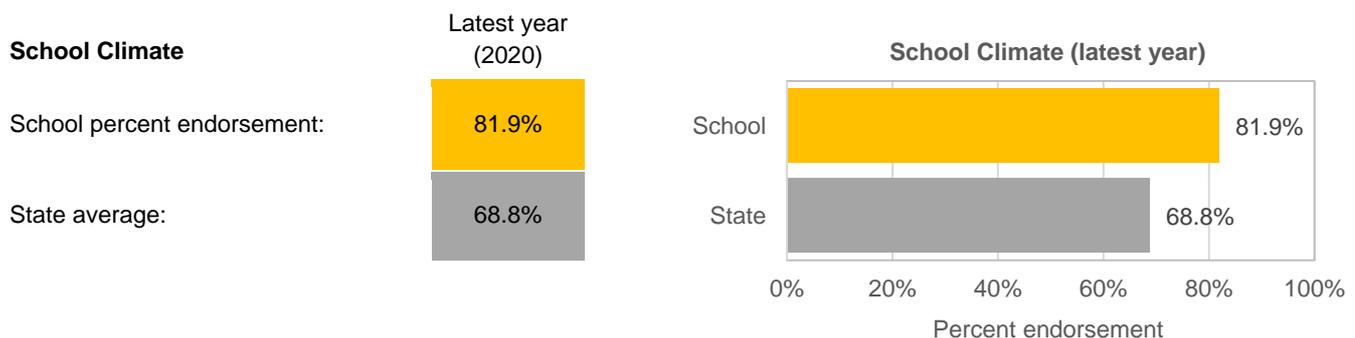


### School Staff Survey

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.



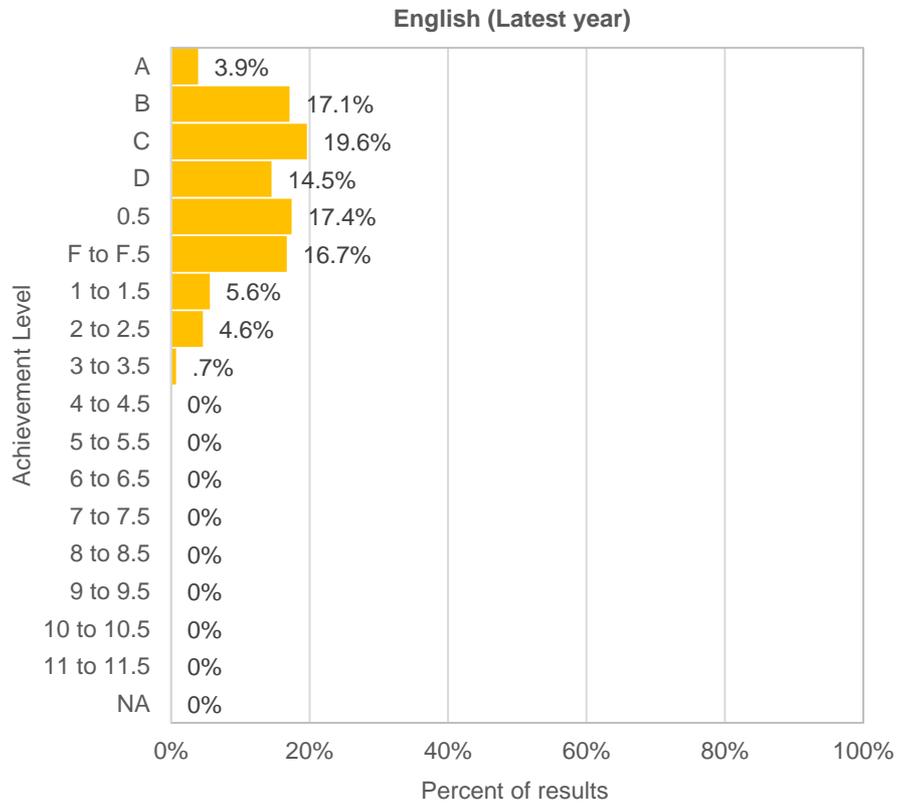
## ACHIEVEMENT

### Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

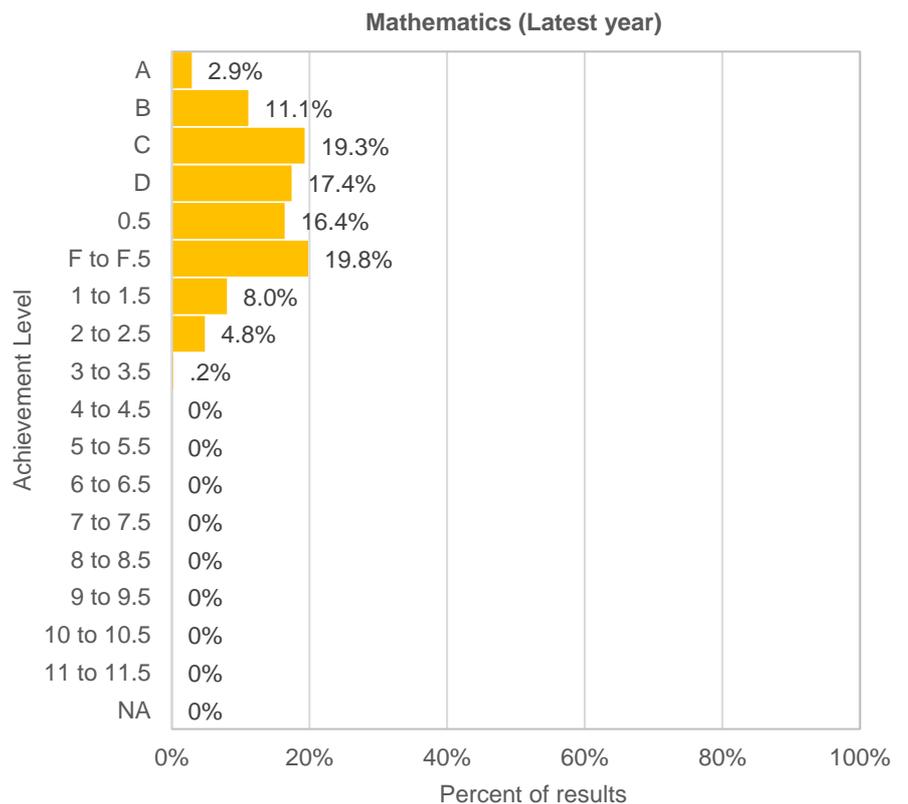
#### English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2020)
A	3.9%
B	17.1%
C	19.6%
D	14.5%
0.5	17.4%
F to F.5	16.7%
1 to 1.5	5.6%
2 to 2.5	4.6%
3 to 3.5	0.7%
4 to 4.5	NDA
5 to 5.5	NDA
6 to 6.5	NDA
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



#### Mathematics

Achievement Level	Latest year (2020)
A	2.9%
B	11.1%
C	19.3%
D	17.4%
0.5	16.4%
F to F.5	19.8%
1 to 1.5	8.0%
2 to 2.5	4.8%
3 to 3.5	0.2%
4 to 4.5	NDA
5 to 5.5	NDA
6 to 6.5	NDA
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. Absence data in 2020 may have been influenced by local processes and procedures adopted in response to remote and flexible learning.

Student Absence	2017	2018	2019	2020	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	22.0	21.3	19.3	18.3	20.4

### 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	2017	2018	2019	2020	4-year average
School percent of students with positive destinations:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

# Financial Performance and Position

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2020

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Student Resource Package	\$5,225,931
Government Provided DET Grants	\$877,528
Government Grants Commonwealth	NDA
Government Grants State	\$3,171
Revenue Other	\$7,976
Locally Raised Funds	\$62,781
Capital Grants	NDA
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,177,387</b>

<b>Equity <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Actual</b>
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$38,234
Equity (Catch Up)	NDA
Transition Funding	NDA
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	NDA
<b>Equity Total</b>	<b>\$38,234</b>

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Student Resource Package <sup>2</sup>	\$4,606,294
Adjustments	NDA
Books & Publications	\$2,901
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$29,253
Communication Costs	\$7,046
Consumables	\$73,168
Miscellaneous Expense <sup>3</sup>	\$48,755
Professional Development	\$7,875
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$23,482
Property Services	\$271,681
Salaries & Allowances <sup>4</sup>	\$211,859
Support Services	\$4,879
Trading & Fundraising	\$22,560
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$6,695
Travel & Subsistence	NDA
Utilities	\$41,985
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>\$5,358,433</b>
<b>Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit</b>	<b>\$818,954</b>
<b>Asset Acquisitions</b>	<b>NDA</b>

- (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 02 Mar 2021 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 2020

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$418,847
Official Account	\$104,818
Other Accounts	NDA
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$523,666</b>

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$96,166
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$24,083
Provision Accounts	NDA
Funds Received in Advance	NDA
School Based Programs	\$10,500
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	NDA
Cooperative Bank Account	NDA
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	NDA
Repayable to the Department	NDA
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$220,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$20,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$185,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	NDA
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	NDA
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	NDA
<b>Total Financial Commitments</b>	<b>\$555,749</b>

*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.*