

2023 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Bendigo Special Developmental School (5298)



- 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 16 May 2024 at 05:22 PM by Kirshy McAinch (Principal)

- This 2023 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 26 June 2024 at 09:24 AM by Leah Thomas (School Council President)

How to read the Annual Report

What does the 'About Our School' commentary section of this report refer to?

The 'About our school' commentary provides a brief background on the school and an overview of the school's performance over the previous calendar year.

The 'School Context' describes the school's vision, values, and purpose. Details include the school's geographic location, size and structure, social characteristics, enrolment characteristics, and special programs.

The 'Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes, and student engagement' section allows schools to reflect on highlights related to implementation of and progress towards the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan, and efforts to improve student learning, wellbeing, and engagement.

What does the 'Performance Summary' section of this report refer to?

The Performance Summary includes the following:

School Profile

- student enrolment information
- the school's 'Student Family Occupation and Education' category
- a summary of parent responses in the Parent Opinion Survey, shown against the statewide average for Specialist schools
- school staff responses in the area of School Climate in the School Staff Survey, shown against the statewide average for Specialist schools

Learning

- English and Mathematics for Teacher Judgements against the curriculum

Engagement

Student attendance and engagement at school, including:

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

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

Key terms used in the Performance Summary are defined below:

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.

What is the 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum'?

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

The 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum' is integrated directly into the curriculum and is referred to as 'Levels A to D'.

'Levels A to D' may be used for students with disabilities or students who may have additional learning needs

'Levels A to D' are not associated with any set age or year level that links chronological age to cognitive progress (i.e., there is no age expected standard of achievement for 'Levels A to D').

Updates to the *'Performance Summary'* in the 2023 Annual Report

Reporting on the following measures has been updated in the 2023 Annual Report to align with changes to departmental and public reporting products.

Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey, School Staff Survey and the Attitudes to School Survey

The calculation of the percentage endorsement for all survey measures has been revised to no longer include skipped responses. This applies to all survey measures reported in the Performance Summary. The change to the calculation reduces the negative impact of skipped responses on school results, particularly where there were a small number of respondents to the survey.

Additionally, the Parent Satisfaction measure has been revised to use the percentage endorsement of the 'General School Satisfaction' factor of the Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey only. Previously, this measure reflected an average of multiple factors in the survey. The change to reporting a single factor is consistent with how Parent Satisfaction is reported to schools and in other public reports.

About Our School

School context

VISION

A place of excellence in education that creates inclusive communities and success for all.

VALUES

Driving learning growth

Valuing diversity with kindness and respect

Uniting to achieve excellence

Ensuring equity of opportunity

SWPBS MANTRAS

Bendigo Special Developmental School employs a School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) framework to support student engagement and learning. Our mantras, which double as our values, are for all members of our school community to Act Safely, Show Respect and Be Your Best. The Bendigo Special Developmental School provides education programs for school aged students 5 to 18 with a moderate to severe intellectual disability. Our students reside in the Bendigo Region encompassing Kyneton, Wedderburn, Heathcote and Huntly. The current enrolment is 157 students.

DE and VCAA curriculum guidelines are followed at the school, with all students being taught seven subjects and the four capabilities of the Victorian Curriculum (the school is exempt from teaching languages). The Victorian Teaching and Learning Model is used to design and implement an individualised learning plan for each student, co designed with their parents/carers and possible external NDIS professionals during regular Student Support Group (SSG) meetings. Staff work in Professional Learning Communities to collaboratively plan and moderate student learning and achievement.

Classroom spaces encompass both permanent and portable buildings and learning is supported by an extensive range of educational equipment and communication aids. A hydrotherapy pool, multipurpose room, student kitchen, truncated bicycle track with a range of adapted bicycles, coupled with a specialist subjects areas of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics), Health and Physical Education including swimming and water safety instruction, Music and the Dramatic Arts, Humanities, Digital Technologies, SWPBS(School Wide Positive Behaviour Support) and RRRR(Rights Resilience and Respectful Relationships) enrich programs. Student health and safety is paramount, and a secure and stimulating outdoor environment, with challenging play equipment and shadeport sun protection provide play and regulation experiences for the students. The school is currently in the first stage of a redevelopment, with construction of the first building of the project to begin in mid to late 2024.

The school has been officially gifted the name 'Manya' meaning 'Meeting Site' by the elders of the tradition land owners, the Dja Dja Wurrung, for the outdoor space located at the north end of the school. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded within the curriculum and the school celebrates all forms of diversity within our community including the neurodiversity, cultural, gender, sexual, racial and religious identities of students and their families.

Teamwork and communication between staff and parents is a priority. Student Support Group meetings are held each term and support the preparation and review of the Individual Education Plan. Parent and caregiver dialogue is support by fortnightly newsletters, a Facebook page, and daily communication through a digital app. Learning programs are additionally supported by the school's physiotherapist, two speech therapists, Family Support Teacher and Mental Health Practitioner.

Several students are dual enrolled in mainstream schools for varying time fractions. Cooperative planning and programming between both educational settings and continual review and support of student progress are essential elements of the success and extension of these programs.

As a recognised resource for special education, the school provides an information, consultancy and professional development base for teachers, parents, tertiary students and other people involved in the disability field.

This school is committed to respecting the dignity of the individual and providing students with disabilities with maximum opportunity to extend their academic, intellectual, physical, social and emotional development in a safe and positive environment.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

Teachers actively engaged in PLC inquiries focusing on the "Big Ideas In Mathematics", most notably ensuring that 'trusting the count' was embedded using concrete materials before moving onto place value with this mathematical content enriching teacher understanding and lesson sequence design practices. Educational Support staff also participated in workshops, expanding their

comprehension of mathematical concepts' significance in numeracy education. Peer reflections on teaching practices were common, with teachers identifying and rectifying misconceptions in their instructional approaches. They recognised how their knowledge gaps could influence student achievement levels and pursued further research to enhance their expertise. All teachers implemented benchmark tasks designed by the Leading Mathematics team, ensuring consistency across the school. Cross-PLC groupings facilitated objective discussions and consensus on students' achievement levels, fostering robust conversations on curriculum and teaching mathematics.

Various artifacts, including the Semester 2 Inquiry Booklet, PLC inquiry notes and celebration presentations, and teaching planning documents, captured the process of staff professional development. Explicit mathematical concept learning intentions and success criteria as outlined in teaching plans also evidence increased teacher knowledge and confidence. Video samples of conceptual teaching were utilised in whole-school moderation workshops, along with 'I can' Achievement standards and moderated work samples from benchmarked tasks.

Analysis of the Staff Opinion Survey reflected positive trends in academic emphasis, teacher collaboration, understanding of the curriculum, and data-driven planning. Statements from the survey demonstrated increased teacher confidence in measuring teaching impact, using evidence to inform practice, incorporating student feedback, valuing peer feedback, and utilising assessment data for decision-making.

Weekly PLC Teaching and Learning meetings, coaching sessions, and PLC meetings led by designated leaders were key enablers of facilitated and consistent ongoing professional development and collaboration for all staff. Leadership meeting minutes and a structured Term In School Professional Development schedule further supported staff growth by refocusing efforts on the school's collective AIP targets and goals. Efforts to address barriers to becoming an Active Math School were documented in a letter to The Board of MAV, highlighting a commitment to continuous improvement from our school, whilst battling the distinct lack of expert and mentor support in the academic space for our student cohort.

Wellbeing

The introduction of the MTSS framework on a large scale has been very positive and has been helping to consolidate the direction of the overall structure of the school and how to target support interventions at the point of need. The key vehicle for embedding this practice has been through the upskilling and refining of middle leader practice, with a focus on improving teacher knowledge of moderation practices, the use of data for planning, teaching and learning and the role of PLC leaders addressing tier 1 and 2 strategies within their PLC and referring to the appropriate tier 3 support identity within the MTSS as required.

The experiences throughout the year with the TLI allowed for reflection on how to prioritise the tutor as a resource across the school, instead of being concentrated into one area of the school. Emphasis was also given to developing classroom team reflection opportunities against the Trauma Informed Practice Matrix (Dr Anne Southall) identifying staff emotional response to behaviours of concern and how this can impact on student engagement within the learning environment. This allows for a more proactive and planned team approach rather than being responsive and ad hoc.

Teachers' lesson planning now reflects aspects required for the DIP funding process. For example, they incorporate 'Transition Support', explicit Personal and Social capability learning intentions and success criteria, and individualised communication strategy instruction for accessing specific learning environments such as classrooms, common rooms, MPRs, playgrounds, and the pool, into the daily program. Additionally, teachers are engaging in peer observations and leveraging reflections from these observations to implement new strategies for assessing students with greater fidelity. Furthermore, teachers are utilising SWPBS data to develop boost lessons for Personal and Social Capability skills, collaborating with the the Tutor to enhance student learning, well-being, and engagement. As a school we are very proud to have been approached by the Inclusion, Access, and Participation Branch to pilot the Practical Functional Assessment - Skills Based Training (PFA-SBT) framework within our setting, a process that we have had great success with and will be looking to identify how this can be expanded in 2024. Moreover, there's increased awareness of Trauma-Informed Practices among staff, with a willingness and ability to reflect on personal responses to challenging situations and students are demonstrating a deeper understanding of help-seeking behaviours and the available supports.

Documentation artefacts such as the Multi-disciplinary Health and Wellbeing Action Team (MHWAT) process and minutes, PLC Teaching and Learning Leaders minutes, staff reflection journals on Trauma-Informed Practice and the Reflection Circles protocol, minutes of various meetings associated with the MTSS structure, and notably, the Silver Award in the SWPBS framework are all evidence of the effectiveness of the MTSS structure implementation across the 2023 schooling year.

The results of the Staff Opinion Survey, namely through the academic emphasis indicators, demonstrate a consistent improvement over time. Additionally, the data identifies a decrease in Major 3 incident occurrences, reflecting positive progress in management of behaviours of concern, which ultimately impact wellbeing and engagement.

Engagement

This year we have seen a repeat of the pattern that emerged last year. We were able to be on track with our target of 45% of students with 20+ plus absence days until the middle of the year, however once the winter months take hold, and illness began to circulate, we saw an increase of the absences of students. Whilst we were not successful in reaching the target, we did see a decline of 12 % of students with 20 + absences, and a slight increase in the number of students 10- 19.5 days absences category, which were a step in the right direction. These small successes can be attributed to the further embedding of the BSDS Attendance Policy and the explicit discussion and documentation of students with significant absence at the PLC level, which has increased accountability on teachers to build the relationships with students and their families.

We have also had a number of students transfer from other schools or from home schooling, who have traditionally poor attendance rates, and we are working, often with a wider Care Team, in these situations to slowly increase attendance.

Attendance data is actively discussed at both PLC and MHWAT meetings, with actionable steps identified. The administrative team prints weekly reports, highlighting students whose attendance has either increased or decreased, facilitating targeted interventions. Referrals to the Navigator program have been initiated, and leadership has engaged the Health and Wellbeing Support Officer from the Regional Office to bolster family engagement. Additionally, return-to-school plans have been developed collaboratively with the Behaviour Coach, Therapy Team, and classroom/PLC teams. The implementation of the BSDS Attendance policy, particularly its follow-up process, is underway. Classroom teachers and leadership team members participate in Care Team Meetings for students in Out of Home Care or involved with Child Protection services. Individualised travel support plans for the bus are crafted to ensure continued access, aiding attendance. Importantly, the therapist team conduct follow-ups with families post-surgery to establish post-operation return-to-school plans and staff utilise platforms like SeeSaw and Sentral's 'instant message' for efficient communication and absence management.

Analysis of attendance data reveals improvements in various metrics. There is a slight increase in students with zero days of absence from 3% in 2022 to 4% in 2023. Notably, there's an increase in students with 0.5-9.5 days of absence from 10% in 2022 to 15% in 2023, indicating progress with more students having less days of absence. However, the greatest achievement was in students with 30+ days of absence decreased from 59% in 2022 to 46% in 2023. Priority cohorts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, equity funded students, and EAL students, also showed improvements in attendance rates over the year, demonstrating the effectiveness of targeted interventions.

Other highlights from the school year

We have made significant gains in our Strengthening Career Pathways (SCP) approach this year, most notably with the formation of a partnership with the Goldfield Local Learning and Employment Network (GLLEN) Placement and Industry Engagement Officers, a resource that our students have not had access to before, which opened up a large number of Structured Work Placements and Work Experience placements that had previously been unattainable.

Additionally, the SCP team have extended partnership relationships with School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) and service providers, including a number of new service agencies. This has created new potential pathways for our students, yet has required additional support for families navigating this transition to ensure that they have the appropriate level of funding in their NDIS plan to access their service. Concurrently, our staff have provided upskilling sessions for many services providers, specifically in the area of communication support, as not all providers are as skilled at working with student individual communication systems as our staff. Most importantly, we have created a culture amongst our students, and our families, that they should be and can be thinking about work options and preferences post school. Students are saying, "I would like to get a job as a ...," or, "I would like to try working at...". This is a new line of thinking for many of our families especially, who have not thought that these opportunities would be available to their child with a moderate/severe disability.

The highlight of the school year, however, was most certainly the staging of our second, whole school production. Our school vision is to be "a place of excellence in education that creates inclusive communities and success for all." We don't think anything could demonstrate that vision more perfectly than seeing our students star on the stage at the Ulumbarra Theatre during the performance of 'Searching for the Rainbow!' The talents of the students were, of course, front and centre in front of an audience of over 600 people, with many students achieving many firsts and at times surpassing the expectations of their families and perhaps even of themselves. The joy of celebrating the 'true colours' of our students is at the heart of our school philosophy, and families and the wider school community were in awe of the staff who supported each student in their own unique way to participate in the show, demonstrating conclusively that inclusion is a practice not a place.

Financial performance

Bendigo Special Developmental School was in receipt of Equity funding that was utilised to support the employment of the Family Support Teacher and a Koori Liaison Officer to provide vital support to students' families by assisting them to link with external service providers and begin the process for NDIS plan reviews that will be required to support students with their chosen post school options, a process that is many years in the planning and implementation. The school continued to access "Advance" funding, which was used to resource Strengthening Career Pathway programs and ensure students had the necessary equipment and uniforms to undertake their structured work placements. Planning for Stage 1 of an overall Masterplan Redevelopment of the school, overseen by the Victorian School Building Authority continued, with the final tender documentation being completed with a view to going to tender early in the 2024 new year.

A modest surplus was recorded despite the school being in deficit for the majority of the year, limiting cash flow and financial strategic planning due to the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Profile funding model in place of the Program for Students with Disabilities. This achieved surplus was a testament to the dedication and expertise of the Leading Teacher of Wellbeing and the upskilling of staff in the documentation of adjustments made for individual students to access all aspects of learning. The cost of staff and replacement staff to ensure adequate staffing levels to maintain student and staff safety whilst continuing the teaching and learning focus continue to be the most significant contributor to the school budget.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://www.bendigods.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 152 students were enrolled at this school in 2023, 50 female and 102 male.

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

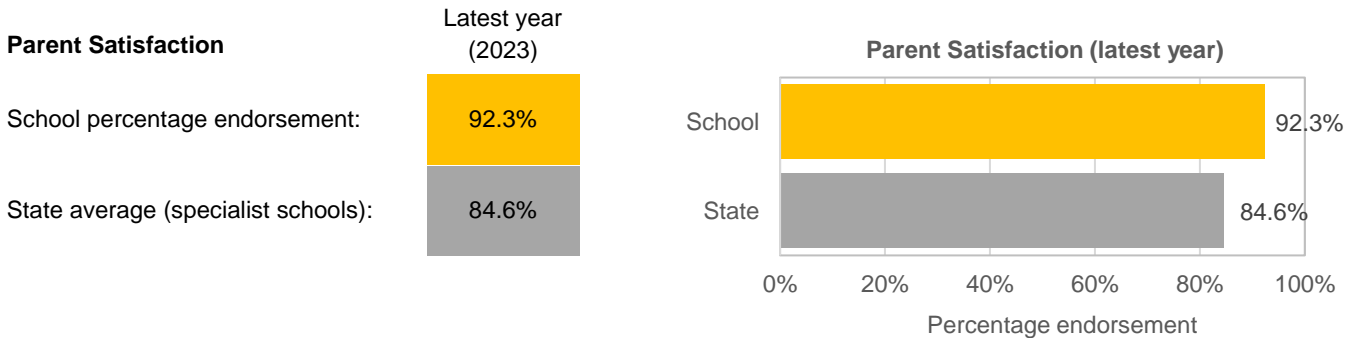
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

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

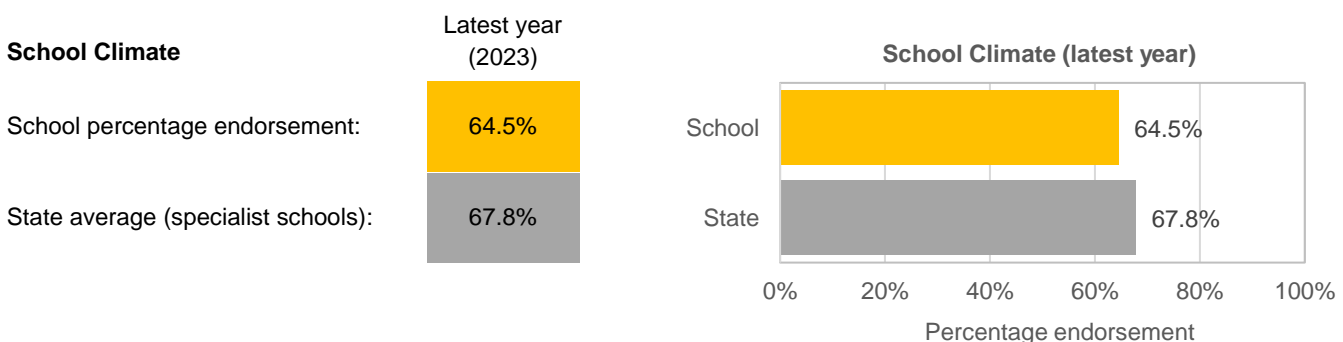


School Staff Survey

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.

Data is suppressed for schools with three or less respondents to the survey for confidentiality reasons.



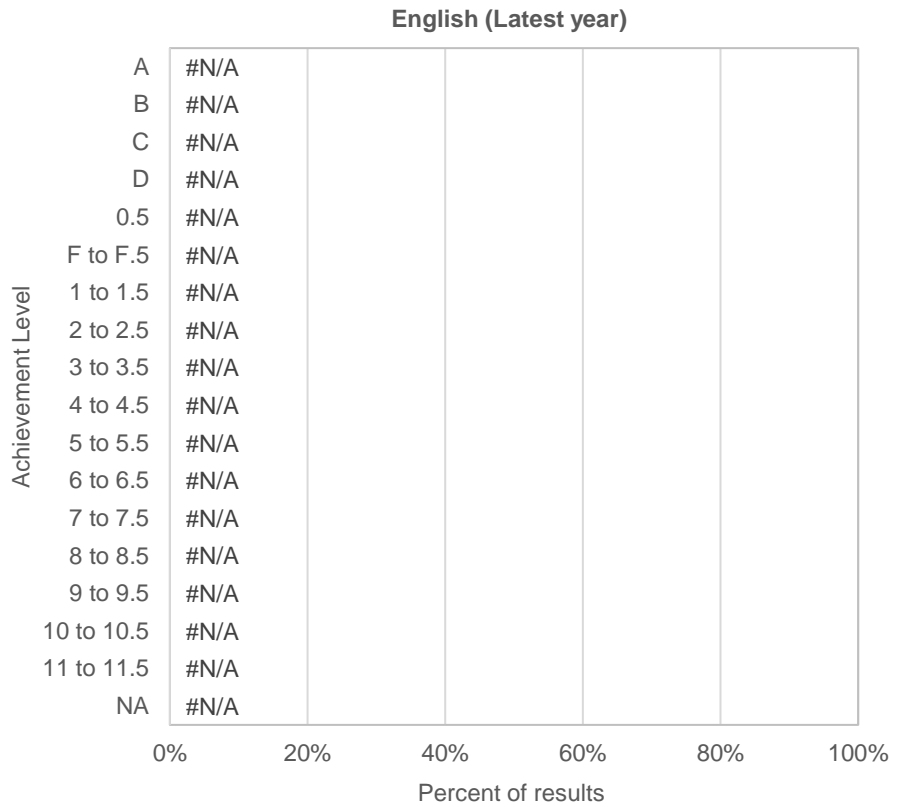
LEARNING

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

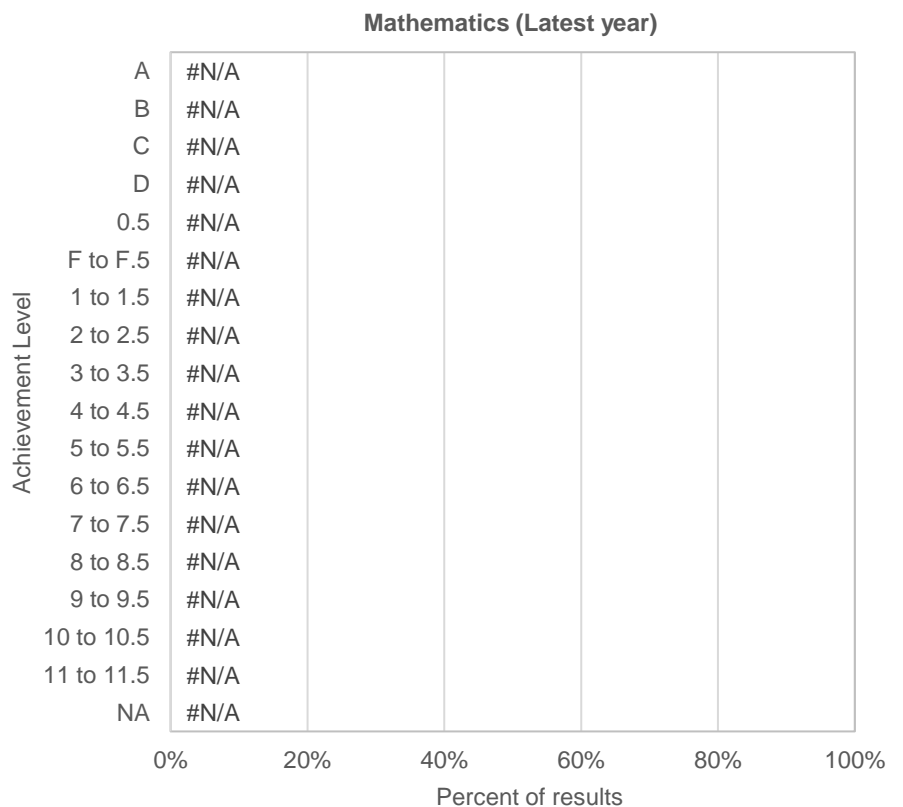
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2023)
A	NDA
B	NDA
C	NDA
D	NDA
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	NDA
1 to 1.5	NDA
2 to 2.5	NDA
3 to 3.5	NDA
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 (2023)
A	NDA
B	NDA
C	NDA
D	NDA
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	NDA
1 to 1.5	NDA
2 to 2.5	NDA
3 to 3.5	NDA
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.

Student Absence	2020	2021	2022	2023	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	45.9	41.1	49.0	45.9	45.5

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	2019	2020	2021	2022	4-year average
School percent of students with positive destinations:	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	NDP	100.0%

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2023

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$9,170,018
Government Provided DET Grants	\$974,583
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$0
Government Grants State	\$9,800
Revenue Other	\$15,898
Locally Raised Funds	\$46,370
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$10,216,670

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$132,536
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$132,536

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$8,893,685
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$0
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$18,349
Communication Costs	\$12,168
Consumables	\$75,146
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$25,063
Professional Development	\$19,543
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$58,759
Property Services	\$209,555
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$403,371
Support Services	\$120,879
Trading & Fundraising	\$4,170
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$4,474
Travel & Subsistence	\$0
Utilities	\$78,152
Total Operating Expenditure	\$9,923,314
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$293,356
Asset Acquisitions	\$15,120

- (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 2024 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 2023

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$13,720
Official Account	\$33,216
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$46,936

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$152,619
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$17,822
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$0
School Based Programs	\$0
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$15,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$185,440

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.