

2023 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Sunbury And Macedon Ranges Specialist
School (5218)



- 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 25 April 2024 at 08:16 PM by Joanne Nolan (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 April 2024 at 09:55 AM by Amanda Solarino (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

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School caters for the needs of students with a diagnosis of intellectual disability. It is a two campus school with the main campus located in Sunbury and the second campus located a 25 minute drive away in Bullengarook. The school strives to maximise the intellectual, physical and social potential of each learner through a partnership with parents and carers.

"Empowering students towards independence through a command of social competency, communication and mobility" ,Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School is a dual mode school. 60% of students have an IQ of 50 or below and 39 % of students have an IQ of between 50 and 70 and 1% of the students do not have a recognised intellectual disability and students attend when approved by the Department of Education as alternative placements. Approximately 50% of students have a diagnosis of autism as well as intellectual disability and some students have additional diagnosis' that include physical disability, social and emotional disorders, vision and hearing impairment and complex medical needs.

The school's socio-economic profile is based on the schools' Student Family occupation and Education index which takes into account parents' occupations and education and the band value is in the High range.

The school has two equally unique campuses. The Sunbury campus was established in 1998 and is located within Heritage listed buildings in Sunbury. Students between 4.8 years and year 11 equivalent attended in 2023. Since 2018 the school has received in excess of \$20million in building project funding and the Sunbury campus has new and appropriate learning spaces for students that include a library, multi-purpose room, kitchen and allied health facilities that compliment the expansive and well maintained grounds and facilities.

The Bullengarook Secondary campus was established in 2008 and is on the grounds of what was once a very small and recently closed primary school. The Building project works were completed at this campus at the end of 2020 and include a new administration area adjacent to an indoor multi-purpose room, a music room as well as a hospitality facility that is purpose built to enable the delivery of VET Hospitality. An arts/wellbeing room, materials technology facilities, one for automotive programs and the other for materials technology programs were part of the building project as well.

The majority of students access buses funded by the Department of Education student transport unit and are eligible for transport as they reside within the designated student transport zone.

The school maintains a whole of school approach and strives to have consistency across the entire school. The school has a fulltime Principal and Assistant Principal at the Sunbury campus and a Campus Principal and Assistant Principal support students at the Bullengarook Campus. 5 leading teachers worked alongside learning specialists and lead 41 equivalent full-time teaching staff. The teaching staff were supported by 54 EFT of education support staff whose roles extend to allied health, administration. IT and classroom support staff.

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School has consolidated itself within its wide designated transport catchment area as being the school that specialises in teaching children with an intellectual disability and actively works with network schools and early education providers to share expertise and support students to maximise their learning opportunities across the education system.

By the end of 2023 the 191 male students attended along with 78 female students . 3% of students were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent along with 1% of staff and 5% of students had English as an additional language.

Of significant concern is the absence data. Average days absent per student in 2023 sat at 41.3% , a slight improvement on 2022 at 46.2%. The state average in 2023 was ?? days of absence . In 2023 there were no international students attending SMRSS.

Parent endorsement of the school indicates that 92.6% of parents who responded to the survey agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with the school , compared to the state medium of 84.6 % in Specialist Schools. Some 71.2 of staff who responded to the Staff opinion survey indicated that they agree or strongly agree with the positive school climate, well ahead of the state mean that sits at 67.8% in Specialist Schools

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

The Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School community continued to feel the impact of changes to school as we knew it previous to covid ,across all of 2023, particularly with regards to staffing challenges and the struggles of a small group of students to return to fulltime school. The Framework for Improving Student Outcomes identified key goals that the school worked towards. The focus on re-engagement and wellbeing as well as prioritising numeracy aligned well with the SMRSS strategic planning goals

that included maximising learning growth for all, improving the quality of student pathways and strengthening student agency, engagement and connectedness to school. Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School Strategic planning goals included the following -To maximise learning growth for all students, To improve the quality of student pathways and To strengthen student agency, engagement and connectedness to school. As the school year progressed the impact of staff challenges profoundly impacted the school's ability to achieve some of the identified goals and this is evidenced by some of the data sets available to the school. Conversely though there is some data that demonstrates the effectiveness of some of the actions and outcomes which is reassuring. The staff opinion survey data reflected a significant decline in the teacher perception of the monitoring of effective use of data, this decreased from 85% in 2022 to 73% in 2023. We believe this demonstrates the impact and challenge of staffing that had an impact on the schools ability to hold PLCs and much time was devoted to enabling teachers to have allocated planning time in lieu of meetings. The focus was taken off the use of data and was place on building capacity of teachers, 20-25% of teachers across the school were new to the school as Graduate or Permission to Teach teachers.

What was positive was the perception of staff around the collective efficacy which increased to 80% in 2023 up from 67% in 2022. What we believe was highlighted was that despite the impact of significant staffing challenges where the disruption to the teacher was felt, there was still a recognition that we could have an impact by working together to support each other.

Of more concern was the perception of staff that the focus on Academic Emphasis reduced from 59% in 2021 down to 56% in 2022. We believe this can be explained somewhat by the school increased focus on engagement and wellbeing post covid as well as forgoing some scheduled professional learning opportunities that enabled teachers to take the time to planning time they needed to prepare for classes. Whilst the school diligently worked on goals to re-engage students and support the wellbeing of students the absence data for a second year post covid, remained extremely high and this maintains as a goal going forward to address the issue of student absences which saw students have an average of 41.3 days off per year in 2023.

In 2023 53.2 % of students were working at foundation level or above in the area of literacy, this data reflects an improvement from 2022 where students who were working at foundation level or above sat at 47.8 %. In 2023 56% of students were working at foundation level or above in the area of numeracy, this data reflects that a small improvement from 54% of students were working at foundation level or above in 2022.

Wellbeing

The Framework for Improving Student Outcomes identified key goals that the school worked towards. The focus on re-engagement and wellbeing as well as prioritising numeracy aligned well with the SMRSS strategic planning goals that included maximising learning growth for all, improving the quality of student pathways and strengthening student agency, engagement and connectedness to school. Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School Strategic planning goals included the following -To maximise learning growth for all students, To improve the quality of student pathways., To strengthen student agency, engagement and connectedness to school. Student wellbeing continued to be a major school priority and in 2023 as in 2022 the school approached the year with equal emphasis on student wellbeing as it did on the academic program. re-engaging students at school and building on attendance maintained as priorities but there was recognition that for some students with complex health needs this was very difficult to achieve with high levels of concern around their medical vulnerability and potential impact of covid.

The school maintained a strengthened approach to wellbeing however also were inhibited by staffing challenges unfortunately. The school was unable to recruit a Mental Health Practitioner in 2023 however we maintained a robust wellbeing team that included 2 social workers. It was a great boost to be asked to deliver a pilot program of the mental health in primary schools initiative and this helped us enormously in developing staff capacity to develop their mental health literacy skills and understandings. The school also received funding from the school focused youth support initiative and were able to introduce a Dogs in Schools program on both campuses and also able to deliver the Berry Street model to 20 staff across the year. Through a school wide, collaborative and strategic approach the school focuses strongly on developing an inclusive and positive climate for learning for all students and as such our parent opinion data reflects this also. It was pleasing in 2023 that 100 % of families reported that they felt the school treated their child with respect and 94 % of families believed that the school actively supports the teaching of positive behaviour through the SWPBS approach.

Engagement

The Framework for Improving Student Outcomes identified key goals that the school worked towards. The focus on re-engagement and wellbeing as well as prioritising numeracy aligned well with the SMRSS strategic planning goals that included maximising learning growth for all, improving the quality of student pathways and strengthening student agency, engagement and connectedness to school.

Whilst there were extraordinary challenges across the school year it is clear that the school still able to continue to work towards school improvement and importantly achieve progress towards some strategic planning goals. Across the year the school prepared Sunbury And Macedon Ranges Specialist School for the introduction of the Victorian Pathways Certificate and supported the whole

of school community in developing greater understanding and the quality of student pathways. The parent opinion survey data reflected a positive response in that 81% of

parents felt confident that the school prepares students for the next phase of their schooling and this was an increase from 2020 where 74% of parents expressed positive reflections. This is worthy of recognition as, despite a significantly impacted attempt to return students to work experience due to covid and the need to re-establish networks with providers the school was able to demonstrate our ability to prepare students for the next stage of their life.

Student attendance data reflects a significant increase in the number of days of absence students have on average across a year post covid. Data reflects the increase from an average of 25 days in 2020 up to 46 days in 2022 and 41 days in 2023. Whilst this is disappointing data we also recognise the significant impact of Covid, particularly around the medical vulnerability of students and reluctance of parents to have students exposed to the virus, another significant contributing factor is the staff shortages and the impact this has on students, a further contributing factor is the disruption to learning in 2020 and 2021 where students, particularly those on the autism spectrum became accustomed to learning remotely and are expressing their will to continue learning in this mode.

Highlights in 2022 including extra curricular activities returning to school including the Debutante Ball and the School Production along with the swimming and interschool sports programs being reintroduced to the curriculum and delivered consistently.

Other highlights from the school year

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School has received over \$20 million in capital works funding since 2016 and in 2022 we were able to fully realise the efficacy of the funding at the Bullengarook campus. At the Sunbury campus the Capital Works program was

completed towards the end of 2022 and fully realised in 2023. With the new facilities at the Sunbury campus, the new Sunbury Secondary program was established in 2023 and with an increased focus on consolidating curriculum opportunities for students, a firm foundation was established in 2023 with the view to continual improvement for Sunbury senior students into 2024 and beyond. The school year started off positively in 2023 when School council endorsed the purchase of a new bus that has capacity to support children in wheelchairs and also funded a new playground for the lower primary aged students. The students across both campuses are proud of their school and the facilities they can access to optimise their learning. The Sunbury classes were able to use the new purpose built kitchen to extend their skills in food preparation and independent living skills and the foundation was set to be able to develop a curriculum and appoint a teacher to this specialist area in 2024. Being able to provide a physical education program across the year, no matter the weather was an incredible boost for children where keeping kids active and engaged is a school priority. Early in the year we held our annual picnic but changed it a little in an effort to bring the community together to celebrate and open the new facilities. Almost 500 people came together for a shared meal and school provided food and entertainment. It was such a positive and appreciated experience that School Council resolved to make this an annual celebration, to be held in the same manner.

The highlight of the 2023 school year would have been the School Production of the Time Travelling Trio however this was trumped by the making of a documentary of the School Production which profiled 4 students and their families. The world premiere took place on August 8th at the Melbourne Film Festival and from there the documentary has gone around the world. The award winning documentary has had unprecedented success and won the coveted People's Choice Award at the MIFF at the outset. The documentary has been modified to be screened on the ABC in 2024 and then on Netflix later in the year. The documentary provides a unique insight into just one of the many successful, inclusive programs offered across the school.

Financial performance

The school finished the year in a sound financial position and as at the 31st of December 2023 the net operating surplus was \$525,726. This is a decrease from 2022 when the operating surplus was in excess of a million dollars. It is to be noted however that in 2022 the school had also received a ten fold increase in Commonwealth Grants from the State Government as compared to 2023 when the school received just \$31,826 in State Government grants.

The student resource package provided to the school increased by \$818,702 in 2023, the actual SRP was \$11,200,102.

In total operating revenue for the school in 2023 was \$13,592,290 and that was up from \$13,354,147 in 2022.

The actual expenditure in 2023 was \$13,066,564 compared to 2022 where the actual expenditure was \$12,076,657.

In 2023 the school received \$108,119 in Equity funding based on social disadvantage and this was an increase of approximately \$16,000 from the previous year.

The actual expenditure in 2023 reflected an increase of a little over a million dollars more than the previous year and reflected the return of many of the regular school programs post covid . Examples of this is the increase in expenditure for camps and excursions as well as motor vehicle expenses.

In 2023 there was a notable increase in the Equipment/Maintenance/hire expenditure line , this increase by \$37,469 which was approximately a 30% increase. Notably the Salaries and allowances expenditure increase by \$40,305. This reflected the challenge the school faced in being able to employ staff as replacement teacher and education support staff members.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://www.smrss.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 270 students were enrolled at this school in 2023, 78 female and 191 male.

5 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).

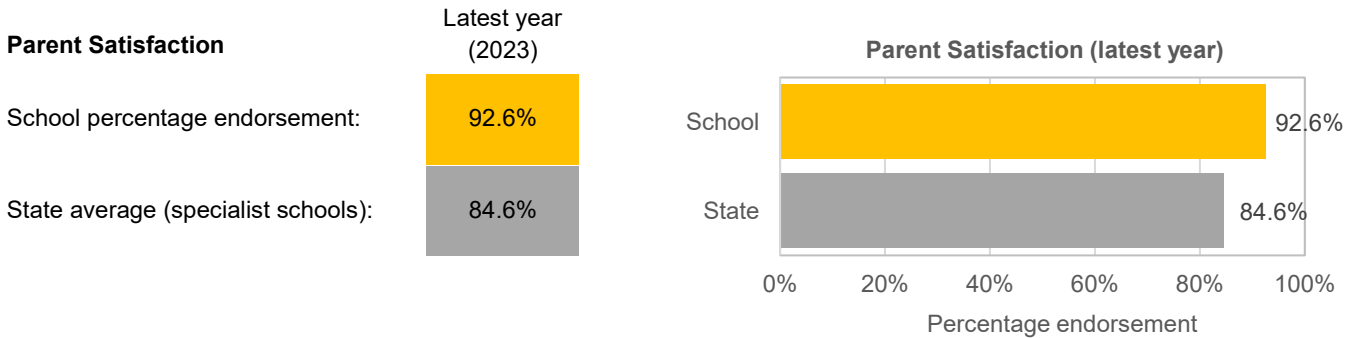
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

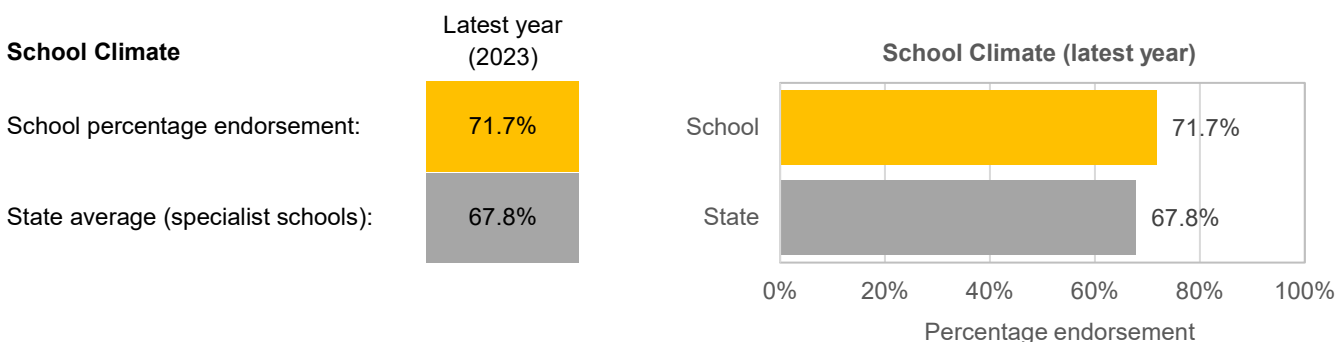


School Staff Survey

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.



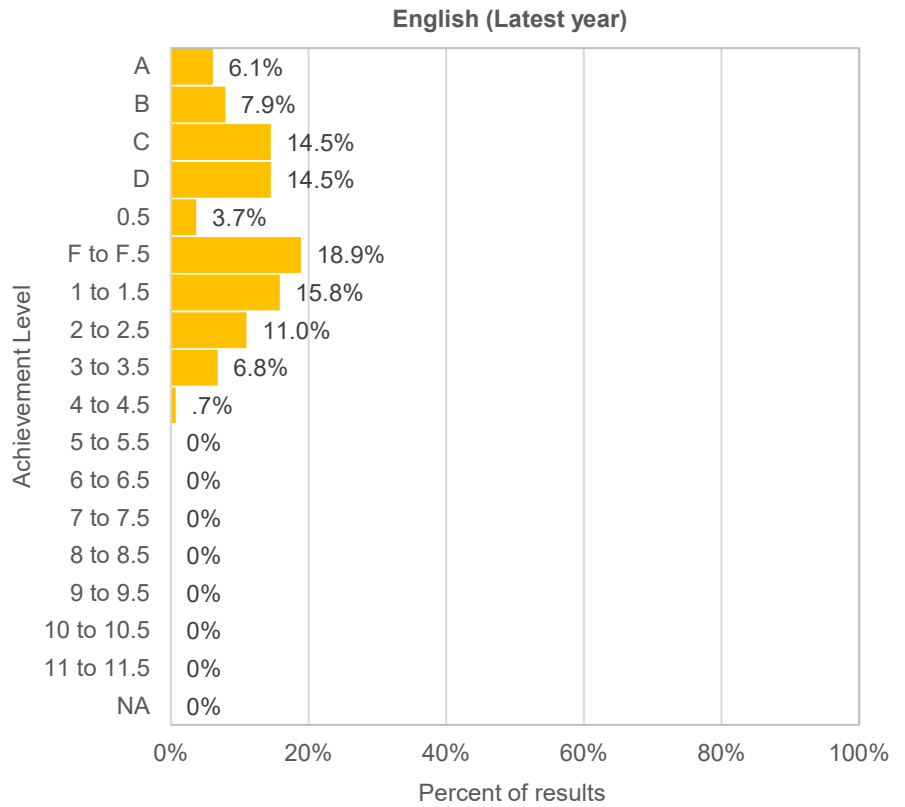
LEARNING

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

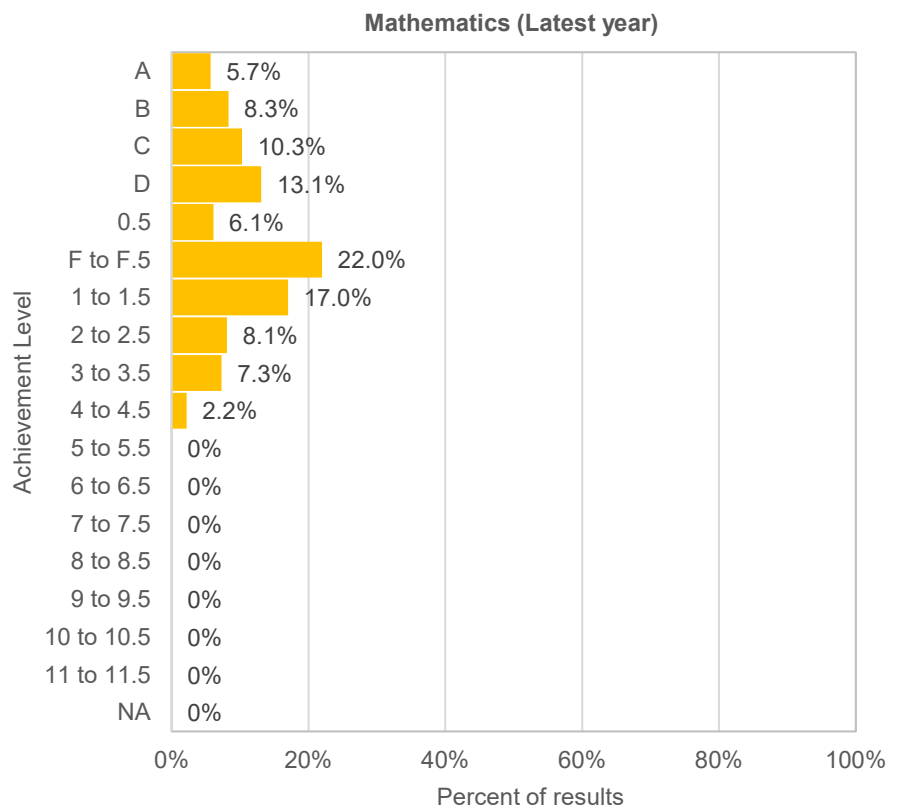
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2023)
A	6.1%
B	7.9%
C	14.5%
D	14.5%
0.5	3.7%
F to F.5	18.9%
1 to 1.5	15.8%
2 to 2.5	11.0%
3 to 3.5	6.8%
4 to 4.5	0.7%
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	5.7%
B	8.3%
C	10.3%
D	13.1%
0.5	6.1%
F to F.5	22.0%
1 to 1.5	17.0%
2 to 2.5	8.1%
3 to 3.5	7.3%
4 to 4.5	2.2%
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:	24.3	47.8	46.2	41.3	39.9

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:	NDP	NDP	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Financial Performance and Position

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

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$11,813,342
Government Provided DET Grants	\$1,557,076
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$9,481
Government Grants State	\$31,826
Revenue Other	\$47,184
Locally Raised Funds	\$133,381
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$13,592,290

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$108,119
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$108,119

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$11,200,102
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$109
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$90,098
Communication Costs	\$13,741
Consumables	\$172,973
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$33,800
Professional Development	\$44,426
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$176,452
Property Services	\$277,938
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$697,955
Support Services	\$91,707
Trading & Fundraising	\$93,360
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$83,092
Travel & Subsistence	\$1,170
Utilities	\$89,639
Total Operating Expenditure	\$13,066,564
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$525,726
Asset Acquisitions	\$224,856

- (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	\$323,328
Official Account	\$83,911
Other Accounts	\$136,643
Total Funds Available	\$543,881

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$287,841
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$9,541
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	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$297,381

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.