

2021 Annual Report to The School Community



School Name: Meadows Primary School (5524)



- All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (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 2021 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.

- This 2021 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

About Our School

School context

Meadows Primary School is located in residential Broadmeadows in the North West Victorian Region (NWVR). The school has Early Learning Centre (Kindergarten) and a Community Hub on site which provide opportunities for transition and connection to the school. The school aspires for all students to make above expected progress in literacy and numeracy and to have agency over their learning. In 2021, the school underwent a whole school review as we were at the end of our current strategic plan period. There was strong commitment from staff, parents and students to continue to embed our school vision throughout the school community. Our school vision reads: We are an inclusive and safe learning community that empowers students to achieve their potential and live our values. We are responsible, respectful and resilient. Meadows Primary School's values are Respect, Resilience and Responsibility. We have Respect for ourselves and others We are Resilient when faced with challenges We are Responsible for our learning, our actions and our belongings. Meadows Primary School is proudly multicultural, having 18 language backgrounds other than English with 67% of students recognised as English as Additional Language (EAL). Although celebrated, this raises complexities when teaching students with high EAL needs. Of these students, 27% are listed as having a learning impairment (predominately speech) compared with the state and region average of 6%. A total of 333 students were enrolled at Meadows Primary School in 2021, with 163 female and 170 male. Two percent of our student population were listed as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The socio-economic band is High. In 2021, Meadows Primary School had 17 generalist classes consisting of three foundation classes, three year 1 classes, three year 2 classes, four 3/4 composite classes and four 5/6 composite classes. The school ran four specialist classes being; physical education, visual art, performing arts and STEM. In addition to three principal class employees, one leading teacher and two learning specialists, there was 17 full time teachers, two part time teachers, 19 Educational Support Staff, a school Chaplain and a school counsellor onsite 4 days a week to provide one to one counselling with students as well as running social groups. Understanding the complexities of trauma on the lives of students and families and adapting teaching and learning programs to cater to this need is a contextual challenge. Our trauma informed, research backed education model followed by staff, cater to around 70% of the student population who present with tier 1 behaviours. Intervention and supports are in place to support the wellbeing and learning outcomes of the remaining 30% of students who present with tier 2 and tier 3 behaviours. These interventions included students working with our counsellor and social worker to engage individual and group support programs. Returning to school after 2 years of school lockdowns due to Covid-19 presented a significant challenge. Managing student and staff mental health and wellbeing was critical in helping the school community re-adjust back into full time schooling. We experienced very high numbers of Covid positive cases in the community, which effected student attendance and had a direct impact on student learning and connectedness to school. The school also experienced a significant decrease in enrolments with international border closures and previously enrolled students yet to return to school. This put significant pressure financially on the school and directly affected staffing and the programs that were offered. In 2022, it is our intention to improve student outcomes in literacy and numeracy by developing teacher knowledge and understanding of learning trajectories, curriculum development and assessment practices, while developing knowledge and understanding of, and how to implement a school wide Response to Intervention to address academic and behavioural student needs. Equally important, is our intent to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for students and staff by providing a comprehensive framework of support and knowledge that caters for individual needs and contexts.

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)

In 2021, Meadows Primary School focused on the following priorities from DET's FISO model: Building Practice Excellence. Empowering Students and Building School Pride. Building Communities. In 2021, there was a strong focus of providing professional learning as needs based and within the context of what staff were trying to achieve with their students. We effectively used latest research regarding best practice to inform teaching strategies and to engage in ongoing professional development and discourse in all teams across the school. Teachers had agency in their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and were able to drive their own agenda based on student data. PLCs continue to be data informed and planning was collaborative. There was time to review the effectiveness of assessments to inform teaching practice. There continues to be a culture of professionalism where teachers are

empowered to reflect and improve practice. Teachers had flexibility and agency over student assessments, and the school moved away from having a '1 size fits all approach' to assessments to a model that supported the assessment and learning needs of different year levels and cohorts. Teachers introduced targeted and systematic phonics and phonemic awareness teaching and had the opportunity to trial assessments and provide feedback on their effectiveness. A whole school content scope and sequence was developed which supported cross curriculum learning. In 2021, we shifted our approach to reporting and placed far greater importance on Student Led Conferences where students had agency over the work they presented to their parents/carers. Students developed their own Ready to Learn plans and the Learning Goals based on gaps in their assessments and learning. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) leaders were elected by their peers and met with the school leadership team (students and staff) to promote SEL focus across the school. Covid hampered some student leadership meetings, however, despite lockdowns, we were extremely successful in empowering students and building school pride through; IFTAR and Harmony Day celebrations which were highly valued by staff and community. A dedicated group of students in years 3-6 led the 'Green Team' - a group of like minded students focusing on sustainability. This provided students with many leadership responsibilities and opportunities. Meadows Primary School plays a key role within the community and we believe involvement beyond the classroom and school setting is essential. We seek to maintain the feeling of connectedness and inclusion in the way all staff interact with students, staff, families and the broader community. Staff pride themselves on the way they engage families and work with them to ensure the success of their children, knowing that learning is a partnership between home and school. Prior to Covid-19 lockdowns, we had strong volunteer programs throughout the school. Parents were encouraged to attend excursions, school events and camps. We worked closely to meet the needs of community and gave experiences to parents prior to students (such as visits to museum, school camp etc) to alleviate concerns about their children attending.

Achievement

The Covid-19 pandemic has seen significant disruption to teaching and learning throughout 2021. Best efforts were made to continue to provide opportunities for students to engage in reading throughout remote learning periods. However, for many of our students, face-to-face learning at school is the best place for learning. Although we are proud of the remote learning program we provided for our students in 2021, it was in no way sufficient to adequately meet the learning and social and emotional needs of our students. As a school, we are confident, that had the disruption to learning not occurred due to Covid-19, and students had continuity in their learning, we would have reached all, and possibly exceeded, our NAPLAN targets. Teachers worked to engage with families of vulnerable, at risk, high needs students and communicate with those families more regularly to support their transition to remote learning. For families who choose not to engage with online learning, teachers continued to create paper based packs for these families to collect and continue learning from home. Some disengaged students did not complete tasks set by teachers or chose to complete some areas of the curriculum over others. During the 2021 school year, as well as our continued focus of explicit teaching instruction in reading, and sequential approach to synthetic phonics and phonemic awareness, there was a whole school agreement that oral language, explicit teaching of vocabulary and sentence structure would be the basis for the school's writing instruction. The teaching and learning cycle supported teachers to implement the school's Instructional Model, with differentiated tasks, suggested mentor texts and feedback on learning. Teacher judgment showed 48% of Foundation to Year 6 students were at or above their age expected standard for English and 46% for Mathematics. In NAPLAN Reading Year 3, 49% of students were in the top 3 bands and 29% in Reading Year 5. In NAPLAN Numeracy Year 3, 28% of students were in the top 3 bands and 21% in Year 5. Across all aspects of literacy learning gain in NAPLAN, year 5 students showed 6% high gain for reading, 29% for writing, 23% for spelling and 19% for Grammar and Punctuation. In numeracy, 57% of year 5 students showed medium gain in NAPLAN results. In 2021, the school engaged in the Primary Mathematics Science Specialist initiative with two teachers participating in the learning and helping to set the improvement agenda for mathematics. This work will continue in 2022 with a strong and targeted focus on improving student outcomes in mathematics, and developing teacher understanding of the mathematics curriculum. PSD funded students have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which are developed with parent/carers, teachers, leading teacher (wellbeing) and allied health practitioners (where applicable). Teachers and Education Support staff make reasonable adjustments to learning programs to cater for the diverse needs of students, both funded and non-funded.

Engagement

In 2021, there was a whole school approach for attendance and early intervention for students deemed 'at risk' of disengagement. We pride ourselves on understanding the attendance needs of the community to make long lasting and sustainable changes, and although we have seen positive improvement in student attendance in the past, Covid-19 has hampered many of our efforts and it has been difficult to re-engage students, in and out of lockdowns. Of note, the average number of student absence days in 2021 was 29 (days per student), a significant difference compared to similar schools who have an average of 18 (days per student). A focus for 2022 will be to address attendance issues with families and support them to re-engage with school. At the beginning of 2021, a newly appointed Leading Teacher tasked with developing our Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) frameworks. The MTSS framework is a way for all staff to better understand the needs of students through 3 tiers of supports. The school provides Student Support Group (SSG) meetings for students who are PSD funded and IEPs for students working 12mths above or below the expected level. Health and wellbeing supports for students continued to be at the forefront of teachers' interactions with students and families, and strong processes were in place to manage concerns. Families became more aware of the importance of providing the school with up to date information and, as a school we had to carefully consider our communication strategies, their appropriateness and success. As we came out of lockdown, we focused on re-connecting with our our community and re-engaging with face to face learning. Teachers followed a documented procedure when referring students to the Wellbeing and Engagement Team if they have concerns for a student's academic, social, emotional or physical wellbeing. These 'at risk' students are discussed at weekly meetings involving Assistant Principal, Leading Teacher (Wellbeing) and School Councilor. The Wellbeing team establishes if internal or external supports are required and consult with SSSOs where required. The school engaged in the Chaplaincy program and was able to employ a school Chaplain onsite 3 days a week to provide pastoral care to targeted students and build on confidence and leadership skills. Meadows Primary has reviewed and refined student Individual Education Plans to create a parent and student friendly document that clearly defines the students' individual strengths, SMART goals, strategies and resources required to achieve the goals. Teachers consult with Leading Teacher and allied health workers that support their students to create short- and long-term goals with students. Teachers developed their relationships with students through lunch time clubs such as; rugby, singing, knitting, basketball, football, soccer, chess and dancing. The culture of care and respect at Meadows Primary School is supported by the schools Cultural Compass and regular time allocated for teachers to meet in triads and gain insights from colleagues on best approaches to supporting students behaviour and learning needs. There was a focus on staff health and wellbeing with the Leading Teacher and Principal engaged in CARE training. The Leading Teacher furthered her training to become a CARE facilitator and will continue to work with staff in 2022 with the focus on self-care and building resilience in teachers so they can best support their students.

Wellbeing

Throughout 2021 periods of lockdown, Meadows Primary School led the community in helping them to better understand and 'make sense' of the information and seriousness of Covid-19. Working in a low socio-economic area, where English levels are low, was a challenge. Initially, supporting our community to understand and adhere to the Covid-19 safe guidelines was a challenge. As a school, we did what we could during this time to help educate and enforce the regulations we all had to abide by. Early on, this meant working with our MEAs and Arabic speaking staff to translate DET and Vic Gov information and creating dual language videos to help our community understand the information. We became a source of accurate and credible information sharing for our community and were very successful in doing so. This supported families and continued to build the trust in the community that we have worked so hard to develop over the last 5 years. Throughout the year, we saw more engagement in 'Zoom School' during lockdown with live online lessons and staff feeling better connected seeing parents and students face-to-face (albeit via Zoom). Staff found that this also relieved stress on parents with live lessons. As students returned in term four, we prioritised re-establishing relationships with our students and families as well as revisiting and reteaching routines around learning. Refining and communicating wellbeing processes became critical as we transitioned back to on-site learning in able to support teacher and student health and wellbeing. However, we were concerned that the learning and social gap amongst students has widened. Data gathered from student forums throughout the year indicated that students believed their teachers were effective because they were helpful, kind and approachable. Students believed

their teacher gave clear explanations and found out 'where you were at' through tests before teaching new learning. Students found teachers to be honest and fair and reacted appropriately when students do 'wrong things'. Students felt teachers have a positive attitude, they like the kids and like their job. Students believed their learning was stimulating because they participated in 'hands on' activities and are given choice over their work. They were able to pick their topic for writing and believe teachers 'make the learning just right – not too easy or too hard'.

Finance performance and position

With Covid-19 and the school locked down for the majority of the year, normal spending on budgeted items did not occur as students weren't at school. Some school funds were re-allocated to provide Covid Safe work pace. Due to these factors, the school recorded a surplus. Our school council approved funding for capital works such as additional air conditioning, outdoor play space/shade and relocation of basketball area to accommodate a new school build. Our Equity funding was used to provide additional resourcing in our Engagement and Wellbeing areas, as well as providing extra staffing resources to cater for the high numbers of EAL students. This also includes many students identified at risk who do not meet PSD funding requirements. This funding highly benefits our students social, emotional and academic needs.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<https://www.meadowsp.vic.edu.au/>**