

2022 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Weeden Heights Primary School (5157)



- 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 of the previous calendar year 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 2022 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

Weeden Heights Primary School in Vermont South is a dynamic, nurturing and vibrant learning community with a focussed commitment to providing exemplary programs in an engaging and safe environment. Students are empowered and supported to achieve personal excellence; to become successful lifelong learners; to be active and informed global citizens; and to develop self-esteem and confidence. We have high expectations of our students and our school core values are; Respect, Personal Excellence, Curiosity and Creativity and Collaboration.

Weeden Heights has an excellent reputation for providing high quality education with a strong focus on academic success particularly in English and Mathematics. These results are achieved through favourable student/teacher ratios and a committed approach to continuous improvement by developing personal learning approaches catering for the needs of the individual learner. Students with talents are challenged within and beyond the classroom and those requiring additional support are assisted through specialised learning programs. We celebrate our cultural diversity, foster a strong sense of community and believe strongly in engaging parents as partners in their child's education.

The school designs curriculum around the development of the 'whole child'. Student wellbeing (social, emotional, physical, behavioural and creative) is also developed through the school's approach to teaching social skills and our school values. We provide extension and enrichment programs to challenge students and enhance the talents of all students. Our specialised learning programs assist all students to become confident critical thinkers and learners. These engaging and challenging programs equip our students with essential life-long skills to be successful learners.

With class sizes of 20 in the junior school and average classes of 24 in the senior school, the current student population of 151 is well supported by professional and caring staff comprising of 9.8 equivalent full time teachers (with no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff), 3.0 full time equivalent education support staff along with a school funded Student Wellbeing Officer, Business Manager and a Principal.

Overseas students are welcome at Weeden Heights PS. Students are offered the opportunity to work in small cohesive classes with personal learning goals in a school with a caring, strong community that has established wellbeing programs. Social and academic growth is recognised and students are placed in appropriate classes. International students are supported with their English language learning while they undertake normal classes with local students.

Mobile and digital technologies are integrated throughout all classrooms with interactive whiteboards, net books and i-pads available to all students. The school has a dedicated STEAM classroom with specialist teacher, to further enhance the extensive science program and support our ongoing relationship with science programs conducted through Deakin and Monash Universities.

From the Foundation year through to Year Six, our students participate in specialist programs, which include; Language, Physical Education (including water safety and swimming program), STEAM, Visual Arts and Performing Arts. The school is very proud of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, which enhances the school's inquiry learning approach, focusing on environmental science, food technology and sustainability and promoting healthy choices and living. We also provide extension and enrichment programs for students by a staff member.

We offer a wide range of extra-curricular and co-curricular learning, which include lunchtime activities and competitions, musical and performing arts workshops, sporting events and a chess club. Our students take an active role in a variety of competitions and enrichment activities: including public speaking competitions, visual arts competitions and chess tournaments, Advanced Learners Gifted program, Premiers' Reading Challenge, and ICAS – University of New South Wales Competitions.

At Weeden Heights, we support and respect each student's cultural and ethnic background. We pride ourselves on our friendly and supportive school community and value and encourage engagement from parents. Our teachers and Principal are readily accessible and important events and achievements are communicated through our website, School Stream, phone app, newsletters, Facebook page and weekly assembly. We greatly value parental involvement, whether it is through working bees, contributing as a classroom helper, or by becoming a member of Parent & Friends Association or School Council.

The school has excellent facilities, extensive grounds and an expansive hall. We also offer an Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) program which is operated by School Council and taught by staff members.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

Weeden Heights Primary School is extremely proud of its achievements and excellent results in student learning. Measures in both English and Mathematics have been strong and continually exceed the state mean in the areas measured. The school has performed higher than similar schools in both NAPLAN and teacher judgements and significantly stronger than the state. In 2022, the school returned onsite and lessons were delivered with the consistent instructional models implemented by the school. Clear learning intentions were evident for every lesson, followed up with an explicit teaching group and individualised group work.

Teachers used explicit teaching groups to track and monitor the learning for each student particularly in the areas of reading and mathematics. The focus of the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) was to identify the achievement levels of each student and then cater a program to extend their learning further. This had a significant impact on the teacher's professional learning over the year and the staff completed significant work in unpacking the Victorian Curriculum and linking learning outcomes to the achievement continuums connected to the benchmarking tests, in particular Fountas and Pinnell reading outcomes. Teachers used this approach to identify learning deficits and direct their class focus and explicit teaching to cater for their students' learning needs. This process also assisted teachers to identify what skills the students had obtained and the next learning stage for them. Overall, students did extremely well with their achievement.

The student achievement results from 2022 has influenced the whole school structure for 2023. Ensuring that the class sizes were small and peers were reconnected in grades, has continued to be a priority. Leadership has also continued to analyse and unpack the student achievement results in order to direct future learning and identify students to participate in the Tutor Learning Initiative.

A range of diagnostic procedures and assessment tools were implemented to identify the individual learning needs of all students, improve learning performance and enhance the instructional program. Assessment was ongoing and implemented using formative and summative assessment either online or onsite when at school. We used Individual Education Plans as a tool to set learning improvement goals and these were revised regularly. We have a strong emphasis on curriculum planning, implement a whole-school assessment schedule and collect student learning data, which enables us to further track individual student progress and support any learning gaps developed during remote learning.

Weeden Heights made a positive difference to improving student performance and these results are indicative of high-quality teaching and learning across the whole school. In 2023, PLC's will continue to investigate data literacy to drive improvement and learning more specifically for each student.

Students have had greater 'voice and choice' in their learning and further engagement with ICT to improve student learning outcomes.

Wellbeing

Student wellbeing was a priority in 2022 as the school aimed to provide a hopeful and optimistic return to an unknown context for students. The challenge was to reengage with students and the school community to ensure it remained connected to Weeden

Heights PS and reengaged post lockdown. The school focussed on returning to events that involved the whole community however some of these were cancelled due to uncertainty and the communities lack of confidence to meet in large groups even when outside.

A student's wellbeing is an extremely important aspect of a student's time at school and is highly valued. It is a part of the development of the 'whole child' which is a priority for our school. Weeden Heights Primary School students feel extremely safe in a supportive environment that enhances their health, wellbeing and opportunities to learn. The school focussed on clear and positive communication to the community so that they are aware of achievements, celebrations, directions and information.

The student survey results have continued to be outstanding particularly in comparison to the state and like schools. This is not surprising for the school as students show how they enjoy their school, learning and community daily. The school continued to provide extra staff in the yard during breaks in term 1 which had a focus on re-establishing the connections and social skills between peers. Teachers included wellbeing and social skills sessions daily along with the weekly focus session. Mindfulness activities were a daily feature to encourage reconnection while school captains ran lunchtime activities along with the buddy captains. Strengthening social skills and social play was featured heavily in the first semester.

Our outstanding whole school Bright Beginnings transition program ensures comprehensive transitioning opportunities for all students as they move from one level to the next. The transition program establishes high learning expectations and accountable behaviours for all students through positive reinforcement and agreed reward systems. Students feel connected to their learning community through school structures and clear class learning agreements used to optimise learning for all. Our environment is safe and inclusive where bullying is not tolerated and where everyone is treated with respect. Restorative practices are also implemented across the whole school and form part of everyday conversations.

The Bright Beginnings Prep Transition Program returned with pre-schoolers enthusiastically completed onsite sessions and being introduced to their school around capital works that began in term 4. In 2023 the prep class will focus on developing social skills, establishing clear expectations for learning. Developing social language and fine and gross motor skills will be a priority as these are skills that were not fully developed due to not having the opportunity to participate in play-based learning at preschool.

The school values of: Respect, Personal Excellence, Curiosity and Creativity and Collaboration underpin the whole school social, emotional and wellbeing program. The Bounce Back Program was further implemented and was enhanced by the Respectful Relationships curriculum, understandings and values. The social curriculum was further aligned with the Respectful Relationships Framework through extensive work completed by the staff over the year. Our focus on mindfulness tools and exercises became increasingly important and staff implemented them in daily class meetings to support students.

The school's locally employed Wellbeing Officer worked within classrooms and conducted specific skill based social groups based on referrals from teachers and parents. Having the extra support to manage students was invaluable. The officer continued to make direct contact with vulnerable families and the school maintained support for families through the Caring Casserole program and referral to services. Unfortunately, the Wellbeing Officer left at the end of term three and work began to employ a new officer. Teachers and staff stepped up in term four to provide the extra support for the school community.

Weeden Heights PS is an accredited E-Smart school so cyber safety is covered comprehensively and linked to the learning agreements signed by all students and their parents. This became even more important for the students as they continued to work from the Google Classroom and with the introduction of student owned Chromebooks in 2023 for years 4 – 6.

Students have many opportunities to participate in buddy activities, both formally and informally across the school. Our Year 5 and Foundation year students participate in the 'Better Buddies Program', established by the Alannah and Madeline Foundation. The buddy program helps students to feel valued and supported, teaches important social skills while creating a caring ethos within our school.

Weeden Heights PS has a very welcoming and connected community and this was a significant factor in our success during 2022. Our relationships with the community were strengthened and the home – school learning partnership continued. The school implemented termly student support group meetings, parent teacher interviews, student led conferences and teachers were able to write comprehensive end of year reports for all students. In 2022 the school offered a hybrid approach to engage with parents;

offering video conferencing and face to face opportunities. With an extensive reporting system, parents have found the feedback on their child's learning invaluable and have a clear direction for future learnings.

Engagement

Weeden Heights PS is always committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment where students can reach their full potential. Students when happy and healthy, support a positive school culture that engages and supports their learning.

Teachers maintained daily attendance records and this was challenging in 2022 with absences post covid and remote learning. Students were excited to return to school and it provided greater stability for learning. Managing staff and student isolation periods was significant as classes would have students missing everyday which impacts on learning continuity. Staff maintained clear expectations on returning to the school year and daily instruction was delivered through the school's P – 6 instructional models.

Management procedures were incorporated into lessons to support students experiencing anxiety or found completing tasks difficult. This had a positive impact on student engagement. Weeden Heights PS has an extensive specialist program (Language, Physical Education, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and STEAM) and extra programs offered such as Extension and Enrichment, the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, public speaking, and school leadership program. These opportunities are hands on subjects and engaging and gave the students consistent experiences that were not available during remote learning.

With a consistent whole school approach to teaching Inquiry Learning, students continued to develop their higher order thinking skills. Investigations were designed to increase opportunities for students to develop 'voice and choice' and this was also enhanced through the writing of personal learning goals and an increased use of assessment tools involving self and peer evaluations.

The school culture is influenced by a common purpose through acknowledging and pursuing high personal performances whilst embedding a social framework to support learning programs. Individual Education plans (IEP) were developed to support the next stage of learning for each student across the school and students with disabilities or requiring extra support were provided with student support group meetings. Teaching towards a student's next stage of learning is prioritised and a feature in IEP's and classroom programs. Teachers designed explicit tasks to cater for each student's specific learning needs based (on extension or enrichment) in line with a detailed assessment schedule.

At Weeden Heights PS we have very good attendance data and student absences have been maintained and improved slightly which has been surprising considering the return to fulltime school. The school had considerably less absences than similar schools and the state. We continue to work towards communicating the message that "Everyday Counts".

Other highlights from the school year

For the very first time, our school conducted a Years 3 – 6 school camp which was positive as after remote learning and camp cancellations, there were three year levels of 'first time' campers. This event strengthened connections and provided support for anxious students as many were still able to connect to siblings through common meal times. The students were elated to be given the opportunity to be outside and participating in challenging new activities.

There was a return to the swimming program by some families as well. Volunteers began to slowly return to the classroom programs which was positive and we are thankful for our parents who helped in the library, in classrooms and at working bees.

A \$5.833 million Capital Works project that commenced in term four after a year of developing plans which is exciting. Grades were relocated to new learning spaces for the upgrade to commence along with the relocation of the main office to the library. Rooms 1 to 4 and a set of toilets will be operational in term 1 2023 and students will return to their learning spaces. The remainder of the scope of works will be completed by September 2023.

Financial performance

Weeden Heights Primary School continues to operate in a sound and secure financial environment operating under a balanced local cash budget approved and overseen by School Council.

Supplementing funding under the Department of Education's Student Resource Package, Weeden Heights was well supported by:

- o voluntary curriculum contributions
- o donations
- o fundraising activities
- o a school owned and operated Outside School Hours Program
- o funding under the Australian Government's Sporting Schools initiative
- o external hirers of school facilities and
- o as a successful applicant on 2 occasions, funding under the Schools Shade Sail Grants program.

Funding as part of the Victorian Schools Building Authority's capital facilities upgrade works program was also received and is held in the school's bank accounts pending staged completion of works.

Effective financial management and processes sees the school with a healthy surplus carried forward into the new year which has been strategically targeted to facilitate ongoing Strategic Plan and 2023 AIP goals, continuity of curriculum and extra-curricular programs, continued improvement in student learning resources and opportunities, and to complement and finalise the major facilities upgrade currently underway and scheduled for completion in late 2023.

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