

2021 Annual Report to The School Community



School Name: Northern School For Autism (5219)



- 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.

Attested on 24 March 2022 at 12:27 PM by Pamela Mathieson (Principal)

- All teachers employed or engaged by the school council meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching.
- To the extent that the school council is responsible, 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.
- To the extent that the school council is responsible, 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.

To be attested by 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, an outline of the school's performance over the year and future directions.

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

The 'Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)' section includes the improvement initiatives the school has selected and the progress they have made towards achieving them through the implementation of their School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan.

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

The Performance Summary includes the following:

School Profile

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

Achievement

- English and Mathematics for Teacher Judgements against the curriculum

Engagement

Student attendance and engagement at school, including:

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

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

Considering COVID-19 when interpreting the Performance Summary

The Victorian community's experience of COVID-19, including remote and flexible learning, had a significant impact on normal school operations in 2020 and 2021. This impacted the conduct of assessments and surveys. Readers should be aware of this when interpreting the Performance Summary.

For example, in 2020 and 2021 school-based surveys ran under changed circumstances. Absence data may have been influenced by local processes and procedures adopted in response to remote and flexible learning.

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

How to read the Annual Report (continued)

What does 'NDP' or 'NDA' mean?

'NDP' refers to no data being published for privacy reasons or where there are insufficient underlying data. For example, very low numbers of participants or characteristics that may lead to identification will result in an 'NDP' label.

'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').

About Our School

School context

Northern School for Autism was established in 2006. The school has two campuses. One is located in the suburb of Reservoir 13 kilometres north of the central business district of Melbourne. This campus caters for Early and Middle Years' students. The other campus is in the suburb of Lalor a further five kilometres north and caters for students in the Later Years. The school also co-ordinates a satellite program in three classrooms at Norris Bank Primary School. The school provides for the educational needs of students with autism ranging in age between five and 18 years.

The Reservoir Campus is a purpose-built facility. All 25 classrooms have access to an outdoor courtyard. In addition to the classrooms there are play therapy, music, visual arts and multi-purpose rooms. There are also three gymnasiums, a student kitchen and a library. The grounds contain secure modern, age appropriate playgrounds with discrete secure play areas including bike riding tracks.

At the Lalor Campus there is a multi-purpose room, a student recreational/library room, kitchens and a canteen. Current technologies are available in all classrooms. Outdoor facilities at the Lalor Campus include a secure, age appropriate, outdoor recreation area with shaded seating, a rope climbing course, fitness equipment, a large oval, a bike track and a student garden,

Enrolments at the time of the review were approximately 423 students. Over the past four years, enrolments increased by 158 students. The Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index was 0.3713 in 2019–20.

The staffing profile of the Northern School for Autism includes a principal, two assistant principals and 70.6 equivalent full time (EFT) teaching staff. In addition, there are 94.1 EFT Education Support (ES) staff comprised of 68.5 EFT classroom aides, 9.6 EFT speech pathologists, 8.2 EFT occupational therapists and 7.8 EFT administrative staff. Reservoir is an Early and Middle Years campus and Lalor a Later Years campus. The curriculum is based on the Victorian Curriculum and centres on developing the interpersonal, communication and executive functioning skills of students. All students have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP). These are designed to accommodate the learning and interest needs of students. Specialist teachers provide Science, Art and Music programs.

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)

The school has clear goals and targets that support agreed FISO priorities. Throughout 2021, the Leadership Team develop professional learning aligned with our FISO improvement strategies based on Curriculum planning and assessment and building leadership capacity across the school. Through the PDP process, all staff have a shared focus for improvement in student outcomes. During professional development sessions and sub school meetings staff capacity and skills have expanded, providing effective, ongoing professional learning to enhance staff/student relationships. We have been successful in using the school's three learning specialists to model best practice and our leading teachers to coach & facilitate teacher learning across the school.

During 2021 the teaching and learning programs were disrupted due to lockdowns, however the teaching teams provided online learning and a physical work pack for all students who were not attending school due to the pandemic.

Achievement

Northern School For Autism provides a comprehensive F-10, ASDAN and VCAL curriculum with breadth and depth to address the learning needs of students aged between five and eighteen years of age. Our personalised learning support programming ensures that individual student needs are met in negotiation with parents/carers. In 2021 extensive

partnerships between the school, educational and vocational providers and community agencies continued throughout the year, including through the learning from home period, enhancing program provision, educational outcomes, and post school placements for our students. During the learning from home period teaching and learning pivoted to a remote and flexible learning and students were accommodated to meet educational outcomes via methods that could be successfully delivered at home, this included provision of virtual lessons through Google Classrooms, Hard Copy Learning Packs

Literacy plays a significant role for our students' development at Northern School for Autism. We embed it in our daily teaching programs as part of the curriculum. The school ensures that each teacher has the necessary skills to plan, develop, differentiate and implement an effective Literacy curriculum to cater for the diverse needs of our learners. Literacy programs focus on the individual needs of each student, taking into consideration their understanding, interests, strengths and experiences. The students develop their Literacy skills in the areas of Reading and Viewing, Speaking and Listening and Writing, during structured sessions, in a functional and meaningful way that they use in everyday life. In Early Years the Literacy focus is based on core-vocabulary teaching concepts of 'Food', 'Play items', 'Clothing', 'Verbs', 'Common objects' and 'Body parts'. Students learn these concepts through activities such as structured literacy sessions, work sessions and sensory stories. Writing and fine motor skills are developed through appropriate activities based on their level and ability.

The focus of Literacy will be to implement the Early Literacy Skill Builder (ELSB) program, which uses direct instruction to teach early literacy skills. We continue to consolidate sight word recognition through a 'Whole Word' approach. Experience books about familiar events happening at school such as cooking, playing and excursions, promoting engagement of the students using motivators and individual interests. Research based teaching approaches 'Sound and Write' and 'Hartley Knows I Can Write' have been implemented for students with reading and writing difficulties to increase their literacy skills and confidence. In each of these areas, NSA builds teacher knowledge and capacity so that are consistent expectations of the students across the school. Our school continues to develop implementation plans and investigate best teaching practice, particularly in reading, writing, problem solving and prompting student independence.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at Northern School for Autism aims to develop students' digital technology skills so they can participate in and contribute to the modern digital world, to inform their learning, to enhance engagement in programs and to integrate ICT across the curriculum for all students. Students at NSA utilise the recently built STEAM building as well as having access to contemporary technology within the classrooms. Policies are in place to ensure safe internet access and that students' online activities are monitored. Professional development for teachers in ICT to build their capacity, skills and knowledge is provided through mentoring, modelling and specific learning opportunities.

The STEAM building, located at the Reservoir Campus, is fully utilised across the school day by students from Reservoir, Norris Bank Satellite rooms and students from the Lalor campus. Equipment includes laptops that the students use for coding and research tasks and robots of varying types. These include Beebots that students control through programming by pushing buttons, Ozobots that are programmed by creating coloured pathways and Dash robots that are manipulated via using apps on an iPad, with the students progressing from basic commands through to creating blocks of code for the robots to perform tasks. The VR room (Virtual Reality) is enjoyed by the students as they become immersed in learning about the world when surrounded by moving images. Lego tasks of all kinds encourage creative play as students are given the opportunity to develop their planning and organizational skills. Students have been learning how to use the 3D printer to create small objects. Robotics coding classes held on a weekly basis at both the Reservoir and Lalor campuses have provided students with the opportunity to interact with external tutors as well as learn the basics of block coding.

At the Lalor campus the Leadership team have strived to provide programs and experiences that engage students to ensure they are ready to transition to post school life. Our planning has looked at different and diverse ways of improving student achievement by creating a rigorous, relevant, and engaging curriculum. For students in the Junior Secondary years (years 7 -9) the focus has been on building on their knowledge, skills and learning and providing opportunities which promote communication, independence and also team work while promoting resilience and confidence. Students across this stage of schooling engage a three-year cycle Integrated Unit curriculum plan. The units covered include 'Understanding me and my community', 'Creative Cuisines',

'Entrepreneurs', 'Olympics', to name a few. The units are theme based and encompass content and skills from all areas of the Victorian Curriculum; English, Maths, Science, The Arts, Humanities (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship), Health and Physical Education, and Digital Technology.

For students in the Senior Secondary years (years 10-12) the focus has been about gradually changing the students' mindset towards thinking about their futures and exposing them to as many different activities and environments as possible to allow them to make suitable choices. Students have followed this pathway through the ASDAN program or VCAL. The curriculum for both include completing modules or units across areas of Literacy and Numeracy, Work-Related/ Industry Specific skills, Personal and Interpersonal skills, Community Access and Independent Living skills. Some of the ASDAN modules include 'Developing Communication Skills', 'Meal Preparation', 'Using computer technology', 'Horticulture' and so on. The ASDAN modules are also taught as part of a three-year cycle plan. The VCAL students have worked on projects such as 'Aprons & Hats' and 'Totem Poles', in addition to running and managing the Canteen.

Work-related learning is a strategy we use at the Lalor campus that provides students with real-life experiences where they can apply academic and technical skills to develop their employability or work-based skills. Students participate in a variety of in-school work-related programs which focus on areas of retail, gardening/maintenance, office skills, sorting & delivery, and volunteer work. Local community organisations, such as Enable, Edendale Farm, Bundoora Farm and Whittlesea Council have also provided a supportive learning environment for our students to engage in tailored, meaningful work based activities and tasks. These opportunities provide students with valuable experiences and a means to build confidence.

Engagement

In 2021, the school continues to strengthen relationships with the school s to improve student and staff wellbeing and improve parent connections with the school and with external support agencies. During the remote learning period the school offered specialised wellbeing SSGs for vulnerable families whose children attended the on site program or who struggled to support their children with learning from home. These extra SSG meetings strengthened the partnerships with families and thereby improved student engagement. The school's web-based platform was fully utilised during the remote learning period with relevant

Many events planned had to be postponed including parent information sessions, however towards the end of the year the restrictions eased and the Reservoir Concert, the graduation ceremonies were held and the the families attended. We are looking forward to having the face to face connection with our parents as we celebrate the achievements and successes, and work together to share information, knowledge and skills in 2022.

Student engagement in learning is critical if students are to attain deep and sustained learning. Northern School For Autism strives to provide an educational environment, which is engaging, stimulating, safe and challenging where students are acknowledged and celebrated. In 2021, the school continued to explore diverse contexts for learning based on student strengths and interests.

School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) provides the framework for the staff to engage and connect with students in the school.

The school continues to have a strong focus on increasing the engagement and involvement of our parent community.

There has been a high level of engagement of parents and carers in the Student Support Group (SSG) meetings. These SSGs continue to play an essential role in the school for both teachers and parents in the learning partnership between the school and the home. The school will continue to promote the importance of these meetings to the school community and set high expectations for student learning. Parent endorsement for these expectations.

The leadership team and the classroom teaching teams are committed to ensure all students are attending school

regularly. Teaching teams will communicate with families if students are finding the transition to school difficult. Generally teachers will send home behaviour scripts or social stories to encourage students to attend school - students who find the transition difficult will often be given a reinforcer when they arrive at school. Most of time this is successful.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing of our students, staff and family continued to be a major priority for 2021. Breakfast Club was continued. After school care and the holiday program continued to be supported by Northern School For Autism. School Uniforms have continued to be encouraged and State School Relief continued to provide uniforms to students. The Allied Health Team has continued to expand and develop professionally with a further move in the area of the importance of using a variety of AAC's, self regulation strategies and professional learning of classroom staff. The leadership team work together to support students and families with complex behavioural issues. A holistic approach was taken to better support these students. Students with complex needs were assigned one key staff member responsible for all communication with relevant professionals and the collection of all communication and reports. Round-table discussions allowed for regional level of supports and other professionals becoming involved in supporting better the specific educational needs of the student.

In 2021 our focus remained on our child safe culture and whole school approach to supporting the health, wellbeing, inclusion and engagement of all students. Covid 19 had a significant impact on the teaching, learning and wellbeing of the students and staff and many community programs were unable to occur. The school provided significant expertise and resourcing, a multi-disciplinary team approach to support all students to remain engaged with their learning to an optimal level during the remote and flexible learning periods, At the peak of the lockdown NSA had over 100 students attending school. Many of these students were attending to provide respite for families.

The school council will continue to review the Child Safe Standard Policy so that school practices comply with all DET and DHHS Child Safe requirements.

The school continued the whole school focus on School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS). Staff members continue to implement structured teaching and the school rules.

Finance performance and position

The Annual result

The annual result was a surplus of \$802,204.63 as per the Financial Commitment Summary for the year ending on 31/12/2021 and it resulted in a surplus due to Covid Pandemic. A lot of planned expenditure was suspended during the lockdown.

Extraordinary revenue or expenditure items

-CRT expenditure for the year was \$1,291,384.00 for replacing the staff and the service provider were Tradewind and Anzuk.

- Robotics course for both Campuses of \$68,493.5 for 2021

-Dell 95 Notebooks of \$122,551.00

-VR Room New Projector at RC \$144,565.00

Sources of funding the school received; for example, equity funding, special grants or fundraising initiatives

-The special grant of \$29,000.00 for Relocatable buildings Furniture & Equipment Grant.

-The Bank Interest received in the Hi-Yield account amounted \$2,135.07 for the Year ending 2021.

-The reimbursements were received of \$1,354.50 which included the Hep A and Hep B vaccinations from DET.

-The amount of \$9,800.00 has been received for the Advance Program at LC.

-The amount of \$45,000.00 Grant for Rolling Facilities evaluation specialist assessment. Priority 1 & 2 defects.

Additional State or Commonwealth Government funding the school received beyond the SRP, the purpose of the funding and its link to improvements in teaching and learning

-The school received Commonwealth Government Grants for \$16,800.00 which includes Teacher Supervision Payments for \$ 6,050.00 and sporting school grants for \$ 10,750.00

Details of any Contracts, agreements or arrangements entered into by the School Council

NSA is paying Equigroup every Quarter \$739.30 for LC & \$947.04 for RC New Leased Konica Photocopier.

Performance Summary

The Performance Summary for government schools provides an overview of how this school is contributing to the objectives of the Education State and how it compares to other Victorian government schools.

All schools work in partnership with their school community to improve outcomes for children and young people. Sharing this information with parents and the wider school community helps to support community engagement in student learning, a key priority of the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes.

Refer to the 'How to read the Annual Report' section for help on how to interpret this report.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Enrolment Profile

A total of 420 students were enrolled at this school in 2021, 86 female and 334 male.

21 percent of students had English as an additional language and 2 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).

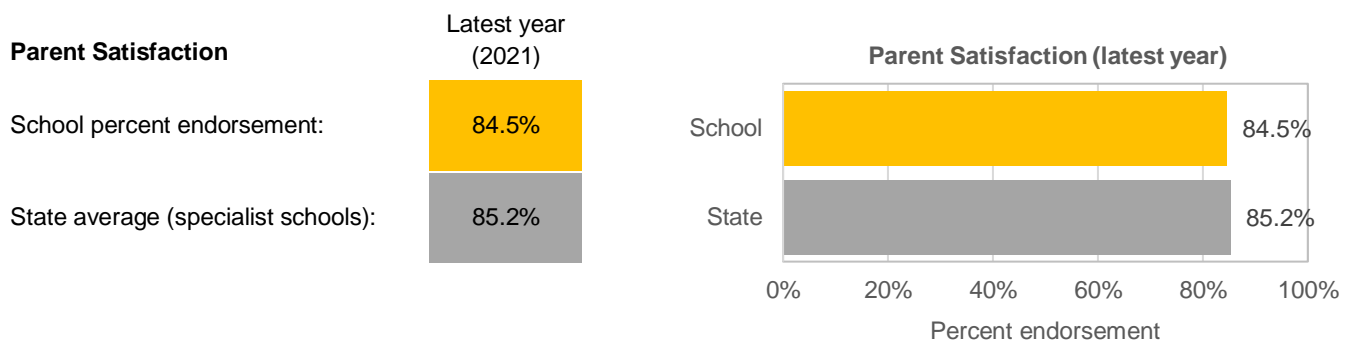
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage,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

This school's SFOE band value is: Low - Medium

Parent Satisfaction Summary

The percent endorsement by parents on their school satisfaction level, as reported in the annual Parent Opinion Survey.

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

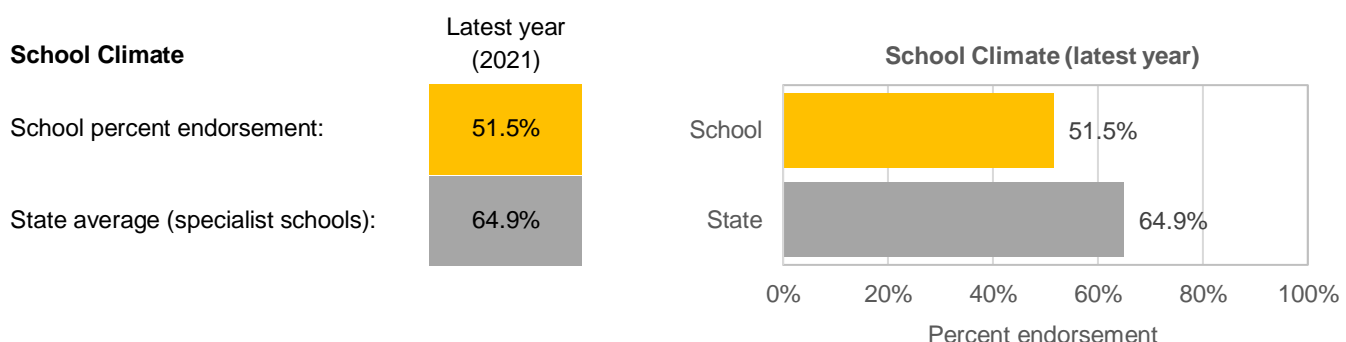


School Staff Survey

The percent endorsement by staff on School Climate, as reported in the annual School Staff Survey.

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

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



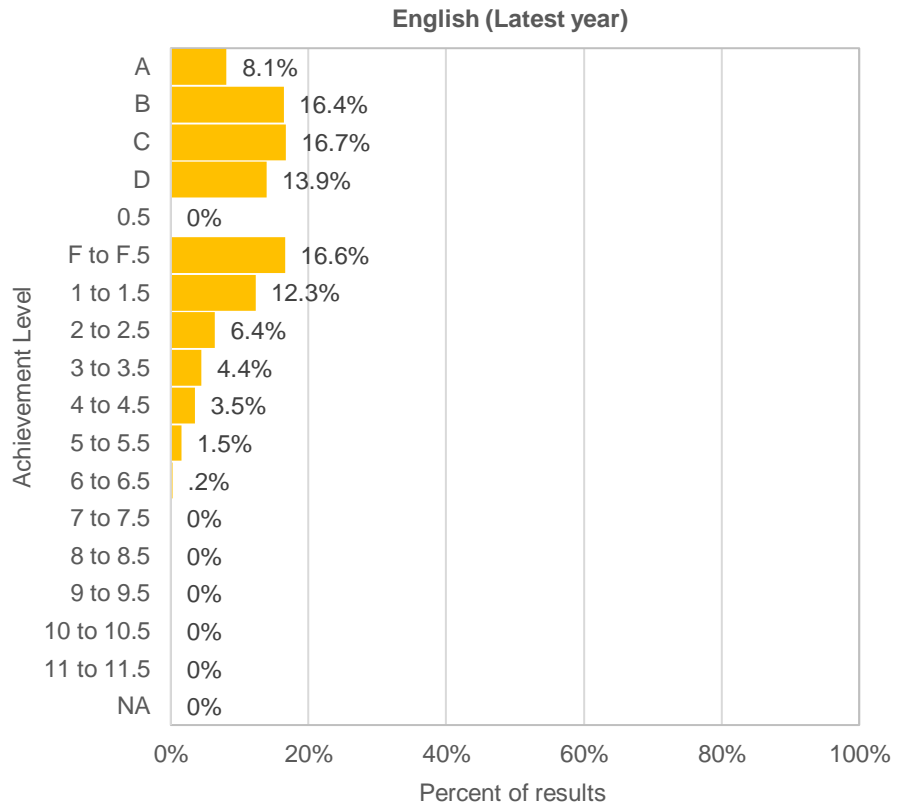
ACHIEVEMENT

Teacher Judgement of student achievement

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

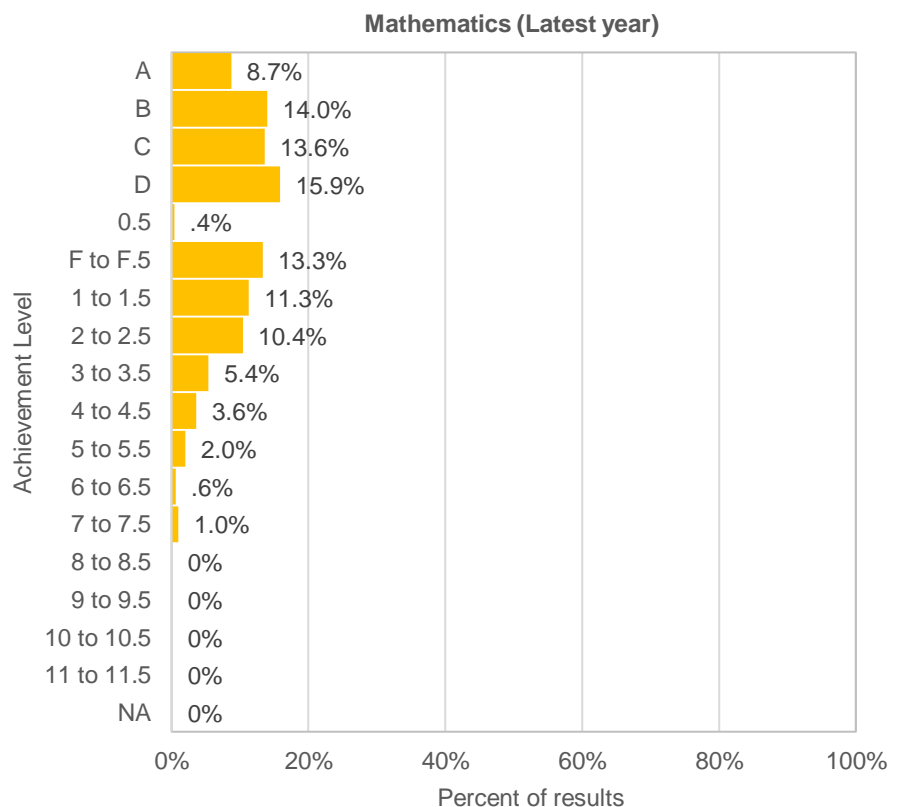
English

Achievement Level	Latest year (2021)
A	8.1%
B	16.4%
C	16.7%
D	13.9%
0.5	NDA
F to F.5	16.6%
1 to 1.5	12.3%
2 to 2.5	6.4%
3 to 3.5	4.4%
4 to 4.5	3.5%
5 to 5.5	1.5%
6 to 6.5	0.2%
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 (2021)
A	8.7%
B	14.0%
C	13.6%
D	15.9%
0.5	0.4%
F to F.5	13.3%
1 to 1.5	11.3%
2 to 2.5	10.4%
3 to 3.5	5.4%
4 to 4.5	3.6%
5 to 5.5	2.0%
6 to 6.5	0.6%
7 to 7.5	1.0%
8 to 8.5	NDA
9 to 9.5	NDA
10 to 10.5	NDA
11 to 11.5	NDA
NA	NDA



ENGAGEMENT

Average Number of Student Absence Days

Absence from school can impact on students' learning. Common reasons for non-attendance include illness and extended family holidays. Absence data in 2020 and 2021 may have been influenced by COVID-19.

Student Absence	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year average
School average number of absence days:	25.5	24.1	19.1	20.1	21.9

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	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year average
School percent of students with positive destinations:	100.0%	NDP	97.4%	96.9%	97.6%

Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2021

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$17,698,745
Government Provided DET Grants	\$2,422,936
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$16,800
Government Grants State	\$0
Revenue Other	\$10,925
Locally Raised Funds	\$150,848
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$20,300,255

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$75,552
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Transition Funding	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$75,552

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$15,963,263
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$0
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$82,334
Communication Costs	\$19,742
Consumables	\$469,912
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$345,399
Professional Development	\$30,705
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$603,986
Property Services	\$417,669
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$121,107
Support Services	\$1,329,422
Trading & Fundraising	\$65,051
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$7,717
Travel & Subsistence	\$0
Utilities	\$88,341
Total Operating Expenditure	\$19,544,650
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$755,605
Asset Acquisitions	(\$131,149)

- (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 25 Feb 2022 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 2021

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$733,997
Official Account	\$68,208
Other Accounts	\$0
Total Funds Available	\$802,205

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$547,044
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$0
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	\$55,160
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$100,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$100,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$802,205

All funds received from the Department, or raised by the school, have been expended, or committed to subsequent years, to support the achievement of educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school, consistent with Department policies, School Council approvals and the intent/purposes for which funding was provided or raised.