School Self-Evaluation Report

Essex Heights Primary School
NEV Region

| School number: | 4907 |
| Principal:     | Andrew Crossett |
| School Council President: | Trevor Sharrock |
| Dates of School Strategic Plan being evaluated | 2011-2014 |
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1. Context

Essex Heights Primary School is situated in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne within the municipal boundaries of the City of Monash. The school reflects a diverse student population, which is enriched culturally and linguistically and caters for a significant number of students funded under the PSD program. Essex Heights’ community supports and encourages individuality and independent learning within supportive and secure classroom environments. It encourages high expectations and promotes innovative and contemporary curriculum that facilitates lifelong learning. As a school, we are committed to meeting the needs of all students by catering for their large range of interests and capabilities with a differentiated approach. The ‘Essex Heights Values’ of *Friendliness, Honesty, Inclusiveness, Persistence and Respect* were agreed by the community at the beginning of this Strategic period and form the foundation for all of our interactions.

Throughout the Strategic Plan 2011-2014, Essex Heights underwent a major facilities upgrade funded through the ‘Building Futures’ and ‘Building the Education Revolution’ programs. The State Government funded $7.2M to demolish our old 1960’s LTC buildings and rebuild 21st Century learning spaces. This work was undertaken in two stages, throughout 2011 & 2012, necessitating the establishment of portable classrooms on the oval as a temporary school. Whilst this was a disruptive time for the students and staff, the outcome has been enthusiastically embraced by the entire community and we have been operating in the new school since the beginning of 2013. At the same time the Federal Government provided our Stadium through the BER program and this now operates as a Specialist Program hub and canteen. This total expenditure of just over $10M has transformed the facilities and physical environment of Essex Heights PS, setting our school up for many years into the future.

The completion of these works has seen the community interest in Essex Heights grow with a significant surge in enrolment interest. The result was that Prep enrolments rose from the average of 60-70 students in the years 2008-2012 to just over 100 in 2013. Consequently, a ceiling and enrolment zone now applies as we do not have the capacity to sustain those levels into the future. We now take 80 Prep enrolments and decline many more applications outside of our zone.

Since the completion of the building works, we have begun the development of our ‘Learnscapes’ program to enhance and develop the grounds as both a recreational and learning space. This will include sustainability...
initiatives, playgrounds, seating and passive areas, many of which will be completed as working bees and community projects.

Essex Heights is recognised as a dynamic learning community, committed to educational excellence, personal learning and agreed values. Our excellent classroom Music and extensive Instrumental Music Program, comprehensive Physical Education and engaging Visual Arts program support the individual interests and needs of students. Additionally, we reintroduced a Languages Program in 2014 with the establishment of Indonesian as a fourth, weekly Specialist program for all year levels.

Additional activities such as a Excursions and Camping Program, Swimming Program, After School Chess, Sustainability initiatives including Bike & Scooter riding incentives, Buddy and Playground Pals, Lunchtime and After School Dance, Kelly Sports, Maths Problem Solving are some of the extra-curricular offerings. We also run our own outstanding Before and After School Care & Holiday Program that is widely utilised and greatly appreciated by many families in our community.

Our Student Family Occupation (SFO) indicates a medium to high socio-economic demographic with close to fifty percent of children from Asian cultural backgrounds and this percentage is rising.

Positive community interaction is encouraged on many levels including active involvement through School Council and Committees, Parents and Friends Association (PFA), ‘Parents as Classroom Helpers’ program, Junior School Council and Social Service initiatives, Parent Classroom representatives with a myriad of other volunteer support in the Canteen, grounds and resource maintenance, sports coaching and excursion support.

*The children, staff and parents of Essex Heights PS have all identified the friendly atmosphere and community feel of our school as a significant strength and something that we all wish to develop and grow into the future. We are also proud of the outstanding opportunities provided by our community to students funded under the PSD Program.*
2. Methodology

Preparation for the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) commenced in Term 3, 2014, with both the staff and School Council provided with a briefing about the School Review, inclusive of the Self-Evaluation process. In the briefing we outlined our ‘Essex Heights Expectations’ and ‘Inquiry Questions’ that would provide a basis for our community discussions and reflections.

Additionally, information was shared with the broader community through newsletter articles, Konnective posts and SMS reminders.

**Essex Heights PS Expectations**

“All students will make progress and achieve at least a year’s growth in student outcomes each year. All students will feel happy and safe at school, and be engaged in their learning.”

**Inquiry Questions**

*If there are students who have not achieved a year’s growth, do we know who they are and why?*

*How do we know if students are happy, feel safe and are engaged in their learning?*

We also revisited our ‘Essex Heights Staff Values’ to further inform our reflections and discussions.

**‘Staff Values’**

- We place the child at the centre of everything we do
- We conduct ourselves in a professional manner at all times; with children, colleagues and parents
- We work together – recognising our collective responsibility for all the children

A pupil free day was put aside to begin the discussion with staff. During the day, staff worked in small groups that were structured to represent all Levels and included Teaching and Education Support staff. These groups considered the questions:

- **What do we do well at Essex Heights PS? – Keep doing**
- **What are the opportunities for improvement? – Start doing**

The group contributions were placed in the framework of the Effective Schools Model as a way of organising our responses.

The groups continued their discussion with a focus on the Strategic Plan Targets and related data sets for 2011-2014 including:

- Teacher judgements of AusVELS achievement
- NAPLAN raw scores
- NAPLAN Relative Growth charts

Groups responded with observations about the data, reflecting on our Strategic Plan Targets, achievement levels and articulating the story of the data.
During the day all staff were encouraged to post thoughts on Reflection Posters with responses to our second Inquiry Question: *How do we know if students are happy, feel safe and are engaged in their learning?*

We conducted two Parent Forums (one evening and one morning) and invited all interested parents to join us and contribute to the Self-Evaluation process. It was very pleasing to have almost 40 parents participate in the Forums. This gave us an opportunity to share with them the Self-Evaluation, Review and Strategic Planning process in greater detail. We engaged in small group discussions facilitated by members of the Leadership Team and asked the parents for their responses to the following focus questions:

*Why did you choose to send your child/children to Essex Heights PS?*

*When telling other parents about Essex Heights, what do you say?*

*and*

*What are our opportunities for improvement – What should we develop further or start doing? How do we want Essex Heights to look in 4-6 years time?*

We also took the opportunity to share with the parents the Strategic Plan Targets and data sets that are utilised in this SSE process.

During the same week all teachers engaged the children in class discussions at their ‘age appropriate level’ around two questions:

*What do you like/value about Essex Heights PS?*

*What are our opportunities for improvement?*

At a subsequent Staff Meeting we tabled the responses from the Parent Forums and from the Class Discussions. This enabled us as a Staff to consider their contributions and look for common threads between Staff, Parents and Children.

The next stage was the collation of input from these discussions, the review of evidence and achievement milestones from strategic actions, and the writing of the School Self-Evaluation Report. This was undertaken by Principal, Andrew Crossett and Assistant Principals Ina Kuehlich and Joan Scott.

Finally, the SSE was tabled at a Staff Meeting for discussion and comment, then presented to the October School Council Meeting for ratification prior to the Review Day.
3. Evaluation of practice

What do we teach?
Through the last Strategic period, we made the transition from VELS to AusVELS as our core curriculum. This required us to audit and evaluate our curriculum planners and documentation, making adjustments and additions as necessary. As a tool to support this process, and in order to standardize our planning documentation across the school, we invested in the online Curriculum Organiser package. This was launched for the staff with Professional Learning sessions to outline the structure of the program. We then set up an implementation team and identified lead users at each Level. They worked on updating the curriculum documentation and ensuring this was standardised across all Levels, as well as leading and supporting their team in utilising the new software. We now have a whole school Scope & Sequence in place based on the AusVELS Curriculum that covers all disciplines.

During this last year (2014), our Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) curriculum focus has been on developing our Essex Heights PS Writing Program. This has involved Professional Learning (PL) sessions for teachers, investigating best practice in other schools, building a school-wide common language for students, developing a Writing Scope and Sequence and agreed writing pedagogy.

*Future Opportunity* – to enhance our school-wide Reading and Speaking & Listening programs following the same process utilised for developing our Writing Program (which will continue as a focus for 2015).

*Future Opportunity* – enhance our Arts Program, exploring options that expand Visual Arts and explore developing Performing Arts, to develop creativity in the students.

How do we teach?
A safe and supportive learning environment forms the foundation for the provision of an engaging and positive culture of learning.

Each year we begin with a school-wide program Starting Up/Starting Out for the first two weeks of the year. This links strongly with our Essex Heights Values and establishes the class environment, agreed behaviours & expectations and focus on learning for the students.

Planning is undertaken each Term on an allocated Planning Day that releases Level Teams to work on evaluating recently completed Units of Study, and planning the upcoming Units. This is now supported by the use of Curriculum Organiser as the common planning tool and structure.

Work has begun on the E5 Instructional Model to form the basis for our classroom practice, and we have a strong focus on differentiation for all students. Our data indicates that we have a significant cohort of high achieving students and we have focussed on meeting the needs of these students across the curriculum through differentiating the classroom and specialist programs and approaches. Additionally, our commitment to effectively supporting the students funded under the PSD Program sees each child working on their Individual Learning Plan with agreed goals and targets relating to their personal development, academic and social progress.

Throughout the last Strategic period we have also enhanced and developed our use of ICT through the provision of flat screen TVs in all learning spaces, along with increased access to notebook computers and iPads for all classes.

On the completion of our new Learning Spaces in 2012, we also invested time in reflecting on our pedagogy as it relates to the changed Learning Spaces. This has continued to be a focus for our teaching and will be so into the future as we seek to maximise the opportunities proved by these flexible areas.

*Future Opportunity* – a renewed focus on pedagogy and developing an agreed Teaching and Learning Framework that establishes common language and understanding of quality teaching across the school.

*Future Opportunity* – continuing to explore and develop the opportunities provided by ICT, the flexible Learning Spaces and outdoor learning areas (Learnscapes).
How do we know our students are learning?

We have an agreed Assessment Schedule (recently reviewed and revised) that outlines the assessment process at each Grade Level in each Term. This enables teachers and Level Teams to monitor student progress to both inform parents and to guide planning and teaching. We have invested in the Student Performance Analyser (SPA) as a database to both monitor and track student achievement and progress across the school. This has been a welcome addition to our student tracking and has enhanced our ability to monitor individual students and cohort trends and support teachers’ moderation in Literacy and Numeracy. We have undertaken several PL sessions with staff utilising the skills of our own Lead Users as well as the software designer, Phillip Holmes-Smith.

We have a strong Intervention Program that supports identified students in both Literacy and Social Skills. These students are initially identified by class teachers, and then assessed by the Student Management Team who work with the Intervention Teachers to establish ‘one to one’ or ‘small group’ programs to support their learning. It is interesting to note that we are experiencing an increase in students from an EAL background and this is stretching our capacity to meet their needs, particularly in Literacy.

During the staff discussions in preparation for this SSE, we reflected on the Inquiry Question - If there are students who have not achieved a year’s growth, do we know who they are and why? Whilst we do have a range of achievement data available on individual students, it was felt that our ability to track student achievement, and more importantly growth over time could be enhanced. We have been investigating the recent upgrades to SPA as well as other student tracking software to build our capacity in this area.

**Future Opportunity – invest in enhanced or additional student tracking-data base software that will better enable us to monitor student learning over time.**

**Future Opportunity – build our skills and programs to more effectively support students from an EAL background in developing their Literacy skills.**

How do we provide feedback to our students and families on learning progress?

Feedback to students is provided by the class teachers both formally and informally. This is happening regularly and is part of the instructional program.

The formalised whole school reporting to parents is:

- Meet and Share Interview - February
- Information Evening – March
- Term Newsletters outlining curriculum program at each Level
- Written Report – June
- Parent/Teacher Discussion – July
- Written Report - December

**Future Opportunity – as part of an agreed Teaching and Learning Framework, building and developing teacher’s skills in providing timely and accurate feedback to students.**

**Future Opportunity – investigating new software options for Student Reports that will give parents an enhanced picture of student achievement and growth.**

**Future Opportunity – exploring opportunities for improved communication with parents about student progress, between the two formal written reports.**
4. Evaluation of performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>What did we set out to achieve?</th>
<th>What did we achieve?</th>
<th>What factors supported or inhibited our success?</th>
<th>Where might we focus future effort?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Achievement refers to both the absolute levels of learning attainment and growth in student learning that schools strive to support. While recognising that literacy and numeracy are essential foundations for students’ success, achievement outcomes encompass a broader view of learning, spanning the full range of curriculum domains, as well as students’ co-curricular achievements. | (Goal) To improve English and Mathematics outcomes for every student across the school. 50% of students from Prep to year 6 to achieve A and B scores in English and Mathematics by 2014 | • In 2011-2013, 50% of students from Prep to year 6 to achieved A and B scores in Reading. However, in 2013, Year 2 achieved 39%.  
• In 2011-2013, in Writing, 40% or more of students achieved A and B scores.  
• In 2011, in Speaking and Listening, 50% of Year 4 students achieved A and B scores whilst at all other levels this was 40% or less. In 2012 only Year 5 students achieved over 50% A and B scores. And in 2013, 60% of students at Year 6 achieved A and B scores and all other levels achieved below 35%.  
• In 2011-2013, 50% or more of students achieved A and B scores in Mathematics, Number and Algebra in the middle and senior schools. **Note:** It is difficult to track changes in the areas of Measurement and Geometry and Statistics and Probability due to the change in recording data from VELS in 2011-12 to AusVELS in 2013.  
• In 2013 in Measurement and Geometry only Year 4 students achieved above 50% A and B scores.  
• In 2014, Years 1 and 6, 50% or more of students achieved A and B scores in Statistics and Probability. | (KIS) Build teacher effectiveness and efficacy so that they differentiate learning for every child and can accurately assess what students know and can do.  
• All new and returning staff participated in the EHPS Induction Process.  
• Graduate Teachers incorporate ‘peer observation’ processes into their Professional Learning Plans. A small percentage of staff has worked with the Teaching and Learning Coach to include peer observation in their PL goals and they have used the E5 framework as the basis of teacher reflection and professional dialogue.  
• Teaching staff have focussed on ‘learning spaces’ in their personal Professional Learning Plans. Level Teams have developed Team charters and timetables for the use of Collaborative spaces and are beginning to utilise new learning spaces in their planning and pedagogy.  
• Teachers Professional Learning Plans focussed on Literacy  
• Level Teams have incorporated ICT goals into Term Planning documentation. Teachers have accessed a range of Professional Learning sessions including SPA | Continue to develop protocols and tools to support learning and inquiry in Professional Learning Teams both at Year levels and across the school with a focus on Literacy. (Work in Writing has been undertaken in 2014 and this should extend into 2015). A similar process for review, development and implementation should be extended to include Reading and Speaking and Listening during the next Strategic cycle. This should include utilising ‘best practice’ Frameworks eg, Literacy and Numeracy Assessment – 18 month strategy. The outcome should be the development of a Whole School Literacy Program.  
Extend Peer observation and reflection to include all staff utilising a whole-school common language for Teaching and Learning and pedagogy.  
Further work should be undertaken to maximise the school’s learning spaces with a child-centred focus taking account of learning needs across a whole level.  
Include a Professional Learning focus on Number and Measurement - building teacher knowledge around AusVELS outcomes to ensure more effective moderation. Prep to Year 2 |
Reduce the percentage of students deemed capable below NMS to nil.

NAPLAN results show 70% of students in Yrs 3 & 5 ‘at or above’ the top two bands of achievement.

NAPLAN Matched Cohort to reflect at least a 10% growth each year.

In 2014, 0% of Year 3 students were deemed below NMS in Writing, Spelling, Numeracy, Grammar and Punctuation (1.8% in Reading). Of Year 5 students, 0% were deemed below NMS in Grammar and Punctuation.

% results summary:

- 2012 G & P – Yr 3 66%; Yr 5 61%
- 2013 G & P – Yr 3 64%; Yr 5 56%
- 2014 G & P – Yr 3 80%; Yr 5 58%

NAPLAN Matched Cohort data shows strong growth in Numeracy & Grammar & Punctuation. Expected growth is evident in Reading, Spelling and Writing.

and COA training, using iPads and big screens in Teaching and Learning.

(KIS) Develop and implement a whole school curriculum plan for learning.
- A Whole school planning and documentation process is in use across all Levels using Curriculum Organiser.
- ILP’s are completed for children in need of support and extension
- Literacy intervention programs are provided for ‘at risk’ students.

(KIS) Use data to inform teaching and learning practice.
- A draft whole school assessment schedule in place across all Levels.
- A range of student achievement data is utilised by some Level Teams in some planning meetings.
- Student Data Base (SPA) in use to monitor students over time.
- A broader range of ICT tools in use across all Levels.

level teachers have tended to rate student achievement less highly than their counterparts in Years 3 to 6. This is also reflected in NAPLAN data.

Build leadership capacity to lead teams in identifying and catering for students requiring support and extension, building on our ‘collective responsibility for all students’.

Develop teacher efficacy in identifying and developing programs to cater for the needs of highly able students.

Consistent moderation and common assessment tasks within and across levels needs to be strengthened to ensure students show what they do and don’t know.

A review of assessment practices and data bases highlights a need for further Professional Learning, clarifying Roles and Responsibilities and a clear and consistent approach to Assessment practices. This includes implementing Common Assessment Tasks across a range of disciplines, common processes for recording data and developing knowledge and skills to utilise data for planning purposes to address individual student needs.

Upgrade student tracking data system to include monitoring student and cohort growth, wellbeing and engagement.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Engagement and Wellbeing</th>
<th>What did we set out to achieve?</th>
<th>What did we achieve?</th>
<th>What factors supported or inhibited our success?</th>
<th>Where might we focus future effort?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement refers to the extent to which students feel connected to and engaged in their learning and with the broader school community. Engagement spans students’ motivation to learn, as well as their active involvement in learning. Engagement also refers to students’ engagement as they make critical transitions through school and beyond into further education and work. Students’ health, safety and wellbeing are essential to learning and development. An inclusive, safe, orderly and stimulating environment for learning is critical to achieving and sustaining students’ positive learning experiences.</td>
<td>(Goal) To improved student connectedness to their learning.</td>
<td>2014 Results: Teacher Effectiveness – 4.28 Teacher Empathy – 4.25 Stimulating Learning – 4.08 School Connectedness – 4.36 Student Motivation – 4.54 Learning Confidence – 4.03 All measures improved on the 2010 figures (with the exception of learning confidence) but fell short of nominated targets.</td>
<td>(KIS) Develop student leadership and student voice in the school.  - Regular Junior School Council meetings for years 3 – 6 with junior school buddy system are in place. JSC liaises with the PFA and School Council  - Leadership opportunities for Year 5 students were extended through the Leadership and Multicultural Program (LAMP)  - Student representation was extended to whole school level to inform focus groups and working parties and to plan and implement community activities including School Values, Code of Conduct for Collaborative Spaces and Learnscapes.</td>
<td>Improve school-wide Communication Continue to increase student voice:  - Establish regular student forums to discuss student issues and provide feedback, especially to the DEECD student survey - Survey tools to be in place to strengthen student feedback across the school.  - Explore suitable ‘student opinion’ style surveys suitable for Prep – Yr 4. This will enable engagement and wellbeing data to be collected and tracked beyond the Yr 5/6 children.  - Support students to seek and respond appropriately to feedback from peers and teachers, setting goals and managing resources.  - Professional Learning schedule includes teacher development in using feedback and Thinking Oriented Curriculum including Creativity  - Teacher and team planning documentation and resources reflects and supports the development of student autonomy in learning.  - Unit planning documentation reflects negotiated curriculum. Further develop consistency in values, behaviours and expectations across the school  - Implement an evidence-based tiered system of support eg...</td>
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**2014 Results:**
- Teacher Effectiveness: 4.28
- Teacher Empathy: 4.25
- Stimulating Learning: 4.08
- School Connectedness: 4.36
- Student Motivation: 4.54
- Learning Confidence: 4.03

All measures improved on the 2010 figures (with the exception of learning confidence) but fell short of nominated targets.

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- Leadership opportunities for Year 5 students were extended through the Leadership and Multicultural Program (LAMP)
- Student representation was extended to whole school level to inform focus groups and working parties and to plan and implement community activities including School Values, Code of Conduct for Collaborative Spaces and Learnscapes.

(KIS) Strengthen community perception and involvement.
- School Values were reviewed and updated in the Strategic Plan, relevant policies and Class Codes of Conduct. The values were consistently reinforced with all community members eg Assembly, Awards, Newsletters
- ‘Starting Up/Starting Out’ program established across the school. Program based on using School Values to establish a positive classroom learning environment for all children at the beginning of the year.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>(KIS) Build staff team efficacy (collective efficacy)</th>
<th>School Wide Positive Behaviour (SWPB)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers interacted with and shared Professional Learning across and with other schools in the network eg School visits, CIN Writing Project</td>
<td>• Develop and implement staff and parent code of conduct. Essex Heights Values to form the basis of the Codes of Conduct.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Professional Learning was provided to build level teams’ capacity to use data to inform teaching and learning eg SPA</td>
<td>Research and implement an effective data base to track and monitor student achievement and wellbeing eg SENTRAL</td>
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<td>• Coaching, mentoring, peer support and feedback was made available with a focus on engagement and wellbeing</td>
<td>Review Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy and Programs including Social Competencies program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transitions</td>
<td>What did we set out to achieve?</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Goal) To improve the student transition process from year to year across the school.</td>
<td>Parent opinion of the transition processes measured by the DEECD and school-based opinion surveys to measure 6 on a 7 point scale.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>What did we set out to achieve?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Productivity refers to the effective allocation and use of resources, supported by evidence and adapted to the unique contexts of each school. Successful productivity outcomes exist when a school uses its resources - people, time, space, funding, facilities, community expertise, professional learning, class structures, timetables, individual learning plans and facilities – to the best possible effect and in the best possible combination to support improved student outcomes and achieve its goals and targets.</td>
<td>Note: schools will not have productivity goals and targets in their current strategic plans. This section is optional.</td>
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Human resources have also been allocated in support of these initiatives in terms of leadership structures and Staff PL days.

Timetables have been enhanced and improved, making the transition to a 2hr-2hr-1hr model in 2013. Then in 2014, we reintroduced a fourth Specialist area (Languages – Indonesian) into the program. This enabled us to provide grade levels 2 hrs common time release that has supported team planning and moderation discussions about student progress and achievement.