

# School Review Report

## 2022 cycle

**Essex Heights Primary School**

**School No: 4903**

North Eastern Victoria Region

Validation Day: 4 November 2022

Fieldwork Day/s: 11 November 2022

Final Panel Day: 16 November 2022

Strategic Plan: 2018-2022

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# 1. Public section

1.1 School Context	
<b>Location and history</b>	Essex Heights Primary School is located in the City of Monash in the eastern suburb of Mount Waverley, approximately 19 kilometres from the Melbourne Central Business District. The school was established in 1962.
<b>School facilities</b>	A school rebuild was completed in 2013. The buildings include three main classroom blocks with a central collaborative space as well as four enclosed relocatable classrooms. Other facilities include a basketball stadium with canteen, a Music room, separate instrumental music rooms and an Indonesian Room. Other facilities include a Library, a school hall with kitchen facilities, an Art room, and a Health Centre. The grounds include an oval, two basketball and netball courts, shaded playground equipment, a Mathematics Garden and a Sensory and Meditation garden.
<b>Enrolments</b>	Enrolments at the time of the review were approximately 586 students, compared to 578.0 in 2018. There are 23 classes catering for students from Foundation to Year 6.
<b>SFO and SFOE</b>	The Student Family Occupation (SFO) category was 0.1789 in 2021 and the Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index was 0.1262 in 2022.
<b>Staff profile</b>	The staffing profile of Essex Heights Primary School includes a principal and two assistant principals, two Learning Specialists, 27.4 teachers, 4.51 Education Support (ES) and 6.59 Teaching Support (Administration and Out of School Hours Care) as well as a qualified school nurse. The leadership team consists of the team leaders from Foundation to Year 6, the Specialist team leader, the two Learning Specialists and the Principal team. The School Improvement Team consists of the two Learning Specialists, three members of the principal team and the leader of the Specialist team.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The school provides an approved curriculum framework differentiated to meet student needs. The key strategic priorities are Literacy, Numeracy and Student Engagement and Wellbeing. The whole school curriculum plan covers English, Mathematics and Integrated Units, encompassing Humanities, Science, Technologies, as well as Personal and Social Capabilities. Specialist programs are provided for all classes in Indonesian, Music, Physical Education, and Visual Arts. Individual Support Programs are provided in Literacy and Numeracy Intervention.
<b>Additional information</b>	<p>The school implements an art and social and emotional learning program which prepares students to be resilient, confident and self-aware young adults, as they transition to secondary school and into society. The school has a partnership with a resilience project, which reinforces the skills required to create resilient and confident young adults. The school has an extensive music program which includes instrumental music lessons, music theory, choir, Marimba, school bands and ensembles. There is a yearly Showcase event to highlight the musical achievements of students in choirs and instrumental music. In alternate years students participate in a dance concert and students also participate in the Victorian State Schools Spectacular in Mass Dance and Mass Choir and an Art Gallery for the whole school community.</p> <p>The school has a fully accredited Outside School Hours Care program which operates during school terms, on student-free days as well as during school holidays. Weekly after-school Chess Club and Soccer X are also offered.</p>

## 1.2 School and Community Highlights

### Highlight 1

**Title:** Improved student learning and outcomes

**FISO2.0 Core Element:**  
**Teaching and Learning**

The Panel found that a key school community highlight was the strong focus on building teacher capability to improve student learning outcomes. During fieldwork activities, the Panel observed and validated the following areas:

- Literacy and Numeracy Learning Specialists provided regular professional learning for staff and were working with all teams to build their capacity and implement school priorities
- teachers were collaborating and supporting each other through consistent and effective team planning
- staff had learnt to use multiple online learning platforms during remote learning, which had assisted with student engagement and learning as well as connectedness to the school community
- the school had strengthened their Intervention Program through support for students with additional needs, and tracking and monitoring of students receiving various interventions including Literacy, Maths and English Tutoring and English as An Additional Language (EAL) support
- all teaching teams completed their data tracker using the school's assessment schedule to assess and monitor students
- building staff capacity in the teaching of Writing through the implementation of Writer's Workshop. Whole school writing tasks had been completed and moderated each term
- the school had adopted an external consultant's approach to Numeracy, which included classroom management strategies, resourcing ideas, developmental insights, and planning ideas. The Numeracy Learning Specialist was reinforcing teaching practices and building consistency between staff. Hands-on learning and open-ended tasks were evidenced in planners and there was a focus on inquiry based mathematics.

### Highlight 2

**Title:** Student wellbeing

**FISO2.0 Core Element:**  
**Engagement**

The Panel found that a key school community highlight was the embedding of practices which enhanced student social and emotional learning.

The Panel heard that the continuation of the social and emotional learning through art and the introduction a resilience program from Foundation to Year Six in 2021 had reinforced the school's focus on student wellbeing

The Panel also noted the ongoing implementation of the Starting Up/Starting Out program each term, including School Wide Positive Behavior, classroom expectations, behaviours and social norms in both the classroom and the playground. Some staff had participated in Respectful Relationships professional development, embedding elements of the program into the Wellbeing Curriculum in 2022.

An audit across year levels was commenced reviewing links between the social and emotional learning through art program, a resilience program, Respectful Relationships and Catching On Early to ensure all facets of Wellbeing were covered in curriculum delivery. Data from 'The Resilient Youth Survey' and 'Attitudes to School Survey' highlighted areas of growth and areas for improvement and an external consultant supported staff to create a positive classroom culture to help children understand their behaviours and supported more socially acceptable behaviour.

### Highlight 3

**Title:** Student engagement

**FISO2.0 Core Element:**  
**Engagement**

The Panel found that a key school community highlight was the building of teacher capability to engage students in their learning.

The Panel agreed that improvements in the positive endorsement of several factors in the School Staff Survey had been attributed to remote learning during 2020 and 2021. Staff listed collaboration and responsiveness of teams in on-line learning provision as a highlight, along with a greater emphasis on student wellbeing and learning readiness. The school had focussed on build teacher capacity to cater for the diversity within their classrooms and a differentiated program was offered through lockdowns and on-line learning. At risk students were catered for and all students were provided with extension and an enabling curriculum. The Program for Students with a Disability (PSD) program was improved to include targeted assessment and monitoring through Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Regular contact with parents was a feature, including responsiveness to at risk students and those with emerging learning needs.

Teachers had also welcomed improvements to the enrolment processes to provide more rigorous screening and timely response to student needs.

In order to track and monitor student progress to inform future learning, teachers reported greater efficacy in using data to target students' needs and this had been supported with the work of Learning Specialists in dedicated team planning sessions.

**Highlight 4**

<b>Title:</b> Community engagement	<b><i>FISO2.0 Core Element: Engagement</i></b>
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The Panel found that a key school community highlight was the creation of multiple structures and procedures to maintain student connectedness.

The Panel heard that this included an on-line learning program with daily student check ins and small group sessions. Through the website the school provided opportunities for the community to participate in interactive videos and community building activities. Teachers supported students to link with the community through on-line events.

The school managed several transitions back to school and into on-line learning. Parents, teachers and students provided feedback on the positive impact of these processes.

In 2022, teachers and parents had taken steps to reconnect through the re-establishment of Parents and Friends Committee (PFC), parent representatives and volunteers and numerous social events. Improved communication had been welcomed with the addition of weekly team newsletters, and social media platforms. The School Council has reinstated a Community Engagement Working Party to further explore how communication and connection could be improved, particularly with the non-English speaking parents and grandparents.

## 1.3 Summary of Key Review Findings

### Performance against the School Strategic Plan (SSP) goals and targets

#### **SSP Goal 1:**

The 2018–22 School Strategic Plan for Essex Heights Primary School set a goal to Improve student outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy. The Panel found that the school partially met this goal, with two of the three targets achieved.

#### **SSP Goal 2:**

The second goal was to empower students' agency and voice in their learning, with three targets related to student, staff and parent opinion survey data. The Panel found the school partially met this goal, with one of the three targets achieved.

#### **SSP Goal 3:**

The third goal was to build a positive climate for learning. The Panel found the school partially met this goal, with one of the three targets achieved.

### Findings against the Terms of Reference Focus Questions

**Terms of Reference Focus Question 1:** To what extent does the school successfully support students to become curious, collaborative and innovative learners?

The Panel found that the school had extensive student leadership opportunities in place and a broad range of programs to support students' social and emotional wellbeing and engagement. There were some avenues for students to follow their interests within the curriculum; however, there were fewer opportunities for students to consistently influence curriculum design and to provide feedback on teaching and learning in their classrooms.

**Terms of Reference Focus Question 2:** To what extent do teachers place student needs at the centre of program planning and delivery and monitor the impact for learning?

The Panel found that progress had been made in the use of student achievement data to inform planning to meet the needs of each student and Learning Specialists were working with teams to improve the teaching practices for Literacy and Numeracy. The Panel agreed that there could be more opportunities for differentiation in learning tasks and for students to have greater ownership of their learning goals.

## 1.4 Summary of Key Directions for the next School Strategic Plan

The School Review Panel recommended the following key directions for the next School Strategic Plan:

- Whole school approach to collaborative planning and instruction
- Professional Learning Communities
- Student voice and agency
- Student wellbeing and engagement
- Partnerships between school and families.