

2021 Annual Report to The School Community



School Name: **Diamond Creek Primary School (1003)**



- 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.

«PrincipalSignDescription»

- This 2021 Annual Report to the School Community has been tabled and endorsed at a meeting of the school council and will be publicly shared with the school community

«PresidentSignDescription»

About Our School

School context

Diamond Creek Primary School sets a clear vision that places students at the centre, and embraces effective learning and teaching as its core purpose. Learning experiences are scaffolded, engaging and robust and are designed against rigorous standards and targets for student achievement.

The school aims to provide a stimulating, safe, happy and caring environment delivering quality education that promotes personal growth and enthusiastic learners. All students are given the opportunity for individual development in a supportive learning environment that encourages positive self-esteem, personal excellence and uniqueness. The school Values of Respect, Cooperation, Persistence and Striving for Excellence are used to prepare and support our students, as they become positive and thoughtful citizens within their community. The Values are the foundation to our school-based personal and social development programs.

The importance of learning is emphasised in our programming and students are encouraged to discover, question and create. A stimulating and varied curriculum caters for the individual learning needs of each student and provides many varied opportunities for success. Students are challenged and inspired, and as they grow as learners they develop a connection and engagement and gradually develop the skills to generate their own course for lifelong learning. Working with our students, we empowered them to progressively take ownership of their learning, to make purposeful contributions to their learning environments, and to be responsive to issues arising in the world around them. Their achievements and effort are well-recognised and celebrated. Specific emphasis is placed on individual development in English and Mathematics and additional assistance and extension is offered to students in need.

The Inquiry process is the approach used to create authentic and engaging learning experiences across the whole curriculum, which connect with the interests and experiences of students. Programming is based on a Thinking Curriculum where learning styles are explored, and an awareness of thinking developed. As successful learners, students develop the skills of critical and creative thinking. Programming encourages students to be enterprising and adaptable and to grow in confidence, enabling the use of purposeful higher-order thinking strategies.

Information and Communication Technologies are an integral part of student experiences where learning seamlessly extends beyond the local school environment to the broader global community. Modern, purposefully designed learning spaces promote a collaborative learning experience for students, enhanced by a plentiful array of technological tools in addition to our BYOD 1:1 iPad program for our year 5 and 6 students.

Complementing the high quality classroom curriculum is a comprehensive range of specialist programs, which incorporates The Arts, with dedicated classes in Language Arts (Italian), Visual Arts and Performing Arts (including Music and Drama), and also Library, Physical Education and Sport. Specialist teachers are provided in these curriculum areas where students are challenged to extend themselves through the outstanding programs provided.

In addition to this, Diamond Creek Primary School is a school dedicated to Science. This dimension has extended our learning and practices in Science teaching and has also enhanced our children's engagement and learning achievement in Science.

Diamond Creek Primary School is situated on a large and well-maintained allotment in the outer suburb of Diamond Creek. There are five main buildings which were each constructed at different times, uniquely reflecting the history of the school's development. A walk through the school is a walk through history with the original Diamond Creek Primary School building, constructed 152 years ago in 1870, still being used productively as high-quality classrooms. The Art room and multipurpose room, (incorporating the Performing Arts / Languages facility and the Out of School Hours Care facility), along with other established learning areas have all been constructed at various stages throughout the life of the school. With years of programmed maintenance and renovations, the schools offers excellent learning spaces.

Students, families and staff are very proud of the attractive, natural school setting and the individuality of each of the

buildings. The entire community works together to ensure they are well maintained, as are the grounds and picturesque gardens.

The Diamond Creek Primary School grounds are spacious and generously provide room for all types of play and outdoor experiences. Included is a full sized basketball court, a synthetic-grass oval, four adventure playgrounds and numerous fitness stations, which are designed for different play challenges, shaded areas including the central courtyard, gardens, veranda areas and a purpose-built outdoor learning space. There is also a landscaped veggie patch area and hot house, cubby houses, wetland areas, 'hotshots' tennis courts, rebound walls, and a number of hard surface areas suitable for ball games, skipping and many other outdoor activities.

Diamond Creek Primary School is committed to a dynamic learning community, fostering collaboration and a collective responsibility for all students. This is reinforced by strong and productive partnerships with families and the wider community.

In 2021 the school maintained overall student numbers, with enrolments reaching 253 students, 126 female and 127 male. 2 percent of students had English as an additional language and 0 percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. There were no overseas students to cater programs for. The school SFOE value is low. The average class size in 2021 was 20 students in the year F-2 levels, and 22 students for the year 3-6 levels.

The staff of 25 consisted of 1 Principal class, 2 part time Leading Teachers, 1 Learning Specialists, 11 full time Teacher Class, 6 part time Teacher Class, 6 Education Support staff (2 part time Office Staff members and 4 part-time Integration Aides) and 2 part-time Tutors (for the Tutor Learning Initiative, specifically). There were no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The level of experience within the teaching staff ranged from graduate to experienced teachers of many years practice. The Office Staff ensured that parent requests, questions and general needs were addressed in a timely manner. The Integration Aides ensured that the requirements of our Students with Disabilities were met and that the teachers were supported in delivering a curriculum, which best catered to the diverse needs of these students, offering them equal access to the curriculum.

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)

In 2021 the school's AIP Key Improvement Strategies continued to address the FISO Improvement Priority of 'Excellence in Teaching and Learning', including both the 'Building Practice Excellence' and the 'Curriculum Planning and Assessment' as we aimed to sustain the resultant improvements produced through our specific focus on student Mathematics achievement outcomes. Through the focus on 'Excellence in Teaching and Learning', the aim was to further increase teacher capacity to ensure teachers:

- were clear about what students know, what they need to learn, what to teach, and how to measure progress
- planned curriculum and programs taking into account differentiated student learning needs
- employed ongoing and authentic assessment tasks, to provide accurate information for teachers, parents and students regarding their performance
- managed data to inform teaching and learning experiences, accurately detailing each child's learning narrative

These points of focus regarding the development of teacher capacity were once again, adapted to an online learning environment. Teachers were well-practiced to use their creativity to provide an online learning environment that was engaging, appropriately challenging and data-responsive, to meet student need.

In addition, the school focused on the Improvement Priority of 'Positive Climate for Learning', specifically the dimension of Empowering Students and Building School Pride.

Building on 2020, during the periods of Distanced Home Learning in 2021, students were empowered to make decisions regarding their own learning and assumed the responsibility (with their family's support, especially in the

junior grades) to complete and return their work. Right throughout the school, students negotiated learning goals with their teachers via online lessons and meetings. Students in the senior grades in particular, were able to advocate for themselves regarding their own learning and their emotional status. The use of Google Classrooms, WebEx and Google Docs offered the opportunity for students to work with their teachers to meet their learning needs.

Achievement

2021 School Performance Summary data is as follows:

- Teacher Judgement of student achievement in English, Prep-6 at 96% of students achieving at or above expected standards.
- Teacher Judgement of student achievement in Mathematics, Prep-6 at 97.8% students achieving at or above expected standards.
- In both these curriculum areas, school performance sits very favourably, with percentages approximately 6-9% higher than similar schools, and 10-13% above average State performance.
- This data indicates overall improvement from the previous year.

NAPLAN data shows:

- Number of students in the top 3 bands in Year 3 Reading at 93.8%, which is above Similar Schools (85.6%) and State (76.9%), maintaining a 4 year average above Similar Schools by approximately 4.5% and above State by approximately 11%.
- Number of students in the top 3 bands in Year 5 Reading at 83.3%, which is above Similar Schools (78.4%) and State (70.4%), maintaining a 4 year average above Similar Schools by approximately 6.5% and above State by approximately 13.5%
- Number of students in the top 3 bands in Year 3 Mathematics - Numeracy at 85.2%, which is above Similar Schools (76.2%) and State (67.6%), maintaining a 4 year average comparable to Similar Schools within 0.6% and above State by approximately 7%.
- Number of students in the top 3 bands in Year 5 Mathematics - Numeracy at 57.1%, which is abnormally below Similar Schools (66.3%) and State (61.6%) , however maintaining a 4 year average above Similar Schools by approximately 7% and above State by approximately 12%.

Students adapted with competence during the periods of Distanced Home Learning. Teachers ensured the learning tasks provided, promoted continuity in learning and were suited to a home learning environment where parents, carers and guardians assumed the role of teacher aides to support their children's learning from home. Students responded well to these self-directed and in some cases, project-based learning tasks during the Distanced Home Learning period. During the periods of Distanced Home Learning, staff were able to utilise online resources for content delivery and assessment, which was refined with greater experience as the periods of Distanced Home Learning were repeated and extended. Teachers broadened methods and opportunities to individualise learning and to differentiate learning tasks.

Learning Catch-Up and Extension Priority

In 2021, we applied a resolute focus on the 'catch-up and extension' priority. We focused our support programs on Mathematics (DET Tutor Learning Initiative), and on Reading (the school's Learning Enhancement Program), with Writing being a more specific focus within the classrooms. We also continued the work for Highly Able students through the DET Student Excellence Program, accessing the Victorian Challenge and Enrichment Series and the Victorian High-Ability Program when available.

PSD Funding (Program for Students with Disabilities) was used to employ Integration Aides who, working under the guidance of the classroom teachers, ensured the requirements of our Students with Disabilities were met, and that the teachers were supported in delivering a curriculum, which best catered to the diverse needs of these students, offering them equal access to the curriculum.

Connected Schools – Moderation (of assessment and data) CoP

The Leadership Team worked productively in the Moderation Community of Practice (CoP), using the learnings from this experience to improve school-based practices.

Unfortunately due to extended lockdowns, the schools in the Respectful Relationships Community of Practice did not choose to continue the work during 2021. With increased workload due to Covid-19, they felt there was not enough time to participate effectively.

Engagement

The general attendance rate for students at Diamond Creek Primary School for 2021 was on average 95%.

Attendance data shows the average number of days absent in 2021, was 11.3 days per student, with a 4-year average of 12.8 days. This compares very favourably with similar schools where they had 14.0 days absent per student, and a 4-year average of 14.3 days. State figures show 14.7 days per student and a 4-year average of 15.0.

Our levels of engagement were generally pleasing through the periods of Distanced Home Learning, however it was evident that some of our older students in particular struggled with these additional periods of remote learning despite the online learning provision being individualised and engaging. The return to school in the fourth term was greatly received by all of our students. The transition back to school was very much welcomed and enjoyed and there were very few issues with children returning.

During the periods of Distanced Home Learning, teachers worked diligently to enhance the home/school communications in frequency and variety. Online meetings and lessons, text messages, phone calls, emails, push notifications, video recordings were all featured in the delivery methods used across the school. This was true for the teaching staff and the school leaders. This form of communication continued once back on site.

During the periods of Distanced Home Learning, grades organised special online events, to keep spirits high and to promote happiness and positivity. Grade WebEx meetings were organised to ensure students maintained social connections with peers.

Again in 2021 as it was in 2020, there were a number of students with medical conditions who did not transition back at the same time as others. These students were supported by their teachers to continue learning at home, and were able to move back to the school environment when safe to do so and with positive effect.

This all reflects our general practice of supporting any families where attendance may have been an issue. We were vigilant in maintaining communications with families to emphasise the importance of regular, non-negotiable school attendance. We work with families where ill-health or family trauma for example, may have caused attendance issues of sorts. We worked with these families individually and discreetly to support the family unit and the children, as they work through their challenges to maintain acceptable attendance levels.

Our students on the Program for Students with Disabilities were well supported online by their teachers and their teacher aides working collaboratively with the respective students and their families.

Wellbeing

Happy, Active and Healthy Kids was the priority for 2021.

We ensured full specialist curriculum provision, even during lockdown, as these areas are many times a very important creative outlet. They often provide students with a unique learning style and interest, as compared with general classroom learning.

The 'DC G.E.M.s Program' is expanding to a broad and all-inclusive program, providing well-thought-out activities that focus on promoting and strengthening the wellbeing of our students and their mental health. We prioritise developing a Positive Growth Mind Set with our students and practise a Positive Approach to Discipline, grounded within our strong School Values Base.

From the Student Attitude to School Survey (students in years 4-6), focusing on the Sense of Connectedness element, our school percent endorsement for 2021 was 76.9% with a 4-year average of 77.7%. This corresponded with the similar schools 4-year average of 79.2% and a State endorsement of 80.4%; possibly indicating a similar wellbeing effect in 2021 for primary school students in general.

School percentage endorsement for Management of Bullying (student survey) sat comparably with similar schools and the State; a variance of only 1.7%. The 4 year school data average is favourable as compared with similar schools and state. Data from the Wellbeing Supplementary Report would suggest that bullying be an area of focus for 2022.

The Student Attitude to School Survey showed uncommon data of concern for the Year 6 cohort, where the total cohort result, in a large number of elements was less favourable than overall school results by more than 5, and many times more than 10 percentage points. This is not the usual Year 6 data reflection. We are advised, that "due to lower participation rates, differences in the timing of the survey/length of survey period and the general impact of Covid-19 across 2020 and 2021, data sets are often not comparable with previous years or within similar school groups". Almost complete opposite data presented in the Year 5 results, where most elements were at least 5 or 10 percentage points above overall school results. It will be interesting to watch this Year 5 cohort, and analyse its data as Year 6 students in 2022, to see whether the 2021 Year 6 data was an anomaly or whether there is a trend emerging.

Staff maintained close relationships with families during times of lockdown and organised special activities to scaffold, promote and extend wellbeing and wellness. We ensured we maintained these strong connections with our families and we guaranteed wellbeing and mental wellness activities were provided, so that students could participate on a daily basis or as required. Teachers collaborated with school leaders regarding strategies and methods of support for the various families in particular need.

We also focused on staff wellbeing during these continuing challenging times in teaching; the School Staff Survey data on School Climate showed school endorsement sitting just above the State. Parent satisfaction increased to more usual DCPS ratings at 84%, sitting above the State at 81.8%.

Wellbeing will continue to be a permanent priority at Diamond Creek Primary School.

Finance performance and position

In 2021, Diamond Creek Primary School maintained a sound financial position. Despite the draw on finances, due to expenses related to the requirements of managing the pandemic effects on our school, the financial report showed an end of year surplus.

This surplus occurred due to the fact that not all budgets could be expended as planned due to the alternative school setting for the year, e.g. the Solar Panels were budgeted for, however not installed due to Covid-19 delays. These works continue to be pursued.

Equity funding was expended on the Learning Enhancement Program which continued in the online form.

Grants received included maintenance allocations and bushfire vegetation works and provisions. The grant for DCPS as Lead School for Respectful Relationships was also received but due to Covid-19, not expended. These and other projects were held over until 2022.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the usual fundraising activities run by the Parents and Friends Team were greatly

reduced, however this will be reinstated in 2022, as allowable.

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