

About Our School

School context

VISION

To work with our community to provide innovative learning that encourages excellence, strengthens self-belief, supports deep critical and creative thinking, recognises and accepts diversity, values and embeds creativity, develops compassion, respects the environment and gives all students the choices to fully participate in a sustainable global future. We are committed to continuous improvement and achieving excellence at every level and aim to instill all students with a sense of: -

- identity based on understanding ourselves, our community, our own past and the story of our unique land and its people;
- integrity based on treating others in a truthful, compassionate and cooperative way;
- community based on connecting with others, understanding diversity, respecting the rights and views of others and living sustainably;
- determination based on being challenged, thinking creatively and critically, believing in our ability to achieve our best and being resilient and persistent

VALUES

The Patch Primary School Community values respect, responsibility, and integrity -

- Respect for the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Owners and caretakers of the land our school is on, and we recognise their continuing connection to it.
- We respect one another's achievements, views, dignity, privacy, and property and accept that everyone is different
- Responsibility through being accountable for our actions
- Integrity through high standards and realistic goals, open and honest communication, and trustworthy behaviours. INTENT, RATIONAL AND FOCUS
- To improve student engagement and learner agency to create curious and confident learners who are more independent and self-aware. This will be achieved through building practice excellence, intellectual engagement, and self-awareness.
- To strengthen the social and emotional wellbeing of every student by empowering students and building school pride, enhancing opportunities for authentic learning partnerships, and utilising the school's outdoor landscapes.

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

The Patch Primary School is located in the Dandenong Ranges. Its large grounds include student designed landscapes that have won awards for both design and sustainability. They provide nature-based learning and play opportunities. Students participate in regular and meaningful projects to improve biodiversity in the school grounds, reduce resource use and improve sustainability. Our school offers students a comprehensive education based on the Victorian Curriculum including Literacy, Numeracy, Physical Education, the Humanities, AUSLAN, Art, Music and STEM. In addition, students take part in Philosophy each week. Our Respectful Relationships curriculum combined with the Berry Street Education Model help students to build healthy relationships, resilience, and confidence. We offer a Forest Classroom Program with the adjoining kindergarten.

The active involvement of parents at all levels of the school is critical to the success of our students. They help in the school gardens, in reading programs, at sports events and during social and fundraising events.

The school also works actively with the wider community to provide more real-world experiences for our students. These include involvement with tertiary institutions, other schools and using the experience of knowledgeable local people in the delivery of our programs. In 2024, 285 students from a wide geographical area were enrolled at the school. The school had 36 full and part-time staff, including a Principal, Assistant Principal, 2 Learning Specialists, 19 teachers, 13 Education Support staff in administrative and classroom support roles, maintenance person and IT technician.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

The Patch Primary School had success with their student learning outcomes in 2024. We were above state average in all areas for English and Mathematics for both NAPLAN bands and Teacher Judgements. A greater focus on differentiated focus groups - to focus on students being challenged and engaged in learning at their zone of proximal development - has supported learning growth in the classroom.

English:

- 91.2% of students in Prep to Year 6 are at or above the expected learning standard for English. This is above the state average of 86.4%.
- 76.5% of Year 3 students are in the Strong or Exceeding bands for NAPLAN Reading. This is above the state average of 68.7%.
- 78.6% of Year 5 students are in the Strong or Exceeding bands for NAPLAN Reading. This is above the state average of 73.0%.

Mathematics:

- 86.1% of students in Prep to Year 6 are at or above the expected learning standard for Numeracy. This is slightly above the state average of 86.0%.
- 68.6% of Year 3 students are in the Strong or Exceeding bands for NAPLAN Numeracy. This is above the state average of 65.5%.
- 70.7% of Year 5 students are in the Strong or Exceeding bands for NAPLAN Numeracy. This is above the state average of 67.3%.

Wellbeing

Improving student voice opportunities and, therefore, connection to school has been a key focus for our school. Student Representative Council, Kindness Matters and Cubby Council are just some of the ongoing student groups that allow students to have a voice in our programs, initiatives and environment. This has seen an improvement in our Attitudes To School Survey (AToSS) results in 2024.

Wellbeing:

- 76.4% endorsement for Connectedness to School on the 2024 AToSS. An improvement from the 68% 4-year average, and slightly above the Similar Schools average of 75.8%.
- 77.8% endorsement for Management of Bullying on the 2024 AToSS. An improvement from the 70.6% 4-year average, and above the Similar Schools average of 74.7%.

Engagement

Attendance figures slightly dipped in 2024. Two main factors contributed to this: illness and extended holidays.

In Term 2 of 2024, both covid and the flu hit our school hard. Over the course of late May to June, our attendance numbers were between 50 to 60% on most days due to higher than normal illness days-off.

The post-covid effect of having a number of families with extended holidays continued in 2024. A number of families had holidays that exceeded a month, which contributed to our rise in absences, too.

On a positive note, very few absences are contributed to school refusal. We believe this positive result is contributed to our wellbeing initiatives to support student wellbeing, such as having a part-time wellbeing officer who provides counselling and social groups, our whole staff being trained in the Berry Street Model, our weekly Respectful Relationships sessions, or our commitment to unconditional positive regard. In addition, our engagement initiatives, such as lunch clubs, cubby building, kindness matters events, student leadership opportunities and more give students extra reasons to look forward to school each day.

Attendance:

- Students averaged 28.9 absence days in 2024. Up from our 4-year average of 23.5 days, and higher than the 21.8 day state average.

Other highlights from the school year

2024 was the last year we had the pleasure of having Michelle at our school. Michelle had a 38 year partnership with The Patch. She began as a parent, then became a teacher and led the garden and outdoor revolution, before becoming our wonderful assistant principal. We celebrated

Michelle with a whole school concert dedicated to the impact she had. Michelle was the heartbeat of what we love about The Patch, and will always have a connection to this place.

Our amazing school community should be celebrated for getting through a big year of transitions. Half our spaces were pulled down and rebuilt - a new Learning Hub and Art Centre, a renovated Main Building, and accessible paths around the entire school. Half our school was inaccessible during 2024, but everyone made it work. Staff, students and parents showed amazing resilience to get through it, and we now get to enjoy a revamped school that will benefit the next generation of children and families at The Patch.

Financial performance

In 2024 we were able to maintain surpluses for both credit (wages) and cash (expenditure) budgets.

We were unable to fulfill a number of our large maintenance items listed for 2024 - such as line-marking and garden maintenance - due to building works taking longer than expected for completion (they were not completed until early 2025). This resulted in a higher than expected surplus cash budget being carried forward to 2025 with the expectation of completing all additional maintenance items.

We had a number of large fundraising events in 2024, including PatchFest (school fete), a Colour Run and a Trivia Night. The Colour Run, alone, raised over \$25,000 for our school. These funds were put towards our 'Beautification Fund' which is supporting the expansion and restoration of our school gardens.

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