

Public section

1.1 School context	
Location and history	Research Primary School is located in semi-rural surroundings on the north-eastern outskirts of Melbourne within the Shire of Nillumbik. The school was founded in 1889.
School facilities	The school has recently undergone a \$5.7 million building project which was completed in 2022. School facilities include purpose built and designed learning spaces in two buildings, an administrative and arts building, a gym, library portable and extensive grounds and bush surroundings for creative play, an oval and formal paved and marked games areas.
Enrolments	Enrolments at the time of the review were approximately 182 students. Over the past four years, enrolments increased by 42 students.
SFO and SFOE	The Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index was 0.22 in 2021–22.
Staff profile	The staffing profile of Research Primary School includes a principal, an assistant principal (0.8), one learning specialist, 10.0 full time equivalent teachers, one full time equivalent education support (ES) staff member and 1.5 office administration staff.
Curriculum	Research Primary School provides the Victorian Curriculum for students with a focus on Literacy and mathematics and specialist subjects in Art, PE, Library, Science and Technology and Japanese.
Additional information	The school provides Before & After School Care programs for the school community. Music therapy is available for small groups and individuals.

1.2 School and community highlights

Highlight 1

Title: Community

Community, added in 2020, is one of the four key values of Research Primary School and reflects the value placed on the strong community feel and ethos of the school and the intrinsic connection between school, home and the wider community. The school identifies as a small but growing community school with a personalised approach coming from a community minded philosophy. Multi-age level groupings on community days and incursions, special lunches, buddies and impromptu gatherings which include the entire school are key to the school's inclusive community. The school prides itself on building strong connection with students individually and their families and extended families. The school has developed strong links with the wider community such as connections with the Lions Club, Rotary and CAVE.

Communication and transparency are highly valued and evident in the parent community responses in the review.

Highlight 2

Title: Literacy - Reading

The panel found that the work with the DSSI (Differentiated Support for School Improvement) team supported teachers to develop their knowledge and teaching practice in the area of reading. The school's teaching team and their commitment to their professional learning was evident in teacher forums conducted during the review and found to be key to successful outcomes. Through DSSI support, the school established effective assessment practices where teachers were scaffolded to improve their data literacy. Whole school data walls then became a point of discussion with teachers as they came together to support the growth of each student. The development of PLCs (called Communities of Learning and Teaching – CoLT at the school) have been reported to provide a vehicle for consistent and open professional conversations. Teachers have been able to discuss evidence-based reading strategies, explicitly learned through focussed professional development and how they can be best applied to improve reading data.

The panel found that NAPLAN and Teacher Judgement assessment were proof of the positive student growth and learning outcomes in Reading.

Highlight 3

Title: Collective Efficacy and Trust

Research Primary School has been through significant change over the strategic plan period and through the change process trust and collective efficacy throughout the school has grown. Panel members who were also involved in the previous review were able to endorse this finding. The school's commitment to shared purpose and vision has been driven and enabled through strategic actions in commitment statements, collaboratively developing agreed ways of working, setting clear goals which directly link to the AIP and Strategic Plan and the redesign of the school's core values. Underlying these actions has been a focus around building trust and streamlining processes and administrative structures to support teaching and learning. The school uses evidence-based principles to scaffold new initiatives and ensure that improvement in teaching and learning is at the core.

Teachers reported to the panel that there is a genuine team ethic and approach and that staff are open to new methods, willing to give something a go and well supported throughout. The staff opinion survey results provide further evidence of this highlight.

Highlight 4

Title: Buildings and Grounds

The panel found that the school's classrooms and facilities projects completed in 2022 have had considerable impact over the period of the SSP and support pride in the school. The new facilities provide

a pleasant amenity for students, staff and families that supports both learning and an engaging and welcoming built environment that blends with the natural features of the land. Student, teacher and parent forums endorsed the extensive efforts, community pride and positive outcomes of the school's facilities projects for the community.

The school reports in its pre-review evaluation that, 'The affection for our new school building runs deep within our community. It stands as a testament to the collective effort that went into securing a \$5.7 million upgrade, a testament to the dedication of our community. The impact of this upgrade is palpable among our students, who now feel a heightened sense of value and empowerment. This transformation has had a profound influence on our school's culture, fostering stronger bonds within the community and forging deeper connections with the broader community. Our school building was meticulously designed in alignment with our educational philosophy, ensuring that it harmonizes seamlessly with our picturesque natural surroundings. Recognising that our students thrive in natural settings, we've effectively brought the outdoors into their classrooms, providing an enriching learning environment that resonates with their needs and preferences.'

1.3 Summary of key review findings

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

SSP Goal 1	The 2019-2023 SSP for Research Primary School set a goal to maximise high learning growth in literacy for all students. The panel found that this goal was partially met with two targets partially met and two targets not met.
SSP Goal 2	The 2019-2023 SSP for Research Primary School set a second goal to empower students to take a higher level of responsibility for their learning. The panel found that this goal was partially met with two targets partially met and one target not met.
SSP Goal 3	The third goal of the 2019-2023 SSP for Research Primary School was to enhance student wellbeing by fostering respectful attitudes that reflect the school values. The panel found that this goal was partially met with one target met and one target partially met.

Findings against the Terms of Reference Focus Questions

Terms of Reference Focus Question 1: To what extent does Research Primary School differentiate learning to meet the needs of all students?

The panel concluded that a whole-school approach to meeting individual learning needs was in place and that progress was made in using evidence-based teaching and learning approaches to fluid and dynamic learning groups, particularly through an emphasis on the Professional Learning Community (PLC) approach known as Community of Learning (CoLT). There was a focus on explicit teaching with a defined and consistent instructional model with an increasing emphasis on feedback to students on their learning progress.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 2: To what extent does Research Primary School empower students to take ownership of their learning?

The panel found that the school was developing student conferencing and goal setting and students were given opportunities through inquiry sessions and project-based learning to follow their interests within the curriculum. However, there are opportunities for students to consistently receive explicit feedback on their progress and for greater student agency in learning.

1.4 Summary of areas of focus for the next School Strategic Plan

The school review panel recommends the following areas of focus be captured in the next School Strategic Plan:

- Numeracy
- Student voice and agency
- Student wellbeing

