

# 2021 Annual Report to The School Community



School Name: Belmont Primary School (0026)



- All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching ([www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://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

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## School context

Belmont Primary School is a great place for children to learn. Belmont is an older southern suburb of Geelong. The name means 'beautiful hill'. Belmont is geographically separated from the Geelong central business district by the Barwon River. The suburb is primarily residential but also encompasses a central shopping and services area nearby. Belmont Primary School has a long and valued 164 year history (opened Dec 1, 1856), being one of the very first schools to be built in the area.

At Belmont we understand just how precious each and every child is and take great pride in working with our parents and wider community to ensure every child enjoys a highly successful primary education in a caring, supportive and increasingly innovative environment. This year was particularly challenging with periods of remote learning and our wider community impacted in many ways. Our school remained as connected as was possible and our responsibility to families and individual students equally so.

Belmont is recognised as a high performing school in terms of achievement but importantly finds the balance, fostering a highly developed sense of social responsibility in our students. Our values of Community, Responsibility, Learning, Honesty, Respect and Courage help guide us in our daily efforts to improve ourselves and our school.

'Learning together' is our motto and reflects our capacity to all be part of a child's growth and development as a life-long learner. Learning in this COVID year looked very different at times and the school endeavored to adapt to the needs of our students and families as quickly as possible. This included providing additional take home materials and resources, purchase of on-line reading resources that could be accessed from home, class video and meetings through WEBEX and regular Seesaw contact. There was an increased focus on engaging activities and challenges that could be completed in the home or even the backyard.

We have a dynamic and hard working teaching staff, specialist team and administrative team that demonstrate daily, a collective responsibility to each and every student. The school provided strong staffing provision for families who required on-site schooling for their children and our daily numbers increased as the lockdown continued. As well as outstanding growing specialist programs in Visual Arts, LOTE and PE we provide a wide range of extra-curricula activities including camps, swimming, bike education, music tuition and regular excursions and incursions. Due to COVID many of these programs could not run or were severely impacted. The very good news is that the school provided an additional two specialist areas in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and Performing Arts in 2021. We are a highly inclusive school with a strongly supported and resourced special needs and intervention programs.

In 2021 the school had an equivalent 20.1 full time staff including: 1 Principal class, 1 Learning Specialist, 13.2 classroom teachers including specialists, 1.8 Office Administration and 3.1 Education Support staff. Although we do not employ any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff we do closely align ourselves with our Koorie educator who works with a staff member to connect with our nine Koorie identified families. The home school connection is an important one and our school sought flexible and varied ways to maintain communication across the year. We enjoy a high level of 'direct' support from parents generally. We had excellent small class sizes averaging around 21 students across our Prep (Foundation) and 1/2 year levels. We continued to experience strong demand for school entry places at year Prep and international interest with links to Deakin University and have established wait lists each year for those families not directly in our school zone.

Our children enjoy 'state of the art' facilities resulting from significant building upgrades and improvements that allow us to employ contemporary teaching and learning practices that best meet the needs of our children. The Mini Village play area was completed in early 2021 after receiving a federally funded grant. A grant for new shade areas has been approved with works to be completed in early 2022.

Our enrolment has been steady; ending in 2021 with 298 students across 12 classes. Next year we will continue with

12 grades and around 275 students which ideally, continues to match our available class and open space areas. We are immensely proud of our school and everyone in it and welcome visitors at any time to see our great school in action.

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## Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)

The school has been using the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) for some time and our school self-evaluation provided the school with some clear directions for the period ahead. Across 2020/21 our focus remained in the FISO area of Excellence in Teaching and Learning and associated initiatives of 'Building Teacher Excellence' and 'Curriculum Planning and Assessment.' Additional focuses included 'Building Leadership Teams' and 'Empowering Students and Building School Pride'.

The school is pleased to see our progress against several dimensions of the FISO continua. Analysis of the school's NAPLAN and teacher judgement data completed in late 2018, indicated that there was still progress to be made in relation to the student learning growth in writing and number particularly. Naplan testing was postponed across 2020 and returned in 2021 to provide additional data and direction. The Review process also recognised the need for consistent whole school practices in assessment, teaching practice and documentation and recommended this as an area for the school to focus on in the next period. We've made strong progress in these areas particularly through our Professional Learning Community (PLC) structure.

Student Attitudes to School survey data was collected in 2021 by the school and showed 82% felt a sense of connectedness, 90% advocate for school and 86% were not experiencing bullying. The school plans to re-engage in the work of student voice and agency and we remain committed to training for our staff in this important area. There is a planned review of our Inquiry units in 2021.

Despite the year 2021 being the year where much of the teaching and learning was remote, we managed to make great progress with our curriculum documents and professional development.

-Improving outcomes in student writing was our major focus. A Writing PD was delivered by our Learning Specialist where staff further built on their knowledge of the Writing Workshop and more specifically the mini lesson component of the Writing Workshop and explicit instruction. Staff also attended a Writing PD which exposed teachers to the 6 + 1 Traits of Writing and how mentor texts can support the teaching of writing. A mentor text library was purchased, and instructions created for staff as to know how to use these mentor texts when teaching reading or writing.

-Documentation in English was created where 'I Can' statements for reading, writing and speaking and listening from Foundation to Year Six were developed which also featured key vocabulary that should be taught at each year level. An English manual was then provided to all staff so that they were able to reference the reading and writing instructional models as well as other literacy documentation.

-Our Numeracy Leader delivered a Maths PD which outlined the Belmont Primary School Instructional Model, quality maths tasks and rich maths using picture storybooks. Picture storybooks with mathematical concepts were purchased to support the teaching of mathematics in the classroom. Instructional model documentation for mathematics was provided to staff including a scope and sequence.

-Although staff were not as connected due to remote learning they did work together collaboratively in their PLCs. All PLC teams completed inquiry circles where they looked at data, identified trends and then investigated research-based strategies and best practices whilst analysing current teaching practices. The PLCs determined areas for instructional change and then shared practices and expertise through reflective dialogue. PLC inquiry cycles were heavily literacy based with research conducted around writing, spelling, reading and grammar.

Given the unique circumstances and challenges the school staff and students experienced across 2021 a great deal of

work was done and the school continued on an improvement trajectory. Particular acknowledgement to our co-ordinators and senior staff in leading our hard working staff in much of this work.

In 2021 we were included in the PLC initiative in Semester 2 where PLC leaders and the leadership team participated in professional learning sessions where they further developed their knowledge and leadership of highly effective PLC's across the school.

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## Achievement

Our staff, students and school community have worked hard this past year and have achieved some excellent results considering the challenges our school community, staff and students faced.

By the end of 2022 at Year 3 our school is aiming to have an increased number of our students in the top two bands in Writing and Numeracy. In 2019 in Numeracy our percentage was unchanged at 51% (Target 60% by 2022) but in Writing up four percentage points to 73% (target 75% by 2022). No NAPLAN data was available for 2020 however we were pleased to see that Teacher judgement of student achievement of students [at or above expected standard from Year Prep to 6] in Writing sat at 94% and was well above Similar school comparisons (86%).

By the end of 2022 at Year 5 our school is aiming to have an increased number of our students in the top two bands in Writing and Numeracy. In 2019 in Numeracy our percentage increased by 5% to 54% exceeding our Target 52% by 2022. No NAPLAN data was available for 2020 however we were pleased to see that Teacher judgement of student achievement of students [at or above expected standard from Year Prep to 6] in Number sat at 95% and was well above Similar school comparisons (90%). Another very strong result for the school.

In Reading and Viewing teacher judgement of student achievement of students saw 96% of our students achieving at or above expected standard from Year Prep to 6, again well above above Like Schools (90%). Interestingly, the school did not see the same level of growth in our 'Above Level' cohort and this could be a reflection of the challenges to effectively triangulate data due to COVID restrictions and testing opportunities. Year 3 was the exception where we saw an increase in the number of students operating at Above level in all three strands of Numeracy.

The school's Panorama Report, places our school well above similar schools in 6 out of the 9 measures and the remaining two other measures 'relative' to similar schools group. In 2019 the school was rated above Similar Schools in 24 out of the 26 measures of learning achievement.

An assessment advice and schedule has been updated in line with some new assessment practices that we have undertaken. Our schedule has also been adjusted to ensure that teachers are collecting data in a timely manner which can then be used to inform learning and teaching plans which are developed to provide differentiated, focused teaching and open-ended learning challenges for all students.

Students responded well to self-directed and project-based learning tasks during the remote learning period. In 2021, we incorporated more project-based learning into our curriculum in reviewing our Inquiry Unit approach where strong student voice will be considered and valued. During remote learning, staff were able to utilise online resources for content-delivery and assessment and consequently developed new ways of differentiating for students. The school invested in and promoted on-line resources like EPIC where staff could assign reading material to students according to their needs. One on one reading sessions via Webex was one of many examples of staff engaging with technology in support of their students.

Our Program for Students with Disability (PSD) monies have been used to great affect by strategically allocating Educational Support staff to support six eligible PSD funded students, as well as other students with additional learning needs. The ES staff also routinely support playtime and lunchtime supervision and support and also a number of lunchtime alternatives particularly for students with sensory sensitivities. It is important to note that the school has routinely supported through our own funding lines for students with high needs who do not fall within the PSD model.

Inclusion funding in 2021 will provide some much needed funding for a range of services to be offered for students with particular needs or to remove barriers to their learning.

Other wonderful examples included STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and Physical Education challenges which students enthusiastically embraced and took on. On occasion these involved other family members including parents.

This past year we have worked hard to address the goals we set for ourselves. These actions and highlights have included:

- Professional Practice and Curriculum Days utilised to maximise learning aligned to school priorities.
- we refined term and weekly planning documents adding HITS ( High Impact Teaching Strategies) to our weekly planners or units.
- common assessment tasks continued and were developed and moderated providing regular feedback on student learning for our parents across the year.
- a Learning Specialist was released to provide on ground support, as well as individual and team direction.
- we examined the value and use of mentor texts and text-less picture books to help develop speaking and listening.
- we strengthened the use of Maths at Belmont document by teams and data tracking using Essential Assessment software.
- we strengthened staff understanding of HITS (High Impact Teaching strategies) and DET Literacy and Numeracy portals.
- we employed a tutor to assist students identified in data that needed 'catch up'.

Future directions and strategies:

- the school is examining once more the professional learning opportunities of 'Peer observations'. We understand the enormous wealth of ideas, approaches, experience and expertise that we can tap into by learning from each other in a systematic and planned way.
- our Assessment Schedule will continue to be updated and refined and the school has invested in a new software portal where all school data can be stored, analysed and tracked. This program is called Student Performance Analyser or SPA.
- tap into further quality PD (Professional Development) including Student Voice and Aspiration, High Ability workshops, First Aid and sessions which examine student health and well being
- the Tutoring Learning Initiative will continue in 2022 and this we be an extension of what has already been in place in 2021.

It will be important that the school returns slowly from this difficult period and ensures workloads and expectations for both staff and students is reasonable and manageable. Programs like Parent Helpers were severely disrupted and will hopefully recommence in 2022.

We have much to be proud of here at Belmont.

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## Engagement

We believe we are on the right path when it comes to developing stronger engagement for our students. The school believes our data may present with a level of drag in these first years of our Strategic Plan but that our increasing and broadened actions will see a steady improvement in the near future.

Data told us that under the category of Learner Characteristics and Disposition, the Resilience factor is one of three elements that we have been focusing on showed a slight increase of 2.3% to 82.3% (2022 Target 85%) and Sense of Connectedness, a very minor increase of 0.3% to 82.5% (2022 Target 90%). This result places us above similar schools in this important area. Self regulation and goal setting remains stagnant at 87.3% against 2018 levels of 88%. (2022 Target 95%) Like many other schools no data was available for 2020 as the school did not undertake the Attitude to School Survey with our years 4-6.

Our 2022 target to improve the percentage of positive endorsement on the Staff Opinion Survey in the factor of parent and community involvement from 80% (2018) to 85% (2022).

On 2019 data, 82.5% of our students felt connected to school (State average 81%). 2021 data saw Belmont with 82.% of students positive endorsement against similar schools with 79.7%.

Our management of bullying measured by students in the period 2017-2021 at 86% was better than similar schools at 80.3%.

Attendance remains a priority for all schools. Over the last three years we have seen a positive trend in our attendance data with the average of 15.1 days absence falling to 14.1 days in 2019 and 12.1 days in 2020. One the measure of students with 20 or more absence days in the period 2018-2020 Belmont achieved very similar results to our similar schools cohort. (BPS: 19% LS: 20%) . Pleasingly we saw strong percentages of our students absent for less than 10 days. Interestingly this result was most positive at Year 6 with 68% of students achieving these levels. We recognise in part that we have a small number of very high absence students who can impact collective data. Our efforts to address this pattern include engaging with these families directly and regularly and offering them additional supports through the school itself and in some cases outside agencies. Unapproved absence rates have shown some variation but in the last two years has fallen to below 2.4% of all absence types down from 4.58%. Interestingly our Year 5/6 unapproved absence rates fell from 11.9% to 5.9% from 2018 -2020. The introduction of Compass has helped parents have increased opportunity to provide the school with notification of absences through this portal.

This past year we have worked hard to address the goals we set for ourselves in this important area of Engagement and during the transition back to onsite learning.

These actions have included:

1. Planning for student feedback in teaching and learning evident in team planning.
2. Staff at many levels have included opportunities for students to access STEM related investigations. Staff have been identified as key learners to connect with any and all PD made available through the Network. STEM was introduced as a Specialist area in 2021.
3. Planning put in place for the school to be involved in next years Victorian State School Spectacular.
4. Opportunities for student voice and agency is evident in team planning of units.
5. Extending student leadership programs to include access to student leader forums and provide an opportunity for student leaders where possible.
6. Strengthening student reporting processes through the continuation of learning assessment tasks shared with parents through Compass connecting parents to the learning and interests of their children.
7. Continuing to explore the potential of Compass to improve home-school communication processes including attendance notifications, calendar events, newsletter distribution, semester report publication, payments and conference organisation. This helps students and families strongly connect with the events, functions and activities of the school.
8. Completion of a Virtual Tour for prospective parents  
[<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1t8GeIGXEUiQbUqcDCEMgD20XFnxVM1k5/view?usp=sharing>]

In finishing this section of the annual report we do acknowledge that for a small number of students who previously experienced challenges in terms of their engagement connected strongly with the opportunities for agency during the remote learning period. This has been a point of discussion at the school and wider Department level. Lessons have been learnt having seen the benefits of technology applications and other on-line opportunities to increase learning and student engagement.

Future directions and strategies

- Strengthening our reporting processes to help parents understand the level and needs of their children. Up to four learning tasks in the areas of literacy, numeracy and inquiry will continue to be created each term and made accessible through Compass.
- Students greater self regulation of their own learning will be advanced eg. Development of personal writing goals.



## Wellbeing

Health and wellbeing supports were prioritised for staff, students and their families where possible through the COVID period. We worked actively with parents to support our 'students at risk' and essential workers particularly. This saw growing numbers of students attending on-site. Our school provided hard copy materials for our Junior students and rotated available staff to work at school with our on-site students. The school used WEBEX and our own YouTube channel to connect with students and this saw some inventive approaches to maintaining student well being.

Using this virtual space and on-line resources staff:

- provided on-line opportunities to access relevant PD like Cyber bullying sessions
- ran Family events which involved the whole family. This included a Movie Event Day and Italian Day.
- ran class quizzes
- had one on one chats with students with parents consent and or attendance
- fun challenges including the use of the common garden snail
- singalongs in LOTE
- Virtual assemblies including student input and toddler time and a raft of other activities individual to each class
- facilitated an Online whole school disco.

Of particular note were the efforts of key staff to ensure the schools participation in State Schools Spectacular which ultimately was delivered on-line. We hope the school can take part again in person in 2022.

Workloads for staff were carefully managed where possible. It was a challenging time for staff managing a very different workplace. Staff were challenged by the arrangements that needed to be put in place and particularly where they held responsibility for managing on-site students while still being responsible for their classes and students on-line. Staff in many cases had their own children and older parents to consider and support. The school minimised meeting requirements and increased team meeting opportunities. Teams supported their members brilliantly and unselfishly taking on a shared responsibility for each other and their collective student cohort. As a Principal I could not have been prouder of the efforts of all of our staff over this time including office and educational support staff.

Parents remained an important group within our school and as a school we have been taking several actions to encourage their connection with student work and class activities. We believe this positive interaction contributes to students view of themselves as successful and happy learners. Our staff measure 'Parent and Community involvement' which had grown 9% in 2019 to it's highest point in 5 years and exceeded our Strategic Plan target of 85% by 2022 took perhaps an expected dip to 76% in this COVID year. Our parents held a view of the schools efforts with Teacher Communication measure remaining steady however at 81% which was testament, we believe, to the efforts made by all staff to remain connected with parents and importantly their students. (85% target by 2022)

Following the heights of the COVID lockdown the school remained highly restricted by the Department guidelines which limited parent and visitor access particularly. Staff were also careful on return to be mindful of the stress and difficulty many of our families and students had experienced. A great deal of time was taken by staff in re-connecting with students and ensuring their welfare and connection with one another was a priority.

In the final months of 2021, we did manage to take part in and complete a range of activities across the school which helped contribute to student wellbeing. These included:

- 3/4 Mini Golf day and activities on-site
- Victorian Premiers Reading Challenge (Over 1939 books read by participants)
- Book Club each month
- Indigenous Literacy day and NAIDOC Week activities
- Recognition for the school World Record effort. (Belmont PS now record holders for Longest line of Honeyjoys)
- Book week Dress Up

- Bike Education Year 3/4
- Completion of the School 2021 magazine which captured this unique year
- Staff vs Students dodgeball
- Grade 6 Graduation
- End of year fun activities including Supa World, MoPA, movies and the beach
- Belmont's Got Talent
- End of Year Celebration Evening - student performances.

#### Future directions and strategies

- Community Circles will remain a part of all classrooms
- Increased learning opportunities in relation to personal and social capabilities, including growth and fixed mindset.
- Planning weekly opportunities for the explicit teaching of social and emotional learning.
- Developing inquiry units using the agreed school model for inquiry learning. This approach helps our students connect with what is relevant and of interest in their worlds.
- Continued strong tracking by our staff of all students to identify and record more accurately and centrally student and family details, medical reports and diagnosis, student attendance and behaviour.
- Build on our connection with student families using Seesaw with regular sharing
- Continue to engage with our local Respectful Relationship Schools Cluster as we deliver this work. This will include a whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, known as Learning Together

We are hugely proud of the efforts of all of our staff, the commitment shown by our families to support the school and our fabulous students who work hard, learn and grow as individuals each and every day.

Here at Belmont we take pride in 'Learning together'. Well done to our school community for their commitment to our students, support for our staff, patience and care over such a challenging year.

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## Finance performance and position



Our school is currently in a sound financial position and this has been through the careful, planned and sustained actions of the school, the Finance Committee of School Council, School Council and our Business Manager who oversees all elements of this important area.

The school finished in surplus once more and this is not by pure circumstance but through careful management. The school receives very little in the form of equity funding because of its strong student/family background. This has meant we have needed to rely heavily on the constraints of the Student Resource Package and any grants that were issued by the Department or we could access through application. These additional grants included: Sporting Schools grants, DET specials grants towards maintenance, CLEANING and compliance.

Key actions we have sustained have included; maintaining a balanced staffing profile, increasing student class sizes, measured specialist teacher provision and appropriate budget setting. Fundraising was on hold through 2021 as was our Chinese School on-site which has been very successful and provided us with a new revenue stream. Out of Hours School Care were asked to contribute financially to the school being an independent business on the school site. In 2021, we appointed a new OHSC provider which has seen an increase in funds being returned to the school and may increase further if numbers increase which we predict. This change has been welcomed by our parents.

The school continues to invest in our buildings and grounds making several purchases including replacement and repair of large shade sails, new television purchase in our Art space, full room sound wall upgrade within our BER space, replacement of aging heater banks in Arkinstall Hall, upgrading older fluorescent light banks with more modern and efficient LED lighting, tree works addressing all urgent and moderate rated elements and continued work to maintain our heavily used small oval area.

We are grateful for the funding we receive as a Government school, the funds both voluntary and requested from our parents. All of these actions and inputs provide the resources we need for our teaching staff to do their best work and



our students, their best learning. Next year we plan to add additional voluntary payment options for our parents including Pay forward which will allow parents to contribute/donate to support other families costs. An upgrade to security may also be a focus along with budgeting for solar panels which has been on our wish list for some time.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at [For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at http://www.belmontps.vic.edu.au](http://www.belmontps.vic.edu.au)**

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