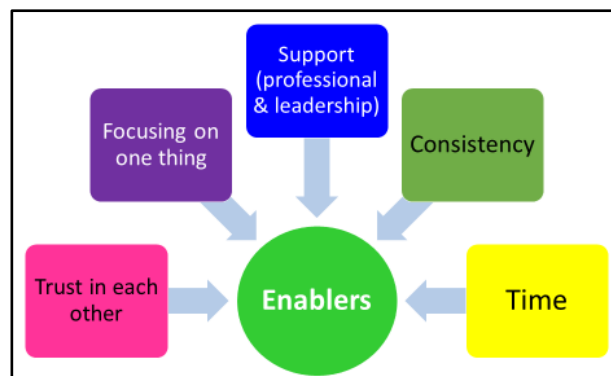


Welcome

Our third annual special addition newsletter provides an opportunity to reflect, thank and celebrate our teachers, support staff, students and families on a successful 2019. We are proud of the fact we have achieved our vision and that Templestowe Heights Primary is the school of choice for our local community.

As a staff we have regularly reflected on what has been the enablers that have allowed us to succeed. Consistently, we have identified five enablers our education support staff and teachers believe that if we stick to these principles, they give us the best opportunity for success in implementing the initiatives and programs we set out to deliver to a high standard.



At the beginning of the school year we undertook a school review where we evaluated our 2015-2018 Strategic Plan goals and targets. We have now set new goals and key actions that will be the focus of the school's new 2019-2022 Strategic Plan ([click here for 2019-2022 SSP](#)).

I invite you to take a minute to read this 'year in review' as we reflect on 2019 and prepare for what is planned in 2020 for Templestowe Heights Primary.

Growth and our Community

The demographics of Lower Templestowe has continued to rise in the number of young families moving into the area. A combination of increased sub-divisions, empty-nesters selling and families securing properties within sought-after school-zones, such as ours, has seen our student numbers increase by 70% over the past five years.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Student population	252	305	330	372	401	436
Number of grades	11	13	14	16	18	19

With increased enrolments means greater funding and this translates into more opportunities for the children. Some of the ways we have invested in our additional funding have been:

- Construction of a new *Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics* (STEM) building that will provide a space for learning opportunities such as robotics, 3D printing and Virtual Reality
- Significant investment in developing our teachers' capacity to deliver high impact teaching strategies and curriculum innovation
- Employment of two Learning Specialists to support all teachers in developing their skills, knowledge & understandings of effective practice and curriculum
- Designated new library building, located next to the new STEM room
- Continued employment of a literacy intervention and a year 3-6 enrichment teacher
- 12 different lunch time interest clubs for students to select from
- Purchase of 3 new interactive TV/whiteboards, 10 iPads and 32 laptops
- Construction (first phase) of a sensory/enviro garden for children to use for creative outdoor play
- Maintaining our sustainability program with our school chickens and community garden

While growth presents more opportunities it also causes concern, in particular ***is our school getting too big?*** I want to reassure everyone now that we are the school of choice in our local community, we are only accepting the enrolment of children from within our school zone at this stage. It's a nice problem to have, but it's how we can manage the growth and maintain a strong sense of community.

Naturally as we grow the other concern families have is around class sizes. Rest assured, our class sizes continue to remain below the State's expected average. In 2020 our average Foundation-2 class sizes are **20.5** and Years' 3-6 is **25**. These numbers are also well below that of other local primary schools in Manningham.

Next year classes will continue to be supported by Lisa Clark (*literacy intervention*), Janine Reid (*year 3-6 enrichment*) Jeanette Breen and Celene Black (*learning specialists*) and *instructional coaches* Chris Egan and Mary McQuilten.

Celebrating our Learning Achievement

We have continued to invest significantly into developing teacher craft (skills, knowledge and understandings) to ensure we are delivering on our goal of providing high quality lessons for all students. In 2019 we allocated over \$75,000 for professional development opportunities for our teachers to observe each other in classrooms and work with coaches to deliver on our goal. What were new and innovative programs three years ago are now embedded within our school.

Our learning achievement results indicate 65% of all students are working above expected levels in at least one subject area. This year our year 3 NAPLAN (*National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy*) results were exceedingly strong, while the trend in our year 5 results plateaued. As I have mentioned before, we have a firm belief about NAPLAN, in that we do not "teach to the test" nor prepare our children to be "test ready citizens". We have always focused on the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms to yield strong results and not give children countless practice tests.

Specifically, over the past 4 years when compared to all Victorian schools, Templestowe Heights Primary has significantly:

- High levels of students performing at the very top two band-levels of NAPLAN
- Very low levels of students performing at the bottom two band-levels of NAPLAN
- Median and average scores demonstrate our students are achieving significantly higher when compared to like-schools
- Significant percentage of students achieving medium and high growth for writing in 2019

Continued Recognition as a Leading School

In March this year we received correspondence from the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)* congratulating us on being identified as one of only 64 out of the 1800 schools in Victoria that has demonstrated significant **high gain** in student learning achievement in literacy and numeracy over a three year trend. Only 3% of the 9000 schools in Australia were recognised with this commendation. This extraordinary achievement is something we should be proud of, particularly as our inner-east network of schools (Manningham, Boroondara, Monash, Whitehorse) is the highest performing network in Victoria. It also affirms that the research-based curriculum initiatives we have embedded and the big focus on developing teacher practice is world-class. This also validates that our teachers are life-long learners and have embraced the challenge of being the best teacher they can be, delivering high quality lessons to our students.

Due to the recognition as being a high-performing school, last month we had a visit from the Department of Education's *Education Improvement Leader*. We have now been acknowledged as a pilot school for other schools to visit to observe our innovative writing curriculum. As I have mentioned before, we are very proud to share our initiatives with any other state schools, as we firmly hold the belief that all schools should be able to learn from each other as this is how, as a system, we get better.

Annual results from our state-wide comparable parent and staff surveys continue to demonstrate that:

- Our **parents/carers** overwhelmingly endorse our school, trust that the educational programs we offer will prepare their child for the next stage of their schooling, are positive about our school, feel there is a sense of community and have opportunities to contribute to the school.
- Our **staff** have a strong sense of collective responsibility to helping all students to flourish, themselves feel supported to grow professionally, have trust in one another and know of, and buy-into the school's vision.

Feedback from our students

This year we unpacked the state-wide student survey results with some of our year 6 school leaders with questions developed to gain further understandings around student perceptions on bullying and learning engagement. Our leaders then aptly name their committee the Voice of the Students (VOS) and facilitated student-led forums with some interesting results.

The two key actions that resulted from the VOS were centred on student understandings of what it is to be mean, rude or bullied whilst a lack of perceived tools to speak up when children see another child being mean, rude or bullied was further to the initial discussions. These two ideas will be developed next year with our student leaders to ensure both are supported with key action strategies developed in consultation with students and teachers.

Staff Profile

We will have an additional Foundation class in 2020, bringing the total to nineteen. As we say farewell to Julie Gibbs (retirement, after 26 years at our school), Julia Rossi and Maria Buttifant, we also welcome in five staff members and look forward to mentoring our new teachers in the learning culture we are proudly embedding at Templestowe Heights Primary.

We have established a rigorous method for the employment of classroom teachers which includes the opportunity for the panel to observe potential candidates teaching a lesson. This is a unique process to our school, as we believe that giving teachers the opportunity to demonstrate their capability is far more important and useful to the screening process, than being able to perform in an interview situation.

Teachers observing each other is an embedded practise at our school, where we strive to learn from each other and to gather input from our students about ways in which we can reflect and improve on the learning in every classroom. Our employment process is a direct reflection of this practise, replicating the ways in which we as a staff believe in teachers being learners and reflective practitioners.

Our expanded executive leadership team, along with Andrew Veal now has Celene Black and Jeanette Breen, our two Learning Specialists. These new positions and their roles are aligned to the school's future strategic targets, more specifically focused on leading the continual growth of teacher capacity (through our teaching & learning model) and driving the implementation of our new research-based literacy and wellbeing curriculum.

As well as leading the implementation of our Annual Plan, our School Improvement Team's (SIT) role is also to lead their year level teams. The SIT will continue to provide a pivotal role in driving the standards and strategic direction of our school. In 2019 our School Improvement Team members will receive regular, 1:1 professional coaching sessions to enable them to continue to develop their leadership capacity. We know from research that it is middle leaders that have the greatest impact on student achievement outcomes. It's vital we invest in them in order to enable the teams of teachers they lead to be the best practitioners they can and deliver strong learning outcomes for our children.

In 2020 we will be employing a Nurse/First Aid officer for the middle four hours of each day. Their role will be on leading the school's three main policies; asthma, anaphylaxis and administration of medication. This will also allow Margaret and Anna to focus on their many other roles and responsibilities, considering the greater demands placed on them as the school has grown.

Administration	Rhys Coulson (Principal), Andrew Veal (Assistant Principal) Margaret de Haas (Business Manager), Anna Sanos (Office Administration)	
Education Support	Ashleigh Bowman, Vikki Brereton, Kerryn Clark, Kirsty Creek, Angelique Giacomini, Navaara Matherson, Yvonne Tan, Mary Wakefield,	
Foundation	Cassie Dykstra , Ashleigh Danes, Jacqui Nicolazzo, Ross Toogood	
Year 1/2	Celene Black* , Tania Martini, Marie Petzierides, Emma Vogel, Louise Wood	
Year 3/4	Jeanette Breen* , Alex Bruinewoud, Rebekah Fall, Tim Hemsworth, Liz James	
Year 5/6	Brittany Chipman , Linda Spencer, Julia Laidlaw, Peter Sartori, Sam Wang	
Specialist Team	Kate Stacker	Physical Education
	Lisa Clark	Literacy Intervention, EAL Support
	Janine Reid	Enrichment
	Sylvia Petrovska	Performing Arts
	Dina Velona	Italian
	Joy Birrell	Visual Art
Highlighted names in bold denotes member of the School Improvement Team *denotes Leading Teacher/Learning Specialist		

Our 2020 Goals

Our school review at the start of the year provided us with the opportunity to reflect and evaluate what went well over the four years from our 2015-2018 School Strategic Plan. While it was important to celebrate all the positive achievements we have accomplished as a school, we are also realistic in that we need to continue to have a strong focus and commitment to improvement.

In 2020 we will carry on with what we have developed over the past four years. We will invest heavily in our teachers, including professional learning with instructional literacy coaches, leadership coaches, induction program for new staff and a teacher observation model which supports our continued target of developing teachers' skills, knowledge and understandings to deliver high quality lessons. Our goal is to increase the rigour of our teaching and learning model, supporting all students to reach their potential. We will continue to employ literacy instructional coaches to development challenge and growth for all children's abilities.

Building on what we established this year, we will also introduce a new wellbeing curriculum (Institute of Positive Education) that will be specific to each year level. This approach builds on the evidence-based research in the field of positive psychology. The aim is to teach key concepts of wellbeing to allow children to live healthy and fulfilling lives. There will be a 2020 workshop calendar where we will present the big ideas and strategies we teach in classrooms to enable our parents to build their own knowledge to support their children at home.

Our financial focus for 2020 will be fitting out our new standalone STEM learning space. Students will now learn coding, robotics, Minecraft Education and undertake 3D printing projects in this space. We will also be introducing Virtual Reality (VR) learning opportunities, something that is a point of difference to almost all government primary schools. We are looking at designing a green screen media space for school captains to present weekly THPS news that will then be broadcast to all classes. This initiative is in response to the VOS feedback from students who overwhelmingly wanted our assemblies to be changed. These exciting new STEM initiatives and the capital works of the STEM building have been paid for entirely without the need for any additional funds.



Like we have in the previous two years, at the start of term 1, 2020 we will be taking 2 of our 4 yearly allocated curriculum days to focus on inducting our new staff, launching our new wellbeing curriculum and further invest in developing our teachers. I also understand from families that these curriculum days prove challenging for working parents. Given this, we have secured a school holiday program for the Tuesday (28th January) and Wednesday (29th January) to operate during our first two allocated curriculum days.

Staying community-focused

We continue to balance our growth with what we think is vital for a school to flourish; maintaining our established strong sense of community. Next year we mark the 50th anniversary of when Templestowe Heights Primary was officially opened. Our passionate steering committee have outlined some exciting plans, with the start of next year being when we will be calling for volunteers to help drive the many facets of our Saturday 21st November celebration.

We are extremely fortunate to have such a supportive community that gives so generously with their time as well as donates to our community garden, chickens and library fund. Our *Parents & Friends* (PAF) Association, led by *Sarah Mabin, Fiona Moran, Cecile Gray* and *Oula Olsen* have competently been handed the baton. They have been supported by so many giving parents and carers, raising over \$23,000 in 2019, allowing us to fund the second stage of our shade-sail construction in the playground adjacent to the outdoor basketball court. Over the school holidays we will also be having our line markings redone, all thanks to funds raised from our active-athon. In addition, other community benefits this year have included:

- One third of our students now participate in our school basketball program (22 teams in 2019), that is coached and managed by parents (led by *Kate Stacker and Sarah Mabin*).
- Our community garden, generously supported by *Laura David, Kate Stacker, Cassie Johnson, Sam Wang* and *Tania Martini* that continues to have a weekly gardening club, a watering roster and a host of after school harvesting markets which have been very successful.
- Introducing a more effective online school management system and school App/portal to create an effective communication channel between home and school.
- The continuation of our school chickens, driven by our very assertive student voice leaders, has taught our students responsibility. It has been greatly supported by *Laura David, Kate Stacker, Sam Wang, Tania Martini, Cassie Johnson* and many keen families.
- Our volunteer class reps have supported all new families who have commenced with us throughout the year.
- The many community-focused events that the PAF organise and run.
- Our School Banking parents and our many classroom helpers who stay after 9am to listen to children read.
- Our student-run canteen that operates every Friday lunch time. This initiative was developed with support by *Janine Reid*. The canteen is now making a profit and they are continuing next year.
- The construction of the first phase of our sensory/enviro garden that will be purpose-built for all students to use as an outdoor creative play space.

In closing, thank you to everyone who are part of our Templestowe Heights community; parents, carers, children and our staff for making 2019 an action-packed, yet satisfying year. As we enter the last few days of school, no matter what you celebrate, I hope you have a wonderful break and I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Kind regards,



Rhys Coulson
Principal