

# Elsternwick Primary School 2870

## 2008 Annual Report to the School Community



Department of Education and  
Early Childhood Development

## School Overview

What an exciting year 2008 has been! We have seen the long awaited completion of our Stage One Capital Works Program with the completion of a wonderful new building and the renovation of a significant section of the Murphy Street facility.

The new building housing the senior students learning area as well as a new Visual Art facility and Library have contributed significantly to our school. More recently we have seen the opening of our re-furnished 1-2 learning area which has transformed the tired northern end of the Murphy street building into one that offers modern facilities and spacious learning areas for some of our younger children.

Considerable fundraising and school monies have been used to finish off these facilities to a wonderful standard.

These new facilities are specifically designed to enhance learning opportunities and create a positive and enjoyable learning environment for the students in both junior and senior schools.

In addition, grants from the Commonwealth 'Investing in Schools Program' have provided us with furniture and laptop computers as well as interactive whiteboards in almost all areas of the school.

While stage two works are planned for the upgrade of the remaining permanent facilities, no time line has yet been established so it is likely to be several years before we undergo the next round of capital works.

Our school continues to provide for about 440 students in classes from Prep to Year 6. We provide a core curriculum in line with the broad subject offerings outlined in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). Elsternwick Primary School follows an Inquiry Learning approach, which supports our strong programs in Numeracy and Literacy providing excellence in education for all students. We continue to be viewed as a leader in Inquiry Learning supported by our continuing work with Kath Murdoch. In 2008 we hosted a number of school visits by staff from other schools interested in seeing our work in Inquiry. The VELS curriculum encourages schools to pursue this method of learning and we have found the past five years of our work with Kath to be invaluable to our staff and students.

At Elsternwick Primary, we believe that students learn best in a supportive learning environment that caters for all students' needs by building on the knowledge and skills that each student already possesses. Teachers strive to facilitate each child's learning by providing a challenging curriculum, personalised to the needs of each child.

Specialist subjects are offered in Visual Arts, Music, Physical education and LOTE. At the end of 2008, our long standing LOTE teacher Isabella Wolfram obtained a position at another school thus launching a process to establish what LOTE language would be the preferred one for the future. At the time of writing, the process is underway and the results will no doubt be mentioned in the 2009 Annual report.

The outsourcing of instrumental music program entered its second year and has been most successful with increased enrolments resulting in another teacher being appointed for this year. Our goal is to have a wonderful school band rivalling some of the local school bands that have performed for our students in the past year.

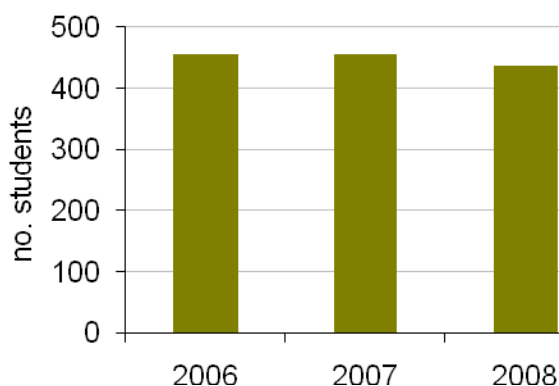
Music continued its strong growth and our senior students were wonderfully represented in the musical Aladdin performed at the Phoenix Theatre.

A Literacy Support Program supported by the Andrew Fildes foundation and overseen by our speech pathologist, Naomi Aufgang and Dr Carl Parsons (Melbourne University), has seen more than 40 students receive additional intensive tuition in core literacy skills during 2008.

Elsternwick Primary School Council made the difficult decision to outsource our After Hours Care service early in 2008. After many years of valuable service from parents and staff, the school was no longer able to manage the huge demands such a program placed on the school both in time and especially financially. This decision was not taken lightly and 2008 was deemed to be a review year with the entire program due for review in early 2009.

## Student Enrolments

Total students enrolled in school



Enrolments remain fairly stable with a small drop indicated from 2007 to 2008. We have a larger P-2 cohort than in years 3-6. In 2008 a number of students left the school both during the year and at the end of the year. Some families moved house to other parts of Melbourne, interstate or overseas. Some students leave the State system for independent schools during their primary years to increase their opportunities for gaining secondary placements. Our goal is to retain more enrolments through to the end of primary school as we see so many positive outcomes for children being able to finish their education with their original classmates and realise the many leadership opportunities gained by being a senior student at Elsternwick Primary School.

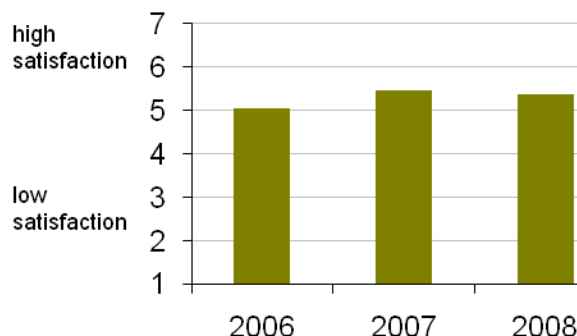
Boys continue to out number girls at the school with some cohorts having three quarters boys when compared to girls. Again the drift of girls to independent schools is very concerning for our school council.

We will continue to seek enrolments of at least four classes of Prep students annually.

### Parent Satisfaction

The parent survey was distributed to a large number of families achieving a 60% return rate. Parents continue to rank their responses placing Elsternwick Primary School above the State means in the following subsets of the survey: reporting, transition, homework, general satisfaction, student safety, classroom behaviour, connectedness to peers, student motivation, social skills and school connectedness.

Parents' satisfaction with this school (average score on scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is best possible score)



General satisfaction, as can be seen in the graph above remains above a score of five on a seven point scale indicating reasonably high satisfaction with the school.

Parents have ranked the school behaviour management well above the State norms and this has continued to grow during the past three years.

Behaviour management remains a focus for us. At the start of 2008, we introduced a new Student Code of Conduct which, simply put, is the school rules in easy to understand language that all children can understand. Students were expected to take the 'Code' home with them and discuss it with their parents and have it signed so that it acts as a form of contract which can be discussed at times during the year if behaviour contravenes the rules.

In addition, we adhere to a restorative approach to behaviour management.

The category 'stimulating learning' received a score well below the State norms. This concerns us and as a staff, we are very much focussed on reversing this trend through an emphasis on assessment for learning during 2009. In addition, professional learning in the use of interactive whiteboards is a priority as our students are part of the digital age and it is our responsibility to ensure that our teaching uses such digital technologies available to us.

## Commonwealth Requirements

### Teacher Satisfaction –

Teacher satisfaction as measured by the school morale section of the staff survey was 76 on a scale of 100. This represented a small decline from the previous year and was three points below the State norm.

We have put in place a staff welfare committee for 2009 to continue to provide suggestions for ensuring that staff are well looked after.

**Teacher Absence** – The average number of days absent on sick leave with certificates is 5.9 and without a certificate is 0.9 days.

**Teacher Retention** – Of the 34 teaching staff in the school in 2007, 27 were retained at the school in 2008 representing a teacher staff retention rate of 79%. This percentage is marginally below the State-wide average of 84%.

### Teacher participation in professional learning

All staff have participated in on-going professional learning during the course of 2008. We have the benefit of high quality educational consultants as coaches and leaders of professional learning at Elsternwick Primary School. Our work continues with Anne Hammond, Kath Murdoch and Michael Ymer who have all led Curriculum days and coached individual staff during the past year.

### Teacher Qualifications –

“All teachers in Victorian Government schools are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. The requirements for registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching can be found at: [http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=241](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au/content.asp?Document_ID=241).”



## Student Progress & Achievements

### Student Learning

*2008 marked the fourth and last year of our current Strategic Plan. While a full evaluation of this plan will occur in our school review, it is important to note that most of our targets have been achieved and achieved well.*

Our goal that students would develop deep knowledge and skills of the world around them has been achieved in part by our continued emphasis on building the instructional capacity of our staff through continued professional learning and our emphasis on Inquiry learning.

We had a target to improve Prep and Year 1 students results in measurement to at or above like school benchmarks (LSB). As LSB are no longer used as a measure, our results show that we were successful in this target and were above the State benchmarks in both of these grade levels. It was noticeable however that our results in year 1 last year declined from those in the previous year and a focus on measurement in mathematics is still required.

A further goal to improve student results in year 3 in writing using the teacher judgement data has also been achieved. Our results show a continuous rise in scores from 2.49 in 2006 to 2.52 in 2007 and finally 2.54 in 2008. All these scores are above the State-wide benchmark of 2.43.

ICT continues to provide a focus and the provision of laptop computers in years 5-6 has increased the access to quality computers markedly. Students continue to present much of their work using computer programs including Powerpoint, Word and many others.

In Student Engagement and Wellbeing, our goal was to improve engagement with teachers. This has not been achieved. Each year we have tried to reverse this trend by working on targeted areas of our teaching. In 2008 we worked to personalise student learning by asking teachers to focus on providing feedback to students at the time of learning to assist students to move forward. This continues to be an area of high need and we will

work consistently to achieve a higher score in student engagement with teachers. It is hoped that the move to our new learning centre will have a positive impact on student engagement.

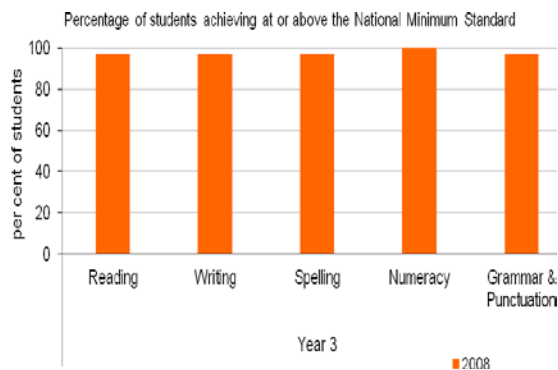
The final goal related to our transitions as students moved through the grades.

Again our prep transition program proved to be extremely successful with the largest cohort of students for many years beginning the school year in 2009. We work on transitions to all areas of the school through providing opportunities for all students to mix with and meet students in classes other than their own. Our new learning areas also provide opportunities for students to learn and work together on a daily basis. It is these opportunities that are essential to students having a successful transition from class to class.

**Percentage of students achieving at or above the National Minimum Standards –**

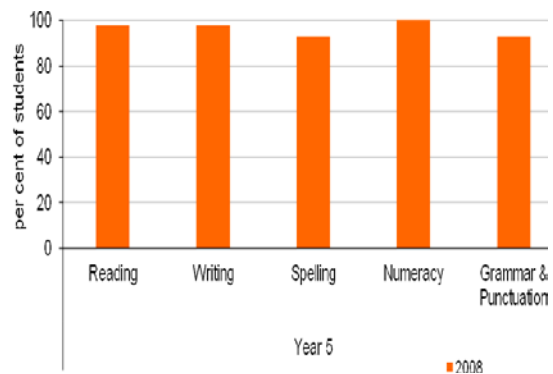
2008 marked the first year of the National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Replacing AIM, the NAPLAN provides States and schools with an accurate measure of how their students are performing in relation to National Standards. The National Standards are however slightly below those of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards so this should be kept in mind when interpreting the results.

The year three results show a high percentage of students meeting the National Standards in all five areas, Reading, Writing, Spelling, Number and Measurement. In Number 100% of students met the standard however in each of the other subject areas, 1 or 2% of students did not make the standard.



Our goal is for 100% of or students to make the National Standard and to this end we have already put a number of measures in place. In 2009 we have undertaken to assess all students in P-4 with a comprehensive Mathematics Interview which allows us to better understand, not only student capabilities but also to match specific teaching requirements to the needs that eventuate.

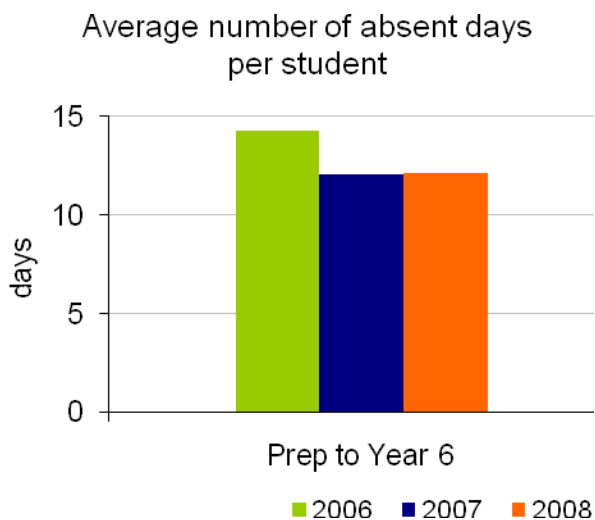
The year five results show that much work needs to be undertaken in Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation. In these areas about 90% of students met the National benchmark. Numeracy continued to show a high result with 100% of students making the benchmark and Reading and Writing resulted in about 3% of students not making the benchmark.



In 2009 some special needs work will be offered for students requiring additional assistance as well as Commonwealth assistance for those students who scored below the National Benchmark.



## Student Engagement and Wellbeing



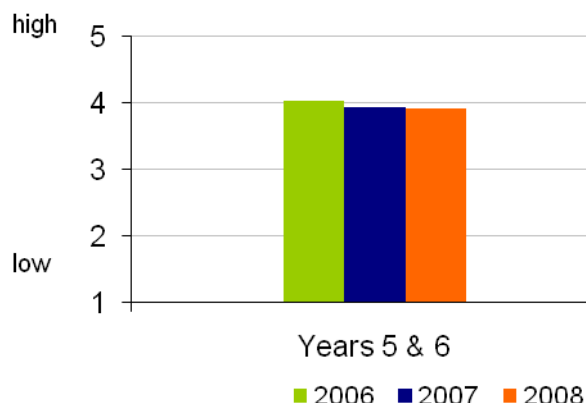
Average number of absent days per student

Student absence rates rose slightly when compared with the previous year. Across the school, an average of 12 days absence per student was recorded, however individual year levels continue to record absence rates above this rate. The State mean score for absence rates is marginally higher at 13.4 days.

Our internal recording of absences continues to show a very high number of families (48%), taking extended holidays (between 1 day and 3 months) outside of regular school breaks. These absences are included in our data and in part explain the high rates. High rates of absence can be shown to have a strong correlation with difficulties in learning. We are hopeful that the Ultraset a DEECD integrated information management system will help in tracking individual students. In line with Government policy, parents are expected to seek the permission of the Principal prior to taking their children on extended holidays.



Student connectedness to school (average score on scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is best possible score)



Each year students in years five to ten across all Government schools participate in a survey designed to ascertain their feelings about school. School connectedness is based on the extent to which students agree with the following five statements:

1. I feel good about being a student at this school.
2. I like school this year.
3. I am happy to be at this school.
4. I feel I belong at this school.
5. I look forward to going to school.

The graph shows a slight decline in student connectedness to school.

The 2008 survey was taken just prior to our move into our new facilities and while we make no assumptions about the degree to which modern facilities affect a students' perception, we know that it is likely to have some impact.

In 2008, the senior students participated in a variety of learning experiences designed to increase the independence of our young adolescent students towards their learning. Previous efforts to make a difference in this area have not improved the survey results. Student results indicate some gender issues which need to be explored in 2009: i.e. Year 5/6 gender based maths groupings.

Data over three years has indicated that boys are more connected to school than girls. Designed to directly impact on girls' connection with each other and the school, we have included a program of social skill building in 2009 in our senior area of the school. Led ably by Marg Armstrong, a Churchill

fellowship winner in restorative justice approaches, this program is designed to assist our girls in their relationships and to better help both genders mix well together and develop respectful relationships.

## Student Pathways and Transitions

Elsternwick Primary School believes that all transitions from grade to grade as well as into school and exiting from school are extremely important. Each year, a member of the Prep and Year Six teaching team is responsible for transitions.

The Prep transition leader begins with a visit to all surrounding kindergartens and pre schools, publicising our Prospective Parent Night.

This night included a brief information overview to all prospective parents in the school hall and then continued in the Prep classrooms, each classroom with a different focus: Literacy, Numeracy/Inquiry and a brief information session with our school nurse and speech pathologist. Current parents also contribute to the success of the evening painting a 'warts and all' view of the first year of school.

The Prep transition program in term four included four one and a half hour sessions for students, followed by one orientation morning. Transition doesn't end there though with a continuing program operating in the early weeks of the new year, a Prep retreat for the long lunchtimes and 'buddies' appointed from the year four children.

Parent feedback continues to be positive regarding the Prep transition setup, allowing our new students to the school the opportunity to become more familiar with their surroundings and teachers. Prep transition continues with the first four Wednesdays of term one set aside for one on one assessment sessions. These sessions include a brief interview with parents followed by a range of assessment tools to assist with planning a curriculum related to student needs.

Students exiting the school for secondary placements leave for on average 19 different settings which include both Government and Non-Government schools. We work closely with surrounding schools and many students and

teachers receive a visit from staff from their future school so that information can be exchanged. Students participate in an orientation day at all settings.

In 2008, Year six graduation celebrated a vast majority of talents and skills. Students made movies, acted, sung, danced and played instruments. The entire night celebrated individuality and student initiative, a huge success!

### Retention rate between Years P & 6

During the past few years we have seen our upper school class's decrease in number while our lower classes have increased.

Other than grade six leavers from the school we had 56 students leave during the course of the year across the school.

- Prep, 6 - (11%)
- Year one, 7 - (12%)
- Year two, 16 - (29%),
- Year three, 10 - (18%),
- Year four, 14 - (25%)
- Year five, 3 - (5%)

While these numbers appear quite high, it has not resulted in an overall decrease in school numbers as we have slightly more students in 2009 than in 2008. In addition, the gender balance of leavers showed 10% more girls leaving the school than boys. Just as students leave during the year, students also enter the school and in 2008 we welcomed many new students to our school and some families from overseas.

It is important to us to retain students at all levels of the school, especially girls.



## Future Directions

This year we will be embarking on a Negotiated Review Process. Our goal is to provide many opportunities for community consultation regarding our future directions. We will be completing a self evaluation, followed by a review and last a strategic plan for the next four years. There will be goals in each area of this report i.e. 'Student Learning', 'Pathways and Transitions', and 'Student Wellbeing'.

Community consultation and feedback is essential to any school. We have many avenues for community participation. Our hope is that we will be able to engage members of our community more through community meetings, school council and school council sub committees, especially as we embark on our school review process.

Elsternwick Primary School is at a critical juncture in its progress towards provision of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning conditions. The first stage of our building works have been completed with further works anticipated in the next few years.

Building more flexible facilities prompts a question about 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. We have mentioned elsewhere in this report about the need for our young adolescent learners in our senior school to develop the independence and thinking skills required of learners today. Our need to incorporate new technologies into student learning is a given. Continuing to outfit all classrooms with interactive whiteboards as well as investigate the use of blogs and wikkis to track student learning should both stimulate and engage students.

Across all levels of the school, the use of accurate and up to date data to track student learning from day to day is equally important. Working with teachers to assist them in their use of such data is a goal. Using strategies such as 'looking at student work protocols', which began in the last year, will continue.

Ensuring that high standards are maintained in Literacy and Numeracy and that no students fall below the National benchmarks is critical. Again the use of data to see continuous improvement and to highlight instructional needs provides direction for the next year.

## Financial Performance and Position

At the conclusion of the 2008 financial year the school finished with an overall cash balance of \$500,106, which is \$6,000 less than 2007.

During the year we received additional grants from the Commonwealth and State Governments for building, professional learning and water tank projects. Our net operating surplus shows we are carrying forward some of these projects funds i.e. water tanks \$52,000 as well as insurance money to replace stolen laptops \$20,000 into 2009.

The Parents and Friends Association raised in excess of \$60,000 last year with the school fete a large part of this.

We spent a significant amount of funds on furniture and equipment in 2008 as we fitted out new learning areas, rebuilt our computer network, painted all portable classrooms, the school hall and the OSHC building and installed a new phone system.

We reduced our expenditure on salaries with the outsourcing of the OSHC to Quality Junior Programs. Our use of support services increased last year as contracted companies to provide technical support. In 2009 we are looking at a traineeship to reduce our costs in this area.

We continue to employ a school nurse with funds from voluntary contributions and increased our building fund by \$18,000.

School Council has approved a number of smaller building projects for 2009 including: new fencing along Montrose Street, shade sails over a playground, school signage, blinds for the new building and shifting the administration to the former art room. These projects at approximately \$130,000 are funded by last year's fundraising and our bank bills.

Our long term goals of the construction of gymnasium and the completion of the grounds master plan still remain the focus of major fundraising efforts. The recent announcement of the Commonwealth Government to build these facilities in primary schools will mean our efforts will hopefully shift to fitting out these facilities.

<b>Financial Performance – Operating Statement Summary for the year ending 31st December, 2008</b>	
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2008 Actual</b>
DE&T Grants	256,838
Commonwealth Government Grants	71,648
State Government Grants	104,434
Other	81,035
Locally Raised Funds	574,799
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>1,088,754</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Salaries and Allowances	104,403
Bank Charges	5,343
Consumables	94,934
Books and Publications	393
Communication Costs	33,463
Furniture and Equipment	197,649
Utilities	21,901
Property Services	125,177
Travel and Subsistence	0
Camps and Excursions	142,481
Administration	5,537
Health and Personal Development	1,721
Professional Development	15,631
Trading and Fundraising	103,569
Support/Service	152,836
Miscellaneous	0
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>1,005,038</b>
<b>Net Operating Surplus/- Deficit</b>	<b>83,716</b>
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	
Please note that the above amounts do not include any credit revenue or expenditure allocated or spent by the school through its Student Resource Package	

<b>Financial Position as at 31st December, 2008</b>	
<b>Funds Available</b>	<b>2008 Actual</b>
High Yield Investment Account	227,304
Official Account	12,990
Building Fund	62412
Bank Bills	197,400
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>500,106</b>
<b>Financial Commitments</b>	<b>2008 Actual</b>
School Operating Reserve	100,000
Co-operative Bank Account	62,412
Assets or Equipment Replacement < 12 months	20,000
Revenue Received in Advance	59,252
Building/Grounds including SMS < 12 months	50,000
Region /Clusters Funds/School Based Programs < 12 months	40,000
Other Recurrent Expenditure (Accounts Payable)	500
Assets or Equipment Replacement > 12 months	0
Building/Grounds including SMS > 12 months	165,142
Provision Accounts > 12 months	2,800
Co-operative loan >12 months	0
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	0
<b>Total Financial Commitments</b>	<b>400,106</b>

## School Contact Information

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Web site:	<a href="http://www.elsternwickps.vic.edu.au">www.elsternwickps.vic.edu.au</a>

This report contains summary data extracted from the School Level Report. If you would like to access the School Level Report, please contact (insert school contact details).

