

About Our School

School context

Cheltenham East Primary School (CEPS) is in a quiet residential zone, yet it remains close to a major shopping precinct and an extensive public transport system. In 2023 we had 49 staff working in a full-time or part-time capacity, including a Principal, Assistant Principal, 2 x Learning Specialists, 26 x classroom teachers, 5 x specialist teachers, 3 x intervention teachers and 8 x education support staff. The year ended with an enrollment of 419 students. There was a mix of different cultural backgrounds of students with 18% of students having English as an additional language. The school's socio-economic band value is 'low'. Our dynamic staff is a mix of new and experienced teachers who plan, implement and evaluate programs in a collaborative and collegiate environment. Open learning environments and flexible teaching spaces are utilised in addition to routine team planning and collaboration. All teachers apply the agreed Whole School Instructional Model to their teaching and deliver a variety of quality programs for our students. Classrooms display Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to focus and direct each lesson's learning and goals. Students are gaining confidence with articulating what they are learning and why, as well as how to self-monitor and assess their own progression. The foundation of the opportunities at Cheltenham East Primary School creates a pathway for students to experience the School Vision: *Cheltenham East students are empowered learners who are flexible thinkers, with the skills and knowledge to respond critically and creatively to their world.* Staff and parents at CEPS work together, underpinning our ideology of the school motto, 'Aim High'. Social and communication skills, as well as our school values of Courtesy, Cooperation, Respect and Responsibility are inherent across our curriculum, driven by our Positive School-wide Behaviour Program. CEPS has proven itself to be caring and supportive and a school that prides itself on high academic standards. To support this, we are currently promoting greater learner agency from Foundation to Year 6. Emphasis is placed on the students developing sound Literacy and Numeracy skills, as well as providing happy and safe experiences through our 'CEPS Kids Are Friendly Kids' and 'Positive School Wide Behaviour' wellbeing programs. The Literacy intervention team works with those students requiring additional support acquiring English skills, across the school and the Learning Tutor (TLI) provides Numeracy intervention. Students participate in weekly Italian, Physical Education, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, and Science (in a dedicated Lab) sessions, provided by individual specialist teachers in each domain. Inquiry Learning, and Library sessions are taught by classroom teachers, whilst all year levels access ICT resources that are integrated across our entire curriculum. A very active and supportive Parent Committee and School Council works alongside the staff to monitor and update policies in addition to fundraising and organising special events. Teachers make great efforts to connect learning with real-life experiences, which proves invaluable and promotes merit in maintaining strong partnerships with the established and broader community.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

In 2023 we achieved significant learning advancements in both Numeracy and Literacy, reflecting our ongoing pursuit of continually improving the teaching and learning for every child.

Numeracy Achievements: This year witnessed a notable surge in numeracy achievement data, which can be attributed to the school's implementation of Professor Di Siemon's 'Big Ideas' in Mathematics'. Through targeted professional development sessions, our teaching staff have begun integrating these conceptual frameworks into their pedagogical approaches. A pivotal initiative was the daily review of foundational math concepts, designed to increase the long-term retention of key mathematical understandings.

Literacy Achievements: Our ongoing commitment to a strong phonics and comprehension approach again yielded commendable results across all grade levels. This success was underpinned by evidence-based literacy intervention programs tailored to address the diverse needs of individual students. A key element of our approach was the improved alignment between intervention initiatives and classroom instruction, ensuring a cohesive and comprehensive learning journey for all learners. Central to our strategy was the enhancement of reading comprehension skills, facilitated through rigorous, evidence-based assessments. Through personalised instruction and support, we ensured that every student received the necessary support and guidance to excel in reading comprehension.

Goal - Support both those who need extra support and those who have thrived to continue to extend their learning, especially in numeracy.

In English, Reading and Viewing 90% of students achieved at or above age-expected standards which was above the State average of 86%. In Mathematics (Numeracy and Algebra) 90% of students achieved at or above age expected standards which was above the State average of 86%. These results are also comparative to our 'similar' and network' schools. In NAPLAN Year 3 (students in the 'exceeding or strong' proficiencies), the school achieved high learning gains compared to similar schools in: Reading 83% against 82% in Similar Schools, Writing 94% against 88% in Similar Schools, Spelling 82% against 73% in Similar Schools, Grammar and Punctuation 69% against 69% in Similar Schools. In Numeracy 83% against 81% in Similar Schools. In NAPLAN Year 5 (students in the top 2 bands), the school achieved high learning gains compared to Similar Schools in: Reading 89% against 89% in Similar Schools, Writing we were just below similar schools 81% against 85%, Spelling we were below similar schools 72% against 81%, Grammar and Punctuation we were just below similar schools 75% against 78. In Numeracy we were below Similar Schools 74% against 81% in Similar Schools.

Wellbeing

A structured three-tier CEPS Wellbeing Framework, inclusive of Respectful Relationships, was refined for implementation in 2023. Whilst the school had partnered with the Resilience Project, utilising lessons that encouraged a broader usage of gratitude, empathy, and mindfulness, the 2023 framework incorporated this resource with the Department of Education's Respectful Relationships series of lessons to support and promote respect and gender equality, reinforcing the learning of how to build healthy relationships. This assists students in developing problem-solving skills and building resilience and confidence. Our approach complements the existing school values of Courtesy, Respect, Cooperation, and Responsibility.

This year we initiated a partnership with Masters of Counseling students from Monash University. Two counsellors attended the school twice a week to service student needs in one-on-one counseling and small group work. Combined with the Respectful Relationships and CEPS Values lessons, the 2023 CEPS Wellbeing Framework provided evidence-based lesson resources, which are easily accessible for every learner and teacher in the school. This ensured that students were supported to improve their social, emotional, and academic learning.

The collective effort and endeavour in providing students with the necessary personal, and social, wellbeing skills, yielded some pleasing responses from students in the Attitude to School Survey results:

- 'Effective classroom behaviour' 86% endorsement, whilst Similar Schools achieved 79%.
- 'Respect for diversity' 82% endorsement, whilst Similar Schools achieved 78%.
- 'Attitudes to Attendance' 92% endorsement, whilst Similar Schools achieved 86%.
- Sense of Inclusion 92% endorsement, whilst Similar Schools achieved 89%.
- 'Student Voice and Agency' 76% endorsement, whilst Similar Schools achieved 67%

Even with these positive results, the school is addressing the engagement of students and how we can more proactively plan for 'student voice and agency' to drive engagement and curiosity in learning from F-6. The school continues to follow processes ensuring inclusion for all students to access equity in education, with learning support as a resource for funded children. Through the implementation of Individual Education Plans and Behaviour Support Plans across the school, we continue to build transparency between teachers and parents to work together to positively set and meet the best possible outcomes for our children, enhancing a trusting and ongoing working relationship with all families.

Engagement

Focus on Lunchtime Clubs

In addition to integrating the Respectful Relationships Program into our curriculum, We have also placed increased emphasis on providing diverse and engaging opportunities for student involvement outside of the classroom. One such initiative is the expansion of lunchtime clubs, which offer students a platform to pursue their interests, develop new skills, and forge meaningful connections with their peers. These extracurricular activities are led by our Year 6 students through the support of staff. They cater to a wide range of interests and preferences, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to engage in a positive lunchtime club experience.

Year 6 Elective Program

In line with our commitment to preparing students for the transition to secondary school, the Year 6 teachers introduced a Year 6 elective program aimed at providing students with a taste of secondary education while still in primary school. This program offered a selection of elective subjects, allowing students to explore their interests and strengths. This program emphasised student voice

and choice in their learning journey, empowering them to take ownership of their education. This not only boosted student engagement but also fostered a sense of autonomy and responsibility.

2023 AtoSS data highlighted positive increases as follows:

Sense of inclusion - 92% (similar schools 89% network 89% and state 88%)

Sense of connectedness - 80% (similar schools 80%, network 79% and state 77%)

Student voice and agency - 76% (similar schools 67%, network 69% and state 66%)

Student Attendance

In 2024 Cheltenham East PS currently records fewer absences than expected, against schools with a similar Student Family Occupation and Education. So far in 2024, we have observed a decrease in family holiday absences following a significant spike in 2022 and 2023. Our comparative data indicates 30% of students in Foundation-Year 6 at Cheltenham East PS having 20+ days absent in 2023, which is comparable to similar and network schools (also 30%) and well below the state at 36%. 2023 AtoSS data demonstrated an increase from 90% to 94% for 'I always try to attend school'.

The school regularly promotes attendance at school via Newsletter entries and at whole-school assembly presentations.

Classroom teachers contact relevant families to promote clear communication and refer to the Assistant Principal where further support is required. The Assistant Principal contacts families where non-attendance is a factor, to triage the support required and contact external agencies where appropriate.

Other highlights from the school year

At our school, fostering a strong sense of community connection and engagement is paramount, and we achieve this through a variety of activities throughout the year. Open classroom mornings and afternoons offered parents and guardians an opportunity to actively participate in their child's education, gaining insight into the learning environment and curriculum. The Term 1 community picnic brought together students, families, and staff in a relaxed setting, strengthening bonds within our school community. For students in Years 3-6, our school camps provided memorable experiences where they built/extended friendships, resilience, and outdoor skills. The end-of-year community concert showcased the talents of our students, promoting unity and celebration. Additionally, our students experienced a diverse range of incursions and excursions to complement classroom teaching, enriching students' learning beyond the school grounds.

Financial performance

The school's total operating revenue as at 31st December 2023 was \$4,660,471 comprising of the Student Resource Package, Department Grants, Commonwealth Government Grants and Locally Raised Funds. The total operating expenditure as at 31st December 2023 was \$4,584,966. The school finished the year with Total Funds Available of \$180,329. All expenditure in 2023 was kept within the proposed budget. Our generous and involved families contributed \$52,797 in curriculum contributions and \$38,611.25 in other contributions which enabled us to provide an enriched learning and teaching program for every student which is highly valued by our community. Our hardworking Parents Committee have continued their support of our school in a variety of ways, contributing \$28740.81 of our total locally raised funds through their fundraising efforts. Our Business Manager has done an excellent job of allocating funds for budgets across the school year and is to be congratulated on the reliable work done which dependably secures the school's financial management. Our Professional Learning Community leaders have effectively resourced their particular curriculum area budgets, inclusive of distributing funds for staff professional learning.

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