

2024 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Blackburn English Language School
(8747)



HOW TO READ THE ANNUAL REPORT

What does the *'About Our School'* commentary section of this report refer to?

The 'About our school' commentary provides a brief background on the school and an overview of the school's performance over the previous calendar year.

The 'School Context' describes the school's vision, values, and purpose. Details include the school's geographic location, size and structure, social characteristics, enrolment characteristics, and special programs.

The 'Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes, and student engagement' section allows schools to reflect on highlights related to implementation of and progress towards the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan, and efforts to improve student learning, wellbeing, and engagement.

What does the *'Performance Summary'* section of this report refer to?

The Performance Summary includes the following:

School Profile

- student enrolment information
- the school's 'Student Family Occupation and Education' category
- a summary of parent responses in the Parent Opinion Survey, shown against the statewide average for Language schools
- school staff responses in the area of School Climate in the School Staff Survey, shown against the statewide average for Language schools

Key terms used in the Performance Summary are defined below:

NDP and NDA

NDP' refers to no data being published for privacy reasons or where there are insufficient underlying data. For example, very low numbers of participants or characteristics that may lead to identification will result in an 'NDP' label.

'NDA' refers to no data being available. Some schools have no data for particular measures due to low enrolments. There may be no students enrolled in some year levels, so school comparisons are not possible.

Note that new schools only have the latest year of data and no comparative data from previous years. The department also recognises unique circumstances in Specialist, Select Entry, English Language, Community Schools and schools that changed school type recently, where school-to-school comparisons are not appropriate.

Performance Summary

The Performance Summary for government schools provides an overview of how this school is contributing to the objectives of the Education State and how it compares to other Victorian government schools.

All schools work in partnership with their school community to improve outcomes for children and young people. Sharing this information with parents and the wider school community helps to support community engagement in student learning, a key priority of the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes 2.0 (FISO 2.0).

Refer to the 'How to read the Annual Report' section for help on how to interpret this report.

SCHOOL PROFILE

Enrolment Profile

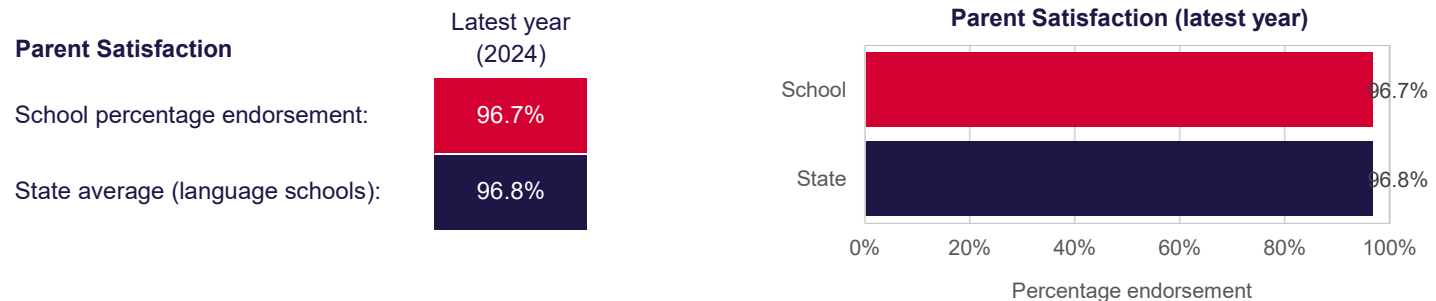
A total of 346 students were enrolled at this school in 2024, 146 female and 200 male.
100 percent of students had English as an additional language and 0 percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Overall Socio-Economic Profile

The overall school's socio-economic profile is based on the school's Student Family Occupation and Education index (SFOE).
SFOE is a measure of socio-educational disadvantage of a school, based on educational and employment characteristics of the parents/carers of students enrolled at the school. Possible SFOE band values are: Low, Low-Medium, Medium and High. A 'Low' band represents a low level of socio-educational disadvantage, a 'High' band represents a high level of socio-educational disadvantage.
This school's SFOE band value is: Medium

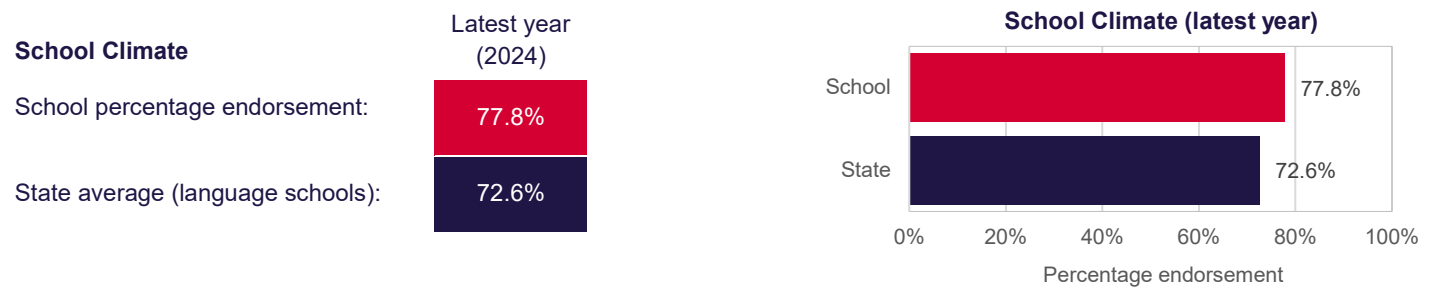
Parent Satisfaction Summary

The percentage endorsement by parents on their General School Satisfaction, as reported in the annual Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey.
Percentage endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from parents who responded to the survey.



School Staff Survey

The percentage endorsement by staff on School Climate, as reported in the annual School Staff Survey.
Percentage endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from staff who responded to the survey.
Data is suppressed for schools with three or less respondents to the survey for confidentiality reasons.



Financial Performance and Position

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER, 2024

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$7,796,470
Government Provided DET Grants	\$1,513,008
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$33,058
Government Grants State	\$0
Revenue Other	\$120,245
Locally Raised Funds	\$205,624
Capital Grants	\$300,000
Total Operating Revenue	\$9,968,405

Equity ¹	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$292,587
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage – Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$292,587

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ²	\$7,986,343
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$15,968
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$153,878
Communication Costs	\$13,928
Consumables	\$106,036
Miscellaneous Expense ³	\$51,886
Professional Development	\$56,227
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$138,477
Property Services	\$205,439
Salaries & Allowances ⁴	\$256,231
Support Services	\$175,132
Trading & Fundraising	\$5,941
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$0
Travel & Subsistence	\$11,097
Utilities	\$47,786
Total Operating Expenditure	\$9,224,370
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$744,034
Asset Acquisitions	\$249,241

- (1) The equity funding reported above is a subset of the overall revenue reported by the school.
- (2) Student Resource Package Expenditure figures are as of 03 Mar 2025 and are subject to change during the reconciliation process.
- (3) Miscellaneous Expenses include bank charges, administration expenses, insurance and taxation charges.
- (4) Salaries and Allowances refers to school-level payroll.

FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024

Funds available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$2,543,795
Official Account	\$36,919
Other Accounts	\$221
Total Funds Available	\$2,580,935

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$206,405
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$16,450
Provision Accounts	\$0
Funds Received in Advance	\$128,178
School Based Programs	\$0
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$53,186
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$100,000
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$1,655,789
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$400,000
Total Financial Commitments	\$2,560,007

All funds received from the Department of Education, or raised by the school, have been expended, or committed to subsequent years, to support the achievement of educational outcomes and other operational needs of the school, consistent with department policies, School Council approvals and the intent/purposes for which funding was provided or raised.

About Our School

School context

Blackburn English Language School (Blackburn ELS) delivers full-time, intensive English language programs to newly arrived students in metropolitan and rural areas of the North-Eastern Victoria Region. The school provides primary and secondary English language programs to students from a range of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The school vision is to provide an inclusive, rigorous and engaging learning environment for newly arrived students to develop their English language proficiency and empower them with the knowledge, skills and capabilities to be confident, active participants in the Victorian schooling system and broader community. The school values are Future Making - We strive to learn, grow and to build a positive future, Embracing Diversity - We celebrate and respect difference. Our differences unite and strengthen us, and Building Communities - We work and learn together. We care for and respect each other. The school purpose is to optimise student English language acquisition to best prepare them for the transition to mainstream educational settings. The school operates across three campuses: the Whitehorse Campus in Burwood East, a second campus, Maroondah Campus established in 2009 in Croydon North and a third campus in Wodonga on the grounds of the Wodonga Middle School College-Huon Campus, established in 2018. Students are eligible to enroll for a 6 month or 12-month program based on their visa code within six months of their arrival in Australia. Student numbers fluctuate in accordance with settlement patterns and Australian Government immigration policies. After the pause in migration due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2023-4 were time of re-establishing campuses in response to new patterns of immigration, with lower numbers of refugee migrants and shifts in settlement patterns due to housing, the cost of living and the availability of community supports for migrants. Whilst in 2021-2 programs were based at the Whitehorse campus and staff were engaged in the ETAC and ECEP programs, 2023 focused on re-opening and resourcing all campuses and supporting each to re-establish community networks and respond to new migrant intakes appropriately. In 2024 enrolments continued to increase steadily at all campuses, with 335 students across the school in term 1 and building over the year to 356 students in Term 4 (up from 226 in Term 1 2023 and 331 In Term 4 2023). Accordingly, staffing also increased from 62.4 equivalent full-time staff in 2023 to 65.52 in 2024: 3 Principal class, 5 Leading Teachers, 2 Learning Specialists 35 teachers and 20 Education Support staff. The total number of employees was 74. In 2024 enrolments continued to increase steadily at all campuses, with 335 students across the school in term 1 and building over the year to 356 students in Term 4.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

The school achievement goal is to optimise the English language learning of newly arrived students in preparation for mainstream school and participation in the broader community. Student progress against the EAL Victorian F-10 Curriculum of two or more stages in all language modes (S&L,R&V,W) was the standard measurement of expected progress. In 2024 the school identified that students newly arrived in Australia had highly varied experiences – many experienced extended periods of disruption to their learning in their home countries including long periods of online/remote learning and long periods of isolation. Consequently, teachers identified that students were challenged in a number of ways, including - learning and study habits, organisational skills, building and maintaining relationships with peers, general resilience in the face of the changes they experience and maintaining mental health and interacting positively in the classroom. For staff, 2024 also presented challenges in adapting to student learning needs and behaviours. Our focus for the 2024 school year was therefore rebuilding, induction and supporting new staff over time, re-establishing collaborative practices and positive learning environments to optimize learning. Learning specialists focused on supporting new staff with effective classroom practices and the new arrivals curriculum. Effective and meaningful PLCs and formative assessment to assess and monitor learning were a focus that was very well received by staff. Pleasingly, teacher judgement of student achievement data showed expected levels of learning gain with some areas warranting attention in 2025, and staff reported favorably on collaboration to improve EAL teaching practice achieve these outcomes. The school had 2 students assessed on the PSD in 2024 for hearing and was successful in resourcing for hearing impairment. A number of students who showed difficulties with learning and/or engagement were supported and monitored through an IEP or BSP and their next schools were provided with specific observations and evidence to support individual learning needs moving forward. Leadership was placed at Wodonga campus over the year, to support the campus and for teaching due to staff shortages in the area. This improved EAL practice at the campus and ensured the continuity of the program for most of the year.

Wellbeing

The school Wellbeing goal is to create a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment for all students. In supporting the settlement of newly-arrived families, the school recognizes key transition points for students - on enrollment at Blackburn ELS, movement from class to class during their time at the school and in moving onto mainstream schooling at the end of their program. The school role to induct students into our program, build their understanding of the school values and behavioural expectations were a strong focus. In 2023-24 as a result of interruptions to student schooling prior to arrival in Australia, students displayed greater challenges in establishing and sustaining friendships, resolving conflicts, turn taking and sharing and demonstrating respect both in face to face interactions

and in online communications. During 2024 the school focused on implementing a positive behaviours framework with accompanying agreements and routines, with the school values as a central component of classroom expectations. Departments of Education's *Effective Teaching and Learning Practices for Behaviour* will continue to guide and embed this work. The school's previous foci on also supported: Respectful Relationships curriculum which aids students in understanding cultural and legal norms in Australian institutions and the broader society; the renewed Health Curriculum to build student understanding and support their transition to mainstream schools; forums with parents to introduce them to the Victorian education system, enunciate our school values and expected behaviours, providing parents with clarity and strategies to support their children's learning in partnership with the school. The school deepened its work in this area in 2024 as it experienced more challenging wellbeing and classroom behaviours than in previous years. From Term 1, the school implemented Active Schools and strengthened its physical activity in both daily and weekly activities; a positive behaviours framework with staff and increased resourcing for those with additional needs. In the context of an intensive program, learning, ability and behavioural needs were identified swiftly and support plans were developed and monitored closely so as to provide support for students both at the school and as they moved to the next setting.

The wellbeing team was expanded and strengthened in 2024 with a wellbeing coordinator and mental health practitioner at each campus. The team developed and trialled a Wellbeing Check In survey for year 4 and above, enabling the school to consider student wellbeing data twice each term as well as comparative data across the year. This has enabled the wellbeing team to review and realign the work according to needs and highlighted the vulnerability of International students who live in a homestay arrangement.

Engagement

Student engagement is critical for positive learning outcomes particularly for students new to Australian schooling and new to English language instruction. Continuous references to the values the school holds and promulgates assists students to be collaborative, collegiate, diligent learners focused on positive outcomes for themselves and their classmates. A positive behaviours framework layered over the values, enables students to acquire behaviours that support their development as learners and as young people, and create a positive learning climate for all students. Student attendance rates very highly in comparison to state averages. Lateness can be an issue as students and their families navigate public and private transport challenges as they adapt to a new city. The school is assiduous in following up on lateness and absenteeism and informing parents of the importance of students arriving at school each day ready for learning. Over the year, the school supported one student with significant absence working with the family to reduce anxiety and build a routine of attendance prior to moving to the next school. The school emphasis in establishing a safe and supportive learning environment whereby trust and respect are built, enables students to take risks with their learning. This is critical as learners need to experiment with language and in the acquisition phase will express unconventional grammatical

forms, pronunciation variations and idiosyncratic speech and writing amongst other errors. Errors are seen as growth opportunities. Critical aspects for effective engagement lie with accurate and continuous assessment of student need and student growth. This consistent engagement relies on the delivery of learning at point of need, so learners are challenged and extended as required. Aspirational student goal setting and effective teacher feedback also play an important role here in providing clarity to ensure learning is targeted and responsive. Overall, the great majority of students approach their learning of English enthusiastically and see the long-term benefit of maximising this opportunity to build a strong foundation for their future.

Other highlights from the school year

Enrolments increased over the year at all campuses. The school successfully employed new staff and is working to improve their skills in EAL teaching and learning for newly arrived students. The school worked at accommodating changing learning and behaviour needs of cohorts across campuses as each campus rebuilds. Term 1 saw Harmony Day celebrations highlighting our multi-cultural, multilingual school in the context of a diverse Australia. A focus on sports and being active has improved students' health and wellbeing. The introduction of art in secondary classes across the school has shown the power of creativity and expression in the context of learners who are grappling with identity in a culture and language that is new to them. Revival of our swimming program across each campus provides opportunities for newly arrived learners to gain an understanding of water safety and develop or build upon swimming skills. Excursion programs each term in both sectors included our three-day city program for secondary learners in terms 2 and 4. Parent engagement in open classroom and attendance at school information sessions/parenting sessions and parent teacher meetings were strong and feedback was positive. Change in principal class personnel was managed well over the course of the year. A concept plan for the works at Whitehorse campus including renovation of student toilets in the breezeway and conversion of the hall into a library was approved by School Council. A proposal for a school-funded project managed by the Victoria Schools Building Authority was submitted at the end of 2024 and the school hopes the designs and process for completion will be finalized in 2025. In mid 2024, office areas were carpeted and painted to align them to the quality and style of work completed in 2022-3.

Financial performance

The school is in a favourable financial position. Some reserve funds are available to complete future works across campuses. The school posted a surplus at the end of the 2024 school year which is allocated to further improvements across the school. The surplus was due to a number of factors – in 2022 the school's campuses had been funded so as to be prepared to respond to the return of migration across the school year, however the campuses remained closed for the duration of the 2022 school year due to low numbers at Maroondah and Wodonga. Due to changes in student needs, in 2024 equity

funding was allocated providing higher levels of support in wellbeing and transition and ongoing pedagogical and curriculum development needs in response to changes to student cohorts and needs due to the impacts of the pandemic. The school has continued to allocate wellbeing staff and increase the number of teacher aides supporting learning and inclusion in classrooms using equity funding to support students at each campus effectively and equitably.

**For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at
<http://www.blackburnels.vic.edu.au>**