




**BERRY
STREET
SCHOOL**

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2023**



Acknowledgement

The Berry Street School acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies, and waterways across Australia. We pay our deepest respects to Elders resting in the dreamtime, and to the Elders of today, who will continue to care, protect and nurture Traditional Lands that we gather on to learn and connect.

Berry Street has learnt that connection to Countries, cultures and communities facilitates pride in identity, resilience and healing. We also acknowledge the diversity present in each community and between communities. We are committed to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to connect to their heritages, languages, storytelling, dreaming and songlines.

The Berry Street School acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures date back 60,000 years and that sovereignty has never been ceded. We recognise that we operate on stolen land and recognise the impact invasion and colonisation has had and continues to have on people, land, seas and skies. We will remain committed to ensuring that all staff and students understand our true history as an organisation and nation. It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.



Our Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

Berry Street strives to be a diverse and inclusive organisation; one where staff, children, young people, families and carers can have a sense of connection and belonging. For connection and belonging to be experienced by everyone, we will make sure there is time and space to listen deeply. The lived experiences of people of all identities and from all backgrounds will be at the centre of our organisation.

We will celebrate the strength of each person's unique identity. This includes Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from LGBTIQ+ communities, people with disabilities, and people from multicultural and/or multifaith backgrounds.

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Our School

The Berry Street School is a fee-free Specialist, Independent Secondary School with campuses located in Narre Warren, Morwell, Shepparton, and Ballarat. The School operates to educate children with a history of adverse childhood experiences who are at risk of disengaging from their education. The School adopts a trauma-informed approach to teaching and learning and puts the needs of students at the centre of everything we do. Our School's vision is to create and sustain a safe and inclusive learning community where our students have access to high-quality education so they can thrive, achieve and belong.



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

History

2023 marked 20 years of the Berry Street School with the first campus opening in Noble Park in 2003. Through a series of local developments in Gippsland, the Morwell campus opened in 2006. Similarly, local approaches ultimately led to opening the Shepparton campus in 2012 and the Ballarat campus in 2017. Since then, both the Morwell and Noble Park Campuses have relocated to meet demand and/or the unique needs of our students, this included the relocation of the Noble Park campus to Narre Warren in 2022.

Enrolments

Over time, the criteria for admission to the Berry Street School broadened from its focus on residential care, to where students must be of secondary school age and meet the following criteria:

— show evidence that mainstream education is not appropriate:

— have a history of disrupted learning and sustained school absence due to school refusal, suspension and/or expulsions

— have not responded to interventions and supports provided in a mainstream setting

— experience social and/or emotional difficulties

— have experienced adverse childhood experiences

— want to be enrolled at the Berry Street School and agree to follow the School's Code of Conduct, as well as other policies and procedures.

Curriculum

The Berry Street School adheres to standards set by the Victorian and Federal Governments. We offer the Victorian Curriculum for years 7-10 and the Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major (VCE VM) and the Victorian Pathway Certificate (VPC) for Senior Secondary.

Contact Details

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Statement of Democratic Principles

The Berry Street School is committed to the principles of Australian democracy. Under schedule 4, clause 1 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic), the principles of Australian democracy include a commitment to:

- elected government
- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech and association
- the values of openness and tolerance.

ACTING CEO'S REPORT



“

There was much to be proud of in 2023 as we acknowledged 20 years of the School's operation and were able to reflect on the School's inception in 2003.”

Jenny McNaughton Acting CEO

At Berry Street, we believe in children, young people, families and their future – and that they should be safe, thriving and hopeful. We know the coming years hold significant challenges as we see the ongoing growth and demand for our services. This knowledge has driven our 2023–2026 Strategic Plan which addresses how Berry Street will advocate for, drive and implement the changes needed. We will strive to reform the systems on which children, young people and families rely for support, so that they are effective, inclusive and culturally safe. We will continue to utilise the best evidence – including the voice of lived experience – to inform our work. We will grow the organisation sustainably so we can support more of those who need it.

One of Berry Street's strategic initiatives is to grow our services to respond to community need – with a focus on education. With our relocation from Noble Park to Narre Warren in 2022, our Narre Warren Campus has allowed us to increase the numbers of students that we can support within the area, as the demand for our School grows.

There was much to be proud of in 2023 as we acknowledged 20 years of the School's operation and were able to reflect on the School's inception in 2003. Against the backdrop of a Victorian Government audit of residential care in 2001 – which reported that 26% of young people in residential care had been excluded from school permanently; that only 47% of 13-year-olds in residential care were enrolled in school; and that only 18% of 16-to-18-year-olds were enrolled in Year 11 or 12 – Berry Street decided to create a new type of school environment that would be better suited to the needs of these young people. The first Berry Street School campus opened in Noble Park in July 2003. Since then, the Berry Street School has evolved into a well-respected multi-campus school and is recognised as a leader in trauma-informed education, supporting over 200 students across the state of Victoria each year.

We have seen the school continue to expand and respond to emerging needs over the past 20 years. A vital part of our success can be attributed to our dedicated school staff, our parents/guardians/carers and our supporters within the community. We are also grateful for the support from donors who enable us to add to how we effectively contribute to our students learning and wellbeing. The dedication and partnerships developed through these relationships allows us to continue supporting our students to thrive, achieve and belong at the Berry Street School.



26%

YOUNG PEOPLE IN RESIDENTIAL CARE EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL PERMANENTLY

47%

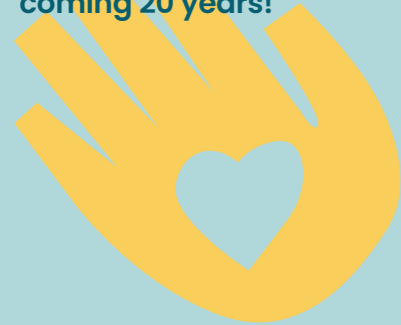
13 YEAR OLDS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE WERE ENROLLED IN SCHOOL

18%

16 TO 18 YEAR OLDS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE WERE ENROLLED IN YEAR 11 OR 12

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

This year has been one to celebrate for the Berry Street School, with one of our major achievements being our 20th year of operation as a school. To celebrate this occasion, the School held an event which gathered together our past and present staff members from both the School and wider organisation, as well as board members, donors, representatives from Independent Schools Victoria and other key stakeholders who have contributed to the School's success over its 20 years of operation. An informative history of the School's inception and operation was shared by our CEO at the event. We also reflected on the School's growth and development over time and further opportunities as we look forward to the coming 20 years!



With our campuses located in geographically diverse locations, separated by hundreds of kilometres, we continue to find ways to unite our school staff and students in creative ways. One such way we gathered in 2023, was at the School's second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Launch through Narragunnawali. Each campus began the launch with a Welcome to Country on Yorta Yorta, Wadawurrung, Bunurong and Gunaikurnai Country which was followed by an online event attended by students and staff at each campus, our CEO and other relevant community members and stakeholders. The online event included a student-produced video that captured footage at each campus and highlighted students sharing about what reconciliation means to them.

Another opportunity for a whole school gathering saw our students travel from each campus to a central location, the Melbourne Sports and Aquatics Centre, to participate in our annual cross-campus Basketball Tournament. This year, our winners were our Narre Warren students. The campuses continue to develop this sense of community across the school with more events scheduled in 2024 to foster this sense of connection and belonging, including a Camp for our Senior Students to attend together at a central location.

Throughout 2023, we partnered with the Berry Street Education Model and Take Two Teams to contribute to several government submissions; including the *Review to inform a Better and Fairer Education System – Consultation Paper* and the *Parliamentary Inquiry into the State Education System*. We also welcomed the Commission for Children and Young People's report on the experiences of Children in out of Home Care with Education in the *Let us Learn Report*, which featured the voices of young people from the Berry Street School. We see our contributions to these submissions as vital advocacy for our students, young people and families to receive equity in educational opportunities.

2023 was our final year of delivering the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and we saw 10 students graduate with their VCAL Certificate. Throughout this year, we also began delivering both the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) and the Victorian Certificate of Education – Vocational Major (VCE VM). We had two students graduate with their VCE VM, which is a huge achievement. We look forward to supporting more students to graduate with these new certificates in 2024.

It was a pleasure to attend each of the Campus's Graduation and Celebration events at the end of 2023, where students, families, carers, loved ones and supporters of our school gathered together to celebrate the achievements of our students. And with 12 students graduating in 2023, there was much to celebrate! As a school community, we are proud of the persistence, dedication and commitment of these graduating students, as we are of all of our students. We are grateful for the ongoing support from families and carers, and our dedicated staff who work in partnership to achieve positive outcomes.

“

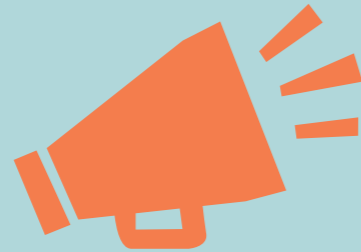
It was a pleasure to attend each of the Campus's Graduation and Celebration events at the end of 2023, where students, families, carers, loved ones and supporters of our school gathered together to celebrate the achievements of our students.”

Rebecca Robinson
Principal



20

YEARS OF BERRY STREET SCHOOL 2003-2023



Design created by Lauren,
Morwell Student

Beginnings

Against the backdrop of a Victorian Government audit of residential care in 2001 – which reported that 26% of young people in residential care had been excluded from school permanently; that only 47% of 13-year-olds in residential care were enrolled in school; and that only 18% of 16-to-18-year-olds were enrolled in Year 11 or 12 – Berry Street decided to create a new type of school environment that would be better suited to the needs of these young people.

In Berry Street's Southern region, where 66% of young people in its residential care were not attending school, Berry Street decided to establish a small school in the southern metropolitan suburbs of Melbourne. The founding philosophy of the school, which remains effectively unchanged to this day, read:



All young people have the right to education. We believe that school plays a central role in personal and social development and that positive school experiences help to empower young people. (The Berry Street School) seeks to empower students, who, for a variety of reasons, do not currently enjoy equality of opportunity in relation to education."

In 2002, with generous support from the Felton Bequest, the *Berry Street Victoria Education School and Training (B.E.S.T.)* Centre was established in a former factory in Noble Park. The Centre was registered as an independent school and opened to students for the first time in July 2003. The inaugural school Principal, Aidan Burns, echoed the school's belief in young people with his comments *"most people don't know these kids exist. These kids are smart. You've got to be smart to survive on the streets. What we want to give them is a better future."* The official opening of the school by Sir Gustav Nossal AC, CBE, FAA, FRS took place on 17 March 2004.

Growth & Development

By 2006, a second school campus had opened in Morwell called BEST@The Shed, which also became a registered school. Over the next five years, the B.E.S.T. centres gradually matured as secondary schools, broadened their focus beyond young people in residential care, and started to become known as the *Berry Street School*.

In 2011, the Leaps and Bounds alternative education program, which was run from Berry Street's Kaiela office at Reedy Swamp Road, Shepparton, drew public praise from Victorian Child Safe Commissioner Bernie Geary OAM as "a fantastic program" and served as a case study in the inaugural Flexible Learning and Alternative Education forum in Victoria. In the following year, this became the third campus of the Berry Street School.

From 2010 to 2014, the School began to change its operating model, setting it on the course to becoming the model school it is today. In 2010, Berry Street Victoria began exploring ways to implement and embed a new trauma-informed approach to education called the *Berry Street Education Framework* (later the *Berry Street Education Model*) which the school further developed and refined through implementation. In 2014, following a strategic review, the schools came together under a single leadership structure headed by a new statewide School Principal role – a milestone on its journey towards becoming a single integrated school.

By 2016, Berry Street had committed to opening a fourth campus in Ballarat in response to a perception of its Grampians Region staff that many school age children in the area were not attending school. Following a feasibility and scoping study, and with the benefit of philanthropic contributions, the Berry Street School opened its Sebastopol location for the start of the 2017 school year where it continues to operate today.

In 2019, the school decided to relocate its original Noble Park campus to a new facility which would be more fit-for-purpose which was completed in 2021 when the School relocated to the nearby suburb of Narre Warren.

The School Today

From its relatively small beginnings, the Berry Street School has evolved into a respected multi-campus school and is recognised as a leader in trauma-informed education. At the time of writing, the school serves 250 students with complex learning needs, and it is a fee-free, independent, flexible 7-12 school in Victoria.

Berry Street believes that children, young people and families should be safe, thriving and hopeful. The School's translation of this belief is that all children have the right to a high-quality education that supports them to **Thrive, Achieve** and **Belong**. The Berry Street School helps children impacted by trauma, disrupted attachment, social disadvantage or disengagement from school to learn; it welcomes students of any cultural background, gender, sexuality, ability or faith; and delivers highly inclusive, responsive and person-centred education for students from diverse communities.

"...most people don't know these kids exist. These kids are smart. You've got to be smart to survive on the streets. What we want to give them is a better future..."



“

Being in the RAP working group and attending workshops has provided me with ideas on enacting culturally responsive teaching.”

Teacher Narre Warren

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

2023 saw Berry Street School officially launch its second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) through Reconciliation Australia’s Narragunnawali program. Our second RAP was a result of months of planning by the RAP Working Group, which revised and built upon the first RAP. Our second RAP has an increased focus on cultural safety, connection to Country, anti-racism and allyship, and the voice and agency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To reach our vision for reconciliation, we are committed to:

- cultural safety
- anti-racism and allyship
- establishing and maintaining relationships with community
- cultural learning for all students and staff
- cultural Plans that prioritise connection to Country and community
- celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures all year
- prioritising voice and agency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Acknowledgement to Trent Frost (Gunaikurnai and Barkindji), Bek Wright (Gunaikurnai) and Cayleb Martin (Gunaikurnai), with support from local artist Montana McStay, for producing the beautiful student artworks which adorn the RAP. Each artwork tells a story for the student.

For the official launch, each Berry Street School campus began with a Welcome to Country on Yorta Yorta, Wadawurrung, Bunurong and Gunaikurnai Country. Community members from each Country were invited to attend. This was followed by an online event. Berry Street School teacher, Mel Hoffman supported a team of students to produce a video that captured footage at each campus and highlights students’ sharing what reconciliation means to them. Following the online event, each campus hosted a morning tea that featured food from local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander businesses.

OPINION SURVEYS

Student Survey

We value student voice and feedback on how we can improve to help our students to thrive, achieve and belong. An online survey is one of many ways in which we collect student feedback. Our students are invited to complete an anonymous opinion survey adapted from the Attitudes to School Survey (AtoSS) by the Department of Education and Training (DET). The results from the survey are presented below in Figure 1. Each year we review the data and respond by identifying areas of action. As you can see in Figure 1 our actions have resulted in improved outcomes across all areas surveyed.

Parent, Carer, Guardian Opinion Survey (PCGOS)

Working in close partnership with parents, guardians and carers is key to supporting our students' needs. We take great pride in fostering an inclusive environment where families and community members are treated with respect and empowered to have a say about our school's approach to supporting students. We are pleased to see that this commitment is reflected in strong survey results across all campuses, with average scores across the three key areas exceeding 4.6. A more detailed breakdown of average results by domains is presented in Figure 3.

Employee Engagement Survey

Every two years Berry Street conducts an Employee Engagement Survey to ensure continual improvement is made to the engagement and satisfaction of employees. Berry Street seeks to create a workplace where everyone is safe, welcomed and feels like they belong. Engagement is a measure of people's connection and commitment to the organisation and its goals. By improving engagement, we improve performance, innovation, retention and attraction of talent. Most importantly, staff are better able to maintain positive mental health. The areas highlighted below are the key areas the Berry Street School is excelling in.

90%

'I am proud to work at Berry Street'

94%

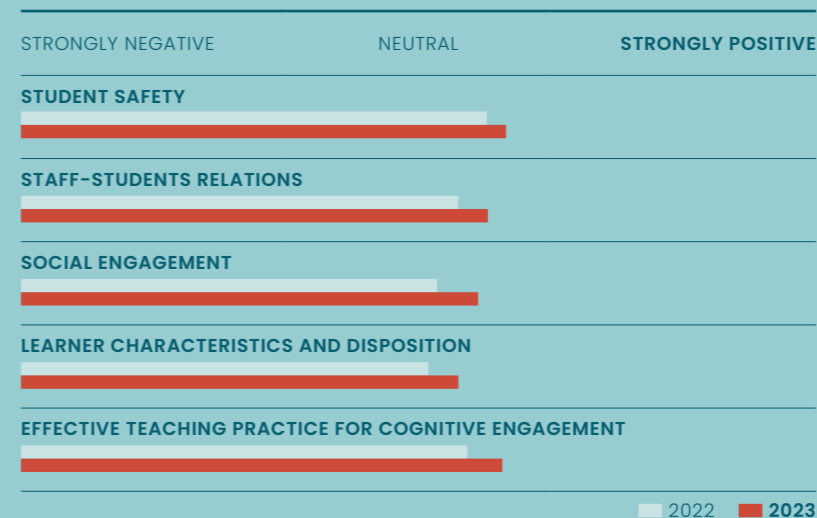
I know I can report a concern in relation to discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment

90%

I know how my work contributes to the goals of Berry street.

The school also identified areas for opportunity and improvement in these Employee Engagement Survey results. A particular area of focus was in the area of enablement - ensuring information needed for staff to do their job effectively is readily available. After identifying this as an opportunity across the school, a change implemented was including a description in the staff handbook of each role within the school to increase role clarity and accountability.

FIGURE 1: AVERAGE STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS OVER TIME (2023)



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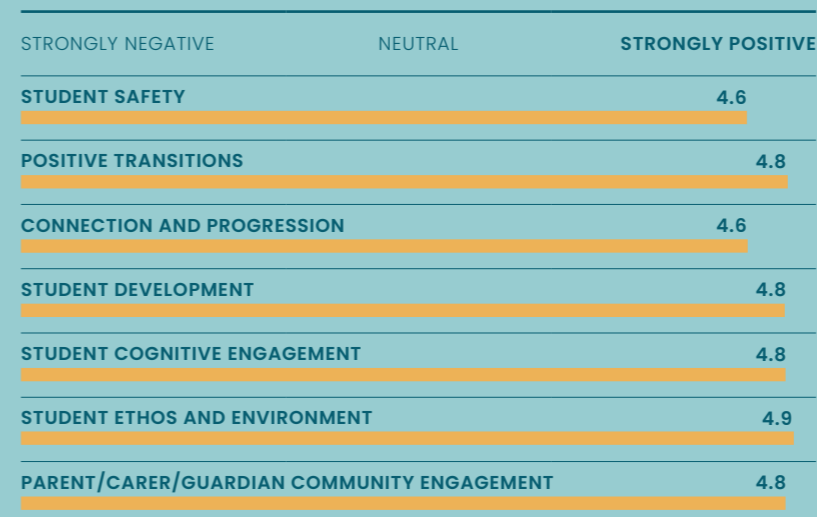
I learn here, I learn a lot more than what I did at a mainstream school.

Student Survey Response 2023

FIGURE 2: AVERAGE PCGOS RESULTS ACROSS THREE AREAS (2023)

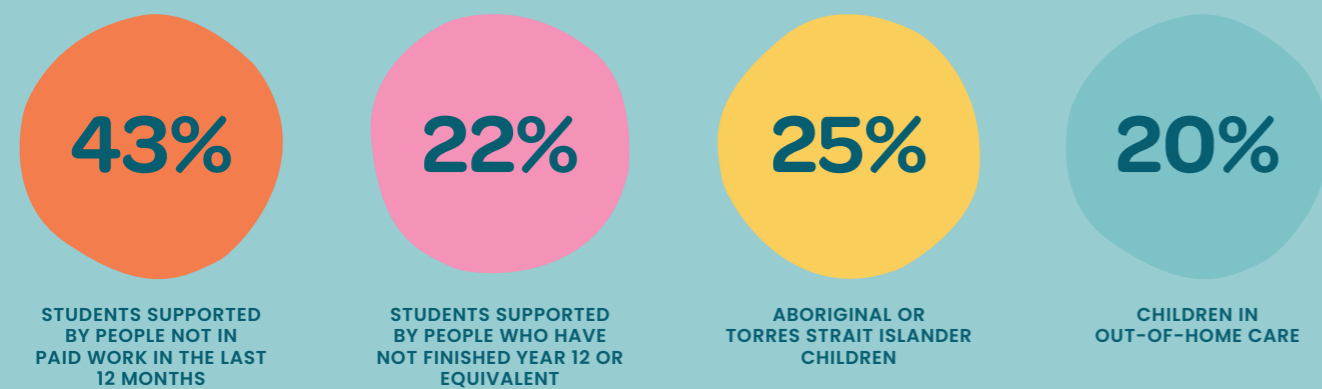


FIGURE 3: AVERAGE PCGOS RESULTS (2023)



1. Our School adopts the Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey (PCGOS) survey developed by the Department of Education and Training (DET) to monitor our engagement with families. The survey results are reported on a 5-point scale (1 = 'Strongly disagree', 2 = 'Disagree', 3 = 'Neither agree nor disagree', 4 = 'Agree' and 5 = 'Strongly agree').

OUR STUDENT BODY



Characteristics of our Student Body

In August of 2023, we recorded 212.3 FTE student enrolments across four campuses. This compares with a total enrolment of 194 students in August 2022.

FIGURE 4: GENDER IDENTITY OF STUDENTS, 2023

	%
Male	48
Female	38
Non Binary	4

At the Berry Street School, we have a strong focus on supporting communities contending with systemic educational inequity:

43% of our students are supported by parents/guardians/carers who have not been in paid work in the last 12 months

22% of our students are supported by parents/guardians/carers who have not finished Year 12 or equivalent.

We believe that students should feel safe to bring any aspects of their identity to school that matters to them. We are proud to support students from diverse backgrounds and life experiences, including:

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children

Approximately one in four (a quarter) of our students are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Children with disability

Many of our students experience a social/emotional and/or sensory disability and the school makes extensive adjustments for their learning.

Children who are a member of the LGBTQIA+ community

Our School provides a safe and inclusive learning community for students from the LGBTQIA+ community. Campuses run student-led groups for LGBTQIA+ young people and allies.

Children in out-of-home care

Approximately 1 in 5 of our students are in out-of-home care.

We celebrate the diversity of our student population by providing a positive and respectful learning environment underpinned by a curriculum that is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion through educational opportunities.

FINANCIAL REPORT

2023 CALENDAR YEAR RESULTS JANUARY TO DECEMBER	ACTUAL YTD
Revenue from operating activities	\$
Private income	
Investment Income	97,443.40
Donations	143,485.04
State Govt Recurrent Grants	3,509,095.01
Comm Govt Recurrent Grants	11,066,234.99
State Capital Grants	16,588.00
Total revenue	14,832,846.44
Expenditure from operating activities	
Salaries - General Teaching Staff	4,140,221.13
Salaries - All Other Staff	2,969,912.09
Other Staff Related Expenses	451,159.81
Superannuation	757,376.26
Leave Provisions	260,525.53
Total Salaries	8,579,194.82
Operating Expenses	3,104,271.35
Building and Grounds Operations	365,847.03
Rent and Lease Expenses	439,271.94
Depreciation	440,831.41
Total non-salaries	4,350,221.73
Total expenses	12,929,416.55
Total operating surplus	1,903,429.89

CERTIFICATION BY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL — REBECCA ANN ROBINSON 23 MAY 2024

I hereby certify that the above statement gives a true and fair view of the income expenditure of the Berry Street School Program for the period indicated and that funds have been used in accordance with the Service Delivery Agreement.

Our Teaching & Learning



At the Berry Street School growth and achievement is measured in many ways. Throughout 2023 we have focused on imbuing our data collection and assessment with evidence-based practise; from the BSEM model to measure and support social and emotional growth, to Essential Assessment to measure and support academic growth, and Macqlit to support accelerated literacy growth in students identified for intervention. Our staff have used this information to ensure our students learning opportunities are rich and relevant to them. Through this our students have demonstrated incredible growth and achievement.

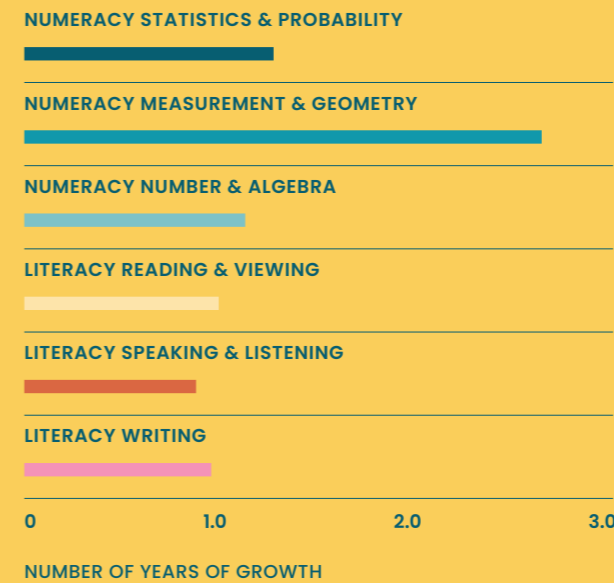
Assessment

Students in years 7-10 continue to be assessed twice per semester in the areas of Numeracy, Reading and Viewing, and Writing on Essential Assessment. The data from this Victorian Curriculum-aligned tool is analysed alongside teacher judgement and other assessments to inform teachers' planning and instruction. Several other reading assessment tools were researched this year, with trials underway across campuses for implementation in 2024. Evidence-based assessment across the school enables staff to better understand students' needs and meet them where they are at with their learning.

Figure 5 below demonstrates the average growth for students in years 7 – 10 on a full timetable from the start of Semester 1 2023 to the end of Semester 2 2023. One unit of growth represents one year of expected progress benchmarked against the Victorian Curriculum standards.

2023 Attainment Growth Full time students - attending full year

FIGURE 5: AVERAGE STUDENT GROWTH IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN 2023



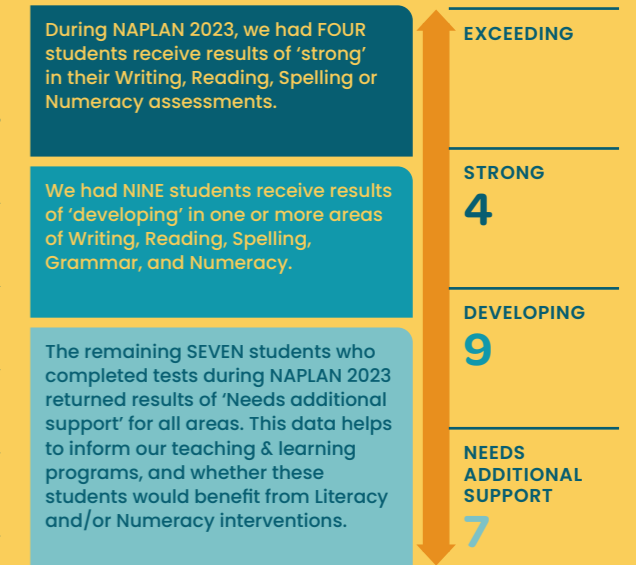
Note: Data includes students that were included in attainment assessments in both semester 1 and 2.

National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

This year we had more students than ever participate in NAPLAN, with 14 students completing at least one area of the testing. Of these 14 students, six sat all four assessments – Writing, Reading, Conventions and Language and Numeracy. A total of 20 assessments were completed.

NAPLAN results are now assessed differently, which means results from 2023 onwards cannot be directly compared with results from 2008 to 2022. This is because the measurement scales have been reset to take advantage of all students now taking the tests online (except Year 3 writing), the enhanced assessment properties of the online NAPLAN tests, particularly the tailored test design, and because students are now assessed earlier in the year (March not May).

FIGURE 6: NAPLAN RESULTS



OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Senior Secondary Certificates

2023 saw the Senior Secondary Certificate reform enter our classrooms with senior secondary students participating in a combination of teach out for the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and introduction to the Victorian Certificate of Education Vocational Major (VCE VM) and the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC). We celebrated our first two graduates from the VCE VM.

At each campus, our senior secondary students participated in Vocation and Educational Training, work experience, and Structured Workplace Learning. Figure 7 presents a snapshot of our senior secondary data for 2023.

We look forward to seeing our students continue to thrive, achieve and belong with the new subject offerings and format in years to come.

FIGURE 7: SENIOR SECONDARY ATTAINMENT DATA

CATEGORY	STUDENT COUNT
Students enrolled in VCE VM, VPC or VCAL (across Year 10 – 12)	65
Students with successful VCE VM completion	2
Students with successful VCAL Intermediate completion	10
Students enrolled in VET certificates (at least one Unit of Competency)	49
Students who participated in Structured Workplace Learning	5

Note: The statistics presented above capture students included in August Census 2023.

MacqLit

MacqLit is an explicit and systematic reading intervention program for small groups of older low-progress readers, including all the key components of effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (MultiLit, 2023). Modelling phonics to students – a key part of the MacqLit program – has been shown to improve sentence comprehension and reading accuracy (Macdonald, 2010; Montgomery et al., 2018).

In 2023, 19 young people across our Ballarat, Morwell and Narre Warren Campuses engaged in the MacqLit program, demonstrating persistence, bravery and significant reading growth.



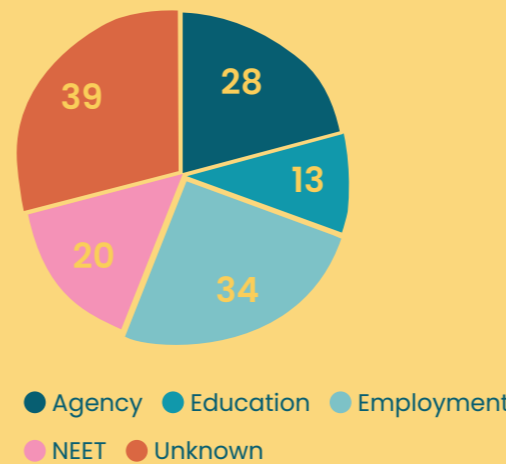
I love doing MacqLit because I can now read out loud better and with more fluency.

Student
Morwell

Student Futures

Destination data is collected from past students through 6 monthly phone calls over 18 months after leaving the school. This is a valuable opportunity for us to continue to engage with our students and celebrate the successes of their achievements after moving on from the Berry Street School.

FIGURE 8: DESTINATION DATA



Note: Based on school leavers between 2019–2023 destination data
Agency – Employment & Job Seeking with an agency
NEET – Not engaged in employment, education or training

Student Attendance

The Berry Street School is committed to upholding the Education Training Reform Act 2006 which outlines the requirement of school aged children to be engaged in education, in a way that is conducive to learning for young people who face significant barriers. Figure 9 summarises attendance data for timetabled students across the whole school for 2023.

Ensuring that students attend school each day is a shared expectation of all students, parents/guardians/carers and the wider School community. We aim to remove all barriers to attendance including transport to school, provision of breakfast, morning tea and lunch for students, and all school materials.

Staff, including dedicated wellbeing team members, follow up on absences by:

- Promoting the importance of attendance through School Newsletters, Student Support Group Meetings, with regular reviews of student attendance in these meetings

- Identifying and following up unexplained absences

- Contacting parent/carers/guardians of student on the day of absence

- Following a process of reengagement, including outreach, adjusted timetables and additional SSG meetings should absences continue.

FIGURE 9: AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE FOR TIMETABLED SESSIONS, 2023

YEAR LEVELS	ATTENDANCE
Year 7	77%
Year 8	68%
Year 9	64%
Year 10	59%
Year 11	53%
Year 12	61%
WHOLE SCHOOL	63%

Note: Some of our students are on adjusted timetables. The data above reflects attendance at timetabled sessions.

STUDENT WELLBEING

At the Berry Street School, we adopt a range of proactive and pre-emptive approaches to supporting our students' wellbeing, including:

our relationship-based practice grounded in unconditional positive regard for our students

the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) which underpins everything we do, providing a structured vision of wellbeing in the school community

a calm and caring environment with small class sizes and high staff-to-student ratio

a highly individualised learning experience with all students following their own Individual Education Plans, Focus Plans, and flexible timetabling where needed, as well as additional specialist supports such as access to therapeutic services

high expectations and a culture of support with an emphasis on applied learning and work preparedness

working closely not only with students, but also with their families/guardians/carers and other services to make sure all students have the right supports in place to succeed.

In addition, we have dedicated specialist team members who focus on supporting student wellbeing:

Wellbeing Team – Each campus has a dedicated Wellbeing Leader and Wellbeing Workers who support student's wellbeing each day and work with students to develop skills to engage in learning. Wellbeing Team members are key points of contact for students and their families to support attendance and engagement.

Take Two – The Take Two ACCESS Program is a partnership between the Take Two clinical team and the Berry Street School. The acronym ACCESS stands for Assess and Connect through Communication, Education, Strengths, and Success which represents the goals of the program in providing Berry Street School students access to clinical services. Berry Street's Take Two program is a Victoria-wide therapeutic service who work with young people, as well as families and schools helping to address the impact of trauma on young people. A multidisciplinary team of Psychologists, Clinicians and a Speech Pathologist has been supplied by Take Two to provide consultation, training and clinical services to the four Berry Street School campuses.



“

So, if you're having, like, a bad day or something, they'll... help you out with it, like they'll give you options to help you get back into class and give you more focus and stuff.”

Student Morwell



STUDENT STORY

“Impressed by Adam’s dedication and skills demonstrated during his placement, the employer offered him a part-time position, where he worked two days a week for the remainder of his school studies.”

Adam’s journey with Berry Street began when he was 2 years old and entered foster care. He started at Berry Street School in 2021 when he enrolled in Year 10 at the Shepparton campus. His transition to the school was marked by significant behavioural challenges, stemming from a history of instability and underlying mental health issues. Adam’s initial struggles included difficulty regulating his emotions, becoming frustrated with learning tasks, and struggling to form connections to students and staff in our school community.

However, as Adam immersed himself in the supportive environment provided by Berry Street School, a major transformation began to unfold. Throughout 2022, Adam demonstrated remarkable progress, showing a greater capacity to manage his emotions, embrace feedback, and build relationships with others.

One notable aspect of Adam’s journey has been his engagement in extracurricular activities and work experience placements. He re-engaged with community sport, obtained his Learner’s permit through the L to P Program, and successfully completed multiple work placements – one of which led to a traineeship opportunity in surveying. Impressed by Adam’s dedication and skills demonstrated during his placement, the employer offered him a part-time position, where he worked two days a week for the remainder of his school studies.

Adam’s commitment to his education and personal development has been exemplary. In 2023 he completed his Unit 3 & 4 VCE VM, worked full-time during the school holidays, and served as the Valedictorian and Master of Ceremonies at the Shepparton campus’ annual presentation evening, all of which underline his incredible determination to reach his goals.

Adam’s aspirations extend well beyond his current achievements and he plans to pursue further education in Surveying at university, leveraging the work experience he has gained. He currently is saving for a car and aims to move into his own place. At the time of finalising this story Adam was driving between Canberra, where he has been working for the past week, and Jembaicumbene in NSW, earning overtime and “helping out the company”.

Adam’s journey exemplifies the transformative impact of Berry Street School’s supportive environment and tailored approach to education. Through resilience, determination, and the unwavering support of the school community, Adam has overcome significant obstacles and emerged as a confident, capable young man ready to embrace the opportunities that lie ahead.

We are all so proud of Adam.

Our Staff



Workforce Composition

The Berry Street School sits under the Statewide Services portfolio within Berry Street Victoria. Our four-campus school is led by the school's Principal, a teaching and learning team that supports all four campuses, and Assistant Principals at each campus.

Each campus's leadership team includes an Assistant Principal – Head of Campus, a Lead Teacher, and a Wellbeing Leader. Each campus team structure is tailored to the unique needs of the students and comprises teachers, education support staff, senior secondary co-ordinators, and wellbeing staff. Across our school staff; 1% of staff identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 63% of staff identify as female and 37% of staff identify as male.

FIGURE 10: STAFF FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS (FTE) BY CATEGORY AND CAMPUS

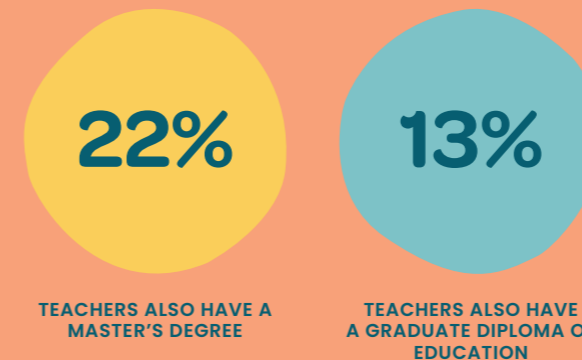
AS OF AUGUST 2023	FTE
Whole school	
Teaching	34.60
Non-teaching	38.50
By campus	
Whole-school team	8.60
Ballarat	17.10
Morwell	18.80
Narre Warren	16.60
Shepparton	12.00

Note: filled positions only, vacancies are excluded.

Teacher Standards and Qualifications

To be registered to teach in Victoria, teachers need to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) and meet the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. All teachers at the Berry Street School hold a current registration with VIT and meet the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. All non-teaching staff hold a Working with Children Clearance (WWCC).

All teaching staff have, or are working towards, a prerequisite Bachelor's Degree. Teaching staff that are working towards their Bachelor's Degree have received Permission to Teach granted by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Further to this:



Focusing on staff wellbeing is a priority at the Berry Street School. All staff are provided with monthly supervision. Staff meet to discuss and review organisational, program and professional objectives. It is a two-way process between the supervisor and the staff member to ensure competency, accountability, collaboration, and identifying relevant professional development opportunities and any other supports.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is also available to provide counselling and support to all employees and immediate family members if required.

Professional Learning

The Berry Street School prioritises the continued growth and development of all staff, to ensure high-quality, evidence-based practice is used in every classroom and conversation. Staff benefit from a broad range of professional learning opportunities offered within the School, including:

- The Berry Street School 2-day Conference – 2023 theme was "Reimagining Student Futures"
- Working Groups and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- BSEM Foundational training (four days for all new staff)
- BSEM Masterclasses building on foundational BSEM knowledge and anchored in practice
- Targeted BSEM consultations following visits and classroom observations to further strengthen practice
- Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Understanding training
- Reflective Practice facilitated by Take Two practitioners
- Instructional Coaches/Learning Specialists located at the Ballarat and Morwell campuses.
- Lesson observations, moderation and Instructional Coaching for teaching staff.

We also seek regular opportunities for our staff to attend professional learning delivered by external providers to improve their practice. Some of the opportunities that staff undertook included:

- MacqLit Professional Development Course, Macquarie University
- Conferences, including Mathematical Association of Victoria's Annual Conference
- Webinars facilitated by Independent Schools Victoria, Reconciliation Victoria and Reconciliation NSW
- Professional learning in ICT, facilitated by Education Advantage
- Australian Teacher Aide Professional Learning Sessions
- Victorian Applied Learning Association Professional Learning Sessions
- Introduction to Leadership Coaching, facilitated by Growth Coaching International
- The Science of Language and Reading, La Trobe University
- Effective Mentoring Program, facilitated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching



“

I want to see them leave school each day with a smile and know that this is a safe space for them to thrive, achieve and belong.”

Jeremy Education Support Worker and Work Experience Coordinator

STAFF STORY

Jeremy joined the Berry Street School after a successful 18-year career in marketing. With stints at major retail accounts such as Myer, Coles, and Kmart, Jeremy amassed invaluable experience in his field. However, in 2019 he reassessed his career path, pursuing a Diploma of Community Services.

At the end of 2020, Jeremy began volunteering one day a week at the Morwell Campus whilst completing his studies. After graduating in July 2021, Jeremy transitioned into an Education Support role where he's been for the past three years, initially at the Morwell Campus and subsequently at the Noble Park, now Narre Warren Campus. Jeremy's commitment to young people and their development was recognized at the end of 2023 when he was offered the position of Work Experience Coordinator for 2024 at the Narre Warren Campus, a role he is eager to embrace.

Jeremy is deeply passionate about the young people at the Berry Street School and their ability to realise their own potential. What motivates Jeremy is providing support and guidance to our students to improve their confidence and self-worth. "I want to see them leave school each day with a smile and know that this is a safe space for them to thrive, achieve and belong." When asked about what else he enjoys about his work, Jeremy shared that Berry Street provides a supportive, safe and inclusive environment. Despite still considering himself a rookie in the education field, Jeremy feels encouraged to follow his instincts whilst still pursuing personal development courses that will help improve his skills at work. "I've been lucky to have had the opportunity to work at both the Morwell and Narre Warren Campuses, and cannot express my gratitude to everyone, both students and teachers, who have taught me so much."

Jeremy reflected on his growth since starting as a volunteer in 2020. He highlighted the experience and valuable knowledge shared by his colleagues who he works alongside each day as the key to success. During the 2023 school year, Jeremy worked closely with the Narre Warren senior students, which helped him feel more confident in his ability to connect these young people with workplaces for work experience. This saw Jeremy gain valuable knowledge and local connections, imperative for his new role as Work Experience Coordinator.

Jeremy is a much-valued member of the Berry Street School and Narre Warren Campus community. He has established strong relationships with local workplaces and makes everyone who walks through the doors feel welcomed. What drives Jeremy is his genuine passion for improving the experience of our students, hoping that "they look forward to returning to school the following day".





Our Future

Future Focus

The opportunities at the Berry Street School are better than ever, with additional resources to support students to thrive, achieve and belong. In 2024, the School will:

introduce a dedicated Work Experience Coordinator role at each campus. This position will assist in supporting more of our students to access work experience and structured workplace learning, as well as forging dedicated partnerships with the wider community to increase opportunities for our students.

provide the opportunity for our Senior Secondary Students to attend a two-night camp in Malmsbury supported through DOXA. In 2023 our Morwell and Ballarat students enjoyed City Camps through DOXA and in 2024 we will expand our offering with a Camp that connects and unites our Senior Secondary students across the campuses.

continue to foster strong partnerships with families, parents, guardians and carers at each campus. Each term, a campus community event will be held inviting families into each campus. Where possible these will be student-led.

ensure that teaching, assessment and data collection is evidence-based, aligning with the Science of Learning.

assist the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) to complete its scheduled review of the School, which is an essential step in maintaining the School's registration. By measuring ourselves against objective standards we can demonstrate our commitment to excellence and accountability to our young people, their families and the wider public. In line with this commitment, the School undertook a comprehensive review in 2022 to ensure our ongoing compliance with educational standards and regulations. We also conducted a follow up review in 2023 to maintain our focus on the areas identified for development. Both reviews were conducted by an independent expert.

The Berry Street School couldn't do our important work without our valued supporters, including our philanthropic partners, corporate sponsors, community fundraisers, individuals, and the research and educational partners who so generously support our work. Thank you for helping us continue to work together to ensure students can thrive, achieve and belong.

For enquiries regarding the Berry Street School's Annual Report please contact:

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Wurundjeri Country



Berry Street acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies and waterways across Australia. We recognise that we operate on stolen land and that sovereignty was never ceded. We are committed to supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to connect to their cultures, countries and communities.

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