

2022 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Western English Language School (8838)



- All teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the Victorian Institute of Teaching (www.vit.vic.edu.au).
- The school meets prescribed minimum standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the Education and Training Reform (ETR) Act 2006. This includes schools granted an exemption by the VRQA until 31 December of the previous calendar year from the minimum standards for student enrolment numbers and/or curriculum framework for school language program.
- The school is compliant with the Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in School.

- This 2022 Annual Report to the School Community has been tabled and endorsed at a meeting of the school council and will be publicly shared with the school community

About Our School

School context

WELS Vision: WELS empowers students to develop the practical and academic language skills needed in mainstream settings within a safe and supportive environment. Our vision is underpinned by respect, responsibility and caring as well as community connections.

Our value of Respect denotes both a positive feeling of esteem for a person and also specific actions and conducts representative of that esteem. Respect can be defined as allowing yourself and others to do and be their best. It is the goal of WELS to create a mutually respectful atmosphere between all individuals involved within our school including administrators, teachers, all other staff members, students, parents and visitors. As such, all entities are expected to remain respectful to each other at all times. Students and teachers especially are expected to greet each other with kind words and student/teacher exchanges should be friendly, in an appropriate tone, and should remain respectful. The majority of student/teacher interaction should be positive.

Our value of Responsibility: All school staff must take reasonable care to avoid harm to students. They have a duty of care. This includes teachers, administrators, canteen staff, casual relief staff and volunteers. WELS believes each student has the right to learn in a comfortable environment that is happy, safe and secure. The best educational opportunities exist when an appropriate school environment is maintained. The staff at WELS recognise the need to uphold consistent expectations and procedures throughout the school. These procedures are in place to guide students towards a more responsible and self-disciplined role in our school environment. Staff and students demonstrate responsible behaviours everywhere in school and in the community.

Our value of Caring: Students and staff demonstrate caring by helping people, thinking about other people, sharing with others and accepting others for who they are.

Context and History of the School: WELS provides newly arrived students in the metropolitan area of the South-West Victoria Region with their first experience of an Australian school. WELS was established in 2000 in order to teach English as an Additional Language to newly arrived students across South Western Victoria Region. Students who enrol are newly arrived migrant, refugee and international students aged between five and eighteen years of age. In 2022, WELS operated five campuses across Victoria, located in Braybrook, Wyndham, Footscray, Manor lakes and St Albans (note that St Albans was re-opened as a campus in term 4). The campuses are all situated in high-settlement areas of newly arrived families.

Campuses

- The largest campus is the F-10 Campus in Braybrook with capacity for 13 secondary and six primary classes (total of 247 students). The F-10 Campus is the administrative hub of the school. Facilities include a library, gymnasium, science laboratory, home economics room and canteen.
- A four-class primary campus at Footscray operates within the Footscray City Primary School with access to the school's facilities (total of 52 students).
- A five-class primary campus at St Albans operated on the grounds of St Albans Primary School to house new arrivals classes in St Albans and surrounding suburbs. Students at this campus have access to the school's facilities (total of 52 students). This site was closed as an outpost in 2021, despite continuing demand and re-opened as a campus in term 3, 2022.
- The Manor Lakes F-6 campus is situated on the grounds of Manor Lakes College and has a purpose-built facility for new arrival classes in Manor Lakes and surrounding suburbs. The campus can accommodate 10 primary classes with capacity for six secondary classes (total of 208).
- The Wyndham secondary campus is situated on the grounds of Wyndham Central College and has a purpose-built facility to cater for new arrivals classes in Werribee and surrounding suburbs. The campus can accommodate eight secondary classes (total of 104 students).

Backgrounds of Students: Students at WELS come from a range of countries. Students have predominantly come from Afghanistan, China, Ethiopia, Iraq, Myanmar, Samoa, Sudan and Vietnam. At any one time, over 50 different nationalities can be represented in the school's enrolments. International fee-paying students also enrol for English Language tuition alongside refugee and migrant students. WELS enrolls Year 1 to Year 10 students within six months of their arrival in Australia. Foundation students can enrol within 18 months of arrival. Students arrive on a variety of visas, including migrant (skilled and unskilled), refugee, humanitarian and various family categories. Students may be equivalently schooled or have interrupted or no prior schooling. A student is classified as having had interrupted schooling if their schooling has been disrupted or discontinued for two or more years.

Teachers: WELS employs teachers who have specialist qualifications in teaching English as an Additional Language. These qualifications, supplemented by the school's strong program of professional development in wellbeing and the acquisition of the English language, equip teachers to teach the English language as well as the literacy and cultural understandings necessary for students to participate in mainstream settings and in the wider community. Staff participate in professional development on the cultural backgrounds of various cohorts, particularly in regards to how these backgrounds influence student settlement and learning. In 2022 WELS staffing across the six sites consisted of 5 Principal class staff, 2.9 Learning Specialists, 2.4 Leading Teachers, 61 teaching staff, 7.6 Education Support staff (Administration, including .6 Mental Health position), and 17.86 Multicultural Education Aides (including SLP of 8.2). 2 Bilingual volunteers also assist with supporting students in classes across the WELS sites. Total central payroll FTE is 79.86 and 16.9 School Local Payroll.

Multicultural Education Aides: Multicultural Education Aides (MEAs) are staff whose main responsibility is supporting EAL students in their learning by explaining concepts or instructions in their first language as well as providing additional support for all students. Due to their own experiences and community connections, MEAs are instrumental in establishing and maintaining links with newly arrived families. Students' health, safety and wellbeing are essential to learning and development.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

2022 was the final year of our 2018-2022 School Strategic Plan (SSP). As such, we had our School Review in term 4.

We had two Learning Goals:

Goal 1: To improve the capacity of students to compose texts.

One of the ways we worked to achieve this goal was to build in protected time for teachers to meet and be supported to plan and assess using the WELS-developed English Language & Literacy Assessment (ELLA).

Goal 2: To improve the capacity of students to read.

One of the ways we worked to achieve this goal was to continue to consolidate teachers' ability to teach and assess reading through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Within Goal 1, we had 1 target: By 2022, 80 per cent of students in the Pre-Literate, Interrupted and Equivalent cohorts will have achieved one or more writing levels (LLs) over the course of their stay at Western English Language School (Western ELS) as assessed against the Language and Literacy Levels across the Australian Curriculum: EALD Students.

Based on our assessment data, we found that the average writing growth per secondary student per stay at the school was 2.1 LLs. Pre-literate students and Interrupted education students reached 2.43 LLs growth and Equivalent students reached 1.94 LLs growth.

The data for primary students is presented in the table below:

One or more levels (LL) progress during time at WELS – Primary Students

Cohort	Term 4 - 2021	Term 1 and 2 - 2022
Equivalent Students	14/16 students = 87%	34/39 students = 87%
Pre-Literate and Interrupted students	19/20 students = 95%	27/29 students = 93%

Based on this data, the Panel assessed that WELS had met this goal.

Within Goal 2, we had two targets:

1. By 2022, 95 percent of students in the Pre–Literate, Interrupted and Equivalent cohorts will show an improvement in reading by the end of their enrolment at Western ELS according to a tool to be identified or developed.

2. By 2022, 80 per cent or more of teachers will positively endorse the Time to share pedagogical knowledge factor in the School Staff Survey (SSS) (67 per cent in 2018)

For target 1, we found that in 2021, 97 per cent of all students with pre– and post–assessment scores made one or more levels of growth in reading assessments. In 2022 this decreased to 93 per cent, however 100 per cent of Pre–Literate or Interrupted students made one level of growth, and 89 per cent of Equivalent students. The Panel therefore concluded that the school's 95 per cent target was partially met.

For target 2, we made promising progress in 2019 (70% positive endorsement) but then had a substantial drop to 61% in 2020. This was likely due to the impact of Covid, which obviously adversely affected the time and opportunity teachers had to share pedagogical content knowledge. Endorsement increased to 67% in 2021 and remained the same in 2022. The Panel therefore concluded we had not met this goal. We will continue to focus on Professional Learning Communities in our new SSP and are confident this will increase the positive endorsement in this and many other factors.

Wellbeing

2022 was a big year for Wellbeing at WELS. We restructured our Wellbeing Team to include more members. We employed a Secondary Mental Health Practitioner and our recently appointed Primary Mental Health Coordinator also continued their work.

We engaged Body Safety Australia to present to all of our students on consent and bodily autonomy.

We continued and expanded our work with health providers, including Foundation House, Royal Children's Hospital and a speech pathologist.

We continued to expand and integrate the School-Wide Positive Behaviour Framework (SWPBS) into our school, for example by increasing the use of SWPBS Tier 1 strategies and creating 'Behaviour Management Continuum' documents.

All of this has contributed to a more consistent, holistic approach that has directly benefited the wellbeing of our students.

School Strategic Plan

In our previous SSP, we had one wellbeing goal: To enhance the wellbeing and safety of all Western ELS students.

This Goal had two targets:

1. By 2022, 70 percent of students on identified visas at the end of their enrolment will show improvement in their safety, mental health and wellbeing.
2. By 2022, the percentage of students at each campus positively endorsing the student safety factor Managing bullying in the Attitudes to School Survey (AtoSS) will increase from 90 per cent (in 2018) to 95 per cent.

The Panel found that the first target was not met. This was largely due to the difficulty of measuring our students' feelings of safety, mental health and wellbeing. Because our students stay with us for only 6-12 months and enrol and exit at various times throughout the year, the Department's Student Satisfaction Survey does not provide us with useful longitudinal data. We hope to find better ways to measure our students' wellbeing in 2023.

The Panel found that the second target was partially met. This was an extremely ambitious target as 90% is already very high; note that the Network result is 52% and the State 60%. As can be seen in the table below, our data fluctuated but was generally very high.

AToSS variable – WELS	% positive endorsement 2018	% positive endorsement 2019	% positive endorsement 2020	% positive endorsement 2021	% p endo 2
Managing bullying - ALL	90	91	-	87	
Managing bullying – Y4-6	96	94	-	95	
Managing bullying – Y7-9	87	90	-	84	
Managing bullying – Y10-12	91	91	-	84	
Campus breakdown					
Braybrook	94	91	-	87	
Footscray	89	79	-	-	
Manor Lakes	96	100	-	-	
Wyndham	81	93	-	82	

Engagement

WELS has always known the value and importance of ensuring our students are valued and supported. And because of this, our students feel safe and love coming to school. Evidence of this is our outstanding Student Attitudes to School results. Some examples are in the following table, which shows the percentage of positive endorsement for a sample of survey facts:

WELS Network State

Effective teaching time	94%	61%	66%
Respect for diversity	83%	49%	53%
High expectations for success	96%	69%	74%
Motivation and interest	96%	61%	63%

At WELS, we have built and maintained inclusive and sustainable relationships with diverse communities and organisations, including youth groups, mental health and medical groups, refugee centres, local authorities, emergency services and education providers. This has helped us to seek guidance, advice and feedback on how to maintain inclusive services and activities for newly arrived students and families, supporting their learning and wellbeing. It has also provided students with a plethora of extra-curricular activities, ranging from bowling to dancing to cooking and many, many other activities.

Teachers engage with students to design rich, open-ended tasks and the implementation of inclusive teaching, learning and wellbeing practices. For example, what topic areas students want to learn and Practical English. Parents and carers have expressed that they feel engaged with the school and are grateful for the opportunities we provide their children.

Attendance: Attendance is a key marker of student engagement. As such, we are proud to have excellent data in this area. In 2022, 13% of F-6 students missed 20 or more days of school, compared to 35% for the Network and 44% for the State. Similarly, 12% of Year 7-12 students missed 20 or more days of school, compared to 35% in the Network and 49% in the State.

Financial performance

All funds received from the Department 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.

The school was in a very sound financial position throughout 2022. The School Strategic Plan, along with the 2022 Annual Implementation Plan, provided the framework for School Council allocation of funds to support school programs and priorities.

The Financial Commitments section of the Financial Performance and Position report shows an end-of-year deficit from both credit and cash budgets of \$80,152, however the actual confirmed deficit/surplus is subject to change as the SRP reconciliation is yet to be completed for the 2022 school year.

In 2022, Western English Language School received the following (in cash):

- \$633,159 in equity funding which was fully expended through additional teaching, Mental Health and MEA staffing.
- \$103,870 for Swimming in Schools (all sites).
- \$39,065 in Career Education Funding (CEF)
- \$9,800 State Government Advance grant expended through additional programs across the two secondary sites.
- Other grants received were either received in the 2022 school year or carried forward from subsequent years (due to COVID19) and expended through additional curriculum programs for students.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at www.wels.vic.edu.au