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| About our schoolBelle Vue Park Primary School is located in the Northern suburbs of Melbourne in the residential suburb of Glenroy. The school core values of Honesty, Respect & Tolerance form the basis of the interpersonal relationships of staff, students, and parents. Our school has positive relationships with our community and community partners and we place a very strong emphasis on *student Wellbeing and Emotional connection*, which has become even more critical in light of the Covid-19 Pandemic over the past 2 years. We were able to continue many of our support services using Webex including our counselling initiative with RelateWell Family Counselling in Coburg. This has been a great initiative with very positive responses from the students, parents, and teachers throughout the year. We had 151 students (70 F, 81 M) who are drawn from a wide range of nationalities. Our school community is diverse ethnically, culturally, and relatively homogeneous socio-economically with 71 % of students from homes where English is an additional language, so there is a very strong focus on the development of oral language and literacy skills. 3% of students were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Our dedicated and diverse staff plan and teach together in teams, sharing strategies, resources, and expertise. They are committed to providing the best possible programs for all our students. This was an important element in 2021 with the need to be agile and quickly adapt to a remote learning environment. Staff were able to support each other to develop their knowledge and skill sets in order to deliver our online platforms (SeeSaw & Webex) We had a number of staff changes who settled quickly into the school and with support from our senior staff quickly adapted to our processes and instructional models.Our Teaching Partners strategy was still maintained during lockdown and support for teachers implementing online reading sessions was provided. Staff were able to still gather student data and as students returned in term 4 we were able to identify appropriate strategies to cater for variation in student abilities and engagement in the remote learning environment, however, this capacity became more problematic during term 2 and 3. Our online platform also included learning tasks provided by specialist teachers for Visual Arts, Drama, Science and Physical Education.Despite the challenges thrown at us throughout the year we were able to successfully complete a number of complex and challenging processes including a Review (Semester 2) and also participation in the Professional Learning Communities training (term 4 and term 1 2021). We completed a thorough Self Evaluation process leading into our school review with very positive feedback and comments from the reviewer and our two Challenge Partners on our achievements over the past 4 years. The review was an excellent process where successes were acknowledge and opportunities for future focus were identified. The school places a great emphasis on supporting students at their point of need through a differentiated model which utilizes the skills of each teaching team member. This allows for more flexible groupings using cohort data and allows us to address individual student needs more effectively. Class sizes across the school are small (average of 20 students per class) from Foundation-6 with extra support provided at each year level either in the form of intervention, extension, or small group activity. We continued developing and refining aspects of S.O.L.E. (Self Organized Learning Environments) which supports the principle that students can be more active and can take greater responsibility for their learning and their behaviours. Utilizing student interests and adopting an inquiry approach to learning, allows us to foster student motivation and engagement and build on prior knowledge to extend concept development in many curriculum areas. We hosted several visits from staff from interstate to discuss our methodology and learn from us. Many of our families and students were negatively effected by the lockdown and our focus in term 4 was on reengagement and wellbeing, which continues into 2021.Partnering with Creative Victoria film and Musical Futures Australia we were able to complete our film, documentary and animation project where the focus was on 'Belonging' and some fantastic animations and films were created. With support from Schools Plus we will continue with a similar project “See me, Hear me” throughout 2022/23. Staff Health & Wellbeing was also a priority throughout the year and remains so. There was a lot of anxiety and emotional stress on staff during the year, coping with health, families and teaching from home. In retrospect our staff did an amazing job and achieved so much under very difficult conditions. This highlighted their passion, commitment and professionalism as they supported students and families.We continued to reference contemporary neuroscience research to inform our strategies and teaching and emotional support strategies and were able to deliver our year 5/6 "Project Connect' in term 4, partnering with Monash University and the Jesuit Social Services. (the initial sessions in term 3 were delivered via Webex).As we respond to the ever-changing landscape of education we are mindful of the importance of preparing collaborative, flexible, curious and self-motivated learners. 2021 promises to be a much more positive year for everyone. There will be quite several staffing changes in 2021 with new teachers joining our team which will have some challenges but reinvigorate the school as we begin our new Strategic Plan. |
| Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) |
| Creating a safe and positive learning environment for our students is critical, given the disadvantage in our community. The focus was exacerbated during 2020 due to the remote learning environment and the stresses within family groups.The majority of our students are from EAL backgrounds with many parents having only a limited understanding of English and limited formal education. Their capacity to support their children at home was greatly diminished. This placed even more pressure on our teachers and ESO staff to plan learning tasks more thoughtfully and carefully. In many cases, less became more as the need to simplify and provide scaffolded steps in learning tasks became more important. Our ‘normal’ learning environment provides several of levels of support for our students and differentiated entry points. This was compromised to a degree; however, our teachers were able to offer small group learning tasks using Webex and follow-up home learning tasks using SeeSaw. A normal day at school has a focus on EAL strategies and this was compromised, with reduced capacity for explanations and timely support usually evident in classrooms. Staff were mindful to plan very carefully with short verbal instruction, video introductions and simple written Learning Intentions and Success Criteria.Our ESO staff continued to remotely deliver our Phonological Awareness initiative to support students requiring further explicit learning of letter/sounds, blending etc. The effort of these staff was amazing as they connected with students and families each day and ensured consistency and support was available. Our staff participated in a variety of professional learning opportunities with our focus on the DSSI Teaching Partners strategy and Social /Emotional wellbeing in semester 2. Our NAPLAN student growth between years 3 and 5 in 2021 was very impressive given student starting points and the ongoing remote learning environment. We remain focused on lifting learning outcomes for all students no matter where they are in their learning journey.Our staff continued to gather and use data to inform their teaching, however, this was limited in terms 2 and 3, but certainly increased as students returned to school in term 4. Staff were able to then re-assess progress and plan more accurately for student learning. We were able to re-assess student Reading and Number progress in term 4, and re-stablish our data walls with more accurate data. Much time was devoted to revision of topics covered during lockdown. These data sets were also valuable in preparing for the Tutoring initiative in 2021 and by the end of the year we had three experienced teachers in place to deliver this program in 2021. We were also able to review our instructional model in Reading and Inquiry and as a result of our Review we have identified Maths and Writing as key foci in 2021.2020 also saw a large investment by School Council in the physical learning environment with new classroom furniture purchased for each area of the school and the completion of a large VSBA project in semester 2. School Council was also active in applying for some much need grants to support a number of their long-term goals (establishing a Wellbeing Centre and an Out of School Hours program). We have applied for funding from the Inclusive Schools Fund and Out of School Hours care grant.2020 was challenging on many levels for staff, students and community, but we achieved a lot and are proud of our work throughout 2020. |
| Achievement |
| Creating a safe and positive learning environment for our students is critical, given the pockets of disadvantage in our community. This was exacerbated during 2021 due to the extended remote learning environment and the stresses within family groups. Most of our students are from EAL backgrounds with many parents having only a limited understanding of English. Our ‘normal’ learning environment provides several of levels of support for our students and differentiated entry points. This was compromised to a degree; however, our teachers were able to offer small group learning tasks using Webex and follow-up home learning tasks using SeeSaw. A normal day at school has a focus on EAL strategies and this was also compromised, with reduced capacity for explanations and timely support usually evident in classrooms. Staff were forced to plan very carefully with, short verbal instruction, video introductions and simple written Learning Intentions and Success Criteria. They also implemented elements of what a completed task may contain or look like which supported learning.We continued to remotely delivered our Phonological Awareness initiative to support students requiring further explicit learning of letter/sounds, blending etc. as well as our THRASS strategy. Our staff participated in a variety of professional learning opportunities Iron Armour, - Men’s Workshop. Our main focus was on re-inforcing the Readers Workshop Instructional model to new staff and introducing the Writers Workshop model as well as focusing on Social/Emotional wellbeing/trauma informed practice. Much onsite time in term 4 time was devoted to revision of topics covered during lockdown. Our staff continued to gather and use data to inform their teaching, however, this was limited in terms 2 and 3, but certainly increased as students returned to school in term 4. Staff were able to then re-assess progress and plan more accurately for student learning. We were able to track reading and number in term 4 and re-stablish our data walls with more accurate data. These data sets were also valuable in preparing for the Tutoring initiative which has really supported students who were falling behind through evidence based small group instruction and tracking.  NAPLAN Learning GainNAPLAN learning gain is determined by comparing the student's current year result (2021) relative to the results of all ‘similar’ Victorian students (i.e. students in all sectors in the same year level who had the same score two years prior (2019). If the current year result is in the top 25 percent, their gain level is categorised as ‘High’; middle 50 percent is ‘Medium’; bottom 25 percent is ‘Low’. Our 4 year trend date shows a significant shift from low into medium into high growth. Our 2021 data identifies that most children are in medium growth with a range from 33% (spelling) - 78% (writing). Our high gain range was from 11% (writing) - 67% (spelling) When comparing our performance against ‘like schools’ our achievements have been significant. Reading high gain was 33% - similar schools high gain was 18%; Numeracy high gain 36% - similar schools was 24%; our Writing high gain - 11% - similar schools - 25% (the big shift though was moving 78% of children into medium gain with only 11% in low gain). Spelling high gain was 67% with similar schools 31%; Grammar and punctuation high gain was 33% with similar schools 24%. 2021 was challenging on many levels for staff, students and community, but we achieved some fantastic outcomes and are proud of our work in 2021. |
| Engagement |
| Once issues with home ICT access were overcome we managed to have the majority of students in our classes use our online platforms. Uptake rates were variable but there were some students who participated in online learning surprisingly well because there were less distractions compared to a classroom (despite the distractions at their home). Our school surveyed parents for their input on any positives they felt came from online learning (there weren’t many) The feedback resulted in some outcomes e.g.: maintaining the SeeSaw platform in 2021. Our school inquiry model S.O.L.E. (Self Organised Learning Environments) supports the gradual release model and empowers students to make more decisions for themselves in the learning process. There was evidence of students displaying some of these traits when the teacher wasn’t always available in remote learning which was pleasing. We try to teach students to know what to do when they don’t know what to do. Student collaboration online was also evident.Remote learning presented a unique opportunity for students to provide evidence of their learning in a greater variety of ways and not always being locked into a teacher assessment. Our students used video, sound bites, digital formats, home science experiments, dance routines and home-made fitness tracks, quizzes etc. to show their understanding. This was a real positive for us! There was also evidence of parents taking a lot more interest in what their children were doing which was another positive.Some of our teachers posted a fun weekly dance routine vide on SeeSaw and challenged the students to learn the routine, video themselves doing it and posting it back…great fun and interaction.There were several families identified for regular contact and home visits due to their children either not engaging with home learning or rarely engaging. These efforts had minimal impact. Some families were provided with hard copy learning tasks with variable success rates in engagement. Each class had 2-3 students who were consistently difficult to engage. Average number of student absence days in 2021 from F-yr 6 was 23.5 (4 yr average was 24.6) Similar schools average was 18.5. There are some families who have chronic absenteeism which skews our data, however, attendance is any area we still need to focus on. (state average absence days in 2021 was 15.0)On return to school there were increased referrals to our on-site psychologists in Term 4 - mainly for supporting relationships, settling in issues and heightened levels of anxiety and frustration. It was noted that most student’s capacity for concentration endurance on learning tasks had diminished during remote learning, especially when more complex thinking and focus was required.During lockdown the school had an average of 16 students attend on-site learning each day. This was a reasonably high number given our enrolment and required staff were rostered for on-site supervision as well as teaching from home.As students returned to school in term 4, attendance/engagement improved, however, a number of families chose to keep students at home for the first 2-3 weeks. Office protocols were maintained in term 4 where parents were contacted the day a student was absent. Our attendance data will be an area for focus in 2022, particularly arrival times in the mornings. We will have a constant focus on Student Emotional Health and Wellbeing (mindfulness), relationship building and Wellbeing in 2022. |
| Wellbeing |
| As much as possible we tried to normalize remote learning as just an extension of school.During 2021, our school continued to provide Health and Wellbeing supports for our students and families on a few levels. Our understanding of the effects of lockdown/remote learning combined with families who have experienced disadvantage, trauma, poverty and the effects these have on emotions, connection and the capacity to learn require staff to consider these impacts in their planning and responses to student choices and behaviour. We were very mindful of presenting a very calm and consistent image for parents and students through the lockdown. A positive mindset was the minimum in our relationships and communications. Daily Webex meetings were critical as students were able to see their teachers and friends, have conversations and connect. We were able to schedule weekly Webex sessions with our two psychologist from RelateWell for those students who were part of this support network before lockdown. Our ESO staff had daily contact with 'at risk' and PSD funded students, which was also a very positive strategy. Students who were eligible to attend school (DHHS cases; at risk; Koorie and Essential Support workers) were very well supported in a caring, positive manner. Staff Wellbeing was always a concern and senior staff had regular contact with all staff members each week via, phone, Webex and at school. There were several staff with anxiety and specific health issues who required an extra layer of support. As well as using Webex for meetings and interviews, the school frequently utilized our website for regular updates, newsletters and communication with parents.In term 4, we delivered our Student Wellbeing program for years 4-6 (Project Connect) which was very timely. Our partners in this, Jesuit Social Services are providing some Professional Learning for all staff in semester 1, 2021 with the focus on Restorative Practice and Trauma informed practices. When onsite, all classes had a weekly 50 minute mindfulness session with a view to continuing this process to support and anchor student emotions and reduce anxiety. Year 4-6 Attitudes to School survey data was very strong. Sense of Connectedness in 2021 was 94.5% Similar schools average was 81.2% State average was 79.5%. Management of any Bullying issues yr 4-6 indicated a 98.0% endorsement of our processes; Similar schools were rated 79.8% an d state average was 78.4 %. This excellent data and endorsement of our strategies and focus on building relationships, a sense of belonging and a safe, positive learning and emotional environment.We successfully applied for a $180k Inclusive Schools grant for our Wellbeing Centre; plans were finalized towards the end of 2021 and the Centre will be constructed in 2022. School Council has planned for a significant contribution to this School Council was successful in applying for a 4 yr $300k an Out of School Hours establishment grant with the program starting in term 4. |
| Financial performance and position |
| School Council has managed our financial position very well over the past few years. Funding from the equity component of our SRP has been utilized for reducing class sizes, for more explicit instruction, purchasing reading resources/PL and to provide weekly release time to plan and work with Regional EILS and to support the “data” conversation strategy. We have appointed a shared role 50/50 time allocation for our Learning Specialist role. We release both these teachers and on Tuesdays to meet with the Prin/AP/EIILs for planning, data, PL, mentoring, coaching etc.Council identified a number of longer term projects for funding including the completion of the Community Hub concept ($500k) front fencing, upgrading of the phone and ICT resources and also allocation of funds to refurbish dilapidated parts of the school. We have also identified the need for new doors on our corridors. The canteen has been closed since lockdown and we are applying for a grant to do this work. Many of our Program Budgets were not completely spent as students were offsite for much of the year. With some staff on forced leave and some staff resigning etc. replacement costs were also reduced. Expenditure included a variety of things including resources for the Video/film project and new classroom furniture. 2021saw 3 new staff employed at the school. Some of these staff are quite inexperienced so we have planned for considerable support including time release and specific Professional Learning to being them up to speed, with particular focus on peer observation processes and to understand and implement our Instructions models. |