

2025 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Cowes Primary School (1282)



- all teachers at the school meet the registration requirements of the [Victorian Institute of Teaching \(VIT\)](#)
- the school meets prescribed Minimum Standards for registration as regulated by the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in accordance with the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#) (this includes any exemption granted to this school by the VRQA, for the most recent calendar year, in relation to minimum student enrolment numbers and/or the curriculum framework requirement to deliver a languages program)
- the school meets the requirements of the Child Safe Standards as prescribed in [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools \(PDF\)](#).

Attested on 23 March 2026 at 01:42 PM by Rodney Mckenzie (Principal)

- As executive officer of the school council, I attest that this 2025 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.

Attested on 26 March 2026 at 08:06 AM by Rodney Mckenzie (Principal)

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
 - responses to the General Satisfaction area of the Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey
 - school staff responses to the School Climate area of the School Staff Survey
- Learning
 - English and Mathematics for Teacher Judgements against the curriculum
 - Reading and Numeracy proficiency levels for National Literacy and Numeracy tests (NAPLAN)
 - Reading and Numeracy relative growth for National Literacy and Numeracy tests (NAPLAN)
- Wellbeing
 - student responses to the Sense of Connectedness area in the Student Attitudes to School Survey
 - student responses to the Management of Bullying area in the Student Attitudes to School Survey
- Engagement
 - average absence days per student
 - student attendance rate

Key terms used in the Performance Summary are defined below:

Similar Schools

Similar Schools are a group of Victorian government schools with similar characteristics to the school.

This grouping of schools has been created by comparing each school's socio-economic background of students, the number of non-English speaking students and the school's size and location.

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.

The Victorian Curriculum

The Victorian Curriculum F–10 sets out what every student should learn during his or her first eleven years of schooling. The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship.

The Victorian Curriculum is assessed through teacher judgements of student achievement based on classroom learning.

The curriculum has been developed to ensure that school subjects and their achievement standards enable continuous learning for all students, including students with disabilities.

The 'Towards Foundation Level Victorian Curriculum' is integrated directly into the curriculum and is referred to as 'Levels A to D'. 'Levels A to D' may be used for students with disabilities or students who may have additional learning needs. These levels are not associated with any set age or year level that links chronological age to cognitive progress (i.e., there is no age expected standard of achievement for 'Levels A to D').

Updates to the 'Performance Summary' in the 2025 Annual Report

NAPLAN relative growth data has been included in the 2025 Performance Summary as there is sufficient data available for the comparison.

About Our School

School context

Cowes Primary School (CPS) is dedicated to providing high-quality education, care, and safety for all students, ensuring they develop into active, engaged, and responsible citizens within both the local and global community. In August 2025, we had 534 students enrolled.

School Setting and Facilities

Our unique setting includes the Phillip Island Early Learning Centre (PIELC), which offers 3-year old kinder, 4-year-old kinder, and long day care. The PIELC plays an integral role in our ability to provide a seamless educational experience from birth to 12 years, supporting strong learning foundations. The centre is licensed to accommodate 178 students, making it the largest Early Learning Centre in Gippsland. CPS offers students well-maintained buildings and outdoor spaces, including a competition-sized gymnasium, purpose-built music, art, and STEM rooms, along with quiet sitting areas, grassed play areas, and separate play equipment for junior and senior students. The school also prioritises student wellbeing with a designated wellbeing classroom and a dedicated wellbeing teacher to assist students and their families.

Workforce and Strategic Planning

In 2025, 10 new or returning teachers and 11 education support staff joined our dedicated team. Our workforce includes: Three principal class officers, Four administration staff, 23 classroom teachers, Learning Specialist, Wellbeing teacher, Learning Tutors, five specialist teachers, 22 Educational Support staff and a Speech pathologist.

Commitment to Excellence & Evidence-Based Practices

Cowes Primary School is committed to providing an education of real value, enabling all students to reach their academic, social, and physical potential. Our teaching and assessment practices are underpinned by the science of learning research, leading to adjustments that have had a measurable positive impact on student outcomes.

School Values

Cowes Primary School's values guide our students in becoming respectful, safe, resilient learners:

- **Be Respectful** – We respect ourselves, our school, and each other, understanding that our attitudes and behaviours impact the environment and those around us.
- **Be Safe** – We work to create a learning community where all students feel safe and are safe.
- **Be Resilient** – We strive to be resilient by managing emotions, recognizing strengths, being resourceful, reaching out to others, and employing problem-solving skills.
- **Be a Learner** – We maximize our learning by maintaining a growth mindset, embracing new knowledge, and taking responsibility for our effort.

Cowes Primary School continues to foster a learning environment that is inclusive, engaging, and forward-thinking, ensuring all students are equipped with the skills and knowledge to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

Improving student achievement remains the central focus of teaching and learning at Cowes Primary School. In 2025, the school continued to make strong progress towards the goals outlined in the School Strategic Plan, with a clear emphasis on building teacher capability and strengthening consistent, evidence-informed practice across all classrooms.

Student achievement data reflects sustained strong performance. Teacher judgements show that 88.5% of students in English and 89.7% in Mathematics are working at or above age expected standards, both exceeding similar schools and state averages. NAPLAN results further reinforce this, with strong performance in Reading and Numeracy across Year 3 and Year 5.

Notable highlights include:

- Year 3 Writing: 91% of students achieving in the Strong and Exceeding bands, above the state average of 79%.
- Year 3 Numeracy: growth in the Exceeding band from 4% to 12%, with 68% achieving Strong or Exceeding, above the state average of 66%.
- Year 5 Reading and Numeracy: achievement remains above similar schools and the state, reflecting consistent instructional practice.

Key drivers of improvement included strengthening implementation of the school's Instructional Playbook, with a focus on explicit instruction, consistent routines and high-impact teaching strategies. Targeted professional learning supported this work, including PhOrMeS training with Shane Pearson, reinforcing early reading instruction and classroom management practices, and ongoing engagement with Nathaniel Swain through professional learning and an Explicit Instruction Community of Practice. Education Support (ES) staff also completed training in Making Space for Learning (Australian Childhood Foundation), strengthening support for student engagement.

A continued focus on evidence-informed practice, combined with targeted intervention and ongoing use of student data, has enabled staff to identify learning needs, address misconceptions and respond quickly to improve outcomes for all students.

All students supported by the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD), Disability Inclusion Profiles, and First Nations students were supported to make progress against the individual goals set within their education plans.

Wellbeing

Ensuring that students are happy, healthy, and resilient remains a key priority at Cowes Primary School. In 2025, the school continued to make strong progress towards its School Strategic Plan (SSP) goal of enhancing student engagement and wellbeing through a consistent, whole-school approach.

Attitudes to School Survey data demonstrates the impact of this work. 88.3% of students reported a positive sense of connectedness, well above similar schools (77.6%) and the state average (77.1%). Additionally, 94.9% of students responded positively to the school's management of bullying, significantly exceeding similar schools (78.3%) and the state (76.4%). These results reflect a strong, inclusive school culture where students feel safe, supported, and valued.

A major focus in 2025 has been strengthening positive classroom management practices. Staff have worked collaboratively to establish clear, consistent expectations and routines across all classrooms, aligned with the school's explicit instruction model. This has led to improved student behaviour, increased engagement, and greater consistency in student experience across the school.

As part of the Department's rollout of the Mental Health in Primary Schools initiative, the school's wellbeing teacher role transitioned to a dedicated Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHIPS) teacher, strengthening a whole-school approach to mental health through targeted support, early intervention, and increased staff capability.

Additional initiatives have further supported student wellbeing. The school breakfast club program has ensured students are settled and ready to learn, while the increased presence of Education Support Staff, enabled through successful Disability Inclusion Profile meetings led by the Assistant Principal, has enhanced in-class support and inclusion for students with additional needs. The introduction of the Reset and Return Room has further strengthened this approach, providing a calm, structured space for students to build regulation strategies, develop positive coping skills, and transition into learning in a supported and confident manner.

Key wellbeing highlights for 2025 include:

- High levels of student connectedness, well above state and similar school benchmarks
- Strong student confidence in the school's management of bullying
- Consistent, whole-school implementation of clear expectations and classroom routines
- Strengthened mental health and inclusion supports through MHIPS, breakfast club, and increased ES staffing

Overall, Cowes Primary School continues to effectively mobilise its resources to support student wellbeing and mental health, ensuring students are engaged, supported, and ready to learn.

Engagement

Absence data highlights that student absences are higher than both the State and like schools. 22% (121 students) missed 30+ days of school in 2025. A further 23% (126) missed 20+ days of school.

Whilst the school's Mental Health in Primary Schools staff member supported the monitoring and follow-up of absences it is evident that more is needed.

Student engagement and attendance continue to be a key area of focus. In 2026, the school will further strengthen this work by enabling a dedicated team to support more consistent tracking and intervention, particularly given the high proportion of students with 20 or more days of absence. This approach aims to improve attendance outcomes and ensure all students are supported to engage fully in their learning.

Other highlights from the school year

Highlights for 2025 included:

- Strong academic and wellbeing outcomes across the school
- A successful School Disco that strengthened student engagement and community connection
- Installation of a new senior playground and climbing spire to enhance student play and physical activity
- Professional learning aligned with current research and best practice, including targeted development with Nathaniel Swain
- Ongoing support through the Breakfast Club program
- Appointment of a dedicated Mental Health in Primary Schools staff member to support students and staff, lead Tier 2 interventions, and provide a valuable resource for teachers
- Implementation of the Prep Buddy Program to support student transition and connectedness

Financial performance

Cowes Primary School ended 2025 in a sound financial position. A large portion of the funds available relates to the operation of the Phillip Island Early Learning Centre (ELC). It should be noted that the Early Learning Centre is projected to operate at a loss, which has been factored into the school's overall financial planning. PIELC Kindergarten fees for 2025 were paid by the State Government.

The school had initially planned to operate at a predicted deficit in 2025. However, the success of applications through the Disability Inclusion Funding pathway resulted in the school finishing the year in a surplus position of \$97,876.

While the school ended the year in surplus, there was an overspend in the Education Support budget line of -\$92,495. This was a deliberate decision, with additional staff employed on local payroll to respond to immediate student needs and to support improved academic and wellbeing outcomes.

The School Disco was a fundraising initiative of School Council and operated at a \$7 loss. This was a deliberate decision by School Council to prioritise an inclusive and enjoyable event at minimal cost to families, in recognition of ongoing cost-of-living pressures. In addition, the school was able to complete key facility upgrades, including the senior playground and climbing spire, through successful access to external grant funding, further strengthening the school's overall financial position.

The school was also successful in securing several Sporting Schools Grants to support student physical activity and skill development.

Moving into 2026, funds will be strategically allocated to support the school's priorities and to maximise educational opportunities and outcomes for all students.

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

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

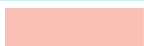
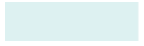

A total of 535 students were enrolled at this school in 2025, 267 female and 267 male. 4% had English as an additional language and 2% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

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 **Low - Medium**.

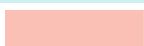


Parent Satisfaction Summary

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

		2025	
% positive endorsement General School Satisfaction (Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey)	School	89.9%	
	Similar schools	86.0%	
	State	82.0%	

School Staff Survey


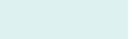


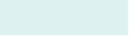

The percentage endorsement by staff on School Climate, as reported in the annual School Staff Survey. Percentage endorsement indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree) from staff who responded to the survey.

		2025	
% positive endorsement School Climate (School Staff Survey)	School	90.6%	
	Similar schools	78.2%	
	State	77.4%	

LEARNING

Teacher Judgement of student achievement against the Victorian Curriculum

Percentage of students working at or above age expected standards in English and Mathematics.

		2025	
English Prep - 6 % of students at or above age expected standards	School	88.5%	
	Similar schools	84.1%	
	State	86.3%	
Mathematics Prep - 6 % of students at or above age expected standards	School	89.7%	
	Similar schools	83.5%	
	State	84.2%	

NAPLAN

Percentage of students in the Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels in NAPLAN.


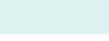


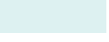

		2025	3-year average
Reading Year 3 % of students Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels	School	80.6%	75.0%
	Similar schools	69.2%	67.0%
	State	69.5%	69.3%
Reading Year 5 % of students Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels	School	76.9%	81.7%
	Similar schools	71.2%	72.6%
	State	73.9%	74.6%
Numeracy Year 3 % of students Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels	School	67.6%	68.0%
	Similar schools	67.6%	65.4%
	State	66.2%	66.4%
Numeracy Year 5 % of students Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels	School	64.5%	70.6%
	Similar schools	65.8%	64.7%
	State	69.1%	68.1%

NAPLAN relative growth

The percentage of students in the High and Medium relative growth categories.

Relative growth is determined by comparing a student's current year result 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). 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'.


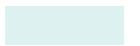

A multi-year average for NAPLAN relative growth will be included in future years as data becomes available.

		2025	
Reading Year 3 to 5 % of students High or Medium relative growth	School	76.5%	
	Similar schools	71.2%	
	State	74.7%	
Numeracy Year 3 to 5 % of students High or Medium relative growth	School	55.9%	
	Similar schools	69.4%	
	State	74.0%	

WELLBEING




Student Attitudes to School – Sense of Connectedness

The percentage endorsement on Sense of Connectedness factor, as reported in the Attitudes to School Survey completed annually by Victorian government school students, indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree).

		2025		4-year average
Years 4 to 6 % positive endorsement	School	88.3%		90.9%
	Similar schools	77.6%		78.6%
	State	77.1%		77.3%

Student Attitudes to School – Managing Bullying

The percentage endorsement on Management of Bullying factor, as reported in the Attitudes to School Survey completed annually by Victorian government school students, indicates the percent of positive responses (agree or strongly agree).

		2025		4-year average
Years 4 to 6 % positive endorsement	School	94.9%		95.7%
	Similar schools	78.3%		79.4%
	State	76.4%		75.8%

ENGAGEMENT








Average absence days per student

Absence from school can impact on students' learning. Common reasons for non-attendance include illness and extended family holidays.

		2025	4-year average
Prep - 6	School	24.7	23.9
	Similar schools	21.1	21.6
	State	21.5	21.7

Attendance rate

Attendance rate refers to the average proportion of formal school days students in each year level attended.

		2025	
Prep	School	90.6%	
Year 1	School	88.8%	
Year 2	School	89.2%	
Year 3	School	88.5%	
Year 4	School	86.6%	
Year 5	School	86.5%	
Year 6	School	84.2%	

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AND POSITION

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - OPERATING STATEMENT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025

Financial figures are as of 18 March 2026.

Revenue	Actual
Student Resource Package	\$6,306,576
Government Provided DET Grants	\$2,037,155
Government Grants Commonwealth	\$960,729
Government Grants State	\$25,539
Revenue Other	\$147,227
Locally Raised Funds	\$853,626
Capital Grants	\$0
Total Operating Revenue	\$10,330,852

Equity	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	\$168,275
Equity (Catch Up)	\$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage - Extraordinary Growth)	\$0
Equity Total	\$168,275

The equity funding reported above is a subset of the overall revenue reported by the school.

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package ¹	\$6,104,709
Adjustments	\$0
Books & Publications	\$11,043
Camps/Excursions/Activities	\$153,392
Communication Costs	\$5,112
Consumables	\$228,502
Miscellaneous Expenses ²	\$64,007
Agency Staff	\$0
Professional Development	\$38,037
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	\$126,630
Property Services	\$369,661
Salaries & Allowances ³	\$2,800,114
Support Services	\$80,386

Expenditure	Actual
Trading & Fundraising	\$138,230
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$0
Travel & Subsistence	\$3,151
Utilities	\$110,003
Total Operating Expenditure	\$10,232,976
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	\$97,876
Asset Acquisitions	\$319,890

¹ Student Resource Package Expenditure figures are subject to change during the reconciliation process.

² Miscellaneous Expenses include bank charges, administration expenses, insurance and taxation charges.

³ Salaries and Allowances refers to school-level payroll.

FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

Funds Available	Actual
High Yield Investment Account	\$2,484,787
Official Account	\$105,925
Other Accounts	\$10,894
Total Funds Available	\$2,601,606

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	\$688,045
Other Recurrent Expenditure	\$373
Provision Accounts	\$139,381
Funds Received in Advance	\$0
School Based Programs	\$500,000
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	\$0
Cooperative Bank Account	\$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	\$0
Repayable to the Department	\$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$85,000
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	\$355,000
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	\$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	\$0
Total Financial Commitments	\$1,767,798

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.