

Making  
education  
meaningful

2023 Annual Report



# Mission

At Newmark Primary we equip our children with the emotional strength and practical know-how to contribute to and change their community for the better. So they can make a meaningful mark on today, and tomorrow.

We inspire children to be curious learners, empathetic thinkers and courageous doers through authentic learning grounded in real-life experiences. We immerse children in the world around them, showing them the problems and opportunities in it.

We encourage children to be bold - to question the status quo, to get stuck in and make their mark. Giving them the emotional strength and practical know-how to find solutions that propel positive change in their communities and beyond.



# An Informed Approach

Our approach to teaching and learning is informed and supported by a range of trusted theories, frameworks and principles. We have built our educational philosophy on firm foundations.



## 5 ways to wellbeing

Our incorporation of the 5 ways to wellbeing equips our children to live balanced and meaningful lives that change community for the better.



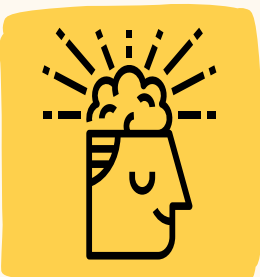
## Human-centred design

Our inclusion of the human-centred design process empowers our children to solve problems in the real world.



## Social enterprise business

Our focus on the social enterprise business model enables our children to create a fairer and more sustainable world.



## Growth mindset

Our goal and growth orientation encourages both intrinsic motivation and a love of learning.

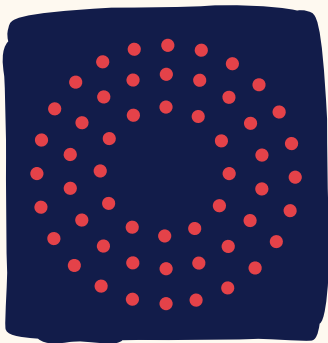
# Beliefs

Our beliefs inform the design of our teaching and learning program. We believe that all people should continually grow, should intentionally contribute to creating better community and should be aware of the impact of their decisions and actions.



## We grow

We nurture empathy, curiosity and resilience to grow children into well-rounded humans.



## We contribute

We equip children to be conscious decision makers and collaborative problem solvers in their communities and beyond.



## We impact

We empower children to have a meaningful and sustainable impact on the world around them.



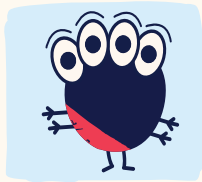
# Values

Our values guide our interactions and conversations at Newmark Primary, creating a rich culture of collaboration, contribution and courage.



## Find a way

We value bravery. We aren't afraid to get stuck in and to build and pioneer new ways of doing things.



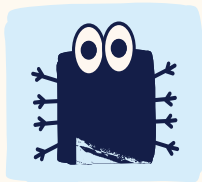
## Better together

We champion collaboration within communities in order to reach a common good.



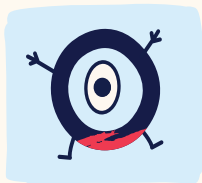
## Keep it real

We don't shy away from what is real. We value genuine connections and experiences, and we seek them out.



## Go beyond

We make time for others and go beyond what is expected, putting positive contribution at the heart of everything we do.



## Know your impact

We see the perspective of others. We listen and take a moment to consider the impact of our words and actions.



## Make someone's day

We build each other up, and use acts of kindness to spread joy, drive change and create a safe space for everyone.



## Our Reflections

A major focus for Newmark Primary this year has been engaging in the cyclical review process conducted by Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). VRQA are responsible for ensuring that all Independent Schools meet the minimum standards for education in Victoria. The reviews are conducted every five years. This is the second review our school has had since opening in 2016. This particular review had three major focus areas: Finance, Governance and Childs Safe Standards. With the recent changes to the Ministerial Order relating to Child Safe Standards, the VRQA review aimed to ensure that Independent Schools made the necessary changes to policies and procedures in alignment with the updates.

In 2023 we also launched our Year 6 program. This was a major accomplishment for Newmark Primary, having been in the pipeline for quite some time before coming to fruition. The design of the Year 6 program is based on the principles of Rites of Passage, and was informed by research conducted by the school to better understand what our tweens need to successfully transition from Newmark Primary to Secondary School.

Overall 2023 has been a settled year with some significant achievements.





# Kane Thornton

Chair of the Board

Our strategy over the past year has been to continue to bring stability and maturity to the running and operations of the school, as we emerge from the challenges of the COVID era and head towards 10 years of the schools operations. It was timely therefore that we underwent our second review by VRQA, which included a rigorous assessment of the schools policies and practices. While this may sound rather dull, it's a bill of health that should give us comfort that the foundation of the school is strong and we meet the stringent compliance requirements for a school.

Careful financial management, amongst plenty of cost pressures, saw the school deliver another modest surplus for the year. This included further steps to pay down our loan and limit the increase in fees that parents face.

The board continued to develop our governance practices and policies, and recruited additional directors to ensure we have the right skills and inject new energy and ideas into the governance and strategy development role that is at the core of the board's role.

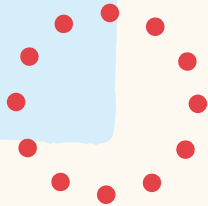
Getting all of this right, of course, allows the school to focus on what's important, providing the best possible experience and education for our children. As we move into the next phase of the school's journey, we are also starting to lift our gaze to the future, and developing a more detailed plan for the long term role and strategy for the school.

In any case, Newmark Primary remains a haven and a beacon of optimism and hope for a better world.



# Amanda Tawhai

Principal



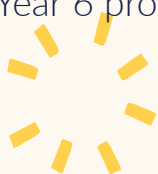
A number of exciting initiatives have been launched this year, and some significant milestones celebrated.

During 2023 we expanded our Expert team and program to include a Tinkerer who has twenty-plus years experience in woodworking. We opened 'The Wing' - our woodworking studio, making iterations throughout the year to improve both the form and function of the space. Our Tinkerer works in partnership with our Artist in Residence, supporting our children through the human-centred design process each term to create high-quality products and services for the local community.

To celebrate our experts and specialists, during National Science week we hosted our first 'Night at Newmark' for the school community. Our experts and specialists ran activities for adults and children, sharing their skills and knowledge. This included opt-in art, science, digital technologies and woodworking workshops as well as a giant game of tee-ball in the park!

We also launched the first version of our Expert Program, providing children with the opportunity to opt into workshops to develop their skills in art, woodwork and digital technologies. This program has been designed to engage children in areas of interest, creating pathways for deep skill development. This program is all about experts creating experts!

Possibly the most exciting program development in 2023 has been the launch of our Year 6 program. This has been a few years in the making, a program specifically







designed to support our tweens in their transition from childhood to adulthood.

We also embarked on a new adventure, working with a company called 'Future Friendly' to create a podcast about Newmark Primary. This was a special experience for the entire school community, with children, parents and staff all participating in the podcast. The finished product was inspirational, with children sharing about their learning, and parents and staff so clearly articulating the school's unique philosophy. The podcast was made available on the Future Friendly website as well as Apple podcasts. It has been a powerful way to share about Newmark Primary with the wider community. We are very thankful for the team at Future Friendly for all the work they did to make this happen!

In addition to this, we hosted a number of Educator Professional Development sessions for teachers and leaders from schools across Australia. There is a real hunger to discuss the current state of education and to explore more relevant approaches to teaching and learning. Our Educator PD Days are another way we share our philosophy and encourage schools nationwide to reflect on children's experiences within the current education system.

Finally, this year we successfully moved through the bulk of the school's cyclical review conducted by Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). A significant body of work was done to ensure the school's compliance with the updated Child Safe Standards. This involved consultation with parents and children to ensure our policies and procedures incorporate the different perspectives of community members. We are very thankful for the contributions of all those involved, including board members, staff, parents and children at Newmark Primary.





## Our Programs

Our Project Ventures in 2023 continued to engage and empower children to take action in the real world to create positive change. These term-long learning experiences are the heart of our teaching and learning program, moving from building knowledge, to exploring needs and issues, and finally to taking action to create change. Our Project Ventures are based on the human-centred design process, a framework which equips children to create stronger community and a better future.

This year we launched our long awaited Year 6 program, based on Rites of Passage to support our tweens transition from childhood to adulthood. The first year of implementation has been extremely successful, confirming the need for this focus in Year 6, and providing us with a springboard for future iterations.

# Year 6 Program

The launch of our Year 6 program has been one of our greatest successes, to date. We have thought deeply about the challenges tweens face when transitioning from childhood to adulthood, and the important role that Rites of Passage play in this transition.

Leaning on the work of Arne Rubinstein, we use his principles of Rites of Passage as the framework for our Year 6 program. His five key elements are: celebration, storytelling, challenge, voice and honour. We categorised the different components of the Year 6 program to align with these key elements.

The Year 6 program includes volunteering at local organisations, the launch of a social enterprise business, leadership development and mentoring, a journey-based camp and trip to the Northern Territory and a deep exploration of identity in the physical and digital world, resulting in a very special art exhibition and poetry recital.

Our tweens engage in semester-long Project Ventures, giving them time to develop knowledge and skills that will set them up for a successful future.

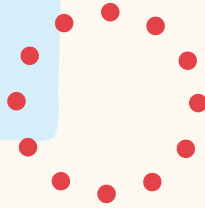
Semester 1: Social Enterprise  
Semester 2: Identity Formation and Expression



# Year 6 Program



# Project Ventures



## TERM 1: Neurology

During this Project Venture our children explored the importance of the brain and how it works. They learned the science of emotions and how we can use strategies to calm our bodies. Our children also investigated how habits can be used to retrain our brains, understanding that neurons that fire together, wire together! At this critical time in history, our older children considered what it means to be neurodivergent and how we can help create more inclusive environments.



## TERM 2: Identity Formation

During this Project Venture our children explored different factors that can shape identity, developing a deeper understanding and appreciation of what makes them the same, and what makes them different from others. They considered how their family and home influence who they are, and how their family's cultural heritage and beliefs play a large role in forming their identity. Our older children considered how personal and social identity can be expressed in different ways.



### TERM 3: Sustainability

During this Project Venture our children explored the relationship between the natural world and our current lifestyle. They found out about the Earth and atmosphere, and the natural resources found in our world. Our children investigated how elements of the natural world impact our lifestyle and choices, and how our careful use of resources is very important.



## TERM 4: Inventions

During this Project Venture our children became inventors! Each cohort studied the achievements of different inventors, paying careful attention to the character traits of inventors and how to come up with new ideas to solve problems. They looked at the evolution of transport, communication and entertainment and important inventors who contribution to the progression in these areas. They then used this knowledge to invent new products to solve problems they experience in their everyday lives. This culminated in our very first Newmark Primary Invention Expo, where the children shared their inventions with families





# Outdoor Education

## Adventure Sports

In 2023 we expanded our Adventure Sport program to include new opportunities and greater choice for our children. For the first time, our children in the older year levels had a choice of three sports, which included a more conventional sport, opening the way for them to participate in the interschool sport competition with local Primary Schools.

- Circus was held for the first time with the Women's Circus in Footscray.
- Rock climbing was progressed in the Year 4/5/6 cohort from Clip & Climb to Cliffhanger gym, where children learnt skills in belaying.
- A third team sport option was introduced for each term in Year 4/5/6, leading to the incorporation of cricket, AFL football, basketball and soccer.
- We joined a district interschool sports community, and participated in one day events such as cross country running and swimming. We've continued building this relationship into 2024, and increasing our interschool sports on offer.



## Camp Program

As part of our Outdoor Education program we once again ran our schoolwide camping experiences. Our camp program began with a night-time experience on campus with Foundation/Year 1 children and culminated in a journey-based camp and trip to the Northern Territory with our Year 6 tweens.

During these camps our children developed high levels of independence and confidence, while having loads of fun with friends.

- Year F/1: Slept at school for a night.
- Year 2/3: Slept at Urban Camp - Melbourne Zoo for a night.
- Year 4/5/6: Slept at the Summit Camp for two nights.
- Year 6: Did a journey-based camp at the Mornington Peninsula and a week long trip to Central Australia.






## Our Team

In 2023 we expanded the school board by recruiting two new directors. With many of the current directors having completed their term of commitment, board recruitment will continue to be a focus for the next couple of years. We are very thankful for the current board directors who have played a critical role in further consolidating the school's stability.

During 2023 the school board reviewed many of the governing policies and charters, and did a major update of the school's constitution. All documents were submitted to Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) as part of the school's cyclical review process.

The professional development of the core team of leaders, educators and administrators also contributed to the school's continual stability and strength. Continuing on from 2022, the focus of the professional development was on the evidence-based theories and frameworks that underpin the school's philosophy. The team engaged in professional development in both Emotion Coaching with the Gottman Institution, and Restorative Practice with Restorative Pathways.

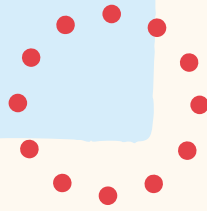


In alignment with the school's commitment to wellbeing, the staff participated in another physical challenge. This year they did 'The Bloody Long Walk', a 35km walk to raise money to cure Mito. Congratulations to all staff members who participated in, and completed the walk!





## School Board



### **Kane Thornton: Chair - Non-Executive Director (03/10/2019 - Current)**

Kane Thornton is Chief Executive of the Clean Energy Council, the peak body for the renewable energy industry in Australia.

Kane has more than fifteen years experience in climate change and energy policy and leadership in the renewable energy industry including as a political advocate, public presenter and media spokesperson.

Kane has held a broad range of advisory and board roles with government and non-government organisations in the climate change and energy sector. He has previously held the role as Chair of national community sustainability organisation Renew and as Deputy Chair of Victorian Government agency Sustainability Victoria, including serving as Chair of the board Audit, Risk & Finance Committee.

Kane is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, has a Masters in Social Science and Bachelor of Information Technology.

### **David Hanrahan - Non-Executive Director (011/11/2019 - Current)**

David is a senior marketing executive with 20 years' experience in financial services, health insurance, resources and energy sectors. Highly commercial connector of marketing activity with sales and business outcomes, across both B2B and B2C.

Experienced leader of teams from insights and strategy through to campaign execution and commercial activation.

**Tanya Tran - Non-Executive Director**  
**(011/11/2019 - Current)**

Tanya is a versatile leader with a track record of achieving business results. Tanya has over a decade of experience providing management accounting, strategic planning, analytics, internal audit, risk management and process engineering expertise across not-for-profit, marketing, health, education, publishing and financial services sectors.

Tanya has been CFO and Company Secretary at Members Own Health Funds and the Australasian Sonographers Association. Tanya is currently the Head of Operations at Open Food Network.

**Robert Meissner - Non-Executive Director**  
**(01/10/2020 - Current)**

Robert is the Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary of Althea Group Holdings, an ASX listed pharmaceutical company.

His experience covers areas such as financial management and control, corporate governance, human resources and commercial strategy. He started his career in private practice, before moving into industry where he has gained experience in a range of industries that include advertising, construction, retail and pharmaceutical.

**Bojana Pjanic - Non-Executive Director**  
**(08/11/2019 - 23/03/2023)**

Bojana Pjanic is a CPA qualified Accountant and a Registered Tax Agent with over thirteen years of accounting experience in the corporate, public and non-for-profit sector. She has a broad understanding of tax and financial accounting processes within both small and large entities.

She has mostly worked for a private company owned by a family who have been involved in property investments, wine producing and not-for-profit foundations and a public museum.

In December 2018 she started her own Accounting Public Practice focusing on small businesses needing advice on anything from tax returns to being their Virtual CFO.



## **Llawela Forrest - Non-Executive Director**

(16/05/2023 - Current)

Llawela has more than two decades experience in marketing, communications and fundraising. During her career she has worked across the media, food and drink, hospitality, not-for-profit and social enterprise sectors; a decade of which was spent running her own business.

Her strengths lie in strategic development, ideation and storytelling, stakeholder engagement and collaboration. Llawela is values-led with a deep social justice focus that has been acutely activated over the past four years in her role as Chief Marketing Officer at Engineers Without Borders Australia. She has recently taken on a new role as General Manager of the Purpose Precinct - an initiative that aims to support, grow, incubate and activate the Victorian social enterprise sector.

## **Ebony Gaylor - Non-Executive Director**

(08/06/2023 - Current)

A founder, speaker, author and thought leader. Ebony has worked on social and environmental movements globally, driving action by bringing together sociology marketing and creativity.

Ebony is a creative sociologist and founder/managing partner of Decade of Action, a social cause consultancy committed to putting purpose-led action at the centre of every business by 2030.

# School Staff



Amanda Tawhai  
Principal



Meghan Thomas  
Daily Ops Lead



Melinda Male  
Business Manager



Kelly Bailey  
Front Office Manager



Hillary Nguyen  
Educator



Ellen Gay  
Educator



Ashleigh Devereux  
Educator



Janine Cuthbert  
Educator



Annie Clayton  
Educator



Kezia Thamrin  
Educator



Sara Sulava  
Educator



Sabrina Kinlough  
Specialist - PE/OE



Simon Huang  
Specialist - Chinese



Zory McGrath  
Artist in Residence



Remi Hypolite  
Tinkerer



Hannah Bailey  
Intervention





## Our Data

We are committed to goal and growth oriented learning as we believe this fosters a love of learning. Over many years we have developed concept pathways based on the Australian Curriculum that inform the goals we set for our children.


Our aim is to make goals and growth visible for our children in all learning areas, as we believe this fosters intrinsic motivation and the desire to keep on learning.

Our preference is to observe children in targeted small group workshops and use anecdotal notes to both capture their understanding and mastery, and inform next steps.

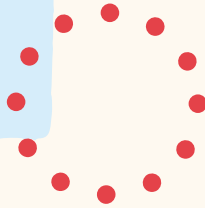
We do, of course, use a range of assessment tools and strategies to identify the starting point for our children. These tools merely confirm the starting point, after which observations and anecdotal notes inform the pace at which a child moves through concepts.

NAPLAN is one form of assessment that reflects a moment in time and is a requirement for all schools. Our view is that it must be considered in light of a broad range of information about a child.

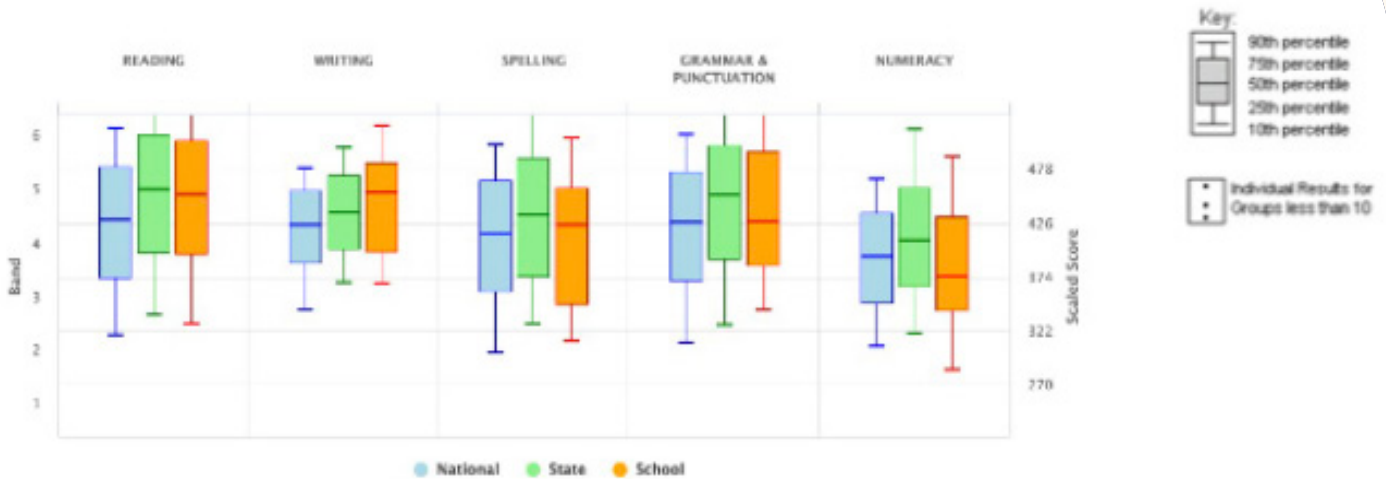
In cases where year level groups are below ten children, NAPLAN results only show individual achievement and are not included in the group summaries.



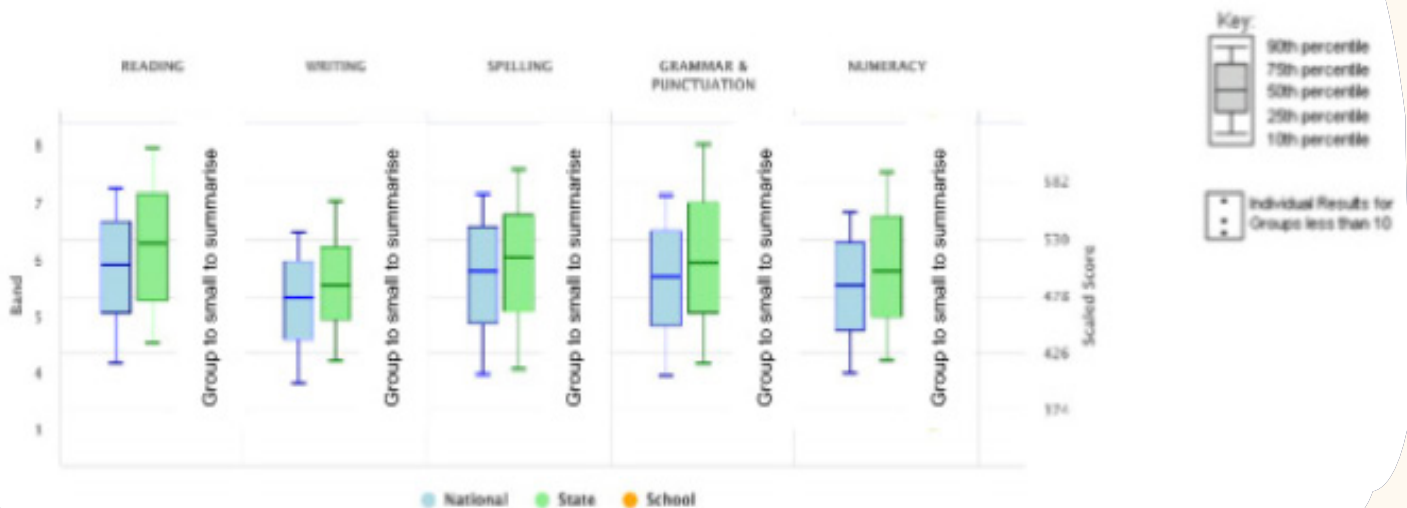
# Naplan Data



2021 - Year 3



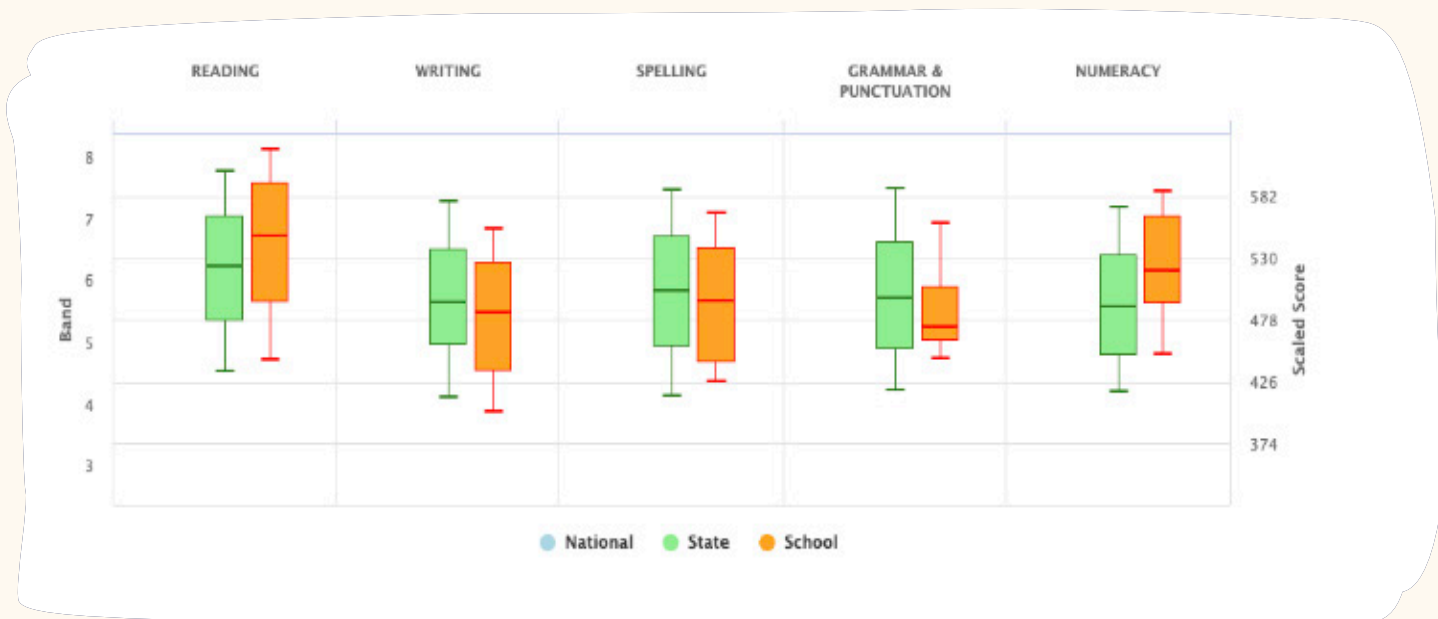
2021 - Year 5



## 2022 - Year 3



## 2022 - Year 5



2023

Year Level	Outcome	Exempt	NAS	Developing	Strong	Exceeding
3	GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION	0% (0)	13% (3)	21.7% (5)	56.5% (13)	8.7% (2)
3	SPELLING	0% (0)	13% (3)	13% (3)	52.2% (12)	21.7% (5)
3	NUMERACY	0% (0)	8.7% (2)	13% (3)	73.9% (17)	4.3% (1)
3	READING	0% (0)	13% (3)	8.7% (2)	39.1% (9)	39.1% (9)
3	WRITING	0% (0)	4.3% (1)	4.3% (1)	78.3% (18)	13% (3)
5	GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION	0% (0)	11.1% (1)	22.2% (2)	55.6% (5)	11.1% (1)
5	SPELLING	0% (0)	0% (0)	22.2% (2)	66.7% (6)	11.1% (1)
5	NUMERACY	0% (0)	22.2% (2)	22.2% (2)	44.4% (4)	11.1% (1)
5	READING	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	66.7% (6)	33.3% (3)
5	WRITING	0% (0)	0% (0)	33.3% (3)	55.6% (5)	11.1% (1)

## Attendance Data

Total number of students: 129

Girls: 59

Boys: 70

Indigenous: 0

Overall attendance: 89%



## Our Finances

During 2023 the school made an annual profit of \$139,429.00. Employment costs remained the school's largest expense at \$1,502,133.00 which was 54% of total expenditure.

The school's auditors, Postan Miller and Associates Pty Ltd, have issued an unqualified audit opinion for the year ended 31 December 2023.

TOPP Schools Ltd is a not-for-profit Company (limited by guarantee), registered and domiciled in Australia. The presentation currency of TOPP Schools Ltd is Australian dollars. TOPP Schools Ltd's general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2014 (ACNC Regulation).



## Revenue

**Total Revenue: \$2,913,233.00**

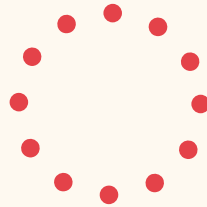
Tuition fees: \$1,573,323.00

Commonwealth and state funding: \$1,189,079.00

Other fees: \$110,186.00

Other income: \$12,558.00

## Expenses



**Total Operating Expenses: \$2,773,804.00**

Teaching and Educational Resources: \$319,384.00

Employment: \$1,502,133.00

Occupancy: \$120,524.00 (does not include rent as AASB16 applied)

Administration and Consultants: \$153,499.00

Insurance: \$55,722.00

Finance Expenses: \$243,741.00

Depreciation and Amortisation: \$371,819.00

Other Expenses: \$6,982.00



# Our Contacts

**Email:** [hello@newmark.vic.edu.au](mailto:hello@newmark.vic.edu.au)

**Phone:** 03 8560 4466


**Website:** [www.newmark.vic.edu.au](http://www.newmark.vic.edu.au)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/NewmarkPrimary](http://www.facebook.com/NewmarkPrimary)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/newmarkprimary](http://www.instagram.com/newmarkprimary)

## Location

126-128 Nelson Place, Williamstown 3016  
Victoria, Australia



We are a team gathering and learning on the traditional lands of the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge their ownership of the land and waters, and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

