

About Our School

School context

At Bruthen Primary School, we foster a culture of respect for ourselves, others, and our place, ensuring that everyone feels safe, included, and has every opportunity to learn. This supportive atmosphere allows us all to strive for our best selves.

In partnership with our families, we aim to help our students become confident, curious and empowered learners who feel supported in facing challenges at school and beyond. Located in a picturesque rural setting overlooking the Tambo River valley, Bruthen Primary School embodies a family-oriented approach where students look after one another, and parents and carers are welcomed and encouraged to engage in their child's education.

We are dedicated to providing a safe, secure, fun, and stimulating learning environment for all students. We believe that students can reach their full potential when they are happy, healthy, and safe, and when the school culture actively engages and supports them in their learning. Our school recognizes that student well-being and learning outcomes are closely linked.

In 2024, we had an enrollment of 67 students, with a Student Family Occupation (SFO) index of 0.3957, including 6 Indigenous students and 21 NCCD-listed students. Bruthen Primary School operated three classrooms: Foundation/1/2, Grades 3/4, and Grades 5/6, with a staff that includes one principal, three full-time teachers, one part-time (0.6) Mental Health Practitioner and DI Co-ordinator, one part-time (0.6) Specialist Teacher (Art, Science, PE) one Educational Support staff member as a tutor (0.7) and one Educational Support staff member-classroom support (0.7), and one part-time (0.6) business manager.

In addition to Literacy and Numeracy, teachers also provide specialised instruction in Cultural Studies, including aboriginal perspectives, ICT, Humanities, and Well-being. We source additional expertise to offer a weekly Performing Arts program in Term 4.

Throughout the year, our Parent Partnership members collaborate with students to deliver programs such as "Garden to Plate" for gardening and cooking, and the Aquaponics Program.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

In 2024, we continued our commitment to "improve well-being and learning outcomes for all students" with a key focus on embedding processes and practices to "Keep Learning Moving Forward." We recognize that every child is on an individual learning journey, and it is essential for our teachers to have a deep understanding of the curriculum, effective practices, and assessment methods that facilitate continuous learning for all students.

To address this key improvement focus, we refined the reading sequence of our learning documents. Teachers utilized these documents to assess where students are in their learning,

determine the next steps in teaching, and evaluate students' learning growth. This information was integral in planning for individual student needs in weekly planning documents. We developed planning templates that included non-negotiable elements of our Gradual Release of Responsibility Instructional Model, along with strategic effective teaching practices.

We also integrated effective practices within our Gradual Release of Responsibility Instructional Model. Throughout 2024, we engaged in professional development to deepen teachers' understanding of small focus group intervention practices. As part of this initiative, teachers created templates for collecting data to inform their planning and enhanced their grasp of guided reading practices.

Additionally, we embedded concepts of reciprocal teaching and book club practices into our curriculum. These new understandings were supported through modeled lessons, observation and feedback processes, one-on-one professional conversations, and team meetings to discuss implementation challenges and successes.

We emphasized the gradual release of responsibility to students across a sequence of lessons. Typically, students advanced from a modeled lesson to paired practice, then to small focus group interventions or collaborative learning before working independently. With a deeper comprehension of the instructional model, teachers were able to ensure that students were working at their point of need.

****NAPLAN Reading Data:**** In Grade 3, 84.6% of students achieved a strong or exceeding standard, while in Grade 5, 81.8% of students reached the same benchmark. We take immense pride in consistently achieving outstanding reading results, surpassing those of similar schools and the state averages. This demonstrates that our implemented effective teaching practices are meeting the needs of a high percentage of our students, establishing a strong foundation as they progress from Foundation to Grade 6 at Bruthen Primary School.

Our key improvement strategy for Numeracy centered around building teachers' understanding of the "Launch, Explore, and Summarise" instructional model at Bruthen Primary School. This approach provides students with opportunities to apply learned (explicitly taught) strategies in a problem-solving and investigation context. Our Numeracy Coach facilitated this learning, and shared understandings were developed during professional team meetings.

****NAPLAN Numeracy Data:**** In Grade 3, 84.6% of students achieved a strong or exceeding standard, while in Grade 5, 81.8% did the same. These results also exceed those of similar-sized schools and state averages.

When comparing our current results with those from 2022, we see that our students are consistently achieving high outcomes in reading (above 80%), and there has been a significant increase in our Numeracy outcomes—Grade 3 improved from 72% to 84.6%, and Grade 5 from 75% to 81.8%. Teacher judgments in 2024 align closely with our NAPLAN data.

Wellbeing

Bruthen Primary School has a strong sense of connectedness, as reflected in the 2024 Student Attitude to School Survey results, with an impressive 86.7% satisfaction rate. This sense of connectedness is built on a solid foundation of respect for ourselves, others, and our environment, ensuring that everyone feels safe and has a sense of belonging.

This commitment to respect is developed through various methods, starting with the entire school community co-constructing a shared understanding of what respect means at Bruthen Primary School. Each class further defines what it looks like to learn and play together, and students uphold this culture by providing respectful feedback to one another. In fact, 88.9% of students reported feeling safe at school, indicating a positive response to efforts in managing bullying.

In 2024, our students participated in a startup program aimed at promoting learning well-being. This program includes explicit instruction about the learning model and how each component supports their education. Students gain insights into the teachers' roles, while also understanding their own responsibilities as learners. It addresses key dispositions, such as motivation and interest (87% positive response), perseverance (76%), and sense of confidence (80%). The program also emphasizes the development of a growth mindset, explores 'The Learning Pit', and teaches emotional regulation, with 81% of students reporting positive responses regarding self-regulation.

To encourage physical activity and student connections, we offer a variety of outdoor activities during recess and lunchtime. These activities include riding bikes, scooters, and skateboards, building cubbies with pallets, pickets, ropes, and tarps, making clay bricks, engineering river and dam waterways, and utilizing an extensive range of sports equipment.

Whole-school well-being initiatives have been enhanced through Tier 1 programs, including 'Respectful Relationships', 'The Resilience Project', Kids Help Line, Cyber Safety, and the Zones of Regulation. Additionally, Tier 2 support has been provided by our Mental Health Practitioner for small groups of students through the 'Secret Agents Society' and Socially Speaking programs, which focus on further developing social and emotional skills. We also employ a psychologist for three hours every fortnight to offer one-on-one support to students. External agencies, such as dental services, pediatricians, and specialists in eye and ear care, as well as dyslexia consultations, have been engaged to address the individual well-being needs of our students.

Engagement

The average number of days students were absent continued to decrease, with students missing an average of 19.8 days in 2024. This figure is below the averages for similar schools and the state.

According to the Student Attitude to School Survey, 91% of students expressed a positive attitude towards attendance in 2024. Common reasons for non-attendance included illness and family holidays. To address this, we implemented a new communication system called UeducateUs. This system allows parents to notify the school of absences via text messages and sends reminders to parents if their child is absent without notification. In addition, daily phone calls are made to parents to follow up on any non-attendance.

We acknowledge that some families continue to take holidays during the school term, and we understand the circumstances surrounding these decisions. These situations are discussed with us, and classroom teachers provide assignments for students to take with them to ensure they can continue their learning when appropriate.

We also recognize that some students miss school due to family wellbeing issues. In such cases, we connect families with external agencies for additional support and provide work for the student(s) to complete at home when necessary. In extreme cases where students refuse to attend school, we hold regular meetings with the families to identify any concerns or barriers to

attendance, and we develop action plans to help support the families in getting their child(ren) to school. We even offer a home pickup option until the family is in a position to resume this responsibility.

Student engagement is also assessed through their attitudes towards learning. In 2024, the Student Attitude to School Survey revealed positive responses in several areas: Effective Use of Learning Time (87%), Differentiated Learning Challenge (88%), High Expectations for Success (94%), Stimulating Learning (93%), and Effort for Learning (83%). Throughout 2024, we continued to enhance teachers' understanding of effective teaching practices that promote learner voice, agency, and leadership capabilities. This process involved clarifying definitions, re-categorizing and refining capability statements, and identifying their use through our Gradual Release of Responsibility Instructional Model.

All students participated in extracurricular incursions and excursions to further increase engagement at school. School camps for each year level included a Foundation/Year 1 school sleepover, a Grade 2 overnight cultural camp at Lake Tyres, a Grade 3/4 Outdoor Education camp at Coonawarra, and a Grade 5/6 experience at Sovereign Hill. Students also engaged in weekly specialist activities, including Science, Art, Language and Culture, Wellbeing, and Physical Education, helping them to recognize and strengthen their learning abilities beyond literacy and numeracy skills.

Financial performance

Revenue

In 2024, Bruthen Primary School operated with a Student Resource Package totaling \$922,060, alongside a healthy High Yield Account of \$264,890. The High Yield Account includes funding reserved for Division Sports Associations, an operational reserve, school-based programs, additional funding, and asset equipment replacement.

The school received an additional \$20,060 specifically for bushfire preparedness concerning buildings and grounds. This funding was utilized for conducting tree audits and maintenance, performing upkeep on the Shelter in Place and Main Building, regularly mowing and removing debris, and cleaning and repairing gutters and leaf guards.

The locally raised funds amounted to \$5,847, generated from families for camps and excursions, sports days, arts performances, and fundraising events such as raffles. These funds directly supported the operation of these programs and helped subsidize school camps for families facing financial difficulties.

Moreover, \$5,500 from Commonwealth Government Grants enabled the entire school to participate in a Bike Education program during Term 3 and attend a four-week gymnastics program in Bairnsdale during Term 4.

Additionally, \$176,009 from Department of Education and Training (DET) Grants was allocated for the 'Tutoring' program and the employment of a part-time Mental Health Practitioner in Schools, as well as a Disability Inclusion Coordinator. This funding was directed towards addressing specific students' wellbeing and learning needs.

Equity funding of \$22,902 was utilized to increase the employment fraction of two Educational Support staff members from part-time to full-time, thereby providing additional assistance in the classroom.

Expenditure Report

In 2024, the Student Resource Package amounted to \$880,329. This funding supported the salaries of three full-time classroom teachers, two part-time educational support staff members, one part-time specialist teacher, one business manager, and one principal.

An allocation of \$49784 for salaries and allowances included payments for casual replacement teachers (CRT) due to illness and professional learning, the coordinator of our Garden to Plate Cooking Program, a Performing Arts Teacher for Term 4, and local cleaning contracts.

In 2024, we spent \$23,250 on support services aimed at enhancing students' physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. These services included psychologists, social workers, optometrists, audiologists, and pediatricians.

We allocated \$18,472 for consumables, which covered the costs of exercise books, pencils, rulers, paper, scissors, art supplies, materials for specialist subjects, and daily classroom learning necessities.

Miscellaneous expenses totaled \$14,351, covering bank charges, administrative expenses, insurance, taxation, as well as photocopier hire, services, toners, and paper.

The Equipment, Maintenance, and Hire Expenses amounted to \$51,357. This covered the purchase of a new smart TV, the purchase and installation of two new heating and cooling split systems, and new furniture (chairs, tables, storage, whiteboards, rugs) in preparation for setting up a fourth classroom in 2025. It also included the purchase and installation of new pin boards in three classrooms and the library. Additionally, funds were used for hall hire for school productions, building and playground equipment repairs, as well as ground and garden maintenance.

\$7,118 was spent on Trading and Fundraising, primarily for groceries for Tucker Tuesday and, to a lesser extent, for Mother's and Father's Day stall gifts.

The remaining balance of \$3,265 for Staff Professional Development was used to enhance our teaching practices within the Gradual Release of Responsibility Instructional Model. This included full-day professional learning activities and in-class modeling and feedback to support the implementation of new practices.

Property services costs of \$56248 showed a significant increase, primarily due to rising electricity prices. This funding covered water rates, security and safety inspections, mowing, garbage disposal, and sanitation expenses.

Miscellaneous expenses of \$3,265 included administrative expenses, insurance, taxation, and bank charges.

Net Operating Surplus

A commitment of \$14954 will be carried forward into 2025.

Financial Commitments

Funds for Committees and Shared Arrangements include a commitment of \$13,793 for the Eastern Division Sport Committee, where Bruthen Primary School acts as the banker school.

We have also carried over a Maintenance-Buildings/Grounds budget of \$105,454 to complete building maintenance and upgrades during the holidays and Term 1. This budget includes repainting two rooms, which will serve as the new Foundation classroom in 2025, as well as paint repairs to the library, the Shelter in Place Staff Office, and external walls. Additionally, it covers repairs to the disability toilet wall and ceiling, foyer ceiling, brickwork, playground equipment, the installation of two new smart TVs, cleaning gutters on the main building and three shed spaces,

repairs to seating in the PE shelter, replacing and repainting the basketball backboard, trimming trip hazards on the sandpit edging, and the removal of rocks and dirt from a pathway.

We are also committing \$96,050 to support school-based programs in 2025, which will assist with the transition from three to four classrooms.

In summary, Bruthen Primary School is in a healthy financial position. We will continue to strategically plan our expenditure priorities to provide the best possible learning opportunities for our students while maintaining their wellbeing and managing the regular upkeep of our buildings and grounds. This ensures that our students have a safe and inviting learning environment in which to thrive.

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

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