2025 Annual Report to the School Community

School Name: Ararat Primary School (0800)

- 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 22 April 2026 at 11:16 AM by Natalie Dowsett (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 24 April 2026 at 07:43 AM by Natalie Dowsett (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

In 2025, Ararat Primary School had a total enrolment of 229 students, comprising 101 female students and 128 male students.

The class structure at Ararat Primary School in 2025 was maintained at 11 classes, supported by a combination of full-time and part-time staff. The school continued to deliver a strong specialist program, including Visual Arts, Kitchen Garden, Physical Education, and Science, providing students with a broad and engaging curriculum that supports both academic and practical learning experiences.

The staffing profile for 2025 comprised 28 staff members, including 19 full-time and 9 part-time staff (approximately 22.5 FTE). The school leadership structure included a Principal, two Assistant Principals, and a Leading Teacher (Disability Inclusion), providing strong direction across teaching and learning, student wellbeing, and inclusive practice. The teaching team consisted of classroom teachers supported by education support staff who worked closely with students to provide targeted assistance across all year levels. The administration team included one office administration staff member and a Business Manager, ensuring effective management of school operations, finance, and daily administrative functions. In addition, a maintenance person supported the upkeep and presentation of school facilities, contributing to a safe, well-maintained, and welcoming learning environment. This staffing structure enabled strong instructional leadership, responsive student support, and efficient school operations, ensuring that the needs of all learners were met across the 2025 school year.

Throughout the year, the staffing profile supported collaboration, consistency, and a shared focus on improving student outcomes. The combination of leadership roles, teaching staff, and support personnel ensured effective implementation of whole-school priorities, with particular emphasis on inclusion, engagement, and curriculum delivery, as well as the maintenance of a safe and well-resourced learning environment.

Ararat Primary School is guided by its core values of Respect, Integrity, Courage, and Honesty, which underpin daily practice across classrooms and the wider school environment. These values are embedded in all aspects of school life and support the development of positive relationships, high expectations for behaviour and learning, and a strong sense of belonging for all students.

A key priority for Ararat Primary School during 2025 was the ongoing improvement of communication across the school community. This focus was driven by the importance of strengthening relationships between students, staff, families, and leadership to support student learning, wellbeing, and engagement. A range of strategies were implemented to improve the clarity, consistency, and accessibility of communication, including enhanced use of digital platforms, more regular classroom updates, and streamlined whole-school messaging.

Progress towards strategic goals, student outcomes and student engagement

Learning

In 2025, Ararat Primary School prioritised high-quality teaching and learning, with a focus on consistent instructional practices, building teacher capacity, and using data to improve student outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

A key priority was strengthening evidence-based literacy practices, particularly explicit teaching in reading. NAPLAN data shows that 54.8% of Year 3 students achieved Strong or Exceeding in Reading, compared to 58.3% in similar schools and 69.5% across the state. In Year 5 Reading, 63.3% of students achieved Strong or Exceeding, exceeding similar schools (61.8%) and demonstrating positive growth across the school, although remaining below the state average (73.9%).

In numeracy, a consistent approach to explicit teaching and formative assessment supported improved outcomes. In Year 3 Numeracy, 61.3% of students achieved Strong or Exceeding, above similar schools (58.8%) and approaching the state average (66.2%). Similarly, Year 5 Numeracy results (61.3%) exceeded similar schools (56.2%), indicating continued growth, although still below the state average (69.1%).

In 2025 the school implemented a focus on data-informed practice, with regular data meetings supporting targeted teaching and intervention. Students requiring additional support were identified early and supported through intervention programs, contributing to improved learning growth.

Highlights include:

- Year 5 Reading and Numeracy results above similar schools
- Numeracy outcomes in Years 3 and 5 exceeding similar schools
- Consistent whole-school approach to explicit teaching
- Effective use of data to target student learning needs

Ararat Primary School has made steady progress in improving learning outcomes, with a continued focus on lifting achievement towards state benchmarks.

Wellbeing

In 2025, Ararat Primary School continued to prioritise student engagement and wellbeing, with a strong focus on strengthening student connectedness, improving perceptions of safety, and ensuring all students felt supported and included in their learning environment. The 2025 Attitudes to School Survey indicated that 64.7% of Years 4–6 students reported positive endorsement of Sense of Connectedness, compared to 72.9% in similar schools and 77.1% across the state, with

a four-year average of 65.4%. This data reflected that while many students experienced a sense of belonging, strengthening connectedness remained an ongoing focus area for the school. In response, the school further developed student voice and leadership opportunities, including the implementation of a formal student leadership structure and regular School Representative Council meetings, which provided students with increased opportunities to contribute to decision-making and school improvement. Student agency was also strengthened through the introduction and consolidation of student-run assemblies, enabling students to take a leading role in whole-school events and build confidence, communication skills, and ownership of school culture. Community engagement was enhanced through open days and school events that invited families and the broader community into the school to celebrate learning and strengthen partnerships. Alongside these initiatives, the school implemented a consistent focus on wellbeing practices, clear behaviour expectations, and positive classroom relationships to support a safe and predictable environment for all students. In relation to Managing Bullying, 59.7% of Years 4–6 students reported positive endorsement in 2025, compared to 74.2% in similar schools and 76.4% across the state, with a four-year average of 66.0%. This data highlighted variability in student perceptions and reinforced the need for continued focus in this area. In response, the school strengthened its whole-school behaviour framework, reinforced consistent expectations and language, and embedded proactive social-emotional learning approaches to support respectful relationships. Staff prioritised early identification and intervention, supported by consistent processes and ongoing professional learning. Overall, 2025 reflected continued work to strengthen student wellbeing through leadership opportunities, student voice, community connection, and consistent whole-school approaches.

Engagement

Throughout the year, students participated in a variety of engaging whole-school events including the Mother's Day and Father's Day breakfasts, which were well attended and provided meaningful opportunities for families to connect with the school community. The Christmas Concert was another standout event, showcasing student talent, creativity, and confidence in a joyful end-of-year celebration. Students also took part in the 5/6 Production, which was a major highlight of the performing arts program and allowed senior students to demonstrate teamwork, resilience, and performance skills in front of a supportive audience. In addition, students enjoyed camps and excursions that extended learning beyond the classroom, as well as sporting events and district competitions that promoted teamwork and sportsmanship. Environmental initiatives and classroom-based projects further supported hands-on learning and student responsibility. Together, these experiences reflected a vibrant and connected school community, making 2025 a memorable year of celebration, achievement, and shared success for Ararat Primary School.

In 2025, the school's average absence rate was 20.7 days per student, which is lower than similar schools (23.5) and slightly below the state average (21.5), with a four-year average of 24.2 days. Attendance rates ranged from 83.1% to 92.7% across year levels, indicating generally consistent attendance, with higher engagement in the middle primary years and lower rates in Year 6.

Other highlights from the school year

Ararat Primary School continued to experience a highly successful and enriching year in 2025, characterised by strong student engagement, a deepened sense of school pride, and meaningful connections with the wider community. A defining highlight of the year was the celebration of the school's 150-year anniversary on its historic Moore Street site. This milestone event brought together current students, staff, families, and past members of the school community to honour the rich history and enduring contribution of Ararat Primary School to the Ararat region. The celebration strengthened intergenerational connections and reinforced a shared sense of belonging and pride.

Throughout the year, students participated in a wide range of camps and excursions that extended learning beyond the classroom, including outdoor education experiences in bush and coastal environments that supported resilience, independence, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Whole-school events continued to play a central role in fostering community spirit and engagement, with highlights including Sports Day, Book Week celebrations, cultural days, Mother's Day and Father's Day breakfasts, the Christmas Concert, and the whole-school production, which provided valuable opportunities for students to showcase their creativity and talents.

Sporting programs remained a strong feature of school life, with students representing the school at district level competitions and demonstrating excellent sportsmanship, teamwork, and perseverance. Environmental and sustainability initiatives, including garden and kitchen programs, further encouraged students to take responsibility for caring for their school environment and engaging in authentic, hands-on learning experiences.

Importantly, the school community also continued its long-standing tradition of contributing to the Ararat ANZAC Day service each year through a commemorative floral installation at the local cenotaph, reflecting respect, remembrance, and strong civic connection. Strong community partnerships and active participation in local events further enhanced the school's profile and reinforced its important role within the wider Ararat community. Overall, 2025 was a memorable and rewarding year, reflecting a vibrant school culture focused on engagement, connection, and opportunity for all students.

Financial performance

At the end of 2025, Ararat Primary School maintained a managed financial position, with total operating revenue of $3,410,494. The school's primary funding source was the Student Resource Package ($2,690,081), supplemented by DET grants ($618,206), locally raised funds ($85,138), and other revenue ($17,069). Equity funding of $256,205 supported students experiencing social disadvantage and targeted learning programs.

Total operating expenditure was $3,600,648, resulting in a net operating deficit of $190,154 for the year. Funds were strategically invested to improve learning environments, facilities, and resources. Key upgrades included new classroom carpets, refurbishment of student bathrooms, new furniture for the Learning Centre to support the Kitchen Garden program, installation of split

system heating and cooling units across the entire school, and upgrades to student learning resources to enhance classroom teaching and learning programs.

The school ended the year with $264,241 in available funds and $206,728 in financial commitments. All funds were managed in accordance with Department guidelines and School Council approvals to support student learning, wellbeing, and school improvement priorities.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at https://www.araratps.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 229 students were enrolled at this school in 2025, 101 female and 128 male. 9% had English as an additional language and 4% 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 **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**	**54.5%**
	Similar schools	79.3%
	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**	**39.8%**
	Similar schools	74.1%
	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**	**76.4%**
	Similar schools	77.7%
	State	86.3%
Mathematics Prep - 6 % of students at or above age expected standards	**School**	**75.1%**
	Similar schools	75.0%
	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**	**54.8%**	**63.6%**
	Similar schools	58.3%	56.4%
	State	69.5%	69.3%
Reading Year 5 % of students Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels	**School**	**63.3%**	**64.8%**
	Similar schools	61.8%	63.1%
	State	73.9%	74.6%
Numeracy Year 3 % of students Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels	**School**	**61.3%**	**61.0%**
	Similar schools	58.8%	56.0%
	State	66.2%	66.4%
Numeracy Year 5 % of students Strong or Exceeding proficiency levels	**School**	**61.3%**	**43.2%**
	Similar schools	56.2%	55.6%
	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**	**71.4%**
	Similar schools	66.4%
	State	74.7%
Numeracy Year 3 to 5 % of students High or Medium relative growth	**School**	**82.8%**
	Similar schools	68.7%
	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**	**64.7%**		**65.4%**
	Similar schools	72.9%		74.3%
	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**	**59.7%**		**66.0%**
	Similar schools	74.2%		75.8%
	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**	**20.7**	**24.2**
	Similar schools	23.5	24.2
	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**	**91.6%**
Year 1	**School**	**88.8%**
Year 2	**School**	**89.2%**
Year 3	**School**	**92.7%**
Year 4	**School**	**92.3%**
Year 5	**School**	**89.3%**
Year 6	**School**	**83.1%**

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	$2,690,081
Government Provided DET Grants	$618,206
Government Grants Commonwealth	$0
Government Grants State	$0
Revenue Other	$17,069
Locally Raised Funds	$85,138
Capital Grants	$0
Total Operating Revenue	**$3,410,494**

Equity	Actual
Equity (Social Disadvantage)	$256,205
Equity (Catch Up)	$0
Equity (Social Disadvantage - Extraordinary Growth)	$0
Equity Total	**$256,205**

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

Expenditure	Actual
Student Resource Package[1]	$2,806,331
Adjustments	$0
Books & Publications	$863
Camps/Excursions/Activities	$71,937
Communication Costs	$2,658
Consumables	$64,246
Miscellaneous Expenses[2]	$17,705
Agency Staff	$0
Professional Development	$8,364
Equipment/Maintenance/Hire	$102,970
Property Services	$247,859

Expenditure	Actual
Salaries & Allowances[3]	$154,376
Support Services	$70,408
Trading & Fundraising	$10,467
Motor Vehicle Expenses	$0
Travel & Subsistence	$643
Utilities	$41,823
Total Operating Expenditure	**$3,600,648**
Net Operating Surplus/-Deficit	**($190,154)**
Asset Acquisitions	**$0**

[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	$182,533
Official Account	$81,708
Other Accounts	$0
Total Funds Available	**$264,241**

Financial Commitments	Actual
Operating Reserve	$132,386
Other Recurrent Expenditure	$5,160
Provision Accounts	$0
Funds Received in Advance	$54,000
School Based Programs	$1,408
Beneficiary/Memorial Accounts	$0
Cooperative Bank Account	$0
Funds for Committees/Shared Arrangements	$13,774
Repayable to the Department	$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement < 12 months	$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds < 12 months	$0
Asset/Equipment Replacement > 12 months	$0
Capital - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	$0
Maintenance - Buildings/Grounds > 12 months	$0
Total Financial Commitments	**$206,728**

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.