

2023 - Year in Review - Fitzroy Community School

2023 in many ways represented a complete return to normal, with fears and restrictions regarding Covid all sliding into the background. School operations were no longer required to include any measures intended to minimise the spread of Covid, and all mandates were moved into the realm of historical blips. Bigger than the changes to regulation was the change in attitude to Covid in the school community – the significant fears of this virus held by many members of the community in preceding years evaporated with real-life encounters with it. Extra-curricular activities were also much easier to organise, with Covid compliance removed from bookings. That is trips to the museum, library, pool or even a sports day in the open air did not require Covid-aligned plans to organise. The disappearance of regular RAT testing added to a sense that normal was returning.

This return to normal saw many events, rituals, calendar items and traditions re-instated in 2023. These were implemented with a significantly lowered compliance and organisational burden, having the effect of making the whole year feel lighter and happier – not surprising really as Covid imposed mandates were founded in fear and were as such restrictive. The year included all pre-2020 rites of passage, the inclusion of which was noted by many school families. Sports day was thoroughly enjoyed, with the parents' tug-of-war continuing to be won by the Normanby Avenue parents. There was an extra disco, pyjama days, fully-attended book reports, a full year of adult afternoon teas and packed-out school play attendances. Soirees were bigger than ever, and the parents' poetry event had a large parent contingent.

The joy of a real, daily experienced connection between all members of the school community underpinned a great school year. The children were again able to organise events, the school fetes were as fun as ever, with the Biggies really thriving on (again) being given authority to plan or organise these. The school day was experienced as a vibrant, connected and caring time.

The new students quickly fitted in and happily engaged with the richness of our school, unaware of the richness of the year having not known the restricted experiences of 2020-2022. The costs of school closures (academic and emotional/social) continued to be addressed, with the costs still apparent in a

number of students, but less clear and serious as it was in 2022. The stark loss/consequence noted by the staff in 2022 were fewer, as the return to normal helped most students find their feet. This said, the losses and costs imposed by isolation continued to be noted, especially the diminished social and interpersonal skills, when compared to past cohorts. Additional efforts continued to be directed toward building social and emotional competencies. The (ongoing) decision to run additional camps appeared to be well-justified, with the low-tech, no-screen social aspect of camp clearly helping build and re-build connection.

Summer Camps ran in Numurkah, Mansfield and East Gippsland, where camaraderie and fun were the defining features of these camps, supporting the school's efforts to promote and inculcate an active love of learning. Significant teacher time continues to be directed toward the promotion of patience, tolerance and the ability to concentrate.

As noted earlier, an attempt was made provide a more than full or typical FCS school experience, and to ensure that all of the traditional rites of passage and special events covered in the pre-Lockdown years were provided to the children. The year started with a slight modification on earlier years, with outdoor meetings more the norm, but finished with a return to an indoor venue for the graduation concerts. The outdoor graduations of 2021, while charming events, had restricted numbers and modified formats, and so it was with a real sense of relief and celebration that these returned to an indoor theatre setting, and the additional richness offered by a theatre, and to have all of the younger students' active witnesses of this significant, important ritual.

In reflecting on the Lockdown years and school closures, it continues to be both sad and distressing that so few school and educators stood up for children, aware but silently complicit in imposing such harms to so many children. And it remains unclear that in future that it would be very different, our education system and the bureaucrats who oversee it more interested in compliance than acting in the best interests of our children. Conversely, in looking back of the Lockdown/school closure years, the character and ability of the FCS staff are nothing short of exemplary.

In thinking of the richness of the FCS experience and the return to normal, it remains a source of some sadness that our elderly remain isolated due to Covid justified rules still being implemented in the facilities that host them. We truly hope that 2024 will see the end of these isolation rules, and the return of our children to supporting the loneliest sector of our community.

The Shergold Review (published in 2022) validated our position on school closures and the harms they were doing children, and the lack of evidence informing this decision, with this review writing of the ‘unjustified closure of schools’ as its primary finding. It is thus unnerving that bureaucratic investigations initiated on the grounds of Covid breaches continue to take up staff time. The unnecessary harms inflicted on so many children should surely be a source of bureaucratic embarrassment, rather than the foundation upon which our school continues to be bureaucratically harassed. No evidence has been presented to our school that we did anything wrong, apart from its failure to follow rules that Health Department itself did not support (the Health Department’s website was hosting research/evidence on school in 2020 and 2021 which concluded that they should be open while the State Government was stating that they needed to be closed while ‘following the health advice’).

The full complement of camps, many outings to a wide variety of venues and experiences (zoo, pool, museum, Scienceworks, the library, galleries, parks and gardens) continued to be commented upon by families, especially those recently joining the school who could not believe how many adventures our students have, nor the richness of their school experience. The core mission of Fitzroy Community School, noted in earlier reports, is and continues to be, the raising of happy, empowered children. The mission was clarified through the contrast with the impoverished Lockdown experience in 2020 and 2021, achieving a clear consciousness by way of comparison. The full curriculum and co-curricular experiences of an FCS student is a rich one. The benefits of our programs were clearly on display through the ability and necessity of seeing them against the reduced offerings during 2020 and 2021. Loss can reveal the taken for granted.

Community, noted earlier, was seen more clearly in its absence, with the second half of 2022 and 2023 all demonstrating the value of connection and the wealth granted by happy co-existence. As noted last year, while soirees, fetes, plays, poetry recitals and concerts allow the children many avenues for

performance, their absence was also felt due to the inability of parents and staff to mingle as part of these events. This absence saw the FCS staff continue to make a concerted and conscious effort to re-engage with those parents who had become more distant during the Lockdown years. Community continued to be re-built through these events, and the efforts of the staff to re-connect.

Normanby Avenue felt fully revitalised this year, with 2022, and the return on-site being the foundation upon which this campus fully returned to a vibrant teaching and learning experience. The buzz at the start of the year was palpable, with the campus open to all from the first day, and no Covid justified restrictions in place. Wayne and Joelle continued to lead this campus with courage, skill and ability, delivering a quality, enriching experience to all students. All rites of passage, having been reinstated in 2022, had greater resonance for the children, especially the Biggies, through their awareness and witnessing of these. The Biggies continued to lead the school well, setting a good example and helping out in a wide-range of ways with a wide spectrum of tasks. Outings and outdoor classes defined Normanby Avenue, with Miranda, Sue and Kate continuing to take the children on constant nature-based adventures. Rounders, basketball, cross-country and netball were all played against local schools, with the netball team and some runners progressing beyond district level competitions. Outside teaching continued to be a feature (with the older children) in an ongoing attempt to minimise the spread of Covid (due to one student having a particularly high susceptibility to cold and flu type viruses).

The Dan O’Connell Hotel project continues to progress, but progress toward the building permit continues to hit hurdle after hurdle, with this important step now not likely to occur before the second half of 2025, meaning that a realistic move into this location is unlikely before the 2027 school year. That calculation takes into account that even once a builder is selected, the build itself will take 14-18 months. These delays, while frustrating, do not diminish the appeal of this location. The scope and opportunities afforded by this location and building underpin the school’s commitment to continue to push for this move, despite the very slow progress to date. The location is unmatched, offering so many expansive educational opportunities on the doorstep. The public transport connections are excellent, with the main northern bike path quite literally at the front door. The iconic nature of The Dan O’Connell Hotel will certainly add to the school.

Goodness – A Reflection

In reflecting upon school closures, a measure that was imposed despite a significant body of scientific and medical research demonstrating that this was a high-cost low benefit imposition, the school's commitment to goodness can be re-examined. The imposition of school closures by those in health and education, despite a large body of evidence opposing this measure, was not due to these departments being staffed by incompetent or evil bureaucrats, but a failure of courage that amounted to a failure to do the right thing by our children. Goodness, acting in the right way, can only happen when the agent has the personal confidence to do the right thing. Goodness required courage, with a lack of courage eventually or inevitably leading to either a tacit acceptance of harmful acts, or the enactment of acts or measures that do harm. Lockdown mandates, imposed against a scientific consensus as was the case with school closures demonstrated this. Avoidance of this in future requires the raising of good children – FCS's commitment to goodness is thus clearly demonstrated as an essential part of producing good future citizens.

Poetry – A Reflection

The two school poems also look to have been very well chosen. *If* by Rudyard Kipling, and *How the Little Kite learned to Fly* by Katherine Pyle both speak and reflect on character, and the qualities of endurance, striving and persistence. These are all aspects of being and doing good. It is simply not possible to be a good person in the absence of these qualities. This is not to claim that the recitation of poetry is the sole ingredient in raising good children... that is the product of a whole-school culture and environment. Still, poetry offers a simple, short and easily accessible medium through which aspirations and qualities may be shared.

Around School

The ability to chat to parents in the yard at pick-up and drop-off marked a clear change to the start of last year, 2022, when parents were still restricted to a street-sited hand over of their children. This return on-site for this daily routine had a lovely feel of happy normal. Our small number of regular

volunteers were also welcomed on-site from the beginning of the year, when it (sadly) also became clear that we'd lost a couple of our older volunteers, who communicated a hesitation to be around children due to ongoing fears of contracting Covid. The return of parents (on-site) dropping kids off, picking them up and having many incidental chats (generally outside until quite later in the year) and the return of our volunteers added returned a feeling of humanity to the school, and marked it as a place where adults feel comfortable. The staffing felt normal too, with the start of the 2023 year being a return for all, unlike 2022 which saw some staff on-site for the first time since the very beginning of 2020.

It is not easy to describe normal, as normal is generally the point of reference for difference, but in the case of our school, normal is a much loved and appreciated experience. Shared cups of tea, in-person conversations, providing a level of care and support difficult to match in a digital medium; a wave of acknowledgement is felt more strongly in person than over Zoom.

The friction and stress associated with the restrictions (and politics) all felt like they had retreated to the distant past, contributing to the feeling of lightness and positivity. These pressure and constant changing of Lockdown rules (and school closures) were politically divisive (in the broader community), so their complete removal allowed for easier conversations and the re-building of connections and the highlighting of commonalities.

The additional outdoor time allocated in the last two years is intended to address the symptoms of excessive screen time demonstrated by a number of children, alongside the consequences of isolation, seen in a restricted ability to engage with their fellow students, a lack of vibrancy and lowered levels of concentration. It is an undisputable fact that children, stuck at home for many months, did return to school with a clear impact on their social skills, particularly with regard to empathy and tolerance. The happy interactive nature of an FCS school continues to act as a tonic, with the impact of school closures continuing to diminish as the year progressed. It has been happily affirming that our approach has seen our students re-gaining normal levels of connection, energy and tolerance.

As shared in the 2022 Annual Report, the school's chaplains continued to play a role in supporting the broader school community, seen through their ongoing commitment to taking the children into nature and their reaching out to school families. The value of camps continues to be noted by all staff, and underpins our school's commitment to continue to organise as much time as possible in the bush, with unstructured time in nature clearly boosting connection/re-connection and playing a substantial role in encouraging creative play. The commitment of our teachers to their students, demonstrated in the nights spent on camp, is gratefully acknowledged.

Highlights of the Year

The Brunswick Street play, *A Storm in a Teacup*, was a great success. The Biggies were stunning as the leads, and the show, from start to finish, had a great buzz. The buzz of a live show typically builds as play week beckons, and *A Storm in a Teacup* was no exception. Lines were practised and re-practised before school, after-school and during breaks. The older children were frequently seen huddled at lunchtime over their scripts, or acting or dancing together. It was apparent from first days of rehearsal that the year six students were determined to make their play a great success. The buzz was at a very high pitch as play week arrived, and the performances reflected the effort, commitment and dedication of this group of year six students. The donning of costumes, the application of stage-make up and the spraying of hairspray literally saw children bouncing in their seats. The shows were enjoyed by all, with a clear increase in the number of grandparents, cousins, aunties and uncles as compared to 2022 when some worries regarding Covid were still part of our cultural milieu.

Thanks to everyone who made this play a success: Lara for her direction, Chuby for his choreography, Sue for the costumes, Steph for the backdrop, Warren for the singing, and Christian (and Steph again) for their help backstage. The audience (and students) enjoyed the play being set in our school (and the Edinburgh Gardens opposite) and the large smattering of in-house references and jokes.

The Normanby Avenue play, *The Arlington Dance Eisteddfod*, was, like *A Storm in a Teacup*, an FCS original. Richmond Theatrette similarly hosted the performances, performances that were well-attended

and thoroughly enjoyed. This play, from the perspective of the children and staff, was a great success, thoroughly enjoyed by all attendees. In a similar vein to the Brunswick St play, the theatre returned to its pre-Lockdown crowd, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles all attending. The older students did themselves, their families and their school proud with engaging, active and thoughtful performances.

As noted in previous reports, our annual plays are a highlight of the year, and so it was quite special to perform these and give the children the experience of the full-buzz of live theatre. The play experience had a more real, visceral impact on school with the performances delivered live in a theatre, to a full-house. The rite of passage of these plays was more real, and as such, special and meaningful, occurring in a theatre with the audience present. Many graduates have shared over the years that the play experience one was not just really special, but has stayed with them for their post-school lives. This feedback is a strong motivator to keep the plays as such a central part of the year, and a core aspect of the year six experience. Thanks to Lara for her direction, Chuby for choreography, Charlotte for her help with make-up, Warren for the singing and a whole gang of parents for their help with sewing costumes.

NAPLAN

NAPLAN was again tackled with enthusiasm, with the students sitting these exams all arriving at school on the test days in good spirits. This positive attitude to tests and exams is one that we've tried to install in our students, and the manner in which NAPLAN was approached would appear to validate the success of our approach. As noted in earlier reports, our school has always been ranked as one of the highest performing schools in the country, currently ranked 11th in Victoria on this measure. Importantly, this result was achieved alongside the greatest allocation of outdoor time in the school's history.

Camp has already been commented upon as an antidote to excessive screen time, and as a means by which connection and community are achieved and grown. Camp therefore plays a significant role in the experience of our students, with this year again seeing a boost in the number of camps (as compared to the pre-Lockdown number). Summer camps were super happy, positive events, with the students all so happy to be back together, away together and in the great outdoors together. Walks, cricket, tennis, chats, and a plethora of games were the features of these camps, as were shared meals

and moments of contemplation. Autumn camps saw bushcraft, cubby construction, face-painting, quizzes and card games all explored and enjoyed. All students returned to school from camp happy and tired (and in many instances with a good smattering of dirt). Spring camp mostly went in the Kinglake and Whittlesea areas, with the end of term seeing a camp in the Grampians. The weather fluctuated, but even moments of dampness could not dampen the spirits of the children. Camp continues to be a staple and highlight of the FCS experience.

This said, it was more than apparent to the teachers that this time on camp made a significant contribution to the general positivity, connectivity and well-being of all students. Camps connect students to each other, their teachers and the wondrous world of nature. A number of teachers reflected upon the gains in confidence made by quite a number of the children during these camps, and the value they provided to both individuals and the class. Growth in confidence and independence continue to be a clear gain from camp, with connection more clearly seen due to the contrast with the school closure/Lockdown year and excessive screen time and exclusive nuclear family time.

Locations visited in camps this year covered: Numurkah, Mansfield, Gippsland, the Grampians (north and south) and Kinglake West, as well as the Mornington and Bellarine peninsulas. A big thank you to the staff who assisted in making these camps such special times for our students: Miranda, Wayne, Steph, Craig, Ben, Joelle, Sue, Kate, Lara and Stefan. Thanks for sharing your time and energy, and this, combined with your experience and dedication to children, contributing to the success of these camps. The tradition of the Tinies camping with a parent, and their parents sharing this night in the bush was a great opportunity for Tinies' parents to get to know each other.

The final camps of the year, in mid-late Spring again saw the Tinies head off for their first night in the bush without parents... and like 2022 were great successes. It continues to amaze many of the staff (surprising given our long and broad experience in hosting camps) how quickly most children adapt to a no-tech, nature experience, finding joy, interest and countless hours of entertainment in searching for bugs, whittling sticks, mushing up clay for paint and assembling sticks to make cubbies. The simplicity and collective creativity of the experiences of the children is charming.

Building Projects / Maintenance / Repairs

This year saw the school continue to dedicate significant time to improvements and minor renovations, alongside ongoing maintenance and routine painting and decorating. The winding back of Covid-informed rules, especially those concerning close contacts and exposure sites, meant that building works, repairs, renovations and painting and decorating did not risk children being sent home nor the school closed. Plaster repairs continue, rooms painted, locks replaced and lighting replaced and upgraded. Trip hazards continue to be checked and addressed when/if they emerge (or in fact before they emerge). Maintenance, small improvements, repairs alongside painting occur throughout the school year, with large improvements generally scheduled during the school holidays.

The Dan O’Connell leak saga appears to have been tackled and rectified. Our maintenance team and plumbers are to be congratulated – there were a lot of leaks, many of the smaller ones only coming to notice with the larger more significant leaks being rectified.

Curriculum Improvements: Fitzroy Literacy and Numeracy Programs

This work continues, with further digitisation of our literacy resources, alongside mapping and planning the later years of the numeracy program, with refinements also being made to the early years of the numeracy curriculum. The additional content being produced for the literacy program will enhance our students’ parents’ ability to assist their learning at home. This work includes extension activities and revision. Nick and Faye deserve thanks here for continuing this work. This project has already made a massive contribution to our programs, and as it continues to grow and expand, enhances our offerings and depth of content.

Media

It seems that our media regime thrives on controversy, and with the passing of mandated school closures, and our school's resisting this child-harming measure, 2023 was again another quiet year. As noted in last year's Annual Report, FCS did not (and never has) taken an anti-establishment position, but a child-first position. Given that the State Government had taken a path that was doing our State's children significant harm, a path that blatantly disregarded the scientific evidence and medical advice on children and schools, our position was actually pro-establishment – we were siding with the medical and scientific establishment... while our MPs were not. As noted earlier, The Shergold Review shared that the closure of schools was the primary policy failure enacted by authorities, positioning the closing of schools as 'unjustified'. No one at FCS believes that we'll ever get an apology, or that the hysterical media coverage of 2020 and 2021 will be reversed or addressed.

Sport / Park / Bush time

Summer terms continue to see all students taken swimming, while basketball runs year-round, netball over the winter months, cross-country in Autumn and early Winter, and rounders late spring and early summer. While not weekly events, our students continue to enjoy their games against our local schools.

Interschool sport has sadly not fully returned to pre-Lockdown levels. While limited instances (specific games and competitions) did return in 2022, 2023 sadly did not see a return of weekly sport (in terms two and four as had been the case pre-Lockdown). Our sports teachers have made a significant effort to organise games with local schools, which while fun, don't quite achieve the level of excitement as a series involving multiple schools for the duration of a whole term. Our school has been involved in Cross Country, Netball and Basketball, with our students progressing to Division and Regional level competitions in Cross-Country and Division Level competition in Netball. Hoop-time basketball was again a fun day, and Spring saw Rounders played against a number of other schools in the Edinburgh Gardens.

Outside of more formal sporting classes and PE activities, nature and bush-time continued to be frequent events, and part of all students' weekly offerings. Edinburgh Gardens, Merri Creek, Darebin Parklands, Pearl Reserve, Curtain Square, Princes Park, Penders Park and Mayors Park continue to be well-utilised by our students.

Sporting Grants continue to be applied for and more often than not, received, with these grants substantially enhancing our swimming program. We again thank the Commonwealth Government for this additional funding.

Blog

Timothy's Blog (his thoughts on education) continues to prompt conversation and examination of the educational landscape, with a termly reflection on a range of pedagogical and parenting themes the central tenets of exploration. Challenging, incisive, reflective and critical are all comments that have accompanied its publication, with feedback received that the Blog has initiated 'long, deep and engaging' conversations around dinner tables. The emails and short conversations that follow its circulation affirm that the topics covered are of interest to many families and educators. These blogs feature a few clear themes: raising empowered, engaged and caring children, and less often, policy issues that stress the right to all children to a diverse, tailored and high-quality school experience, a school experience that reflects the values, faith and aspirations held by each family.

Visitors

Visitors were many and varied over the year, increasing in number as the year unfolded. While the majority were from Australia, overseas visitors also returned (in smaller numbers than pre-Lockdown). The many visitors almost without exception were fellow educators, interested in the approach and success of our school, with an interest in literacy and numeracy frequently mentioned, as well as those interested in our pedagogical approach. Our commitment to the outdoors, success in inclusion and understandings of disability were also points of interest and discussion. Alongside these visits of fellow educators, prospective parents were frequent attendees at our Wednesday adult afternoon teas.

MySchool Website

Our school continues to rank as one of the top performing schools in Victoria. Our results were again pleasing, especially the strong showing demonstrated in student improvement which we judge to be a truer measure of the quality of a school's programs. Our raw scores continue to place our students as significantly ahead of their peers in most schools, and the poor literacy and numeracy of the vast majority of the students who transfer to our school, anecdotally affirms that reality behind the NAPLAN/MySchool data. It does feel tragic to us that so many children are failed by their school. The importance of the NAPLAN data on student improvement, is in its ability to demonstrate the quality of our teaching program and school staff, as it highlights the impact of these to a student's literacy and numeracy levels. In looking at the raw NAPLAN scores, it is also worth noting that our school devotes substantially less time to the teaching of literacy and numeracy than other schools; necessary due to our commitment to camps, plays, outings, sport, music, science and nature time.

Yours,

Timothy Berryman (Principal)

The following part of this document are aspects of school operations that we are obliged to write on.

Student Learning

Students at this school continue to make great gains socially, emotionally and academically. Participation in standardised testing (NAPLAN/MySchool) shows that our school is one of the top performing schools not only in the State, but in Australia, finishing within the top echelons of primary schooling in the country. Our (pre-2020) visitors from schools across Asia report that our level is comparable with that achieved in their schools. We would like to add to this that we achieve this with far fewer hours dedicated to literacy and numeracy. Our high achievements in literacy and numeracy continue to reinforce the approach we take to literacy and numeracy. It remains encouraging that a growing number of schools have contacted us and sent staff to investigate our program and methods.

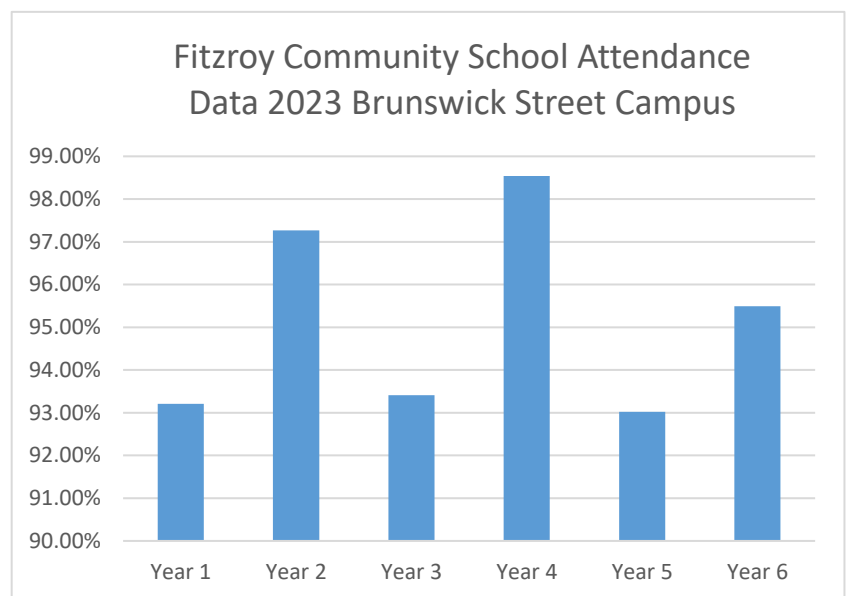
The benefits to well-being, health, connection, agency and independence achieved by our curriculum are not as a result of sacrificing academic successes; they are achieved alongside them.

Attendance

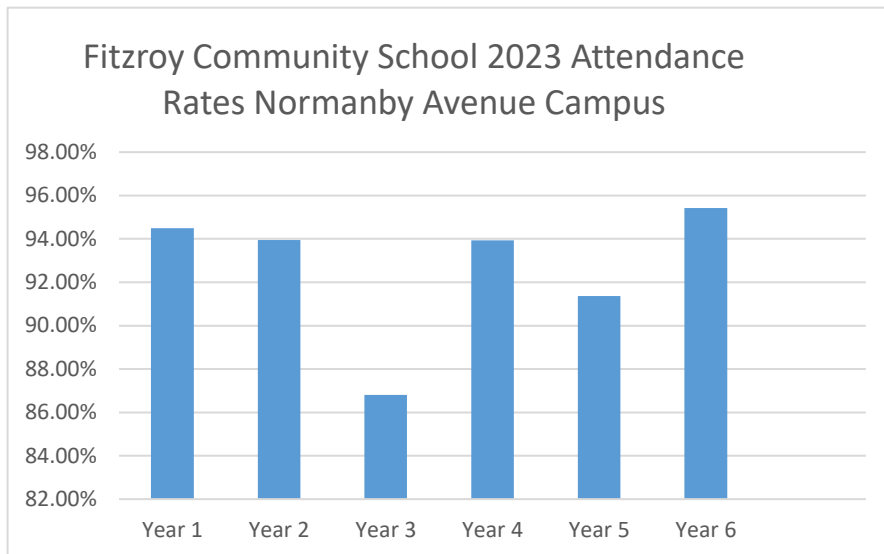
We officially report our attendance data to the Commonwealth, and in this, demonstrate our the high-level of attendance. It is really pleasing that attendance issues (or lack of) are not an issue of concern, reflecting (we believe) our student’s desire to come to school.

While significant absences and truancy are not major issues, attendance monitoring is not without some frustrations. We continue to remind families to notify us of student absences early in the day (unwell or other cause of absence), but continue to spend time chasing undocumented absences (which without exception were a result of parental forgetfulness rather than truancy. While we do understand that a sick child can pose a plethora of logistical problems, a short, early call to school would be appreciated.

Fitzroy Community School Attendance Rates 2023 Brunswick Street Campus	
Year 1	93.21%
Year 2	97.27%
Year 3	93.41%
Year 4	98.54%
Year 5	93.02%
Year 6	95.49%



Fitzroy Community School Attendance Rates 2023 Normanby Avenue Campus	
Year 1	94.49%
Year 2	93.94%
Year 3	86.8%
Year 4	93.93%
Year 5	91.37%
Year 6	95.43%



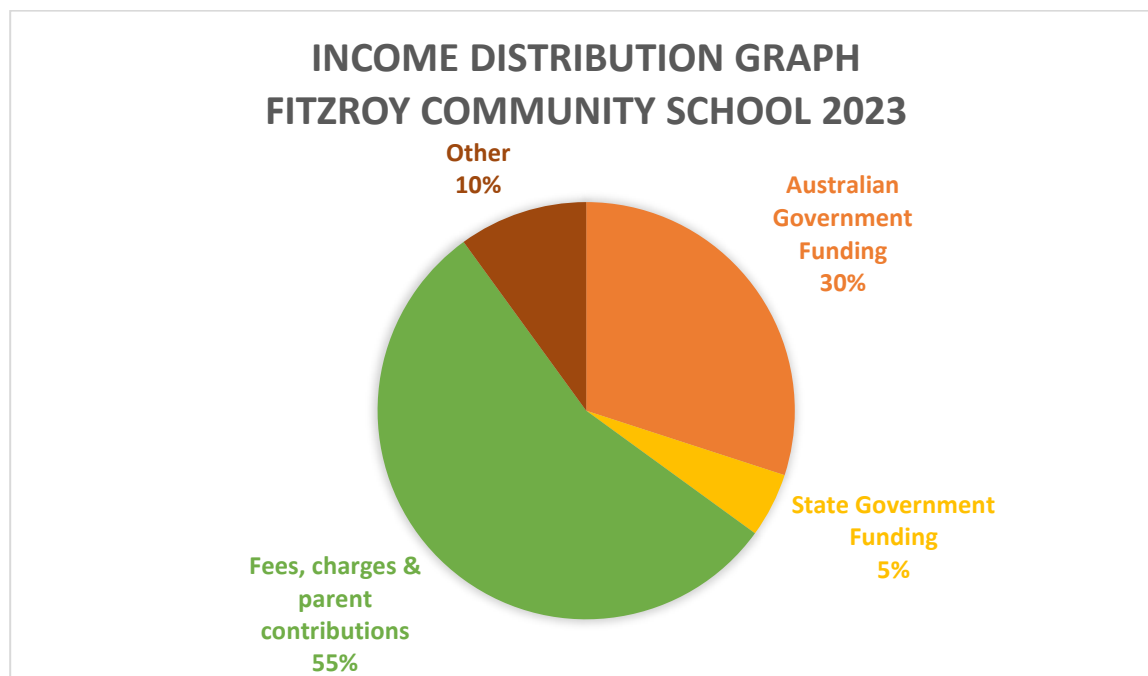
School Finances

Fitzroy Community School receives over half of its income from school fees, a third from Commonwealth Grants, and a 1/20 from the State Government as recurrent grants. In acknowledgement of the fact that the majority of the school's income is derived from school fees, fee collection is necessarily an important task. Fees (issuing and collection) are one of the principal tasks of the bookkeeper, with the principal providing assistance when and if necessary. This year saw fee deferrals again at pre-Lockdown levels (very few outstanding fees/approaching zero) and the ease of fee collection continues to improve (seen through a reduction of reminders sent to families). The bookkeeper is acknowledged in performing an important role in maintaining the school's strong financial position, and minimising late, slow and non-payers. The school continues to have an enviable position with regard to bad debts, reflecting not just the professionalism of the bookkeeper, but the quality of the teachers and teaching program. Happy kids contribute to happy parents and easier fee collection. In examining the financial position, it does not appear that bad and doubtful debts will become a significant issue in the future.

The school engages an external accountant to prepare budgets (adding expertise and independence) and to provide an outsider's perspective on the school's finances and financial position. The last few years

have seen a marked increase in the value of Commonwealth Government funding, bolstering the school's financial position and feeding into minimal fee increases. The very low increases in fees in recent years reflect a commitment to keep our school as accessible as possible to families on average incomes, and to pass on all additional Government funding. The additional funds received under the FAM funding model are passed directly on to families with Health Care Cards. In taking a longer perspective, the benefit of having moved to a two-campus model continues to pay an economic dividend, with some compliance and administrative costs shared over a larger student body.

Income Distribution Graph



The school did not receive any Commonwealth Capital Grants in 2023.

Teacher Standards/Qualifications/Satisfaction

The school only employs the most talented and engaging teachers, reflected in both our ongoing successes and parent and student satisfaction. The school continues to be encouraged by the number of talented student teachers undertaking their placements in recent years, and we feel that this situation bodes well for the profession as a whole. Sadly, the number of placement requests does occasionally exceed the school's capacity to accept all student teacher applicants. We have again received

comments from our graduates, after they have moved into secondary schooling, on the quality of their primary school teachers: their talents and abilities align with our commitment to recruit teachers of the highest standard, and we then give them the space to be themselves and to offer their best.

Fitzroy Community School is committed to providing a happy, fun, engaging and challenging learning environment. Many of our part-time teachers visit the school on their day off, again reflecting their enjoyment of their working environment, and the friendships and community that constitute their work environment. In schools more broadly, teacher quality, classroom and parental satisfaction has been a slow but steady story of growing disappointment, with many schools becoming increasingly unruly and learning increasingly disrupted. Our school has to date avoided this all-too-common outcome.

Teaching Staff & Their Qualifications

Principal

Timothy Berryman Bachelor of Arts (Melbourne), Graduate Diploma in Education (Melbourne), Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Studies (Melbourne), Bachelor of Letters (Melbourne), Master of Letters (University of New England), Master of Arts (Universidad Jaume I – Spain). Doctorate of Education (re-submitted).

Teachers

Vice Principal - Jeannette Howden Bachelor of Education (comprised of Diploma of Kindergarten Teaching Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers' College and Graduate Diploma in Curriculum Melbourne College of Advanced Education)

Faye Berryman Bachelor of Arts, Diploma of Education, Diploma of Social Work, Master of Arts

Warren Howden Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Music, Master of Teaching

Miranda Frankel Bachelor of Arts (Melbourne University), Diploma of Education (University of Western Australia)

Wayne Wearn-Jarvis Bachelor of Education (Flinders University)

Joelle Wearn-Jarvis Bachelor of Education (Flinders University)

Nicholas Berryman Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Law, Master of Applied Positive Psychology
Melbourne University, Graduate Diploma in Education (with Honours) Charles Sturt University

Lara Brooks Bachelor of Arts (Musical Theatre), Master of Teaching

Kerrie Bolton Bachelor of Education (Music Major, Deakin University), Bachelor of Music (Voice, Performance stream - Melbourne University Conservatorium), Master of Music Performance (Victorian College of the Arts)

Susanna Campbell Bachelor of Speech Therapy, Bachelor of Arts, Certificate of English Language Teaching, Master of Education, Master of Teaching (Primary)

Craig Dowell Bachelor of Education (Primary), NVQ Level 3 in Vehicle Maintenance and Repair, BTEC National Diploma Vehicle Repair and Technology, NVQ Level 2 in Aircraft Engineering Maintenance

Stephanie Leo Bachelor of Communication Design, Master of Teaching (Primary)

Workforce Composition

The school believes that one of its strengths is the diversity and composition of its teachers and assistants. The school has a broad mix of genders, ages and experience (with teachers of forty plus years' experience working side by side with teachers in their first year), a good mix of men and women, and a range of cultural and religious backgrounds. The school does not currently employ a staff member who identifies as Aboriginal, but has a couple of teachers with extensive 'on the lands' teaching experience, having taught and lived in Aboriginal Australia for a number of years, and then in schools with significant Aboriginal populations.

The single greatest hindrance to our school (and many other workplaces) in Australia employing a more diverse workforce is compliance in the form of licensing, qualifications and certification. This results in, for instance, a foreign-born teacher, a graduate of a prestigious foreign university, being denied registration to teach in Australia irrespective of their language skills, teaching ability or former teaching experience, despite competence and experience in schools, and having demonstrable higher language skills than their Australian-born counterparts. If Governments were serious about workforce composition rather than virtue signaling, schools would not be required to comment on composition of

their workforce but would rather be allowed to employ suitable, qualified and able teachers, a move that would instantly contribute to an expanded teaching profession across class, language, race and nationality. Teaching ballet or French should be measured on one's ability to dance and one's language skills, and an ability to impart these skills, not whether a Victorian recognized qualification has been completed. In a country where 25% of the population were born overseas, this restriction is especially problematic. Sadly, in Victoria, it would appear that well-intentioned regulations hinder an expansion of diversity within the teaching profession, and in doing so, lower the quality of the classroom experience for a significant number of children. The current framing of regulators, preferencing the geographic location of the awarding institution hinders the ability of schools to employ teachers of the highest caliber. If the Victorian Government was actually focused on the ability and composition of the teaching workforce, then skills and teaching ability would be the sole qualification required of teachers. Still, in the weird bureaucratic dystopia we exist in, writing on this seems to have greater importance than actually empowering schools to employ a more able, diverse group of teachers. It is ironic that schools are required to write on workforce composition while at the same time being denied the right to expand it.

Schooling for Life

We work to maintain a school lifestyle in which camps are enjoyed, hi-fives are acts of spontaneous camaraderie, chasey is played, skipping is fun, applying Band-Aids is an act of a caring adult, and showing affection is regarded as a standard expression of friendship.

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