

SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

Updated: 03/2017

School number: VIRGINIA PRIMARY SCHOOL 0455

VIRGINIA PRESCHOOL 1626

School name: VIRGINIA PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Profile: Virginia Primary School is a Preschool to Year 7 School of approximately 369 students. This is made up of a preschool with 42 children and 327 students from R to 7. The preschool on site enables continuity of learning from preschool to school. The school is located in the township of Virginia in a well-established multicultural market gardening community about 30 km from the centre of Adelaide. While the school is located on the northern outskirts of metropolitan Adelaide, it has a rural feel. The school reflects the wider community with students being from culturally and linguistically diverse families. 19 cultural backgrounds are represented within the school community. The school has a strong culture of positive wellbeing based on the school values of caring, respect, fairness, achievement and diversity. High expectations of student academic achievement are embedded in the school culture with effective intervention in place for students requiring extra support. Specialist areas of learning are science, the arts, physical education and Vietnamese. Our students are involved in Choir and in 2017 Wakakirri.

General information

- School Principal name: Ilia Tsoutouras
- Deputy Principal's name: Voula Pounendis
- Year of opening: Virginia Primary was first established in 1876 on the Old Port Wakefield Road. The present Park Road site is the third site of the school and was opened on 20th November 1976.
- Postal Address: Park Road, Virginia S.A. 5120
- Location Address: Park Road, Virginia, S.A. 5120
- DECD Region: Orion Partnership
- Geographical location – road distance from GPO (km): 29 km
- Telephone number: 8380 9292
- Fax Number: 8380 9576
- School website address: www.virginips.sa.edu.au
- School e-mail address: info@virginiaps.sa.edu.au

- **Preschool attached:** Virginia Preschool is located on the school grounds in a separate fenced area. In 2010 the preschool was in round one of implementation of the federal Government initiative of 15 hours of Preschool Universal Access. Preschool children access 2 sessions one week and three the next. Playgroup runs from 9:00am to 11:00am every Friday morning and is open to all families in our catchment area.
- **Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service:** Virginia Primary School Out of School Hours Care program available before and after school and in vacation time. Before School Care provides care from 6.30am – 8.30am. After School Care provides care from 3.15pm – 6.00pm. There are a maximum of 102 places.
- **February FTE student enrolment:**

Primary		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
	Reception	20	28	34	24	31	42	41	35	44
	Year 1	35	28	34	37	28	37	47	39	39
	Year 2	26	36	28	31	36	31	36	50	40
	Year 3	29	30	39	30	29	37	37	39	50
	Year 4	24	38	29	41	30	30	37	36	41
	Year 5	34	25	34	30	40	28	32	38	42
	Year 6	37	35	23	34	31	40	29	34	38
	Year 7	21	37	30	23	30	30	36	29	33
TOTAL		226	257	251	250	255	274	295	300	327
School Card Percentage		36%	40%	39%			37%	TBC	33%	TBC
NESB enrolment		145	62%	61%	63%	63%	64%	60%		50%
Aboriginal Enrolment		0	0	0	0	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%		3%

Student enrolment trends: School numbers continue to increase. There are three public schools within a 10-kilometre radius of the school – Two Wells, Angle Vale and Burton. Our Local area includes Virginia, Waterloo Corner, Buckland Park, Penfield. In 2009 and 2010 and again in 2014 - 2017 there has been an increase in families seeking to enrol at Virginia Primary School. The school had/s gained a reputation as a 'desirable' school and mapping of current enrolments indicated that the catchment pool for enrolments had widened. Enrolments from outside our area was/ is placing pressure on our resources. In 2011 the Virginia Primary School Governing Council was successful in their application to the Minister of Education to have a zone enacted around Virginia Primary School. This enables the school to enact local enrolment protocols to ensure priority enrolment for local students.

There are two independent schools within our locality that cater for students R-12. Both these schools are active in promoting their schools in our area.

Staffing numbers (as at February census): The staff consists of 19.5 full time equivalent teachers in the school. This is made up of 22 full or part time staff. There are currently 376 SSO hours undertaken by 17 SSO's in a combination of permanent and temporary hours. There are 14 classes from R-7 and a preschool. There is 1 male grounds person two days a week. We choose to site fund intervention hours and also receive funding for hours targeted to individual children with special needs and preschool attendance. SSO's are employed with these funds.

Students (and their welfare)

At Virginia Primary we strongly believe “together is better”, this is underpinned by our school vision of **“Learning Together, Learning for our Future”**. Strong communication between school and home is encouraged and we welcome parents into the school. Our school has its own ‘Skoolbag’ app for smartphones to keep communication between school and home strong.

General characteristics

The school community is culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse. 50% of students are of EALD backgrounds. Over 19 cultural backgrounds are represented within the school community: Anglo-Australian, Vietnamese-Australian, Italian-Australian, Cambodian–Australian, Greek-Australian, with some children identifying with Turkish, Albanian, Croatian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Indian, New Zealand, Maori, Russian, Jordanian, Thai, Columbian, Filipino, Dutch cultures. A portion of students commence pre-school with minimal English skills.

Student well-being programs

The five school values underpin the way we expect people within our school community to relate to each other and form the basis of well-being and positive relationships. The values were determined collaboratively by the school community in 2002 and have been reviewed several times. Teachers actively teach school values and consistently refer to them in relation to supporting students’ learning and social behaviours. We run a proactive programs play initiative whereby there are a range of structured and unstructured activities that children can be a part of during play breaks.

VALUES: Caring, Fairness, Achievement, Respect, Valuing of diversity

CARING: Speaking and behaving kindly, considering other people’s feelings, helping others.

RESPECT: Behaving politely towards others, not putting others down, looking after our school environment and property.

FAIRNESS: Sharing, taking turns, playing and working by the agreed rules, including others, taking the time to listen to others.

ACHIEVEMENT: Trying hard, being persistent to keep improving and learning at your level, setting goals and feeling proud when you have been successful in reaching your goals.

DIVERSITY: Valuing the similarities and differences in all people. Being confident and proud of who you are.

Examples of specific well-being strategies are below:

School Culture building: There is a focus on school culture building during the first weeks of the year and this continues to be built on throughout the year.

Spirit of Generosity: Students in years 6 and 7 are involved in tasks and roles which support their 'spirit of generosity' throughout the school

Healthy Body and Soul days: periodic cross-age sessions are held in which students participate in activities to promote physical, spiritual and nutritional well-being.

Proactive Programs: lunchtime activities (sport, IT, construction, bike/ trike, art etc.)

Yard Surveys: are a tool used termly for us to track our student's perception of playtime

Bully Audits: are a tool used termly for us to track any instances of bullying. There are subsequently followed up with all students involved

What's the Buzz: is a social skills program/ guideline promoted within classrooms across P-7

Student support offered

We recognise that students' life experiences can be varied and complex and that students' ability to manage aspects of their lives varies. We endeavour to support the individual needs of each child with a focus on having the skills and emotional stability to relate well to their peers, access the school learning program and achieve academically and socially. Students access support for a range of concerns such as: learning, behaviour, social skills, friendship and family issues.

Student management

The school's behaviour policy is in line with DECD policy and is based on all children having the right to learn and have relationships in a safe and supportive environment. There is a focus on developing positive learning behaviours and in developing skills in getting along with others. We believe strong partnerships between school and home are crucial in supporting students to demonstrate positive behaviours

Behaviour management practices are therefore proactive and based on supporting students to developing skills in getting along and considering others and repairing relationships. Students are supported in developing problem solving strategies that match the context of the situation. Students are also supported in identifying emotions and developing strategies to calm down. Individual behaviour plans and strategies are put in place for a small group of students who have difficulty managing their behaviour appropriately.

Parents are informed and involved as part of the process in working as a team to support their child in developing appropriate behaviours, with a focus on learning and positive intent in improving behaviour. Leadership staff are proactive in supporting staff, and working as a team, to induct and maintain a consistent whole school culture of positive learning and social behaviours and restorative approaches to issues.

Student Voice

Student government is currently facilitated through a range of strategies including working parties. Year 6/7 students participate in a leadership conference at the beginning of the year. Broad-based, varied and inclusive student involvement is promoted, in efforts to develop a range of student voice opportunities. Whole school student opinion and decision making is sought through 'Student news', a daily electronic communication forum. In 2014 we introduced a student executive who have already had a positive impact and driven genuine change within the school. The SRC of 2014 with the support of the student body raised the issue of school uniform and drove with the support of the Deputy Principal a change in our uniform. Our parent community and staff were all involved in the process. A new uniform was phased in throughout 2015 and has now seen all students adopting it.

At Virginia Primary our Senior Students have the opportunity to apply for and take on a greater leadership role around the school.

These roles are as follows; *Student Leaders Executive, Student Mentors, Public Relations Officers, Photographers, Sport Monitors and Kitchen Garden Coordinators.*

To become official leaders, our Year 7 students have to go through a process of applying for a position. Their application has to address why it is they think they would be applicable for the position and what skills they think they could bring to the role.

Special programmes

Habits of Mind/ Formative Assessment

In 2014 we introduced the Habits of Mind. As a school we are actively focussing on supporting our children to be problem solvers, reasoners, and communicators and have a sense of inquiry. Habits of Mind fits under one of our key school priority areas on our Site Improvement Plan (Teaching & Learning). Our staff explicitly share learning intentions and success criteria with students.

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden

In late 2013 we were awarded a grant to become a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden school. As a school we worked steadily to implement the program and infrastructure throughout 2014 to have it up and running successfully in 2015 and 2016.

SAPSASA competitions

Our school has a strong and proud history of competing in SAPSASA events. In both 2013 and 2014 we were crowned district athletics champions in our division and in both years our Girls football team have also made the Grand Final played at Glenelg oval.

Global Peace School

In 2010 Virginia Primary school was accredited as a 'Save the Children Global Peace School'. The whole-school approach has enabled children and their families to understand the rights and responsibilities enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It empowers children to be active citizens in their own lives and in the lives of others, locally, nationally and internationally.

Our school is one of 13 schools which provide an outstanding model of 'good practice' that inspire the development of similar teaching and learning practices in other schools and communities.

Key School Policies

- Site Improvement Plan and other key statements or policies:
- The school's Site Improvement Plan is underpinned by the visionary framework which includes the school's vision, values, aims and mission.

VISION: Virginia Primary School: Learning together, Learning for our Future

AIMS

Through education at VPS children will:

- feel safe at school and enjoy learning
- achieve to the best of their potential in all curriculum areas
- live the school values of: caring, respect, fairness, achievement and diversity
- have a sense of belonging within the VPS community
- get along with others, resolve problems peacefully and repair relationships
- develop skills in literacy and numeracy
- contribute to making the school (and the world) a better place.

MISSION

Staff will work together with colleagues, students and parents to:

- Ensure a safe learning environment
- Plan and implement developmentally appropriate, relevant and interesting learning experiences
- Assess and report student achievement, as required, at a class, whole school and district/ state level
- Develop students' ability to form inclusive and respectful relationships, positive learning and social behaviours
- Engage in decision making and in contributing to the school and wider community
- Engage in reflection, inquiry, professional learning and continuous improvement

SITE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Focus: English and Literacy

Literacy Improvement Coordinator and critical pathway team members lead the development of a coherent whole school approach that reflects the DECD Literacy Strategy

Sustainable outcome: *To improve learning outcomes in English and raise the level of Literacy skills*

Underpinned by our Literacy Statement of Practice

(Whole site agreement)

A consistent, evidence based approach to...

Oral Language

Phonics

Spelling

Writing & Handwriting

and reading

Focus: Maths and Numeracy

Numeracy Improvement Coordinator and critical pathway team members lead the development of a coherent whole school approach that reflects the DECD Numeracy Strategy

Sustainable outcome: *To improve learning outcomes in Maths and raise the level of Numeracy skills*

Underpinned by our Numeracy Statement of Practice

(Whole site agreement)

Rapid re-call focus
Mental Strategies focus
Problem Solving focus
Investigations focus

Focus: Quality Teaching & Learning

Quality Teaching & Learning Improvement Coordinator and critical pathway team members lead and oversee the development and implementation of curriculum, effective teaching and community engagement

Sustainable outcome: *To create empowered and lifelong learners and improve teacher effectiveness for powerful and informed teaching.*

Underpinned by our Teaching & Learning Statement of Practice

(Whole site agreement – *to be created in 2015*)

Habits of Mind focus
Formative Assessment focus

Curriculum

Subject offerings:

Students access 4 x 50 minute specialist lessons a week: NIT subjects are currently the Arts (a term each of dance, drama, visual arts and music), Science, Vietnamese and PE.

Meeting minimum state required times for maths and literacy of 300 minutes per week is a base expectation.

Science curriculum is implemented with one lesson from specialist science teacher and one from class teacher. This is to ensure state expectation of increased time on science is programmed for and implemented.

EALD (ESL) – The EALD teachers meet regularly with classroom teachers to discuss and plan for the language development of students in the class and to plan strategies to support the students.

Mother tongue lessons: Vietnamese

Teaching methodology:

Teachers R-7 are transitioning to ACARA in learning areas of maths, English, science and history. Teachers utilise a range of methodologies, with PD to explore and align with pedagogy outlined in SA TEFL. Preschool staff are implementing 'Belonging, Being, Becoming' framework and OSHC staff are implementing 'My Time, Our Place' framework.

To meet the needs of high numbers of EALD learners, methodology includes use of integrated visual and auditory learning, explicit teaching, opportunities for discussion, learning through experience. The majority of teachers at Virginia Primary have undertaken the ESL in the Mainstream course and new teachers are encouraged and funded to undertake this PD.

Our school has recently had a focus of introducing technology into classrooms to support our 21st century learners. Junior Primary classes have iPads permanently located in their classes and MP/UP classes have a combination of iPads and laptops. This approach was taken rather than having sets of iPads/ laptops as we believe as a school the technology should enhance the learning, not become the learning.

Student assessment procedures and reporting

Term 1: 10 minute parent/ teacher Acquaintance meetings.

(the aim of these meetings is to meet parents/ caregivers so they can share their knowledge/ thoughts about their children as a learner to support the teacher for planning and programming to best support their child.)

Term 2: progress report

Term 3: 3 way interviews between student/ parents/ teacher, 10 minutes

Term 4: summative report

There are a range of whole school assessment practices in place to assess literacy, numeracy and well-being. There is a move to increased formative assessment (assessment **as** learning and assessment **for** learning.)

Parents of preschool children receive a summative report and profile folder at the conclusion of the final term in preschool.

Sporting Activities

- The school has a 'Be Active' committee. This committee coordinates regular and varied coaching clinics and a strong emphasis of daily fitness and PE.
- Some of our students play netball, soccer, football, tennis, basketball and karate for local and community teams. Students participate in SAPSASA athletics and district teams throughout the year. (Recent teams have included: cricket, netball, soccer, football and athletics.)
- Swimming lessons have been conducted annually for all students R-5 at the Elizabeth Centre.
- Year 6/7 students participate in a day of aquatics each year.
- The Virginia United Soccer Club uses the school oval for its junior soccer program.
- Currently OSHC manages the federally funded 'Active After Schools' program and students are able to participate twice a week in diverse physical activities.
- There is a junior primary play shed with equipment such as bikes, scooter, prams and dress-ups, which children in years R-2 can use at lunch play times.
- All classes have a bin of sports equipment which students can borrow at play breaks.
- Years 6/7 participate in 'Footsteps' in term 4.

Other Co-Curricular Activities

- **General**

Guitar: private provider, Terry Snow.

- **Special**

Harmony Day celebrations

End of Year concert – this is very well attended by families.

Community events as they arise

Spring Fair

ANZAC Day

Day for Daniel

Grandparent's day

Staff (and their welfare)

- **Staff profile**

Our staff, like the school community population, are a diverse group of people. We have a combination of people who live locally, reasonably near, and some who travel a considerable distance to work. Several members of staff are from CALD backgrounds supports communication with parents. Virginia is perceived by some staff initially to be far away, however many staff change this opinion, as the route is fairly direct. There is a combination of permanent and contract teaching positions, permanent and temporary SSO positions.

Leadership structure

Principal and deputy. In the spirit of DIAf principle 3 'share leadership', there is a commitment to building the capacity and broad-based leadership amongst staff (and with students.) School priority Coordinator positions were advertised internally to all staff in January to work toward agreed action plans through our school improvement process and support the 'teams' approach at Virginia.

Staff support systems

The deputy and principal share line management responsibilities and student behaviour support responsibilities. Teachers in teams provide ongoing support for each other.

Preschool staff work closely with Reception teachers to ensure a smooth transition to school. Staff work with Guidance Officers, Speech Pathologists, teachers from the Hearing Impaired team and from time to time the Behaviour Support and Social Work team.

Performance Development:

All staff meet with their line manager to share and agree on their individual improvement plan in term 1. The plan links to aspects of the Site Learning Plan as well as aspects of personal development.

School Facilities

Buildings and grounds:

The school is set on 4.7 hectares and has a football oval and soccer ground as well as a large grassed area for student use. There is a netball/ basketball court on the asphalt area. The asphalt was resealed in December 2006 and in 2013 a special coloured surfacing was applied with our school values and vision lining each side of the basketball court.

The administration/resource centre and the main teaching block are SAMCON buildings of which contain asbestos and were constructed in approximately 1973.

A wooden quad transportable was delivered in 1994. (Building ages as late 1950's / early 1960's) A double metal teaching block houses two classrooms and was renovated in 2004. A single metal classroom serves as the art room. These buildings have undergone total refurbishment with carpeting, painting, new interactive whiteboards and furniture.

All furniture across the school has been totally refurbished throughout 2014 – 2017.

Out of School Hours Care uses the school's activity room. The computer room was relocated in 2017 to the library space and the existing room was totally gutted and refurbished. There is a preschool on site which is fenced separately from the school but has easy access from the school yard. This underwent major renovations in 2005 and has had continuous modifications to enhance the learning spaces both in and outdoors..

The Virginia Community Centre, situated on adjacent council property was completed in December 2001. The school has access daily to this facility.

In 2010 a new library was built funded by Federal BER funds, along with refurbishment of staff and student toilets.

All classrooms have interactive whiteboards and visualisers and have been refurbished over the past 3 years with new furniture.

Heating and cooling

All classrooms have reverse cycled heating and cooling. The school is an accredited SunSmart school and has documented practice for hot and inclement weather.

Staff facilities:

There is a large staff work area in the administration building used by staff as a preparation area with access to computers, photocopiers and colour printer. Internet access is provided to all classrooms. The staff room acts as a professional development area. There is a small meeting/interview room available for parent/staff use.

ICT Infrastructure:

In 2013 our school through fantastic parent/ community support in fundraising managed to go wireless across the school with internet. Since going wireless we have upgraded the IT backbone across the school, a significant investment to handle the increased use of IT across the school. All classrooms have laptops and iPads to enhance and support the learning in classrooms. At the beginning of 2017 the computer room was converted to a classroom and a new computer suite was established in the Library.

Access for students and staff with disabilities

All buildings have wheelchair ramp access. There is a disabled car par in the staff car park.

Access to bus transport: no school bus is available.

School Operations

Decision making structures:

The Staff Decision Making Policy is based on a consensus model. PAC is active and undertaking input as outlined in the EB agreement.

Staff meetings are held each Wednesday with administration and professional development activities as planned by the School Planning Committee. There are many effective embedded processes and structures within the school. These are open to improvement and a focus is on all staff having a level of participation to ensure effective running of the school. This is with the understanding that there are varied levels of participation. Staff nominate to take on responsibilities for different roles and tasks within the school. Various task groups and committees make recommendations to staff for consideration.

Regular publications

A fortnightly newsletter provides families with an overview of school happenings. This is distributed in hard copy, with some families receiving it via email. It is also posted on the school website and Facebook page. There is a sign notice board at the entrance of the school to notify families of key dates and events. Class teachers send home a class overview at the beginning of each term and class newsletter every term.

‘Student News’ is communicated across the site via a custom/ purpose built intranet system developed in 2014. The staff were all supplied with iPads and contribute to and access an ‘electronic day book via the same intranet system.’ A weekly bulletin is also distributed/ available on the intranet.

Other communication

Our school has its own 'Skoolbag app' that can be downloaded to smartphone devices (see below). For parents/ caregivers who do not have access to smartphones, all information from the app can be viewed from our school website.



Many teachers have developed close links with parents and communicate both formally and informally. All classes use a diary or communication book.. Vietnamese and Khmer speaking staff provide excellent communication link between home and school for parents. They interpret as required at formal meetings with parents, and parent teacher interviews as well as with daily communication.

School financial position

The school is in a good financial position. A Financial Advisory Committee includes the Treasurer from the Governing Council, Principal and SSO Finance Manager.

Much work has been done to develop a budget that is reflective of the many areas across the school, and reserve lines are in place for replacement of key items. The school operates with three companies: school, canteen and OSHC.

Local Community

General characteristics

Virginia is a well-established, highly multicultural market gardening community 30 kms from Adelaide. It is a major food producing area. The township is undergoing growth with the release of land for housing in the Virginia Grove estate. The opening of the Northern Express Way has changed accessibility of some local roadways.

Parent and community involvement

The Governing Council is an enthusiastic and committed group of parents. There is a strong and active sub-committee structure. Parents are welcomed into junior primary classes at the beginning of the day to support their child in practice literacy tasks. There is high parent turn up for 3 way interviews, sports day and concert.

Feeder or destination schools

The local feeder high schools are Gawler Secondary School, Paralowie R-12 School and Mark Oliphant College. Year 7s generally move to a variety of secondary schools, both independent and state. The main destination secondary schools are Gawler High and Xavier College.

Other local care and educational facilities

Virginia Grove Early Learning centre is a child care facility available to accommodate the expanding needs of the Virginia area. It is located 1.5km from our school site. They have 65 places for children ranging in ages from 6 weeks old. The centre is open from 6:30am till 6:30pm week days and offers a drop off and pick up facility to our school.

Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities

There is a local shopping centre in Virginia. The closest major shopping centres are Elizabeth, Salisbury, and Munno Para, each approximately 20 minutes away.

Other local facilities:

The township has a sporting ground to cater for football, cricket, netball and tennis. The Virginia Community Centre is an indoor facility for sporting activities such as karate, and is linked to an industrial kitchen.

There is a doctor, dentist and chemist in Virginia. Central Districts and Lyell McEwin are the closest hospitals. The town is proud of having the states first community owned Bendigo Bank. The Virginia Institute is a heritage building in the main street that is used by organisations such as the CWA and local dance school.

Accessibility:

The majority of students are driven by car to school. There is a large council car park adjacent to the school which has recently been resurfaced. A teacher is on car park duty after school each day to direct traffic and ensure student safety.

Local Government body

The school is located in the City of Playford (Telephone 8254 0222).