

# Primary Schools: Australia's Future

Primary schools teach our children and contribute to our nation's future. They embrace the responsibility of giving children the academic and social foundations for leading fulfilled and enriched lives. In our school communities, each child's identity and culture are celebrated; personal responsibility is encouraged and expected; and, the knowledge and skills are gained to become independent and lifelong learners.

## The Nature of Primary Schooling

The main purpose of primary schooling is to develop the whole child.

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) states: "All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens."

In achieving this goal of the Melbourne Declaration, primary schools recognise the vital importance of strong partnerships with families.

In these foundational school years, children form a stronger sense of self while establishing new and more independent relationships. They build resilience and enhance their sense of right and wrong. They see themselves as contributing members of the local and wider community. They gain an enduring love of learning.

The primary school classroom is characterised by enthusiasm and inspiration, collaboration and engagement, curiosity and discovery. The primary teacher has a rich set of skills and capacities,

and balances the need for explicit teaching with innovative ways of encouraging cooperative work, research, problem-solving and self-directed learning.

Principals and teachers know that the literacy and numeracy general capabilities are fundamental to student achievement. At the same time, covering each curriculum area allows for a rich and balanced school experience.

A contemporary teaching and learning program also includes the other five capabilities of the Australian Curriculum:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding
- Information and communication technology capability.

Schools complement, but should not replace, the responsibility of families and other professionals or agencies to adopt programs and services that support the child.

## The Vision

All primary schools have the people and resources necessary for every child to reach his or her potential.

They are characterised by dedicated school leaders and teachers with high expectations of student learning, and communities that respect and value education.



Australian Primary Principals Association

