

Our Place case study: Doveton College

Doveton College is the first Our Place school and in just five years has significantly changed outcomes for children, their families and the community.



About Doveton College

Doveton is in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, originally developed in the 1950s alongside huge industrial growth in the local area.

But with the closure of the GMH and Heinz factories, work for unskilled and low-skilled workers dried up, unemployment skyrocketed, opportunities for young people closed down, and the community changed significantly. Doveton also became home for a new, highly diverse refugee community, with nearly half the community now speaking one of 50 languages other than English.

The Doveton community continues to grapple with a number of significant challenges and is experiencing one of the highest levels of disadvantage in Victoria.

When Doveton College first opened in 2012, nearly 47% of children were starting school with significant developmental vulnerability, over two thirds of students were below national minimum standard in literacy and numeracy, unemployment was double the state average, and there were significant rates of involvement with child protection, family violence and justice.



The College was one of the first social partnerships between government and philanthropy around a single school. The Colman Foundation made an 10 year, \$5M commitment to the College and worked with other philanthropy and service providers, to establish an integrated, place-based, family-focused community hub as a core part of the school.

Today Doveton College has nearly 650 students between prep and Year 9, with another 140 or so children aged birth to five attending its Early Learning Centre.

What we do differently

Doveton College brings together all the resources young children need to develop well, that students need to succeed at school, and that families need to thrive – and make them available, accessible and appropriate for the families in our community.

Early learning, health and wellbeing services for children and families, and adult engagement, education and employment services are all integrated through a single entrance into the school and a co-designed service model that put people at the centre.

This makes a difference because of the relationships the school builds with families, their focus on igniting and meeting the community's aspirations, and the sense of belonging families experience because their local school truly is, as they say, "our place".

The school also has a commitment to providing the highest quality teaching and learning environment for all students, with high expectations for what their students can achieve, the right support for teachers, intensive additional support for those who need it, and effective leadership.

Our Place's contribution

At Doveton College Our Place has provided the resources for the community team – a community engagement coordinator, a volunteer coordinator, and an adult engagement coordinator. The community team are experts in relationship-building and at creating opportunities to ignite and meet the community's aspirations for themselves and their children.

Our Place invests in the early leadership and facilitation to establish a strong service delivery model, develop a practice philosophy, and to support and enable implementation.

This contribution has extended to provide data and evaluation support to develop an outcomes framework, support the school and community to collect and use data more effectively, and track impact over time.

Our impact

Our approach is working. In just five years, we are starting to see big changes.

Doveton College is a high-growth school rapidly catching up to national averages, and learning outcomes for the children who attended our exceptionally high quality Early Learning Centre are hugely encouraging.

We are starting to see the kinds of impacts that change the lives of children and the fabric of communities.

More children are starting school healthy and ready to succeed at school

- **13% reduction** in children who are developmentally vulnerable in one or more domain 2012-2015
- **6% reduction** in parent concerns about children's oral health, behaviour, and speech or language on entry to school from 2013-2016

Engagement in learning and academic performance is growing year on year

- **30% reduction** in days absent across year levels (Prep to Year 6)
- **50% in Year 5-9** students reporting feeling engaged and motivated to learn, supported to learn and listened to by their teachers and feel positive about coming to and being connected to school (2014-2016)
- **A higher proportion of students performed** at or above the national minimum standard on NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy assessments in 2017 from 2013: with 95% of Year 3, 5 and 7 students performing at or above the national minimum for both Reading and Numeracy, with 100% of Year 9 students performing at or above the national minimum for Numeracy and 80% for Reading

Children and families are participating in the community

- 75% of students from Prep to Year 8 participating in sport and recreation activities before and after school
- Parent participation in programs and services doubled 2014-2016
- An average of 40 parents volunteering each week supporting in classroom activities and specialist lessons, with a further 55 per week supporting broader college activities from breakfast club to student enrichment and adult education.

Adults are engaging in education and training and getting jobs

- 400 parents attending life skills, pre-vocational or Certificate II level training, since 2013-, with a further 130 attending Certificate III through to Diploma level courses
- Almost 90 parents have been supported into paid employment since 2013

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