Nossal High School

Nossal High School is the first Government fully academically selective coeducational secondary school, joining Melbourne High, MacRob and Suzanne Cory HS to form the select entry network of schools. Nossal has a capped enrolment of 200 students per year level for Years 9-12, and opened in 2010 with an initial Year 9 cohort of 200; and in 2012 had 600 students in Years 9-11. Enrolment is through a common entry exam in Year 8, overseen by VCAA and administered by an independent testing company. (Edutest) The three cohorts comprise 50% male and female students and will come from over 97 different schools from across the metropolitan area – approximately half from the non government sector. The school is located in Berwick, in the urban growth corridor with lower levels of enrolment into selective schools and lower levels of university entry. The school is situated on the grounds of the Berwick campus of Monash University and adjacent to Chisholm Tafe and the Berwick TEC. The school buildings have been purpose designed to provide a flexible, modern, ICT rich, adult learning environment appropriate for an academically selected cohort. Partnerships have been formed with Monash and shared facilities and programs have been offered and will continue to develop as the school grows. The building program is now basically complete, but significant grounds development is underway, including the construction of outdoor classroom and recreation spaces, oval and playing fields, and themed gardens and performance spaces. 2012 saw the first significant Year 12 results posted with most Year 11 students undertaking at least one Unit ¾ study. Results were exceptional. We welcomed 20 new staff members to the school at the start of 2012, and completed the appointment of the final new cohort of staff for 2013 late in the year; the last year of significant annual growth. In 2012 there were 2 Principal class staff; 37 teaching staff and 14 Education Support staff employed at the school. Nossal works closely with the other three selective schools as part of the Selective Entry Network, and within the local Casey Central Network of schools. Our students are active participants in a broad range of academic and co-curricula programs, both within the school and the wider educational community.
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| As an academically selected cohort Nossal students perform at generally high levels across standardised measures at all levels. Year 9 NAPLAN results confirm the effectiveness of the selection mechanisms with students performing at and beyond the higher end of the NAPLAN bands. VCE results were very strong and the first Year 12 outcomes were higher than expected; 30% of students achieved a study score above 40; 65% above 30; and the average study score was 37.26. There were some exceptional individual performances, but it should be noted that this level of performance is unlikely to be sustained when students move into a full Year 12 program in 2013, as in 2012 most undertook a single Unit ¾ study in an area of particular strength or interest. Nossal students are offered a broad AusVELs and VCE curriculum, two LOTES and growing elective and co-curricula programs. Not all students are academically advanced in all areas and some may show exceptional levels of performance in numeracy studies but average levels in literacy studies and vice versa. (and some are exceptional across the board) The students are not accelerated as such but are generally operating at a more advanced level and cover the curriculum in much more breadth and depth than would be possible within a mainstream cohort. Students are offered an individualised learning program with opportunity to participate in numerous leadership, community, social, cultural, musical and sporting events and activities. In 2012 the instigation of a full VCE program has been the priority for the curriculum team, and much time has been the priority for leadership | The transition into a school of 600 was less dramatic than the doubling of the student numbers the previous year, and a happy, positive and supportive culture has been a wonderful feature of the school since year one. Subsequent student cohorts have been welcomed into an adult learning environment where they are given significant responsibility for their own learning, and introduced to structures and processes that will best prepare them for successful future study in a tertiary environment. Student and parent opinion survey data is exceptionally positive with results well above state and like school means and well into the 4th quartile across nearly all measures. The key areas of challenge for students appears to be (relatively) minor transition discomfort for some as they move into a fully academically selective environment and are exposed to large numbers of highly capable and very proficient students, and managing the level of pressure and expectation (their own and others) relating to their academic performance levels. As highly aspirational students and families with very clear academic goals, the level of effort and interest that goes into their studies is enormous and as they move into their final VCE studies, learning to manage the workload and associated pressure is a key part of their school curriculum and underpins the structures and operational processes that are being developed as the school grows to capacity. A vibrant and broad House structure is firmly embedded within the school culture, and student wellbeing is directly addressed through a pastoral program | Student (and staff) retention rates are very strong, and few (less than ten) have left the school. The majority of these moves are due to a family relocation either interstate or overseas, and several gained a place into Year 10 at the John Monash Science School. Two students left to seek more appropriate pathways in other mainstream schools. Student attendance figures are very high, and large numbers remain at school on Wednesday afternoons to catch up on work, undertake additional SACs, or to participate in student directed co-curricula programs. Direct partnerships with the Faculty of Education at Monash University (who have moved Berwick in 2012) are developing, and University enhancement studies will be offered for the first time in 2013. Senior students have been allocated individual staff mentors; and a mentoring program with university students is also being developed. A comprehensive work experience and pathways counselling process is developing and the school hosted a highly successful Tertiary Pathways expo. involving Victorian and interstate Universities and parents and community members who presented workshops and information sessions on specific careers. Students undertook a number of overseas tours either as part of their LOTE program, or for leadership and community service. Sister school relationships are being explored and there is much interest from a variety of schools in a number of countries who are keen to work with us. Within the local network of schools, Nossal has been part of a diverse cross sector coalition seeking to implement co-operative Trade Training Programs; and has been
and energy has gone into counselling students, constructing appropriate pathways, and building structured programs that will best meet the needs and aspirations of all Nossal students. University Enhancement programs are being developed for 2013, and the school is piloting a number of specialist curriculum programs and courses. Ongoing research into student performance levels through Monash University and Edutest is producing data that confirms significant “value adding” for the first student cohort, and this testing will continue with subsequent student groups to establish consistent data sets and benchmarks.

Demand for places continues to rise, with increased numbers applying for entrance at Year 9 and for possible vacancies into other year levels. Levels of participation are very high across all aspects of the curriculum, and students have the opportunity to take on authentic leadership roles, and participate in a growing range of co-curricula events and activities. Nossal students are also exceptionally active within the sporting arena and compete strongly and successfully against other local schools, as evidenced by our swimming team (consisting of only three year levels) winning the 2012 district swimming carnival against our much larger neighbouring schools. Nossal students have a strong presence within the local community, as participants, instigators and supporters of many worthy programs and events.

For more detailed information regarding our school please visit our website at www.nossalhs.vic.edu.au

or view our 2012 Annual Report online at http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/SReg

exploring the implementation of shared VCE programs to enable a greater breadth of subject offering for all local students.

Tertiary transitions are part of the focus for 2013, and curriculum structures and processes are being implemented through the Year 10-12 VCE program to better prepare our students for university studies. Private study periods, structured study sessions, individual mentoring and tutoring, lecture and tutorial style delivery, and a comprehensive digital online communication and resourcing platform form part of this preparation and will evolve progressively.

2013 will be a historic (and emotional) year as we graduate our first Year 12 cohort, and farewell the pioneering students who have had the most significant input into the development of the school structure, curriculum, and culture and ethos.