



## Dallas Brooks Community Primary School



### Overview

**Country or Region:** Australia

**Industry:** Education

### School Profile

Dallas Brooks Community Primary School is located just outside of Melbourne, Australia, and opened in 2013.

**Number of Students:** 480 primary students; 150 preschool students

**Gender:** Mixed

**Age Range:** 3–12

**School Leader:** Valerie Karaitiana

**School Website:** [www.dallasps.vic.edu.au](http://www.dallasps.vic.edu.au)

Dallas Brooks Community Primary School has been selected to participate in the Microsoft Innovative Schools World Tour because it is a showcase example of the following Innovation Topics:

- 1:1 learning environments.** Students work on their own devices and can use technology at any time to access educational tools.
- Personalized learning environments.** Use of systematic continuous assessment to change the course of student learning and for remediation.
- Student-influenced learning environments.** Involving students in decisions around curriculum and culture.





"The Dallas Brooks Community Primary School vision is to actively engage our learning community in authentic learning projects to develop responsible global citizens. The Microsoft Partners in Learning, Innovative Schools, and Mentor Schools programs have provided us with the opportunity to work toward this vision by facilitating global networking opportunities for staff and students. Our participation in the Partners in Learning program has enabled us to work with like-minded schools from across the world and has challenged us to regularly re-evaluate our pedagogy."

Valerie Karaitiana, Principal, Dallas Brooks Community Primary School

## 1:1 learning environments

Dallas Brooks Community Primary School's 1:1 program is targeted at all students in grades 3 through 6. These students are given a Lenovo Netbook and are able to work within a technology-rich environment. The widespread use of information and communications technology (ICT) enables teachers to more easily differentiate the learning environments for students.

ICT enables communication, collaboration, and creativity within the classrooms. Students can decide when and how they use technology and choose the most appropriate software for their intended outcome. As an example, students can frequently be observed filming themselves using the internal camera in their netbooks as part of their ongoing self-reflections, as evidence of a skill achieved, or as a self-assessment or peer-assessment task that leads to the development of new learning goals.

1:1 learning enables a purposeful and innovative use of ICT to support learning and teaching and is evident throughout the school, from kindergarten programs to the adult education classes in the school's Community Hub.

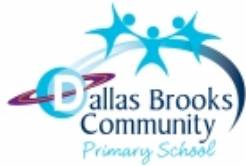
### **Key Technology**

- *Every computer in the school is imaged with the DEECD eduSTAR image so that students and teachers have access to Microsoft Office and a range of other software programs.*
- *Students use Microsoft OneNote note-taking program to collaborate with peers and to develop portfolios of their work.*
- *Students regularly use the internal cameras in their netbooks, video cameras, still digital cameras, desktop PCs, tablets, interactive whiteboards (IWBs), touchscreen TVs, and more.*

## Personalized learning environments

The school has a strong commitment to Hattie's principles of Visible Learning, in which all students understand themselves as learners and are able to plan for self-improvement. The school accomplishes this goal through the following process:

1. All teachers participate in Data Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) on a weekly basis. Teachers use Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to enter student data and then sort the data to form a Guttman Chart, which allows the teachers to rank students from the highest to lowest performing and pinpoint the skills to be targeted for each student.
2. Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development" is used to target skills for both individual students and for groups of students with similar needs. Once the skills have been identified, groups of teachers work together to develop learning goals, to identify teaching strategies and resources for each student group (collective responsibility). The learning goals, strategies, and resources form the basis of a 3–4 week unit of work.
3. Teachers then share the data with the individual students and have a series of "conversations for learning" during which each student develops his or her own personal learning goals.
4. At the conclusion of the unit, teachers are expected to present evidence that the students have achieved the stated goals to their Data PLT. The evidence must be in the form of what the students "made, said, or did" and members of the Data PLT are encouraged to challenge and question the presented evidence until they are satisfied that the goals have been met.



5. Students are expected to provide evidence to their teacher that they have achieved their negotiated learning goals; this evidence is frequently presented to the teachers in video format.

The school emphasizes the acquisition of strong speaking skills to enable the students to articulate their learning pathways. Extensive work continues around the building of academic vocabulary.

#### **Key Technology**

- *Students and teachers use OneNote extensively for collaboration, communication, and recording of observations and evidence.*
- *Student data and Guttman Charts are uploaded to the school's Staff Web based on Microsoft SharePoint.*
- *During Data PLTs, teachers use a large touchscreen TV and an IWB; they also use their netbooks to sort data, access files, and search Internet sites.*

### **Student-influenced learning environments**

Dallas Brooks encourages students and teachers to form a partnership to co-construct the curriculum. Each school year begins with a Quality Start Program designed to develop negotiated classroom values, mission statements, rules and consequences, and "5 star work" rubrics. Students and teachers regularly discuss the learning process, including using individual student data for feedback and goal setting.

Students in kindergarten to grade 2 (ages 5–7) have ownership of their education through their "Learning Boxes" during Investigations Time. Each student chooses up to three topics for their Learning Box investigations and develops a set of questions that they then use to guide their research. In the older grades, student-

influenced learning is evident through student participation in project-based learning, inquiry learning, and goal setting.

#### **Key Technology**

- *Students and teachers use OneNote extensively for collaboration, communication, and recording of observations and evidence.*
- *Students use Padlet and Edmodo to collaborate.*
- *Students use Photo Story 3 and Songsmith to reflect and create.*

### **Improving student outcomes**

The students at Dallas Brooks are highly engaged in the learning process and enjoy an increasing degree of independence. For several years, the school planned the move into its new building and its open learning spaces, conscious of the responsibility to ensure that both the staff and the students were prepared for the changes. The school developed a process to track the behavior of individual students across the school day and to identify and analyze patterns in behavior. Student learning outcomes are monitored closely and continue to follow an upward trend.

### **Driving leadership and a culture of innovation**

The leadership culture at Dallas Brooks is very much that of a distributive model that features layers of leadership. All teachers participate in PLTs. The PLTs feed information and requests to the School Improvement Team through their representatives. The PLTs have control of a budget that they are able to use for professional development purposes and to purchase resources. The PLTs are also able to influence the direction of the school curriculum to reflect the needs of students.





## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft in Education, visit:

[www.microsoft.com/education/ww/solutions/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/education/ww/solutions/Pages/index.aspx)

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## Technology Infrastructure

