Thomastown East PS video transcript

By Miranda Tay

Headline: The write stuff: how Thomastown East Primary School transformed its literacy and numeracy program

Description box: A highly diverse student population posed an unusual challenge to the literacy and numeracy program at Thomastown East Primary School. So the principal and staff devised a successful five-year strategy that put the spotlight solely on reading, writing and mathematics – and turned around the school’s NAPLAN results.

TRANSCRIPT STARTS:

**Jeremy Blaney, principal:**

The challenges that we’re facing at Thomastown East Primary School have been 78 per cent of children who are EAL (English as Additional Language), so their background is obviously not mainstream English as we’re used to it. We also have 25 refugee children at the school at the moment in a very small school. By having a more focused approach we were able to really tune in on what good teaching was about, and it made significant academic gains, not just in the classroom, in the student books as well, but in our NAPLAN results. Curriculum areas that didn’t fit into the reading, writing and maths process of what we were doing was cut back to the bare minimum to ensure that 100 per cent of the child was more focused on reading, writing and maths.

00:42

**Heather Walters, teacher, prep:**

We approach numeracy by using a lot of manipulatives, so we have a lot of hands-on things so that they can actually do the task physically, and then understand it. And they can teach the partner that way as well.

00:55

**Gabby Lye, student, year xxx:**

I’m really into multiplications because we’ve been using material like six packs. So you get a pack of cards and you choose six cards. You place it down and you need to make a multiplication sum with a number.

1:10

**Tabark Alshukur, student, year xxx:**

In arrays we normally use, like, small little characters or counters, so that we can make it like an array or something like that.

1:21

**Julie Harris, assistant principal:**

So children are working at their own level all throughout their day but it’s expected to be to their best ability.

1:28

**Mark Mastrandrea, teacher, years 2 to 3:**

With our writing program, we tend to introduce some of the larger words of vocabulary that get the kids excited. So these are types of words they generally wouldn’t have exposure to otherwise.

1:37

**Sharleise Marshall, year xxx:**

My favourite word would probably be ‘passionately’. It means you’re really passionate about something, and you believe it very strongly.

1:47

**Marija Perisic, year xxx:**

I like using personification. Personification is when you get a non-living thing and add human characteristics. ‘The trees were dancing.’ The trees don’t actually dance.

1:59

**Azhdar Iman, year xxx:**

We have a program called Literacy Circles and your teacher gives you a book when you get together in the group on a Friday, you ask your group questions and they have to answer it, and I love to be the boss of the group and stuff like that.

2:13

**Julie Harris:**

It’s opened up a whole new world for our children. They now start asking questions rather than being that passive learner.

20:20

**Jeremy Blaney:**

Our children’s motivation and commitment and engagement is where I sort of see that the best part of our journey is. Our children turn up knowing they’re going to be successful.

2:29

**Heather Walters:**

They’re sponges. They just want to learn more. It’s a really exciting experience.

2:33

**Mark Mastrandrea:**

When you see that connection, you see the children have really, really understood something and they’re able to apply it, it really just makes my heart sing, I guess.