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The West Australian

Education

MySchool update: Jolimont and Oakwood primary among 30 WA schools recognised for high achievement this year

Bethany Hiatt The West Australian
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Year 5 Jolimont Primary School students Abhijna Gangatkar, Even Kiddie and Ella Chidgzey. Credit: Andrew Ritchie/The West Australian

Practice makes perfect for Jolimont and Oakwood schools, which are the only two WA primary schools recognised for achieving higher than expected results in this year's national reading, writing and maths tests.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has today released a list of 30 schools, recognising those that achieved above the expected results on the

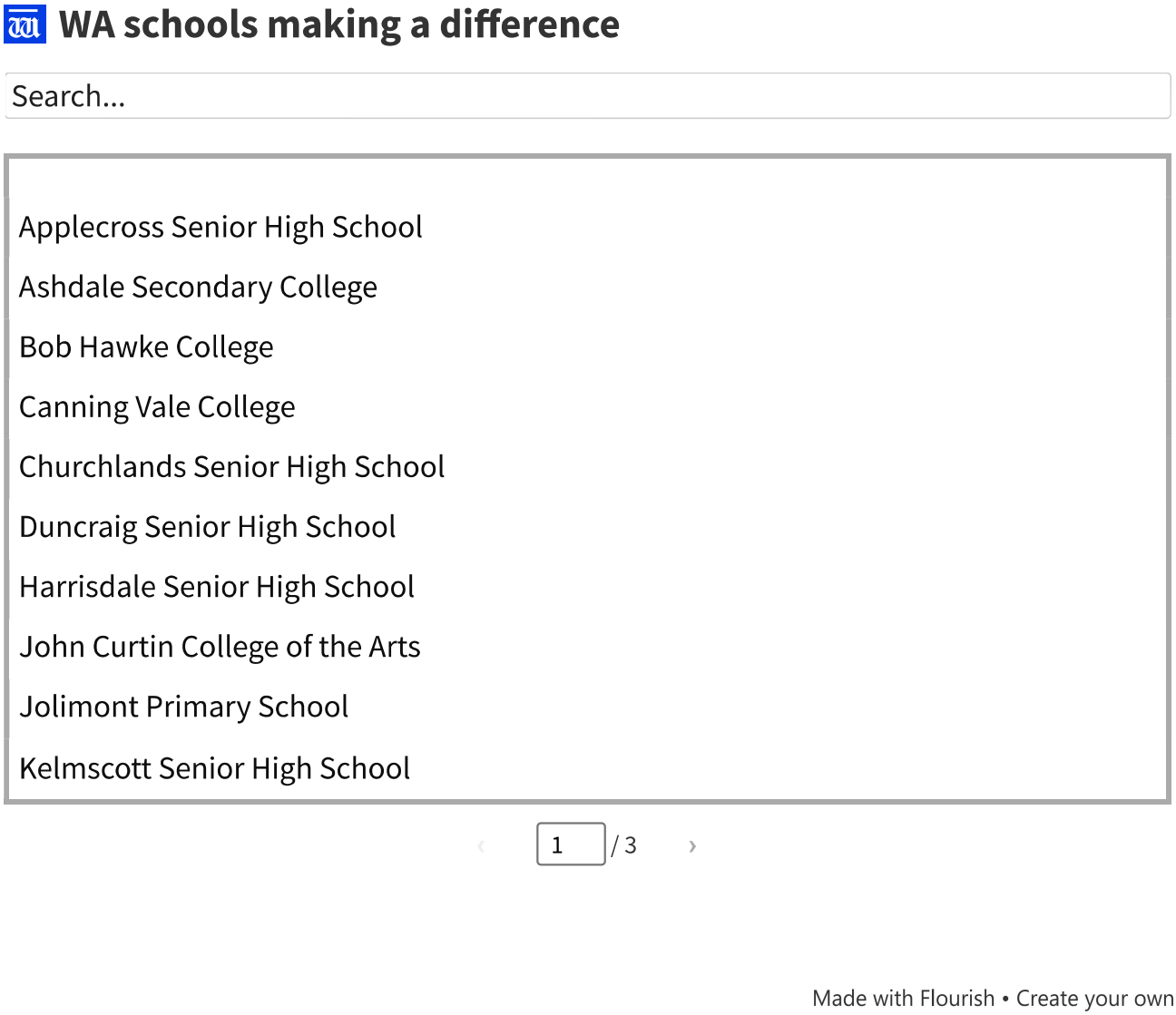
national NAPLAN tests when compared to schools across the country with a similar socio-educational standing.

At Jolimont Primary School, 69 per cent of Year 5s made above-average progress in numeracy — the most of any school on the list — and 62 per cent in reading, when compared with students of similar backgrounds and with the same starting scores on their Year 3 test.

Principal Barbara Iffla said her staff were “delighted and proud” their efforts were making a significant difference to their students.

“We are passionate about promoting student agency and developing the whole child,” she said.

Subiaco’s Bob Hawke College, which had just seen its first cohort of students finish Year 12 this year, was among the 21 public high schools recognised as making much stronger progress than students from comparable backgrounds. Applecross, Churchlands, Rossmoyne, Leeming, Melville and Willeton senior high schools were also included.



Seven Catholic secondary schools were also recognised for making above-average progress.

From Wednesday, WA parents will be able to see all individual school's results by logging on to the updated MySchool website. The website allows users to see how every school performed on this year's NAPLAN tests.

For the first time in several years, this year's update includes data on students' progress from Year 3 to 5 or from Year 7 to 9. The reporting methods for this data changed in 2023.

The update will also reveal schools' latest attendance and finance data.

While ACARA discourages league tables that rank schools based on those achieving the highest results, it selects a sample of schools from each State that are achieving above expectations relative to their level of advantage.

The selected schools have the highest average proportions of students making above-average progress in reading, writing and numeracy.

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National NAPLAN results released in July revealed WA was one of the worst-performing States in the country for Year 3 reading, with almost 40 per cent of students below the proficiency benchmark for their age. However, WA's Year 9s scored above the national average in all areas.

ACARA chief executive Stephen Gniel said Wednesday's return of information on student progress showed how much the same students at the same school had improved since their previous NAPLAN assessments.

"Student progress data provides the information to celebrate improvement in a fairer way that considers the individual circumstances of a school, as well as to better identify areas for renewed or continued focus," he said.

To ensure regional schools were recognised, ACARA also selected 10 high-achieving schools representing each Australian Bureau of Statistics statistical area. These included Broome and Denmark senior high schools and John Paul College in Kalgoorlie.

The principals of Oakwood and Jolimont attributed some of their success to "high impact" teaching strategies, such as frequent checks for student understanding and daily lesson reviews to practise what students have learnt.

Jolimont Primary School Principal Barbara Iffla. Credit: Andrew Ritchie/The West Australian

Ms Iffla credited Prime Maths — a program based on problem-solving methods taught in Singapore — for "significantly" improving students' maths progress and achievement.

Jolimont also piloted Word Origins last year. The spelling and word study program, now being rolled out across the nation, teaches children the meaning of Latin and Greek roots of words.

"We have a significant English as a second language student population, and the Word Origins program has supported their learning over the past two years, while also

positively impacting the literacy levels of all students," she said.

Ms Iffla said training in the past two years by professional learning provider Teach Well had helped staff implement high-impact teaching strategies to improve students' results.

Will Davis, head of Mandurah's Oakwood Primary School, said more than 40 teachers had also been through Teach Well's program, cementing consistent approaches such as high-impact instruction across the school.

Abhijna Gangatkar, Even Kiddie and Ella Chidgzey wtih Principal Barbara Iffla looking over NAPLAN data. Credit: Andrew Ritchie/The West Australian

At the beginning of each maths lesson, teachers deliver daily review sessions to give students a chance to practise previously-taught skills and consolidate learning.

Teachers are delivering "high-impact" direct instruction, where they explain, demonstrate and model concepts, combined with practical, play-based learning in Kindergarten to Year 2 and inquiry-based learning in Years 3 to 6.

"We have achieved improvements by refining and building consistency in our learning approaches," Mr Davis said.

"Our teaching programs have driven our NAPLAN improvements over the past four years, but this recognition is the fruit of eight years of hard work since our school opened in 2018."

More than 1.3 million children in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 sat the NAPLAN tests in March in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and numeracy.

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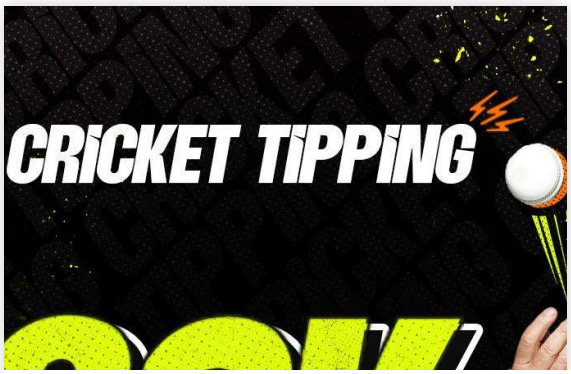

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