



Ardoch Youth Foundation – Stonnington Primary School

www.ardoch.asn.au

Innovation

Ardoch Youth Foundation works with over fifty schools and early childhood centres across Australia. They have a focus on volunteer based programs and respond to school and student needs in each setting through their locally based Education Partnership Coordinator. Ardoch notes that their partnership with Stonnington Primary School is one of their best practice examples. Feedback from volunteers at the school shows they feel fully part of the school community; that they understand their impact on student wellbeing and learning; they feel valued, supported; and that their skills and time are being well used.

Ardoch's Education Partnership Coordinator for inner Melbourne works with the school's leadership team to identify needs, review progress and support the volunteers. The partnership includes:

- ▶ Ardoch volunteers (skilled volunteers support students in the classroom with literacy and numeracy, learning and wellbeing)
- ▶ Broadening Horizons (providing students in areas of high need with inspiring learning and life experiences, includes excursions, camps, sport, art and music activities)
- ▶ Learning Essentials (resources and services to address barriers to education for children and young people, including emergency food and stationery packs) and access to partnerships with other agencies (e.g. FareShare)

There are currently seventeen Ardoch volunteers at Stonnington Primary School, providing over 300 hours of volunteer time in the classroom each term. Many of these volunteers attend the regular Ardoch professional development training sessions. The volunteer retention rate is the highest for Ardoch partner schools.





Outcomes

There was a synergy between Stonnington Primary School’s priority on student wellbeing to facilitate improving student learning and the Ardoch Youth Foundation’s mission and approach (e.g. to overcome barriers to students’ full participation in education through mobilising volunteers). This synergy led to Ardoch mobilising volunteers in the school’s local area to support children’s education and welfare.

Building capacity to support schools through volunteers is an ongoing process and doesn’t end once volunteers are trained and placed. There is a need for ongoing training, support, communication and management, both by the school and Ardoch Education Partnership Coordinators. From the regular Ardoch professional development training sessions for volunteers on, for example how best to support literacy and numeracy teaching, Ardoch is noticing this has positive benefits. The partnership with Stonnington has helped to develop a more resilient and cohesive community with positive learning and wellbeing outcomes for students. The community also benefits from the positive social and emotional wellbeing outcomes for the volunteers themselves and the opportunities to support the education and raise the aspirations of local students. It increases the knowledge, skills and capacity of volunteers to support the learning and wellbeing of students at Stonnington Primary School. In turn, this enables the volunteers to play a more active role in the school and local community and improve the long-term prospects for the children and young people with whom they work.

In addition, they are also noticing improvement from other evidence and approaches.

Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through... Evidence and approaches, such as
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Social and emotional wellbeing

Students:

- Have positive relationships with at least one adult outside their family.
- Are connected to a positive adult role model through regular volunteer support at the school.
- Talk in class and with volunteers about their future aspirations and expectations.
- Show improved competence in literacy and numeracy.
- Show improved attendance, particularly those with previously poor attendance rates.



continued





Examples include

Improving	What might help you notice whether improvements are being made? Through... Evidence and approaches, such as
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Community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers believe they are more skilled and confident as a result of Ardoch’s professional learning and training, as reflected in their feedback to the annual survey of volunteers.• Shifts in a volunteer’s experience and their perceptions of their impact and their level of engagement in the school/ kindergarten, through volunteer pulse checks’ mid-year, a survey at the end of each academic year and exit interviews volunteers• Numbers of volunteers and the time they have contributed, captured through attendance sheets at each host setting.• Volunteer retention rates.• Greater local community engagement in the school (e.g. peer-to-peer activities with students from Presentation College Windsor and FareShare providing fruit and other food, both originally facilitated by Ardoch with relationships managed by the school).
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Volunteers believe they are more skilled and confident

School leadership	<p>Through Ardoch’s regular planning and review meetings with the school leadership and a mid- and end-of-year survey of staff, school staff are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilising and retaining skilled volunteers to support children’s education.• Showing greater expertise in tailoring community resources to meet their school’s identified needs.• Accessing additional services for students through Ardoch’s facilitation that they otherwise did not know about or have the time or skills to investigate (e.g. FareShare)
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Lessons learned

Evaluate: We developed a program logic framework to assist us evaluate our impact. This has helped us to clarify for Ardoch the outcomes we are seeking from our work with schools and communities. In relation to short-term outcomes, we focus on participatory action research approaches, such as cyclical outcomes-based planning, observing and reflecting, including stakeholder feedback. Indicators of long-term impact are monitored through year-on-year shifts in student, family, school and community behaviour and educational progress sourced from the school’s data.

