

Mooroolbark East Primary conquers the paper mountain with GradeXpert

ET Staff

Mooroolbark East Primary School in leafy outer eastern Mooroolbark, 30 km as the crow flies from Melbourne's CBD, has a student population of 575 in 24 grades and four special classes from Foundation to Year 6. And the total keeps growing as young families, attracted by affordable homes, move into the area.

A paper-based records system had been used until 24 months ago when Assistant Principal Brant Kennedy started a search for a digital system to replace the always-growing paper mountain.

He says: "I was looking for a better way of tracking students' progress. We wanted an all round digital system that would record students' results, attendance, teacher notes, parent conversations and so on... a tool that would be easily accessible by teachers and administration staff.

He selected GradeXpert, starting off across all grades with individual learning plans, followed by student notes. Six months later, when users were comfortable with the program, the attendance module was implemented to make marking the class roll a task that could be accomplished in moments.

At the start of this year, when the Victorian Department of Education announced that Quick Vic, the department-endorsed reporting system, would no longer be available free for schools to use, Mooroolbark East Primary decided that it was time to move across to GradeXpert's report writing module, designing report formats based on the program's easily modified templates.

We have absolutely everything on GradeXpert now," Kennedy says. "Previously it was just all paperwork and not much tracking at all, now we have mountains of data. All of our individual learning plans, student support groups, learner profile, notes, NAPLAN data and reports are there; it's so simple to generate hand-up notes at the end of the school year.

"Like many schools these days, we have quite a number of students with additional needs and medical conditions and GradeXpert keeps us on top with indicators to identify these students, along with strategies to assist them. As well, when a student leaves the school we can print off a complete history of the student's academic progress, behaviour and needs if requested.

"And data security is excellent. Access levels can be managed so confidential data, like family



"We use it for reports, attendance, notes, student support groups, individual learning plans ... pretty much all of our tracking. It's been fantastic for our school."

Brant Kennedy, Assistant Principal

background, can only be accessed by people who need to know. Files can be accessed but not deleted.

"Everything the teachers need is there on their laptops so they can work at home and upload [the file] and synchronise when they come into school in the morning."

Recently released GradeXpert Ver 8.1 includes improvements suggested by users since Ver 8 was released. There are several significant upgrades in the report writing module; improved stability; faster operation; more intuitive interfaces; improved file synchronisation processes; and more customisation options. As well, users now have online access to many



helpful videos and can participate in weekly Wednesday webinars.

And Mooroolbark East Primary can rightfully take credit for suggesting several of the refinements. Brant Kennedy says: "After we finished our reports, I asked our teachers to comment on what they liked and didn't like. I sent their suggestions through to GradeXpert and I'm happy to say that a number of our suggestions have been included in the new version.

"GradeXpert always listens and responds promptly. I have recommended it to several schools in our area ...it is a great program."

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