Cultivating agricultural knowledge

**TIMBOON**

By CLARE QUIRK

WHEN preps arrive at Timboon P-12 School many come with a mountain of agricultural knowledge.

The school has worked hard to build on that knowledge and has been nominated for a statewide award as a result. It is a finalist in two categories of the Victorian Education Excellence Awards 2013 for its Timboon Agriculture Project.

School principal Rosalie Moorfield said about 70 per cent of students who attended the school came from farms or had parents who worked in agriculture.

"Many come as five-year-olds with a mountain of knowledge about dairying and agriculture," she said. "We want to build on the knowledge they already have. What we're trying to do is value-add.

"We know kids coming here already have knowledge and we want to enhance that, especially in maths and science."

Ms Moorfield said under the Timboon Agriculture Project, students work and prepare calves, including looking after their nutrition.

"We are focused on providing our students not only with an excellent education, but also the skills, knowledge and opportunities to choose from a diverse range of career pathways," she said.

"Academic excellence is supported by opportunities to apply that learning in the real world, not just the classroom."

Ms Moorfield acknowledged the partnership with WestVic Dairy, the funding support of the Gardiner Foundation and the generosity and enthusiasm of many farmers, agricultural service providers, community organisations and individuals. The school has been nominated for the Outstanding Partnerships with Families and Communities award, along with Huntly Primary School and Nagambie Primary School.

It has also been nominated for the News Australia Outstanding Curriculum Innovation award, up against Warrnambool East Primary School's Inspiring Young Scientists project and Bendigo Secondary Senior College's VCE virtual world.

Winners will be announced at a dinner on May 17.

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