

2. Peer Review Report Executive Summary (published on school's website)

2.1 School Context

Skipton Primary School (SPS) is situated in the Western District of Victoria, approximately 45 kilometres west of Ballarat. The town and district has a population of about 1000 and is largely agricultural.

The school buildings comprise a Building the Education Revolution multi-purpose space, the original school building and an additional wing housing the administration and three classrooms. The grounds include hard court surfaces, an oval and large playground.

The Skipton kindergarten is across the road and most students are enrolled from the kindergarten. Enrolments have increased from 72 in 2012 to 103 in 2017. Two school buses transport students from the local district to school. The school supports students through the Program for Students with a Disability (PSD).

The workforce at SPS consists of 11.4 staff, including nine teachers, three education support (ES) staff and the principal.

The school curriculum has been based on the Australian Curriculum (AusVELS) with classroom teachers responsible for the core program and specialist teachers for Library, Science, Sustainability, Music, Chinese, and (recently) Art. The school has transitioned to the Victorian Curriculum for 2017. The school has initiated a 'Healthy Eating School' and 'Go for Your Life' award accreditations. In 2015 the school won first prize in a national 'Nude Food Day' competition run by Nutrition Australia.

SPS has also been part of a 'Goldfields Partnership' for three years; a partnership with two larger schools in Ballarat: Miners Rest and Canadian Lead. They have shared professional development and undertaken initiatives such the curriculum focus on digital literacy and coding.

SPS has a camps program that is sponsored by a local trust, the Mackinnon Trust.

2.2 Summary of the School's Performance

2.2.1 Summary of the School's Performance against the Previous Strategic Plan

Student Learning

The school aimed to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes across the school with a focus on years prep to three. The panel agreed that the school had improved literacy and numeracy outcomes although the desired standard was not achieved in all areas.

The target to increase the number of students achieving in the top two bands of National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in reading, writing, spelling a numeracy to 45% by 2015 was not achieved although a third of students or more were achieving in this range. By 2016, the target was achieved in year 3 reading, writing and spelling. The target to decrease the percentage of students at or below the national minimum standard to 15% was met for year 3 writing and numeracy and year 5 reading, writing and numeracy. By 2016, the target was achieved in all areas excepting year 5 spelling.

The panel agreed that the key improvement strategies were; the formation of teacher professional learning teams to share expertise and implement common teaching approaches and the introduction of a literacy intervention program and a problem based maths program. Other strategies identified by the panel were the training of staff in the literacy leader course, the development of student learning goals and consistent school-wide assessment practices.

Student Engagement and Wellbeing

The panel agreed that the school had achieved its goal to provide a stimulating learning environment that fostered student wellbeing.

The targets related to increasing the mean score for student safety and classroom behaviour on the Student Attitudes to School (SATS) survey results was reached. The school maintained a high level of response for all variables with all results in the fourth quartile. The panel concluded that high scores on the staff and parent opinion survey and attendance data also demonstrated that the school had achieved this goal.

Strategies that the panel agreed had contributed to success were; the establishment of the school-wide wellbeing program, the formation of a wellbeing team that included staff and parents and the adoption of school values that formed the basis of a consistent behavioural expectations for the school. The panel concluded that a factor in the high level of motivation of students was the provision of a range of interest based program for students.

Pathways and Transitions

The review panel determined that the goal to provide positive transitions and learning pathways for all students was achieved.

The Parent Opinion survey showed the transition factor was consistently high and above the target score. Student Attitude to School Survey data for the past four years has rated school connectedness in the fourth quartile. Attendance rates have been above state mean over the past four years.

The panel agreed that the partnership between the school, community and the kindergarten was significant in achieving successful transitions and that structures such as mixed aged classes, whole-school events and team teaching developed a shared knowledge and responsibility for every student.

2.2.2 Summary of the considerations for the next Strategic Plan

After consideration of the school's performance over the past four years and the factors that enabled or inhibited its progress, two key improvement areas were proposed by the panel as considerations for the next Strategic Plan.

Building Practice Excellence

Evidence that led the panel to make this recommendation related to the school not achieving all the targets for student learning achievement in literacy and numeracy although it was agreed that improvement had occurred, particularly in years prep to three. The panel attributed improvement to the development of team practices in which teachers worked together to analyse student learning data to inform future planning and share expertise, the introduction of a literacy intervention program and the development of problem solving tasks in maths.

The panel identified the key improvement strategy as the development of whole school practices and processes including:

- a sequential curriculum plan identifying essential learning skills
- a whole school professional learning plan
- common formative assessment tasks
- use of student cohort learning data to develop pre-tests that inform individual student goal planning, teaching interventions and learning growth assessments
- build leadership capacity to lead improvement
- observation and feedback to teachers regarding agreed practices.

Intellectual engagement and self awareness

The panel considered evidence of student learning data that showed higher levels of growth for students achieving below or at expectation than those who were achieving above expected level as relevant to making this recommendation.

The school demonstrated high levels of student wellbeing and engagement in learning with results for the Student Attitude to School survey being in the fourth quartile. The panel identified the key improvement strategies over the past four years as the establishment of student learning goals, individual student conferencing, high expectations for all students and multi-age groupings that enabled all staff to know all students.

The panel identified the following key improvement strategies to increase the degree to which students have choice and self-determination in their learning:

- collection of rigorous formal and informal evidence of learning to target teaching
- planning for challenging learning tasks for all students, particularly high achieving students that engage students in higher order thinking and problem solving
- development of assessment rubrics to inform planning and evaluate learning growth that are accessible for teachers and students
- development of student self-assessment rubrics
- track and report student learning growth as well as achievement
- increase the frequency of high-impact teaching strategies such as questioning, explicit teaching to learning intentions, assessment criteria and a common lesson structure.

2.2.3 Next steps

The review panel believes that Skipton Primary School is well placed to implement its next stage of school improvement. Further improvement will occur as a deeper understanding of FISO is gained and the work currently being undertaken to develop effective professional learning teams to build teacher quality and increase student voice and agency in learning is strengthened.