

Peer Review Report – 2017 Cycle

Southmoor Primary School

South Eastern Victoria Region

School number:	4910
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Peer Review Report Executive Summary

1.1 School Context

Southmoor Primary School, established in 1963, is situated in the bayside suburb of Moorabbin, 21 kilometres south-east of Melbourne. The 2017 enrolment of 426 students is drawn from the surrounding area, with a substantial proportion attending the school from further afield. The school population reflects the characteristics of the local community with a diversity of socio – economic and cultural backgrounds.

The school is located on five hectares of spacious, maintained grounds, featuring a native garden setting, with water and garden features, playground areas, water and energy saving initiatives and organic vegetable, fruit and herb production.

The 2017 staffing profile consisted of 29.7 full time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff and a with a support staff of 11.2 FTE. Teaching staff include two Principal class and 35 Teachers.

The school's curriculum framework incorporated the eight learning areas¹ required by the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 aligned with the new Victorian Curriculum. In addition, a range of extra curriculum and other opportunities was provided to students. These included learning opportunities within and beyond the classrooms, including the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, Digi Tech – FabLab Central, Design Tech – Design FabLab, Volunteer Program, Reggio Emilia inspired Prep Program, Student Leadership Program, Program for Students with Disabilities and an extensive outdoor learning precinct.

1.2 Summary of the School's Performance against the previous School Strategic Plan (SSP)

A range of evidence examined by the review panel revealed that Southmoor Primary School was a very effective school – achieving improved student learning, engagement, and wellbeing outcomes during the 2015-2017 period.

The panel confirmed that the various teacher judgement and National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) performance indicators provided clear evidence that the school had realised the SSP goal to maintain student learning outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy.

The panel determined that the school attained the target to improve NAPLAN Year 3 to 5 Relative Growth in Reading, Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation and Writing. Approximately two or more in every five students (≥ 40 per cent), on average from 2014 to 2017, achieved high relative learning growth in all NAPLAN literacy dimensions, a rate far superior to the state twenty-five per cent benchmark. A similar pattern of high performance was also recorded for Numeracy learning growth. The average percentages of students making high relative learning growth (2012-2016) for Reading and Numeracy were 'well above' the figures recorded for similar schools.

Panel discussions of the percentage of Year 3 and 5 students assessed in various bands of testing in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) revealed the following patterns:

- Virtually every Year 3 and 5 student from 2014 through 2016 was assessed as being above the National Minimum Standards in all English dimensions and Numeracy.
- The 2016 and four-year average (2013-16) percentages of Year 3 and 5 students in the top three NAPLAN Bands in Reading and Numeracy for their year level were greater than one standard deviation above levels predicted by the DET for the school – a statistically significant result, and indicator of very effective teaching and learning practices.

¹ English, mathematics, sciences, humanities and social sciences, the arts, languages, health and physical education, information and communication technology, and design and technology.

- The percentages of Year 3 and 5 students in the top two NAPLAN Bands for their year level in Numeracy, Reading and Writing trended upward during the SSP, with the average percentages (2012-2016) for all three dimensions 'well above' similar schools at both Year levels.

The panel confirmed that results on the student Attitudes to School Survey (AtSS) revealed progress was made toward realising the SSP goal to improve student engagement through strengthening student voice. Anecdotal evidence discussed by the panel confirmed this view. The 2015-2018 School Strategic Plan (SSP) contained student outcomes targets to be attained by the end of 2018. The review occurred mid-2017, and in this context, the panel confirmed that progress had been made toward attaining the student engagement targets at the time of the review. The measures of cognitive engagement in the Teaching and Learning category of the AtSS were consistently strong and improved during the strategic plan period. All six factors recorded scores of four or better on the survey's five-point agreement scale.

The AtSS results provided evidence that the school made progress toward achieving the goal to maintain the inclusive, cohesive and positive learning environment to support the social, emotional, physical, developmental and academic needs of all students. The panel agreed that clear progress had been made toward attaining the target to reduce unapproved and unexplained absences from an average of 4.94 days per student in 2014 to 4.0 days or less in 2018.

1.3 Summary of main findings and considerations for the next School Strategic Plan

The panel acknowledged that a strong basis for even further improvement in student outcomes existed at the school. School leadership had responded to changing contexts and had created a highly visible focus on building a positive education culture, made decisions, and adapted strategies and resource allocations to achieve the good to great to excellent mantra. The 2016 School Staff Survey provided strong evidence of a collaborative approach to improvement across the school.

The school's Pre-Review Self-Evaluation (PRSE), identification of unfinished business from the previous strategic plan, assessment of the school's stage on the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) continuum, and the review panel discussions confirmed that future endeavours should consolidate and build on the work completed during the previous SSP and continued into 2017. The panel confirmed that the school had aligned practice with FISO dimensions.

Student learning

The panel suggested that a goal to accelerate the learning growth of every student in English and Mathematics be considered for inclusion in the new strategic plan. It was also suggested that SSP targets designed to measure progress toward achievement of this goal be included. A key target would be aimed at ensuring every deemed capable student makes at least one Victorian Curriculum level of learning progress in each school year during the strategic plan period in the English Language Modes and Mathematics Strands. Other suggested targets focused on Writing and emphasised increasing the percentages of students performing above expected levels and the school continuing to attain high rates of relative learning growth as students moved through the school.

The panel's considerations of strategies designed to achieve these learning goal and targets were based on the rationale that if the school's agreed personalised teaching and learning model is consistently embedded in every classroom then high quality teaching will occur and every student will demonstrate the targeted learning progress. The view formed by the panel that key improvement strategies designed to achieve these ends included:

- Consistently embed agreed whole-school personalised approaches to literacy and numeracy teaching and learning
- Continue to use teacher teams and other collaborative professional learning approaches to support teachers in building capacity to consistently implement the school's personalised approaches
- Further develop distributed instructional leadership that guides, supports and directs improvement in teacher practice and student learning

Student engagement

The review panel suggested a goal for the new SSP was to develop curious, critical and creative thinking students who are confident and digitally capable problem-solvers, and who demonstrate learner agency. Based on the rationale that students who are cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally engaged with schooling will improve

their learning outcomes, the panel suggested the following strategies:

- Consistently embed an agreed whole school approach to 21st century learning that incorporates STEM and 21CLD approaches, Critical and Creative Thinking, and digital learning technologies.
- Activate student voice, leadership and agency in own learning.

Student wellbeing

The review panel suggested a goal for the new SSP was to develop resilient students who display growth mindsets, behaviours and attitudes that reflect the school values. Based on the rationale that children with higher resiliency are more likely to thrive in learning and achieve greater educational outcomes, the panel also suggested the school continue to develop a consistent whole-school approach to health, wellbeing and inclusion.