

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

2.1 School Context

Clunes Primary School located in the township of Clunes, was established in 1875. It is thirty-two kilometres north of Ballarat, at the far western end of the Hepburn Shire. Clunes Primary School is part of the Department of Education and Training (DET) South Western Victorian Region and Central Highlands area.

The school's roots can be traced back to various Clunes schools established in 1857 that were transformed and amalgamated into state school number 1552 in 1875. The school was recast in various educational roles during its long history of educational provision to the town and surrounding areas. South Clunes Primary School (number 136) was amalgamated with Clunes Primary School in 1892. School number 1552 also served as a training school, and a Higher Elementary School from 1911 to 1955. Its founding principal went on to become Inspector General of Schools and Secretary of the Victorian Education Department. It currently boasts the original heritage school buildings, complemented by classroom additions from the early 2000s and a purpose-built Building Education Revolution complex constructed in 2011.

Other facilities include a multi-purpose hall with a kitchen, an art/craft room, resource rooms, functionally equipped flexible learning spaces, library and administration areas. The grounds are extensive, with two adventure play areas; the junior, re-shaded at the end of 2015 and the senior area to be all weather shaded in 2017. The school has two ovals, a multi-purpose court, various asphalt games areas, vegetable garden and landscaped outdoor learning areas.

The school's 2016 enrolment was 143 students arranged into a Junior Unit (Foundation-Year 2) and a Senior Unit (Year 3-6) with composite groupings this year across all year levels. The enrolment's average Student Family Occupation (SFO) index was 0.65 between 2012 and 2015, above the state median of 0.51 for Victorian Schools. This indicated that, on average, the socio-economic status of the families at the school based on the school parents' occupations was in the low-mid category of all schools. The SFO index declined from 2014 to 2016, indicating a slight change in the enrolment socio-economic status mix.

The school had a complement of 11.8 equivalent full time (EFT) staff, consisting of one Principal Class, 8.9 Teacher Class and 2.9 Education Support Staff. The teaching mix combined a Graduate with Classroom Teacher 1 and 2 classifications. Commonwealth funding provided the support for a Chaplain for 1.5 days per week during the strategic plan period.

The school's curriculum framework incorporated the eight learning areas² required by the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 and was being aligned with the new Victorian Curriculum. In addition, a broad range of curriculum and extra opportunities was provided to students. These included specialist programs in sustainability, Visual Arts, Physical Education, a bi-annual Musical and Japanese. A feature was the extensive vegetable garden and regular learn to cook with fresh produce cooking program. Students also participated in Sporting Schools activities and the RACV Energy Breakthrough and had access to an. A whole school values based approach to positive student well-being underpinned curriculum.

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

A range of evidence reveals that Clunes Primary School achieved improved student learning, engagement, and wellbeing outcomes during the 2013-2016 strategic plan period.

The School Strategic Plan (SSP) student achievement goal was to improve individual learning outcomes for all students with a focus on literacy and numeracy. The review panel confirmed that the various teacher judgement and National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) performance indicators revealed measurable progress was made toward realising this goal. The same indicators revealed that the SSP targets for student learning were achieved in most English language modes and Mathematics strands:

- The target to increase the percentages of Prep to Year 6 students assessed with A or B grades was achieved in the three English language modes, and in the Number and Algebra strand in Mathematics.

² English, mathematics, sciences, humanities and social sciences, the arts, languages, health and physical education, information and communication technology, and design and technology.

- The target to reduce the percentage of Year 3 students at or below the National Minimum Standard (NMS) was achieved at Year 3 for Reading. The Writing percentage was consistently zero per cent of students from 2013 to 2016.
- The target to increase the percentage of Year 3 students in the two highest NAPLAN bands was achieved for Reading and Numeracy when measured from 2013 through 2016. The Writing percentage increased 2013 through 2015.

Various DET performance indicators also showed the school results were generally in the range predicted by the DET, and on some indicators, above that range. An example of the latter was the percentage of Year 5 students assessed in the top three NAPLAN bands of testing in Reading. This indicator showed the 2015 and the four year average percentages were greater than levels predicted by DET for the school – a statistically significant result.

Scores on the student Attitudes to School Survey (AtSS) improved during the period reviewed. The measures of cognitive engagement in the Teaching and Learning category of the 2015 and 2016 AtSS were relatively strong, with all but one factor recording scores above four on the survey's five-point agreement scale. The Student Motivation measure was consistently high, with scores of 4.21 in 2014, 4.38 in 2015, and 4.52 in 2016. The panel confirmed that the improved AtSS scores and attendance performance indicators revealed progress was made toward realising the SSP goal to motivate and engage students in their learning.

The DET 2015 Performance Summary (including Intake Adjusted Charts) for Clunes Primary School report revealed that the 2015 scores for Connectedness to School and Student Safety were in the range predicted. Although not targeted or included in a SSP goal, the panel considered these results were evidence that the school had achieved progress toward the Education State goal of 'Happy, Healthy and Resilient Kids'.

The 2016 School Staff Survey provided evidence to the panel of a positive culture and factors that had enabled improved student learning. All the survey's School Climate, Professional Learning and School Leadership module measure scores were substantially above the means for all primary schools. This indicated strong absolute and comparative levels of collective responsibility and collective focus on student learning.

The panel view of a positive school culture was corroborated by the Parent Opinion Survey results during 2014 through 2016. Scores for School Climate, Student Engagement, and Student Behaviour measures in the survey were consistently above the average for all primary schools during this period.

2.3 Summary of the considerations for the next Strategic Plan

Student learning

Other patterns within the overall performance in the NAPLAN student learning data highlighted extending more students in some areas of Mathematics and in Writing as initial opportunities for further improvement in the next School Strategic Plan, particularly as student progress from Year 3 to Year 5.

The panel suggested that a goal to optimise the learning growth of every student with a focus on English, Mathematics, and Science 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. One target would be aimed at ensuring every student makes greater than one Victorian Curriculum level of learning progress in each school year during the strategic plan period in English, Mathematics, and Science. Another suggested target was to increase the percentages of students performing above expected standards.

The panel's considerations of strategies designed to achieve the learning goal and targets were based on the rationale that if the school's agreed teaching and learning model was embedded in every classroom then consistently high quality teaching will occur and every student will demonstrate the targeted learning progress. The view formed by the panel that existing strategies would be effective when fully implemented during the next strategic plan period. These strategies included:

- Review the school vision statement.
- Continue to develop agreed English, Mathematics, and Science models of differentiated teaching practice.
- Build teacher capacity to implement the models of practice.

Student engagement

The review panel suggested a goal for the new SSP was to develop creative and critical thinkers who are engaged in and connected to their learning, and who make positive contributions to the community.

Based on the rationale that students who are cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally engaged with schooling will improve their learning outcomes, the panel suggested strategies designed to ensure students have an active role in the school approach to teaching and learning, to embed an effective Junior School Council and school wide system that promotes and enables Student Voice, and to continue strategic partnerships with community organisations and businesses to improve student opportunities and outcomes and raise the school profile might be further incorporated

into the curriculum be included in the SSP. It was also suggested that targets to increase the percentage of positive responses to the student survey Stimulating Learning measure and further increases in attendance rates be included in the SSP.

Student wellbeing

The review panel suggested a goal for the new SSP was to develop resilient, problem-solving students who display 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 refine and implement agreed whole school approach to student wellbeing and resilience. It was also suggested that targets to increase the percentage of positive responses to the student survey Connectedness to Peers, Student Safety, and Classroom Behaviour measures be included in the SSP.

2.4 Next steps

The panel's opinion was that the school is very well placed for its next strategic plan period. The review was an opportunity for the school community to recognise its achievements. Observations by members of the review panel were that the school's current directions should lead the school to be optimistic about future gains. The panel confirmed the clear directions articulated by the leadership group.