

School Review

Our school review was completed earlier this term with the school commended on many areas highlighted by:

- Our whole school literacy and numeracy strategies
- Our excellent student achievement data
- Our teacher PD and coaching program to enable each teacher to be their best
- Our high levels of parent and community involvement
- Our positive school tone reflected in both parent and student surveys
- Our strong leadership structure
- Our amazing extra curricula activities
- Our sense of enjoyment, fun and inclusiveness as a school

The review also looked at targets set 4 years ago in our last strategic plan. We were very aspirational when setting these targets around, high relative growth according to NAPLAN, student survey data, transition data from our parent surveys and NAPLAN band data. All goals were achieved through the 4 year period and those that weren't were missed by very small margins but major growth was recorded in all areas. A summary of the review conducted by peer principals, reviewers, School Councillors and staff is available on our website. www.elwoodprimary.vic.edu.au

The next step is to write our next strategic plan which will guide the next four years at Elwood primary School.

Peer Review Report Executive Summary

2.1 School Context

Elwood Primary School is an inner bayside school located in the City of Port Phillip and was established in 1917. The majority of students are drawn from nearby areas with the school enforcing a neighbourhood boundary in 2010. The school forms part of an education precinct including a Maternal Health, Childcare and Kindergarten Centre, Elwood Primary School and Elwood College.

The school population reflects the diverse range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The school has grown from 551 in 2009 to 807 in 2017. The Foundation enrolment has doubled since 2005 and is 135 in 2017. The student family occupation (SFO) index is low at 0.2113, and below the state average of 0.5126.

The staffing profile is comprised of teachers with a range of teaching experience. There are 35 classes in 2017 with four shared classes. Seven teachers make up the specialist team, three integration aides work with students on the Program for Students with Disabilities and there are five education support staff in the office. The leadership team consists of the Principal, two Assistant Principals and two Learning Coaches, four team leaders and a specialist and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) leader who are all leading teachers.

The school's programs reflect the focus on the foundations of learning as well as the wellbeing of students, and are designed to assist in developing skills for life-long learning. The values which form the basis of the school's actions are empathy, resilience, respect, integrity and responsibility. They also incorporate organisation, persistence, getting along and confidence, all of which aim to promote resilience in students.

Professional learning is delivered through a teaching and learning coaching model for all teachers in literacy and numeracy. A developmental curriculum is implemented from Foundation to Year 6 with Years 3-6 having a major focus on educational research projects.

Specialist teaching areas include music and performing arts, visual arts, physical education and sport, library, ICT, reading intervention, literacy enhancement and Indonesian. An outside school hours care program is located on the school site, along with a holiday program. A kitchen garden program is conducted with all students in Years 3 and 4. The aim of the program is food education and students experience the links between growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing fresh, seasonal produce.

All original and new buildings and learning spaces have been modernised to provide flexible classroom spaces to support the curriculum programs and learning needs of students. The outdoor environment includes basketball courts, an oval, a play pod and numerous other play spaces.

2.2 Summary of the School's Performance

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

Student Achievement

The 2013-16 School Strategic Plan for Elwood Primary School set a goal to maximise student learning across all curriculum areas, with a focus on literacy and numeracy. The first target was related to the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results and the expectation that 40 per cent of students in Year 5 would achieve a high relative gain in reading and numeracy. The second target stated that 90 per cent of students in Year 3 and Year 5 would achieve above band 4 and band 6 respectively in NAPLAN.

The panel agreed that the school met the first target for reading with 40.5 per cent of Year 5 students achieving high relative growth, but did not meet the target for numeracy, with 34.7 per cent making high relative growth in 2016. The target was achieved in numeracy in 2015. The panel acknowledged that the second target was not achieved but in 2016 all NAPLAN areas were in the low to mid 80 per cent range in Year 3 and low to mid 80 per cent range in reading, numeracy and grammar and punctuation for Year 5. Writing and spelling results were well below the expected target of 90 per cent.

The review panel also discussed AusVELS data over the period of the strategic plan and compared the percentages of students achieving above the expected level in English and mathematics domains as determined by teacher judgements. Panel members agreed that teacher judgments showed an increasing trend for a greater percentage of students achieving an A or B as well as a decreasing trend for students receiving a D or E rating over the period of the strategic plan.

Student Engagement and Wellbeing

The Strategic Plan set a goal to improve student engagement and wellbeing. The target was to improve the percentile rankings of all variables of the student Attitudes to School Survey (ATSS) to above the third quartile. The review panel found that in the 2016 ATSS data all variables were above the third quartile except for classroom behaviour and student motivation which were just below.

The review panel agreed that although the target was not met, all variables had improved over the three year period of the strategic plan.

Student Transition and Pathways

Elwood Primary School set a goal to ensure a positive transition experience for students as they moved into, through and out of the school. The target set was for the transition variable score in the parent opinion survey to be at or above 6.00.

The review panel noted that although the transitions variable increased steadily throughout the strategic plan period from 5.56 in 2014 to 5.97 in 2016 it was just below the target of 6.0.

2.2.2 Summary of the considerations for the next Strategic Plan

The panel agreed that the following items should be considered for the next Strategic Plan: Continue to build teacher capacity in the school philosophy and embed a model of continuous assessment and reporting to parents.

The review panel acknowledged that the initiative of building practice excellence was a focus for the next strategic plan because of the ongoing changeover of staff due to the growth of the school. The school had a clearly defined philosophy which was developed in 2012 and it needed to be revisited to ensure all staff understood why they were teaching the strategies the school had adopted. The support for staff was facilitated by a comprehensive coaching model that met the needs of teams and individual teachers. The second area of focus was the alignment of reporting with the whole school assessment schedule, to ensure parents were receiving the most accurate and up-to-date information about their child's learning. Current practices allowed parent access to teachers at all times but the panel agreed that a more structured process would further enhance the quality of reporting to parents.

Increase opportunities for higher levels of student voice through cognitive engagement, challenge, self-directed inquiry and deep thinking.

The review panel explored the current opportunities available to students to have a voice in their learning. Parents identified leadership roles, choice of lunchtime activities and the education research projects as some examples. Students spoke about choosing who they could work with, sharing their learning with the class and the roles of students in the developmental curriculum in Foundation to Year 2. Discussion about student awareness of where they are at in their learning and what they needed to learn next identified that students can articulate the actions for learning but not the qualities of a good learner. The review panel recommended that the school should audit current opportunities for student voice, investigate and explore what best practice is regarding student voice and develop a high level of understanding of what student voice would look like at Elwood Primary School.

2.2.3 Next steps

Elwood Primary School has a strong leadership team as well as processes and structures in place to build teacher capacity to provide a comprehensive and engaging curriculum for all students and to maximise learning. The learning environment will be further enhanced with a school focus on increased opportunities for higher levels of student voice through cognitive engagement, challenge, self-directed inquiry and deep thinking.