

School Review Report

2022 cycle

Willowmavin Primary School

3479

North-Eastern Victoria Region

Validation Day: Monday 27 February 2023

Fieldwork Day/s: Friday 10 March 2023

Final Panel Day: Thursday 6 April 2023

Strategic Plan 2018-2022

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1. Public section

| 1.1 School Context | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Location and history | <p>Willowmavin Primary School is located in the Shire of Mitchell near the town of Kilmore, approximately 70 kilometres to the north of the Melbourne Central Business District.</p> <p>The school was founded in 1904.</p> |
| School facilities | <p>The school has one main building with three classroom spaces and a large open area that houses the school library. There are an additional two small double demountable buildings comprising four classrooms used for specialist subjects. Another demountable building contains the school administration, principal's office and staffroom.</p> <p>The school grounds comprise an undercover basketball court, an adventure playground area and smaller spaces with a variety of play equipment for students.</p> |
| Enrolments | 45 students were enrolled at the school at the time of the review. |
| SFO and SFOE | The Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index was 0.36 in 2022. |
| Staff profile | The staffing profile of Willowmavin Primary School includes a principal, a 0.2 full time equivalent (FTE) learning specialist, a 0.2 FTE mental health leader, 3.4 FTE classroom teachers, and a 0.6 FTE business manager. |
| Curriculum | The school provides a curriculum framework differentiated to meet student needs. Specialist subjects include a language (Italian), the arts, health and physical education, and <i>Discovery</i> (an inquiry/science-based subject). |
| Additional information | <p>The school has three multi-age classrooms. One classroom has students from Foundation to Year 1, another has students in Years 2 and 3, and the third, students in Years 4, 5 and 6.</p> <p>The school is part of the Victorian Professional Learning Communities (PLC) initiative.</p> <p>The school's wellbeing program is supported by the mental health leader.</p> |

1.2 School and Community Highlights

Highlight 1

Creating a positive, supportive, respectful learning environment.

FISO2.0 Core Element: Support

The Panel agreed that a key highlight of the strategic planning cycle was the creation of a respectful, safe and positive learning environment supportive of all students. Key activities undertaken to achieve this included:

- Continuing the implementation of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) program
- Agreeing the school values of; *Be Your Best, Respect, Resilience, and Safe* in a collaborative process with students, families and staff
- Creating, documenting and displaying matrices in every classroom to develop shared staff and student understanding of expected behaviours
- Establishing a schoolwide rewards system to acknowledge positive behaviour, including a student of the week award
- Commencing the documentation of a social and emotional curriculum to build student capability to manage their social and emotional wellbeing
- Identifying and engaging senior students in leadership roles
- Developing a student survey to obtain student feedback to continually improve the school.

The Panel found evidence to support these activities and of processes that contributed to establishing the safe and respectful learning environment across the school. Classrooms appeared calm and orderly with students engaged in their learning tasks. All school documents reinforced the school values.

Students appeared friendly towards one another. They spoke with confidence to Panel members and demonstrated a shared understanding of the school values and behavioural expectations. They talked about Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) lessons to help develop their social, emotional and positive relationship skills.

Students described in detail the processes associated with the school's rewards system and how it promoted positive student behaviour. They said they felt safe at school.

Parents and carers said students all knew one another and interacted well across age groups, with older students caring for the younger ones. They described staff as nurturing, encouraging, and focused on student wellbeing.

Staff reaffirmed the strong focus on wellbeing; building student confidence and a positive mindset, and described student behaviour as a strength of the school. They said a sense of calm had been established across the school and relationships between students and teachers were respectful.

Data shared with the Panel affirmed the observations of key stakeholders, with a reduction in the number of major and minor behavioural incidents over the strategic planning period.

Highlight 2

Establishing a consistent approach to teaching and learning in writing

FISO2.0 Core Element: Teaching and Learning

The Panel agreed that a second highlight of the strategic planning period related to establishing an agreed approach to the teaching and learning of writing.

The Panel determined that the school developed an evidence-based instructional model for writing to promote consistency of high quality practice. School leaders attended specialised literacy training and conducted targeted whole staff professional learning. Time was invested in the planning and structuring

of lessons. Resources and documentation were created/purchased to support learning. These included classroom posters and booklets for student reference. Peer observation feedback processes were established. These were focused on specific aspects of the model to promote consistency and the continuous improvement of quality teaching practices.

Parents spoke to the Panel of classroom structures and routines that supported student learning, including students with additional needs. Teachers expressed pride in the work completed and the foundation established that would be used to continue to build quality practice in other areas of learning. Staff opinion data showed improvement over the planning cycle in the use of high impact teaching strategies and the application of an agreed pedagogical approach.

Students demonstrated an awareness of the instructional model, of the use of learning intentions and success criteria, and described how they helped them to understand how to be successful in their writing. Teacher judgement data showed improved student growth in reading and writing over the strategic planning period.

Highlight 3

Developing processes to drive continuous improvement across the school

FISO2.0 Core Element: Leadership

The school identified a third highlight in its Pre-Review Self Evaluation (PRSE) report that was validated by the Panel, associated with its efforts to establish an agreed approach to the continuous improvement of teaching practice.

The first of these related to the school adopting the Department's Professional Learning Community PLC approach. This involved:

- Building staff understanding and capability with support from the region's PLC Manager
- The undertaking of formal PLC training
- Establishing PLCs involving all teaching staff
- Developing processes, protocols and documentation to guide the team in undertaking structured improvement cycles within regular PLC meetings.

The school's PLC improvement cycles were informed by student learning data and focused on improving specific elements of teaching practice. A student survey was developed to further inform the process and measure the impact of the improvements made.

In 2022 the school was recognised for its PLC success by being asked to present to other small schools in the region who were completing their core professional learning. Further evidence of the success of the school's PLC approach, noted by the Panel, was the positive feedback and ongoing support provided by the regional PLC coach. This demonstrated an energy and appetite for improvement and maximising opportunities for external support.

The Panel determined that the school's PLC effort led to the development of agreed assessment practices and the development of schoolwide assessment plan.

The school also developed a framework and comprehensive process for professional learning through peer observations and learning walks in classrooms. These practices also helped to promote consistency and support the continuous improvement of teaching practice.

Highlight 4

Community connections

FISO2.0 Core Element: Engagement

A fourth highlight of the SSP period agreed by the Panel related to the school's strong community connection.

The school's focus on relationships with the community appeared to have withstood many of the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic with participation remaining high after the lifting of restrictions. Community events included *Welcome days* and well-attended school working bees. The community was involved in a review of the school values in early 2021. School staff also described to the Panel how community members frequently and spontaneously came into the school to provide help and support.

Students and parents spoke to the Panel of strong relationships and the sense of community. Parents spoke of supportive one-on-one interactions with staff, and said that the school worked in close partnership with families. They described the school as a constant *providing connection to community and seen as a hub in the landscape*. They advised that any issues were responded to and resolved quickly and talked of the effectiveness of school communication processes. These processes allowed increased access and support to the community. They included interactive software systems, regular phone calls and emails. The introduction of software systems allowed staff to regularly inform families of their child's progress, through positive behaviour recognition and the celebration of learning achievements. Each classroom also sent out a termly newsletter to supplement the fortnightly school newsletter. The classroom newsletter outlined learning for the term, key dates and other important information including how families could support home learning and provided resources to assist.

The Panel found that staff and parent opinion data related to community connections had significantly improved across three of the four years of the strategic planning cycle. It agreed that the school community was an inclusive and welcoming one.

1.3 Summary of Key Review Findings

Performance against the School Strategic Plan (SSP) goals and targets

SSP Goal 1: To improve reading, writing and numeracy outcomes for all students.

The 2018–2022 SSP for Willowmavin Primary School set a goal to improve the reading, writing and numeracy outcomes of all students. The Panel found that the school partially met this goal. Of the seven targets, one target was met, five targets were partially met, and one was not met.

SSP Goal 2: To increase student engagement in learning.

The second goal was to increase student engagement in learning. The Panel found the school partially met this goal, with two targets partially met, and two not met.

SSP Goal 3: To improve student wellbeing.

The third goal set by the school was to improve student wellbeing. The Panel found that this goal was also partially met with both targets partially achieved.

Findings against the Terms of Reference Focus Questions

Terms of Reference Focus Question 1: To what extent are data used to differentiate, support, extend and improve the learning and wellbeing of all students?

The Panel determined that the school made progress in agreeing and documenting a planned approach to the assessment of teaching, student learning and wellbeing. The Panel agreed there was opportunity to further develop a whole school approach and to build staff capability in the use of wellbeing and learning data to inform the differentiation of teaching and wellbeing support.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 2: To what extent is student voice and agency a feature of the teaching, learning and daily happenings at Willowmavin Primary School?

The Panel found that the school developed opportunities for students to follow their interests within the curriculum and to have some input to cocreating their wellbeing, learning, and daily school life. The Panel agreed that the school continue to strengthen these processes with particular focus on increasing student ability to monitor their learning progress. Also, in the use of student feedback to increase their involvement in the continuous improvement of learning, wellbeing and the school.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 3: To what extent is the school's pedagogical approach documented and consistently applied across the school?

The Panel found that the school progressed the development of agreed curriculum and schoolwide teaching and learning approaches to literacy. It agreed there was opportunity to further develop the curriculum and teaching and learning practices to cover all areas of learning, to build staff capability and consistency across classrooms. The Panel also recommended that the school fully document its approach to wellbeing to meet the emerging and continuing needs of students.

1.4 Summary of Key Directions for the next School Strategic Plan

The School Review Panel recommends the following key directions for the next School Strategic Plan:

- Improving student learning growth in literacy and numeracy
- Improving student engagement through student voice and agency
- Strengthening the school's approach to student wellbeing.