

2. Priority review report summary (to be published on school's website)

Executive Summary

2.1 School Context

Werrimull P-12 School is located in the Millewa region of far north-west Victoria, seventy-five kilometres west of Mildura. Werrimull P-12 School's motto is 'Striving to Achieve'. The school has nine teaching staff members (6.8 EFT) and six education (4.1 EFT) support staff. The student family occupation (SFO) index is 0.58.

The Milewa Region grows wheat and other dry land crops and many students at the school come from a farming background or heritage. Werrimull and the Millewa region was originally settled in the 1920s under the then government's 'closer settlement scheme'. At its peak in the early days of its settlement the town had a population of over 1000 people and an active rail link to Mildura. As time progressed the farms have become larger and the number of families in the region fewer. Werrimull P-12 remains the only school in the Millewa Region and now also has the management responsibility for the Millewa Preschool located nearby.

In the last decade the region has experienced further population decline that has impacted on the Werrimull P/12 School. The student population at the start of 2015 was 44 students 21 Primary and 23 secondary; this represented a 32% decline in enrolments since the last review in August 2012. During 2015 enrolment has declined to 39 students with a further decline predicted for 2016. Currently the preschool has an enrolment of nine students (with predictions of 14 students in 2016 (

Despite the decline in enrolments Werrimull P/12 has to date been able to maintain a broad range of curriculum options for students in the primary and secondary years. In 2015 students across year 10 to 12 participated in nine Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) studies, Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) Equine studies. Further maths at VCE units 3 and 4 is delivered via a polycom link to Manangatang P-12 College. The Primary school offers well supported small class sizes with a major focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills.

The physical environment of the school is spacious with access to well-maintained classroom and specialist facilities.

2.2 Summary of the School's Performance

Werrimull P/12 school set three goals in its current strategic plan due for completion at the end of 2016. These goals align with the previous Departmental priority areas of student learning, engagement and pathways and transitions. This section summarises the school's performance against these goals.

Given the small and varying size of cohorts any National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results and year level analysis need to be managed carefully. Cohort sizes (number of students represented in the data) are often included in the commentary and represented by the n= symbol.

Student Learning:

The school set a target to have 25% of students across the school achieve in the two higher bands of the NAPLAN across all domains.

The school reached this aggregated target in the 2015 NAPLAN (n=13) for three of the four domains. Where the school did not meet the target, in writing, the 2015 figure is 2 per cent short of the target, which is statistically less than one student. Results in Numeracy showed 61% of the students (n=13) achieved a result in the top two bands. The school also set a target to have all students achieve above the National Minimum Benchmarks. This target was met in Writing and Reading in 2015, but not in Spelling (85%) and Numeracy (93%). Teacher judgments recorded in 2014 against literacy and numeracy domains did not demonstrate the range of assessment grades targeted in the strategic plan, and in the case of secondary literacy, did not reflect data available from the NAPLAN. It is apparent that some teacher judgments tended to plot students into the middle range (a grading of c) of achievement levels.

VCE, VET and VCAL data is on track to meet the 100% completion rate in 2015 as the school did in 2013 and 2014. The VCE all study score for the school across 2013 (N=6) and 2014 (N=4) was clearly above the state mean in both years.

The cohort size for the Primary 2015 NAPLAN was one student in year 3 and two students in year 5. The cohort size makes any trend commentary inappropriate and statistically unreliable. Analysis of teacher-based judgments across the Primary years does suggest that student writing is not as strong as other literacy and numeracy domain areas. For writing, 33% of students received an E or D for writing at the end of semester 2 2014, compared to 22% for reading. For the A and B grades the comparison was 18% for writing and 29% for reading.

Engagement:

The 2015 student Attitudes to School Survey (ATSS) trend data demonstrates conflicting results between the secondary (Year 7 to Year 10) and the surveyed primary section (Year 5 and Year 6) of the school. In the primary sector, the school met the 2016 targets in one domain in 2015, Student Motivation. All other domains were down on 2013 data and below the expected target. Across the secondary sector all domains have trended toward the 2016 target since 2013, with the school reaching the 2016 Student Motivation target in 2015. The data collected from primary students during forums and classroom visits appeared to conflict with the survey findings.

Although the school attendance rate in 2014 is better than the state mean in secondary school and near the state mean in primary school, the school attendance rate has trended down and is currently above the targets set of 9.8 days primary and 9.8 days secondary average absence per child per annum.

Pathways and Transitions:

The school manages four transition periods:

- Home to 3 year old preschool
- Preschool to school
- Primary year 6 to secondary
- Year 7 and middle school to senior pathways.

The school makes a distinct effort to recognise and plan each of the transition stages for students. The parent survey in 2015 saw a trending up of the transition variable in the school cli-

mate section from the 2013 results to now be at the 81st percentile. The set target has been met. The school also met the target of 100% of students exiting to further education and training or full time employment in 2014.

The wide range of subjects possible due to the flexibility of staff at the school and the use of vertical timetabling that joined year levels and ability groups together, was evident during the reviews

2.2.2 Summary of the review findings against the Terms of Reference

This section sets out the key findings of the review against the four key questions making up the terms of reference.

Question 1: To what extent does Werrimull P-12 have a viable P-12 curriculum?

Currently the school offers subjects and studies across a range of curriculum domains. The school can respond to the requirements of the Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority with their current curriculum programs and timetable allocations. The school uses the current staffing resources in a creative way through vertical timetabling and subject grouping. Students consider that the use of polycom technology in VCE Further Mathematics has been successful in 2015. This use of technology has enhanced the viability of the curriculum. In the Primary sector small class sizes has enhanced the school's capacity to deliver more personalised learning.

The school is well equipped with specialist study areas in Science, Multi Media, Materials Technology, Food Technology, and Sport and Physical Education.

The school community is concerned that the ongoing drop in student enrolments will eventually affect the viability of curriculum offerings at the secondary level of the school. A declining global budget and less staff due to a further decline in numbers will seriously affect the viability of current student programs and pathways.

Question 2: To what extent does the school engage its students and provide opportunities for student voice?

The ATSS data indicates a distinct difference between the Primary and Secondary school student population.

This distinction is not as apparent when students are interviewed in focus groups or talked to in the classroom. Secondary and primary students reported a strong connection with their teachers that they considered was a distinct advantage of being in a smaller school. This was however offset by the lack of social interaction with students of the same age.

Students and teachers considered the access they have to technology, equipment and space led to more engaging learning. This was apparent in classroom visits where the use of technology was seen assisting learning in most rooms.

Students in the senior primary school considered they needed more choice in what they did. During focus group and classroom discussions they referred to activities the secondary students engaged in and equipment they used, expressing a clear desire for more exposure to these practical activities.

Student feedback from teachers and reflection on their learning is apparent at the school, however, student feedback to teachers is not as regular or formalised.

The school has a functioning Student Representative Council but their role in decision making at the school was not apparent during the review.

Question 3: To what extent is there an effective and agreed whole school approach to teaching and learning that demonstrates consistent pedagogy and assessment practices, particularly in literacy and numeracy?

There is evidence of progress in developing a whole school approach to teaching and learning. The school has set up a common framework for lesson planning and articulating learning intentions and purpose of lessons. The framework was consistently understood by students and teachers. The school has refined their assessment schedule and is developing a school wide approach to assessment. The review found evidence of teachers monitoring student performance in the classrooms. This is reflected in individual student assessment folders that are kept up-to-date for all students. There is, however, little evidence of the triangulation of data by comparing results from various assessment items for students. The school is also not currently moderating student assessments with other schools at both the primary and secondary levels despite this being listed as a key strategy in the current strategic plan.

More recently the school has commenced implementing the SAMR Model to enhance the integration of technology across the curriculum. Knowledge and application of this model has not yet transformed across all teachers. The school considers that the application of this model, combined with the COMPASS student management package, will have excellent benefits for student outcomes. These models do not yet appear in the school's strategic plan. The SAMR model is also not in the current Annual Implementation Plan. Discussions with the Leadership of the school led to the determination that the elements contained in the teaching and learning approach would be clearer if synthesised into a succinct planning document.

Question 4: To what extent does the school engage and build relationships with parents and the broader community?

The school demonstrated a range of symbolic and learning activities that engaged the school with the community.

Most parents saw the school as a welcoming place for the community although this view was not shared by all. The current enrolment decline, combined with the divide in the community regarding the current standards and leadership of the school, is having a significant effect on the health of staff and some community members. It is agreed by all stakeholders that these issues are the greatest threat to the immediate and long-term future of the school. A degree of tension between parents with students at the school and those who have withdrawn their students was apparent at the community forum and school council meeting. Some expressed how the situation has affected friendships and relationships within the community. The parent representatives on council and staff consider the defusing of this issue an urgent priority for the community.

Even if all students from the immediate area attended the school the enrolment decline will most likely continue looking at the current long term trend.

2.2.3 Key Findings

- The current enrolment decline is threatening the viability of secondary programs at the school
- The divide in the community regarding the school is having a detrimental effect on the future viability of the school and the health and wellbeing of some staff and some communi-

ty members. The majority of parents and staff at the school support the school, however, the current community divide is hampering the future directions of the school.

- The school, through a range of staffing and timetabling strategies has demonstrated a flexible capacity to offer successfully a range of student programs including pathways programs in the later years. The school can demonstrate good outcomes for students in their secondary programs
- Progress has been made in developing a teaching and learning framework and whole school approach to pedagogy. However, this does not yet have the clarity targeted for 2016
- A whole school engagement and wellbeing plan is not yet embedded in the school as targeted for 2016.

2.2.4 Next Steps

The school has a number of initiatives in place that reflect good practice, however, without community support and increased student enrolments the way forward will be difficult.