

Peer Review Report Summary

Executive Summary

2. 1 School Context

Canterbury Primary School (CPS) is located in a suburban street in Canterbury approximately 16 kilometres east of the Melbourne CBD. The school was built in 1908 and is situated in an heritage overlay area with the main building reflecting architectural features of the era. The school is located on a treed site with grounds that provide for active and passive play and include a synthetic turf oval and running track and two adventure playgrounds. Indoor learning spaces accommodate for student-centred learning and a new facility that incorporates a senior learning centre, a music room, art room and a gymnasium with a basketball court that was opened in 2011.

The school has increased in enrolments over the past four years from 586 students in 2013 to a current enrolment of 609. The school caters for students from foundation (prep) to year 6, and there has been an increasing number of students from a language background other than English over the review period, and most of these students are from China.

There are 37 FTE (full time equivalent) teachers and five FTE support staff. The leadership team includes a principal, assistant principal, and two leading teachers.

There were four learning centres across the school and these catered for students in foundation (discovery), years 1 and 2 (creativity), years 3 and 4 (innovation), and years 5 and 6 (leadership). Teachers therefore worked in collaborative teams to meet the learning needs of students across their centre.

Over the period of review, the school aimed to provide a student-centred authentic real world approach to learning, with an emphasis on student voice and contextualised learning, within the Victorian curriculum. Specialist programs included visual arts, music, physical education, and Chinese Mandarin language. Digital technologies were embedded across all learning and teachers developed their digital capabilities with the support of an e-learning coach. The school was a partner in the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning global project; and created a Digital Learning Hub at Canterbury Primary School in 2015 that provided professional learning on digital leadership for educators and parents.

The school encouraged networking with other local schools, networks, organisations and communities. There was a range of opportunities for parent and community participation and the celebration of intercultural awareness, global citizenship and diversity. The school established a partnership with a school in Suzhou in China where there were intercultural visits, shared projects and opportunities to enhance language learning and cultural understanding. In addition, the school provided access to information on student learning through the COMPASS parent portal.

2.2 Summary of the School's Performance

The 2013 to 2016 school strategic plan (SSP) set out the goals and targets for student achievement, student engagement and student wellbeing.

Student achievement

The school sought to foster the achievement of high quality learning outcomes for all students across the curriculum with a strong focus on improving literacy and numeracy over the last review period. Overall the review panel concluded that the school has made some progress in student achievement, particularly in writing. The school's strategic plan targets to increase the percentage of students above the expected Australian curriculum (AusVELS) levels (according to teacher judgements) to between 65% and 70% (A and B) prep-6 were not met in 2015, but were met in reading, and some areas of mathematics in 2014. The 2015 teacher judgement data indicated all areas were above 60%. The target in relation to the percentage of A students was met for all years of the strategic plan in reading and all areas of mathematics.

The National Assessment Plan - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) outcomes indicate that in year 3, the percentages of students achieving in the top two bands increased over the review period to 85% in reading in 2015, and this was above the target of 80%. However, the percentage dropped to around 71% in 2016. The target of 80% of students in the top two bands in writing was not met in either 2015 or 2016 (approximately 72% both years). In numeracy, 64% were in the two top bands in 2015 and 67% in 2016, and the target was 65%.

In year 5, however, the targets for the percentages of students achieving in the top two bands were not met in any area. The target of 75% in reading was not met (62% in 2015 and 51% in 2016). The target of 65% was not met in writing (36% in 2015 and 33% in 2016) and the target in numeracy of 65% was also not met (46% in 2015 and 52% in 2016).

Student learning growth from years 3 to 5 from 2014-2016 was measured by NAPLAN and the results indicate that the school had only 16% low growth and 33% high growth in writing. This result is stronger than the state average. However the learning growth in the other areas of literacy (reading, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy was not strong, and this is an area for future attention.

Student engagement

The school also sought to foster a vibrant and supportive school community that fully engaged students in their learning, promoted student voice and connected students to their world. The review panel agreed that student engagement in their learning was evident but there were variations across the school. Strong levels of engagement in learning were reported in foundation (prep) and at the top end of the school in years 5 and 6, where student voice in learning was more evident. The other year levels 1 to 4 indicated some improvement in the promotion of student voice in their learning and this is ongoing work.

The targets set for the student attitudes to school survey were met and exceeded in 2014 and 2015 in school connectedness and stimulating learning, and teacher effectiveness was close to the target. However, the targets were not met in 2016. The teaching and learning factors were at or above state means in 2015 but slipped below the state means in 2016. However, the review panel agreed that there is a strong sense of a safe, stimulating and orderly learning environment across the school.

Student wellbeing

The panel agreed that ensuring high levels of student wellbeing at CPS has been a focus and a priority for the school over the period of review. Student safety data was strong and student behavior improved. A whole school approach to student wellbeing and management with a focus on building an inclusive learning community, was documented and visible in all learning spaces over the review period. This included the 'Tribes' approach across the school and 'Play is the Way' strategies implemented in the junior school. In addition, a student wellbeing officer was employed over the review period to support and engage students with activities such as martial arts therapy, Lego club and other activities. The implementation of a scope and sequence framework - Growing Up Digital - to support digital citizenship development was also introduced. However, the panel discussed the variations in the implementation of the whole school approach to student wellbeing and management and this was reflected in some of the in student, staff and parent perception data.

2.2.2 Summary of the considerations for the next Strategic Plan

Student achievement

While the review panel agreed that Canterbury Primary School had made some progress in student achievement over the 2013-2016 period, a number of outcomes have varied. While some areas of literacy and numeracy are near expected levels at year 3, student learning growth from year 3 to 5 is not strong particularly in reading, grammar and punctuation and numeracy and this was identified by the panel as a future focus.

The panel noted that curriculum content and planning based on the new Victorian curriculum had been articulated in some but not all areas across the school. Agreed classroom curriculum delivery models, and teaching and assessment strategies were not yet consistently implemented across the school. In addition, the use of data and evidence to track student learning and growth was reported to be vary across teachers and teams. The panel therefore agreed that if a whole school agreed approach to curriculum planning, instruction and assessment is developed and implemented then student learning growth and achievement will improve.

Student engagement

The panel noted the broad range of efforts throughout the review period to build a high expectations student-centred learning culture and this has seen varying degrees of success, as consistency across classes and teams remains a challenge. Success was evident in writing, digital technologies across the curriculum, and student leadership. There was also acknowledgement from the DET for the development of student voice in learning. However, there were also high levels of low learning growth in areas of literacy (except writing) and numeracy, as demonstrated in NAPLAN growth charts.

The panel therefore agreed that if there is a systematic approach to the setting of challenging goals and providing rich effective feedback to students and to teachers, then student engagement and learning will be enhanced across the school. The panel also endorsed a view to continue to build on the achievements so far in developing a student-centred learning culture, authentic curriculum and strong learning partnerships with parents and the broader local and global community.

Student wellbeing

The panel discussed the focused efforts of the school in ensuring a positive climate for learning, and empowering students and building school pride. The panel endorsed the school's current positive approach to student wellbeing and the need to purposefully and explicitly articulate the school purpose and the shared values.

All agreed that if the school's mission, vision and values are articulated for all stakeholders and embedded in the everyday learning of students, work of teachers, and partnership with parents and the community then student wellbeing, engagement and learning will be enhanced.

2.2.3 Next steps

The review panel agreed that the school has undertaken a thorough and extensive self-evaluation and is well placed to undertake the next level of work in building excellence in teaching and learning, building a positive climate for learning and engaging the community in partnerships in a digital age.