

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

2.1 School Context

Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School is a dual mode school for students aged between five and 18 years. The primary disability of students is an intellectual disability ranging from a severe, to moderate to a mild intellectual disability.

Approximately 35 per cent of students have a diagnosis of autism and many students have additional challenges that include physical disabilities, social and emotional disorders, challenging behaviours and/or a sensory impairment. In the context of the review period the school saw a significant growth in the number of students with complex mobility and medical needs.

The Primary School Campus was established in 1998 and is located within heritage listed buildings that were formally part of a closed institution for people with intellectual disabilities. The school is in the township of Sunbury approximately 42 kilometres north of the Melbourne Central Business District. The Secondary Campus was established in 2008 on the grounds of what was formally the Bullengarook Primary School. The Secondary Campus is located seven kilometres from the township of Gisborne.

At the time of the review there were 102 students enrolled at the Primary Campus of which approximately 70 per cent were boys. One hundred and three students were enrolled at Secondary Campus of which approximately 60 per cent were boys. Over the review period there was a 45 per cent increase in enrolments at both campuses.

All students have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) with goals established in liaison with families and carers and which was appropriate to their level of ability and needs. In addition to classroom based learning which covered all areas of the Victorian Curriculum students at the Primary Campus access the Art, Physical Education and Music Therapy programs. Students at the Secondary Campus, in addition to classroom learning, participated in Materials Technology and Wellbeing programs. In the final three years at the Secondary Campus students have the opportunity to attain the Foundation level of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL).

At the time of the review there were 94 members of staff comprised of 33 teachers and 61 Education Support (ES) staff. Within the ES staff there were two speech pathologists, two occupational therapists, a physiotherapist, a music therapist, a social worker, a technologies technician, administration staff and a facilities manager. Most

ES staff worked as teacher assistants either within a classroom or in a specific program.

The current Leadership Team is comprised of the Principal, an Assistant Principal based at the Primary Campus, a Secondary Campus principal and four Leading Teachers who led the Lower Primary, Upper Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary sections of the school.

2.2 Summary of the School's Performance

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

Panel members agreed Sunbury and Macedon Ranges Specialist School was successful in achieving the goals in the 2013-2016 strategic plan.

An achievement goal was to improve learning outcomes for all students. The school was close to achieving the target of 95 per cent of student to achieve good or better progress in the areas of literacy and numeracy and 80 per cent for Interpersonal Development. Ninety-four per cent were assessed at or above the expected level in literacy, 92 per cent in numeracy and 96 per cent for Interpersonal Development.

Additional evidence showed there was an increase in the percentage of students who demonstrated learning growth in Reading and Writing from 47 per cent in the 2013-14 period to 80 per cent in the 2014-15 period. Assessment data for Personal and Social Capabilities—Self showed an increase in the percentage of students who achieved learning growth from 59 per cent in 2013-14 period to 69 per cent in the 2014-15 period.

A further goal was to ensure all students were engaged in their learning and felt safe and connected to school. Achievement of the targets, panel day discussions, school data and the results of departmental surveys provided evidence which enabled the panel to agree the school was successful in achieving the goal. At the Primary Campus, the number of reported student incidents reduced from 128 in Term 1 2016 to 47 in Term 3. The percentage of students involved in incidents reduced from 33 per cent to 14 per cent. At the Secondary Campus the number of incidents reduced from 55 in Term 1 to 12 in Term 2 and the percentage of students involved from 19 per cent to 7 per cent.

The results of the 2016 Parent Opinion Survey (PO Survey) indicated the school was successful in improving the level of parent satisfaction with access to therapy services and opportunities for parent input.

The results of the student survey administered in 2015 exceeded the State and regional benchmarks for all areas which indicated a high level of connectedness to school, their peers, teaching and learning and their own safety and wellbeing.

The final goal was to provide transitions and pathways that maximise learning outcomes for students at all stages of their schooling. Information gained from school administered survey and parent perception of Transition in the PO Survey supported by anecdotal evidence from members of staff enabled the panel to agree the school achieved the goal. With very few exceptions the feedback from parents whose children were enrolling in their first year at school, were enrolling during the primary or secondary years, were transitioning between classes or sections of the school or when exiting the school was positive. The Transition variable in the PO Survey improved over the review period.

The school considered the amendments made to the transition process after each survey was conducted enabled the school to develop and implement effective transition practices and processes.

2.2.2 Summary of the considerations for the next Strategic Plan

The review panel considered the extent to which the school was aligned with the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO). The panel gave consideration to the School Self Evaluation (SSE), the 2016 Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) and panel day discussions. The panel agreed the members of staff and the School Council had developed an understanding of the framework and used the framework to complete the self-evaluation and to inform school improvement.

The panel agreed the strategies the school implemented to build practice excellence and to develop a school curriculum aligned with the Victorian Curriculum supported the school in improving student outcomes.

The panel discussed the extent to which the school developed an ongoing process for gathering, analysing and reflecting on evidence to improve student outcomes. Documentation provided by the school and panel day discussions enabled the panel to agree the school collected data from a range of sources such as student assessments and behavioural incidents, curriculum provision, students' attitude toward school and parent perception of transition. The panel concluded all data sets were discussed and analysed and the information used to improve outcomes for students and for whole school improvement. However the panel identified the development of more efficient and effective ways of analysing and presenting data would enhance the understanding

of all members of staff as to why data was an important element of the school improvement cycle.

The panel discussed to what extent the school implemented a consistent teaching model and what impact those practices had on student outcomes.

The panel agreed a document which detailed practices that were non-negotiable for teachers provided new and existing teachers with an understanding of the school's expectations. Included in the document were non-negotiables for teaching literacy and the implementation of the sensory motor program and the positive behaviour management framework. As a result the school was successful in improving literacy outcomes, achieving greater engagement in learning and in improving student behaviour and wellbeing. Consistent whole school approaches to teaching numeracy or practices for developing student resilience, independence and social skills were areas identified by the panel as areas for further development.

Following panel day discussions the panel suggested the following goals and key improvement strategies.

To improve student achievement in Numeracy by:

- Building the capacity of school leaders to lead and implement change.
- Building the capacity of all members of staff to systematically collect, analyse and use data to inform teaching and learning and whole school improvement.
- Building the capacity of all members of staff by adopting whole school instructional practices and an agreed framework for all areas of the curriculum.

Develop the capacity of every student to have optimal independence and to develop social skills and readiness for post school life by:

- Building the capacity of all students to be resilient, socially responsible and respectful in their relationships.
- Developing and strengthening partnerships with parents/carers, schools, services, employers and agencies.

2.2.3 Next steps

The panel agreed the school was well prepared for the review process and was well placed to continue the work undertaken to build practice excellence in a positive climate for learning and to achieve ongoing improvements in outcomes for students.

