

Negotiated School Review Report

Prepared for
Drummartin Primary School
Loddon Mallee Region
School Workforce Reform and School Improvement
Division
Department of Education & Early Childhood
Development
2009

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1.0 Executive Summary

Drummartin Primary School is a small rural school servicing the educational provision of 12 primary school students in the Drummartin and Kamarooka areas. The school has been proactive in securing funding [in excess of \$100,000.00] to enhance the school buildings, playground facilities and resources for the community. The parents, staff, students and the wider community enjoy positive working relationships and the school is central to the life of the community. The school is part of the Campaspe network of the Loddon Mallee Region and its curriculum is enhanced through an active involvement in MARC and MACC programs, and cluster sporting, camping and social events. The La Trobe University places education students at the school as part of their training.

The parent opinion survey indicates a high degree of support for the school with the data in the fourth quartile for the past four years. School events regularly attract 50+ people from the community with the same community providing much of the materials for students to showcase as an indication of their support for the school. The parents at the review meeting indicated the school is a good safe place for their children and that the parents were engaged in the learning program of their children. The achievement levels of the students are very good. The children want to come to school and are prepared to learn and support each other to research topics of interest.

The school has a focus on teaching and learning and since the last review has achieved good results for its students. The school reports there are no issues of bullying or teasing and nothing is ever taken without permission. The students display exemplary behaviours on excursions and regularly receive positive feedback from the larger community they visit. The children are genuinely happy to be at the school and display impeccable manners to all visitors. Every family has the opportunity to be represented on the school council which is conducted more as a consultative forum and is held at times convenient to the whole community.

The facilities at the school are regularly used by the community. The technology available at the school enables people to see the school as a community hub that services them all rather than just the children. Significant community groups who access the school resources and facilities are Land Care, the Northern Forestry group and the Tandarra Tennis club.

The challenges ahead for the school include generating greater social opportunities for the children and not being 'threatened' or swamped by the 'bigger is better' mentality. The clustering of events with other small schools is enhancing the learning of the children and broadening their outlook. The children's transitions to larger secondary schools have been successful with most finding new friends and actively participating in the life of the schools.

The demographics for the school over the next few years are stable with a potential high of 14 students in 2010. The community is reporting the gradual increase in the lifestyle purchase of small farms and in the medium to long term this may result in a further increase in enrolments.

The school is well resourced for its size. The principal is completing his tenure in 2009 and the school community is hesitant of the replacement process. The current principal has been at the school for twenty years providing a high level of stability for the community. The school does not want to merge with any other school and expects the region to replace the principal in due course to continue the good work at the school. The school has concerns re the amount of administrative tasks required of the principal and will continue to use its SFO and welfare grants innovatively to support the good work of the staff.

The goals and targets set for the next review period reflect the high performance of the school and challenge it to individualize the learning for all students and strive for higher levels of success in all areas of the school. The targets are above the Campaspe network means and support the school to continue its improvement journey.

2.0 Aim / Purpose

The review was designed to reflect on the schools performance over the past four years and align its direction to the Campaspe Network strategic plan for the next review period. The school reported on its achievements and challenges in student learning, engagement and wellbeing and transitions. The parent, student and staff opinion surveys were scrutinized to look for indications of trends that would influence the new targets for the school and allow the review team to benchmark the current level of achievement and set aspirational targets for the next review period.

3.0 Methodology

The school council worked with the principal for most of first semester of 2009 to understand what a negotiated review was and how they could participate in preparing the documentation

for the review. The school community were briefed on the data trends of the past four years and participated in a number of sessions to evaluate the data for the learning, engagement and transitions of the students.

The terms of reference for the review were discussed at the school and approved by the region. The draft of the Self Evaluation was prepared by the principal in consultation with parents, staff and critical friend. The school council discussed the draft report and added clarification and improvements before it was ratified in June 2009

4.0 Findings

The review findings were comprehensive and the school needs to be congratulated for the integrity it brought to the process and the openness it presented to the review team.

Student learning.

The student learning goal was: **to improve student achievement in all areas, with a particular emphasis on English and Mathematics.**

While we need to acknowledge the sample numbers for the data are small the following is a summary of the school's achievements.

In Assessment of Reading Prep – Year 2 the school was equal to or better than the state benchmarks for the review period. At Year 3 and 5 AIM data the students are above state means and shown improvement over the review period. The 2008 NAPLAN scores for reading, writing and numeracy for Years 3 and 5 were well above state means and significantly higher than the expected SFO indicator. The teacher judgments against the VELs levels indicated that almost all students were working at the expected level or above with improvements in 2008 in reading, writing and speaking and listening.

The reasons the school has good levels of achievement include the high level of commitment to the daily literacy and numeracy blocks. The staff attended professional learning sessions, expanded the guided reading materials and improved the use of technology to enthuse the students about eLearning. The teaching practices inherent in POLT were better implemented and student assessment was clarified. The capacity of students to make decisions about their learning and school practices improved over the review period.

The Parent Opinion data in stimulating learning improved from 6.36 to 6.72; learning focus 6.25 to 6.69; extra curricular from 4.57 to 6.56; general satisfaction from 6.29 to 7.00; and reporting and feedback was stable at 6.19. The Student Opinion data in all teaching and

learning responses improved from 4.61 to 4.71. The Staff Opinion data indicates empathy at 84%; clarity at 92%; engagement at 95%; and learning at 87%.

Student engagement and wellbeing

The student engagement and wellbeing goal was: **to enhance a caring and stimulating learning environment that caters for individual abilities and promotes student engagement and wellbeing.**

The school is the last remaining public facility in the area. It is highly valued by all members of the community and receives solid support from residents and former students. The school council sourced Investing in Schools funding from the Commonwealth Government to improve the physical environment of the school and the play spaces for the children. Parents are actively involved in excursions and camps and primary welfare officer funding has greatly assisted families as they come to terms with the ongoing drought and the impact on their families. The school community maintains the school grounds on a volunteer basis with many former students happy to oblige.

The Parent Opinion data in student behaviour improved from 5.07 to 6.83 over the review period; student safety from 6.14 to 6.93; the school climate indicators from 6.10 to 6.63; and the student engagement indicators from 6.11 to 6.52. The Student Opinion data for school connectedness improved from 4.87 to 4.93; student relationships from 4.48 to 4.91; while student wellbeing dipped from 6.69 to 6.48. The student attendance data is trending up [3.1 to 9.8] however it remains below state means and the virus that went through the school in 2008 was hopefully a one off experience.

Student Pathways and Transitions

The student pathways and transitions goal was: **to support students in the transition to and from Drummartin Primary school.**

The school introduced a survey to measure the level of satisfaction for students and families transitioning into the school especially those starting at prep. The responses had five levels: unsatisfactory, acceptable, good, very good and excellent. Over the review period the school constantly received indications for parent and child's feeling questions in the 4/5 level i.e. very good/excellent. The Parent Opinion data for transitions improved from 6.29 to 6.69 during the review period.

The review team acknowledges the work in place to support the year 6 students to transition to secondary schooling. It would be beneficial for the schools' long term planning if the school could develop the capacity to research how their students integrate into the new environments and discuss if any changes in the preparation process needs to be put in

place. It would be great feedback to the community if the students continue to perform at or above benchmark levels and acknowledge the good preparation they received in primary schooling.

5.0 Conclusions and recommendations

The review team has made the following recommendations for the school from the next review period.

Student Learning

Goals	Targets	Key Improvement Strategies	Suggested actions (optional)
to sustain continuous improvement in student learning in literacy, numeracy and ICT	Students improve the expected VELs level every two years or above in literacy and numeracy All students have access to a personal Netbook for use in all learning domains	Using the schools data to develop an individualized learning programs/plan for all students	Personalized learning plans developed and reviewed Budget to purchase Netbooks Professional development in the use of Netbooks in the learning program Literacy and numeracy blocks in place Literacy and Numeracy plans in place and reviewed

Student Engagement and Wellbeing

Goals	Targets	Key Improvement Strategies	Suggested actions (optional)
to enhance a caring and stimulating learning environment that caters for individual abilities and promotes student engagement and wellbeing	<p>P-6 Attendance at 7 days or better</p> <p>Parent opinion survey variable in General Satisfaction and Stimulating Learning to be 6.5 or better</p> <p>Student opinion survey variable in Student Morale to be 6.5 or better; Student Safety to be 5.0 or better; School Connectedness to be 4.7 or better; Teacher Effectiveness to be 4.7 or better; and Stimulating Learning to be 4.3 or better</p>	Maintain a whole school focus on: positive and engaging school cultures, student engagement, and promoting school attendance and positive behaviours	<p>Continue improvements to the school environment</p> <p>Seek the assistance of outside agencies if needed e.g. drought, special needs</p> <p>Continue the promotion and participation of families in the life of the school</p> <p>Interschool partnerships to support our students to be cooperative with neighboring school students</p> <p>Continue to promote the school and the success of our students to the community</p>

Student Pathways and Transitions.

Goals	Targets	Key Improvement Strategies	Suggested actions (optional)
to provide effective transitions and pathways into, through and out of	The parent opinion transitions variable is maintained at 6.4 or higher	A whole school transition program is developed for all	Develop and implement a survey for all new students and parents to complete to address transition

the school	All new students and parents are assessed and monitored re transitions Year 6 students in first six months of secondary schooling to be monitored for the success of transition program	students prior to entry, at point of entry, change in year level and leaving to secondary school/other school location	experiences All families have the opportunity for representation on the school council All families invited to attend school activities Continue participation in the small school cluster programs for students and families
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The school has performed well during the review period 2006-9. The challenge ahead is to continue to grow that performance and ensure the preparation for secondary schooling remains at high levels.

We thank the school for the thorough preparation for the review and the welcome we received. The hospitality of the staff, parents and students on the day was just wonderful and added to the productive atmosphere of working together. We wish the school well on its improvement journey.