# Peer Review Report

## Ashburton Primary School
## North Eastern Region

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
State Government Victoria

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| School number: | 4317 |
| Principal: | Natalie Nelson |
| School Council President: | Sarah Quinn |
| Review Company: | National Curriculum Services |
| Accredited School Reviewer: | David Gurr |
| Peers: | Des Dalton |
| Date of Review Meeting: | August 13, 2014 |

# 1. Contents

## 2. Executive Summary

Students at Ashburton Primary School tend to perform at level commensurate with the socio-educational advantage of their families, with learning outcomes consistently above state and national medians and mostly at a level comparable to similar schools. The mandated student and staff surveys, and a parent survey that school has constructed, suggest that this is an engaging and rich learning community where students are encouraged and supported to do their best. The school has benefitted over the previous period from major improvements to the buildings and grounds, resulting in a variety of high quality learning spaces that facilitate contemporary approaches to teaching and learning. The school is well led, with a stable leadership profile that has helped the school to not only minimise any adverse impacts of the building program, but also to show significant improvement in teaching and learning practices. Staff plan and work together to cater for the needs of all students, and resources are both acquired and utilised to meet the goals and improvement foci of the school.

Building on the previous strategic plan, the recommendations for improvement in the coming four years: address two areas of student learning (improvement in numeracy and writing), and continues the improvement of teaching through a school wide approach to teaching and learning; improves student engagement through better use of learning technologies and feedback to improve learning; supports student wellbeing through revision of the student development program SMILE, development of a learning information system, greater connection with the wider community and enhanced communication within the school; and, improves resource use through a review and development of the school's management processes and practice.

The student learning goal has been expanded to better capture the richness of the learning experiences student have at this school and will include a statement similar to this:

**To enable students to fully develop abilities across all curriculum areas.**

The final wording of this goal will be constructed through negotiation with the school community. The student engagement goal captures the richness of the learning environments provided to students, their role as active participants in their learning, and the sense that learning is a collaborative activity located within community. The goal is:

**To provide a stimulating learning environment where students are active learners who collaborative, explore and connect with the school and wider community.**

The student wellbeing goal focuses on developing core attributes of students that will help them be successful learners and valued members of their community. The goal is:

**To develop the capacity of students to be resilient, socially responsible and respectful in all their relationships**

Finally, a productivity goal that captures how well the school acquires and uses resources will be:

**To acquire and distribute resources (broadly conceived) to support the school's strategic direction, goals and improvement areas**

# 3. Context

Ashburton Primary School is located in an Eastern suburb of Melbourne, about 12 kms from the central business district. Opened in 1928, the school has served the community well over the past 86 years.

The school purpose is

> … to provide our students with the capacity to manage themselves and their relations with others and to give them the skills to thrive in a rapidly changing and complex world We do this by creating a dynamic learning environment that encourages students to become active learners who are committed to personal success in education, work and life and are responsible citizens of the global community.

Beliefs include: Learning is a social process; learning needs to be relevant, purposeful and authentic; we all learning differently and at different rates. Values include responsibility, respect, and resilience

In 2008 there were 447 students. With an enrolment of more than 549 students in 2014, the school has grown by more than 20 per cent in six years, with DEECD projections suggesting a further rise to 564 students by 2017. There are slightly more girls than boys currently, although this has fluctuated over recent years. About half to two thirds of students exit to nearby government schools including Camberwell High School, Canterbury Girls' Secondary College, Melbourne Girls' College, Mount Waverley Secondary College and Auburn High School. The school serves a community that has a higher level of socio-educational advantage then the state and national averages (SFO 0.17, ICSEI 1151) with more than two thirds of families in the top quarter for socio-educational advantage. Proportions of indigenous (1%) are low and the proportion of students from a language background other than English (25%) is mid-high. In terms of students at risk entering the school at the prep year in 2014, the school was placed on the lowest level of risk, although the school noted that about 20 per cent of students have some documented learning concerns. These data suggest that student outcome results should be well above the state average. Students with disabilities and impairments have tailored programs and there are currently seven funded students supported by five integration aides.

There are 32.2 (EFT) teaching staff and 6.0 (FTE) educational support staff. There is a stable leadership profile with both the principal and assistant principal at the school during the previous review period, and few changes in terms of the four unit leaders. The school documents noted that the staff is committed to the school, and that they represent a cross section in terms of age, experience and gender. Organisationally the school is organised in straight classes, and in units that match the AusVELS levels. Many of the levels are taught in teams where groups of teachers plan together how they will teach their students. The average class size has been between 22 and 23 over the past four years. As well as individually targeted professional learning there is whole school professional learning with a different focus each year; for 2014 the focus is 'From great to sensational – one step at a time'.

The school is located near to a main road on a large block of undulating land. The refurbished original 1928 building greets the community, and a variety of buildings provide high quality learning spaces. Whilst there are older buildings in excellent condition, the school has benefitted from a substantial building program in recent years. Under the Victorian School Plan and Economic Stimulus Package an 8.3 million dollar building program has transformed the school. This has included a major refurbishment of the original double story brick building to include eight learning spaces and modern office/staff facilities, and the construction of three classroom pods each consisting of four flexible learning spaces. Each pod is themed to provide spaces for developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Other buildings include an Arts precinct and gymnasium precinct (gymnasium, performing art studio, Japanese room, and hall). The grounds offer many exciting active and passive recreational spaces and learning spaces. As students progress through the school they physically move around the school, ensuring that

there is always something to look forward to each year. There are numerous displays around the school of the work and achievements of students. The school has a stimulating and high quality learning environment.

Teaching and learning is organised into developmentally appropriate stages, has good provision of ICT, uses well regarded programs (e.g. Café reading program), and there are specialist programs in visual arts, physical education and sport, performing arts, and language other than English (world wise in 2011-12, and Japanese in 2013-2014). Apart from the emphasis on literacy and numeracy development, an integrated program covers the areas of science, humanities, health, civics and citizenship, design, creativity and technology and student wellbeing is supported through programs such as SMILE (values education program), peer mediation, buddy/special friends program, camps and so forth. There is variety and quality in the experiences designed to support student learning and development.

The self evaluation provided a contextual snapshot for the past four years according to curriculum foci, environmental context, student population, staffing profiles, staff professional learning foci, and staff feedback model. This contextual snapshot suggests that this is a school that has clarity and purpose to what it does.

# 4. Terms of Reference

**Aim / purpose**

To review the degree to which the school achieved the following:

- Empower and guide students to be actively engaged in their learning by delivering a relevant, purposeful and authentic curriculum.

- To cater for individual differences in student learning by giving them choice to explore and evaluate their learning through a wide variety of modes.

- Engage students in meaningful learning experiences through the innovative and creative use of multimedia technologies.

- Reduce disparity by establishing common team learning areas and an authentic team teaching practice across the school.

- Provide opportunities for effective professional learning, mentoring and feedback to be embedded in day to day practice.

- For students to feel connected and belong to their learning community whilst developing their own sense of identity.

To determine the possible future directions of the school through establishing goals and key improvement areas for the next four years.

**Methodology**

The methodology for the Self Evaluation was prepared as follows:

- School Community informed of review process via School Council and School Newsletter.

- Staff informed of review process during staff meetings. Staff were given opportunity to volunteer for Staff Working Party.

- Staff asked to complete '3 stars and 3 wishes' survey.

- School Review Sub committee of School Council established in March 2014. Multiple meetings occurred to establish Terms of Reference, Methodology, data collection, data evaluation, establishing school review panel, facilitating parent forums and feedback and recommendations for Strategic Plan 2014-2019.

- Staff, parents and students have had input via both DEECD surveys as well as school based surveys such as Prep to School transition.

- Parents have had input by analysing parent opinion survey data at School Council meetings.

- Leadership team drafted Self Evaluation document and sought feedback from School Review sub committee and staff members.

- School Councillors reviewed and edited self evaluation document.

- School Councillors have reviewed and edited Annual Reports, Annual implementation Plan and NAPLAN data from 2011-2014.

- Student survey conducted by Student Representative Council with two questions

  a) If a new family move next door to you what would you tell them about Ashburton Primary School, and

  b) If you were Principal for a day what would you change?

Attendee's:
- David Gurr (accredited Reviewer)
- Natalie Nelson (Principal)
- Julie Gilbert (Assistant Principal)
- Des Dalton (Peer Principal)
- Sarah Quinn (School Council President)
- Rob Sleath (Convenor of School Review Subcommittee)
- Michelle DiGiovanni (Prep Leader)
- Mary Gibney (Unit 2 Leader)
- Kerri Hutcheson (Unit 3 Leader)
- Merryn Bevis (Unit 4 Leader)

Invited guests:
- Harvey and Amanda (School Captains)
- SRC students – five students presented the results of a student survey on school strengths and improvement areas.
- Judy Yorston (11:00- 12:30) Student Wellbeing

**Agenda**

**9:00- 10:30      The Story of the School**

Welcome from the principal
Introduction of the review by the reviewer
Overview of the review process by Convener of the School Review Subcommittee
Informal and short presentations from:
- The principal – the journey of the school
- School captains – our time at the school
- School council president – the school community
- Senior teacher(s) – how our classes operated
Discussion of where to?

10:30- 11:00      Break in staff room to chat informally to staff members

**11:00- 12:30      Reflection on the review areas:**

Student Achievement,

Engagement,
Wellbeing,
Productivity.


12:30- 1:00        Lunch with invited guests


**1:00- 3:30        2015-2019 Strategic Plan goal setting**
Further reflection on the review areas and recommendations for goals and improvement areas.

# 5. Evaluation of Performance

| | Panel view of school performance | Panel Recommendations for improvement |
|---|---|---|
| **Achievement:**<br><br>Achievement refers to both the absolute levels of learning attainment and growth in student learning that schools strive to support.<br>While recognising that literacy and numeracy are essential foundations for students' success, achievement outcomes encompass a broader view of learning, spanning the full range of curriculum domains, as well as students' co-curricular achievements. | The previous achievement goal was 'to improve student learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy from Prep-Year 6', and there were key improvement strategies associated with: Develop and embed a whole school approach to teaching, learning and assessment that ensures purposeful and explicit learning for every student; enhance purposeful teaching practices by building staff capacity within a framework of collaborative teams.<br><br>Performance highlights include: teacher assessment of English and Mathematics, and NAPLAN reading and numeracy for years 3 and 5 that is well above state medians and similar to schools with similar socio-educational advantage; NAPLAN relative growth that is above expectations for all areas other than writing.<br><br>The panel agreed that the goals and improvement areas had been met, although not all targets were met. Discussion of the targets set in the previous Strategic Plan suggested that these might have been set at an unrealistically high level. Whilst targets were not set during the review day, for the Strategic Plan the school can use the previous targets but base these more closely to current performance. The targets should be challenging as the school serves a socio-educationally advantaged community in a school that has a high level of quality resources. However, the targets need to set so that there is a realistic expectation that they can be achieved.<br><br>In setting the goal the school was challenged to construct a statement that was more reflective of what the school does. Whilst improving literacy and numeracy is a | That the student achievement goal be:<br><br>To enable students to fully develop abilities across all curriculum areas.<br><br>Key improvement areas to include:<br><br>To improve student outcomes in numeracy from prep-6<br>To improve student outcomes in writing from prep-6<br>Develop further the school wide approach to teaching and learning<br>To improve recruitment, induction and development of staff |

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<td>worthwhile goal, a goal such as this does not capture the breadth of learning that occurs in this school. Whilst there was some resistance to the idea of a broader goal, a statement was constructed that the school will continue to refine before inclusion in the new Strategic Plan. The school wanted to focus on improving numeracy and so this is an improvement area. The data also suggested that writing and spelling could be improved, and so a writing improvement area has been nominated. The school has made significant progress in developing a school wide approach to teaching and learning through producing 'Ways of Working' documents. The school will strive to further develop an 'Ashburton' approach to teaching and learning. Acknowledging this work, the school will ensure that new staff are recruited, inducted and developed to support this approach to teaching and learning, and that all staff will continue to be supported to improve their work.</td>
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<td>**Engagement:**

Engagement refers to the extent to which students feel connected to and engaged in their learning and with the broader school community.
Engagement spans students' motivation to learn, as well as their active involvement in learning.
Engagement also refers to students engagement as they make critical transitions through school and beyond into further education and work.</td>
<td>The previous engagement and wellbeing goal was 'Develop in every student a strong connection to the school, their peers and their teachers', and there was a key improvement strategy: build a stimulating learning environment that engages and challenges students in their learning and fosters positive wellbeing in every individual.

Attendance is very good and at expected levels compared to similar schools. Student attitudes to school results are well above state medians and above similar schools.

Parent opinion is lower than the state median, although a school constructed parent survey indicates high levels of parental support. Parent opportunities for participation in the school are varied and worthwhile.

The new school goal captures the contemporary and stimulating learning environment provided to students, and articulates the qualities of active, collaborative and connected learning. The school has considerable technology resources but they are not used as well as they</td>
<td>That the student engagement goal be:
To provide a stimulating learning environment where students are active learners who collaborative, explore and connect with the school and wider community

Key improvement areas to include:

To develop better use of learning technologies
To explore and develop methods of feedback for improved student learning.</td>
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| | could be to support teaching and learning, and so an improvement area is to improve the use of learning technologies. Feedback (broadly conceived to include feedback to and amongst students, staff and parents) will also be explored and developed to support improved student learning.<br><br>No targets were discussed on the review day but these will be based on the previous Strategic Plan targets, and current levels of performance. | |
| **Wellbeing:**<br><br>Students' health, safety and wellbeing are essential to learning and development. An inclusive, safe, orderly and stimulating environment for learning is critical to achieving and sustaining students' positive learning experiences. | The previous transition and pathways goal was: 'Build positive transition experiences for all students and their families as they move into, through and beyond the school', and there was a key improvement strategy: strengthen school transition processes particularly as students move into Year 3 and Year 5.<br><br>The pathway students experience through this school is stimulating and varied. New students now experience their first few years in the learning pods, with four classes and four teachers working collaboratively in the one building, They then move through the school to experience spaces were classes work in a variety of configurations including paired and single classes. Students are supported to be good members of the school through a variety of personal and group development programs, and a variety of specialist and additional programs and activities. Student survey results are high and suggest that the school is supporting students well.<br><br>The goal for this area focuses on developing qualities important for socialising and working well with others. Improvement areas focus on reviewing and developing the SMILE program, promoting better sharing of information about students through development of a learning information system, promoting more connection with the wider community and enhancing communication within the school community. | That the student wellbeing goal be:<br>To develop the capacity of students to be resilient, socially responsible and respectful in all their relationships<br><br>Key improvement areas to include:<br>To evaluate and develop the SMILE program<br>To develop a learning information system<br>Explore and implement meaningful opportunities for further connection with the wider community.<br>Enhance the communication within the school |

| | No targets were discussed on the review day but these will be based on the previous Strategic Plan targets, and current levels of performance. | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Productivity:**<br><br>Productivity refers to the effective allocation and use of resources, supported by evidence and adapted to the unique contexts of each school.<br><br>Successful productivity outcomes exist when a school uses its resources – people, time, space, funding, facilities, community expertise, professional learning, class structures, timetables, individual learning plans and facilities – to the best possible effect and in the best possible combination to support improved student outcomes and achieve its goals and targets. | The school is well maintained, staff are supported to develop professionally, time and financial resources are used well to support key initiatives, and the school is managed very well, with clear structures and processes. It was agreed by the panel that the school is well led and managed. The goal for this area is concerned with how the school both acquires and distributes resources (including, money, time, people and knowledge) to support the goals and improvement areas. An improvement area is to review the current administrative processes and practices to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the school as the school has grown considerably in the past few years.<br><br>No targets were discussed on the review day but these will be based on the previous Strategic Plan targets, and current levels of performance. | That the productivity goal be:<br>To acquire and distribute resources (broadly conceived) to support the school's strategic direction, goals and improvement areas<br><br>Key improvement areas to include:<br><br>To review and development the administrative processes and practices of the school. |

# 6. Registration Requirements: Summary Statement
## Ashburton Primary School

Signature of Reviewer:                                    Date:  30 /07 /2014

Name of Reviewer:  Dr David Gurr

| Registration requirements to be met by all Government schools | Is the registration requirement met? | |
|---|---|---|
| **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE** | | |
| • Democratic principles *Evidence provided to VRQA by the Department* | | |
| • Structure *Evidence provided to VRQA by the Department* | | |
| • Philosophy (eg. - SSP, AIP)<br>• Statement of school philosophy<br>• Explanation of how philosophy is enacted | Yes X | No ☐ |
| • Not-for-profit status *Evidence provided to VRQA by the Department* | | |
| **ENROLMENT** | | |
| • Student enrolment policy   **(Specialist and Specific Purpose\***[see below]** schools ONLY)** | Yes ☐<br>N/A X | No ☐ |
| • Student enrolment numbers *Evidence provided to VRQA by the Department* | | |
| • Register of enrolments *Evidence provided to VRQA by the Department* | | |
| **CURRICULUM AND STUDENT LEARNING** | | |
| • Time allocation per learning area (eg. Timetable)<br>• Explanation of how and when curriculum and teaching practice will be reviewed (eg. - SSP, AIP, Curriculum Committee minutes, staff Professional Development)<br>• Outline of how the school will deliver its curriculum (eg. Scope and sequence)<br>• A whole school curriculum plan (eg. Scope and sequence)<br>• Documented strategy to improve student learning outcomes (eg. - SSP, AIP) | Yes X | No ☐ |
| • Monitoring and reporting on students' performance *Evidence provided to VRQA by the Department* | | |
| **STUDENT WELFARE** | | |
| Student welfare<br>• Student Welfare policy and procedures<br>• Bullying and Harassment policy and procedures | Yes X | No ☐ |
| Student safety<br>• On-site supervision policy and procedures<br>• Excursion policy and procedures<br>• Camps policy and procedures<br>• Ensuring safety and welfare of students with external providers policy and procedures | Yes X | No ☐ |
| Student care<br>• Care arrangements for ill students<br>• Distribution of medication policy and procedures<br>• Anaphylaxis management policy and procedures<br>• Register of staff trained in first aid<br>• Record of student medical condition and management | Yes X | No ☐ |
| Additional evidence<br>• Mandatory reporting policy and procedures<br>• Accidents and incidents register<br>• First aid policy and procedures<br>• Internet policy and procedures<br>• Critical incident plan<br>• Emergency management plan<br>• An outline on how the school communicates policies and procedures on the care, safety and welfare of students to the school community<br>• Emergency bushfire management | Yes X | No ☐ |

| DISCIPLINE | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Behaviour management policy and procedures (including procedural fairness and an explicit statement prohibiting corporal punishment)<br>• An outline of how the school communicates these policies and procedures to the school community | Yes | X | No | ☐ |

| ATTENDANCE MONITORING | |
|---|---|
| • Attendance monitoring | *Evidence provided to VRQA by the Department* |
| • Attendance register | *Evidence provided to VRQA by the Department* |

| STAFF EMPLOYMENT | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers' requirements<br>• Register of all teachers with name, VIT registration number and category | Yes | X | No | ☐ |
| Compliance with Working with Children Act 2005<br>• Procedures to ensure that all required staff have *Working with children check*<br>• A *Working with children check* register<br>• Procedures to maintain the *Working with children check* register | Yes | X | No | ☐ |

| SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE | |
|---|---|
| • Buildings, facilities and grounds | *Evidence provided to VRQA by the Department* |
| • Educational facilities | *Evidence provided to VRQA by the Department* |

| OTHER REQUIREMENTS | |
|---|---|
| Information about school performance | *Evidence provided to VRQA by the Department* |
| • Registration of an additional year level or campus | *Applicable only when required* |
| • Changing a school type or location | *Applicable only when required* |

| Additional registration requirements to be met by schools offering a <u>senior secondary</u> course or qualification (VCE / VCAL / IB) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student learning outcomes<br>• Current student and staff handbooks<br>• Sample student learning sequence<br>• Procedures and documentation to indicate staff have been provided with current and accurate information<br>• Policies and procedures to enable compliance with the awarding body | Yes | ☐ | No | ☐ |
| Student records and results<br>• Policies and procedures to maintain accurate student records<br>• Policies and procedures to undertake an annual analysis of records and results<br>• Policies and procedures to monitor patterns of student participation and completion rates | Yes | ☐ | No | ☐ |
| Student welfare<br>• Policies and procedures in place consistent with relevant legislation to ensure care, safety and welfare of students and provision of opportunities for students with special needs | Yes | ☐ | No | ☐ |
| Teaching and learning<br>• Qualified and competent staff to teach and assess the class<br>• Suitable teaching resources and physical facilities to provide the course<br>• Processes to ensure consistent application of assessment criteria<br>• Processes to oversee conduct of assessment, including processes to conduct investigations and hearings, and if necessary amend or cancel assessments | Yes | ☐ | No | ☐ |

If you require support regarding the minimum standards:
- email school.reorganisation@edumail.vic.gov.au, or
- telephone the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development on 9947 1854, or
- contact your Senior Advisor.

If you would like examples of further evidence to supply please see: VRQA registration requirements for Victorian Government Schools.

* The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) has registered the following schools as Specific Purpose schools:

- Austin Hospital School
- Avenues Education
- Blackburn English Language School
- Collingwood English Language School
- Croydon Community School
- Distance Education Centre Victoria
- John Monash Science School
- Kensington Community High School
- Lynall Hall Community School
- Noble Park English Language School
- Sovereign Hill School

- Sydney Road Community School
- The Alpine School
- Travancore School
- Victorian School of Languages
- Western English Language School