



ACT
Government
Education and Training

EXTERNAL VALIDATION REPORT 2015

for

GILMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Introduction: Overview of the Validation process

As part of the Territory's school improvement approach, public schools and colleges in the Australian Capital Territory are required to participate in an External Validation process every four years. This document captures the findings of the panel during this cycle of validation.

In broad terms, the panel sought to determine, through evaluation and validation, the extent to which the school is meeting its agreements, achieving its priorities, and addressing its challenges: in the context of a continuously improving educational environment.

External Validation was conducted over three days and involved a wide variety of data gathering approaches including observations, interviews and documentation. This approach provided evidence for the panel to consider against the nine inter-related domains in the National School Improvement Tool that informed our commendations and recommendations.

Section A: School context

Gilmore Primary School is a preschool to year 6 school located in the Tuggeranong Valley. The school has a current enrolment of 133 students and draws its enrolments from the Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) of Gilmore, Hume and the eastern section of Chisholm. The PEA has remained constant throughout the life of the School Plan, with a total of 62 percent of enrolments in 2014 coming from within this PEA. One third of the school population come from outside of the school PEA, which can be attributed to families who have an existing connection to the school from their own schooling choosing to enrol their children, and those with after school care arrangements in the area. The number of students enrolled in the school has declined steadily over the past four years, from 236 in 2011, 209 in 2012, 157 in 2013, to 170 in 2014, to 133 in 2015. This can at least in part be attributed to changing demographics in the suburb and across the Tuggeranong Valley.

In 2014 the school Index of Community Socio-Economic Advantage (ICSEA) was 973 which is 27 points below the national average. The panel notes that the ICSEA value can have an effect on school resources and performance and indicates a level of educational advantage based on the educational and occupational indicators of parents. This makes it important that Gilmore Primary School's performance is compared with other similar schools.

The school student demographic has remained constant: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students represented between 18 and 7 percent of all students enrolled between 2011 and 2014; and students with English as a Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) range from between 10 and 17 percent of all students enrolled between 2011 and 2014.

Currently 35 students have had adjustments to their learning programs as reflected in Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs). This figure has remained similar since 2011 despite declining enrolments, forming a larger percentage of total school enrolments. In 2015, 23 children are enrolled in the preschool. Specialist programs at the school have included: The Arts, Japanese, Science and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).. The school also has a strong focus on sustainability and has been awarded status as a 5-Star Sustainable School.

The current principal was appointed in 2007. During the life of the current plan, leadership and staff have undergone significant changes. Staff numbers have reduced by 5 in line with decreasing enrolments and the positions of deputy principal, executive teacher, literacy and numeracy field officer and school psychologist have changed several times from 2011 to 2015.

These changes occurred in line with staff taking up substantive promotion positions across the ACT.

Languages other than English are not currently taught at Gilmore Primary School due to the difficulty in securing a part time Japanese language teacher for the 2015 school year.

The panel noted key changes in school context over the past four years that have had an impact on school performance and the school's improvement efforts. These include the following:

- **Decreases in student enrolments:** As school enrolments have decreased from 2011, it has been necessary to down size classroom space through the removal of 3 portable classrooms and a redesign of the school playground. During the course of the plan this has affected the school environment, extra-curricular programs offered, reduction in staff and spending patterns.
- **Recruitment of new members of the leadership team:** A new deputy principal was appointed in 2014, recorded as the sixth person to enter this role within 8 years. The change is attributed to executive who were promoted elsewhere in the Education and Training Directorate. A new executive officer was appointed at the end of 2013 after previous officers were promoted elsewhere. Finally, the school has experienced change in the Literacy and Numeracy Field Officer role with a new officer appointed into this position on an annual basis over the past 3 years. The result of this change has impacted significantly on the schools improvement agenda over the life of school plan.
- **Changes in physical environment:** The school executive and School Board set a clear plan of expenditure to support necessary changes to the school environment. Over the four years of the plan, the preschool has been painted, the hall has been repainted, senior toilet block refurbished, carpark resealed, a new shed has been installed, vegetable gardens and sensory gardens have been created together with new landscaping of the school grounds. An artist was engaged to paint murals in collaboration with the students on the external school buildings to highlight famous Australian authors. This was undertaken as part of the Artist-in-Schools Program (a creative Education Partnership initiative of the Australia Council for the Arts, in partnership with artsACT and the ACT Education and Training Directorate).The decisions made also supported the school's vision for sustainability by providing the necessary infrastructure.

Section B: School performance

The panel noted that the school has used a combination of standardised system data – that is, Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) and National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) – and school-based results to describe overall student performance over the past four years.

The PIPS data suggests that the school is performing on par with ACT averages in reading and mathematics, with minor variation in the number of students reaching expected growth during their first year of school. In 2013 the school made greater gains in PIPs reading scores than the ACT, but no analysis of the reasons for this change was available to the panel. The school reduced the number of students achieving less than expected growth in reading between 2011 and 2014 from 53% to 25% while at the same time increased the number of students achieving better than expected growth from 9% to 33%. The school has also reduced the number of students making less than expected growth in numeracy from 41% to 25% for the same four

year period. The actions taken to directly influence these achievements were not made clear to the panel.

NAPLAN results for years 3 and 5 in both literacy and numeracy have largely remained constant over the past four years. The school's mean scores have remained close to or below ACT averages in all areas. From the evidence presented, fluctuations in results appear to be driven by natural variation in individual cohort strengths and areas for development. In relation to the NAPLAN targets set by the Education and Training Directorate, the school met 1 of 4 targets in reading and all of the year 5 targets in reading between 2011 and 2014. In relation to writing, the school met 1 of 4 targets between 2011 and 2012. In numeracy, the school met 7 of 8 targets for year 3 and 5 between 2011 and 2014.

The panel also looked at the school's performance against 'similar' schools, as identified on the My School website. Performance has varied overtime. With the exception of year 3 in 2014 the school's reading and mathematics results have been above or close to 'similar' schools results. For three consecutive cohorts writing has been below or substantially below.

When looking at gain score, for those students who have been at the school from year 3 to year 5 the gain in reading has generally been above that of 'similar' schools, the gap has closed in writing with the school's results close to 'similar' schools. In numeracy the school's gain score has improved overtime, since 2013 with the gain score in 2014 being better than that of 'similar' schools.

School-based data shows that the school has not achieved its target to increase the percentage of students scoring at or above the school's reading benchmark; this data set has remained constant at an average of 75 percent over the four years of the school plan.

The school has a comparatively large number of students on Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and several students with Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs). This figure represents a quarter of the school population and includes 6 students currently enrolled in the Learning Support Centre (LSC) and 3 students on Inclusion Support.

A challenge for the school has been working with multiple data sets and finding meaningful ways to analyse the data and measure the impact of its actions. Careful analysis of student achievement data would allow the school to measure and understand the impact of current programs and better inform future improvement strategies, both for individual students and wider cohorts. The school has developed an assessment schedule to aid the routine collection of quantitative student data; however staff reported inconsistent use of the data sets to inform teaching.

Attendance rates for the school have remained constant either on par or higher than that of the ACT average across the four years of the School Plan. The staff has developed heritage values of high expectations, keeping it real, resilience and interpersonal understanding. These values are beginning to underpin conversations at staff level. Students are aware of the 'Five Keys to Success', which form part of the School Wellbeing Policy. Student feedback about behaviour management was used as the impetus to develop the Gilmore Good Citizens club. Students displaying the You Can Do It! 'Five Keys to Success' are nominated to attend a special celebratory morning tea once a fortnight by choosing appropriate behaviours. The panel noted that students were incredibly positive about the Club and were able to identify the types of behaviours they needed to display in order to receive an invitation to the Club.

Stakeholder satisfaction levels, as reported by national survey instruments, reflect high levels of overall satisfaction in the school by staff, with students at or above the ACT average in most areas. Parent and Carer satisfaction has improved over the life of the plan in many areas.

Students consistently reported moderate levels of personal safety both through stakeholder surveys and through interviews with members of the Gilmore Good Citizens Club. Students indicated a strong awareness of the school wellbeing approach and were able to articulate key principles related to the school 'Keys to Success' behaviours. Parents have also identified that behaviour management is an area in need of focus.

Parents reported improved levels of satisfaction with the way the school is maintained, the feedback provided to their children on their progress and the use of ICT at the school. They continue to seek stronger community partnerships and encourage the school to hold high expectations for student achievement. The panel suggests focusing on these areas as part of the next School Plan.

Teachers reported high levels of satisfaction from their teaching at Gilmore Primary School, particularly within the domains of learning and teaching and leadership and management.

Evidence cited and its validation

- NAPLAN and PIPS data 2011 to 2014
- Enrolment data 2010 to 2014
- Stakeholder perception data
- Interviews with students, staff and parents
- Annual School Board Reports 2012 to 2014
- Gilmore Primary School Student Wellbeing Policy.

Section C: School improvement planning and implementation

During the four year improvement cycle, the panel found that Gilmore Primary School has allocated resources in an effort to improve student outcomes. The school has begun to investigate whole-of-school practices in literacy and numeracy. The school has also created an assessment schedule in line with the introduction of new assessment processes such as Middle Years Mental Computation, Stepping Stones, Letter ID, First Steps Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening and BEE Spelling.

Gilmore Primary School worked on the implementation of a consistent numeracy model in an effort to improve teacher confidence and student outcomes. In 2014, an action research plan was developed to align the Stepping Stones resource with a balanced approach to numeracy. This approach was intended to meet the needs of students in multi age classes and cover the related Australian Curriculum components. This model was then implemented across the school with teachers currently developing at different rates of confidence and competence. It is too early at this point for the school to ascertain the impact on student outcomes, although initial feedback from staff is positive.

In the School Plan 2012-2015, Gilmore Primary School identified three priorities for school improvement. These were:

Strategic Priority 1: Improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students K-6

Strategic Priority 2: Undertake a review of the school values across staff, students and the community

Strategic Priority 3: Increase cultural awareness of staff, students and the wider school community

A fourth priority was added in 2013 in response to community feedback:

Strategic Priority 4: Improve the outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

The panel found that the priorities identified were closely aligned to the recommendations of the 2011 External Validation report.

Achievements

Priority 1: Improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students K-6

The performance measures identified by Gilmore Primary School over the life of the four year plan were improve outcomes in writing, numeracy and reading and a closing of the gap between the achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the whole school cohort. Targets were set in relation to school reading and writing benchmarks and NAPLAN scores.

Strategies employed by Gilmore Primary School to work toward their targets over the four years includes the introduction of whole school approaches to literacy and numeracy, assessment and pedagogy, and actively engaging parents as partners in education. Specific programs to address needs were implemented in 2012 and 2013. These included Stepping Stones numeracy, temporary employment of a Reading Recovery teacher, and professional learning for staff on balanced literacy, Writer's Notebook and significant reading difficulties.

In 2014, the school introduced 'The Daily Five' literacy initiative, with a small number of teachers trialing the program. Upper primary teachers attended training for, and reintroduced Middle Years Mental Computation as part of the Mathematics program. In 2014 an Action Research project was initiated to study the effects of Stepping Stones mathematics within a balanced numeracy program. Mentoring was provided by the then Literacy and Numeracy Field Officer to build individual teacher capacity and assist with creation of resources.

Targets were set each year. The school did not meet its targets in 2012. In 2013 the school achieved the target of 60 percent of students achieving above National Minimum Standards in writing and numeracy. The school did not meet its reading target in 2013. In 2014, targets changed slightly. Year 3 students achieved well below the target in both reading and numeracy, while year 5 students achieved above the targets. In writing, 75 percent of students achieved school benchmarks, based on the First Steps program.

In relation to targets around parental engagement, School Board Reports allude to opportunities provided to parents to engage with the school, but no data was kept on the increase in engagement. Limited data was provided to the panel on the results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students due to the small cohort sizes

Priority 2: Undertake a review of the school values across staff, students and the community.

The performance measures used by Gilmore Primary School to measure Priority Area 2 related to increasing ownership of the school values by all stakeholders and increasing participation, engagement and feedback from the school community. An increase in staff morale and job satisfaction as shown in the School Satisfaction Survey results were also used as a measure.

On analysing the data available, the panel found the school has implemented a number of strategies in order to review and promote the school's values. In 2012 a review of the current values occurred and the *You Can Do It! Keys for Success – confidence, persistence, getting along,*

organisation and resilience were affirmed. A new Student Wellbeing Policy was also launched after a number of consultative sessions with stakeholders.

In 2012, the school launched its Facebook page, which has been a resounding success. Parents reported at interview that they like the updates posted on Facebook and appreciate the reminders it gives. In 2013 a school code of conduct was introduced and signed by students at the beginning of each year. During the reporting period the school utilised 'Friendly Schools Friendly Classrooms', the 'You Can Do It' program, Peer Support, and Protective Behaviours as part of the Gilmore Social and Emotional Program. In 2014 the Gilmore Good Citizens Club was commenced.

Staff overall job satisfaction increased across the four years by 15%. The panel noted that in terms of feedback from the school community, all questions related to managing student behavior are an area for future focus.

Priority Area 3: To increase cultural awareness of staff, students and the wider school community

In determining progress against this priority, Gilmore Primary School used system survey data and frequency of cultural awareness through teaching programs. Targets were established against each of these performance measures each year.

The panel noted in the life of the school plan, the school reviewed the Student Wellbeing Policy, combined school input into school planning documents, implemented student wellbeing programs such as 'Friendly Schools and Families', 'You Can Do It', 'Friendly Schools Plus', 'Peer Support' and 'Protective Behaviours', and aligned staff performance discussions with the priority.

The panel noted that the Student Wellbeing Policy had been promoted through the school newsletter and website and was reviewed in 2014. The impact of these actions is evident in the school satisfaction survey results between 2013 and 2014 where notable improvements were made. Parent and Carer satisfaction improved by 9% to 55% who believe the school takes their concerns seriously; student satisfaction improved 30% to 78% of students in year 5 and 6 who believe the school takes students' opinions seriously; and 100% of staff in both 2013 and 2014 agree that colleagues value their opinions. The school aimed to develop cross curriculum awareness with staff through focusing on professional dialogue through implementing quality teaching rounds. The school identified that this remains a priority for the future and will be met through professional learning from 2015.

Priority Area 4: To improve the outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

The performance measures used by Gilmore Primary School in relation to this priority included PIPs and NAPLAN results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the development of strong partnerships with the local school community. Targets were established against some of these performance measures each year.

To this end the school: used an action research model to develop a whole school approach to Numeracy; implemented 'I Can' Statements for English, Maths, Science and ICT; commenced work towards a Reconciliation Action Plan; employed an EALD teacher who speaks Aboriginal English; introduced hands-on activities at lunch time; and developed Personalised Learning Plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

PIPs results in 2014 showed 66 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students made expected progress in reading and mathematics compared with 50 percent of non-Indigenous

Australian students. These figures fluctuate over the years. The school reported positive outcomes for Indigenous Australian students who participated in the MiniLit program however documenting this in meaningful ways remains a challenge.

Surveys with staff completed in 2014 indicate that further work is needed in supporting staff in the use of data to improve student outcomes. In 2015, the school has begun work on developing a school Reconciliation Action Plan.

Reflections

Reflection on school performance across the life of the plan was not clearly articulated to the panel. It is important the school carefully document reflections and lessons learnt during the school improvement cycle, particularly in relation to analysis of data. The panel recommends a sharp, integrated focus in relation to planning, assessment and reporting of priority areas. Future school improvement processes would benefit from targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. The panel noted that the constant changes to staffing at teacher and leadership levels, including the Literacy and Numeracy Field Officer position, has complicated the school improvement journey. This impacted on both the consistency of implementation of important initiatives and the consistency of collection of relevant school based data.

Evidence cited and its validation

- Parent, staff and student satisfaction survey data 2012-2015
- School Plan 2012-2015
- School Board Reports 2012-2015
- School Annual Operating Plans 2012-2015
- Professional Pathways Plans
- NAPLAN data 2012-2014
- Interviews with staff, parents and students
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative certificates.

Section D: National tools self-evaluation results

National School Improvement Tool

During 2015 Gilmore Primary School engaged in self-assessment using the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT). The NSIT was introduced to teaching staff who were asked to complete an evaluation for one domain each. The leadership team individually completed the NSIT for all domains. Nine selected families were invited to complete the NSIT for one domain each. The collected data was then triangulated and an average rating assigned. The panel concurs with the school's assessment that limited evidence is available to support the ratings given to each domain.

In validating the school's journey against the National School Improvement Tool the panel noted the following in relation to **Domain 1: An Explicit Improvement Agenda**

- *School leaders articulate a commitment to improvement, but limited attention has been given to specifying detail.*
- *Plans for improvement do not appear to have been clearly communicated, widely implemented or to have impacted significantly on teachers' day to day work.*

- *Targets for improvement are not specific.*
- *Although there is an expressed commitment to improvement, this is not reflected in a high level of enthusiasm for personal change on the part of the staff.*

Three priorities remained constant through the life of the plan, a fourth was added in 2013 based in response to community need. The panel recommends that the school develop an agenda for improvement in partnership with parents and the community, and place a greater focus on being able to describe the student behaviours and learning outcomes that they wish to see. The school is encouraged to set clear targets with accompanying timelines which are rigorously actioned by all staff.

Within **Domain 2: Analysis and discussion of data**, the panel verified the following:

- *Teachers do not consistently analyse data to reflect on their teaching.*
- *The school is unable to demonstrate how data have been used in meetings with parents.*
- *School leaders pay attention to data provided to them about performance of the school and identify areas in which the school is performing relatively poorly or well.*
- *An ad hoc approach exists to building staff skills in the analysis, interpretation and use of classroom data.*

The panel was provided with some evidence of NAPLAN, PIPS and school benchmark reading data. In 2014, the then Literacy and Numeracy Field Officer was instrumental in setting up a spreadsheet to track literacy and numeracy data. The panel recommends that this approach be continued as the school builds its skills in systematic collection and analysis of data. There is evidence to show that the school has collected some data in relation to identified groups of students' literacy and numeracy results.

Within **Domain 3: A culture that promotes learning** the panel verified the following:

- *Behavioural problems and disengagement are issues for a significant proportion of students. In a number of classrooms students are clearly not engaged in productive learning activities.*
- *The school implements its policies by ensuring that disruptive behaviour is dealt with. The school has clear expectations as to how students should behave.*
- *Staff morale is satisfactory.*
- *Parents and families are encouraged to take a genuine and close interest in the work of the school.*

The panel notes that students are able to articulate 'the Five Keys to Success' and the student wellbeing behaviour management steps. Students are introduced to, and asked to sign, the school's code of conduct at the beginning of each year. While the school has introduced a number of programs within the Kidsmatter initiative, behaviour management currently takes up considerable executive staff time and does disrupt classes. Satisfaction data from both parents and students indicate that behaviour management is a priority area for future focus. As the school has noted, extreme behaviours are magnified in a small setting, and this will need to continue to be addressed in order for the school to progress its academic agenda.

Within **Domain 4: Targeted use of school resources**, the panel verified the following:

- *The school uses its human and physical resources to address the needs of students, although this may not be preceded by a systematic analysis of those needs.*
- *There are very few school-wide programs or policies designed to address the learning needs of particular student groups. School leaders encourage teachers to address individual learning needs in classrooms, but there are very few agreed school-wide strategies for doing this.*
- *Physical learning spaces are used Programs to meet learning needs are prioritised in the school budget.*

The panel recognises in a school with declining enrolments and complex student needs, the targeted use of school resources is challenging due to the limited budget available. In spite of the difficulties, the school has successfully managed its physical environment, maintaining and repainting classroom spaces, removing excess portable buildings and upgrading the playground. The school has also invested in appropriate programs to enhance social skills and school engagement.

In **Domain 5: An expert teaching team**, the panel verified:

- *The school undertakes professional learning activities, although these may not always focus on the development of knowledge and skills required to improve student learning and there may not be a coherent, documented learning plan.*
- *The leadership team is seen as supportive of day-to-day teaching practice.*
- *The school is implementing a formal process for conducting professional discussions with staff.*
- *Attention is paid to strengths and weaknesses in the school-wide team, with strategies in place to recruit staff with particular expertise, to train staff to address particular needs, and to support staff who find it difficult to commit to the school's improvement agenda.*
- *The school provides opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles outside the classroom.*

With a small staff, all members are provided an opportunity to lead initiatives such as curriculum development, sports coordination or sustainability programs. The panel notes that specialist preschool staff were employed during the life of the plan, contributing to the preschool's overall rating of meeting the National Quality Standard. The panel concurs with the school's assessment that formal staff mentoring programs need to be more widely implemented, and acknowledges that high staff turnover has hampered efforts in this area.

Within **Domain 6: Systematic Curriculum Delivery**, the panel agreed:

- *The school's curriculum delivery plan identifies curriculum, teaching and learning priorities and requirements.*
- *The school curriculum plan gives priority to English, Mathematics and Science.*
- *School leaders talk about embedding fundamental cross-curricular skills such as literacy, numeracy and higher order thinking within all subjects, but there is little evidence that school-wide strategies are in place to drive a consistent approach.* The school has a coherent plan for the delivery of Australian Curriculum history and geography. Science is well planned and integrated with ICT, the school values, and literacy. The school sends

overviews home each term for the information of families. The panel concurs with the school's desire to further embed the cultural background of students in the planning of curriculum.

The panel agreed with the following statements within **Domain 7: Differentiated teaching and learning** of the NSIT as it relates to the school:

- *Some use is made of differentiated teaching, but in most classes teachers teach the same curriculum to all students with similar levels of individual support.*
- *School leaders explicitly encourage teachers to make use of assessment instruments to establish where individuals are in their learning.*
- *Reports to parents include suggestions for ways in which parents can support their children's learning.*

The panel notes that there is a high percentage of students on Individual Learning Plans or Personalised Learning Plans. These plans are monitored and tracked to assess the number of students achieving their goals each semester. Most teachers implement the school's comprehensive assessment schedule for literacy and numeracy outcomes. In visits to classrooms, the panel saw limited evidence of differentiation.

Within **Domain 8: Effective Pedagogical Practices**, the panel agreed:

- *School leaders are explicit about their desire to see effective teaching occurring throughout the school, but are less clear about what this might look like.*
- *There is some clarity about what students are expected to learn, but a lack of balance in teaching methods.*
- *There is a particular focus on improved teaching methods in reading, writing, mathematics and science.*

In the area of pedagogy, the panel recognises that transience in the Literacy and Numeracy Field Officer role and school leadership profile has affected the school's progress in implementing whole-school programs. The school has invested in Professional Learning for teachers in research-based literacy and numeracy strategies during the life of the plan, such as First Steps, Daily Five, and Stepping Stones. The panel recommends that the school continue with these strategies and plan an evaluation to gauge the impact on student results.

Within **Domain 9: School-community partnerships**, the panel agreed:

- *The school has external partnerships but these tend to be mutually convenient arrangements.*
- *Partnerships are often established by individual members of staff and have limited whole school support or engagement.*
- *The student needs that partnerships are designed to address may not be made explicit.*
- *No plans exist to systematically review the effectiveness of partnerships, which typically are very dependent on the efforts of a small number of individuals, and so have limited sustainability.*

Gilmore Primary School actively seeks out partnerships with community organisations to enhance student wellbeing. Examples include Kulture Break – Every Chance to Dance Program,

Buoyed Up Sailing Program, and Blue Earth. The panel notes that the issue of sustainability of programs goes beyond external partnerships.

National Safe Schools Audit Tool

This audit was not completed by the school in 2015.

Section E: Commendations and recommendations

Commendations

Gilmore Primary School is commended for the following.

1. **The allocation of staffing resources for maximum benefit.** The panel commends the school for creative school wide solutions to address the needs of students. The current leadership team has strategically allocated staff to the preschool, the release role, and leadership roles outside the classroom. This has allowed the school to continue to provide for students in spite of declining enrolments and staff numbers.
2. **Sustainable school initiatives.** During the life of the school plan, Gilmore Primary has worked to achieve accreditation in all five areas of the Australian Sustainable Schools initiative. Students have taken ownership of the program, particularly in regards to waste, water and energy. The panel commends the inclusive nature of this approach and the opportunities for student leadership that it has created.
3. **Maintaining school resources in the climate of decreasing enrolments.** The school executive has prioritised the repurposing of facilities to maximise their use for a smaller cohort. A great deal of effort has been expended in the school grounds to remove unnecessary portable classrooms and upgrade the playground and school buildings to maintain the quality presentation of the school. The decisions made also supported the school's vision for sustainability by providing the necessary infrastructure.

Recommendations

The panel recommends Gilmore Primary School pays attention to the following opportunities for improvement during the next planning cycle.

1. **Refine and strengthen the drive toward an explicit and detailed improvement agenda.** The panel recommends the school leadership team drive an improvement agenda that is grounded in evidence from research and practice and expressed in terms of improvements in measureable student outcomes. The panel strongly recommends that this improvement plan be developed in conjunction with the school community to ensure strong and optimistic commitment by all stakeholders. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's approach will ensure greater impact on student outcomes.
2. **Embed effective pedagogical practices across the school.** The panel recommends that the school build on the heritage values of staff to develop a pedagogical philosophy that outlines what the school firmly believes about student learning across the curriculum. This will drive a strong focus on quality teaching and learning and on the creation of a culture in which all students are expected to learn effectively. These actions will provide a framework against which to hold teachers accountable for their practice.
3. **Establish systems for collecting and analysing data.** The panel acknowledges that the school has begun the process of building a system for the collection of data. The panel

recommends that the school now develop a systematic approach to access, analysis, discussion and application of data. This will inform whole school teaching practice and provide a system to monitor student progress.

4. **Strengthen the focus on a culture that promotes learning.** The panel acknowledges that the school has made a commitment to positive and caring relationships with students and parents. The panel recommends that the school commit to purposeful and successful learning for all students while continuing to look for effective ways to manage student wellbeing and behaviour.
5. **Extend coaching throughout the school.** Build a solid foundation and system for teacher coaching within the school. This approach offers potential to improve teacher practice, student learning outcomes and leadership development by engaging more staff with demonstrated expertise in the practice of coaching others.

Record of Validation Process

The following people were members of the external validation panel for Gilmore Primary School conducted on Friday 24 July, Monday 27 July and Tuesday 28 July 2015.

Name: Jennifer Howard

School: Maribyrnong Primary School

Name: Felicity Levett

School: Mount Rogers Primary School

Name: Rachel McClure

School: Emmaus Christian School

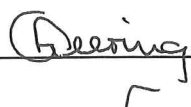
As chair of the panel I endorse that this is a true and accurate record of the findings from the external validation process.

Name: Jennifer Howard

Signature:  Date: 31-8-15


As principal of **Gilmore Primary School** I accept the Validation Report on behalf of the school community.

Name: Andrew Geering

Signature:  Date: 1.9.15

As co-director of Quality Learning Australasia, external lead validators for the conduct of validation process in ACT public schools, I concur that the panel acted within the guidelines set by the ACT Education and Training Directorate.

Name: Michael King

Signature:  Date: 1.9.15