ACT Government
Education

EXTERNAL REVIEW
REPORT for
FARRER PRIMARY SCHOOL

2016

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Contents

Introduction: Overview of the School Review 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 review process every five years. This document captures the findings of the panel during this cycle of school review.

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.

The external review 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

The vision of Farrer Primary School is 'Educational success for a socially and environmentally sustainable future' and the values that guide the work at the school are honesty, persistence, fairness, respect and excellence.

The current Farrer Strategic Plan was written at the end of 2013 with implementation from 2014-2017. As the improvement cycle is not complete the school's Summative Evaluation Report is based on evidence from 2014, 2015 and semester 1 2016. This report will inform the work of the school and Principal, Mrs Linda Heath, who started at the school in semester 2 2014, to establish a new strategic focus.

Farrer Primary School opened in 1970. It currently has 354 students from preschool to year 6, including a Learning Support Unit - Autism specific (LSUA) and it is situated in the south of Canberra in the suburb of Farrer. Both the school and suburb are named after William Farrer (1845-1906) in recognition of his contribution to the Australian wheat industry.

Farrer Primary School is well known for its sustainable practices, Environment Centre and science programs which have served as a showcase for schools across the ACT. The Environment Centre is well served by a Science in Residence program established and maintained for the past 10 years. As well the Japanese Language Other Than English program provides cultural spoken and written experiences for all preschool to year 6 students.

At present Farrer Primary School has 17 full time teachers, 10 teachers who work part time, 7 Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), two Administrative staff and one Building Service Officer. Parents have a strong presence in the school, as does the school in its local community, a feature of which is positive open communication and authentic partnerships.

From 2014 the school's enrolments have steadily risen from 289 to 354. Farrer Primary School services a community with a medium to high Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) background of 1116 and is above the median of 1000. This has dropped from 2014 when it was 1129. The school has maintained a 90 percent plus student attendance record throughout 2014 and 2015. Students from within the Primary Enrolment Area of Farrer and the southern part of Isaacs make up 63 percent of the population. The number of students for whom English is an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) has dropped from 29percent in 2014 to 21percent currently. The number of Indigenous students is less than one percent of the Farrer Primary School population.

The current executive team has been in place since 2015 and it comprises a Principal, Deputy Principal and two School Leader C appointments (SLC). During the life of the plan there have

been significant changes to the senior leadership team during which time four new substantive school leaders have been in place with many opportunities for internal replacements to act in higher duty roles. Teaching and administration staff have been relatively stable over the life of the school plan.

The panel has noted that these changes have not had an impact on the consistent implementation of the school's plan, additionally the school has reflected on their achievements providing evidence to support their progress.

Recent refurbishment of the Cameron building, new disabled car park, water stations, an audio visual system in the school hall along with upgraded playground area, has further enhanced a vibrant learning environment at Farrer Primary School. ICT resourcing since 2014 has been a major emphasis to provide both infrastructure and to develop teacher capacity in this area. There have also been physical resource developments in the school's Environment Centre in the last two years.

Teachers from Farrer Primary School share best practice, strengthen transition connections and build student leadership skills through participation and membership in the South Weston Network of schools.

Section B: School Performance

Farrer Primary School has outlined in its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan the following three priority areas which are closely aligned to the Education Directorate's Strategic Priorities. These are to:

- increase the performance of all students
- connect families and strengthen parental and community engagement
- provide high quality education service to preschool students of a National Quality Standard.

The school has examined some longitudinal system data (NAPLAN), Performance Indicators in Primary School (PIPS) scores, PM Benchmark reading levels, A-E Achievement Data, Reading Intervention data, demographic attendance and process data and Parent, Teacher and Student School Satisfaction Survey data in preparation for the review.

After further analysis by the review team of tabled mean score data from 2013 to 2016 the following school trends were evident:

TABLE 1: NAPLAN mean data scores 2013-2016

School Mean Score	2013	2014	2015	2016	Trend
Reading year 3	414	463	451	508	Varied Trend
Reading year 5	517	528	504	538	Varied Trend
Writing year 3	417	438	426	448	Varied Trend
Writing year 5	478	465	475	483	Varied Trend
Numeracy year 3	401	456	402	430	Varied Trend

| Numeracy year 5 | 497 | 496 | 479 | 501 | Varied Trend |

As a consequence of analysis of the 2013 year 3 means in reading, writing and numeracy the school identified targets in the 2014 Annual Operating Plan to increase the number of students achieving the Minimum Achievement Standard (MAS) in reading and spelling (measured by school data). They established base line data for the measurement of number and also a target to increase the percentage of students scoring above average growth in PIPS testing for mathematics and reading. Farrer Primary School believes that their strong emphasis on literacy intervention provided by highly experienced specialist teachers for K to year 5 students in 2014 and 2015 could have contributed to the high growth of students from year 3 to year 5.

The review team can concur with the school's analysis identifying that growth in NAPLAN mean scores has occurred in year 3 reading and year 3 writing from 2013 to 2015.

As well, the 2014 Farrer year 3 mean scores across all five domains was considerably above the ACT and South/Weston Network means.

Farrer Primary School did not reflect on their NAPLAN data against all like schools, cohort growth data or achievements in bands.

There were no clear trends against the system sector groups of boys, girls and EAL/D for year 3 or year 5 students across 2014 and 2015.

The review team can acknowledge that there was demonstrated strong effect size growth across the five domains in 2015 compared to 2014.

In 2014 and 2015 the Farrer Primary School PIPS results in reading and mathematics have shown an increase in the percentage of students achieving 'expected' or 'above expected' growth compared to 2013. There was improvement showing the school was above the state and cohort averages, for both reading and mathematics in PIPS 2014 and 2015 achievement data. When comparing PIPS 2012 data with year 3 NAPLAN cohort data 2015, Farrer Primary School achieved above the ACT average in reading and below the ACT mean in numeracy. The following factors were identified as contributing to this outcome; explicit teaching of phonological awareness, modelled and shared writing, literacy intervention with small groups, regular benchmarking of assessments linked to targeted support and proficient teaching by skilled educations.

The leadership team has led the establishment of a centralised data base linked to their assessment schedule for tracking and monitoring. Teachers are beginning to use this student achievement data and their own assessments to inform their planning and programs.

A PM Benchmark reading data analysis, for 2014 and 2015, was presented in the Summative Evaluation Report.

The table below shows end of year student percentages for reaching benchmarks with full comprehension across year levels.

TABLE 2: PM Benchmark reading achievement by year level 2014-2015

Yr	Level	2014	2015
K	8	92%	92%
1	16	78%	80%
2	24	70%	82%
3	30+	70%	65%
4	30+	60%	86%
5	30+	86%	86%
6	30+	90%	91%

In 2015 the percentage of students in Kindergarten, year 1 and year 2 who were deemed to be at or above level has remained constant or increased, whilst there has been an increase in the percentage of students below expected PM Benchmark levels in year 3. From year 4 the data shows an increased percentage reaching and exceeding the minimum expected PM Benchmark reading level.

When comparing cohort data between PIPS and NAPLAN, positive trends were maintained achieving above the ACT average in all areas except for year 3 numeracy 2015. The resourcing of literacy intervention specialists has been a significant investment at Farrer Primary School. Data monitored across time for these students supports the effectiveness of the targeted interventions.

The tracking and monitoring of PM Benchmarks, Torch, Spellodrome diagnostic, PAT Maths and the Writing Guide are analysed each term. The school has indicated that a comparative summative evaluation will occur at the end of 2016 as the assessment tools above will have been used consistently across 2015 and 2016.

Cross grade moderation of Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards A to E, shows a consistent spread of grades across cohorts.

The school has commented on its Parent, Teacher and Student School Satisfaction Survey results from 2014 to 2015. Their overall satisfaction data from staff and parents has trended upward over the past two years. The areas of strength for 2015 included the use of learning technologies and the management of student behaviour. An area that requires further work is student to teacher feedback. Students reflected to reviewers their need for informed feedback from their teacher about their learning.

Collaborative practices at Farrer Primary School include, semester planning release days, report writing days, sharing of practice at team, focus and staff meetings, executive staff facilitation of data analysis meetings, Professional Pathway discussions linked to Annual Action Plans (AAPs) and Quality Teaching and AITSL standards.

Evidence cited

- PIPS performance and growth data 2014 to 2015
- NAPLAN data 2013 to 2016
- Education Directorate targets 2014 to 2015
- Parent, Student and Teacher School Satisfaction Data 2013 to 2015
- School Satisfaction Survey Data 2014 and 2015
- School Summative Evaluation Report 2016
- Student Attendance Data 2014 to 2015
- Demographic Data 2014 to 2016
- PM Benchmark reading data 2014 to 2015
- A to E Achievement Data 2014 to 2015

Section C: School Improvement Planning and Implementation

The recommendations from the 2013 external validation report included; a focus on literacy, data analysis, a systemic approach to student achievement and opportunities for community engagement.

In 2014, the school identified three main areas for improvement that closely aligned with both the external validation recommendations and the Directorate's 'Educational Capital: Leading the Nation Strategic Plan' 2014-2017.

School Priority Areas are:

- to increase the performance of all students
- to connect families and strengthen parental and community engagement
- to provide high quality education service to preschool students of a National Quality Standard.

Strategic Priority 1: To increase the performance of all students

School improvement in this priority has been measured by NAPLAN achievement, the Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) Kindergarten assessment, measures of achievement on school based minimum achievement standards in reading, spelling and writing and measured growth in numeracy outcomes.

During the period of this Strategic Plan the Education Directorate set various targets for student achievement in NAPLAN. Trend data over this period of time demonstrates various fluctuations above and below the scaled scores comparing Farrer to all students in the ACT and comparatively to students in the South Canberra-Weston region, with an upward trend in place from 2015 to 2016. Documentation supports the leadership team's data interpretation that the school has achieved within the confidence interval of the Directorate's targets and that the measured effect size is to be commended.

The school uses the directorate's suggested minimum achievement standards for reading to guide their decision making in regard to those students at risk of not achieving annual growth in reading skills for all students K-6 and especially for those in kindergarten through to year 2. The

proportion of students who achieved the minimum achievement standard in reading and spelling as measured by the school based data was 78% of all students in reading and 54% of all students for spelling. The leadership team used a disciplined dialogue data analysis tool to further understand school wide data. They have introduced data discussions between teaching team partners and provided all staff with additional time to reflect upon the results their students had achieved. As a result a process of using data to inform teaching and learning practice is developing across the school.

In 2014 the proportion of students achieving growth in number as measured by Count Me In Too (CMIT) and Middle Years Mental Computation (MYMC) was 85%, further discussion by the staff recognised that CMIT is a diagnostic tool used to inform the teaching of mathematics. Further consultation and investigation lead the leadership team to introduce Progressive Achievement Tests in Maths (PAT Maths) as the tool to assess numeracy growth from 2015 onwards. Staff are beginning to become more confident in both the administration and interpretation of the PAT Maths assessment, a deeper understanding of how to use the data to inform the 'where to next' will be a future focus.

Annually, the percentage of students achieving better than expected growth in Performance Indicators in Primary School (PIPS) is an achievement of which Farrer is very proud. Over the life of the plan student achievement data in PIPS has shown that in both reading and maths students at Farrer have attained expected or better than expected growth greater than or equal to 95 percent.

The panel found evidence in the documentation that building a culture that uses an evidence base to measure improvement in student outcomes was an imperative. This was supported by a documented assessment schedule that highlights key responsibilities for each grade level across the year. Systematic data tracking was highlighted as a mechanism that enables classroom teachers to focus on the achievement and progress of each individual student. As a result of review panel interviews with teachers it has been determined that further support is required for teachers to be able to access and use the GradeXpert data base system effectively.

Google Apps for Education (GAFE) is a new feature of the work of both staff and students especially those in year 6 due to the introduction of a Personal Electronic Device policy. The year 6 students are connected to many learning programs through the Google platform and are confident and intelligent users of the available tools.

All staff are becoming familiar with their newly acquired teacher computers and are using the Google Platform in staff, team and professional learning meetings. This platform enables sharing of documents, working together on plans remotely, and an increase in collaborative planning documentation.

The Quality Teaching Model was previously used as the basis for teachers to observe and discuss each other's practice. From 2015 there has been a move towards integrating the Professional Standards for Teachers as a guide to enable staff to examine strengths and improvement areas.

Additionally teachers identify skills and knowledge in which they would like to improve, and seek out colleagues who can support them to develop their understandings. Staff commented that this enabled them to take ownership over improving their own professional practice.

The school has developed an informed and consistent approach to identify and provide targeted learning assistance to students. Teaching staff identify students who require support, referrals are made to a school based team, parents are informed of the learning interventions for their children, the support to be provided is documented and the intervention process that occurs both within the classroom and in targeted intervention groups outside of the classroom, has

improved outcomes for the students involved. The student support process ensures that all students' needs are being met and that there is a documented process in place to ensure that staff have a deep knowledge of what support has been provided to students in their class.

Strategic Priority 2: To connect families and strengthen parental and community engagement

Farrer Primary School provides rich and varied opportunities for families and community to be involved in the life of the school and for parents and families to develop knowledge of their child's learning progress. The main goals of this priority were to ensure that the responses to the following parent survey statements demonstrated an increased percentage of agreement;

- 'This school takes parents opinions seriously' and 'community partnerships are valued and maintained'
- 'The school encourages students and their families to share ideas'
- 'The school communicates important information in an effective way'.

The currency of the school website, the sharing of the directorate's Parental Engagement Framework and the advent of the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) strategy for students in year 6 were identified as areas in which communication to families could be strengthened.

The school found that updating the school website in line with a new format from the Directorate provided a degree of positivity but the greatest area of positive response has been the introduction of The School App. Since the introduction of the App, in term 2 2014, data indicates that there are now, in August 2016, 654 users and that the App has become the main form of communication within the school community. Parents find the App a valuable tool that enables them to communicate with the school when their child is absent, to complete excursion notes and provides knowledge of upcoming events. An additional sustainable practice has been the introduction of an on-line only newsletter that supports the schools commitment to sustainability.

Developing an understanding of the Parental Engagement Framework has seen an increase in the number of parents supporting students through reading programs, the Environment Centre, at the preschool, various sports carnivals and attendance on excursions. The preschool parent community has especially responded to the opportunities provided to be involved in the school.

Strategic Priority 3: To provide high quality educational service to preschool students, of a National Quality Standard

Every preschool is required to use the Early Years Learning Framework to inform and reflect upon their teaching practice; staff must have a deep understanding of the seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard (NQS) and knowledge of the Education and Care Services National Regulations and National Law. Farrer Primary School set a target that by the end of 2015 the preschool will have achieved an accreditation in the NQS seven quality areas of at least satisfactory.

The preschool team leader along with the preschool team wrote their annual Quality Improvement Plan and submitted it to the Children's Policy and Regulation Unit for accreditation during 2015. During the accreditation process the authorised officer noted that:

- the preschool team is a high-functioning unit that includes members from across the preschool and junior school setting

- deliberate and sensitive staffing and regular team meetings focused the work

- planning showed evidence of collaboration between the preschool teacher, assistant and the team leader

- the preschool team were invited to showcase their work at an Education Directorate Preschool Quality in Action exhibition, especially in regard to their work in sustainable practices and science and the development of an outstanding physical environment.

As a result of the work that occurred in the preschool area Farrer Primary School was recognized as having achieved Exceeding in all seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard. They were especially commended in *Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities* for their effective enrolment process, the valuing of family input and contribution towards the service, effective use of strategies to create a warm and welcoming environment and providing families with community support and resources to address student needs.

Evidence cited

- School Strategic Plan 2014 to 2017

- PIPS performance and growth data 2012 to 2015

- NAPLAN data 2012 to 2015

- Parent, Student and Teacher School Satisfaction Data 2012 to 2015

- School Climate Survey 2014 and 2015

- School Summative Evaluation Report 2016

- Student Attendance Data 2012 to 2015

- Reading Support and Intervention Growth Data

- PM Benchmark reading data 2014 to 2016

- Data Discussion Timetable 2015 to 2016

- Quality Teaching Correlation Chart 2016

- Staff Professional Learning 2016

- Community Events Timetable 2016

- Parental Engagement Framework

- Bring Your Own Device Information Session 2015

- Preschool Accreditation 2015

- Preschool Indigenous Perspective 2015

- Preschool Quality Improvement Plan 2014 to 2015

- Preschool Spot Check Report

Reflections

The Farrer Primary School priorities have remained constant over the life of the School Plan. There has however been a significant change in the leadership of the school over the last three years. The current leadership team has done an excellent job in reflecting upon the data for the period under review and as a result have written a comprehensive Summative Evaluation Report and associated supporting documentation.

Appropriate targets have been set each year in the Annual Operating and Annual Action Plan to measure improvement over time. This has been the key to effectively guide and reflect upon the continuous improvement journey of Farrer Primary School.

With the appointment of the new principal there has been an increased focus upon data and data collection protocols. The leadership team have used the collected data to begin to understand the achievements of the school and to inform decision making. An important development for the school has been the identification of students who are not making expected progress, including a process to identify and address their needs and a cyclical timetable of intervention that ensures that all students are being responded to in an informed way. The leadership team is committed to ensuring that these processes are strengthened, shared and embedded across the school and that data conversations are embedded in team and staff meetings.

Connecting and building parent and community engagement has also been a feature of the strategic priorities and there has been excellent uptake of the use of the school App and increased awareness by parents of how they can be connected to the school. Additionally, Farrer Preschool continues to be closely connected to the needs of the community and in the period of the current strategic plan has built a strong partnership with the Kindergarten teaching team and the broader school community.

Section D: National Tools Self-Evaluation Results

National School Improvement Tool

Farrer Primary School has identified that this framework was reflected on and completed by teachers in both 2015 and 2016. After collaboration to meaningfully reflect on school processes and effectiveness, the leadership team aggregated assessments and formed a consensus on domain descriptors and evidence across all nine domains. In 2015 these deliberations assisted in developing and refining the Annual Action Plan and Board Report. It included specific staff identified action around using evidence based learning support with a focus on extension and continued lesson observation and feedback.

In 2016 the nine domains were mapped out and quality time was provided for staff in teaching teams, across grades and individually, to understand each domain and collect evidence from Low to Outstanding. Evidence was combined that was common to all groups and the master framework with shading was considered along with key commendations and recommendations. Feedback from staff was sought for additional amendments.

The review team can affirm that there is some alignment between the school identified domain strengths and the review team identified strengths, however there is strong alignment between school and review team commendations and recommendations.

At Farrer Primary School the combined time reviewers spent across the three days in the school, in conversations with the principal, leaders, teachers, learning support assistants, students, parents and board members was approximately 40 hours. Another 12 hours was spent on reviewer moderation, writing and preparation for presentations to leaders and staff.

The panel noted the following in relation to the **Explicit Improvement Agenda** domain.

- *The school has developed an agenda for improvement in partnership with parents and the community and school leaders can describe the improvements they wish to see in student behaviours and outcomes. This agenda is communicated in staff meetings, school newsletters, parent-teacher meetings.*

- *The leadership team has analysed school performance data over a number of years and is aware of trends in student achievement levels. Targets for improvement are clear and accompanied by timelines.*

- *The school leadership team is clearly committed to finding ways to improve on current student outcomes. This is reflected in an eagerness to learn from research evidence.*

- *There is evidence of a school-wide commitment to every student's success and staff of the school tell stories of significant student improvement.*

- *The principal and other school leaders articulate a shared commitment to improvement.*

Comments and Findings

The school Summative Evaluation Report showed strong evidence that over the life of the plan data has been used to effectively drive decision making, including for students in priority groups.

While there have been some disruptions in senior leadership positions the review team found that this appears to have had minimal impact on the implementation of strategic plan priorities.

The strategic plan template provided by the Directorate at the time of the 2014-2017 School Strategic Plan (SSP) being written did not necessitate the inclusion of targets and as a result the targets set in each years' Annual Action Plan (AAP) vary. They are a reference point against which the school has measured their progress and reported accurately to the board.

Parent responses were varied in relation to what all the key priorities were and how the school improvement agenda could be accessed. Stakeholders will be consulted to ensure there is a shared commitment to the vision and understanding of goals and targets in the next SSP plan.

Within the **Analysis and Discussion of Data** domain, the panel verified the following.

- *There is evidence that the principal and other school leaders view reliable and timely student data as essential to their effective leadership of the school. There is a documented school plan and timetable for the annual collection of data on student achievement .*

- *One or more members of staff have been assigned responsibility for implementing the annual plan, analysing the full range of school data, and summarising, displaying and communicating student outcome data for the school. The school has ensured that appropriate software is available and that at least these assigned staff have been trained to undertake data analyses.*

- *Time is set aside (e.g., on pupil free days and in staff meetings) for the discussion of data and the implications of data for school policies and classroom practices. These discussions occur at whole-school and team levels. The school can illustrate through project plans how data have been used to identify priorities, take action and monitor progress.*

Comments and Findings

It was clear to the review team that the school's leadership team utilised collaborative practices to interpret and reflect on the school's progress based on collected data. They had a deep understanding of trends and could clearly articulate how this information has informed decision making and will in the future further inform 'point of need' teaching and learning sequences.

Teachers enter their own data, based on a school assessment schedule, into GradeXpert. Meeting structures allow for student data to be discussed in teams and used to inform practice. Embedding the use of disciplined dialogue protocols at regular executive led team meetings would assist to build teacher data literacy skill, confidence and capacity.

Further use of the range of summative data available would support teachers to regularly triangulate information to inform student progress.

Clear processes for teachers to refer students to the Student Support Team have been established using student data as a springboard for conversation. Capturing these processes and procedures using a Response to Intervention Framework is being considered.

With respect to **A Culture that Promotes Learning** domain, the panel noted the following.

- *High levels of trust are apparent across the school community. There is a strong sense of belonging and pride in the school.*

- *The 'tone' of the school reflects a school-wide commitment to purposeful learning. There are very few obvious behavioural, attendance or engagement problems and behaviour management takes up very little, if any, time of school leaders and classroom teachers.*

- *Respectful and caring relationships are reflected in the ways in which staff, students and parents interact and in the language they use.*

- *Parents and families are encouraged to take a genuine and close interest in the work of the school and are welcomed as partners in their children's learning.*

- *Staff morale is generally high.*

- *The school effectively implements its policies, for example, by ensuring that disruptive behaviour, bullying and harassment are dealt with promptly. The school has clear expectations for how students should behave and interact with one another.*

- *Most parents take an obvious interest in their children's learning. Engagement is primarily through regularly scheduled parent-teacher interviews.*

Comments and Findings

Parents and students hold the staff and leadership team in high regard. Parents commented that the efforts the school has made to improve communication has been valued. Parents spoke highly of the school, having confidence that issues, when they arise, are dealt with promptly. They affirmed the school's Multi-aged classroom (MAC) student inclusion practices and greatly appreciated the chance to participate in learning journey visits.

Targeted literacy and numeracy assistance is highly structured and planned in 10 week learning episodes for 3 hours each week for identified students. Follow up on student progress and regular sharing of information between teachers are strong features of practice.

The Farrer Student Senate acts as the year 6 governing body, enabling student involvement in school decision making. There are strong connections with the local network in building student leadership skills through hosting network student leader activities.

Preschool and kindergarten teachers have embedded transition activities that involve whole school events. Examples of preschool teacher inclusion as part of a wider teaching team was evident.

The panel noted the following in relation to the **Targeted Use of Resources** domain.

- *The principal and other school leaders have introduced programs and strategies to identify and address the needs of students in the school and are sourcing and applying available resources to meet those needs.*

- *The school has developed processes (e.g., systematic testing and assessment) for identifying student learning needs.*

- *Programs to meet individual learning needs (e.g., programs for gifted students, students with learning difficulties, students for whom English is a second language, Indigenous students, refugees) are prioritised, where possible, in the school budget.*

- *Learning spaces are organised for whole group work, small group work and individual work.*

Comments and Findings

The school has used locally raised funds to support the provision of ICT resources as well as enhancement to external play spaces, furniture enables cooperative strategies however teachers did not comment that this was a strong feature of how students learn.

Year 6 students have been involved in a Personal Electronic Device (PED) initiative in 2013 and 2014 and this is expanding to year 5 in 2017. Significant investment has been provided to purchase Chromebooks and interactive whiteboards. The use of GAFE to connect to each other's work and for reflection was evident. The review team noted how this has led to a change in teaching practice in some areas of the school.

Flexible use of human resources and additional school funds supplement the budget for Learning Assistants to both support and extend students.

Teachers commented that they felt the school provided adequate resources and PL opportunities.

Farrer Primary School has very well kept and maintained buildings and grounds.

Consider in the annual roll out new furniture Teacher-student conference tables, the need for everyone to have a chair and creative and sensory equipment for MAC students in classrooms.

The Environment Centre, Flexible Learning Environment and Japanese classroom are well resourced and utilised.

Within the **An Expert Teaching Team** domain, the panel verified the following.

- *There is evidence that the principal and other school leaders see the development of staff into an expert and coherent school-wide teaching team as central to improving outcomes for all students.*

- *Teachers visit each other's classrooms.*

- *Attention is paid to strengths and weaknesses in the school-wide team, 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.*

- *The principal and leadership team are seen as supportive ofthe day-to-day practice and learning of teachers.*

- *Teachers are open to constructive feedback and provide feedback to colleagues, although there may not be formal mentoring or coaching arrangements in place.*

- *The school is implementing a formal process for conducting professional discussions with staff.*

Comments and Findings

The leadership team have streamlined the process for teacher attendance at professional learning (PL), incorporating the expectation that newly acquired learning will be shared with other staff including the use of correlation charts and a skills register to track staff confidence and expertise.

The school may like to consider articulating an Annual Professional Learning Plan prior to the beginning of the school year which is aligned to the annual key improvement strategies in the new SSP.

A Classroom Lesson Observations and Feedback (CLOF) Framework which is linked to AITSL Standards and Professional Pathways is used to provide reflection opportunities for all teachers.

A thorough process had been undertaken so that all teachers were well informed about the NSIT domains and descriptors, making a contribution to school commendations and recommendations.

Broader sharing and documenting of planning and teaching strategies would enable development of a shared understandings of both the horizontal and vertical curriculum enacted at Farrer.

Teachers commented that they would welcome the school leaders to work with them during their planning time and would appreciate having the voice of the leadership team as their critical friend. This would assist them to understand if they are on the 'right track'.

In the domain **Systematic Curriculum Delivery**, the panel noted the following.

- *The school has a documented plan for curriculum delivery that includes year level and term plans, but the progression of learning from year to year is not always obvious and the relationship between the pieces of the plan (the year, term and unit plans) would benefit from further clarification.*

- *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.*

- *Discussions about curriculum delivery tend to be with a year level focus rather than being driven by a leadership team with a whole-school approach.*

Comments and Findings

The review team noted there was high variability in the use of formative assessment strategies, success criteria and learning intentions.

Teachers described as valuable the moderation writing guide with exemplars and stated they were a good reference point used to inform student learning progress.

The school's decision to audit current curriculum programs will be an excellent starting point to inform consistent curriculum design and program implementation in the future. Units of work designed by teaching partners could immediately be put into shared folders on the G Drive so that other teachers can take into account students' prior learning.

Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar are used in K-2 with some extension modifications. Ensuring that all students are stretched and that knowledge is able to be transferred to specific reading skills and strategies, will be important areas to focus upon.

All teachers are using the Australian Curriculum to guide their work including the MAC curriculum which has some modifications.

In consideration of the domain **Differentiated Teaching and Learning**, the panel found the following.

- *School leaders explicitly encourage teachers to tailor their teaching to student needs and readiness. This includes the systematic use of assessment instruments (standardised assessment tasks and teacher developed assessment tools) to establish where individuals are in their learning and to identify skill gaps and misunderstandings.*

- *Reports to parents show progress over time and include suggestions for ways in which parents can support their children's learning.*

- *Some use is made of differentiated teaching (e.g., differentiated reading groups in the early primary years), but in most classes teachers teach the same curriculum to all students with similar levels of individual support.*

- *Regular assessments of student learning are undertaken.*

Comments and Findings

Teachers spoke about differentiation practices with varying confidence and knowledge. Teachers have some understanding about adjustment of tasks to address learner needs however this was not consistent or highly evident in planning and assessment. The most identified differentiated support for learning was in the early years, particularly with reading. Student goal setting could easily become a feature in every year 3 to 6 classroom by sharing Tests of Reading Comprehension (TORCH) reading results with students and identifying reading strategies to be worked on through short cycle teaching episodes.

Teachers trialled and adopted the Directorate's proposed reporting template in 2014. The reporting template shows ways in which parents can support their child's learning at home. The active involvement of parents in learning journeys also show ways in which the school reports student progress made over time. The review team saw high levels of parent attendance at learning journeys, especially by fathers.

Students and parents commented on the value and enjoyment of extension mathematics and Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics (STEAM) programs.

The panel noted the following regarding the domain **Effective Pedagogical Practices**.

- *School leaders are committed to continuous improvement in teaching practices throughout the school and expect team leaders and teachers to identify ways of doing this.*

- *School leaders are explicit about their desire to see effective teaching occurring throughout the school. School leaders take a close interest in the school's literacy and numeracy results, and will need to engage in discussions with staff about effective teaching strategies.*

- *There is some clarity about what students are expected to learn, but a lack of balance in teaching methods (e.g., over-reliance on whole-group teaching or very little explicit teaching).*

Comments and Findings

Displays of student work, environmental print and the provision of literacy resources in all classrooms were highly evident across the school. Classrooms looked stimulating and inviting.

Students were routinely observed to be highly engaged in learning tasks and spoke confidently to reviewers about what they had been asked to achieve. There was less clarity from students about how connections could be made between learning or how they knew what to do to improve. Consideration could be given to establishing and consistently using identified school wide feedback strategies, including written and digital feedback.

Teachers value the collaborative conversations they are having from identified class observations (CLOF). With high levels of mutual trust evident the benefits of this valued professional practice may be strengthened through training of teachers and leaders to effectively give and receive feedback, also establishing a shared understanding of what quality teaching and learning at Farrer Primary School is, for use in staff induction and to inform PL and coaching.

In the final domain, **School-Community Partnerships**, the panel found the following.

- *The school has established one or more partnerships with families, local businesses and/or community organisations with the express purpose of improving outcomes for*

students. Partnerships have generally been initiated by the senior leadership team and have their support.

- *Each partnership brings staff and students of the school together with external partners such as families, other education or training institutions and community organisations.*

- *Attention has been given to communication and to the sharing of experiences within the partnership; however, there may be no formal plan for reviewing the partnership's outcomes and effectiveness.*

Comments and Findings

Farrer Primary School has numerous connections with families and outside organisations. Over the life of the plan these partnerships range from highly organised and formal such as; the South/Weston Network of Schools, P&C, Ride or Walk To School, Fresh Tastes Program, Canteen Kitchen Kids, Instrumental Music Program, Schools in Japan, After School Care, preschool play group, Pegasus and Health Networks; through to a wide range of more informal partnerships providing extra curricula activities, such as: BMX workshops, bike club, Environment Center animal and garden bed volunteers, parents partnering with school BYO device policy, Gross and Fine Motor Programs and timetabled community events.

Parents commented that they felt welcomed to be engaged in their child's learning at Farrer Primary School and that they were well informed. The use of the school App by parents is high. The review team can affirm the valuable work of the school to improve communication with parents and their intention to establish a volunteer skills register for use by teachers to tap into parent, business and community expertise to support learning in 2017.

<u>National Safe Schools Framework: School Audit Tool</u>

The school has identified that this framework was discussed in staff meetings during 2016. Each teacher rated the school using the online audit tool under the nine elements of the National Safe Schools Framework. After results were shared with staff the executive team compiled the ratings by recording the median group result, followed by a master copy being presented back to staff for amendments and discussion.

The strongest five elements that were all, mostly and definitely true were:

- leadership commitment to a safe school

- the early intervention and ongoing support to identified students

- positive behaviour management

- authentic student engagement in learning

- professional learning

The audit tool indicated that Farrer Primary School would benefit from:

- a whole school approach to promoting explicit pro-social values and expectations

- teaching personal safety and protective behaviours skills and understandings

- working collaboratively with community organisations to provide opportunities for education on issues related to student safety and well being.

Section E: Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

The review team commends Farrer Primary School for the following :

1. The consistent focus on its three School Strategic Plan priorities over the last two and a half years including reaching preschool accreditation as Exceeding across all seven National Quality Standard areas.

2. Developing strong literacy and numeracy school data collection systems across the school to identify, track and monitor student learning. The data sets have helped to establish an understanding of how an evidence based approach to decision making can be implemented across the whole school. The school leadership team and many teachers believe that reliable data on student outcomes is crucial to informing the school's improvement agenda.

3. The positive manner in which the school embraces the integration and inclusion of students with additional needs, including deployment of staff to make the best use of their expertise to add value to the learning programs of identified students. Parents and families acknowledged the importance of their role in their child's learning and feel valued as partners in their child's learning. They placed great importance on the manner in which the whole school community works together in a mutually supportive way to ensure success for all students.

4. The development of a consistent approach to the identification of students specific learning needs to ensure that interventions are targeted and timely. The identification process, referral documentation and student support meeting processes have enabled a strategic focus on ensuring students are meeting their learning targets. The timetable of support for those students is seen to be an informed and effective one and the time given to support students both inside and outside of the classroom environment has improved outcomes for those students.

5. There is an obvious sense of belonging and pride in the school. Students, staff and parents speak very highly of the school. Students feel safe, parents feel welcome and listened to and there are strong relationships between teachers and students. The review team can affirm that the parents value the small, relaxed community feel of Farrer Primary School and its involvement with the wider community.

6. The Environment Centre provides a valuable place where students are engaged in science and sustainability learning and where the community feels a strong commitment and connection. Many community members, staff and students spoke of the Environment Centre as playing a key role in enabling families to connect with the school, for students to be provided with an alternate setting for learning and for developing school wide sustainability practices.

Recommendations

The review team recommends that Farrer Primary School consider the following opportunities when developing the next 2017 to 2022 School Strategic Plan and related AAPs.

- Design the improvement agenda with a narrow and sharp focus, in collaboration with all stakeholders so that it:
  - connects strongly to the school vision
  - focusses whole school attention on core learning priorities based on practices that lead to measurable improvement in student learning
  - includes both long and short term strategies, timelines and meaningful targets for all subject cohorts and classes, that inform teaching and that enable achievement growth to be tracked over time
  - ensures roles and responsibilities align with key improvement strategies which embrace the work and accountability levels of all leaders, teachers and administrative staff.

- The continued building of a school culture that promotes intellectual rigour where high expectations are the norm, where every minute of teaching counts, where the status quo is challenged, and where the bar is lifted around all academic learning and all school practices. Embed multiple levels of accountability and the articulation of whole school expectations to increase consistency of practice so that every child fulfills their potential.

- Develop and articulate a vertically aligned Curriculum Delivery Plan for the teaching of the Australian Curriculum. Make explicit what and when teachers should teach and students should learn, monitoring how the school's written and enacted curriculum are aligned. Ensure the school's curriculum plan is centrally housed and made available to families using various digital platforms.

- That Farrer Primary School continues to embed the use of all school data sets to:
  - build a culture of self-evaluation and reflection across the school based on high levels of data literacy confidence of all teachers and leaders
  - identify starting points for improvement and continually adjust and differentiate teaching in response to progress that individuals are making
  - communicate about class performance and progress ensuring there is vertical alignment of all curriculum content
  - monitor and support teachers to consistently document these adjustments into their planning, while building teachers' feedback and assessment skills and strategies.

- Build a shared understanding of what a Quality Teaching and Learning pedagogy looks, sounds and feels like at Farrer Primary School for teachers and students. Ensure that this pedagogy is based on research and is embedded in every classroom by:
  - collecting and analysing evidence of the implementation of the agreed pedagogical framework from 'walk through' data gathering procedures to target improvement focus areas
  - embedding a quality explicit coaching program for leaders, teachers and Learning Support Assistants
  - leaders working in classrooms with teachers.

Section F: Record of School Review Process

The following people were members of the external School Review Panel for Farrer Primary School conducted on 7- 9 September 2016.

Name:	Dianne Pekin	ACER:	Lead Reviewer
Name:	Julie Cooper	School:	Principal, Franklin Early Childhood School

As chair of the Review Team I endorse that this is a true and accurate record of the findings from the external School Review process.

Name: Dianne Pekin		
Signature:	Date:	23 / 09 / 2016

As Principal of Farrer Primary School I accept the School Review Report on behalf of the school community.

Name: Linda Heath		
Signature:	Date:	04 / 11 / 2016