

Palmerston District Primary School Annual Action Plan Report 2017

Context

Palmerston District Primary School is situated at the entrance of the Gungahlin District and was opened in 1995. The school is a harmonious mixture of families from different backgrounds and cultures. In 2017 the school has approximately 650 students in classes from preschool to year 6. The school consists of five preschool classes, 21 mainstream classes, one Learning Support Unit, the Gungahlin Introductory English Centre sub-school and an integrated Learning Support Centre. Two of the mainstream classes are dedicated to students who are identified as intellectually gifted, these classes are known as Challenging Academic Performance (CAP) classes. As well as dedicated classes, children from the CAP program, who are identified through a rigorous identification process, are catered for in integrated mainstream classes

Our school vision is: *Engage, Empower, Achieve* and our school mission is: *Empowering all students to become successful learners and valuable citizens*. We model our school values of Palmerston PRIDE - *Participation, Respect, Integrity, Determination, Empathy*. A strong student voice is achieved through an active Student Representative Council (SRC) and our Peer Support Program provides opportunities for senior students to enhance their leadership skills.

Our preschool statement of philosophy states that, *“we value positive relationships with children, families, educators and the community which supports us to care for each child’s learning and wellbeing. We encourage and respect family feedback and involvement in the school and their child’s education. We value the importance of promoting independence and self help skills through creating a learning environment which encourages student agency. We appreciate that play is a cooperative process and students will be provided with opportunities that promote positive social understanding and problem solving skills”*.

Palmerston District Preschool is part of a multiculturally diverse community that acknowledges the Nggunawal people as the traditional custodians of the land on which the preschool stands. Staff at Palmerston District Primary School embrace the Early Years Learning Framework “Belonging, Being and Becoming”. The aim of this document is to extend and enrich children’s learning from birth to five years and through the transition to school.

The school has large proportion of families whose parents are in the defence forces, with a Defence Support Transitions Officer to support their needs at school.

There is a strong commitment to community partnerships and the relationships between school and home are viewed as essential in learning process of our students.

Methodology

Throughout 2017, staff and community at Palmerston District Primary School evaluated the school’s performance on an ongoing basis, referencing the Annual Action Plan (AAP), School Vision and

Values, Safe Schools Framework and the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT). Palmerston District Primary School also undertook the School Review process throughout 2017.

Following School Review, further consultation took place with all stakeholders including the local feeder high school, in-school parent meetings, the School Board and the P&C, which added a layer of information utilised to identify areas of focus in the next Palmerston District Primary School Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

Other whole school survey data used in our reflection process includes Student, Staff and Parent Satisfaction Surveys, School Climate Measurement Tool, Staff Skill Audits and feedback following professional learning and community activities. The Safe Schools Framework was also used as a touchstone to evaluate our ongoing performance.

As outlined in the 2017 Annual Action Plan, teaching teams were provided with organised meeting times with their team leader to discuss and analyse student assessment data. This data included the performance data of: National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), Performance Indicators in Primary School (PIPS), Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) Maths, Reading Benchmarking and Schedule for Early Number Assessment (SENA) results, as well as ongoing in-class assessment. After analysis, teaching teams updated the school designed "Springboards" which provide easy to access data on student progress. We also identified a need to continue this process into 2018 and extend teacher professional knowledge on formative assessment.

Professional Learning Community (PLC), Leadership Team and Professional Learning Team (PLT) meeting times were used to reflect on our progress against the priorities in the Annual Action Plan and to identify the next step in this self-reflection process.

Evaluation of Performance

Priority

Improve English outcomes for all students.

Targets

By the end of 2017

- 90 percent of students achieving the school's reading benchmarks
- Achieve the ACT Education Directorate NAPLAN targets in reading for years 3 and 5
- 90 percent of students achieving Australian Curriculum achievement standards in writing.

Strategic Priority 1- Improve English outcome for all students

Key improvement strategy 1:

Develop capacity of staff to deliver high quality English teaching through the school's approach to teaching of English

This strategy aimed to ensure that all staff were equipped with the expertise to deliver high quality English teaching throughout the school. This has enabled beginning and experienced teachers to build deeper understandings about the curriculum, which has further enhanced student engagement and ensured teachers meet the differing needs of students.

A trial was embarked upon throughout 2017 in which teaching staff were provided with additional release from face to face teaching which enabled them to participate in both Data and Planning Days. During this time executive staff collaborated with professional learning teams to utilise the analysis of student data, including progress against SMART goals, to create appropriate pedagogy and teaching strategies to improve student growth. Teaching practices grounded in research, such as Christine Killey’s Spelling program: *Learning Made Easier*, were explored at these times. Key staff with experience in such programs worked shoulder to shoulder with teachers to upskill and support them in the professional learning needed to successfully implement these into their classrooms.

Professional learning on teaching English within teaching teams was prioritised during 2017. During term 1 executive staff and teachers examined the 2017 Palmerston District Primary School English Vision and explored evidence-based practices to ensure successful implementation of the Vision. Professional Learning Team meeting time was dedicated to collaborative discussions which enhanced the breadth of teacher knowledge and capacity in English. Key staff members within teaching teams provided demonstration lessons, feedback and coaching strategies to support staff. As a result, 100% of teachers use the 2017 English Vision to plan teaching programs in English, within the framework of the Australian Curriculum. This is evidenced during team planning sessions and planning days as well as being reflected in teaching programs.

A strategy to improve teaching practice has been to provide staff with external professional learning opportunities as well as the in school strategies listed above. The data collated below provides a summary of professional learning in English:

Table: Staff Attendance at English Professional Learning

Professional Learning	Number of staff who attended
English Vision and personalised writing goals	All staff
Spelling with Chris Killey	All staff
Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards	18
Guided Reading and the Balanced Reader by Carmel Small	7
Australian Literacy Educators Association Conference	5
MacqLit- reading intervention program	2

Source: 2017 Staff Data

Each of the above listed professional learning opportunities provided teaching staff with the opportunities to further develop an understanding about effective pedagogical practices in English as well as the opportunity to enhance their capacity in the teaching of English.

Palmerston has a teacher induction program embedded into practice. Throughout the year new educators have been provided with mentoring and coaching opportunities. Using English as a lens, this model successfully supported and enabled new educators to develop a deep understanding of the work of teaching teams within a professional learning community, by unpacking what the purpose, priorities, targets and actions of an English professional learning community would look like on a day-to-day basis. The outcome of this has been that staff are equipped to work as an effective team when planning and delivering high quality English programs.

Participation of Palmerston District Primary School in the Gungahlin network of schools' writing project provided a platform for staff to maintain writing as a focus for the year. This writing project model was designed to support the development of effective writing practices across the network and within schools. During professional learning team time at the commencement of term 1, all staff were upskilled on the setting of writing goals, via explanations and modelling of successful evidenced based practices. Rigorous discussions and sharing of practice around the implementation of teaching strategies led to an increase in staff capacity to teach writing. Professional learning team time also provided the opportunity for staff to develop common language and pedagogy as well as sharing resources. Key staff visited another school to observe that school's writing journey and explore the impact of directions within the classroom. To celebrate the work of schools within the writing project, teaching staff attended the Directorate's Writing Fair. This provided affirmation to staff about current school wide practices.

A focus on reading programs was maintained throughout 2017. Initiatives previously implemented such as reading tables, quality literature home readers and coaching and mentoring via professional learning team meetings were successfully implemented. Guided reading programs ran throughout the junior school and a combination of guided reading and co-operative reading ran throughout the senior school.

Key Improvement Strategy 2:

Continue to embed consistent assessment practices to inform teaching and learning across the school.

Layering into the aforementioned Induction Program were the strategic actions of the executive staff to expand teacher induction on the assessment section of the English Vision. To ensure a thorough understanding and to highlight expectations of assessment within the Vision, all staff were provided with a copy for reflection and discussion during week 1, term 1. With assessment in mind, executive and key staff across the school provided new educators with shoulder to shoulder teaching and coaching time throughout the year to unpack how these processes would successfully look within classrooms. Modelling of writing conferences occurred regularly throughout the year, ensuring that processes were adopted in a similar manner across the school.

Professional learning remained as a priority in 2017 and, in line with the Annual Action Plan, 100% of staff received professional learning in English throughout the year. Under the lens of improving teacher capacity around assessment practices, Christine Killey was once again employed to provide demonstration lessons in classes for teachers, followed by team workshops where teachers had the

opportunity to discuss, reflect and refine their teaching spelling practices, particularly in relation to assessment. Ms Killey unpacked with staff how to utilise daily observation sheets and spelling inventories in the assessment process, as well as guiding staff around the use of assessment data to accurately plan for the learning needs of students. Executive staff worked with Ms Killey to further understand their role in supporting teachers and their assessment practices.

Support within teaching teams was established at the beginning of the year in order to provide professional learning to staff in the use of “bump it up” walls, moderation processes and Data Days. Guidance was provided by key staff on the creation and implementation of “bump it up” walls so students can see and monitor their writing progress, including where they are in their learning and what they need to do to move forward. Each term, professional learning teams collaborated to discuss evidence based processes concerning moderation. The targeted support provided by experienced teachers to new educators has led to a positive shift in teacher capacity in this area as evidenced by teams’ ability to effectively implement moderation processes. Work within teaching teams on Data Days provided opportunities for all teaching staff to reflect and refine their assessment practices which led to accurate and informed teaching practices within classrooms.

Achievement against targets:

The data collated below provides a summary of reading results for Palmerston students:

Table: Mainstream students achieving at or above year level reading benchmark in 2017

Year	Target benchmark level	Below	At or above	Percentage (Target of 90%)
Kindergarten	7-8	11	85	89%
Year 1	16-17	23	62	80%
Year 2	22-23	9	54	92%
Year 3	27-28	7	53	96%
Year 4	30-INDEPENDENT	7	45	96%
Year 5	INDEPENDENT	7	49	96%
Year 6	INDEPENDENT	4	38	98%
TOTAL		68	386	85%

Source: 2017 School Data

*This data includes Inclusion Support Plan (ISP) students who have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

Table: Schools 2017 NAPLAN Mean Scores against Target mean

Cohort & Test	Target	Actual	Achievement
Year 3 Reading	441 ± 22	454.1	Achieved
Year 5 Reading	508 ± 20	496.1	Achieved

Source: SMART DATA, October 2017

Writing

Table: Number of Students achieving 'C' or above on the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards in Writing

Total No Students	'C' Grade or Above	Percentage (Target of 90%)
381	337	88%

Source: 2017 School Data

In 2017, data collected around PM Benchmarking and Writing did not discriminate between students who have Individual Learning Plans, as a result of being part of the Integration Support Program, and mainstream students.

Strategic Priority 2- Improve Maths outcomes for all students

Targets

By the end of 2017

- 90 percent of students achieving the school's SENA benchmarks
- Achieve the ACT Education Directorate NAPLAN targets in maths for year 3 and 5
- 90 percent of students achieving 'c' or above in the Australian Curriculum achievement standards in maths

Key Improvement Strategy One:

Continue to embed a whole school approach to the teaching of mathematics

In order to enhance teaching practices across all maths strands, teaching staff were supported to undertake professional learning by a variety of providers. 100% of staff have participated in professional learning on mathematics teaching by our consultant and mentor, Christine Killey and were provided with the opportunity to observe and reflect on a quality mathematics lesson delivered by Ms Killey. This gave teams the chance to identify elements of best practice in the identified maths strand and implement these elements into their classrooms. Key teachers throughout the school were identified to attend two mathematics conferences hosted by Anita Chin, an expert on the teaching of mathematics. This was followed by teaching staff attending Ms Chin's "Chin Up" professional learning session entitled "Number Sense K-6, How and why?" Palmerston volunteered to host the maths event which was promoted by the Principals As Numeracy Leaders team. Over 60 ACT teachers were in attendance on the day. Staff attending the session provided feedback to PLTs which has resulted in teaching teams utilising ideas and strategies of Ms Chin's. Ms. Chin is delivering whole school professional learning in January 2018 to the entire Palmerston teaching and relief staff in order to extend staff understandings. Mathematics will remain a focus in 2018.

In response to a decline in the mathematics PIPS results at the end of 2016, this year, the kindergarten team worked closely as a PLT to trial the 'Envision' Mathematics program which aligns with the Australian Curriculum. The result of this has been positive and our 2017 PIPS results started and ended above the ACT average.

One strategy to improve teaching practice in maths has been to provide staff with external professional learning opportunities as well as in school strategies such as mentoring and coaching. The data collated below provides a summary of professional learning in Mathematics:

Table: Number of Staff attending Mathematics Professional Learning

Professional Learning	Number of staff who attended
Anita Chin- "Chin Up"	8
Chris Killey- maths professional learning	All staff
Anita Chin- maths conference	4
Count ME in Too	3
Principals as Numeracy Leaders	6
Middle Years Mental Computation	3
Anita Chin- leadership conference	3

Source: 2017 School Data

To promote partnerships with parents in mathematics education, a community workshop was held in term 2, which was attended by over 40 families. The workshop focused on a range of mathematics topics to develop understandings of what maths learning looks like and strategies to assist children at home. The families were provided with a mathematics pack, which included number cards, counters, dice and a variety of games to use at home with their children. Feedback during consultation on the night indicated that 100% of parents who attended the workshop found the night helpful and informative and would use the resource at home.

The school leadership team and key teaching staff attended Principals as Numeracy Leaders (PANLS) throughout 2017. Participation in this professional learning allowed staff to develop a school numeracy plan based on best practice and research, for implementation over the next two years. Participation in PANLS provided the school with the opportunity for teachers to attend Count Me In Too (CMIT) and Middle Years Mental Computation (MYMC) professional learning. This led to staff increasing their sharing of exemplary practice in numeracy during PLC time. The result of this saw staff implement a range of new pedagogical strategies to effectively teach maths. Our maths vision has always included CMIT and MYMC as teaching tools and these are in our assessment schedule. Complementing this, a staff survey identified that additional mathematics resources were required, which led to the Numeracy Committee purchasing \$1500 worth of additional resources to support mathematics teaching.

Key Improvement Strategy 2

Continue to embed consistent assessment practices to inform teaching and learning across the school

Embedding the consistent use of assessment practices to inform teaching and learning across the school has been an ongoing focus for 2017. The use of Planning and Data Days were the successful platform utilised to achieve this. The introduction of Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) Maths in

term 1 for all students ranging from years 1-6 provided the majority of data to be analysed on these days. These tests have been utilised to provide accurate information to teachers about the level of achievement of students in the skills and understanding of mathematics. To ensure consistency, all teachers were provided with professional learning on how to access and interpret the PAT Maths scores. This resulted in the accurate examination by teachers of PAT results, leading to a reflection of practice and the creation of informed programs to cater for the needs of the students.

The continued use of Data Days in 2017 provided staff with the opportunity to utilise pre and post test data and the discipline dialogue questions to identify what student outcomes were being achieved, as well as to identify future learning needs. This examination led to the creation of SMART goals within teaching teams. The level of achievement of these goals was examined on planning days with future considerations planned for at this time. Support within teams was provided across the year to ensure moderation processes were consistent across the year levels. Guidance was provided by leadership team and team leaders to discuss evidence based processes concerning moderation. The targeted support provided has again resulted in a positive shift in teacher capacity in this area.

The use of testing to gauge student levels of understanding has been effectively and consistently utilised at Palmerston. This year, teaching teams worked collaboratively through mentoring and workshops during PLT time to support one another to analyse the processes needed to create accurate pre and post-tests, as well as identifying quality maths tests. Progress was made in this area and the maths committee and the leadership team have identified the need to continue this approach as a focus in 2018.

Achievements against Targets

The school has achieved all targets for 2017 in mathematics.

Table: Junior School Students achieving benchmark or above on the SENA test in Mathematics 2017

SENA Results 2017	Students	At and Above	Below	Percentage of students at and above benchmark
Junior School	281	260	21	91.6%

Source: 2017 School Data

Overall the school achieved the target of 90% of junior students achieving at or above benchmark in SENA testing.

Table: Schools 2017 NAPLAN Mean Scores against Target Mean in Numeracy

Cohort	Target	Actual	Achievement
Year 3	424±20	430.8	Achieved
Year 5	494±20	496.6	Achieved

Source: 2017 School Data

The school achieved above the ACT NAPLAN targets in numeracy for year 3 and 5.

Table: Students achieving 'C' or above on the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards in Maths

Total Students Numbers	'C' Grade or Above	Below 'C'	Percentage (Target 90%)
385	365	20	94%

Source: 2017 School Data

The school achieved the target of c grade or above in the Australian Curriculum achievement standards in maths.

Priority 3

Improve student engagement

Targets

By the end of 2017

- Achieve to system level or above in the School Satisfaction survey data:
 - > 'The school gives me interesting things to do'
 - > 'The teachers provide me with useful feedback about my school work'
 - > 'I feel safe at school'

Note these replace the previous survey questions:

- > The things I am learning at school are important to me
- > I am regularly asked to assess the quality of my own school work
- > Other students at school are friendly towards me)

Key improvement strategy 1:

Develop staff capacity in supporting students' health and wellbeing

Professional Learning Team time was utilised as an effective platform to develop explicit high expectations in the effective roll out of *KidsMatter* programs based on best practice. Within teams staff utilised the Palmerston District Primary School Student Wellbeing Procedure and readings from the text *The First Six Weeks of School* to identify the desired key elements of a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment. Teachers then guided students to collaboratively construct codes of conducts that identified the expectations for each classroom/PoD learning environment. The school's Student Wellbeing Procedure was refined with input from senior members of the Directorate's NSET team. The result of this was a document with a more clearly defined focus on the building of positive relationships and restorative practices. At various points throughout the year teaching staff have been provided with professional learning opportunities on this document at the whole school and team level. This has led to teachers working with students with a strong focus on well-being and safety.

At the commencement of 2017 all staff participated in the Team Teach professional learning day in order to increase the capability of teaching staff to engage all learners through the use of verbal and non-verbal avenues in order to establish and maintain positive classroom environments. 89% of teachers indicated that they believed their ability to use Team Teach practices had remained constant or improved, compared to the beginning of the year.

Targeted professional learning for key staff included attendance at Bill Rogers' Behavior Management For Teachers, Sue Larkey (both on-line and in person) and Protective Behaviours. New Educators were provided with an induction on the social and emotional learning program- *KidsMatter* and Protective Behaviours. These sessions provided the opportunity to develop and reflect on strategies to both support and engage students in a positive and respectful manner. In response to feedback on the staff skill audit a member of the NSET team was engaged to provide

professional learning for teaching staff in *Circle Time*. This was facilitated to develop teacher skills in developing students' social and emotional literacy and as a process to build positive classroom environments. As a result there has been an increase in teacher perception of their own expertise and effectiveness. Student well-being has remained as the focus of our work.

Professional readings outlining student's health and wellbeing supported and clarified key messages and ideas contained within the document. The readings were the basis of PLC discussions and shared practice across the school.

Key Improvement strategy 2:

Develop and maintain the whole school vision for student engagement

This was achieved through whole staff professional learning and reflection time around the draft *KidsMatter* Vision.

During term 1 the *KidsMatter* committee worked with staff to review and clarify KidsMatter practices including the vision and framework for student engagement. Throughout 2017 the committee was proactive in maintaining student wellbeing programs which develop healthy food awareness, exercise and environmental sustainability. The Father's Day barbeque provided an avenue to survey families about *KidsMatter* programs in place at the school. After this event the data was collated and reviewed by the committee. The following events were successfully implemented throughout the year: sporting activities and carnivals (Athletics Carnival, Cross Country and Swimming Carnival), Ride and Walk to School Days, Fresh Taste/YBites healthy food choices, Green Team, The Palmerston Kitchen Garden, Clean Up Australia Day, Peer Support and the Walkathon. The middle of the school year saw Palmerston awarded with a certificate for completion of the implementation phase of the Fresh Tastes program. Palmerston was also awarded with a 5 year certificate for participation in the Peer Support program.

All staff worked within teams to roll out the implementation of Friendly Kids Plus throughout 2017 which successfully enhanced the children's engagement in a year of productive learning. To ensure successful engagement for each student, staff aligned and tailored their Friendly Schools Plus model to the unique needs of their classroom environment. This maintained a positive behaviour approach within classrooms which reflected current practices. This will be a focus again in 2018, with continued input from staff and students. Across the year, a variety of teams have engaged in Autism Awareness with Sue Larkey via an on-line course to support students with additional needs. The overwhelming success of this action was evidenced by the weekly discussions held, where a reflection on the learnings from the course and the transference of this learning into the classroom was discussed. The successful impact of this learning was shared during numerous PLT meetings.

The KidsMatter Vision is the overarching framework established at Palmerston District Primary School as a guide to inform teaching practices. PLC time in term 4 provided all staff with the opportunity to reflect on the Kids Matter Vision and provide feedback on practices implemented throughout the year including successes in this area. These successes included the establishment of a Green Team, Palmerston's acknowledgement for being a Fresh Tastes School for three years and the Ride and Walk to School initiative. The reflection also provided the time for staff to set goals for 2018. These goals included working as a team to implement the Positive Behaviours For Learning program. Identified staff have participated in Positive Behavior for Learning training throughout the

year and will provide professional learning to staff at the commencement of the 2018 school year. This program will be launched across the school during 2018.

Achievements against targets:

The school achieved above system level in two of the three areas. A continued focus and intervention around “I feel safe at school” will occur in 2018.

This survey data will be used as the benchmark for improvements in 2018.

Table: 2017 School Satisfaction Survey results:

Item	School result	System result
The school gives me interesting things to do	84.27%	82.01%
The teachers provide me with useful feedback about my school work	88.76%	81.43%
I feel safe at school	68.18%	77.28%

Source: 2017 School Data

The school exceeded the target of “The teachers provide me with useful feedback about my school work” and “The school gives me interesting things to do”.