

Peer Review Report

Murchison Primary School
North Eastern Region

School number:	1126
Principal:	Melissa Houlihan
School Council President:	Leanne Houkes Wilson
Review Company:	Valad Solutions Pty Ltd
Accredited School Reviewer:	Joan Sibley
Peers:	Jania Cotter-Principal at Dhurringile Primary School Jane Loyd- Principal at Tatura Primary School
Date of Review Meeting:	25 th November 2015

2. Peer Review Report Summary

Executive Summary

2. 1 School Context

Murchison Primary School was established in 1860 and serves the rural town and surrounding areas of Murchison, which is situated 36 km south of Shepparton. The school enrolment of 112 (August 2015) is organised into six multi-age classes. The school consists of a brick building built in 1906, housing a reading recovery room, library, music room, Murchison After School Kids (MASK) room and resource room. A new building completed in 2011 has four learning spaces, a staffroom, offices and resource room. Currently two classes are housed in a modular classroom, which is earmarked for removal. An art room is situated in an upgraded shelter shed. There is a covered outdoor learning area and multi-purpose court alongside a kitchen garden. The large covered playground area provides an all-weather venue for students. The grounds are extensive with large grassed areas and a number of garden beds.

The Foundation to Year 6 curriculum is based on AusVELS. Specialist teachers provide weekly sessions in Music, Art and Library. Murchison Primary school is part of a supportive cluster of local government schools that share resources and staff professional training.

The Student Family Occupation (SFO) measures the school population's socio-economic background, which is 0.57. The school has a slightly higher SFO to the state median, which is 0.5139.

Murchison Primary School predominately serves the local town community with a few students travelling from outlying areas. Most students are dropped off by their parents or walk or ride to school.

Murchison Primary School promotes partnerships between parents, children and teachers. Parent participation is encouraged through involvement in its active School Council, Parent Club, parent participation days and curriculum activities. The school has developed strong community partnerships with various community groups such as the Mother Goose Program, Community Library and Neighbourhood House.

MASK provides After School Care each school day for eight to fifteen students. The school provides before school care for students from 8:00am to 8.30am.

The school has an ethos of community and service. Each term students visit the local nursing home to spend time with the residents. The school has begun support of the Neighbourhood House with their 'Simply Lunch' program where students prepare food, serve members of the local community and help clean up.

2.2 Summary of the School's Performance

2.2.1 The School's Performance against the Previous Strategic Plan

Achievement

The previous Strategic Plan (Plan) set a goal to improve literacy and numeracy achievement from Foundation to year six. The Plan's success was measured by NAPLAN results in years three and five, teacher judgements against learning standards in AusVELS as well as locally collected data.

Student learning targets set in the school's previous Strategic Plan (Plan) have been met in the majority of curriculum areas. The panel found that despite attaining its major targets, students had not succeeded in attaining high growth in several key curriculum areas. The school is now looking at improving learning outcomes by investigating how it can achieve high growth for all students in all areas.

Engagement and Wellbeing

The Plan's goal was to enhance students' engagement to school and the well being of all students. These goals were linked to targets measured by the Student Attitudes to School Survey (SATS) and the Parent Opinion Survey. The school reached the targets for classroom behaviour, student safety and connectedness to school. SATS data for stimulating learning and teacher effectiveness suggest that this is an area for improvement.

2.2.2 Summary of the considerations for the next Strategic Plan

Achievement

The review panel suggested that high growth was needed in all areas of the curriculum for all students. This could be achieved through strategic analysis of student data and constant reflection on the effectiveness and consistency of classroom practice. It also recommended that professional learning and consistent teaching practices are an integral part of improving the rate of growth in students' learning.

Engagement

The review panel found that while the level of engagement of students was mostly positive there were opportunities to improve student engagement by providing students with greater opportunities to talk about their learning and give feedback on their learning experiences. This would involve student goal setting and raising expectations of students, teachers and parents. The panel also suggested that engaging students in purposeful and challenging uses of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in their learning would increase student engagement.

Wellbeing

The panel found that the school has a number of programs and practices currently operating to support student wellbeing. It was felt that an audit and refinement of the programs was needed. This would provide a more structured approach to wellbeing across the school.

Productivity

The panel considered that the allocation of resources to support the effective structure of teams and provision of professional learning for staff were of vital importance for the school. The panel also suggested that the school would benefit from allocating resources to the provision of new ICT devices and science resources.

2.2.3 Next steps

The review established that Murchison Primary School has initiated many strategic responses during its plan period. It has generally performed well and school personnel have expressed a desire to enhance and build on their successes to optimise outcomes for all students. The next stage of improvement is for a whole school commitment to a school philosophy, which incorporates a model for teaching and learning, high expectations for all learners and effective assessment practices.