

Macarthur Primary School School Number 1571

School Self-Evaluation

Completed Term 2, 2013

Covers period 2010 – 2013.



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1. Executive summary

Macarthur Primary School is a small, rural primary school situated in the small township of Macarthur. The school has a strong connection to the town and is well supported by parents. The school also has a strong relationship with the local Macarthur Kinder which is also located in the town.

Enrolments have increased over the term of the Strategic Plan from 55 in 2009 to 64 in 2013. The enrolment trend is looking strong for the future and the school can expect to maintain numbers in the mid 60's. There have been some staffing changes during the term of the Strategic Plan.

The school has had specific goals and targets in the areas of Student Learning, Student Engagement and Wellbeing, and Pathways and Transition in the Strategic Plan 2010 – 2013. Each year an Annual Implementation Plan has been developed to plan strategies towards achievement of these goals and set targets in all three areas. The school has made progress made towards some of these goals and targets but has identified areas through the review where more work is needed.

The main focus in the area of Student Learning was to improve outcomes in English and Maths with a particular emphasis on Reading and Number. The results in reading show some very positive trends with the infant P-2 continuing to achieve excellent results and the middle area of the school also improving to produce some very strong outcomes. This strength is beginning to flow through into the upper school with improved data in 2012 in grade 5. Maths results show a similar pattern but generally results are lower in maths than in English.

In the area of Student Pathways and Transitions the school has developed a very successful transition program for students entering the school from the Macarthur Kinder. Parents are generally happy with this but our work in the transition to secondary school has been more challenging and there is still some work to be done here.

The area of Student Engagement and Wellbeing has had a large amount of time and resources put into it during the last 3 years. There have been some successes in the improvement of student connections to each other but there are still some issues evident from the data with student relationships, learning confidence and clarity about acceptable classroom behaviour.

From the Self Evaluation process a summary of recommendations for areas of future improvement include:-

Student Learning

- Literacy and Numeracy. Continue to look at ways of improving outcomes for all students in all areas of literacy and numeracy, including supporting students who are not achieving at expected levels.
- Continue work on setting Student Learning Goals and increase student capacity to self-monitor
- Implementation of AusVELS: Align "I can" statements with AusVELS

Engagement and Wellbeing

- Investigate ways to improve student learning confidence and motivation and connection to school
- Continue to work with girls on developing relationship and resilience skills.
- Development of student understandings of what distracting classroom behaviour "looks like". Continue work begun in 2013 on the Mac "Behaviour Scale"

- Develop a communication strategy with parents in the area of student safety and behaviour.

Pathways and Transition

- Develop ways of improving the transition processes and communication with secondary colleges, with a particular focus on communication with independent secondary colleges.
- Review the school's Homework Policy and investigate the organisational skills needed to assist students in transition from grade 6 into year 7.

2. Methodology

The process of Self-Evaluation was conducted in term two 2013. School Council was informed of the School Review process during term 1 and a timeline was developed to complete the Self-Evaluation by the end of term 2, 2013. This would enable the review process to be conducted in term 3, with the aim of completing both the review and strategic plan by the end of term 3 when the current principal was to retire.

The principal completed the preparation of data sets necessary for the Self-Evaluation including information available on the School Portal, NAPLAN website and internal school-based assessments and surveys. Particular data was analysed in the context of the goals and targets of the Strategic Plan 2010 -13.

The Macarthur Primary School staff are a small team so all were involved in meetings during term 2 to look at school data in the areas of Student Learning, Engagement and Wellbeing, and Pathways and Transition. The Attitude To School Survey (ATSS), Parent Opinion Survey (POS), and Staff Surveys were used: NAPLAN data, English Online Interview (EOI), and Victorian Essential Learning (VELS) data were compared. Trends were identified and patterns and problems analysed. Targets were scrutinised and our performance in each area discussed.

During the analysis of data the school found it often more meaningful to look at cohorts in terms of percentages and trends in percentages rather than comparisons with state means due to the sizes of the cohorts. We must also be mindful, however, when looking at data of the effects of small cohort sizes on percentages.

Some data was unclear to the staff in the areas of student wellbeing and transition so further input was sought from students and parents in the form of surveys. This formulated the basis of the Self-Evaluation discussion, the outcome of which was transferred into the Self-Evaluation document by the principal.

The draft of our School Self-Evaluation was distributed to School Council for input and comment. The final document was presented to School Council at a meeting on June 20th 2013.

3. School context

Macarthur Primary School is located 37 kilometres south east of Hamilton in Victoria's Western District. The school is a small rural school established in 1875 to serve the local township, population 300, and the surrounding farming area. The town offers its community a variety of services and facilities including a post office, health centre, police, pub, chemist, swimming pool and a range of sporting clubs including tennis, football, cricket, bowls and golf.

Macarthur Primary School has a strong history of connection to the local community and is well supported by parents and local community groups, forming an essential part of the social fabric of the town.

The current 2013 school enrolment is 64 which has shown a gradual annual increase since 2006 and generally remains steady throughout the school year. Projections for the future should see enrolments stabilise at approximately 65.

Students enrolling in Prep attend the local Macarthur Kinder. The school has developed a strong link with the Macarthur Kinder and runs an extensive transition program for students and families. Grade 6 students move on to a variety of secondary schools in Hamilton, Hawkesdale and Warrnambool so secondary transition programs are more of a challenge.

Two buses service the school and approximately 60% of students travel to school by bus, with routes covering a radius of approximately 20 kilometres from the school, the remainder travelling by private car, on foot and bicycle. Bus services to both Hawkesdale P-12 and Hamilton secondary colleges pass through the town.

The school SFO density is 0.481 with no non- English speaking families, one koorie student, and no students currently funded through the PSD Program. Approximately one third of families receive EMA. Students' families are employed in farming and rural service industries with the local township providing employment in these areas. Families travel either to Hamilton or Warrnambool for a larger range of services including shopping, medical specialists and sporting opportunities.

Macarthur Primary School enjoys extensive and attractive school grounds which includes a large oval and multiple playing areas. A new playground and sandpit area has been developed to compliment the large existing adventure playground. Grounds are well established with attractive gardens which are well maintained by the school community.

The school has three large classrooms including the original bluestone building which have recently been refurbished and painted. All rooms are well equipped and conducive to effective learning. In recent years the school built a new library extension which also houses the community Corangamite Library Service. A new multi-purpose room and art area was added in 2011 which has significantly enhanced educational opportunities at the school.

The school is well resourced with ICT, having recently upgraded the school servers and computers. Students in the upper grades have individual netbooks, each classroom has interactive whiteboards and a bank of iPads has recently been purchased as a shared resource.

The school is staffed in 2013 by 1.0 EFT principal, 3.7 EFT teachers and employs a 0.5 business manager and 0.2 teacher aide. The school is organised into 3 composite grades with 1.6 teachers in our prep one area to ensure support for early literacy development. Aide support is provided to the infant area for oral language programs. The school also offers small group and individual support programs in literacy and numeracy, when necessary.

Curriculum is developed around the VELS (AusVELS) and integrated thematic units are studied across the school. Teachers are currently working on the introduction of AusVELS into planning and assessment. Specialist programs are offered in Art, Music, Phys Ed and LOTE (French) and a visiting MARC Library van provides specialised library lessons. All students participate in our Kitchen Garden Program including science, gardening and cooking. The Active After Schools Communities Program was introduced in 2012 to add to our extra -curricular programs which include a whole school camping program and regular cultural performances.

The school works on developing a culture of respectful relationships and has a high level of student and parental involvement. Support for the school in the community is high with parents regularly assisting in sporting programs, camps and our daily reading program. The work of the Macarthur Parent Association supports the work of staff and Macarthur Primary School Council.

Evaluation of performance

Student learning

What student outcomes were we trying to achieve?

In the School Strategic Plan 2010-13 the goal for Student Learning was:-

To improve learning outcomes for all students in the English and Mathematics domains.

Targets were set for student achievement across the school using VELS levels in English and Mathematics as follows:-

- 100% of students to achieve at or above the expected VELS standards (grading C,B or A) in English and Mathematics by 2013
- 50% of students to achieve at least one year above the expected VELS standards (grading B or A) in English and Mathematics by 2013

Additional targets were set for grades 3 and 5 to be measured by NAPLAN data as follows:-

- 100% of students at years 3 and 5 to achieve at the expected band (band 3 and 5) in reading and number in the NAPLAN by 2013
- 50% of students at years 3 and 5 to achieve at least one band above their expected band (band 4 and 6) in reading and number in the NAPLAN by 2013.

The Key Improvement Strategy was to:-

Improve teacher classroom capacity through the development of a whole school approach to teaching, learning and assessment that:

- makes learning explicit for each student, and
- is focused on high expectations for student outcomes.

Specific actions were to include

- Develop and implement a whole school scope and sequence curriculum plan for maths (number) and English (reading)
- Revise, update and implement whole school Data Plan that includes English and Mathematics VACC On Demand Testing.
- Increase teacher's data literacy through Professional Learning Teams and the relationship and implications to explicit teaching in literacy (reading) and mathematics (number).
- All students set personal learning goals, self-reflections and evaluation of their learning.
- Expand whole staff professional learning in the e⁵ model.

What student outcomes did we achieve?

The Strategic Plan deliberately set high standards for student achievement with the aim of 100% of students reaching the expected VELS and NAPLAN level and 50% achieving higher than expected. This was to enable teachers to aim high for all students and to also extend the higher achieving students.

The analysis of data through the NAPLAN and EOI results on the School Portal shows that progress has been made in improving student outcomes over the term of the Strategic Plan. Although the 100% figures were not achieved and some students did not achieve the expected level in some years in Maths and English an increased number of students have achieved above the expected level and we did achieve the targets of 50% of students achieving above in a number of cases.

The school has used both school-based and statewide testing to assist teachers in making VELS judgements in English and Maths during 2010 – 2012. This has included the use of VACC On Demand Testing in grades 3 -6 and the English Online Interview and Numeracy Interview in Grades Prep to 2.

The whole of school VELS Data for the end of 2012, including all 65 students in Prep to 6, based on teacher judgement is as follows:-

VELS Area	Students Achieving at Level D or ,E	Students Achieving at Level C	Students Achieving at Level B or A	Total Number of students achieving at or above Level C.
Reading	8/65 12.3%	29/65 43%	28/65 43%	87.7%
Writing	10/65 15.3%	31/65 47.6%	24/65 36.9%	87%
Number	8/65 12.5%	42/65 64%	15/65 23%	87%

This shows that generally 87% of students by 2012 are reaching the expected level or above in Reading, Writing and Number. Teachers are placing 43% of students at above expected level in reading but only 23% above in number, with a larger percentage of students performing at just expected level C in number according to teacher judgement.

Analysis of the English Online Interview data is showing high growth between P-2 in Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening.

Reading in gr 1 and 2 in both 2011 and 2012 are at or above state and the school came very close to reaching the goals of the Strategic Plan. In 2011 and 2012 grade 1 data shows 100% of students in group 3 or above with 54% above in 2011 and 72% above in 2012. Grade 2 reading results are similarly strong with 100% in group 3 or above in 2011 and 90% in this group in 2012. The number of students performing above in reading in 2011 was 90% and 54.5% in 2012 which reached the target of the Strategic Plan.

In Speaking and listening data show that mean VELS scores are below state at the start of Prep and grade one but by the start of grade 2 mean VELS scores for both 2011 and 2012 are equal to or above state level. Writing data for 2011 and 2012 shows that preps arrive at school equal to the state level, by beginning of gr 1 results are either equal to or higher than state, and by end of grade 2 results are above the state. In 2011 we met the target of 100% of students at or above expected level and 80% were achieving above. This strong result continued in 2012 where 81% achieved at expected level and 63.6% achieved above.

Analysis of NAPLAN data assists us see the school performance in grades 3 and 5 with a particular reference to Reading and Number targets as shown by the table below.

NAPLAN Reading Gr 3	Below C (D or E)	Band C	Above C (A or B)	NAPLAN Number Gr 3	Below C (D or E)	Band C	Above C (A or B)
2010	20%	20%	60%	2010	20%	0%	80%
2011		25%	62.5%	2011	25%	0%	75%
2012		8.3%	83.3%	2012	0%	25%	75%
NAPLAN Reading Gr 5				NAPLAN Number Gr 5			
2010	37.5%	25%	37.5%	2010	25%	25%	50%
2011	12.5%	50%	37.5%	2011	37.5%	37.5%	25%
2012	16.7%	16.7%	67%	2012	28.5%	14.3%	57.2%

In reading, the school results show the number of grade 3 students achieving at or above band C in 2010 to be 80%, 2011 87.5%, and 2012 91.6%. This is an upward trend but short of the target of 100%. The target for 50% of students achieving at Band 4 or above, however was achieved in Gr 3 reading each year with over 83% at Band 4 or above by 2012. Grade 5 reading results are not as strong but are showing an improvement each year in the percentage of students achieving at Band C or above and by 2012 over 67% of students were achieving at or above Band 4.

Maths NAPLAN data is very positive for grade 3 with over 75% of students achieving at or above Band 4 in 2010, 2011 and 2012. In 2012 we reached the target of 100% students achieving at expected Band C or above in NAPLAN. In Grade 5 the NAPLAN data has been weaker in maths in both 2010 and 2011. This has strengthened in 2012 with 71% of students reaching the expected Band C and 57% of students achieving above the expected level at Band 4 or above..

Analysis of NAPLAN cohort growth data for 2012 is positive. This shows the student growth between 2010 NAPLAN and 2012 NAPLAN in terms of Low, Medium and High levels of growth. Reading growth showed all students achieved at least medium growth and in Number, out of 7 students, 3 achieved high, 3 medium and one low growth.

One cohort of students has had very weak results, particularly in maths. The grade 5 group in 2011 had 37.5% of students not achieving the expected Band C in NAPLAN maths. Reading results were also weak for this group but most students did reach the expected level. Analysis of 2009 data also shows a weak result for this cohort.

In summary, the trends for student learning appear that we have maintained our strong results in the infant section of the school in Literacy and Numeracy. The grade 3 data is indicating a strengthening of our results in the middle of the school in both English and Maths and the upper grade data is showing weaker results in 2010 and 11 but a strengthening in 2012 in both English and Maths.

Why did we achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?

The school has worked very hard each year of the strategic plan to make improvements in literacy and numeracy and the Annual Implementation Plans developed each year have focused clearly on this, including improving programs through explicit teaching and developing staff capacity at all levels of the school.

PD has been central to building of staff capacity. This has included:

- Two staff members took on roles as Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators during 2011 and 2012. These staff participated in Lead Teacher Training in district PD and shared their learning with the school team.
- All staff attended district PD and worked with our School Improvement Partner (SIP) and district teachers from other small schools to develop knowledge of progression points in number
- The School Improvement Partner worked in the school with teachers, both in classrooms and in PLT meetings to assist teachers develop effective teaching strategies in literacy, particularly reading.
- The school organised time for staff to visit other local schools and timetabled meeting time for staff to work and plan in teams. This included two regular weekly PLT meetings and a whole school planning day each term.
- Major work was completed producing “I can” Statements in Reading, Number and Writing which transferred the VELS progression points into more child friendly language. This required staff to look closely at the expectations of each VELS level and built teacher curriculum knowledge.
- At the end of 2011 the school held a major curriculum day in maths with Michael Ymer visiting the school for two days. This included a staff PD day with district teachers and a day working in classrooms with teachers demonstrating effective teaching methods.

This has resulted in some major changes in curriculum approaches over the last two years, particularly in the teaching of reading and number. Central to this has been our aim to make teaching more explicit for each student and focused on high expectations. Our work has been influenced by the work of John Hattie, our adoption of The CAFÉ Menu, Andrea Hillbrick’s work in planning for maths instruction and an aim to make learning more student-centred. Changes have included:-

- Teachers have introduced Learning Intentions and Success Criteria into lessons so that students are aware of the learning and what they need to do to be successful
- The introduction of setting Learning Goals for students and the sharing of assessments with students. This has also included the introduction of student conferencing in classrooms and the introduction of 3 Way Student, Parent, Teacher conferences in 2012.
- The development of an agreed planning model for documentation of program planning across the school in maths.
- Timetabling of team planning has enabled staff to plan curriculum across the school with similar focus areas in maths and English to enable sharing of knowledge and meaningful, focussed discussion in PLTs.
- A whole school consistent approach to literacy has been agreed including the use of the CAFÉ Menu and incorporating common elements of the Daily 5.

The school also worked on the improvement of assessment practices and the use of data to inform teacher planning and judgements. This assisted staff to improve their data literacy and how assessments could be used more effectively. Staff are now able to analyse the available data to inform them more accurately about student achievement and program planning. Work included: -

- Revision of our Whole School Assessment Schedule in English and Maths to include VCAA On Demand Data, English Online Interview and Numeracy Interview. This also included other school based assessments.
- Setting targets at the start of each semester for achievement in Number, Reading and Writing for each student. These included VELS Levels and assessment results
- Use of tools such as Grade Expert and SPA to analyse data.
- Development of individual Student Profile Books using the “I can” Statements to keep a record of student achievement against VELS progression points in Number, Reading and Writing.

One area of our school programs did not change during the term of the Strategic Plan. The school continued to run the whole school Spelling Mastery Program which had been successful in the past. This has maintained our high level of results in spelling which staff believe has also had a positive effect upon our writing results.

How effectively did we manage resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?

The school managed resources effectively in the following ways to improve outcomes in Student Learning:-

- The school provided staffing to support the programs needed including aides to support the larger infant classroom in 2011 and 2012.
- Aides were used to assist with individual intervention programs, including Multi-Lit, Oral Language Programs and the whole school Spelling Mastery program
- A teacher was allocated to run Reading Recovery in 2011 and run additional intervention programs in Maths, English, and Oral Language in 2011 and 2012
- Budgets were prepared annually to support the needs identified in the AIP, including the major resourcing of classrooms with maths equipment and upgrading of classroom reading resources.
- The Professional Development budget was developed to fund PD in areas of school need, including the Michael Ymer Maths visit and a principal visit to New Zealand
- The district SIP was a major district resource which was of great value to our school in achieving change and improvement in our practices.
- Tight and often creative timetabling was employed to create additional time for regular staff planning times, time for one on one testing, and to release teachers for teacher, student, parent conferencing.
- The school budget subsidised parents to purchase individual netbooks for students in grade 4,5,6 during 2010,11,and 12.

What can we do in the future to continue to improve?

Based upon the evidence staff believe the school could look at the following areas to improve student outcomes in the future.

- Continue to look at improving teaching of maths across school. Look at other areas of maths including Space, Measurement and Chance and Data.
- Investigate ways to support children not achieving, particularly in maths. Look at possible maths intervention programs. E.g. EMU (Extending Mathematical Understanding)
- Continue to work on improving English outcomes across the school, Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening
- Writing: Look at a whole school focus on editing skills as NAPLAN results in Grammar and Punctuation are down.
- Continue work on setting Student Learning Goals and increase student capacity to self-monitor
- Implementation of AusVELS: Align existing "I can" statements with AusVELS
- Continue to use ICT effectively and develop further ways to support student learning into the 21st Century.

Student engagement and wellbeing

What student outcomes were we trying to achieve?

The school's main goal in the Strategic Plan was to improve student engagement and wellbeing with a focus on resilience, connectedness and the building of positive relationships.

This was intended to be measured and monitored over the course of the 2010-13 Strategic plan with particular reference to data in the Attitude to School Survey in the areas of Student Relationships and Teaching and Learning.

This included data in specific areas such as Classroom Behaviour, Student Safety, Connectedness to School and Connectedness to Peers. Targets were set in each area to be at or above the following scores by 2013 as follows:-

- Classroom Behaviour 3.28
- Student Safety 4.48
- Connectedness to School 4.61
- Connectedness to Peers 4.19.

The Key Improvement Strategy in the Strategic Plan was to develop and embed a whole school wellbeing approach that:

- promoted engagement in learning
- promoted connectedness to school and peers
- created 'real' links to the community

What student outcomes did we achieve?

The school was successful in one major aim of the strategic plan in the development of positive relationships and connectedness to peers with the data from the Attitude to Schools Survey (ATSS) showing results above the target score of 4.19 for years 2010 to 2012. These results are generally above or equal to state level and data for both grade 5 and 6 show a similar trend.

In the areas of Classroom Behaviour, Student Safety, and School Connectedness the results are not as strong or consistent and some clear patterns have emerged through more in-depth analysis.

Generally, results for 2010 are stronger than results in 2011 and 2012, with 2011 showing a significant drop in results in many areas in the student's Attitude to School Survey. Results rise again in 2012 but not to the level of 2010. The data from girls and boys is also very different with boys tending to score areas such as classroom behaviour and student safety significantly higher than girls. One cohort of students also scores very much lower than others over the three years. This is the grade 2011 grade 5 cohort, who also score low in grade 6 in 2012, and much lower than the grade 5 cohort in 2012.

Looking more closely at targets as aimed for in the Strategic Plan, the target for Classroom Behaviour in the ATSS was 3.18. Both grade 5 and 6 results meet this target in 2010 and results are at state level. During 2011, however, the results drop with grade 5 scoring particularly low at 2.29 which is in the 10th to 25th percentile. Grade 6 results are 3.19 for this year which is just slightly below state median level. In 2012 the results follow a pattern with the grade 6 results following through very low at 2.79 and grade 5 results showing a stronger 3.24 which meets our target and is close to median state level.

The results for Connectedness to School are also lower than aimed for. The results in 2010 were in the third quartile and these dropped in 2011 and 2012 to the second quartile. In 2012 the score was 4.34 which is just under the 50th percentile.

Results for Student Safety are generally strong with overall results for 2012 being in the third quartile. The target score for this variable was 4.48 and the 2012 score for grade 5 was 4.71 and grade 6, 4.5. Data for 2010 was at median state level but there was a significant difference in the grade 5 data during 2011, where this dropped to 3.8 which is below state median level. Grade 6 data for the same year was significantly higher at 4.65. The girl's data was also very low (in the first quartile) whilst boy's data was in the 4th quartile.

Data is suggesting that one group students had some specific concerns or difficulties which are being reflected in the data for that particular cohort. There is also a strong indication from the data that girls have had some specific issues which have not been felt as strongly by the boys.

There are also some anomalies when comparing data sets including the Parent Opinion Survey (POS) and the Staff Opinion Survey (SOS) results in the areas of Student Safety and Classroom Behaviour then cross matching these with the ATSS results. For example, in 2010 when the ATSS has Classroom Behaviour at above the state level at 50th percentile, the staff have rated this variable at 75th percentile and parents rate this at a low level (between 10th and 25th percentile). In 2011 when the ATSS rates Classroom behaviour at between 10th and 50th percentile the staff score is at the 50th percentile and parent score is at the 60th percentile. This suggests some differences in perceptions and expectations exist between the varying groups within the school.

Why did we achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?

In order to achieve improved outcomes the school implemented many strategies from the School Strategic Plan 2009-13 and worked particularly hard on the area of student relationships.

The development of a new Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy was completed in 2009 as required by DEECD. The strategies in this included the implementation of a Restorative Practices approach to behaviour and relationship issues. This was implemented from 2010 and the assistance of Jane Langley, a Regional expert in this field, was sought.

The school also participated in the DEEM initiative in 2009 and 2010, conducting additional student surveys and developing strategies to particularly target a low area in the ATSS, Connection to Peers. Strategies included:

- Whole School Bully Busters Program in 2010
- Friends For Life Program 2011 (Grades 2-6)
- Circle Time timetabled to occur weekly across school
- Learning to Learn program conducted at start of each year to set classroom expectations and to revisit Bully Buster, Cool Calm Kids, strategies.
- Restorative Conferencing was conducted with both individual and small groups of students to assist solve relationship problems.

This has been successful in improved data for Connectedness to Peers.

Relationship issues with girls have been evident over the last few years and an attempt has been made to assist girls with strategies to understand each other, deal with conflict, and develop an increased resilience. The strategies have included Restorative Conferencing and the school has received assistance in this from Jane Langley who has worked with the school when particularly persistent issues have been apparent. The Friends For Life Program run in 2011 aimed to develop coping skills and develop positive relationships as the problem for our girls continued to be evident. This is constantly being addressed and a program targeting grade 4,5,6 girls (MPower) is currently being run in 2013 by a district member of staff. The relationship issues appear to be magnified by the small cohorts of students and the closeness of the relationships both within and out of the school setting

Parent information sessions have been held for parents to assist parents to develop an understanding of Restorative Practices and how the school deals with welfare issues in a restorative manner. Parent sessions were also run on bullying by the Bully Busters Team and a session on Friends For Life. These sessions have not always been as well attended as we would have liked which could explain anomalies in the survey results from staff and parents where perceptions of behaviour may vary significantly.

The school has worked hard to create opportunities to develop Student Voice and create a connectedness to school and the community. All students in grade 6 have leadership roles and Junior School Council gives a voice to students throughout the school. Links with the community have been increased through more parent involvement in the school, particularly through sport such as athletics and swimming training, our annual clubs program, and the whole school Kitchen/Garden program. Unfortunately our results in School Connectedness in the ATSS do not reflect this effort.

Analysis on the data on Classroom Behaviour has been very interesting but has been confusing to staff as their perceptions were not the same as the students. Looking at the results in Teaching and Learning, however, the data on student outcomes and changes in our classroom structure at

this time could explain why there was a drop in Classroom Behaviour in this particular cohort. Our 2011 grade 5 data matches a group with lower academic outcomes also having lower outcomes in the ATSS.

Some changes in classroom structure occurred at this time, including flexible seating arrangements and more individualised ICT. It is possible that students and parents were not ready for this change which may have needed to be more gradually introduced so that students had a clearer understanding of behavioural expectations in an environment of increased choice and personal responsibility. The introduction of increased structure in 2012 where the classroom has balanced the changes and expectations have reflected in some improvement in results in 2012.

In analysing this data on children's views on classroom behaviour the staff decided to investigate deeper and conducted some in-depth surveys and discussion with students in grade 4,5 6 in 2013. The results showed a clear difference in student perceptions of what constituted acceptable classroom behaviour. Boys were very surprised by the results which showed half students feeling distracted by the behaviour of others and half not feeling they were affected at all. During discussion, it emerged that the boys were totally surprised that the behaviour in the classroom could be considered distracting. This indicates a different perception from boys and girls and may explain some of our survey results.

The surveys and discussion with upper grade students also investigated areas which concerned staff in areas of Learning Confidence and Motivation where data was down. This revealed a lack of student understanding of the words describing feelings when answering survey questions and the supplementary survey indicates that the areas of student distress and moral are not as low as surveys indicate. A small number of children are feeling low and this appears to be relating more to the playground than the classroom. Learning new things is stressful to some children and some children indicated they had a lack of belief in their own self. A few students identified maths as an area that worried them when facing new concepts. This is a very valuable piece of information for staff to understand and digest.

How effectively did we manage resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?

The school budgeted for some major initiatives in the area of Student Engagement and Wellbeing over the term of the Strategic Plan. Money received through the Warrnambool Network Alternative Programs Fund and the SRP was used to pay for major programs such as Bully Busters and materials to support the implementation of Friends for Life and Circle Time.

The school actively sought the assistance of regional and district staff to support with the introduction of programs and the development of strategies. Jane Langley and Cindy Jenkinson-Clarke provided valuable support in the implementation of Restorative Practices, Circle Time, Friends for Life and the current MPower program. They also supported the school in providing parent information sessions.

The principal took the major role as welfare officer which was funded through the primary welfare component of the school's SRP. This included a major investment of time in restorative conferencing with girls over the course of the Strategic Plan. The principal was also responsible for working with grade 6 in development of leadership roles and supporting the JSC.

All staff took responsibility for dealing with minor daily welfare/behaviour issues using a restorative practices approach. The staff worked together to ensure the Learning to Learn Program was consistently delivered to each classroom at the start of the school year. Timetabling ensured that Circle Time was conducted regularly in all classrooms each Thursday.

What can we do in the future to continue to improve?

The school will look at the following areas to continue to improve.

- Investigate ways to improve student learning confidence and motivation
- Continue to work on individualised learning goals for students to make students more connected with their own learning and achievements.
- Investigate ways to improve connection to school and make links to the community.
- Continue to work with girls on developing relationship and resilience skills. Focus more heavily on students at the lower levels, grade 2 and 3.
- Development of student understandings of what distracting classroom behaviour "looks like". Continue work begun in 2013 on Mac "Behaviour Scale"
- Artist in Schools Program 2013 focusing on connectedness with community and local environment.
- Develop a communication strategy with parents in the area of student safety and behaviour.

Student pathways and transitions

What student outcomes were we trying to achieve?

The main goal in the school's Strategic Plan 2010-13 in the area of Student Pathways and Transition was to:-

Improve transition processes and learning pathways for all students in order to realise their full academic and social potential.

Targets were set and achievement was to be measured by parent satisfaction in the transition variable of the Parent Opinion Survey with the aim of this being at or beyond the 5.64 score between 2010 and 2013.

There was also a school based measure – to obtain feedback from preschools and secondary colleges.

The Key Improvement Strategy was to: -

Refine, plan and implement transition processes into, between and beyond the school, that are comprehensive of student learning and social needs.

Specific implementation strategies were to:-

- Continue to build and strengthen links with the local pre -school and secondary schools.

- Investigate the strengthening of the exchanging of information with the local pre -school and secondary colleges

- Continue to liaise with GRaSS schools to investigate ways of preparing students for larger school environment.

- Investigate methods of providing improved information and support to parents in transition processes.

What student outcomes did we achieve?

In analysing the Parent Opinion Survey (POS) results it was apparent that the school had not reached the targets set in the Strategic Plan for the Transition variable. The target was to improve upon the 2009 score of 5.64 but in 2010 and 2011 this dropped to 5.6 which indicates a downward trend. This also appears very low when compared to the state school mean of 5.8 and puts the school in the second quartile and in the first quartile when compared to all primary schools data.

In order to understand this data and the negative trend staff analysed in detail the Transition variable in the POS and also sought additional information from the community. Surveys were sent out in 2013 to current parents, past parents and students to gain further understandings and input.

Analysis of the 2011 POS transition variable where there were a total of 40 surveys returned reveals the following when transferred into negative, positive and uncommitted responses.

Survey Question	Number of responses who Strongly Disagree, Moderately Disagree, or Mildly Disagree	Number of responses who Neither Agree nor Disagree	Number of responses who either Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree or Mildly Agree	Total number of responses to question.
My child is well prepared for the next stage in their education	4	6	22	35
My child was supported well when they started back at school this year	4	2	27	36
Before the end of last year, my child was well prepared for this year at school.	6	4	25	36
My child has been supported in their transitions at school.	2	2	32	36

This data tells us that a small number of parents are unhappy with transition with over 70% in the Strongly, Moderately or Mildly Agree categories, approximately 10% in the Neither Agree or Disagree categories, and 11% in the Mildly, Moderately or Strongly Disagree categories.

The analysis of the internal school based surveys gives us more information of what is working well and areas of concern. The surveys clearly indicated that:

1. Parents are generally very happy with our transition program between kinder and prep.
2. Some parents were unhappy with the transition of grade 6 students to secondary college.
3. Most students were happy with transition programs in general but had some suggestions regarding how we could improve preparedness for high school.

The results of the parent and student surveys varied depending upon the secondary college attended, particularly between the transition to government and independent schools. This included differences in the expectations of homework and preparedness for the academic rigour of

secondary college and the number and dates of transition visits. Those attending independent schools were less satisfied in general than those attending government schools.

Why did we achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?

The school has built up very strong links with the Macarthur Kinder and good relationships exist between school and kinder staff. This has ensured that we have a very effective transition program with good communication processes.

The transition program begins formally in term 3 but connections are made from the start of the year with a weekly school newsletter being delivered to the kinder for all families. During term 2 the principal makes formal contact to begin communication with parents and a school tour is conducted during Education Week each year. This enables families to make their first school visit and gain a feel for the school setting.

The formal transition program occurs in terms 3 and 4 with five organised visits, the first with prep students and the teacher visiting the kinder, followed by 4 visits to the school by kinder children and staff. These visits include experiences of both literacy and numeracy sessions, with the current prep students and the prep teacher, and concluding with the full day State Orientation Day visit in term 4.

A further information session is held for parents in term 3 during Enrolment Week by the principal and Prep teacher to ensure parents are familiar with the school routine and programs. An information pack is distributed to all parents at this time and parents are encouraged to ask questions and contact the school or other parents in the school community with any concerns.

Students and families are invited to participate in special school events and some cultural visits as appropriate to further develop the connections between the school and families. Students beginning Prep at Macarthur PS are very prepared for the school setting by the local kinder and the strong transition program. All children quickly settle in to school at the start of the school year.

The secondary transition program is more difficult to coordinate with students moving on to up to five different secondary colleges. This is compounded by small numbers of students, different dates and numbers of transition days and different expectations from the different secondary colleges.

In general, during the term of the Strategic Plan the transition processes to the government secondary colleges Hawkesdale P-12 College and Baimbridge P-12 College have improved. More transition visits have been arranged, and there has been more communication from the secondary transition coordinators including visits to the school by the transition coordinators to meet with students. This has been well received by students who have indicated school visits and knowing people to go to as very helpful with their transition.

The transition to the independent schools is more challenging due to less organised transition days and no communication from the schools. The main independent schools, Monivae College and Hamilton Alexandra College, have one organised transition day which is a day when testing is conducted and there is no transition coordinator visit to the school or communication regarding transition dates.

There also appears to be different expectations in year 7 from the different settings with the need for homework and preparation for home study routines to be a concern for some parents and

students. The development of personal organisational skills is something parents believe we do not address well to prepare for high school, particularly for those students moving on to the independent schools. The school has not focussed on formal homework and this is an area to consider for improvement. Organisational skills are being encouraged and developed at school but this is an area we need to communicate more effectively to parents. We may also need to look closely at what particular organisational skills may be needed at high school.

The Grampians Rural and Small Schools have held a grade 6 transition camp each year over the term of the Strategic Plan. This has been very helpful to students to gain experience of a large cohort of similar aged students and to build up friendships and social skills prior to moving to secondary college. Student surveys have indicated that students have found this of great benefit to their transition. GRaSS has attempted to improve this during 2011 and 2012 by introducing a Science Day for all grade 5 GRaSS students.

Due to the small school setting and all staff personally knowing all students there are few problems with students transitioning between grades. As we have developed a whole school approach to classroom structures and teaching and learning approaches this is continuing to improve. We have worked to improve communication between teachers regarding student achievement, or difficulties, through timetabling team staff planning times. A school wide student file system is in operation to transfer information between teachers and targets are set for achievement at the start of the year. This includes the end point VELs level from the previous year in the data to improve transfer of achievement data and give teachers an immediate starting point for students learning and test analysis.

How effectively did we manage resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?

The school used resources effectively to support improved transition outcomes in the following ways:

- Timetabling was organised to support staffing for transition visits to school and beyond school. This included visits to the school by the year 7 coordinators, kinder visits to school, and student visits beyond school, including to secondary college and the GRaSS Camp. The principal supported the grade 4,5,6 teacher in provision of grade cover for attending camps.
- Staff within school supported each other by providing cover during kinder transition times with teachers taking additional students to release the Prep /One classroom teacher
- The Business Manager produced Welcome Packs and documentation to welcome and inform Kinder families and liaised with district and school staff on dissemination and collection of Year 7 enrolment forms.
- Staff were allocated transition roles and tasks for both kinder and grade 6 transition.
- The principal was personally involved in kinder transition programs and information sessions.
- The grade 6 teacher provided secondary colleges with data on student achievement prior to transition.
- The school timetabled team planning times to assist communication between staff
- The GRaSS Camp was subsidised heavily by GRaSS funds to ensure its' continuation and success.

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What can we do in the future to continue to improve?

As the school strives to improve in the area of Pathways and Transition we have identified some areas which we believe are working well and need to be continued. These include:-

- Continue the existing strong Kinder to Prep Transition Program
- Continue the GRaSS Camp and the continued development of opportunities to work with other small schools in the GRaSS group to hold group days for grade 5 and 6 students.
- Continue to give students in grades 3 to 6 opportunities to participate in sporting opportunities beyond the school and build links with other small school students.

Areas we have identified for improvement are:-

- Develop ways of improving the transition processes and communication with secondary colleges, with a particular focus on communication with independent secondary colleges.
- Review the school's Homework Policy. Introduce a Homework Program into the upper grades.
- Investigate organisational skills needed to assist students in transition from grade 6 into year 7.