

## **Executive Summary**

### **2.1 School Context**

Clayton South Primary School (Clayton South PS) is located on Clayton Road, South Clayton, in a mixed housing and light industrial area 20 kilometres to the south-east of Melbourne. Enrolment over the review period has fallen from 202 students in 2011 to 116 students in 2015. Students are taught in seven classes including Foundation, and composites from Year 1 to Year 6. Currently 68% of the student population has a non-English speaking background.

A new kindergarten has been opened adjacent to the school in the past year and a privately operated child-care centre is to be opened next to the school in another 12 months. The local council is confident that student numbers in the area will grow, as areas of light industrial land have recently been re-zoned for housing development.

The school is set in extensive grounds which are attractive and well treed and which provide a good buffer from the road noise. The grounds provide for a wide range of both active and passive games with many areas well suited to a range of learning opportunities. These include vegetable gardens, an active hen enclosure, arrangements for recycling, solar power and water conservation, and provision for sandpits and water play.

In 2015 a substantive Principal has been appointed following several changes of leadership in previous years with significant periods where the school was led by Acting Principals. The leadership team now consists of the Principal and two Expert Teachers.

Specialist teachers provide lessons in Physical Education and Sport, Languages Other Than English LOTE (Spanish) and Art. Students are involved in a wide range of extra curricula programs, including a science program, a community art program and a sustainability program.

A Building the Education Revolution Program (BER Program) building provides the school with a hall for assemblies and other opportunities for the school to come together. It also provides for the Physical Education program to be held inside during inclement weather. A stand alone building houses the library, an older brick building houses the Foundation-Year 2 area of the school and a light timber construction (LTC) houses the administration and the classrooms for Years 3-6.

## **1.2 Summary of the School's Performance**

### **Student learning:**

Over the review period the school sought to improve student learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. According to both teacher judgements against the Australian Curriculum and Victorian Essential Learning Standards (AusVELS) and results from the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) the results achieved for literacy and numeracy were variable during this review period. While a number of the targets set in the School Strategic Plan (SSP) for 2012-2015 were met it was apparent that continuous improvement in student learning had not occurred and 'maximising outcomes for all students at all stages through their primary years' was not evident.

Significant staffing and leadership changes occurred during the period of the review and these changes led to discontinuity in the planning for learning, the implementation of agreed curriculum and a whole of school approach to teaching and learning.

### **Student Engagement and Wellbeing:**

The school also planned to 'improve the capacity of students to be more engaged personal learners who are challenged and encouraged to achieve their personal best to develop in each individual a sense of wellbeing and connectedness to school'. According to the student Attitudes to School Survey (ATS Survey) for 2015 students' scores for the two wellbeing indicators were well above State means, as were their scores for Connectedness to School and for Stimulating Learning. According to the Parent Opinion Survey (PO Survey) for 2015 parents saw growth in Students' Connectedness to School and in Stimulating Learning.

### **Student Pathways and Transitions:**

The data on student learning indicated that progress has been made over the review period but that it was not consistent across all areas of the school's program. Teachers were providing well for the students in their own classes but an overall school-wide approach to teaching and learning, the development of an agreed curriculum and a clearly defined assessment and data analysis of student learning were all areas that in 2015 the school was working towards embedding.

Arrangements for transition from pre-school to Foundation were impacted by issues arising from the construction of a new kindergarten adjacent to the school in 2014 but these were being addressed with a view to a well-established culture of sharing resources and seamless transition being established for 2016.

## 2.2.2 Summary of the review findings against the Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the review included three main focus areas.

### 1. The nature and extent of whole school understanding of effective and consistent teaching practice with regard to the following:

- *The development of a whole of school curriculum plan.*
- *Agreed and consistent approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy.*
- *Agreed and consistent approaches to assessment, moderation, shared planning and student tracking.*
- *The use of data to inform teaching, differentiate curriculum, personalise learning and hold teachers to account for student progress.*

Effective and consistent teaching practice was not yet embedded across all areas of the school, although in 2015 the school had made considerable advances in ensuring that teachers were all working towards an agreed curriculum and were developing agreed and consistent approaches to teaching practice.

In 2015 teachers started to collect data and evidence for the purposes of informing planning to develop a differentiated learning program. The variability of teacher judgements against the AusVELS across the school and across curriculum areas indicated that the data used to inform school-based decisions on student learning and progress were not consistent or reliable. A whole school data management system, Student Performance Analyser (SPA), was in place in the school but was not yet being used systematically by teachers to analyse data. Evidence highlighted that teachers lacked an understanding of all data sets and the knowledge to effectively analyse and to use data to inform the teaching and learning program. Teachers acknowledged that they were not yet providing a curriculum that fully met the needs of high performing students and were better at providing for students in need of additional support.

A review of NAPLAN data indicated that the results for student growth from Year 3-Year 5 had improved in all areas in the cohort of students from Year 3 in 2013 to Year 5 in 2015. However, the results for the percentages of students in Years 3 and 5 in the top three bands in 2015 varied from 46.2% for Numeracy for Year 5 to a high of 85.8% for both Grammar and Punctuation and for Writing for Year 3 students. The results for Numeracy were the lowest recorded for both Year 3 and Year 5.

A review of teacher judgements against the AusVELS data for Semester 2, 2014 indicated considerable variations across year levels and across subject areas for the percentages of students assessed in the top two bands – A and B. The results for

Reading and Viewing ranged from 8% to 39%, for Speaking and Listening from 0% to 23%, for Writing from 0% to 23%, for Number and Algebra from 0% to 36% and for Measurement and Geometry from 0% to 27%.

**2. The extent to which the school has engaged with, and mobilised the school community and the wider community in order to maximise the learning opportunities, engagement and participation of all students.**

Enrolments into the Foundation year at the school have been impacted by the relationship with the adjoining kindergarten. A focus during 2015 has been on developing better communication and the sharing of resources and events between the kinder and the school in order to develop a cooperative relationship.

The school has been involved in the wider community with shared projects at the Monash Hospital, John Monash Science School and with the local Council sustainability project leading to an increase in student connectedness to school and community.

**3. The extent to which high expectations for all students and staff are demonstrated in school practices with particular focus on improvements to teacher practice and student outcomes.**

A culture built on the school vision, goals, values and high expectations was starting to develop in 2015 at Clayton South PS. Progress had been made towards developing a clear, aligned and well communicated vision in 2015 which includes a focus on high expectations and how these are enacted across the school.

An agreed instructional model has not yet been fully developed and embedded at Clayton South PS. Effective teaching and learning strategies were evident, but not consistently delivered across the school.

The school has engaged in a range of professional learning programs over the review period. However, much of the professional learning was disjointed due to the frequent changes of coaches, staff and leadership and did not contribute to a cohesive approach to teaching and learning across the curriculum and school. The transference of knowledge from learning activities into practice was not consistent across the school.

A clear and focussed direction for teacher professional learning linked to the goals and priorities of the SSP, together with teacher performance plans, was not evident prior to 2015. In 2015 a Performance and Development (P&D) process has been introduced. Teachers shared their goals and received feedback at a staff meeting and have all been allocated interviews with the Principal. Teachers reported that their plans were more meaningful as they were explicitly linked to their real work.

A review of student learning data made the school aware of the work that was required to lift student outcomes and commented in their School Self Evaluation (SSE) as follows: 'The constant changing of staff leadership, school visions and subject coaches has also impacted the student outcomes. These are all areas that are currently being addressed.'

The school made Numeracy and Reading the focus in 2015, based on their review of NAPLAN data and have recognised that the discrepancies between the teacher judgement data and the NAPLAN data need to be addressed. The school has recognised the need to provide continuous coaching to support the development of the skills teachers require to effectively implement the Reading and Numeracy programs.

### **2.2.3 Key findings**

- The school does not have:
  - An agreed curriculum program consistently implemented across the school.
  - Deep understanding of the content and intent of the AusVELS curriculum.
  - An agreed and fully implemented instructional model.
  - Assessment, moderation and data literacy amongst all staff.
- Low levels of staff morale and leadership challenges have impacted on the school climate and resulted in a falling enrolment.
- A cohesive team approach to leadership has not been in place during most of the review period resulting in the lack of a distributed model of leadership and the loss of leadership development across all levels.

### **2.4 Next steps**

Clayton South PS is well placed to build staff and leadership capacity to drive an explicit school improvement agenda that will lead to improved student outcomes through a whole of staff commitment to the development of deep knowledge of curriculum, agreed and consistently implemented assessment practices and continued strengthening of community engagement.