

School Review Report

Footscray West Primary School

No. 3890

South Western Victoria Region

Validation Day: 8 May 2023

Fieldwork Day/s: 31 May and 1 June 2023

Final Panel Day: 20 June 2023

Strategic Plan 2019-2023

School Principal	Name: Brendan Millar Email address: Brendan.Millar@education.vic.gov.au
School Council President	Name: Andrew Newman Email address: Andrew.Newman@education.vic.gov.au
Senior Education Improvement Leader	Name: Natalie Bakai Email address: Natalie.Bakai@education.vic.gov.au
School Reviewer	Name: David Mann Review Company: Valad Solutions Email address: david.mann@valadsolutions.com.au
Challenge Partner 1	Name: Jen Briggs Email address: Jenny.Briggs@education.vic.gov.au
Challenge Partner 2	Name: David Moss Email address: David.Moss@education.vic.gov.au

1. Public section

1.1 School context	
Location and history	Footscray West Primary school is located in the City of Maribyrnong in the inner western suburbs of Melbourne approximately eight kilometres from the Melbourne Central Business District. The school was founded in 1915.
School facilities	The school grounds include an indoor multi-purpose hall, four main buildings and eight portable structures. The grounds include two separate adventure playgrounds, one basketball and netball courts, an oval and orchard.
Enrolments	Enrolments at the time of the review were approximately 676 students. Over the past four years, enrolments decreased by 24 students.
SFO and SFOE	The Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index was 0.19 in 2021–22.
Staff profile	The staffing profile of Footscray West Primary School includes a principal and two assistant principals, two leading teachers and two learning specialists, 34 full time equivalent teachers, four full time equivalent Education Support (ES) staff, 3.5 office administration staff, a qualified school nurse, 0.5 library technician and 0.5 maintenance officer.
Curriculum	Footscray West Primary School offers a Foundation to year 6 program through the Victorian Curriculum. The school currently offers Physical Education / Sport, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Music, and the LOTE Italian.
Additional information	The school is part of the Victorian Professional Learning Communities (PLC) initiative and provides an accredited Out of School Hours Care Program.

1.2 School and community highlights	
Highlight 1	
Title: Professional Learning Communities	
<p>The panel found a key school community highlight was the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLC). The leadership team devoted school funds to the construction of a dedicated PLC space for teams to collaborate and investigate inquiry cycles. The panel observed PLC meetings where student data was discussed and a whole school data wall for literacy and numeracy was regularly updated. Leadership redeveloped the timetable to include scheduled PLC meetings during the day where moderation, curriculum planning, and data analysis was undertaken by teachers. Teachers reported to the panel that the introduction of PLCs strengthened collaboration and improved their teaching practice through professional reading and data informed best practice. The panel noted that PLCs focused on continuous improvement of student outcomes.</p>	
Highlight 2	
Title: Student and Staff Wellbeing	
<p>The panel heard that a school community highlight was the focus that the school placed on wellbeing and emotional learning of students and staff throughout the four years of the strategic plan. The school</p>	

implemented many wellbeing initiatives to monitor and improve the mental health of both students and staff. Students reported to the panel that Footscray West was ‘the best school in the area’ and ‘everybody looks out for everybody at Footscray West, especially the teachers’. Staff Opinion data supported this care shown by leadership. The panel noted the calm and caring school environment and how the Child Safe & Wellbeing team monitored student behaviour, attendance and wellbeing concerns. The panel also noted the trust and mutual respect between leaders and staff through a harmonious consultative process.

Highlight 3

Title: Peer Observations

The panel acknowledged that carefully planned professional learning supported by peer observations during the strategic plan period-built staff knowledge and confidence in key areas of implementing the school’s identified problems of practice. Peer observations were prioritised and organised in advance of each term through the planner. This provided clear direction for each teacher. Clear protocols and documentation were developed and in place to ensure each activity was efficient and purposeful. The panel noted that all teachers spoke extremely positively about their peer observations and how the experience had improved their understanding of teaching. The panel noted that the Staff Opinion Survey data indicated consistently high levels of teachers’ positive endorsement against variables of Professional learning to improve learning, Feedback improves practice and Interest in improving practice. The panel acknowledged the strategic development of staff professional practice through peer observations was a highlight.

Highlight 4

Title: School Communication

The panel found a key community highlight was the successful introduction of digital technologies to improve communication across the school. Parents informed the panel that this digital platform enhanced school communication and allowed them easier access to teachers and leadership and book online school events. The panel observed how PLC teams could access documentation and share content for all team members in real time. Teachers informed the panel that individual student information could be accessed from anywhere and updated when needed.

1.3 Summary of key review findings

Performance against the School Strategic Plan (SSP) goals and targets

SSP Goal 1	The 2019-2022 SSP for Footscray West Primary School set a goal to improve writing growth for all students. The panel found that the school had partially met this goal, with one target met, one target partially met, and one target not met.
SSP Goal 2	The second goal was to improve student agency and voice in their learning. The panel found that the school had not met this goal, with one target not met.
SSP Goal 3	The third goal was to deepen and strengthen students’ resilience and capacity to form sustainable respectful relationships. The panel found that the school had not met this goal. With one target not met.

Findings against the Terms of Reference Focus Questions

Terms of Reference Focus Question 1: To what extent do the teachers differentiate learning and support student agency?

The panel concluded that there were inconsistencies in how differentiation was catered for across the school. The panel noted that students below level had their learning needs met through focussed teaching groups and individual teacher conferencing, however, students above level were not consistently provided with tasks that stretched their thinking and that provided rigour and challenge. The panel found that the school had not developed a whole school understanding of student agency and that students were compliant in their learning but not necessarily active agents in the learning process.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 2: To what extent has the school implemented an effective, consistent, and sustainable PLC model?

The panel found that the school had made extensive progress with the implementation of PLCs. Protected meeting times had been provided by leadership for teams to meet and develop cycles of inquiry. Agreed norms, protocols and consistent planning documents had been developed to assist teams to complete cycles of inquiry. All teachers had a voice in meetings and used student data, professional reading, and current research to develop their teaching practice. Leadership had provided PLC leaders with professional learning to build their capacity to lead effectively.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 3: To what extent does the school build the social and emotional wellbeing and resilience of its students?

The panel concluded that the school had invested much time and resources through an effective social skills program to build the social and emotional wellbeing of students. The panel noted the consistent approach to wellbeing across the school by teachers and the calm, safe and positive culture that existed in the school through a supportive leadership and committed school staff.

1.4 Summary of areas of focus for the next School Strategic Plan

The school review panel recommends the following areas of focus be captured in the next School Strategic Plan:

- Instructional model for literacy and numeracy
- Differentiation with a focus on students above level
- Middle leader development
- Attendance with a focus on interventions to support students at risk
- Student agency with a focus on students monitoring learning growth
- PLC development with a focus on targeted cohorts identified by data and evidence