School Review Report

Eltham Primary School

School Number: 0209

Region: North-Western Victoria

Validation Day: 8 June 2023

Fieldwork Day/s: 19 June 2023

Final Panel Day: 21 June 2023

Strategic Plan: 2019-2023

School Principal	Name: Lorraine Kennedy Email address: Lorraine.Kennedy@education.vic.gov.au
School Council President	Name: Chris Adams Email address: chris@mc3consulting.com.au
Senior Education Improvement Leader	Name: Clare Read Email address: Clare.Read@education.vic.gov.au
School Reviewer	Name: Branko Lukic Review Company: National Curriculum Services Email address: lukic.branko.b@gmail.com
Challenge Partner 1	Name: Brigitte Walker Email address: Brigitte.Walker@education.vic.gov.au
Challenge Partner 2	Name: Melissa Mackenzie Email address: Melissa.Mackenzie@education.vic.gov.au

Contents

1. Public section

1.1 School context

Location and history	Eltham Primary School is situated in the township of Eltham, located in the City of Nillumbik, approximately 24 kilometres from the Melbourne Central Business District. The school was founded in 1856.
School facilities	The school grounds include the original sandstone building, which now houses the administration area, an indoor multi-purpose hall and two main buildings. The grounds include grassed and paved play areas, playgrounds, seating areas, and native and vegetable gardens.
Enrolments	Enrolments at the time of the review were approximately 329 students.
SFO and SFOE	The Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index was 0.147 in 2021–22.
Staff profile	The school staff consists of the Principal, Assistant Principal, one Learning Specialist, 19.4 full-time equivalent (EFT) teachers and 3.8 EFT Education Support (ES) staff. A Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader (MHWL) and Tutor Learning Initiative (TLI) tutor complement the school's staffing profile. The school is supported by Student Support Services (SSS) and one part-time support technician.
Curriculum	The school's F-10 curriculum framework incorporated the eight learning areas of English, mathematics, sciences, humanities and social sciences, the arts, languages (Indonesian), health and physical education, information and communication technology, and design and technology, aligned with the Victorian Curriculum.
Additional information	Eltham Primary School is part of the Victorian Professional Learning Communities (PLC) initiative. The school is a lead Respectful Relationships school and operates within the School Wide Positive Behaviours framework. Eltham Primary School operates an accredited Out of School Hours Care Program. Students participate in excursions, incursions, camping programs and can elect to participate in the Band program and Choir. The school's Kitchen Garden program, located in the original residence, complements the school's science and health curriculum units and enables students to learn about food literacy, including sustainability, through a practical and hands-on approach.

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1.2 School and community highlights

Highlight 1

Title: Student Voice and Agency

The review panel confirmed that a key school and community highlight was the school's work on building student voice and agency.

In focus group discussions with staff, the panel heard that there had been a strategic focus during the review period to provide increased leadership opportunities for students, greater opportunities for student voice and choice and older students with more engaging activities,

Leadership informed the panel that student leaders were empowered to make decisions. Students in focus group discussions confirmed this by telling the panel they had a prominent role in the school's decision-making process. Staff told the panel that there was a strengthened focus on Indigenous education during the review period. The panel heard that this was supported by; the celebration and promotion of key cultural events such as Reconciliation and National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week and the development of the school's Indigenous garden. The panel heard from leadership that new students were welcomed with an inaugural welcome to country from the Wurundjeri people and a smoking ceremony.

Teachers told the panel that establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Cultural and Histories Inquiry Team had strengthened the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders curriculum content and engagement with the Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan Network.

Students informed the panel that the implementation of the goal-setting tool helped them identify their strengths and areas for improvement and they were able to set specific learning goals for themselves. Additionally, students told the panel that the year five and six elective program was very popular amongst students as it provided them with appealing, interesting, and engaging curriculum choices.

Leadership informed the panel that the expansion of the school's Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program had a greater focus on digital skills and access to multimodal possibilities. Teachers reported that this gave students more choices in presenting their work, and students enjoyed exploring different ways of demonstrating their knowledge and creativity.

Highlight 2

Title: Community Engagement and Support

The panel agreed that a second key school and community highlight was the school's work building Community Engagement and Support.

Leadership informed the panel that the initiative was designed to promote strong community engagement and to build a sense of belonging and pride with the school to overcome the challenges that lockdowns and the subsequent and significant social impacts that Covid -19 had imposed on the local community.

Leadership and parents informed the panel that numerous community events were organised to unite the school community. These included the Indonesian community picnic, the Welcome BBQ and the end-of-year picnic. In a parent forum, the panel heard that these events were well-attended and enjoyed by all. Leadership told the panel that the school had refined its graduation processes, making it a more meaningful and memorable occasion for students and families. Parents told the panel that families valued the support the school and its staff offered during remote learning. Despite the challenges that remote learning presented, parents told the panel that the school's staff demonstrated resilience, flexibility, and adaptability to deliver consistent, high-quality programs to all students. Teachers in focus group discussions told the panel they had provided whole class, small group, and individual support. This included one-on-one sessions with teachers, targeted

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interventions for struggling students, and opportunities for students to work collaboratively with their peers.

Leadership reported that they observed increased levels of engagement between families and teachers during remote learning. Parents told the panel that the school worked hard to maintain a strong connection between home and school, with regular updates and communication from its teachers to parents and carers.

Highlight 3

Title: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

The panel agreed that a third key school and community highlight was the school's introduction of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Leadership informed the panel that the introduction of the PLC approach facilitated a natural progression from Professional Learning Teams (PLT). PLCs were designed to strengthen teaching teams' ability to share assessment data, reflect on their practice and explore strategies for meeting the needs of individual students.

The panel heard from leadership and staff that they completed initial PLC training in 2019. Teachers told the panel that the school leadership prioritised time for PLCs to meet and plan together, aligning schedules to facilitate their effective operation. The panel heard from staff that consistent operational protocols for PLCs were developed. The panel heard from leadership and staff that during the review period, there was an explicit focus on using data to set clear goals and make evidence-based instructional decisions. Teachers informed the panel that this was supported by consistent data collection using Guttman charts, which helped identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement. Staff told the panel that the introduction of common assessments for literacy and numeracy and data tracking protocols supported and guided conversations during PLCs.

Teachers in focus group discussions told the panel that the prioritisation of data discussions as an expectation in PLCs had facilitated a greater focus on student data. The panel heard from leadership that the shift to working in teams using the PLC approach supported the school's ongoing improvement journey. Leadership informed the panel that the focus on aligning professional learning with individual teacher Performance and Development Plans (PDPs) supported improvement in teacher growth and greater consistency in the implementation of high-impact teaching strategies (HITS).

Highlight 4

Title: Wellbeing

The review panel confirmed that a key school and community highlight was the school's work in student wellbeing during the review period.

Leadership informed the panel that there had been a deliberate intent during the review period to improve student wellbeing and to build respectful relationships supported through professional learning for all staff.

The panel heard from leadership and staff that a review and audit of the school's Social and Emotional (SEL) curriculum during the review period led to a strong focus on teaching the school values. Staff told the panel that this assisted in developing more positive and supportive relationships with students and families. Leadership told the panel that the Wellbeing team provided effective structures to prioritise wellbeing support. The strategic allocation of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader (MHWL) also augmented wellbeing support. Leadership informed the panel that the MHWL and the Wellbeing Team developed improved referral processes to identify and support students who required Tier 2 and Tier 3 support in either learning, wellbeing or behaviour.

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The panel heard from leadership and staff that the school used the School-Wide Positive Behaviour (SWPB) framework and the Respectful Relationships curriculum to support a proactive model for managing behaviours. The school developed strategies and common expectations to promote positive behaviour and support students to manage their emotions through self-regulation.

Leadership informed the panel that the school was identified as a lead school for SWPBS. During the review period, the school regularly refined and reviewed its SWPB processes to better support student wellbeing and social and emotional development.

In focus group discussions with staff, the panel heard that a review of the school's SWPBS matrices led to changes to the rewards systems to better align with its revised Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Scope and Sequence.

Teachers told the panel that creating common expectations across all areas of the school helped create a more consistent and supportive learning environment for all students.

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1.3 Summary of key review findings

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

SSP Goal 1	The 2019-2023 SSP for Eltham Primary School set a goal to maximise learning growth for every student in literacy and numeracy. The panel found that the school had partially met this goal, with one target partially met and one target not met.
SSP Goal 2	The second goal was to empower students to take ownership of and responsibility for their learning. The panel found that the school partially met this goal, with two targets partially met and one not met.
SSP Goal 3	The third goal was to strengthen student connectedness and sense of community. The panel agreed that the school had partially met this goal, with one target met, one partially met, and one not met.

Findings against the Terms of Reference Focus Questions

Terms of Reference Focus Question 1: To what extent does the school build relationships with students that foster engagement in a positive learning environment?

The panel found that embedded structures and routines across the school enabled students to know the next stages of their learning. The panel found that there were agreed expectations around how teaching was structured. The panel agreed that teacher planning was undertaken collaboratively, and the panel observed a range of assessment data being gathered and used by teachers to assist with the differentiation of student learning and goal setting.

The panel agreed that opportunities remained to foster positive relationships between staff, students and peers, especially at the senior end of the school, to foster greater student engagement in learning.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 2: To what extent does the school create opportunities for students to develop resilience, a strong sense of self, curiosity, and high expectations of themselves as learners?

The panel agreed that the SWPBS framework was an enabler in fostering resilience and high expectations. The panel heard from parents, staff and students that all teachers consistently referred to the school's values and expectations. The panel found that the school's goal-setting tool was an enabler that promoted the ability of students to monitor their learning effectiveness. However, staff use, and understanding of the tool were not yet consistent across the school.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 3: To what extent do students have agency over their learning?

The panel found that the school had extensive student leadership opportunities in place and some avenues for students to follow their interests within the curriculum. However, there remained opportunities for students to consistently influence curriculum design and provide feedback on the impact of teaching and learning.

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:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Student agency
- Student wellbeing