

Palmerston District Primary School

Network: North Canberra/ Gungahlin

Impact Report 2021

The purpose of this document

This document flows directly from our Action Plan for 2021 which translated our school priorities into actions for the current year of our five-year improvement cycle. These actions were responsive to identified challenges, changes or risks to delivery of improvement for student learning.

Our school's contribution to whole-of-system Strategic Indicators

Education Directorate Strategic Indicator 2018-2021

To promote greater equity in learning outcomes in and across ACT public schools

In 2021 our school supported this Strategic Indicator through – Priority 1 and 2 (see reporting for detail):

- Improve students' writing and spelling capabilities.
- Improve students' ability to connect with learning.

Education Directorate Strategic Indicator 2018-2021

To facilitate high quality teaching in ACT public schools and strengthen educational outcomes.

In 2021 our school supported this Strategic Indicator through – Priorities 1 and 2 (see reporting for detail):

- A restructure of the Leadership team as well as introducing a Learning Leader for each year level and the Specialist team and programs – acting as a conduit between classroom teachers and the Leadership team. An additional SLC with the responsibility of Coaching and Mentoring for New Educators with the intention to build teacher quality.
- Developed whole school approaches to Writing and Spelling and employed Christine Topfer as a critical friend to support and upskill the leadership team and regular check-ins with teaching teams.
- Continuation of a PBL team to harness recent introductions and propel forwards to maximise student recognition of successful learner behaviours.

Education Directorate Strategic Indicator 2018-2021

To centre teaching and learning around students as individuals

In 2021 our school supported this Strategic Indicator through – Priorities 1 and 2 (see reporting for detail):

- Learning programs and learning environments from Preschool to Yr 6 demonstrate an increased focus on words and a rich print environment. Co-constructed anchor charts and Bump It Up walls (for example) support the individual need of all students.
- Individual writing and spelling progress is tracked, and explicit targeting is better informed to set student learning goals.
- New assessment structures implemented to ensure data collection and analysis is frequent and moderated.
- Through a whole school approach of Mindset Monday - Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons and Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) lessons are targeted for every class exploring the individual needs of our classes.

Reporting against our priorities

Priority 1: Improve students' writing and spelling capabilities

Targets or measures

By the end of 2021 we will achieve:

- Increase the proportion of students who demonstrate growth in writing, using formative and summative strategies.
- Increase the proportion of students in every year level being exposed to authentic daily writing.
- Essential Practice 7: Intentional and ambitious efforts to build vocabulary and content knowledge in spelling and writing lessons across 75% of classes.
- At least 65% of students in years 1-6 achieving at Australian Curriculum achievement standard or above in writing.

In 2021 we implemented this priority through the following strategies.

- Teachers develop a classroom culture in which learners are curious about words and engaged in the process of becoming effective spellers and writers.
- Teachers provide all students with authentic writing experiences every day.
- Classroom environments become the 'third teacher' by using co-constructed resources to assist with spelling and writing strategies
- Collect and analyse data of student learning to inform decisions about teaching.

Below is our progress towards our five-year targets with an emphasis on the accumulation and analysis of evidence over the term of our plan.

Student learning data

Targets or Measures	Base	Year 1 2020	Year 2 2021	Year 2022	Year 4	Year 5
To increase the Year 3 to Year 5 growth in mean scale scores in Writing to 65 mean scale scores or more	54.6 mean scale scores	N/A	56.7%			
65% of our students will be achieving at or above expected growth from Year 3 to Year 5 in Writing	56.8%	N/A	56.8%			
To increase the % of Year 5 students in the top two bands of writing to 35% or more. (this cohort has a much larger group of students in the bottom two bands)	22.3%	N/A	16.1%			

Perception Data

Targets or Measures	Base	Year 1 2020	Year 2 2021	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
80% or more of our Yr 4,5,6 students agree or strongly agree that 'Teachers give useful feedback'.	72.2%	66.7%	60.9%			

What this evidence tells us

What does this evidence indicate about your school's progress towards its five-year targets? Despite the second year of COVID19 having impact on learning, our staff chose to continue with our Writing priority. Across the school, teachers used different styles of co-teaching model to maximise lesson delivery and differentiate more effectively. All teachers were invested in the essential Practices to boost writing and frequently engaged with authentic writing, far more than previous years. Giving feedback, especially before, during and after remote learning displayed the increased confidence and competence by teachers, to set the scene for a different way of learning and using different mechanisms for feedback. The teachers found remote learning to be a very useful 'situation' to improve their feedback mechanisms.

Have any of your data sources changed over time? If so, why?

We have improved our data collection and moving towards a whole school understanding of how to harness moderation to inform consistency across different classes in the same year level. Our Assessment Schedule was adhered to, and a greater understanding gained for the need for Christine Topfer's Spelling Analysis tasks- albeit it is time consuming.

The school data tracker is being progressively developed to meet the needs of teachers and incorporate a range of data sources in the one document to enhance accessibility and continuity. PAT Assessments were undertaken towards the end of the year due to remote learning restricting access.

What implications does this evidence have for your next AP?

Perhaps with a change of emphasis on student wellbeing and staff wellbeing, some areas of focus changed. The Directorate announced a workload reduction plan for assessments and reports to be minimised - therefore having a potential 'domino effect' in years to come with missing comments, and less reporting responsibilities across the Achievement Standards.

Our achievements for this priority

Implement strategies such as word conscious classrooms and Essential Practices across all classrooms K-6.

- 100% of classrooms adopted Word Walls and added to these walls throughout the week during lessons and portraying the natural curiosities of words that occurred during lessons all over the school.
- By the end of the year, 100% of classrooms adopted Bump It Up walls, some were co-constructed with students, others were set up to use a s tool to increase the quality of writing. This differentiated approach demonstrated the readiness of teachers and their interpretation on how to *introduce* and *trial* the use of Bump It Up walls.
- Our Specialist teachers also delved into focusing on words pertinent to their area of speciality. Words were displayed inside their classrooms or on external walls for all students to read and be enthused by. Music classrooms aligned to have relevant words displayed on walls, and there was evidence of students transferring words from one classroom to their writing in their home classrooms.

- Teachers in both Learning Support Units – (LSU’s) discovered that whilst word walls were created with students and usage occurred, there was a preference for students to refer to individualised word lists on hooks at their desk and Siri preferred options.

Build staff capacity in using Spelling and Writing strategies in the classroom

- Essential Practices 1,6 and 7 were used in English lessons across the school. The school purchased an individual copy of The Writing Book and the suite of Christine Topfer’s Spelling books as a teacher resource to gain consistency in all year levels. The leadership team and Learning Leaders encouraged a metalanguage across the school through continual referral and usage of those teacher resources.
- Collecting data increased across the school using a range of new approaches such as: the Writing Tracker, rubrics, work samples and observations. Students in the LSU also benefitted from gauging the volume of words learnt each month as growth in their context.
- Celebrations occurred through PRIDE awards with deliberate focus on improved skills and confidence as writers and spellers. Children ably described they were writers and their love and curiosity for words increased with the new and different approaches across the year.

Challenges we will address in our next Action Plan

- With a high staff turnover at the end of the year due to retirement and transfers, the starting point in 2022 will need a differentiated approach to introduce/continue with the writing and spelling priority.
- Continue to build teacher knowledge in the process of writing.
- Having high expectations for differentiation in planning and delivering writing lessons – especially for EALD students and students of a higher ability.
- Continue to create rigorous rubrics.
- Growth in the Progressive Achievement test (PAT) – Vocabulary median scaled score for each year level is at or above the growth in the national median scaled score for the corresponding time. We can’t find on PAT anywhere a national median to gauge against. We will look to understand and refine this for 2022.

Priority 2: Improve students' ability to connect with learning.

Targets or measures

By the end of 2021 we will achieve:

- 100% of teachers will plan SEL lessons using the Bounce Back teacher resources.
- Above 80% in PBL school wide evaluation tools, demonstrating current systems and practices are well embedded. This includes an increase in positive reporting using our Djurra system through Sentral.
- 100% of classrooms host visible learning strategies to motivate student engagement and a shift to independent learning when appropriate.
- Increased reporting of positive behaviours through use of Djurra system and input into Sentral.

In 2021 we implemented this priority through the following strategies.

- Teachers develop the personal and social capabilities of our learners, with specific relation to the school's agreed SEL approach.
- The school delivers a systematic plan for the teaching of social and emotional learning.
- There are clear and consistent processes enacted for promoting positive behaviours for learning.
- Students are provided with leadership opportunities to connect with students across the school.
- A co-constructed approach to classroom PBL displays featuring classroom matrix, response to positive and negative behaviours and celebration of positive incidents.

Below is our progress towards our five-year targets with an emphasis on the accumulation and analysis of evidence over the term of our plan.

Perception Data

Targets or Measures	Base	Year 1 2020	Year 2 2021	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Increase percentage of student agreement with the item <i>"I feel safe at this school"</i> to 80%	63.4%	51.9%	54.5%			
Increase percentage of student agreement with the item <i>'My teachers motivate me to learn'</i> to 85%. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replaced with "teachers want every student to do their best"	79/8%	72.1%	90.1%			
Increase percentage of student agreement with the item <i>'I can talk to my teachers about my concerns'</i> to 80%.	73.1%	61.5%	46%			
Increase percentage of student agreement with the item <i>'My school gives me opportunities to do interesting things'</i> to 80%. <i>* replaced with "I am interested in what I learn at school,</i>	74.7%	69.4%	50%			

School program and process data

Targets or Measures	Base	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Increase number of positive incidents by (15%) each semester	2020 S1 – 1309	63% increase from S1 2020 to S2 2020.	** 23 219			
** change to annual total due to Covid having impact with remote learning.	2020 S2 - 3562					

What this evidence tells us

What does this evidence indicate about your school's progress towards your five-year targets?

- 23 219 positive actions were recorded for 2021
- Students in the LSU's extended SEL program to join to meet and co-teach Mindset Monday through puppet and role play. Additionally the older students mentored younger students on the playground.
- Despite Covid interrupting the flow of regular learning, teachers continued with using the Djurra system by placing electronic Djurras on work to identify excellent efforts and outcomes.
- During remote learning, teachers work in a highly dedicated manner to greet students every morning to recognise, appreciate and acknowledge each student for either academic/social/
- CoOconstructed behaviour charts and classroom expectations set the scene for a consensual understanding about everyone's roles and responsibilities to create a safe learning environment.
- Specialist teachers taught explicit vocabulary for behaviours such as Fair Play (in PE) to promote inclusive behaviour.
- Teachers identified 85+% of students across Kindergarten – Yr 6 were empowered to be problem solvers and had a stronger sense of belonging in 2021.
- 100% of teachers declare they increased their reporting of positive behaviours across 2021.

Have any of your data sources changed over time? If so, why?

- During remote learning periods and the transitions back into onsite learning, there was an increased focus to maintain student wellbeing. Teachers focussed on additional SEL lessons, when necessary, circle time meetings and explored a wider variety of ways for students to express how they were feeling around the shift from learning at home back to learning collectively at school. Discussions exposed many students felt a sense of loss returning to school away from the safety net of home life and, many students expressed their delight in returning to a 'normal school day'.
- It was also a directive from the Directorate of Education for teachers to relax somewhat with the collection of data and reduced report templates for end of year summative reports.

What implications does this evidence have for your next AP?

- Whole school data collection and analysis

- Using lessons learnt with remote learning and transferring those into 2022, acknowledging the impact this has on teachers and potential high levels of absenteeism with the continuation of Covid 19 presence.
- With new Deputy and two new executive teachers, how to reframe roles and responsibilities coming from a strengths-based approach.

