

## Peer Review Report Executive Summary (published on school's website)

### 2.1 School Context

Falls Creek Primary School is situated 30km from Mt Beauty in the Victorian High Country, Falls Creek Primary School is a remote rural school which services the small but fluctuating cosmopolitan population of the Alpine village. The school is at an altitude of 1550m and the area is often subject to snow and adverse weather conditions, even in summer, making access difficult.

The school was established in 1972, with a strong sense of community as evidenced by the assistance and involvement of the parent body in the school's activities. The current building was constructed in 1985 and BER funding allowed a major upgrade of all school facilities and additional classroom space in 2012. The well-heated classrooms can easily be converted to a multi-purpose area, for concerts or social events, and the school caters for an influx of students for the Term 3 ski season. Resources such as ICT provision and library facilities are stretched considerably each winter by the large increase in student population. The outdoor facilities are small but adequate for the summer population.

For many years permanent enrolments at the school were steady at around 8 - 10 students, but for 2017 the permanent enrolment has more than doubled to 21, due to an increase in permanent employment opportunities in Falls Creek and a growing family-orientated community in the village. In Term 3 each year the school enrolls additional students up to a cap of 40, and the school is always full, with many more expressions of interest unable to be catered for. The waiting list for Term 3 enrolment is over 40 in 2017. The majority of the Winter students return to the school each year, as their parents have seasonal employment in Falls Creek. Some students attend the school each winter for their entire primary school life, so although they are not 'permanent' enrolments, they do have a strong connection with the school.

Falls Creek is a member of the Upper Kiewa Valley cluster of schools. The local schools meet on a regular basis for sports days, art performances, leadership days, Life Education van and other group activities, and teachers meet regularly for professional development activities.

The school community largely consists of professional parents, and this is reflected in the school SFO. In 2016 the school SFO was 0.1337, up from the 2012 level of 0.2250, and SFOE was 0.1285.

For 2017 the staff comprises a full-time teaching principal and full-time classroom teacher in summer months, a 0.4 business manager, an instrumental music specialist for half a day each week and a visiting library specialist, (MARC Van), for 2 hours every second week. Additional teachers are recruited for Term 3 only. The school has strong community support, particularly from Falls Creek Resort Management and Falls Creek Ski Lifts, and all family members have the opportunity to be involved in the life of the school. Overall parent satisfaction with the school is very high, with a strong partnership between the school and the community.

The school's ski program in Term 3 provides opportunities for Physical Education and Sport closely linked to the alpine environment in which the students live. This program has strong community support and provides a unique learning opportunity for the students.

## 2.2 Summary of the School's Performance

### 2.2.1 Summary of the School's Performance against the previous Strategic Plan

The panel acknowledged the work of the school in developing a high levels of student achievement over the review period.

#### **Student Achievement**

The school's Student Achievement goal was to:

Expand student learning outcomes and opportunities for meeting individual student needs.

The school met the following targets relating to this goal;

- All teaching staff to participate in Mathletics training and certification, working towards 'Lead Educator' Qualification
- Mathletics testing used to measure student progress and individualise the curriculum to student needs
- As measured on November to November on-demand testing, students in Grades 3-6 achieve on average 12 months learning growth each year in all 3 areas of Mathematics. All students at the school, for the full year in 2015 and also in 2016 made 12 months or more learning growth on all three areas of Mathematics on the VCAA On-Demand tests.
- Completion and implementation of the whole school curriculum plan, initially using current AusVELS curriculum, but transferring to the Second Iteration of AusVELS between 2015 and 2017

#### **Student Wellbeing**

The school's Student Wellbeing goal was:

To continue to provide a stimulating, safe environment for all students

The school met the following targets relating to this goal:

- Effective use of the 'Bounce Back' student resilience program in our school
- Effective use of SAFEminds strategies to deal with mental health issues relating to anxiety and depression
- Use of eSmart program to promote cybersafety for students and families

The school did not meet the following targets relating to this goal:

- Upper Kiewa Valley (UKV) Cluster Grade 5/6 teachers group to meet once each term to discuss opportunities for students to meet and interact, including possible shared camps program
- Staff to participate in further student wellbeing training as it becomes available
- Bully Stoppers student survey used in the Grade 5/6 class in Term 3 to assess student wellbeing and develop strategies as required.

The cluster did not operate as anticipated over the review period leading to less opportunities for student interaction, staff involvement and professional learning.

The Bully Busters survey was only used in one year during the review period to assess particular issues in that year.

### **Student Engagement**

The school's Student Engagement and Wellbeing goals was:

To explore opportunities for the community to engage with the students and their learning.

The school met the following targets relating to this goal:

- Students provided with relevant hands-on experience of local environmental education, working with local experts on the Communities For Nature project to revegetate the School Bog with native vegetation species, providing improved ecological outcomes for a threatened community in a sub-alpine environment and creating habitat for critically endangered fauna species.
- School Bog Project completed and signed off by Department of Primary Industry
- Mass participation of students and parents encouraged in the Joey Hoppet ski race with a target of 25-30% student participation each year

The school did not meet the following target:

- Community members encouraged to visit the school in winter and provide cultural experiences from Europe, North America and Asia

The main barrier to meeting the target in community engagement was the difficulty for the school of undertaking this activity during the winter period, when management of the increased enrolments and winter sports program impacted on staff and the community had limited available time for involvement.

### **Productivity**

The school's Productivity goal was:

To explore options for use of ICT for staff to network and attend meetings

The school met the following targets relating to the goals:

- Reduction in cost of staff travel for professional development and meetings
- Reduction in casual relief teacher (CRT) replacement costs for Principal attending meeting
- Ongoing assessment of ICT tools for teaching and learning

The school did not meet the following target:

- Teacher network established within the UKV Cluster in grade level groupings to share professional learning and moderation of student work

The main barrier to meeting the target in staff professional collaboration was diminished activity within the UKV Cluster due to staff and leadership changes within the schools.

## 2.2.2 Summary of main findings and considerations for the next Strategic Plan

The panel found that the areas for consideration in the next strategic plan are:

### **Excellence in Teaching and Learning**

The panel recommended that the school:

- Investigate and establish a whole school instructional model to ensure consistency between classes throughout the year and during the Term 3 increase in the number of classes
- Investigate and implement relevant evidence-based high-impact teaching strategies
- Complete the implementation of the VCOP/Big Write program to improve student writing, grammar and punctuation skills.
- Continue the implementation of the Victorian Curriculum (VC), ensuring a direct link between classroom teaching programs and the VC to link teaching and assessment processes.

### **Professional Leadership**

The panel recommended that

- The principal actively seeks to engage with stakeholders to secure commitment to the school's vision.
- Strategies are in place to address barriers to engagement of the community.
- The school monitors how well programs and activities are aligned with the school's vision and goals.
- New staff into the school, including during the Term 3 increase in staff, are provided with mentoring, coaching and feedback.
- A coaching and mentoring culture is built and sustained at all levels in the school. A system of staff review and feedback is in place.

### **Positive Climate for Learning**

The panel recommended that the school

- Actively builds students' capacity to participate in decision-making in the school and wider community.
- Actively develops all students' leadership skills, and provide opportunities for students to practise these (e.g. communication, teamwork, decision-making and problem-solving skills).
- Develops strategies to enable students to be actively involved in development and implementation of relevant school policy.
- Develop student involvement in personal goal setting and evaluation of progress towards their learning goals.

### **Community Engagement in Learning**

The panel recommended that the school

- Investigate alternatives for transfer documentation that meets the needs of students and the school.
- Revise winter transition procedures to add survey instruments for students, staff and parents.
- Revise school assessment schedule to include relevant assessments in at least English and Mathematics areas for all Term 3 students.

- Revise Term 3 reporting format back to receiving schools to ensure schools have adequate information in regard to student progress during Term 3, not just areas covered in the curriculum
- Further develop the school's relationships with the pre-school childcare provider to ensure effective transition to school.
- Further develop the relationship with Mt Beauty Secondary College, with Upper Kiewa Valley Cluster schools, to ensure relevant, comprehensive data on student learning is transferred to the school as part of the transition process for Year 6 students.
- Further develop the involvement of all parents in the school, including Term 3 parents.

The consideration of aspects of global perspectives in the curriculum is to be further developed by the school.

The panel recommended that the school use the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) improvement cycle continuum to plan and evaluate progress in school improvement in relation to school goals