School Review Report for
Nar Nar Goon Primary School
Southern Metropolitan Region

School Improvement Division
Department of Education & Early Childhood Development
Educational Development and Review

School number: 2248
Principal Jay Stent
School Council President Michael O'Hoy
Type of Review Continuous
School Reviewer John Coulson
Date of Review Meeting at school 22^nd June 2010
Date of this Report (final version) 14^th July 2010
## Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary ............................................................................................................. 4
2. Methodology ......................................................................................................................... 4
3. School Context ..................................................................................................................... 9
   Student Learning ............................................................................................................... 11
   Student Engagement and Wellbeing ............................................................................... 17
   Student Pathways and Transitions ............................................................................... 21
1. Executive Summary

Nar Nar Goon Primary School is performing very effectively particularly in student engagement and wellbeing while acknowledging there is room for improvement in some aspects of teaching and learning. It is projecting a positive and purposeful culture in which students are valued and encouraged to reach their potential.

The school is led by a committed and professional principal supported by a cohesive long serving staff with high levels of collegiality and mutual support. It is also fortunate to have a modern, stimulating and secure setting with a well developed ICT infrastructure. Students are friendly, generally well behaved and cooperative; contributing greatly to an orderly learning environment and the school is also advantaged by a supportive and involved parent body.

Student learning outcomes are generally very satisfactory particularly in Numeracy; however the reviewer believes that the school could do be even better. It was pleasing to note the school’s pride in its achievements while it also acknowledges the need for further improvement. The absenteeism record is another area for where the school could do better. This review recommends that the school gives attention to these issues in its next strategic plan.

This review has also touched on the pressure and stress that leadership teams face in relatively small schools. It is suggested that the school takes every opportunity to delegate tasks and further develop the middle level of leadership. This report also acknowledges the manner in which the school coped successfully with its major building program in the past two years, not allowing the disruption to normal routine to adversely affect the school’s activities.

Student Learning

There is no doubt that the teachers have high expectations for their students and there is a strong focus on nurturing the individual student; however, the review indicates that teaching and learning practices do not always take sufficient account of the varying capabilities and needs of some students. A related issue is the extent to which data is used rigorously to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses in order to plan teaching and learning that is more personalised and targeted to the individual.

VELS Teacher Judgements suggest that the school is performing well in both Literacy and Numeracy. However a comparison with other performance data indicates that these judgements don’t necessarily represent the full range of student achievement.

NAPLAN test data shows that Numeracy outcomes are generally superior to Literacy outcomes. English Online Interview data indicated that outcomes were mixed with some below expectations while others were satisfactory.
In summary the review has revealed that while some very acceptable outcomes have been achieved, effective teaching standards are not always consistent across the school and there are some shortcomings in the assessment and reporting processes.

**Student Engagement and Wellbeing**

The school has achieved some very pleasing outcomes in this performance area. The reviewer noted that the School Connectedness intake adjusted scores were well above the predicted score. While there are variations in year level cohort and gender scores over the past triennium, in general the school’s outcomes are very satisfactory. Year 5 scores are typically usually lower than Year 6, especially in Student Motivation and Stimulating Teaching and these areas could be monitored to identify any underlying causes.

An area for concern is the school’s absenteeism record. The attendance record has improved across the triennium with some year levels now performing well compared with the state mean. A particular concern is the unsatisfactory Year 6 absenteeism record. While it is gratifying to note the downward trend, the school is still above-state benchmarks.

In keeping with many other schools, it is apparent that the biggest issue related to absenteeism is the number of families who take holidays during school time. While this is beyond the school’s ability to influence, it is nevertheless a real concern that needs to be addressed and is recommended for inclusion in the next strategic plan.

**Student Pathways and Transition**

It is pleasing to note that the school recognises the importance of its internal transition processes as well as entry transition at Prep and exit transition at Year 6.

There is good practice at the Kindergarten to Prep transition level including collaborative relationships with local centres and careful screening of new students. Cooperation with the local secondary colleges could be improved to include a more proactive approach to curriculum, teaching and learning.

The review highlighted the fine work guiding students as they transit through the school. It is pleasing to see that the school recognises the critical developmental steps that acknowledge the significant changes in learning expectations and behavioural standards in a child’s education. It is also apparent that students with special needs are treated individually with personalised learning plans and supported by specialist members of staff.
What can the school do in the future to further improve?

This report has commented on the positive characteristics of the school including professional leadership, shared vision and goals, high expectations and a pleasant secure learning environment. The reviewer suggests that the school needs to continue to build its teaching and leadership capability as a foundation for further improvement and as a consequence the following goals and key improvement strategies are recommended. The reviewer further recommends that the school concentrate its energies and resources on this limited number of initiatives to ensure a successful outcome.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Key Improvement Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Learning</strong></td>
<td>To improve outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy</td>
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<td>Concentrate on more realistic assessment and reporting and the effective use of data to drive improvement.</td>
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<td>Expand and refine the school’s current engagement and wellbeing programs to ensure that the school community values teaching and learning.</td>
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<td>Internal transition practices are to be enhanced so that student learning, wellbeing and engagement outcomes are even more effective.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Engagement and Wellbeing</strong></td>
<td>To improve outcomes in Engagement and Wellbeing with a particular emphasis on absenteeism.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Pathways and Transitions</strong></td>
<td>To improve outcomes in Pathways and Transition</td>
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Successful implementation of these strategies will see Nar Nar Goon PS become an even more effective school. It is fortunate to have a group of teachers led by a committed leader who strive for excellence and are willing to embrace change. The reviewer congratulates the school on its achievements and wishes the school community every success in the future as it seeks to maximise their students’ outcomes and meet their individual needs.
2. Methodology

The reviewer provided the school with emailed pre review advice including guidance on how to conduct the review verification day. He contacted the Regional Network Leader to set up a meeting on Tuesday 18th May to discuss the school’s context.

The reviewer visited the school on Thursday 3rd June and met the leadership team. He also took the opportunity for a guided tour of the school’s facilities.

The school provided the following data sets:

- School Level Report 2009 including an attachment 2009 Intake Adjusted Charts
- Annual Report 2009
- Annual Implementation Plan 2009
- The previous Strategic Plan
- NAPLAN Reports Years 3 and 5 for 2009 including detailed reports
- Staff Opinion Survey 2009
- Attitudes to School Survey 2009

The reviewer provided the school with two staff survey instruments designed to provide up to date information about staff attitudes:

- The Effective Schools Model survey
- The Preconditions for School Improvement survey

The reviewer collated the staff response sheets and provided the results for discussion at the review panel meeting.

The reviewer accessed the school’s NAPLAN Data Service to establish the school’s Years 3 and 5 NAPLAN outcomes against VELS Equivalent state cut off scores and VELS teacher judgements. He provided data sets for review panel discussion.

The review panel met on Tuesday 22nd June and comprised the following:

- Principal: Jay Stent
On the review day the reviewer interviewed a student focus group.

The reviewer returned to the school on 16th August to report to a staff meeting and the school council.
3. School Context

The school is located in the rural town of Nar Nar Goon, east of the Melbourne urban fringe. It is approximately five kilometres from the nearest major centre, Pakenham, and surrounded by mostly farming activity. The school has been located on its present site for over seventy years and continues to be an important part of the local community.

As of May 2010, there were 223 children enrolled in the school. The school accepts enrolments from the town and outlying areas including Nar Nar Goon North, Maryknoll, Tynong, Tynong North and Cora Lyn. There is also a significant percentage (30%) of enrolments from the Pakenham area. A neighbourhood-zoned area is in place that aims to give the school more control over enrolments due to the limited capacity of the school to cater for increased enrolments.

The proportion of families in receipt of EMA is 30% and has remained steady over the last few years. There are no students from Non-English speaking households or indigenous students. The school population has generally a low percentage of mobility and there are a few single parent families.

The school has approximately 3% (8 children) of children funded on the Program for Disabilities and Impairments although none of these children have severe behaviour problems.

Nar Nar Goon Primary School has undergone a major building program in 2008-2010 resulting in an almost total rebuild of school facilities that include ten classrooms, eight of which are in a single, modern building with flexible teaching spaces and two in a new portable building. The new classroom building also includes a modern art room and a well-resourced library central to all classrooms. The administration building includes staff and general office facilities as well as a canteen and an adjacent multipurpose building. Both buildings are built around an attractive courtyard area / basketball court. Adjacent to this area is a small oval and a variety of playground areas. The new buildings have greatly improved the facilities and also the general aesthetics of the school. The disruption created by the building program over the last two years has been quite considerable mainly caused by lack of space, alterations to normal programs and noise.

The school provides an educational program based around a structure of both single year and multi aged grades. Specialist programs are provided in Art, Physical Education, Science and Reading Recovery. The school’s teaching and learning program is based on VELS and is delivered using a variety of approaches. All classrooms are well equipped and provide a positive environment for effective teaching and learning to take place.

The staff profile includes a blend of experienced and graduate teachers comprising a Principal, Leading Teacher and a range of Experienced, Advanced, and Graduate Teachers. Education Support
staff include an Office Manager, five Integration Aides and support in the Library and Administration areas. The school is committed to ensuring the teaching staff receive appropriate professional development and are enthusiastic, motivated, innovative, dedicated and caring. Teachers are supported by Education Support staff members that are committed to the successful operation of the school.

The school aims to provide a safe and happy environment that supports the students to participate in class and school activities, and enjoy learning. The development of the students is viewed as a shared responsibility between home and school. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their children’s learning and to participate in school activities. Staff members take responsibility for all children and aim to be effective role models. The school has a range of programs and practices that encourage the development of children’s social, emotional and personal learning growth.

There is a high level of parental support and involvement. This includes parent membership on a variety of school groups including School Council and its committees, fundraising groups and a Parents and Friends Association (PAFA). There is also a high level of parental involvement in classroom activities, excursions and camps, and in general support throughout school activities.
Student Learning

What student outcomes was the school trying to achieve?

The school had included two learning goals in its strategic plan:

1. To improve student learning outcomes in English in Years 3-6 with a focus upon comprehension,

2. To improve students’ capacity for higher order thinking through the enhanced application of ICT in teaching and learning.

The school developed the following Key Improvement Strategies

1. Initiate the processes to obtain accreditation as a Performance and Development Culture,

2. Build school leadership capacity by providing opportunities for teachers to lead curriculum and teaching and learning developments,

3. Develop and publish the school’s shared approach to learning with student centred approaches, inquiry based learning and the Thinking Curriculum as the major underpinning elements,

4. Improve student learning at key junctures (Year 3 and Year 5) through improved internal transition practices,

5. Develop an e-learning environment so that there is greater use of ICT to engage students in learning through higher order thinking and problem solving.

The targets were:

- 90% of Year 3 boys attain the indicative level in the AIM assessment of Reading,
- 90% of Year 5 girls attain the indicative levels in the AIM assessment of Reading

The school changed these targets following the introduction of NAPLAN in 2008 to:

- To be above the state mean for Years 3 and 5 in the NAPLAN results,
- To improve on our results in NAPLAN in the previous year.
- 90% of students in Prep to Year 6 achieve the expected VELS standard in ICT (SSE p 13)

What student outcomes did the school achieve?

In general the school has a range of satisfactory learning outcomes whether measured by VELS Teacher Judgements, English Online Interviews or AIM/NAPLAN tests. The reviewer noted that Numeracy Online Interviews are not being used at present. There are occasions where learning outcomes are not so satisfactory especially at the Prep level.

A comparison of outcomes data indicates that the school’s VELS judgements are quite conservative and don’t necessarily present an accurate picture of the school’s performance. Other data suggest that there are significant cohorts of students performing well above and well below the expected levels.
VELS Teacher Judgements

In general Numeracy outcomes are more satisfactory than Literacy outcomes.

Literacy Teacher Judgements data indicates that the school has not reached the state mean in Prep to Year 3 Reading but is more successful in Year 4 to 6. Writing scores are more satisfactory across the triennium. The school’s performance against the SFO percentile range is mixed with year levels exceeding the SFO range in one year but not the other year. Year 6 results are particularly pleasing with consistently high scores against both the state mean and the SFO percentile range.

Numeracy scores in Number and Measurement Chance and Data are satisfactory and are often in excess of the state mean. There are some exceptions such as Year 1 in 2007 and 2008. Again Year 6 results are consistently high exceeding both the state mean and the SFO percentile range.

VELS Teacher Judgements c.f. AIM & NAPLAN Outcomes

A study of these two performance data sources indicates a disparity in their distribution of student learning outcomes. For example Year 3 AIM Numeracy scores show that 5 students were performing at Level 2 and 9 students at Level 4 whereas the schools outcomes showed nobody at these levels. Year 5 AIM Reading scores showed a similar pattern - 2 students at Level 2, 9 at Level 3, 7 at Level 4 and 1 at Level 5 whereas schools based scores showed 2 students at Level 3 and 32 at Level 4.

A similar pattern was apparent in the 2008 and 2009 NAPLAN and Teacher Judgement outcomes.

2009 English Online Outcomes

Prep Reading outcomes were below the state mean and the SFO percentile range. Year 2 Writing outcomes were also below the state mean and marginally below the SFO percentile range. On the other hand all other English Online Interview outcomes were in excess of state means and the SFO percentile ranges.

AIM & NAPLAN Outcomes

This data didn’t show a regular pattern of satisfactory outcomes with Year level scores in English and Numeracy either above or below the state mean and the SFO percentile range.

2007 AIM Reading scores were below both the state mean and the SFO percentile ranges, for example Year 3 2.1 c.f. stat mean 2.3. On the other hand AIM Number scores were in excess of both state means and the SFO percentile ranges, for example Year 5 3.8 c.f. mean 3.2.

2008 NAPLAN Reading scores were more satisfactory with Year 3 in excess of both the state mean and the SFO percentile range. Year 5 Reading was less satisfactory. Year 3 Writing scores have improved from 2008 to 2009 and are well above the state mean and the SFO percentile range – 436.9 c.f. 423.7. Year 5 Writing scores are very acceptable being above both the state mean and the SFO percentile ranges in 2008 and 2009. 2008 Numeracy scores were mixed with Year 3 well above the
state mean with 68% of students at Band 6 and Year 5 slightly below the state mean – 478.5 c.f. 487.8. The Year 3 Numeracy outcomes success is reinforced by the intake adjusted measure that indicates achieving more than one standard deviation above the predicted score for the school.

2009 NAPLAN Year 3 Reading was below the state mean and the SFO Percentile range – 422.3 c.f. 427.6; while Year 5 Reading was above the state mean. 2009 Numeracy scores were similarly mixed with Year 3 well above the state mean – 458.0 c.f. 410.6 but lower than 2008 with 38% at Band 6 while Year 5 is slightly below – 494.1 c.f. 495.5 with no students performing at Band 8.

A study of the school’s NAPLAN outcomes compared with the state mean cut off scores indicate that significant cohorts of students were performing at least twelve months below the state mean. This was particularly apparent at Year 5 in Reading – 31%, Writing - 32%, Punctuation and Grammar - 26% and Numeracy - 28%. On the other hand comparatively larger cohorts were performing at least twelve months above the state mean – Year 5 Reading 48%, Writing 41%, Spelling 36%, Punctuation and Grammar 37% and Numeracy 32%. This data reinforces the school’s requirement to be quite definite in differentiating teaching to cater for these ability levels – both above and below the state mean.

**Why did the school achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?**

One of the features of this school is its pleasant and orderly learning environment that allows effective teaching to take place. Staff members have high levels of expectation for student success.

There is no doubt that there is good teaching occurring across the school however there is also an acknowledgement that the implementation of best practice is inconsistent. Some year levels have displayed a lack of team work and inconsistent approaches.

The school has adopted the concept of ‘Guided Choice’ to underpin its practices. The school has already adopted the PoLT processes to improve its teaching capacity and is considering the introduction of E5 concepts. Comment was made at the review panel that it is not necessary for the school to abandon one approach in order to take up another. There are indications that the school lacks a coordinated teaching methodology even though an education rationale has been developed by the principal. It is apparent that explicit teaching is a focus for the school while other concepts such as Inquiry based learning and the use of thinking skills are yet to be embedded in the school’s practices.

Explicit teaching is demonstrated by the use of strategies such as SRA (Years 5 and 6), Cars and Stars (Years 3 and 4) and the explicit teaching of reading strategies (Years 1 and 2) while Prep and Year 1 have focussed on oral comprehension.

Two hours per day is devoted to Literacy while another hour is devoted to Numeracy. Phonics teaching is supported by THRASS and all members of staff are trained in this program.
It was pleasing to learn that the school uses ability based groupings in literacy and numeracy as a basis of teaching.

There is evidence of strong collegiate support and collaborative teaching. The school is proud of its culture of mutual support as evidenced in the staff opinion survey data. Teaching and Learning approaches are discussed at scheduled curriculum meetings and during more informal exchanges. The reviewer noted that professional learning teams are not a feature of the school’s practices. The school responded that it is small and such structures may not be appropriate.

Members of staff acknowledge that teacher assessment and reporting err on the side of caution resulting in not identifying students performing well above or below the expected levels. Review panel discussion revealed that staff members will concentrate on students performing below the expected level. This was described as the deficit model of judgement.

The review panel discussed the efficacy of triangulating performance data to ensure validity of outcomes. The school is using PAT Maths in 2010 as an alternative source of measurement but has yet to adopt Numeracy Online. On demands testing is being introduced.

The reviewer noted the use of the flexible learning spaces that are a feature of the new buildings. Students are being taught how to use these spaces and the necessary skills of team work, cooperation and independent learning. Review panel discussion highlighted the use of these spaces by the senior students. It was noted that Years 3 and 4 classes do not have equal access to these spaces as they are located in a separate relocatable complex.

The school feels that one of the factors inhibiting its drive for even better learning outcomes was the disruption caused by the building program during 2008-2009.

How effectively did the school manage its resources to support improved student outcomes?

The review identified the critical role of the principal in the leadership of the school. His proactive and professional role is acknowledged by high staff opinion survey scores. Members of staff are appreciative of his work in relieving them of much administrative responsibilities. The school doesn’t have an assistant principal and this role is filled by a Leading Teacher – a full time classroom teacher.

The reviewer suggests that more emphasis be placed on middle level leadership to share work load and build expertise.

The majority of the teaching staff members are mature and experienced with a small number of young graduates. Specialist teachers provide classes in Art, Physical Education, Science and Reading Recovery. Review panel discussion highlighted the school’s need for an identified leader in Teaching and Learning to drive further improvement.

The school’s PSD program is supported by five integration aides.
The school supports members of staff with appropriate professional development and plans to train education support staff and interested parents in the LEAP program to support individual students.

Over the past two years the school has had to cope with a major building program as the new state of the art complex was constructed. This has resulted in a state of the art flexible learning space complex for Prep to Year 2 and Years 5 and 6 while Years 3 and 4 are accommodated in a stand alone double relocatable.

From all reports, the transition from the old buildings to the new complex has been handled well and not impacted severely on the school community. Comment was made at the review panel that one of the factors underpinning the very positive staff opinion survey data is the positive reaction to the new buildings and resources.

The school has significant ICT resources in the form of interactive white boards and laptops/net-book computers. A future plan is to install whiteboards in all teaching spaces. Netbooks are available as a class set for teacher use. There is also a separate computer laboratory.

The centrally located library provides research materials and individual study facilities. A separate large multipurpose room allows indoor sport and a wet weather area for physical education classes. Another feature of the school is an Art and Craft centre proving for ceramics and wood work activities.

**What can the school do in the future to continue to improve?**

The reviewer has been impressed with the school’s demonstrated desire to improve student outcomes. A number of the preconditions for improvement are already in place including strong leadership, high expectations and an orderly learning environment.

The school acknowledges that enhancing teacher capacity is the key improvement strategy required to raise learning outcomes. The following goals and key improvement strategies are recommended for inclusion in the next strategic plan.

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<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Key Improvement Strategies</th>
<th>Suggested actions (optional)</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| To improve student learning outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy. | Consider the following targets for achievement by 2014:  
The % of Year 5 students performing at Numeracy NAPLAN Band 7 be at least 40%  
The % of Year 3 students performing at Numeracy NAPLAN Band 6 be at least 65%  
The % of Year 3 students performing at Reading NAPLAN Band 5 be at | Develop and implement processes designed to further improve teaching capacity in the context of flexible learning spaces | Consider the appointment of a Teaching and Learning leader when appropriate.  
Continue to use PoLT as well as considering E5 as processes to improve teaching capacity  
Consider the development of Professional Learning Teams in small school context.  
Expand and integrate |
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<th>least 65%</th>
<th>ICT across the school</th>
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<tr>
<td>The % of Year 3 student performing at Writing NAPLAN Band 5 be at least 65%.</td>
<td>Evaluate exemplar programs in schools that are using flexible learning spaces effectively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concentrate on more realistic assessment and reporting and the effective use of data to drive improvement</td>
<td>Consider alternate forms of testing such as Numeracy Online and On Demand Computer Adaptive Testing</td>
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<td>Develop professional development around moderation, assessment and reporting</td>
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<td>Investigate a student mapping tool to support teaching and learning</td>
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<td>Consider the Patrick Griffin program</td>
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Student Engagement and Wellbeing

What student outcomes was the school trying to achieve?

The school’s Student Engagement and Wellbeing outcomes were:

- To improve the motivation of boys across the school,
- To improve student attendance.

The targets were:

- Improvement in the Attitudes to School Survey in the areas of Student Motivation, for boys to be in the effective range by 2009,
- Absenteeism in Years 1, 2, 4 and 6 to be equivalent to the state average by 2009. (SSE p 15)

What student outcomes did the school achieve?

The school has achieved some very pleasing outcomes in Wellbeing, Teaching and Learning and Student Relationships. The reviewer noted that the School Connectedness scores were over one standard deviation above the predicted score when intake adjusted. While there are year level cohort and gender variations over the past triennium, in general the school’s outcomes are very satisfactory. Year 5 scores are generally lower than Year 6. The one area for concern is the school’s absenteeism record.

Student Engagement

Comment was made above concerning Year 5 Teaching and Learning outcomes that reflect on student engagement. The 2009 Stimulating Learning score of 3.51 is well below the state mean of 4.10 and places the school in the first quartile. Student Motivation at 4.39 is also below the state mean of 4.51 and in the second quartile. Year 5 girls generally have lower scores with the exception of Student Motivation.

By contrast Year 6 scores are all well above the state means and in the fourth quartile. This has been consistent across the triennium with some variations in 2008. For example Classroom Behaviour fell to the first quartile. The girls’ responses are all higher than boys’ scores but the latter are still within the third and fourth quartiles.

It is pleasing to note the 2009 high scores in both year levels concerning Connectedness to Peers, Classroom Behaviour and Student Safety.

These pleasing outcomes are supported by the Staff and Parent opinion surveys. Parent opinion survey scores are all consistently above the state mean and in the 90th percentile. Staff opinion survey
scores are also consistently high. The reviewer was also able to confirm this general picture during a focus group with a number of Years 3 to 6 students.

**Student Wellbeing**

The school’s wellbeing indicators were very positive. Again Year 5 scores were lower than Year 6 however the scores were still in the second quartile and equal to the state mean. The girls’ scores were below the boys’ scores. Year 6 scores were high for both genders. A striking aspect of the Year 6 Wellbeing scores was their very positive trend across the triennium.

**Absenteeism**

The school’s attendance record has improved across the triennium with some year levels now performing below the state mean. An area for concern is the absenteeism record for Year 6 with 20 days (2007), 18.3 days (2008) and 17.3 days (2009). It is gratifying to note the general decline in absenteeism at this year level but the school is still above the state mean of 13.8 days. In 2009 Prep, Year 2, Year 4 and Year 5 are all below the state mean and the overall school absenteeism trend is down across the triennium. While Year 3 absenteeism is above the state mean, it is only a matter of several decimal points. A comparison with the school’s SFO percentile ranges indicates that the school’s absenteeism record is still well in excess of all year level ranges in other than Year 1/2008.

**Why did the school achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?**

The school is proud of its strong focus on Wellbeing and Engagement. It has undergone significant physical changes over the past two years providing staff and students with facilities appropriate for education in the twenty first century. The school made the following comment ...*the staff and students are to be congratulated on their efforts to remain largely focussed on teaching and learning.* (SSE p 16)

It is apparent to the reviewer that the school’s leadership team is an important factor in the development of a high level of morale and positive attitudes amongst all three sectors of the school community.

Many members of staff are long serving, are committed to the school and are proud of its achievements. The small school environment allows a closer relationship between staff and students and between the students themselves. Anecdotal evidence indicates that many families have chosen the school over other schools for this reason.

The school also enjoys a high level of parental support and involvement through membership of a variety of school groups including School Council and committees, fund raising groups and the parents and Friends Association. Parents are also active in their participation in school camps and excursions.
The new buildings and significant technological equipment including data projectors, interactive white boards, new furniture and fittings and a class set of net books have engendered a very positive atmosphere around the school.

The school has a well developed Student Engagement policy that focuses on positive relationships and building self esteem through a range of programs including camps, excursions and specialist programs in art, craft and physical education. There is a widely understood values program supported by staff and parents that is a significant feature. These values are Respect; Responsibility; Honesty; and Persistence.

Students are involved in the life of the school through an active leadership program. School captains and House captains are positions available to senior students.

The school prides itself on an open honest and reflective environment that clearly focuses on the learning and well being of the students. This was readily apparent to the reviewer during a tour of the school and during less formal exchanges with staff and students on the review panel day itself.

Student absenteeism is regarded as an issue and the school has made significant progress in developing awareness of the importance of students attending school. Strategies put in place include a new student attendance policy, an attendance improvement plan for chronic absentees, awarding student attendance certificates each semester for students with high attendance records. Absence records are included on student reports. The school uses its newsletter to communicate to parents.

In keeping with many other schools, it is apparent that the biggest issue related to absenteeism is the number of families who take family holidays during school time when the costs of accommodation and fares are lower. While this is outside the school’s ability to influence, nevertheless it is a real concern that is common to many schools. The school has adopted the ‘It’s Cool to be at School’ program as a proactive strategy.

**How effectively did the school manage its resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?**

This review report has already commented on the upgraded facilities that are now enjoyed by the school community. The council was fortunate to access some BER funding that enabled it to enlarge a previously planned multipurpose room. Council funds have been used to purchase ICT equipment including interactive white boards and data projectors. Not every room is equipped to the same standard and this will be addressed in future years.

The school is relatively small but has appointed a part time Student Wellbeing Coordinator who is supported by a Wellbeing Committee. The reviewer noted the welcoming and supportive environment created in the school’s office.
Monies are set aside on an annual basis to fund wellbeing projects including excursions, incursions, camps, art and craft facilities and the production of certificates and awards. The tool shed is an innovative feature of the school’s facilities. These were particularly designed for boys who had been identified by the school as a focus for attention.

The school grounds are a welcoming and inclusive area in which all year levels interact. The various classroom blocks are named after local identities that also provide the titles for the school’s Houses.

What can the school do in the future to continue to improve?

The school acknowledges that it should focus on student absenteeism in the new strategic plan within the wider context of Wellbeing and Engagement. There is also an acknowledgement that the leadership team needs to monitor Year 5 outcomes to ascertain whether current outcomes are cohort based or based on more underlying factors.

It is also important to point out that student learning key improvement strategies are also relevant here. The following goal, key improvement strategies, action plans and targets are recommended for inclusion in the new strategic plan.
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<td>To Improve outcomes in Student Engagement and Wellbeing with a particular emphasis on attendance.</td>
<td>Consider the following targets to be achieved by 2014: The Year 5 Attitudes to School Survey 2009 Stimulating Learning score of 3.51 increase to at least 4.10 (the 50th percentile benchmark) The Year 5 Attitudes to School Survey 2009 Student Motivation score of 4.39 increase to at least 4.51 (the 50th percentile benchmark) The Year 6 Student Absence 2009 rate of 17.3 average days decrease to at least 13.8 average days (the Year 6 state mean) The Year 3 Student Absence 2009 rate of 13.6 average days decrease to at least 13.2 average days (the Year 3 state mean)</td>
<td>Expand and refine the school's current engagement and wellbeing programs to ensure that the school community values teaching and learning.</td>
<td>Implement the revised Student Engagement Policy. Consider the introduction of programs such as 'It's Not OK To be Away' and 'It's Cool to be at School'. Continue the appointment of a Student Wellbeing Coordinator. Maintain the current range of curricular and extracurricular programs that enhance student engagement. Continue the student leadership program. Continue the practice of awarding attendance certificates and developing attendance plans for students at risk. Consider the introduction of a school web site to enhance current communication channels. Evaluate exemplar engagement and wellbeing programs in similar schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Pathways and Transitions

What student outcomes was the school trying to achieve?

The school’s goal was to improve the students’ feelings of confidence in making the transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

The key improvement strategies to support student achievement were:

- Assume a prominent leadership role in the Innovations and Excellence Cluster to improve transition practices between Year 6 and Year 7,

- Improve student learning at key junctures (Year 3 and Year 5) through improved internal transition practices. (SSE p 20)

The school developed a short survey of Year 6 parents in regard to transition to provide feedback.

What student outcomes did the school achieve?

The reviewer was pleased to note the school’s holistic approach to transition issues. Review panel discussion and the self evaluation statement indicated that the school recognises the importance of its internal transition processes.

The reviewer notes that the school’s goal concentrated solely on the transition point between Years 6 and 7 ignoring the Prep to Year 1 transition point let alone the intra school points. The Parent Opinion Survey indicates that parents were very satisfied with the school’s transition processes. The school’s own transition survey indicated a similar result.

Year 6 students do move on to a range of schools however anecdotal evidence from student feedback plus informal discussion with students on the review day indicated that one secondary college is preferred over the other schools.

Similar anecdotal evidence suggests that the school has developed close relationships with the local kindergarten with satisfactory transition outcomes for incoming students. Prep enrolments vary from year to year but the total school enrolments are steadily increasing – 214 (2007), 218 (2008), 222 (2009) while the current 2010 enrolment is 223. It’s interesting to note that approximately 30% of Prep enrolments came from the Pakenham urban area that is at least five kilometres away from the school.

The school believes that its internal transition processes (Year 2 to Year 3 and Year 4 to Year 5) are effective. It acknowledges that transition can be challenging to some children but anecdotal evidence indicates that the processes are effective in meeting the needs of these children.
Why did the school achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?

The reviewer noted the school’s comprehensive approach to its transition processes. A range of strategies and practices have been developed over the past few years.

**Kindergarten to Prep**
At the Kindergarten to Prep level, the school has established effective links with neighbouring preschools and child care centres. The Head of Junior School visits these centres to discuss transition issues. The reviewer noted that these discussions do not include curriculum issues. Information is distributed to parents and prospective parents are placed on the school’s mailing list.

Information sessions are held regularly to give parents an opportunity to ask questions and tour the school. Personal interviews and tours are available and encouraged throughout the year. The reviewer noted that this is a role for the Principal.

Orientation sessions are held for newly enrolled children to meet their Year 5 buddies and their new teacher. Prep teachers assess student achievement using the English Online interviews, the AEDI survey and individual interviews. It was noted during the panel discussions that the AEDI processes are conducted later in the Prep year while the data generated would be more valuable and pertinent earlier in the year.

New parents are invited to a “New Parents Dinner’ in early term 1 to meet all members of staff. Information sessions are held where parents and teachers discuss the school’s program and policies.

**Year 6 to Year 7**
Historically students have preferred one secondary college over the alternatives available. Drouin and Pakenham Secondary Colleges offer a range of activities for Years 5 and 6 students. Staff and students from these colleges visit the school to talk to students about their programs and life at secondary college. The reviewer noted that the conversation between the schools doesn’t touch on teaching and learning issues and he gained the view that there is little liaison between schools other than Network meetings. This could be an area for further discussion in the years to come.

Secondary college staff members meet with the school’s Year 6 teachers to discuss the needs of individual students, particularly those on the school’s PSD program. Orientation days are conducted in concert with all other schools to provide an opportunity for these students to visit their new schools. The school celebrates the departure of the Year 6 students with celebratory activities.

**Internal Transition Process**
The school concentrates its transition processes on the steps between Years 2 and 3 and between Years 4 and 5. All students meet their new teachers before the beginning of the new school year and are involved in classroom activities in their new class groups.
Children have the opportunity to list the children they would like to have in their new classrooms while parents are invited to submit requests.

Teachers meet regularly towards the end of the school year to discuss individual children with the receiving teachers. Detailed records are maintained and updated by the office staff and reviewed each year. Comment was made at the review panel that the school could consider tracking systems such as the Student Mapping Tool.

**How effectively did the school manage its resources to support improved student outcomes?**

Nar Nar Goon PS is a relatively small school and the transition processes are delegated to teachers who have a range of other responsibilities. The reviewer noted the important role that the principal plays particularly with parental interviews and individual tours. Comment was made about the time consuming nature of such activities. The reviewer suggested the school consider developing a web site that can act as an information portal for interested parents.

Teachers are able to discuss transition issues at a relatively informal level given the small number of teachers involved. The school has provided time release for staff members to visit kindergartens and secondary colleges and supervise students during orientation activities. A school bus service links Nar Nar Goon with Drouin and Pakenham.

The review noted the increasing work load on the school’s office staff to produce up to date information earlier in the school year as most potential parents expect to have a personal interview and tour of the school.

**What can the school do in the future to continue to improve?**

Several areas for further improvement were identified by the review – the need to have more effective links with secondary colleges regarding curriculum and teaching and learning issues as well as specific student related matters. It was also apparent that the school could further develop its marketing and publicity processes and the development of a web site is acknowledged.

The following goal, key improvement strategy, targets and action plans are recommended for inclusion in the next strategic plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>Improvement Strategies</th>
<th>Suggested actions (optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To improve outcomes in Student Pathways and Transition</td>
<td>Consider the following targets to be achieved by 2014. Maintain or improve the 2009 Parent Opinion Survey score for Transition – 6.56 c.f. the state mean 5.80 Improve the Attitudes to</td>
<td>Internal transition practices are to be enhanced so that student learning, wellbeing and engagement outcomes are even more effective..</td>
<td>Consider the development of a school web site. Further develop the collaborative links with local secondary colleges and kindergartens Consider the introduction of student</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
School Survey Year 5

Learning Confidence
score from 4.00 (50th percentile) to at least 4.21 (75th percentile)

tracking systems such as the Student Mapping Tool.

Maintain and improve current systems including, information sharing, interviews, school tours and brochures.

Consider exemplar transition processes and practices in similar schools.