

School review report

Bell Primary School (4309)
School strategic plan 2025-2029

Executive Summary

This section provides a summary of key review findings and areas of focus, which can be shared with the school community.

Key findings on student outcomes and school practices

In Term 4, 2025, Bell Primary School completed their 4 yearly school review to inform development of the next School Strategic Plan (SSP). The review was facilitated by an independent, external school reviewer with input from the school's Senior Education Improvement Leader (SEIL) and 2 challenge partners. The principal, school council representative and key staff members were also part of the school review panel. The following provides a summary of the review's key findings regarding student learning and wellbeing outcomes and supporting school practices.

- The first SSP (2020–24) goal was to improve student outcomes in literacy and numeracy. This goal was partially achieved, with 2 targets partially achieved and 2 targets not able to be assessed.
- The second SSP goal was to improve student independence, engagement and motivation in learning. This goal was partially achieved, with all 3 targets partially achieved.
- The third SSP goal was to enhance the health and wellbeing of all students. This goal was mostly achieved, with 1 target fully achieved and 1 target partially achieved.
- The Panel found the recent transition to a new leadership team was supported by a clear organisational design that strengthened leadership capacity and aligned work with school improvement priorities. The Panel noted that a strong collaborative culture underpinned a key focus on building teacher capability. Teachers felt trusted to do their job and valued the collaborative dialogue with leaders in understanding the school's improvement direction. Continuing to build the capacity of middle leaders, particularly those new to their roles, could enhance instructional leadership and improve oversight of school initiatives.
- The Panel confirmed that scheduled professional learning aligned with school priorities contributed to improved practice, capabilities and the implementation of school initiatives. The Panel noted protocols guiding the effective operation of Professional Learning Communities known as improvement cycles were well established. Staff expressed interest in further opportunities for peer observations, coaching and mentoring. The Panel suggested refining feedback mechanisms could strengthen the school's learning culture. This could also reinforce improvement cycles as the 'core work', and create additional opportunities for leaders to develop their instructional leadership.
- The Panel noted the school developed an instructional lesson structure incorporating a shared language for lesson phases. More recently an exploratory lesson structure focused on problem solving and risk-taking was developed to complement this approach. Together these models were aligned with the Victorian Teaching and Learning Model 2.0 (VTLM 2.0), though continuing to strengthen this alignment was recommended. Feedback indicated some variability in knowing when to use the exploratory model and the Panel agreed that further refinement would be beneficial.
- The Panel noted significant work to develop and refine the school's curriculum effectively guided teachers to scaffold learning from Foundation to Year 6. A review of curriculum documents showed comprehensive depth, and all staff actively used them to plan student learning. The Panel agreed further alignment with the Victorian Curriculum 2.0 was future work for the school. Continuing to strengthen understanding of the continuum of learning could also enhance challenge and effective differentiation for all students.
- The Panel confirmed that system and school-based summative assessment tools were well established. An assessment schedule outlined assessments and regular reviews ensured

assessments were adapted in response to curriculum and program updates. Staff were supported to use these tools for planning and monitoring growth. Ongoing refinement of assessments and support for the effective implementation of new assessments were also identified as a future focus.

- The use of formative assessments was also evident across all classrooms, though the rigour varied. The Panel suggested that strengthening teachers' understanding and purposeful use of formative assessment could enhance targeted instruction. Continuing to strengthen staff data analysis and refining the use of data could enable more rigorous and precise differentiation and challenge for students. Continuing to improve moderation at whole school and within teams could also assist teachers to support students in peer and self-assessment.
- The Panel heard from many students that they used a range of feedback strategies and set goals to support their learning. These practices were found to contribute to greater student engagement. The Panel suggested that continuing to nuance feedback to refine goal setting could augment active student engagement in learning and support students in identifying their next learning steps.
- The Panel noted, an expanded student leadership model offered additional student leadership positions and opportunities for student involvement and connection. Partnerships between staff and students strengthened students' participation and engagement at school. The Panel agreed there was scope to add depth to the student leadership model giving students a stronger voice and supporting further partnerships between staff and students.
- The Panel noted that parents and staff regarded the school's deliberate focus on fostering an inclusive culture and a consistent approach to student wellbeing as a key strength. Student wellbeing was prioritised, particularly for those students with additional needs. Most teachers felt confident in making reasonable adjustments for students, though some staff, expressed a desire for further guidance. The Panel found that staff understanding of how to make effective adjustments for neurodiverse students could be strengthened. Parents also expressed a desire for more consistent understanding of neurodiversity. The Panel identified advancing understanding in this area as an important focus for future work.
- The Panel noted expectations and clear processes for managing behaviour were in place supported by a proactive behaviour framework. The Panel recommended a continued focus would strengthen the approach. Clear processes were in place for following up on student absences. The Panel suggested continuing to refine processes should remain a priority, especially for student cohorts with higher absence rates.

Focus areas for the next School Strategic Plan

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

- Middle leadership particularly building capacity of existing leaders and providing opportunities for aspiring leaders.
- Peer observations, coaching and mentoring.
- Teaching and learning approaches and the instructional model.
- Implementation of the Victorian Curriculum 2.0 and understanding of a continuum of learning.
- Assessment and data literacy, particularly accuracy of teacher judgements, differentiation, moderation and formative assessment.
- Student empowerment and ownership of learning, particularly feedback and engagement strategies.
- Student leadership
- Student wellbeing
- Learning partnerships with parents.
- Student attendance.