

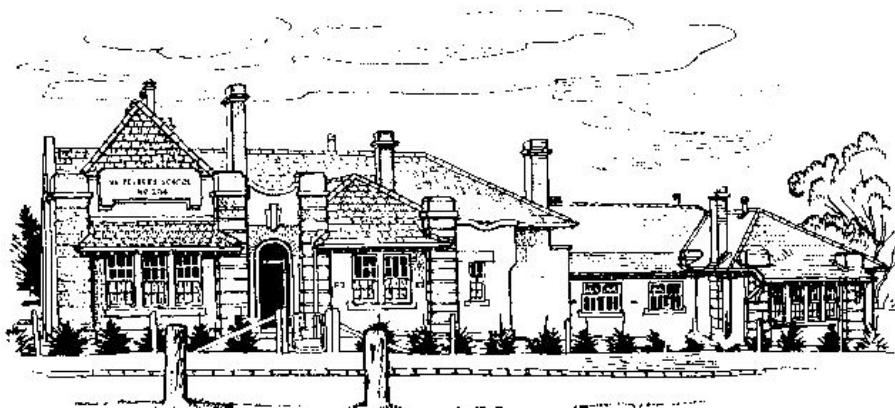


# Heidelberg Primary School

No.294

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## School Self-Evaluation for the period 2004-2006 (Prepared term 2 2007)



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## 1.0 Executive summary

Our school has taken the opportunity provided by the Self Evaluation to look back critically over the last three years, and to begin planning for the future. Generally we are very pleased with the progress and improvements we have achieved over the period of the review, despite this being a period of enormous change and renewal.

Amongst our many achievements over the review period, we have:

- met or exceeded our 2004 targets of equalling or exceeding baseline school performance in 2002 in both English and Maths. For example, 100 percent of Year two students reached the benchmark in reading. Student achievement usually met or exceeded state benchmarks in all areas in other year levels
- continued our involvement in the Viewbank Innovation and Excellence Cluster
- continued the implementation and refinement of the Start Up Learning Program, which incorporates You Can Do It and the implementation of the principles of Quality
- improved our student attendance, and decreased the numbers of students late.
- seen an upward trend in Staff Opinion Survey data
- launched the documents "Whole School Approach to Behaviour Management" and the accompanying student book "Our School Values in Action"
- managed our resources effectively
- enhanced and implemented a successful transition program at pre-prep/prep and year six/seven
- introduced a number of measures to support student engagement, including lunch time activities, a welfare officer and improved curriculum design

We have achieved all this despite our enrolment increasing by more than 40 students, from 255 in 2004 to 296 in 2006, and working with 3 principals and 10 new teachers

Future directions as detailed by this review include:

- identifying and continuing to implement successful Early Years strategies, and rolling these out across the school
- establishing high expectations of all members of our school community
- endeavouring to provide small class sizes, and adequate classroom support
- ensuring open lines of communication between the stakeholders
- investigating and applying the initiatives related to the effective schools model

- maintaining our involvement in the Viewbank Innovations and Excellence cluster
- continuing to deliver effective transition programs
- assisting teachers to effectively use data to track student progress and inform their teaching
- holding student forums to unpack the student Attitudes to School Survey and make suggestions to improve the school environment from a student perspective
- continuing the implementation of PoLT, the Start Up Learning Program, Quality and You Can Do It to ensure consistency of approach across the school. This will include reviewing school commitment to our current mission and vision statements, and a review of the school system map

While the review has been a valuable process, involving all teachers, further consultation with school council and the school community will be required. This will take the form of parent and student forums, to be led by various staff members or school councillors, to unpack and discuss some of the issues identified in this review with a view to setting the future direction of our school.

## 2.0 Methodology

The process of self-evaluation commenced in first term when the principal, assistant principal and our Leading Teacher attended an information session organised by the Northern Region Office, which outlined the process for developing a School Self Evaluation. At approximately the same time, the teaching staff began meeting in small groups, grade level teams and existing school improvement teams for English and Maths, to analyse the data contained in the school level reports, PAT Tests and reports generated by the SSO staff from CASES21. Groups worked to interpret the graphical information, note trends and identify areas that required further investigation and possible future direction.

Student input to the review was via the various surveys conducted over the review period. This included the Student Attitude to School Survey, and a Bullying Audit. Likewise, general community input was sourced from Parent Opinion Surveys.

School Council was kept informed of the process via the Education Sub Committee, at which school level reports and the data analysis results were shared and valuable feedback from parents gained.

The collation of the data and its analysis, and the writing of the School Self Evaluation was undertaken by the principal and assistant principal. Staff were offered opportunities to comment on the draft document on many occasions before its submission to the reviewer.

It must be noted that in many instances the data available was difficult to compare and trend data difficult to isolate because of departmental changes to the variables included in each of the surveys during 2006.

### 3.0 School context

School Values: Learning, Integrity, Friendship, Care, Cooperation, Respect

Heidelberg Primary School is one of the oldest schools in Victoria and is situated approximately ten kilometres north east of Melbourne. Established in 1854 as a National School, the school features prominently in the history of the district. The school celebrated its sesquicentenary (150<sup>th</sup> anniversary) in August 2004.

Rosanna Road, a major arterial leading into the City of Melbourne, borders the school on its eastern side. To the south is the Warringal Village shopping centre. The school is easily accessible by bus and by train.

Neighbouring schools include Haig Street and Banyule government primary schools and Viewbank Secondary College, while St John's Catholic primary school and Our Lady of Mercy College are a short distance to the south in Cape Street.

Heidelberg Primary School boasts well-maintained grounds that feature two adventure playgrounds featuring new, bright equipment, two newly renovated grassed areas, artificial turf and asphalt surfaces and substantial shady areas created by trees and shade sails. The indoor heated swimming pool continues to operate successfully under a Joint Licence Agreement between the Joanne Love Learn to Swim Centre and the School Council.

The main red-brick school building dates from the 1870's and was totally renovated and extended in 1923. This building retains its attractive period architecture. A new canteen, which operates daily and multi-purpose facility were recently completed. A large science room, an art room, an Out of School Hours Care facility and a staff car park are situated at the eastern end of the school site.

Alongside the main building in Cape Street stands the renovated heritage-listed and original headmaster's residence built in the 1870's. This cottage is used for Reading Recovery and English as a Second Language lessons.

At the end of 2002 the school had an enrolment of 230 students and this has increased to 320 in 2007. A number of students come from surrounding areas but most live locally. The majority of students travel to school by car. Our community is rich in diversity, both socio-economically and culturally. In recent years, the number of boys attending the school has exceeded the girls. We take pride in the long association our past pupils maintain with the school.

Parents are invited to be involved in school activities and decision-making through membership of School Council or the Parents and Friends Association. School Council also operates a number of sub committees, which parents are more than welcome to attend. Parents are also welcome to help in classrooms and a number complete the Parents as Helpers course offered each year. The school community is positive and caring, providing a stimulating and supportive environment for the children.

Heidelberg Primary School continues in Like School Group 2. We have noticed an increase of approximately 30 in the numbers of families qualifying for EMA over the period of the review. The school continues to have a number of students funded under the PSD program. A permanent Integration Aide and an Aide employed on a casual basis, support the students and their teachers.

Currently, our thirteen classrooms are organised into three departments. While straight preps grades operate, all remaining grades are composite groupings around CSF/VELS levels. Where possible, we have endeavoured to adhere to DoE guidelines regarding class size, however, this has not always been possible due to increasing enrolments and lack of learning spaces.

Heidelberg Primary School currently operates a very successful, accredited Before and After School Hours Care Program. This is in a new building leased by the school.

Heidelberg Primary School is a member of the Viewbank Innovation and Excellence Cluster of Schools together with Viewbank, Streeton and Banyule Primary Schools and Viewbank College. This cluster has developed a range of activities to support the transition of Year 6 students to secondary school including the STARS (Successful Transition of At Risk Students) program and presented a range of professional learning activities.

In 2001, our school joined Intake 4 of the Quality in Schools Program. A total of nine teachers have attended the David Langford four-day Quality Learning workshop and many of the strategies learned have been implemented in their classrooms. We began the 2003 school year with an intensive 10-day Start-up Learning Program. The program has three main aspects, Quality, You Can Do It and Thinking Curriculum. The mission of the program is to 'provide students with the life skills that enable them to be self-motivated, goal-oriented and positive, risk-taking learners to achieve ongoing success'. Teachers immersed the students in a variety of activities to teach them **how** to learn. The program aimed to create the right conditions for learning in every class and to ensure that all teachers and students were working towards the same goal. Each class developed a Classroom Learning Plan that was published at the end of the intensive program and celebrated at a whole school "SUCCESS" assembly. The program was condensed in 2004, and continues to be implemented at the beginning of each term.

Through an integrated curriculum approach our school embraces the domains of VELS. Each child is encouraged to strive for success. We have a strong focus on developing competencies and confidence in literacy and numeracy. Specialist programs have included Science, Learning Technologies, Visual and Performing Arts, Physical Education, Languages Other Than English (Japanese) and Cultural Studies. They have involved all students from Prep to Year 6. A library program complements literacy learning and integrated studies. A Reading Recovery program caters for Grade 1 students. The school's heated swimming pool has enabled students to participate in an intensive swimming program throughout the year. As far as is possible within staffing constraints, English as a Second Language, reading intervention programs and extension activities are structured to cater for the particular needs of individual students.

Opportunities are provided for students to develop leadership skills through a number of programs including Junior School Council and House Captains. The students compete in interschool sports and a number of sports carnivals including Athletics, Swimming and cross country. Our school provides an excellent camping program beginning in prep with a healthy breakfast, and concludes with a tour of Canberra in grade five/six.

Our students have the opportunity to perform in a bi-annual concert, and take part in the school dance every other year. Senior students have traditionally been invited to participate in a production organised by Banksia1 Secondary College. Grade five/six students also take major responsibility for the production of the radio program "Hands on Heads," which is broadcast by the local community radio station once per term.

## **4.0 Evaluation of performance**

### **4.1 Student learning**

#### **What student outcomes were we trying to achieve?**

The school's aim was to extend and support all students to demonstrate continuous improvements in their learning, and particularly in English and Mathematics. This was to be achieved through improved teaching and learning and the development of sound, productive pedagogy, underpinned by positive student/teacher relationships.

We identified three areas of improvement. These were English, Mathematics and Student Wellbeing.

Our key target was to equal or exceed baseline school performance in 2002, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Our curriculum provision goals were:

- to provide a dynamic, sequential program addressing individual differences across the 8 key learning areas
- to develop teaching and learning strategies that cater for the individual needs of all students and provide opportunities to learn in both independent and cooperative contexts
- to provide students with life skills that enable them to be well motivated, goal oriented and positive risk taking learners to achieve ongoing success
- to provide curriculum design and implementation that promotes and maintains student engagement and enjoyment of school

#### **What student outcomes did we achieve?**

Early Years data for Heidelberg Primary School over the long term is very pleasing, with results, indicating that the percentage of students reaching 90% accuracy at text level 20 at the end of Year 2 is generally above like school group and typically around the 100<sup>th</sup> percentile. This represents nearly all students reaching the benchmark each year. Over the past four years this outstanding performance has been consistent. Reading means for the same cohort of students are generally consistent from year to year, with means typically above the like school group and the state means.

Where data can be directly compared, there is a tendency for CSF reading results to be at or above state benchmarks, and similar to like schools at all year levels. Student achievement results in reading have trended upward across the school when compared to 2002 baseline data.

The percentage of students beginning or lower than expected levels compared to Like School Group Benchmarks has shown significant improvement over the review period in all areas of English at all year levels for which data was collected. Improvement is also evident when tracking cohorts through the school, with fewer students below, and more above the expected levels.

There is no pattern in CSFII assessments whereby the difference between the school and state means for Writing is greater than that for Reading, however school achievement levels tend to be higher for Reading than Writing. The data indicates that results were at or about state mean, except in year 4, 2005.

At Year 3, AIM Reading means are generally volatile in comparison to the like group, but above state mean in all years except 2005. In 2004 and 2005, results were below the like school group, but in 2006 they were above. Means for Writing are typically slightly above those for Reading. There is no correlation at Year 3 between teacher assessments and AIM data.

At Year 5 AIM Reading means trended downward over the period of the review, beginning above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2004, and ending about the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2006. Means for Writing are typically about or below those for Reading. This is also true for CSF data. When comparing AIM results with teacher assessment in reading and writing, teacher assessments are consistently higher than AIM results. ACER PAT testing results are consistently higher again, suggesting that our teachers are conservative in their assessment of student achievement

Comparing the position of the matched Year 3 cohort against the complete school group with that achieved by the same cohort at Year 5 indicates that their average growth has been consistent.

Generally results for Speaking and Listening indicate Heidelberg students are achieving at or about the state mean, and progressing at or about the expected rate. They are consistently 0.1 below the mean for the Like School group for all years and levels except in 2004 when the year two level was 0.4 below and year 4 level which met the Like School Group benchmark.

Taken overall, there is some correlation (agreement) between long-term outcomes for Early Years, VELS/CSF and AIM outcomes.

For CSF Number and Measurement, teacher assessed means for the same group of students are generally volatile from year to year, with means ranging from .07 above to .14 below state mean. There appears to be no discernible trend for any particular year group, but data indicates that students are making expected progress through the school, with the greatest progress taking place in the senior grades.

At Year 3, AIM Number means are generally volatile, but below the like school group. They are typically around the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, except for 2005, when the results were nearer the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile.

At Year 5 AIM Number means are even more volatile, ranging from 90<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2005 to the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2006.

Comparing the position of the matched Year 3 cohort against the complete school group with that achieved by the same cohort at Year 5 indicates that their average growth has been consistent.

Generally our results throughout the review period in English were at or about our target of baseline school performance in 2002. Of concern however was the performance of the 2000 prep cohort. AIM results and CSF/VELS data indicates their performance in all areas has been consistently below state benchmarks throughout their time at our school.

Our overall results in Maths showed improvement over the review period in all years, exceeding 2002 baseline performance targets.

It was also pleasing to note that many students have been successful in the University of New South Wales Competitions, with a number of students receiving distinctions. One student received the medal for the highest science score in year three.

## **STUDENT TRANSITION**

The mean score for the school on the “Transitions” factor in the 2006 Parent Survey was below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of the state.

Considering the same cohort of students from Year 2 to Year 3; the position of the school against the like group with regard to the percentage of students achieving 90% accuracy at the end of Year 2 has been both higher and lower than the position of the school on the Year 3 AIM Reading test.

Taken over the long term, there is no consistent pattern whereby absence increases or decreases from Year 2 to Year 3, but there was a slight decrease from Year 4 to Year 5.

Prep enrolment is increasing by around 10 students each year.

Indications from parent and staff feedback on transition to Prep are that activities involving kinder visits, Information Nights and Orientation activities were very successful. Parents have especially responded positively to the “welcome show bag” we offer our new prep enrolments.

Consideration by the combined group of primary and secondary teachers with responsibility for transition indicate that the Innovation and Excellence Cluster activities associated with Viewbank Secondary College were very successful. Parents have also taken advantage of Open Nights at local secondary schools, advertised through our school newsletter and promoted with students.

## **STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT**

### **Absence**

Average student absence for the whole school is typically 12.9 days per student. It has remained reasonably constant over the past several years.

In 2006 students were absent for a total of 4141 days. This is more than previous years, following an upward trend.

Percentage absence has been generally higher for girls than for boys in each year level for each of the past 3 years. Exceptions to this occurred at Years 6 in 2004 and Year 2 in 2006.

The number of students who were absent for 5% - 10% of the year (0 to 10 days) has increased over the past three years.

The number of students who were absent for 10% - 15% of the year has increased over the past three years, however school population has also increased over the same period. There has been no pattern to the number of students who were absent for 15% - 20% of the year, but there has been a decrease from 2005 to 2006.

The number of students who were absent for 20% of the year or more has decreased over the past three years.

The greatest numbers of students in all years were absent for between 0 and 5% of the school year during the review period.

### **Behaviour**

The school undertook the DE&T Parent Survey in 2004, 2005 and 2006, with 106, 39 and 43 families respectively responding.

Scores for the General Satisfaction variable have generally remained below the state mean for the past several years. The school score has trended upward toward the state mean.

Scores for the School Climate variable were generally at or above the state average. Scores for the Behaviour Management variable in 2006 were at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and for the Classroom Behaviour below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Both parent and staff surveys show an improving trend on all aspects related to discipline and student behaviour, but each variable remains below state benchmarks.

Scores for Effective Discipline policy are typically around the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile, whilst those for Classroom Misbehaviour are around the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile. There is not consistency between scores for Classroom Misbehaviour and Student Misbehaviour, with scores for the latter typically around the 35<sup>th</sup> percentile.

## **Engagement**

Looking at all variables in the combined grade 5/6 student survey, it is apparent that students at Heidelberg Primary School are indicating decreasing engagement with the curriculum and feeling less connected with peers, teachers and the school.

Over the period of the review however, where direct comparisons can be made, scores for Student engagement and well-being have remained similar to 2002 baselines. This typically means below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile.

The combined score for student safety has defied this trend, improving significantly until 2005, and then dropping back in 2006. Year 5 students feel safer than year 6 students, and boys feel safer than girls.

## **Why did we achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?**

It would appear in the setting of our charter targets that our school community did not have high expectations of student learning. While our data would indicate our students have easily met or exceeded the targets we set for them in the 2004 Charter, and the 2006 Implementation Plan, we believe we have still not achieved our school's full potential.

The success our school has achieved has no doubt been as a direct result of the hard work and professionalism of our staff. This is particularly evident with the excellent results achieved in the prep to two area. The programs developed in this area provided a solid framework around which the teachers could implement a structured learning program responsive to student needs.

The school also implemented a number of models of effective support in the prep-two area during the period of the review. For example Reading Recovery students were able to be withdrawn for one on one support, and at times ESL students worked in both one on one and small group learning situations. Until recently such support has not been available for students in the middle and upper school.

In the last year of the review period teachers have been expected to provide structured support to a colleague in the form of mentoring, working with individual students requiring extra assistance, team teaching, and so on.

Small class sizes has also contributed to the excellent results in infant grades. Generally prep classes have remained below 22 students, with the average grade 1/2 class around 23. Unfortunately due to lack of classroom space and other factors, classroom numbers in the other areas of the school rarely fall below 25, and have been as high as 32 students.

This can be shown to have had real impact on student learning. It could also help explain low scores on Classroom Behaviour and Teacher Morale on the parent survey, and Excessive Workload, Student Misbehaviour and Classroom Misbehaviour and on the staff survey.

During the review period the school has managed the extremely challenging behaviour of a number of students, all of whom are over represented in the HPS bullying survey, detention and suspension records. A number of children have been referred to the SIU at Olympic Village Primary School, to Baltara School and to CAMHS unit at the Austin Hospital. Applications to support these children are pending under Programs for Students with Disabilities.

In 2006 our school launched our new document "Whole School Approach to Behaviour Management," including the student booklet, "Our School Values in Action." This document was the culmination of many years of effort by a number of staff, and brought behaviour management in line with the practises employed under our Quality in School model. The documents outline our community's expectations regarding student behaviour and the discipline procedures to be followed at our school, contributing to clarity and goal congruence.

The Start-Up Learning Program (SULP) made a significant contribution to the development of a consistent approach to learning, and to students as individuals. This was complimented by the staff involvement in PoLT. Our work in PoLT so far has involved developing teachers' awareness and understanding of the principles of teaching and learning, then identifying opportunities for improvement through staff discussion and whole school component mapping. Work in both of these programs will continue for the foreseeable future.

The value of the Start-Up Learning program is demonstrated we believe by the relatively poor scores indicated by our grade 5 and 6 students on the Attitudes to School survey. These students are the last at our school that have not had the benefit of participating in the SULP from prep. Our relatively high scores for the Goal Congruence and Student Decision Making components on the staff opinion survey, and our improving scores for Learning Environment and Student Misbehaviour also point to the value of SULP.

As part of our commitment to the Quality in School program, learning teams have undertaken one Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycle, focusing on one aspect of their program each year. As part of this cycle teams identify strengths and weaknesses of current practice, investigate possible solutions, propose a theory for improvement, which is then trailed, evaluated, adjusted then implemented. Over the period of the review this process has led to teams developing a new writing scope and sequence across the school, and reviewing the teaching of spelling.

Professional Development has focused on Curriculum Planning, Literacy and Numeracy over the period of the review. Highlights have included a day with Michael Ymer, the completion of the curriculum planning modules with staff, and regular ongoing PD in Early Years Literacy and Numeracy conducted by school based coordinators.

During the period of the review our school has experienced significant staff changes. In 2005 for example, we had three principals, and welcomed 10 new teachers, of which we retained eight in 2006. (In 2007 we welcomed a further 5 new teachers.) Most of these have less than one year teaching experience. The school's solid induction process has assisted with the teachers assimilation into the school community, but such enormous change still impacts on the overall school environment.

Before and during this period of change the school experienced significant staff welfare and morale issues, as indicated by very poor scores on the staff opinion survey. Measures to address these issues have been put in place, including whole school and individual professional development activities related to stress management, leadership, optimism and dealing with difficult people. Data would indicate these measures have been successful, as all measures of the staff opinion survey currently demonstrate an upward trend.

Change is also evident in our school student population. Our school experiences many new enrolments throughout the year. It has been noticed that an increasing number of these students are from families with English as a Second Language, many of these ESL families arriving at our school with no English, placing significant demands on school and staff resources. Similarly, the data indicates an increasing number and percentage of these families are eligible for EMA support.

The increasing population of our school causes organisational challenges. With limited classroom spaces, some classes are geographically isolated from their peers, leading to concerns about planning and consistent curriculum implementation, and social isolation for the students. Class organisation also has been less than ideal in some years, with numbers dictating unusual composites, eg a 4/5 in 2005/6, further isolating students from their peers, and disrupting the implementation of the curriculum scope and sequence.

Curriculum scope and sequence was further interrupted by the introduction of VELS in 2006. Teachers have been required to review curriculum planning and implementation at very short notice. This has also impacted on assessment, and the ability to compare trend data. Despite many sessions on moderation, unfamiliarity with progression points has led to teachers assessing student achievement conservatively.

It has become apparent through the self evaluation process that it has not been common practice at our school for teachers to use systems gathered data to inform their planning and teaching.

Through casual observations and discussions with various stakeholders, including students, parents and visitors, it appears that our school is "doing" better than the data suggests. Staff morale seems good, the students appear to be happy and learning, and parent involvement is high.

## **How effectively did we manage resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?**

At Heidelberg Primary School we believe that a strong start to school provides a solid base on which to build later learning. To this end we have provided many resources to support the Early Years initiatives, including an Early Years Coordinator 0.4EFT, a Reading Recovery teacher 0.5EFT, ESL support 0.3 EFT and an Early Years Numeracy Coordinator. Limited classroom space has at times prevented small classes across the school, and so resources were also devoted to the provision of specialist programs to support the classroom teachers.

A heavy investment in ICT over recent years has also been a feature of our school. The provision of modern and reliable computers, along with an ICT specialist to conduct classes and provide professional development for staff has been seen as valuable.

A significant component of the school's budget has also been devoted to staff professional development. Access to professional development has been on the basis of meeting a teacher's needs, whether individual, team or school based. The focus has been on implementing the Department's initiatives, ensuring OHS compliance, and improving the teaching of English and Maths.

Because of a number of difficult students at our school, a teacher has been employed for the period of the review for 0.4EFT. This person has developed and implemented a variety of programs to assist these students to deal with a range of issues, including bullying, anger management and other anti social behaviours.

A rigorous process of minor program evaluation and budget review each year involving the whole staff and overseen by school council ensured the school resources were directed to the areas of highest need.

## **What can we do in the future to continue to improve?**

To continue the great success of our early years students, it is going to be important to investigate and implement those strategies that are found to be most effective, and carry them beyond the P-2 area. Succession planning to ensure continuity of the Early Years program will also be important.

Ensuring adequate resourcing of English across the school should also be a high priority.

In setting targets for the future, our school is in a position to strive for better results, setting high expectations of all. Professional learning for staff and community education should be an important strategy to be adopted. Acceptance only of "quality" work, for example, would be one aspect of this.

The refinement and adoption of an agreed assessment schedule and the increased use of data to track progress and inform teaching across the school is also seen as important.

Greater emphasis on the use of teacher moderation, especially with high achievers, would ensure teachers feel more comfortable placing students at appropriate progression points, particularly those who have progressed above expected outcomes.

We have noticed the improvements possible with the provision of small class sizes and provision of extra support in the prep-2 area. Following on from this, continued implementation of intervention support for students 3-6 should be a priority. Discussion with region to provide more classroom space to reduce class sizes or the implementation of an enrolment ceiling will also be important.

Ensuring the lines of communication between the various stakeholders are open and effective is going to continue be a vital strategy in changing the perceptions regarding our school.

Continued and ongoing investigation and implementation of the initiatives related to Effective Schools Model will also contribute to a vital and successful school.

## 4.2 Student pathways and transitions

### What student outcomes were we trying to achieve?

Heidelberg Primary School aimed to provide major transition programs from pre-prep to prep, and year 6 into year 7, while also facilitating a smooth transition between year levels within the school. The programs aimed to ensure that students are prepared for transitions, so that they might be calm and positive experiences.

At the prep level we aimed to ensure that students and their parents are familiar with the school, and ready for entry through an extensive orientation program involving both parent induction and information sessions and student classroom experiences. We aimed to do this by strengthening the links between school and kinders through increased involvement with the Banyule kinder network and the use of senior school buddies for prep students.

At the grade 6 level teachers aimed to ensure students were prepared academically and socially to meet the challenges of transition to a secondary school environment through purposeful teaching, the Start-Up Learning Program, the You Can Do It program and involvement in the Viewbank Innovation and Excellence Cluster.

At the end of each year level we aimed to ensure a smooth transition by careful consideration of grade placement that involved the whole school community, moderation of results, the development of cumulative records to enable teachers to more quickly identify student strengths and learning needs and the provision of opportunities to meet their new teachers and class mates before the end of the year, where possible.

### What student outcomes did we achieve?

Anecdotal data collected from parents suggests the pre-prep/prep program was extremely successful. School starts have become very smooth, with all children settled and ready for learning, and parents familiar and comfortable with the school and its routines. Unfortunately the parent opinion data does not reflect this.

Our grade 5/6 students were involved in exciting transition activities with Viewbank College. Last year it was Wild About Technology (WAT) Day. Students were also involved in 3 R's (Rights Responsibilities and Respect), a values focused program with other cluster schools.

A transition report is completed by our teachers for all exiting students, and meetings conducted with transition coordinators from post primary schools. Viewbank College also have initiated a STARS program (School Transition for At Risk Students) involving close liaison between the college and primary school for students considered to be at risk either socially or academically.

Anecdotal evidence gained from participation in the Viewbank College induction program suggests these are successful programs.

Unfortunately, as not all of our students move on to Viewbank College, the full value of these programs is not realised.

Year 6 students are actively engaged in the planning of their graduation ceremony, with grade 5 parents assisting with catering this event. Last year the school introduced a reflections program, where grade 6 students produced a portfolio recounting their primary school years. The grade five students also produced a modified program recounting their grade five year. This proved to be extremely popular.

The composite make up of our grades facilitates smooth transition from one year level to another, ensuring a level of familiarity with other students and teachers, and that there are no abrupt changes in curriculum or teaching style. Encouraging students to play with students at other year levels by not imposing artificial boundaries in the playground, and organising cross age activities through the day also helps.

Before the end of each academic year, parents are asked to provide feedback about special considerations regarding their child's placement for the next year. Students are also asked to nominate a number of friends they learn well with and would like in their class. Following this teachers meet in learning teams to place students in grades for the following year, taking into consideration special requests and social and academic achievement. Opportunities are then provided for all staff to comment on these proposed class lists, drawing upon their insights and experiences.

Many opportunities are provided for students to demonstrate leadership across the school. This includes electing school council representatives for each class from grade two onwards, and the whole school electing house captains from the students in grade five and six.

## **Why did we achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?**

Improved outcomes have been achieved with pre-prep/prep transition largely because of the commitment of our teachers. Their willingness to build a relationship with the local kinders, and their responsiveness to the feedback received from our families has been commendable.

During the review period, teachers from our school visited each of our feeder kinders regularly to deliver promotional material and discuss the needs of prospective students. Teachers attended Banyule Kinderlinks meetings where they also discussed kinder programs and the needs of students. Our teachers took an active role in setting the meeting agendas. Our teachers believe this has been a very worthwhile program.

All pre-prep students were involved in a wide variety of orientation activities during November and December preceding their commencing school. At the last session for the year students were provided with a "Welcome show bag" that included tips for parents on preparing students for school, some basic writing activities to practise over the holidays, a CD containing photos of the teachers, and the words and music to our school song. The content of this show bag has evolved over time, including suggestions by parents. On the first day of school the new preps were introduced to their grade six buddies and this relationship is continued throughout the year with learning activities shared between the classes.

At the beginning of the review period middle years teachers at our school were very excited about the possibilities offered by their involvement in the Middle Years program. After three years and three changes of leader, they are now not so enthusiastic. This combined with the continual change in focus of the role of the educator, as dictated by the department has led to some disengagement with the program.

Data from the Parent Opinion Survey would suggest that transition within the school is an opportunity for improvement. Currently we are unsure why this is.

## **How effectively did we manage resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?**

Appropriate funding was allocated to enable effective transition programs and both pre-prep/prep and year 6/7, with cluster funding supporting the latter. Funds were also accessed through the Innovation and Excellence cluster to provide professional development to transition teachers in relevant topics.

The process used for the selection of staff has ensured personnel were capable and willing to teach in these areas.

Administrative and Planning time was organised so that teachers in the same area were released from classroom duties at the same time, to allow for planning and transition activities to be effectively implemented.

The meeting schedule also supported fortnightly learning team meetings. Additional time is also allocated where possible or necessary to allow transition teachers time for further liaison. The consultative committee meetings represent all levels and devote time to discuss transition activities. Time is devoted to transition at other forums across the school.

### **What can we do in the future to continue to improve?**

Our school will build on the successful programs already in place. At pre-prep transition ensuring there is sufficient funding and personnel to continue with building the relationships with local kinders will be important. At year 6 continued involvement in the transition activities offered by the Innovation and Excellence cluster will also prove to be valuable. Opportunities should be provided for teachers from primary and secondary schools to shadow each other in an attempt to develop better relationships and understandings of the needs and strengths of each. In addition, similar opportunities should be provided for our teachers to work with colleagues in other year levels at our own or other schools.

It will be very important in the future to investigate the reasons behind our school's poor scores on the parent and student opinion survey on the components relating to transition. Initial investigation of the raw data indicates many respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed with the survey statements, for example.

## 4.3 Student engagement and wellbeing

### What student outcomes were we trying to achieve?

Our aim was to provide curriculum design and implementation that promoted and maintained student engagement and enjoyment of school. Our specific targets were to equal or exceed baseline 2002 parent and student opinion data.

Our school acknowledges the direct and strong links that exist between student learning and student engagement, self-esteem and wellbeing. To this end we identified issues relating to student engagement and the utilised funds available through the cluster accordingly. We also endeavoured to embed the principles of Quality within the curriculum, and continued to implement the You Can Do It program across the school. Key improvement strategies were identified in relation to improving student attendance, and reducing the number of students arriving at school late.

### What student outcomes did we achieve?

The variables on the student attitude to school survey and the parent opinion survey have not been consistent throughout the review period making direct comparisons difficult. It is clear however that our school remains below state means on many variables. An exception to this was student safety and student self esteem on the attitudes to school survey, which were above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile on both surveys for 2004 and 2005, and above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in 2006. These figures are confirmed by a bullying audit conducted last year, which identified only a small number of students engaging in bullying behaviour.

It can also be said that there was significant improvement on all variables from both surveys during 2004-2005. 2006 data from the parent and attitude to school survey again suggests many areas needing improvement.

Improvement in student absent data is evident over the review period, with only one year level remaining above the state mean in 2006, and year 6 significantly below.

Staff Opinion survey results trended upward in the period 2004-2006, but remain below state benchmarks on all benchmarks except student decision making, which was at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile.

### Why did we achieve / not achieve improved student outcomes?

There have been many successes in this area over the period of the review. Our Sulp continued to be implemented at the beginning of each term, setting expectations for behaviour and ensuring a positive classroom environment. The You Can Do It program was delivered in all classrooms, with one aspect of the program forming the focus for each term. Whole school awards reinforced these programs, with the "Achievement of the Week" award given to a student in each classroom who has demonstrated one of the YCDI foundations, and the "Caught Doing Something Good" award given at assembly to students demonstrating one of our school values in the yard.

To ensure student engagement at recesses, teachers and students organise activities such as sports events, board games, library and computer activities, construction activities and so on.

A Student Welfare committee operated during the review period, meeting fortnightly to develop strategies to address individual student needs, provide professional development and to clarify and document agreed school procedures. The resulting document “Whole School Approach to Behaviour Management” was launched last year, along with the companion document “Our School Values in Action” for students.

A number of strategies operated to track student misbehaviour. Teachers on yard duty record minor incidents in a yard duty folder. Major incidents are recorded as part of a detention process, which involves informing parents. Incidents may also be recorded in the “Big Behaviour Book”, which is kept in the Principal’s office. Many teachers also operate communication books, to allow parents to be kept informed about what’s happening at school.

CASES Student and absence and lateness data was used to identify students with high, repetitive and unexplained absences, and consistent lateness. Processes have been introduced to monitor these students and respond appropriately. The number of absences and days late was included on all student reports.

Occasional campaigns were conducted across the school against lateness, with class students assisting in graphing their class data for a month. Results were then published in the school weekly newsletter. Improvement was evident during and after such campaigns.

### **How effectively did we manage resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?**

The first week of each school year, and the first few days of each new term is devoted to our Sulp. Much teacher time is also devoted to the development of this program, and a core team meets fortnightly to coordinate its implementation. Professional Development in the Quality principles is a very high priority at our school, with each new teacher attending the Langford Conference during a school holiday.

As mentioned earlier, a student welfare officer has been appointed each year, with time fraction being 0.4 and 0.8EFT in response to student needs. The school also utilises SSSO resources that are allocated by the department, as well as accessing other appropriate resources and alternate settings.

We endeavour to cater to student needs and special interests by providing stimulating classroom environments and programs, an excursion and camping program, swimming, leadership program and a wide and varied specialist program. All students have the opportunity to participate in areas such as science, music, visual arts, Japanese, cultural studies, ICT and library. Extra curricula activities such as instrumental music, dance and performance are routinely provided.

## What can we do in the future to continue to improve?

It will be important for our school to gain some further insight as to why the student attitude to school survey does not appear to match our perceptions. To this end student forums will be held to help provide direction. A similar approach will be adopted with the broader school community. Focus groups will be established to assist us in understanding why parents are responding as they do on the surveys.

As a large number of parents indicated that they neither disagreed nor agreed with survey statements it will be important to seek new ways to communicate our programs to parents, increasing their awareness and capacity to respond to the survey statements more definitively.

The SULP is always being refined in response to both teacher and student feedback and this process will continue to be adopted. The method of implementation of the You Can Do It program must be examined and if deemed appropriate a staff member or committee be allocated the role of coordinating a more proactive model of implementation. Further means of embedding the program within the school and creating a common understanding and promotion of the foundations in the broader school community should also be investigated. Review of community commitment to our school mission and vision statements will prove valuable, as well as a view of the school system map.

Specialist programs offered will continue to be considered carefully with the aim of providing a balanced curriculum over the seven primary years.

Our school will need to continue to have flexibility in both its capacity to respond to student welfare needs and the manner in which it does so. This can best be managed by the appointment of a welfare coordinator at a time fraction that suits the needs of the students and can be effectively resourced within the SRP.

The implementation of the principles of learning and teaching through out the school in response to component mapping will be a major professional learning focus over the next two years.

Our school is fortunate to have sufficient ICT resources in the form of computers in each class room and a dedicated computer lab as part of our library. We need to be proactive in seeking opportunities for our students to become involved in ICT projects that take them beyond the simple use of computers and into more complex multi media activities, which integrate closely with classroom activities.

Adding to the increased student voice at our school, the opportunity exists for students to become increasingly involved in the management and development of our school grounds. A safety club was started recently, which is a step in this direction. Future involvement of students via a gardening club for example would be desirable.

Continual monitoring of student absence and lateness will also be a priority. Further "campaigns" will be organised as necessary.