



School Review Report

Prepared for

Williamstown Primary School

Western Metropolitan Region

School System Development Division

- Department of Education -

2007

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- **School Number** 1183
 - **Co-Principals** Tilly Barger & Bill Green
 - **School Council President** Stuart Nicolson
 - **Type of Review** Continuous Improvement
 - **School Reviewer** Peter Fotheringham
 - **Date of Review Meeting at school** 24th August 2007
 - **Date of this Report (final version)** August 2007

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1.0 Executive Summary

There are many positive things to observe at Williamstown Primary School, particularly the actions that have been taken during the 2004 to 2006 charter period to enhance student learning and the community spirit of the school. Examples of this include the Willy Kids are Friendly Kids program, the use of teacher teams, and engagement of parents and the community. In their endeavours to provide the best outcomes for every student the school leadership has embarked on a clear instructional improvement pathway – the improvement of teaching practice as the way to improving student learning.

Data consistently indicate some general positive patterns in student learning at Williamstown Primary School. These include high proportions of students assessed at or above expected standards in English and Mathematics according to teacher assessments, AIM and the Prep-2 Reading data. There has been some observable improvement trends recorded in the Prep-2 Reading Assessment and AIM value-added indicators. All indicators show that the school performs at levels better than the state benchmarks, and at levels similar to like schools.

Opinion survey data also generally point to positive perceptions of the school. Parent opinion survey data for 2006 reveal that parent perceptions of *School Climate*, *Student Engagement* and *Student Behaviour* are well above state benchmarks. Student opinion is similarly high and indicates students have positive perceptions of their education at Williamstown. The 2007 survey shows that students had high levels of morale, felt positive, cheerful, happy and relaxed, they were highly motivated, had very positive perceptions of their ability to learn, got on well with peers and classmates, and enjoy attending school. Students also viewed teachers as effective, energetic, empathetic, and providing interesting, enjoyable, and inspiring teaching.

While maintaining an emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy levels will be an integral part of the new Strategic Plan, other areas for student learning to be focused on include enhancing student responsibility for their own learning. These efforts should be linked to the appropriate VELS domains and strands in English, Mathematics, ICT, Thinking Processes, Personal Learning, and Interpersonal Development.

The key strategies identified to achieve the student learning improvements sought over the next few years focus on the enhancement of the teaching and learning across the school through explicit teaching. This focus builds on the excellent *Statement of Values, Beliefs and Successful Learning and Teaching Practices*, and draws on many other supporting strategies such as the explicit setting of targets, the use of learning data to monitor improvement, use of professional

learning practices such as teams, coaching and modeling for explicit teaching, and sustaining the school's performance and development culture.

To further advance student engagement and wellbeing outcome key recommended strategies include the ongoing use of the *Willy Kids are Friendly Kids* program which has a positive impact on students, and the use of data to inform practice.

The school has strong foundations for improvement in place. While the school recognises its strengths it is concerned with doing even better with student learning and has clear ideas on where and how improvements should be made.

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2.0 Methodology

Methodology for this Continuous Improvement Review followed the Continuous Improvement Review process and included a School pre-visit, analysis of the School Self-Evaluation, School Level Report, School Charter, the School Annual Implementation Plan, and other associated data.

The Review Panel meeting was held on 24th August 2007. In attendance were:

Tilly Barger & Bill Green	Co-Principals
Stuart Nicolson	School Council President
Nicole Richards	Curriculum Coordinator
Robyn Nankivell	Early Years Coordinator
Mark Richardson	ICT Coordinator
Sue Conquest	Western Metropolitan Region SEO
Peter Fotheringham	National Curriculum Services Reviewer

Reports to the School Staff and Council occurred as part of the review methodology.

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3.0 School Context

Williamstown Primary School has a long history of serving its community commencing in earnest with the completion of bluestone buildings in 1877. There have been a number of additions over time and new building and grounds improvement project is currently reaching completion and has been carried out in keeping with a conservation management plan approved by Heritage Victoria. Situated on a point jutting into Port Philip bay, Williamstown is an historic suburb which has a strong community ethos.

Enrolment was capped at 450 for a number of years, but rose in 2006 and is currently 515. Numbers are expected to rise and the school expects in the order of 100 Prep students in 2008. Including specialist support teachers and part time staff there are 45 teachers and 21 classes. The structure of the leadership team is unusual in that the principal position is shared between two people. Though staff are predominantly female and experienced, just over 20% are male and there are in the order of 3 teachers who have recently graduated. With the completion of the improvements currently underway the school will provide an excellent environment for students.

The School Level Report has listed the proportion of students in receipt of an Educational Maintenance Allowance as 15.3% and the percentage from a language background other than English as 4.5% for the past four years. This places the school at the lower end of like group 2. However, CASES no longer tracks EMA levels and there may have been some change. The SFO range for the school runs from the state 85th to the 100th percentile. Currently 11 language groups are represented at the school. Apart from English which accounts for over 95% of students, none of these groups is greater than 3 students except for Vietnamese, which comprises 8 students (1.6%). Mobility is perhaps a little higher than in a typical like group 2 school, with around 65% of the current Years 5 and 6 students beginning at the school as Preps.

Education at the school is provided in keeping with an extensive statement of values and beliefs that have been cooperatively developed and explicitly stated. The curriculum places emphasis on improvement in literacy and numeracy and a focus on student wellbeing through a school developed program "Willy Kids Are Friendly Kids". A very broad and inclusive curriculum is provided, well supported by specialist subjects and extra curricula activities. There is a very strong music program, Italian is provided as a language other than English, ICT is integrated into the curriculum and there is extensive support for the Arts.

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4.0 Evaluation of Performance

4.1 Student Learning

What outcomes was the school trying to achieve?

The school set out to implement a broad curriculum incorporating multiple intelligences and the thinking curriculum, with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy.

Targets related to the percentage of students reaching or exceeding like group means by 2007. There was a specific aim for the 1999 Prep cohort to complete Level 4 with outcomes above state means in English and Mathematics by the end of 2007.

These intentions provided a challenging context for the charter period.

What did the school achieve?

School Level Report data indicate some general patterns in student learning at Williamstown Primary School. These include high proportions of students assessed at or above expected standards in English and Mathematics according to teacher assessments and AIM data. There has been some observable improvement trends recorded in the Prep-2 Reading Assessment and AIM value-added indicators. AIM data show the school consistently performs better than the whole state indicators, and at levels similar to like school performance.

English

Assessment of Reading Prep – 2

Analysis of the proportion of Williamstown Prep, 1, and 2 students reading with various accuracy rates at the higher text levels data show that:

- The proportions of students reading with 90-100% accuracy at the highest text levels have consistently been above the state proportions at Prep and Year 2, and at levels similar to the like school group proportions.
- At Year 1 the proportions of students reading with 90-100% accuracy at the highest benchmark text level (Level 15) have been below the state and like school proportions.
- There is a consistent pattern that by the time a cohort reaches the end of Year 2 the proportions have increased in comparison to when that cohort was in Prep two years prior.

- There is a 'dip' in performance on this indicator at Year 1, although the previous point identifies that at the end of Year 2 performance is again comparatively strong.
- The data also show very small numbers of students 'at risk' during 2003 – 2006 (between one and four students). Reductions in numbers at risk are recorded between Prep and Year 1, although the numbers increased by one student at Year 2.

Teacher Assessment

A 2006 whole school measure (Teacher assessments against the VELS – Year levels Prep, 2, 4 & 6 combined – SLR page 7) of achievement indicates that at least eight out of every ten students across the school achieves at or above expected standards. The 2006 percentages of students for each English dimension were:

- Reading 84% (46% above standards)
- Writing 79% (27% above standards)
- Speaking & Listening 83% (22% above standards)

Analysis of 2006 Prep and Years 2, 4 and 6 level data also show high proportions of students at or above standards. Mean scores for the three English domains were at or above the appropriate VELS level score for each year level (for example, a score of 4.00 at the end of Year 6/VELS Level 4). The 2006 mean scores at Years 2, 4 and 6 were at or above state and like school group means. Writing means are marginally lower than those for Reading.

AIM Data

English - Year 3

Year 3 AIM Reading means have consistently been above that of the state during the charter period of the 2004 – 2006. The school mean was at the like school mean in 2004, well above in 2005 (between the 75th and 90th percentiles), and below in 2006 (at the 25th percentile).

The 2004 to 2006 Reading data indicate almost substantial proportions of students performing above expected standards, between 26% and 49%. The data also show small proportions of students well below standards at VELS Level 1 – 6% in 2004 and 2006, zero in 2005.

The 2006 Annual Report shows approximately 80% of Year 3 students were at or above expected levels for Reading during 2004 to 2006. Over the 2000 to 2006 period AIM Writing performance has consistently been a bit higher than Reading.

There is some AIM evidence that at Year 3 AIM boys performance has not been as strong as that for girls, for example, boys means for Reading and Writing have generally been below those of like school boys for the period reviewed.

English - Year 5

Year 5 AIM Reading means have been above those of the state and below those of the like group for the past three years. Prior to this the school had the same mean as the like group in 2002 and was above in 2003. Writing results at Year 5 have been stronger, reaching the like group in each of the past two years and in 2-003, but were considerably below in 2002 and 2004

The 2002 – 2006 Reading data indicate substantial proportions of students (19-26% over the past three years) well above standards.

The 2006 Annual Report shows an increase in the percentage of students at or above expected levels for Reading ranged between 70-80% during 2004 – 2006, a marginally lower performance than for Year 3.

English - Year 3 to Year 5

The 'value-added' AIM measures show that an average growth Reading means of just less than one VELs level as students progress from Year 3 to Year 5. These growth indicators are similar to those recorded for the like school and state indicators. Progress of girls from Year 3 to Year 5 tends to be a little above that of boys for Writing.

Mathematics

Year 3 AIM Mathematics results tend to be at, or 0.1 of a VELs level above, those of the like group. The sole exception to this occurred in 2006 when the school mean fell to the 10th percentile. Means for Number are not quite as strong as those for Mathematics; falling below the like group in three of the past five years.

At Year 5 Number and Mathematics means are similar and more often than at or above those of the like group. Mean teacher VELs/CSF assessments are also typically close to those of the like group and are above those of the state. Progress of students from Year 3 to Year 5 tends to match that of the like group for Number, but is typically 0.1 of a VELs level lower for Mathematics as a whole.

Differences in achievement in Mathematics attributable to gender do not appear to differ from those across the state in any consistent way. Similarly, there is no consistent pattern whereby the progress of girls for Year 3 to Year 5 differs from that of boys.

Combining the patterns from the various performance indicators illustrates some broad patterns in student learning at Williamstown Primary School during 2004 – 2006. These are:

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- Very high percentages of students across the school at the standards expected, around 80% on the AIM and teacher assessment indicators.
- Writing performance being marginally stronger than that for Reading
- Mathematics performance a little stronger than that for Number
- Some differences between boys and girls, with girls performing generally stronger than boys.

Why did the school achieve / not achieve its desired outcomes?

A range of factors has potentially contributed to Williamstown Primary School's Student Learning Outcome performance during 2004 – 2006. These factors include leadership, the use of purposeful teaching, some targeted literacy and numeracy intervention programs, analysis of learning data to identify where and how improvements might be made, the '*Willy Kids are Friendly Kids*' program, allocation of additional resources to improving learning, changes to organisational structures, and approaches to professional learning. These factors are discussed making reference to survey data sets that provide information on factors that may impact student learning, for example, the student Attitudes to School Survey, the School Organisational Health Questionnaire (SOHQ – or teacher opinion survey), and the Parent Opinion Survey (POS).

Leadership and School Directions

An important factor in promoting student learning is the possession of agreed beliefs about learning combined with a clear vision and direction pursued by the school leadership team and teachers. It is clear to an external observer that the Williamstown school leadership did provide very strong and clear direction focused on improvement.

The most observable artifact that provides evidence for this is the school's *Statement of Our Values, Beliefs and Successful Learning and Teaching Practices – 2007* an outcome of a previous Carter Priority. The document describes school values and beliefs that inform approaches to teaching and learning.

Evidence for clear leadership and agreement about directions can be garnered from the teacher survey. The 2006 teacher survey show comparatively high scores for *Supportive Leadership*, *Role Clarity*, and *Goal Congruence*. These variable scores were in the second quartile of results for each of these years. In 2007 while teacher responses are generally positive, indicating high levels of agreement with leadership and clarity of direction there has been a decline in the scores. Within the results, marginally lower agreement levels were recorded for *There is agreement about the teaching philosophy of this school* in *Goal Congruence*, and *My work objectives are always well defined* in *Role Clarity*.

Students

Student perceptions revealed through the Attitudes to School survey are important in that they identify a range of factors that may potentially impact student learning outcomes. The 2007 Attitudes to School (Student) Survey show positive results with all variables reported in the third or fourth quartiles of all primary school scores. Students have positive perceptions of their education at Williamstown. The 2007 survey shows that students had high levels of morale, with the *Student Morale* variable score being in the third quartile, indicating students feel positive, cheerful, happy and relaxed at the school.

The Willy Kids are Friendly Kids program which establishes positive relationships between and among students and teachers influences much of student activity in and out of the classroom.

Motivation

Students are generally highly motivated, and have very positive perceptions of their ability to learn. The 2007 *Student Motivation* score was in the third quartile and *Learning Confidence* in the fourth quartile of all schools. There is some 2007 evidence that girls feel more highly motivated and confident in their learning than boys do.

Student Motivation variable scores reported in the teacher opinion survey was in the state first quartile in 2007. There was very little disagreement with the motivation items in the 2007 survey, although there was some 'fence-sitting' (rated these latter items as a three on the five-point scale, that is, neither agreeing or disagreeing) for the item *Students at this school spend most of their time on task*. Teachers generally agreed that students put a lot of effort into their work, and there was general agreement that students were motivated, keen to do well, and feel that doing well at school is important to them.

The 2006 *Student Motivation* variable score in the parent survey was 5.64, similar to the state mean, with 72% of parents indicating agreement with the item – *My child always wants to go to school*.

Behaviour

Students also believe that good classroom behaviour exists at the school, a circumstance that helps with their learning. This is consistent for both 2006 and 2007 with the *Classroom Behaviour* variable in the fourth quartile in both years. Girls in general have more positive perceptions of classroom behaviour not disrupting their learning.

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The 2007 teacher survey supports this picture with *Student Misbehaviour*, as measured in the teacher survey, being at the state 69th percentile in 2007. *Classroom Misbehaviour* also was comparably strong, being at the 72nd percentile.

Parents have a very positive perception, with the *Classroom Behaviour* variable score in the 2006 parent survey at the state 91st percentile benchmark. The student, teacher and parent survey results corroborate a picture of positive behaviour.

Connectedness

The 2007 Attitudes to School survey shows the *Connectedness to Peers* and *School Connectedness* variable scores to be in or close to the report fourth quartile. The first variable is a measure of the extent to which students get on well with peers and classmates, and the extent of feeling liked by others and being cared about by friends. The second is a measure of the extent to which students feel they belong and enjoy attending school.

Same named variables appear in the parent opinion survey. In 2006 *Connectedness to Peers* is reported at the 85th percentile and *School Connectedness* at the 71st percentile. These indicate strong levels of agreement with items such as *My child gets on well with their peers at school* and children feeling accepted by, and getting on well with, other students at the school.

Parent perceptions of student social skills development were very positive with the *Social Skills* score at the 85th percentile.

Teachers and teaching

Variable scores in the *Teaching & Learning* category of the 2007 Attitudes to School Survey reveal that students have very high opinions of their teachers and teaching, viewing teachers as effective, energetic, empathetic, and providing interesting, enjoyable, and inspiring teaching. *Teacher Effectiveness*, *Teacher Empathy*, and *Stimulating Learning* were in the third quartile of all primary schools.

In 2006 parents expressed generally high opinions of *Stimulating Learning* and *Learning Focus* at the school with scores above the state median scores. Parents view teachers as good at making learning fun, encouraging children to learn, and getting students to persist when learning is difficult, and the school as providing challenge in the academics. The 2006 *Teacher Morale* score at the state 66th percentile, indicating parents viewed teachers as dedicated, enthusiastic, energetic, passionate and taking a lot of pride.

Teaching

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The *Statement of Our Values, Beliefs and Successful Learning and Teaching Practices – 2007* provides a clear basis for teaching practice at Williamstown Primary School. Much of what is contained in this document is consistent with the Department's Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT).

Discussion at the review panel meeting included notions of explicit teaching, and how to make existing good teaching practice even better.

Assessment for Learning/Use of Data for improvement

The use of more comprehensive data to identify what students know and are able to do, and to inform teaching practice designed to take students to the next level has become an increasing focus at Williamstown. While a range of instruments has been used to monitor student progress the school has intentions to use a wider range of learning assessments in the future. This will mean a system and schedule designed to build more comprehensive profiles of each student's learning and to track individual progress.

Professional Learning

The school has unit/level professional learning teams in place, and these meet regularly for planning and administration. Each team has three leadership roles; Curriculum Leader, Administration Leader, and Resources Leader. While considered effective in many ways the panel meeting discussion focused on how the teams might become more focused on improving teacher practice and student learning.

The teacher opinion survey does reveal some information about teachers' attitudes to professional learning and improving teaching practice and student learning. The 2007 teacher survey shows the *Professional Growth and Appraisal & Recognition* variable scores to be in the first quartile, indicating some possible improvement areas. The 2007 *Learning Environment* variable score was in the second quartile. Responses to the survey indicate possible areas to explore in relation to items such as teachers always challenge each other to improve the quality of the school's teaching and learning practices and increasing focus on these aspects.

The school is currently exploring Performance and Development Culture accreditation and the five Elements in this process will highlight where further improvements to professional can be made.

Curriculum Alignment

"The introduction of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards during the 2004-6 period provided the school with an opportunity to audit and reinvigorate curriculum across all learning

areas ensuring that previous work on the thinking curriculum and multiple intelligences were incorporated in the units of work. The appointment and subsequent strong leadership a Curriculum Co-ordinator, along with the leadership and expertise in each of the Professional Learning Teams saw the school implement a well-rounded curriculum which gave all students access to a comprehensive curriculum catering for their diverse interests, abilities and learning styles.”

The school has identified further enhancement of VELS alignment curriculum as a focus for improvement. This will incorporate *“school-based and specific documentation in all curriculum areas but particularly in English and Mathematics (taking) the form of scope and sequence outlines and include annotated work samples highlighting the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) progression points and be stated in plain language accessible to all staff and the community.”*

Intervention/Safety Nets

The school uses a range of interventions to support students who might be struggling in literacy, These interventions include Reading Recovery and various forms of literacy assistance such as volunteer teachers, teacher aides, and the reading voucher scheme.

Information and Communication Technology

The school has a very innovative and advanced approach to the use of ICT to engage students in their learning. Examples include claymation videos, webquests, and other approaches.

How effectively did the school manage its resources to support the achievement of its desired outcomes?

The School Self-Evaluation reports that significant budgetary allocations were made to literacy and numeracy. The importance of these outcomes are also reflected in how time and teachers are allocated. Discussion during the review panel meeting highlighted many examples where the school’s resource allocation has been clearly aligned with intentions to improve student learning. The Self Evaluation referred specifically to:

- A strong emphasis on building professional learning teams where teachers have pooled expertise, ideas and resources to ensure a consistent implementation of well-planned curriculum, including assessment and moderation.
- A significant increase in spending during the charter period, notably in English and Mathematics where the budgets increased from \$4,500 to \$10,200 and \$3,500 to \$6,200 respectively.

- Overall the curriculum budget, not including ICT, increased from \$22,300 in 2004 to \$38,990 in 2006.
- Class numbers of twenty or less in Prep grades
- The provision of a comprehensive and widely valued specialist program including Music, Physical Education, Library, Italian, and ICT.

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

Data analysis and discussion at the review panel meeting has highlighted some areas for action that will lead to further improvement in results. The school does have very strong foundations in place for further improvement in student learning to be achieved, and much of existing strategy needs to be continued with. The suggestions contained in this section of the report are designed to complement the existing good strategy and hopefully assist in focusing the actions around improving instructional practice and student learning.

Goals

These suggested goals reflect a focus on the strategic vision of improvement and achieving high standards of whole learning for all students as described in VELs. A suggested student learning goal for example is:

To ensure that the greatest number of students as possible reach the expected standards of VELs English and Mathematics, ICT, Personal Learning and Thinking Processes.

This goal might be complemented by some additional sub-goals that pick up the specific improvement areas identified during the review. These include:

- To improve performance in upper levels of the school

Targets

It is suggested that the Strategic Plan targets associated with the goal described above incorporate measures of increasing proportions of students achieving at or above the Standards over the 2007-2010 period.

- By 2010, 90% of deemed capable students be at or above the Victorian Essential Learning Standards appropriate to their year level in English and Mathematics (using the whole school teacher assessment and AIM indicators)
- By 2010, the school achieve an AIM 'value-added' indicator of 1.0 VELs level for Reading and Number

The effect of such targets is to maintain high expectations for learning for all students as well as requiring an understanding of value-added approaches to mapping student learning. Other

targets for consideration may include increasing the percentage of A grades by 2010. A year-by-year measure of adequate progress toward the targets should also be established.

Suggested Key Improvement Strategies

Key Improvement Strategies will form the basis of the Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plans during the 2007 – 2011 period. A limited number of Key Improvement Strategies are suggested below. The suggestions are made with the intention of complementing existing strategy described in the Self Evaluation and the Annual Implementation Plan (with some recommendations from these sources repeated in this report*), and hopefully provide a focus for the existing strategy. These have an emphasis upon achieving further improvement in teaching practice through direct and indirect methods. The strategies imply focus on both making good practice even better, and bringing each classroom's practice up to a consistent and agreed high level. It should be noted that Key Improvement Strategies could apply across the three student outcomes. An example of this is attention to using data for improvement which applies to the Transition and Engagement and Wellbeing Outcomes in addition to the Student Learning Outcome. The Key Improvement Strategies are in bold, with possible actions for inclusion in Annual Implementation Plans listed for each strategy.

Provide clear and focused instructional leadership

- Leadership, at all levels in the school:
 - Communicates a clear commitment to the achievement of high performance standards for all students as described in the suggested Student Learning Outcome Goal
 - Continues to make the guidance, direction and support of sustained improvement in teaching practice a priority focus for its actions as the way to improved student learning, and incorporates such a statement in Leadership Teams purpose statements.
- Development of a Leadership Team Charter or plan that communicates a clear instructional focus through purpose, role, and improvement focus statements.
- Communicate the key annual improvement objectives of the leadership team to staff in support of the performance and development process.
- Provide instructional leadership training to team leaders, including professional learning team curriculum leaders.

Use Professional Learning to further enhance teacher capacity and practice

- Regular meetings of Professional Learning Teams that:
 - Have a clear focus on improving instructional practice through, for example, scope and sequence that aligns programs with VELs, identifying student work that meets VELs standards, use of assessment data to inform practice, the use of observation of practice, mentoring, modeling, and PoLT.

Meet routinely to take action on improvement. These teams to form the basis of the performance and development culture.

Establish tangible and measurable annual student performance milestones for Maths and English at each year level based on VELs

- Focus professional learning on explicit/purposeful teaching.
- Teacher modelling and targeted support to improve teaching strategies and learning outcomes for all students.
- *Staff working with colleagues at various levels, above and below their level to consolidate their understanding of approaches and standards across levels, including year seven and pre-school.**

Use focused and explicit instruction

- Ongoing implementation of the use of instruction that is focused precisely on building directly on what students already know and are able to do and that takes them to the next level of understanding.
- Enhance the existing values, beliefs, and learning and teaching approaches document through strengthening the focus on high performance in all areas (see *teachers at our school enable students to learn* section)

Continue to enhance assessment for learning practices

- Formalise and implement the Prep – 6 Assessment Schedule to map students' progress throughout their time at Williamstown PS.
- Further development of student learning data management system to build profiles of each student's learning. Continued use of student assessment data, and other data as appropriate, to inform improvement in curriculum, teaching practice, and student learning.
- Analysis of AIM data to identify groups strengths and weaknesses
- Further opportunities for moderation in relation to VELs standards to develop shared understandings and consistency of assessment across teams and between teachers.
- Review of the benchmark testing regime in both Prep and 1\2 to ensure that the program is providing the most appropriate and relevant information.

Enhance alignment of curriculum and plans with VELs

- Ongoing alignment of programs, explicit teaching practice, use of ICT, assessment, teaching materials, and intervention programs with the domain Standards as described in the VELs
- *Develop school-based and specific documentation in all curriculum areas but particularly in English and Mathematics. This documentation would take the form of scope and sequence outlines and include annotated work samples highlighting the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELs) progression points and be stated in plain language accessible to all staff and the community.**

Use of ICT as a creative and integrated component of teaching plans that is aligned to improving student learning outcomes.

- Maintain the strong ICT focus within the classroom
- Use of ePotential - <http://epotential.education.vic.gov.au> - to support teachers as they develop their capabilities to integrate ICT into their learning and teaching and Digilearn

Provide intervention support to struggling students (and to extend more able students) in English and Mathematics

- Continue Reading Recovery and other/additional resources to cover areas of need
- Further investigation of Numeracy Intervention and Extension Programs

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4.2 Student Pathways and Transitions

What outcomes was the school trying to achieve?

No goal or improvement area directly relating to transition was specified in the current charter.

While the School Charter was not required to specifically address this area, the Self Evaluation reports that the school intentions for the student pathways and transition outcome were to *“ensure that all students, particularly those entering the school at prep and leaving the school at Year 6,*

- *are well-prepared for their next level of schooling, and*
- *have received the necessary support during this transition.”*

What did the school achieve?

Whilst there was no specific goal in the area of transition, implicit in the policies and programs of the school there is a keen awareness of the issues involved, particularly as they relate to students moving into Prep and from Year 6 to Year 7. The provision of appropriate pathways for students with disabilities is also an issue of which the school is well aware.

There are programs operating aimed at assisting students to successfully enter and exit the school. These are run by designated teachers with responsibility for the transition into Prep and for the program for students exiting to secondary college.

Effective links have been forged with pre-schools, including regular discussions between Prep and pre-school teachers and visits of pre-school children to the school. This allows for tracking of individual students who may require extra assistance when they enter Prep. The informal contact is augmented by a formal program in Term 4 where pre-school students visit the school a minimum of two times in a two week period. Where it may prove helpful, or is requested by parents, extra visits are arranged in the period.

Separate activities are provided for parents at these times to address any concerns they may have and to provide information as to how they can assist their children. The program allows the school to gain information as to the needs of individual students and assists in forming groups and providing any specific support required in the Prep year. All indications are that this is a very successful program.

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The majority of Year 6 students exit to Williamstown High School and good cooperation occurs between the two schools. Apart from the formal transition program there are visits back and forth between the schools for activities such as performances and science afternoons. Through the Innovations and Excellence program Years 5 and 6 students participate in an environmental program, working with teachers and students from the secondary school.

Transition from year to year is facilitated by each student having a folder that includes information, work samples, tests and the like. As well, a register is kept of all students with information that relates to student health and wellbeing. The school has expressed some concern as to the consistency and continuity of the curriculum between year levels. This is perhaps seen in the apparent contradiction of Year 3 AIM Reading data not quite matching the high Early Years assessments.

The school program appears to be successful, with the mean for the factor of *Transitions* in the Parent Opinion Survey for 2006 at 5.78, above the state mean. Analysis of the 2006 Parent Opinion Survey Response Frequency Distribution shows an average of 83.5% agreement with the four transition items in the survey.

Why did the school achieve / not achieve its desired outcomes?

Performance in transitions and pathways is undoubtedly the result of the support processes that are in place at the school. This is applicable to transition into, through, and in exiting the school. The Self Evaluation highlights the following factors that have contributed to the success of transition programs:

- At Prep entry the overwhelming majority of parents attend information nights
- All prospective Prep children are able to access a two week long transition program at the school in October
- The use of a buddies program
- Early assessment and the establishment of routines for Prep students
- Use of a middle years approach starting in Grade 5 to help students take more responsibility for their learning
- Student visits to the local high school including participation in an environmental education program working alongside students and teachers from the high school.
- *The Willy Kids Are Friendly Kids program which ensures a shared understanding, expectation and language for behaviour management across the school.*

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- *Whole-school interactions such as the buddies program, assemblies, Italian day, sports days, the disco, the footy day, the billy-cart derby, junior school council, etc. which enable younger students to build an expectation and confidence across levels.*
- *Multi-age grades from 1-6 which promote resilience and allow the children to develop a broader range of friendship across grades.*

How effectively did the school manage its resources to support the achievement of its desired outcomes?

The School is proactive in supporting pathways and transition programs and initiatives and has a clear focus on the importance of this area. Significant resources have been allocated to supporting transition as evidenced by the Kindergarten to Prep and Year 6 to 7 transition programs..

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

(Student learning outcome goals, targets and strategies are also applicable to the transition and pathways outcome by ensuring students are at the levels expected for smooth transition between sections of the school.)

Goals

To ensure students are well prepared with the knowledge and understanding necessary for smooth and settled transition through the various stages of their schooling at Williamstown.

Targets

- To increase the rate of agreement responses by parents to the four transition items in the Parent Opinion Survey to an average of 90% by 2010.

Key Improvement Strategies

Refine existing school transition practices

- *The re-introduction of parent information evenings at the beginning of the year to outline the expectations for each level along with a published outline of expectations for the year.**
- *Staff professional development with a focus on students with special needs, including children funded under the Disabilities and Impairments program and from NESB.**
- *Consistently updating the Willy Kids program to ensure it meets the needs of the children and is being implemented at all levels across the school.**

- *Maintenance of all current transition programs eg. information evenings, buddies, visits to schools, liaison with other agencies.**
- *Investigate possible transition programs when children change levels.**

Use data for improvement

- *Review of the benchmark testing regime in both Prep and 1\2 to ensure that the program is providing the most appropriate and relevant information**

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4.3 Student Engagement and Wellbeing

What outcomes was the school trying to achieve?

Under the Environment area of the existing Charter the school sought to provide a caring school environment and to promote children's wellbeing, self esteem and learning.

There was an improvement area relating to the schools discipline and welfare program "Willy Kids Are Friendly Kids", with particular attention to building resilience. There was also an improvement area relating to new buildings.

Targets related to reviewing the welfare program and completing the first stage of the school building program.

What did the school achieve?

All indications are that the schools social skills program, "Willy Kids Are Friendly Kids", works very well. The program is implemented in conjunction with a set of cooperatively developed values and beliefs that have been explicitly stated and will be used to guide the schools program into the future.

Parent Survey variable scores for 2006 are generally at or above those of the state mean and those relating to student safety, classroom and individual behaviour and connectedness are at or above the state 75th percentile. The measures appear to be reliable as there was a return rate of 86% in 2006 and results are consistent with scores from previous years.

Staff survey variable means have shown an upward trend over the long term and are typically above the state mean. This includes the Effective Discipline factor which has remained close to the state 75th percentile over the past three years. Means in the negative domain have matched the improvement of other factors and have typically trended down over the past three years. Scores for Classroom Misbehaviour and Student Misbehaviour have dropped to the state 25th percentile. The strong data are consistent with similar high means from the parent survey and also with perceptions of students.

Mean scores on the student Attitudes to School survey for Years 5 and 6 combined have trended up and are typically above the mean of schools across the state for each factor over the long term. Indeed, in the past two years they have been around or above the 75th percentile. There are no indications within any of the data of a consistent pattern of difference in perceptions

attributable to gender. Considering Year 6 separately, variable scores have trended up over the past four years, moving from at or below the state mean to around the 75th percentile over the period. At Year 5 results have been consistently positive. The Connectedness to Peers variable, for example, remained around the state 75th percentile in each of the past three years.

Whole school average absence has been a little volatile from year to year, but typically lies between 10 and 12 days per student. This places it below the state average in each of the past five years and equates to around 30 students absent from the school on any given day. However, the school only occasionally reaches its SFO band. Aggregating absence over 6 years, the school was below its SFO range at all year levels, and considerably below at Year 2. There is no consistent pattern over the long term whereby absence rates of boys vary from those of girls.

Why did the school achieve / not achieve its desired outcomes?

The Self Evaluation reports that a strong focus on and commitment to student engagement and wellbeing have been characteristics of the school's approach to this outcome. Student engagement and pride in the school were demonstrated to the reviewer and the SEO during the review panel-meeting day via a student led guided tour. Student were confident and able, particularly in articulating various aspects of the school that made Williamstown Primary School a good place to be a student at. The tour was one of the many enjoyable aspects of the review process. There have been some key factors in the school's observable success in this outcome. These are highlighted in the Self Evaluation and were reinforced during the review and include:

- The *Willy Kids Are Friendly Kids* program that has an obvious impact across the whole school. This social skills program outlines the school's expectations for student behaviour and provides students with strategies enabling them to function in a friendly and positive manner.
- The provision of a curriculum which caters for a wide range of interests, abilities and learning styles.
- An experienced and dedicated staff who consistently demonstrate sound classroom management practices which enable all students to participate and find their schooling worthwhile and enjoyable
- A range of student leadership and recognition approaches including student led assemblies, awards for achievement and for displaying Willy Kids attributes, a Junior School Council, and many special events.
- Student Decision-Making as part of the middle years approach.
- Engaging students through ICT resources

How effectively did the school manage its resources to support the achievement of its desired outcomes?

The School has devoted substantial resources to this outcome in reflection of its important status. Time, staff, and other resources have been allocated to strategies. Resources have been devoted to establishing and supporting significant efforts that are specifically designed to address engagement and wellbeing matters such as described above. Specific resource allocation examples include those mentioned in the previous section.

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

The Self Evaluation and 2006 Annual Report identify what the school wants to do to achieve further improvement along with potential approaches. Continuation of Willy Kids will be integral to ongoing success.

Suggested Goals, Targets, and Key Improvement Strategies for consideration are:

Goals

To enhance student relationships based on self-respect and dignity, appropriate social behaviours, positive attitudes to learning, and connectedness to school and peers.

To ensure student safety.

Targets

By 2010, maintain and improve where possible student positive responses to the Attitudes to School Survey School Connectedness and Connectedness to Peers and Student Motivation variables.

A decrease in the whole school absence rate to ten days per FTE student by 2010.

Key Improvement Strategies

Continue to reinforce those successful values, beliefs, practices and programs articulated in its recently published booklet *A Statement of Our Values, Beliefs and Successful Learning and Teaching Practices*.*

Curriculum Alignment

- Ongoing monitoring of achievements in the VELS Personal Learning domain.

- Ensure maintenance of the current focus on ICT components as a vehicle for delivering engaging and relevant curriculum.

Use data to improve

- Continue to use PoLT, the Attitudes to School survey and other available data to identify ways to enhance connectedness to school, teachers, peers and community, to inform improvement in student relationships and wellbeing.

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