

School Review Report 2020–2024 Cycle



Sydenham–Hillside Primary School

School number 3559

South Western Victoria Region

Review Dates

Validation Day: 17 May 2021

Fieldwork Day/s: 21, 24, 25 May 2021

Final Panel Day: 24 June 2021

Strategic Plan 2017–2020

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1. Public section

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT	
Location and history	Sydenham–Hillside Primary School (Sydenham–Hillside PS) is a two–campus primary school. The Sydenham campus is located in the City of Brimbank in the north western suburbs of Melbourne, approximately 22 kilometres from the Melbourne Central Business District. The Hillside campus is located in the City of Melton, approximately 24 kilometres from the Melbourne central business district. The Sydenham campus was established in 1996 and the Hillside campus was established in 2000. The original school, which was located on the Melton Highway, was founded in 1908.
School facilities	The school grounds on each of the two campuses include an indoor multi–purpose hall, a library and main buildings with classroom spaces, offices and meeting rooms. The classroom facilities include areas for specialist subjects such as Art and Science. There are also a number of portable structures on each campus. The grounds include playgrounds, multi–purpose courts, sporting ovals and areas for quiet relaxation.
Enrolments	Enrolments at the time of the review were approximately 1250 students. Over the past four years, enrolments decreased by 80 students.
SFO and SFOE	The Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index was 0.3591 in 2020–21.
Staff profile	The staffing profile of Sydenham–Hillside PS includes a principal and four assistant principals, 91 full time equivalent (FTE) teachers, 34 FTE education support (ES) staff, including office administration staff, a first aid supervisor, classroom support staff, maintenance staff and technical staff.
Curriculum	The school provides an approved curriculum framework based on the Victorian Curriculum.
Additional information	The school wellbeing programs are focused on developing positive behaviours.

1.2 SCHOOL & COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

Highlight 1

Title: Positive climate for learning

Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) dimension: Empowering students and building school pride

The Panel found that a key school community highlight was the focus on positive activities and events for the students. Students were asked to describe the highlight of their life at school over the last four years.

- The majority of students focused on engagement activities and academic success as being their highlight.
- Students commented that they enjoyed out-of-uniform days, book parades, colour fun runs and school excursions and camps. In focus groups, students were positive about their participation in camps and noted that they had missed some camps as a result of COVID-19.
- Students also commented that they enjoyed the different approaches to learning that occurred during the COVID-19 lockdown. The students stated that they enjoyed theme days during online learning. Themes included a cooking challenge, dressing up activities, Science experiments, treasure hunts and “bringing your pet to class”.
- Parents and students noted that these activities provided for stimulating learning during the lockdown period.
- The Panel agreed that these activities provided students with real highlights in their school life.

Highlight 2

Title: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

FISO dimension: Building practice excellence

The Panel found that a second school community highlight was:

- during the last School Strategic Plan (SSP) the school commenced the implementation of PLCs.
- The Panel was informed that the PLCs had been developed based on year levels, and focused on using data and other evidence to inform teaching and learning.
- The PLC leaders were given extra professional learning to build their leadership capacity and their ability to lead the PLC cycle.
- The PLCs were also supported through the provision of documentation, including agendas and the school’s PLC Handbook.
- The Panel noted that, in 2020, COVID-19 impacted on the implementation of the PLCs, but 2021 has seen a further development of the PLC program across all year levels with a focus on Reading.
- The Panel agreed that this was a highlight of recent years and that continued development would ensure positive learning outcomes for students.

Highlight 3

Title: Positive behaviours

FISO dimension: Health and wellbeing

The Panel found that a third school community highlight was related to positive behaviours. The Panel found that:

- the school had made the decision to introduce a positive behaviours framework in 2018.
- A positive behaviours coordinator was appointed, with the responsibility of creating a positive behaviours leadership team, which focused on the implementation of the program across the school.

- A new set of school behaviours was established, along with a matrix of positive behaviours. The matrix was piloted with the students.
- The development of the program involved the whole school community. Signs of a changing culture were observed in terms of student behaviours, and staff acknowledging positive behaviours rather than focusing only on negative behaviours.
- In focus groups during the review, students were positive about the program and commented that there had been improvement in student behaviours at the school.
- The Panel agreed that, whilst this program was still developing, it was a highlight of the school.

1.3 SUMMARY OF KEY REVIEW FINDINGS

Performance against the SSP goals and targets

SSP Goal 1:

The 2017–20 SSP for Sydenham–Hillside PS set a goal to maximise staff capacity to improve student learning outcomes. The Panel found that the school did not meet this goal, with both of the two targets, which related to teacher judgements and the School Staff Survey (SSS), not achieved.

SSP Goal 2:

The second goal was to maximise student learning in literacy and numeracy, with two targets related to the Reading and Numeracy results in the National Assessment Program–Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The Panel found that the school did not meet this goal, with both targets not achieved.

SSP Goal 3:

The third goal was to improve student engagement in their learning, with three targets related to the results of the Attitudes to School Survey (AToSS), the Parent Opinion Survey (POS), and student absence rates. The Panel found that the school partially met this goal, with two targets partially achieved and one target not achieved.

Findings against the Terms of Reference (ToR) Focus Questions

ToR Focus Question 1: To what extent have strategies, such as the use of data, differentiation and the use of the instructional model, been implemented to improve student learning growth and to ensure that all students are challenged to learn at their point of need?

The Panel found that a school instructional model was in place and that differentiation techniques were evident in many classrooms. The Panel noted that the use of data was encouraged as a means of determining each student's point of need. In each of these areas, the Panel found that, whilst there was good practice, these strategies had not been consistently implemented across the school.

ToR Focus Question 2: To what extent has the school's curriculum been adequately documented and effective in supporting the learning of each individual student?

The Panel found that curriculum documentation had been constructed and that, in most classes, the documentation was used. The Panel noted that the documentation often did not contain extension activities or activities for students who struggled with their work, and that the set curriculum was not fully implemented in every classroom.

ToR Focus Question 3: To what extent have school structures and practices developed the school as an accountable, consistent and effective community focused on improving student achievement, engagement and wellbeing?

The Panel found that the school structures during the last SSP had not focused on accountability or consistency of practice. As a result, the Panel noted that there were many areas of the school where inconsistency was evident.

1.4 SUMMARY OF KEY DIRECTIONS FOR THE NEXT SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN

The School Review Panel recommends the following key directions for the next SSP:

- consistency of practice
- literacy and numeracy
- guaranteed and viable curriculum
- instructional model
- differentiation
- use of data
- student voice and agency
- positive behaviours
- connectedness to school
- parent and community participation.

