

Peer Review Report – 2016 Cycle Dimboola Memorial Secondary College South Western Region

School number:	7770
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SEIL:	Dr Joanna Day
Review Company:	National Curriculum Services
Accredited School Reviewer:	Ms Pam Toose
Challenge partners:	Mr Brendan Ryan Mr John Richmond
Date of Review Meeting:	15 September 2016



2. Peer Review Report Summary

2. 1 School Context

Dimboola is located 340 kilometres north west of Melbourne and has a population of approximately 1500. The township is within the Hindmarsh Shire and is in the broader Wimmera area of Victoria. Agriculture and related industries contribute to the bulk of the local economy. The town is a regional hub for V-Line and National Pacific Railways.

Dimboola Memorial Secondary College (DMSC) is the only provider of secondary education in the town of Dimboola. DMSC has 180 students of which 80 travel to school on buses from farms or neighbouring country towns. The staffing profile consist of effective full time (EFT) 27.5 staff comprising two principal class, EFT 18.3 teachers and EFT 7.2 education support staff. There are three leading teachers with responsibility for teaching and learning, Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and daily operations, and Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and Vocational Education and Training in schools (VETiS) and professional learning.

Based on the school's student family occupation index (SFO) of .67, compared to state median index of .51, the school is in the low range of overall socio-economic profile. No students have English as an additional language and five percent of students are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Years 10–12 students access VETiS programs, at DMSC (Building and Construction, Hospitality) and also through a range of providers in Horsham. A VCAL program is offered at Years 11–12, as well as VCE subjects, which can be accessed by students in Year 10. Students access VCE subjects at DMSC, Wimmera Virtual School and via Distance Education Victoria. Instrumental music and a camps program contribute to a rich school environment.

The College values of 'Freedom', 'Care', 'Excellence', 'Honesty' and 'Respect' underpin the culture. Further support is provided to students through a vertical grouping mentor program which meet twice per week, year level coordinators and the student wellbeing coordinator.

The College has a mix of new and old buildings including the historic memorial building which is the town's war memorial. ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day are significant events and the school has a close working relationship with the local branch of the Returned Serviceman's League. DMSC also has a shared sports facility which includes a full-size synthetic hockey pitch and a gymnasium and indoor multi-purpose space. The facility is used by DMSC and a range of user groups from both the local and wider community. New buildings consist of the Science and Language Centre, constructed in 2010 and the Assembly hall with a recently added extension.

Relationships between school and home are highly valued and encouraged. Parents are involved in many activities within DMSC including the College production, Debutante balls and canteen assistance. In addition to regular student reports, parents have access to their child's curriculum through an online curriculum portal.



1.2 Summary of the School's Performance

2.2.1 Summary of the School's Performance against the Previous Strategic Plan

Achievement

DMSC achieved student learning goals related to Years 7–10. Although AusVELS targets related to student numbers achieving both below and above expected levels were not consistently met, most targets related to NAPLAN were met. For example, the number of students at or less than national minimum benchmarks at both Year 7 and 9 Reading and Numeracy exceeded the target. Student growth data exceeded state benchmarks in every area 2013–15 and 2014–16 from Years 7–9 with more students achieving medium and high growth than state benchmarks. Absolute NAPLAN scores in Numeracy, Reading and Writing, Years 7 and 9 were mostly at or above state mean 2013–16. The Pre-review School Self Evaluation (PRSE) and review panel attributed the attainment of the goal and most targets to the focus on building teacher capacity in learning teams to implement the instructional model. Staff capacity to assess and moderate student work was not a focus during the review period and contributed to AusVELS assessments and not meeting the target.

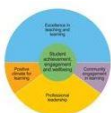
The goal related to Victorian Curriculum Education (VCE) was not achieved. Both targets involving the all study score and percentage of study scores greater than 40 were not met. VCE results declined over 2012–15. Percentage of scores greater than 40 declined from 7.8 percent to 4.78 percent. Average study scores declined from 30.44 to 26.88. The review panel attributed this to teacher capacity, exposure of students, and expectations. Additionally small cohorts can impact overall measures. For example, numbers of students completing VCE over the review period ranged from ten in 2013 to thirteen in 2015.

Engagement

Both engagement goals were achieved with most targets met. Attitudes to School Survey (AtSS) data was in the top seven percent of schools and has improved over the review period. Overall attendance data exceeds the state mean at 14.86 days compared to 18.26 days. Retention data Years 7–10 met targets whilst Years 7–12 retention did not. The PRSE attributed this to student mobility and disengagement of VCAL students who exited prior to completion of their certificate. The panel endorsed attainment of the goal to the effectiveness of student mentor groups in connecting and engaging students across DMSC and increased curriculum opportunities with purposeful links to community.

Wellbeing

The goal to improve student wellbeing was met with related AtSS variables in the top six percent of schools and improving over 2013–16. Students were supported with a wellbeing coordinator, their mentor teacher and year level coordinator. Implementation of the College Engagement and Wellbeing policy incorporating a staged response to classroom behaviour has enabled students to feel safe and happy at school with the support and confidence to achieve their best.



2.2.2 Summary of the considerations for the next Strategic Plan

Achievement

The review panel discussed the importance of continuing focus on building practice excellence, through existing team structures, learning areas and triads. Effective implementation of agreed whole school strategies such as using data to target teaching and extend students, consistency in planning aligned to the Victorian curriculum and high level implementation of the instructional model were discussed by the review panel as focus for the next four years. This work has begun and the panel recommends the school consolidate their agreed practice and processes across all areas. In addition, providing opportunities for teachers to assess against the learning continuum will improve confidence in their assessments of student learning and more effectively inform their teaching. Professional learning will be enabled through a whole school systematic approach aligned to the key improvement strategies.

Engagement

Vertical mentor groups provide the structure to enhance student connectedness and empowers students to have voice in their learning. Strengthening staff capacity to support students through goal setting and ILPs will provide the extension to student learning discussed by the review panel. Whilst there are examples of authentic learning through community projects and associated links there is further work supporting teachers to plan rich and engaging tasks aligned to the Victorian Curriculum. Continuing to offer curriculum breadth and subject choice, particularly at Years 9–10 will optimise student engagement and outcomes. This will create the environment for students to become independent and curious learners. DMSC has strong processes to support the transition of students into, through and beyond the school. Promoting the relationship with the primary school with discussion and alignment of curriculum and data will enhance the relationship and improve student outcomes. Whilst absence data is better than the State mean, the panel supports the school in continuing to take a proactive approach in encouraging the importance of attending school and tracking and monitoring absences.

Wellbeing

The panel discussed the timely review for the College values to be revisited in terms of currency. With the College vision, they will underpin the College culture. This is an area for focus in the new Strategic Plan. Current structures and procedures such as the mentor system and staged approach to classroom behavior management will continue to provide support to students. The college maintains and sustains strong links with the community and is proactive in providing students with programs such as, MATES Mentors, VCAL community projects and involvement in the Dimboola Community Action Network. Further developing these links and programs will improve student skills, confidence and wellbeing.

2.2.3 Next steps

The panel considered the productive partnership between principal, staff, school council and parents conducive to quality learning. Curriculum documentation, instructional model underpinned by peer observation and student engagement and wellbeing practices are evident and appropriate strategies to strengthen outcomes. A distributed leadership model and College structures aligned to professional learning, provides the framework to build capacity. There is clear direction providing quality learning experiences in a safe and secure environment.

