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<th><strong>School number:</strong></th>
<th>649</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Principal:</strong></td>
<td>Lyn Tout</td>
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<td><strong>School Council President:</strong></td>
<td>Phil Morley</td>
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<td><strong>Type of Review:</strong></td>
<td>Diagnostic</td>
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<td><strong>School Reviewer:</strong></td>
<td>Avis Grahame</td>
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<td><strong>Date of Review Meeting at school:</strong></td>
<td>August 8, 2011</td>
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1. Executive Summary

Werribee Primary School (PS) has a long and proud history dating back to the 1850s and the settlement of Victoria. Built to meet the needs of a growing community Werribee PS has remained close to its community and continues to maintain the loyalty of many local families. This sense of ownership is reflected in the school’s enrolment including a number of families which proudly boast a three generations link to the school, that is, three generations having been past or present students of the school.

The City of Werribee is amongst the fastest growing areas in Victoria. Many young families, often from culturally diverse backgrounds, are attracted into the area by affordable housing either in new developments or the rental market. But there remains much of the old and well established neighbourhoods within Werribee and together with the new they make up the interesting and vibrant community that Werribee PS services.

The curriculum offered covers all areas of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) with the exception of a Language other than English (LOTE), which is presently substituted with a cultural program in Karen. Specialist programs are provided for the Arts, Physical Education and Library. Students enjoy a program of extra curricula activities including camps, excursions and sport.

The school is culturally diverse with 22 different ethnic groups represented in the student population. There has been a major change in the makeup of the school population over the last five years with an increase from 5% to 27% in the proportion of families with a Language Background other than English (LBOTE). Many of these families are refugees and their children qualify for assistance for English as a Second Language (ESL) under the New Arrivals program.

Over the last six years the school has seen an increase in the level of disadvantage within its community. In socio-economic terms it has gone from being placed at the State median to now be clearly below, with a little more than half the school’s families in receipt of welfare support.

Currently there are 471 students enrolled in the school. The enrolment includes a 17 students funded through the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD), 106 students who qualify for ESL support, 10 Koorie students and 10 International students.

Whilst the enrolment peaked in 2007 at 507 students, the enrolment projection indicates that demand for places will continue into the foreseeable future. By any measure the school site is comparatively small for the size of its enrolment, and that is without taking into consideration the number of students attending the Western English Language School who share the playground with the primary school students. Addressing the issue of playing space in the light of increasing enrolment will be a challenge for the school.

This review period has been an exciting and rewarding time for the school. Having laid the foundation for improvement in the previous review period it is now seeing the goals of those long term plans finally realised. Over this time the school has maintained a tight focus on the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy through whole school approaches, supported with a generous resource allocation. The school’s aim was to improve student learning outcomes through improved teacher practice, underpinned by research into best practice along with professional learning delivered by coaching in the classroom. The National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data for Year 3 and the matched cohort indicates that the goal is being realised with consistent improvement in the school’s performance at Year 3 relative to the State
benchmark in Reading, Writing and Numeracy. Improvement is also evident at Year 5 in Writing and Numeracy although there is still some way to go to improve overall performance and close the gap here.

Although the resources allocated to professional learning have been significant the benefits of this investment should not be underestimated. The feedback from the staff forums attributed the overall improvement in the school’s organisational health, as measured by the Staff Opinion (SO) Survey, to the coaching program and the work of the consultants and school based coaches. The teachers were animated and enthusiastic, and reported that they felt well supported and valued in their work. Also evident was a sense of professional pride as they talked about being involved in innovative practices and being progressive. Clearly teachers have been energised by the quality of the coaching program.

The other factor which has played a big part in lifting the school’s performance has been the improvement in student behaviour and the achievement of a more orderly learning environment. The great improvement in the tone of the school coincides with the introduction of the program School Wide Positive Behaviours for Engagement and Learning. Although the initial focus was on incidents in the playground there is no doubt the Positive Behaviours program along with the teaching of social skills has had a positive impact in the classroom too.

It is also of great credit to the school that despite the significant reduction in what is already a small play area, with the oval being unavailable for 7 months and six years of almost continuous building construction, it has still been able to progress its program for improved student behaviour and achieve improved learning outcomes. This is a commendable achievement indeed.

Transition programs for the incoming Preps and the students exiting at Year 6 are well established and effective. There is also a program in place to support students transitioning from the Western English Language School. Although there is already a well resourced program in place for ESL students the continuing growth in this group with needs for high levels of support will likely give cause for an upgrade of the program. To date the attention given to student transition across the school has been inclined to be perfunctory. However, this is changing and although it is still a work-in-progress it is expected it will receive greater time and recognition.

There is no doubt that over this last review period the school has progressed its achievement of the Effective Schools Model (ESM) immeasurably. Professional leadership is well developed. The school has a clear sense of purpose and authority, and responsibility is now being distributed across the staff. Staff are engaged and supportive of the direction of the school. Unquestionably the school’s focus is on teaching and learning as reflected in the school’s resource allocation. The school has been most successful in developing a learning community with staff committed to enhanced professional practice to underpin purposeful teaching. Although catering for individual learning needs has been the focus the inclination has been towards the lower achievers and this imbalance will need to be addressed to ensure high expectation for all students. Although there is room for further improvement here there is no doubt the school has made considerable progress in developing a stimulating and secure learning environment. The school’s processes ensure all staff are linked into the school’s accountability framework.

The teaching of Literacy and Numeracy will continue to be the major focus of the school. The key improvement strategies will include the embedding of the high quality leadership practices including the instructional leadership role while building the leadership capacity of teachers, continuing to enhance teacher capacity through the whole school commitment to coaching in the classroom, and further development of the program School Wide Positive Behaviours for Student Engagement and Learning.
2. Methodology

The process which underpinned the development of the School Self Evaluation (SSE) for Werribee PS has been transparent and provided for broad school and community involvement.

The input from the staff, parents and students was then drawn together by the principal class team who prepared the draft SSE which was presented to a whole of staff meeting for final comment. School Council was kept informed throughout and this included progress of the draft. The final draft of the SSE was endorsed by Council at its July 2011 meeting.

The Reviewer contacted the Regional Network Leader (RNL) and on 21 June 2011 met with him to develop the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the review. The areas identified for particular consideration included:

- Distributed leadership and the capacity of Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) to lead improved teaching and learning practice for improved student learning outcomes.
- Formative assessment and the use of data to inform teaching practice.
- Teaching positive behaviours - given the three year pilot for the program is coming to an end, where are we at and where to from here.

On Tuesday June 28 2011, the Reviewer made a preliminary visit to the school. This was an opportunity to meet the Principal and the two Assistant Principals, as well as to gather information and gain insights into the school context and operations. A tour of the school was also included in the visit. A plan, which included two days of field work, was discussed with the Principal. Expectations of the review were also discussed with the Principal.

Field Day 1 - July 21: small group discussion with teachers in unit teams Prep, 1/2, 3/4, and 5/6, Education Support (ES) staff, Maths Consultant, and 2 x parent groups.

Field Day 2 – July 27: Meet with the Educational Leaders Team, focus group discussion with Karen parents accompanied by interpreter, Junior School Council and the School Captains, ESL team, and Integration team.

In addition, the Reviewer met with the parents from School Council on the evening of July 25 and made phone contact (29/8) with the Principal of Werribee Secondary College (SC), the main State secondary receiver school for exiting Year 6 students.

The school provided the following documents/data for the Review:

- School Level Report (SLR) 2010 and attachment Intake Adjusted Charts.
- SSE 2008-2011.
- School Strategic Plan (SSP) 2008-2011.
- Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2010 and 2011.
- NAPLAN data service reports 2010 - 3 year summary report and 5 year trends.


Other supporting material included: The report of the School Council Parent Forum 16th June, Action Team reports, Roles and Responsibilities and duties, PLT schedule, professional learning calendar and record of professional learning undertaken 2008-2010, Assessment Schedule, Budgets 2008-2010, the Werribee PS Curriculum 2011 - Teaching and Learning Units including supporting documentation regarding planning, the Werribee PS Information Folder for families of new enrolees, Werribee PS Staff Handbook, Werribee PS Behaviour Management Guide, copies of school brochures relating to Literacy, Numeracy, and Wellbeing and sample copies of the school’s newsletter “The Owl”.

These documents were analysed by the Reviewer prior to the Review Panel day to gain an understanding of the school’s performance over the review period, and to form a view for a proposed future direction for the school.

The Review Panel day was conducted on Monday August 8, 2011.

Participants included:

- Principal: Lyn Tout
- School Council President: Phil Morley
- Assistant Principal: Rosemary Doherty
- Assistant Principal: Sue Osborne
- Leading Teacher/Literacy Coach: Cathy Millar
- Leading Teacher/Student Welfare: Kylie Champion
- Leading Teacher/PSD - Autism Co-ordinator: Michelle Grace
- RNL - Wyndham Network: Steve Boyle
- Reviewer: Avis Grahame

The report to School Council will be presented at its meeting of Tuesday September 20, 2011. A presentation of the review report will also be provided to staff on September 20 at a whole of staff meeting at 3.30 pm.

The Review Report and its key findings and recommendations have been discussed with the Principal.
3. School Context

Located in the heart of the City of Werribee, 32 kilometres south-west of the Melbourne CBD, is Werribee PS with its long and proud history dating back to the 1850s and the settlement of Victoria.

Having started out as a denominational school in 1855 it evolved and grew along with the community and became known as Werribee State School No 649 in 1885. Despite renovation and expansion of the original timber and blue stone buildings the school outgrew these facilities and moved onto the present site in Deutgam Street in 1919.

To accommodate the needs of the rapidly growing Werribee population for the provision of secondary education the Werribee State School program was extended to cover the Years P-10, and the school became known as Werribee Higher Elementary School until 1959, when Werribee High School was opened and the school reverted to a primary provider only. The original red brick building built when the site opened is still in use.

The history of the school is also reflected in its enrolments with a number of families proudly boasting three generations having been past or present students of the school.

Enrolment at Werribee PS has increased from a little above 400 in the late 1990s and peaked at 507 in 2007, a growing concern for the school given its relatively small site. Currently there are 471 students enrolled at the school and the projection indicates enrolment is likely to continue at this level or possibly higher in the foreseeable future, given the demand for housing in the area. Although there is no gender bias at present there was a noticeable bias towards boys over the years 2002-2006 peaking at 56% boys to 44% girls. The 2011 Prep enrolment also shows a bias to males at 57:43.

The school’s Student Family Occupation (SFO) density index has been rising over the last six years from 0.50 to now be at 0.6432, indicating increasing disadvantage within the school community. The proportion of school families who are in receipt of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is 51.51%.

The number of school families who have a LBOTE and speak a language other than English in the home is presently 27%. The growth in the number of families with a LBOTE has been significant in the last five years, from 0.05 to 0.27, and is reflected in the increase in the number of students qualifying for additional support through the ESL program. The school population is very diverse with 22 different nationalities represented in the student community. The largest ethnic group at 14% is the Karen, mostly refugees who have come via Thailand. The school does receive additional funding to support 106 (22.6%) students who qualify under the ESL program.

The student population also includes 10 Koorie students, 17 students who qualify for additional support through the PSD and 10 international (full fee paying) students.

The curriculum covers all areas of the VELS with the exception of LOTE. Recruiting suitable qualified teachers of LOTE has proved an issue for the school and as an interim measure LOTE has been substituted with a cultural program in Karen. There is a heavy emphasis on literacy and numeracy across the school but specialist teachers are provided for the Arts, Physical Education/Sport and Library.
The school is organised to align with the VELS with composite classes at Years 1/2, 3/4, and 5/6. Average class sizes are Prep = 23 (3 classes), Years 1/2 = 27 (5 classes), Years 3/4 = 26 (5 classes), and Years 5/6 = 23 (6 classes). All classes have a grade teacher with the exception of one Year 1/2 grade which is shared.

The school has 20 classrooms including 16 permanent and 4 relocatables. Whilst the facilities include the original red brick building from 1919, which accommodates the administration and a specialist Art room, most of the classrooms are comparatively recent additions resulting from upgrades completed over the last six years. The school has been progressing through a staged master planned upgrade which included 6 junior classrooms in stage 1, 10 classrooms and a learning gallery for stage 2, plus the redevelopment of the junior playground and perimeter fence. The Commonwealth Government initiative Building the Education Revolution (BER) provided $3 million to complete stage 3 of the plan which included a gymnasium complex plus a music room and a canteen, and an upgrade of the school oval. Future plans are for stage 4, the upgrade of the administration area. Overall the state of the facilities is very good indeed and a source of considerable pride for the students and the school community.

The grounds include adventure playground equipment (junior and intermediate year levels with installation of equipment for the seniors currently underway) and a basketball court and a netball court, although both of these are in need of resurfacing. Works underway include the oval upgrade with artificial turf, building a rotunda, and the provision of more seating around the oval, the junior area and around the gardens.

Werribee PS also hosts an outpost of the Western English Language School. This was established in 2006 to meet the increasing enrolment of LBOTE students in the area. The facility has since been re-sited and upgraded to improve the amenity of the school.

A number of teachers and support staff are long term members of the staff, in a number of instances in excess of twenty years. But change is happening as a number of staff reach retirement age. This has opened up opportunities to offer ongoing positions including the appointment of an Assistant Principal.

The staffing profile includes the Principal, 2 x Assistant Principals (2.0 EFT), 3 x Leading Teachers (2.5 EFT), 10 x Expert Class (8.4 EFT), 11 x Accomplished Class (9.6 EFT) and 6 x Graduates (6.0 EFT). Of the teaching staff 25 are employed on a fulltime basis and 6 (2.9 EFT) are employed part-time. To support the teaching and learning program the school employs 7 x Teacher Aides (3.24 EFT), 3x Multicultural Aides (1.83 EFT), Teacher Aides to provide additional support for Literacy 0.4 EFT, and Numeracy 1.08 EFT, and a Library Technician 0.47 EFT. Support for the wellbeing program includes a Student Welfare Co-ordinator (SWC)/Social Worker 1.0 EFT, a Primary Welfare Officer (PWO) 0.5 EFT and a Chaplain 0.4 EFT. The administration is supported by a Business Manager 1.0 EFT and 2 x Administration Support staff 2.0 EFT. To maintain the grounds a maintenance person is employed 0.2 EFT. The school does provide a Before/After School care program but this has been outsourced to Camp Australia.

The Principal, Mrs Lyn Tout was appointed to the school in 2002.
4. Evaluation of Performance

Student Learning

What student outcomes was the school trying to achieve?

In the SSP 2008-2011 the goals identified for student learning included:

- To improve student literacy outcomes especially in writing.
- To improve student numeracy outcomes.

In support of these goals the school set the following targets:

- Each cohort to progress > 0.9 of a VELS level over a two year period in Reading and Writing.
- In Achievement Improvement Monitors (AIM) the median mark will progress > 0.8 between Years 3 and 5 in Writing and Spelling.
- Each cohort to progress > 0.9 of a VELS level over a two year period in Number and Mathematics.
- In AIM the median mark will progress > 0.8 between Years 3 and 5 in Number and Mathematics.

What student outcomes did the school achieve?

ENGLISH

EOI - Reading, Writing and Speaking and Listening

Note data for EOI was only available for one year at the time of the review and therefore conclusions which can be drawn are limited. However, given the three dimensions are covered it is possible that there is a pattern emerging here. The data shows that on enrolment the school mean for the Prep intake is a little below the State benchmark for all three dimensions. But it is noted at the end of Prep and then again to the end of Year 1 the gap between the school mean and the State benchmark clearly widens, before decreasing at the end of Year 2, although not quite to the level of the initial gap at the beginning Prep level.

This fall away in performance in Prep and Year 1 before lifting again in Year 2 is also reflected in the SFO benchmark

Teacher Judgments against the VELS

Reading and Writing

The pattern for Reading and Writing is similar. Measured against the State benchmark the school mean is below the State mean at all year levels and trending down at Years P, 1, 2, and 4 although Years 3, 5 and 6 are showing improvement relative to the State benchmark.

The SFO benchmark shows the school mean within the expected range at all year levels except Year 2. However, there is a downward trend in performance at Years P-4.
The combined P-6 data shows a clear downward trend for both Reading and Writing. But also of note is the fall in the percentage of students assessed at the expected level C, 72% -58% for Reading and 73% -64% for Writing. There have been only 2-3% of students who would be deemed at-risk and the number of students achieving below the expected level has risen only marginally, presently 12% (Reading) and 16% (Writing) on average. While the number of very high achievers remains small the proportion of students achieving above the expected level shows little or no improvement, presently at 24% (Reading) and 14% (Writing) on average.

Speaking and Listening.

Only at Prep is the school mean above the State mean. In all other year levels the school mean is below the State benchmark but trending down at Years 2 and 4 only.

The combined P-6 data shows no appreciable improvement in outcomes. But the proportion of students achieving below the expected level is relatively small at, on average, 10% and this includes only 1-2% of students who would be deemed at-risk. In keeping the proportion of students achieving above the expected level is also comparatively small at 11% with the majority of students, 80% on average, achieving at the expected level.

NAPLAN

Reading

At Year 3 there has been a significant lift in the school’s performance over the review period. The school mean has risen from being well below the State mean to now sit just below the benchmark. The data highlights the significant increase in the number of high achievers compared with the drop in students achieving below the expected level.

The SFO also highlights a significant improvement at Year 3. In 2008 the school mean fell well short of the SFO percentile range. This is in marked contrast to the 2010 outcome which shows the school mean well in excess of the expected SFO range.

At Year 5 there has been a decline in performance 2008-2010 with the school mean falling further relative to the State mean. Despite a small lift in 2009 performance fell away again to be below the 2008 level, mainly as a result of the increase in the number of students achieving below the expected level.

Although the school has fallen a little relative to the SFO benchmark the school mean for Year 5 does remain within the expected SFO range.

Despite the decline in performance at Year 5 the mean learning growth for the school’s Matched Cohort (MC) is a positive outcome. It shows that the mean growth for the MC over 2008-2010 has exceeded State mean growth for that period.
At Year 3 there has been a strong upward trend in the school’s performance with the school mean now sitting just under the State mean. Whilst the proportion of students achieving above the expected level has risen to 54%, in marked contrast the number of students achieving below expectation has fallen to 4%.

The SFO benchmark also highlights the school’s improving performance over the review period and shows the school’s performance is exceeding expectation, with the school mean well beyond the SFO percentile range.

At Year 5 the school mean is trending up and although it is still below the State benchmark the gap has been reduced.

Against the SFO benchmark the school’s performance at Year 5 has fluctuated a little. However, overall there is an upward trend and the school mean remains within the expected SFO percentile range.

Comparison of the average learning growth for the MC and the State shows the school’s MC has achieved significantly greater growth on average over the review period 2008-2010.

MATHEMATICS

Teacher judgements against the VELS - Number and Measurement, Chance and Data

The outcomes for both dimensions are very similar in that the school mean at all year levels is below the State mean. The school’s performance is trending down across Years P-5 for Number and Years P-4 in Measurement and, whilst there is some improvement at Years 5 and 6 evident, the gap between the State benchmark and school mean at Years 5 and 6 is clear.

The SFO benchmark shows the school’s performance trending down at Years P-4 although the school mean is still within the SFO percentile range. Whilst at Year 5 a little improvement is evident the school mean at this year level is only just within the expected range. At Year 6 there is little or no improvement evident and the school mean has fallen well short of expectation as measured against the SFO percentile range.

The combined P-6 data shows the school’s performance trending down for both Number and Measurement. Although the proportion of students achieving below the expected level is relatively small in both dimensions at 12% on average, with few if any students at-risk, the number of students achieving at the expected level is considerable at 72% for Number and 81% for Measurement. The number of high achievers, the students achieving above the expected level are small at, on average, 14% for Number and 5% for Measurement.

NAPLAN - Numeracy

At Year 3 the school’s performance has improved each year 2008-2010, with the school mean now sitting just below the State mean. Over the period the proportion of students achieving above the expected level has improve consistently while the percentage of students achieving below expectation has declined.
The SFO benchmark highlights the sharp upward trend in the school’s performance over the review period with the school mean now well beyond the SFO percentile range.

At Year 5 the trend in performance is also upward and although the school mean is still clearly below the State mean the gap is narrowing. Whilst the improvement includes a small but steady increase in the percentage of high achievers, 9% to 16%, the drop in the proportion achieving below the expected level has been significant, from 48% to 19%.

The SFO benchmark also reflects the improved outcomes at Year 5 with the school mean moving from below the expected SFO percentile range in 2008 to now be within the expected range.

Comparison of average learning growth for the school’s MC and the State shows mean growth achieved by the MC was clearly above that achieved on average State-wide.

**Performance as measured against the targets set in the SSP 2008-2011**

- Each cohort to progress > 0.9 of a VELS level over a two year period in Reading and Writing.

Reading: partially achieved.

Cohorts Years 1-3 and 3-5, and 4-6 achieved learning growth greater than > 0.9 whilst the remaining cohorts Years P-2 and 2-3 achieved growth = 0.9.

Writing: partially achieved

Cohorts Years 1-3 and 3-5 and 4-6 achieved learning growth of greater than > 0.9 whilst the remaining cohorts Years P-2 and 2-4 achieved learning growth of less than <0.9.

- In AIM the median mark will progress > 0.8 between Years 3 and 5 in Writing and Spelling.

This target was technically rendered redundant with the introduction of NAPLAN.

- Each cohort to progress > 0.9 of a VELS level over a two year period in Number and Mathematics.

For both Number and Measurement: partially achieved.

Cohorts Years P-2 and 2-4 achieved learning growth greater than > 0.9 whilst the remaining cohorts Years 2-4, 3-5, and 4-6 achieved learning growth less than < 0.9.

- In AIM the median mark will progress > 0.8 between Years 3 and 5 in Number and Mathematics.

This target was technically rendered redundant with the introduction of NAPLAN.

**Summary**

Whilst the teacher judgments indicate a generally declining performance in both English and Mathematics this is at odds with the outcomes achieved in NAPLAN.

By contrast the externally assessed NAPLAN shows significant improvement in student outcomes at Year 3 in Reading, Writing, and Numeracy, closing the gap between the school mean and the State benchmark.
The school mean for Year 3 now sits just under the State mean in all three dimensions. Whilst at Year 5 the school has also lifted its student outcomes relative to the State benchmark in Writing and Numeracy there is still some way to close the gap fully at this level.

The other improvement of note is the lift in learning growth 2008-2010 as measured by the MC. It shows that over the review period the school has achieved learning growth for its MC considerably in excess of mean growth achieved State-wide in Reading, Writing and Numeracy.

Why did the school achieve/not achieve improved student outcomes?

The significant improvement in student learning outcomes for Werribee PS is said to have begun with the long term plan which aimed to change the culture of the school. The Principal reported that for many years there was a tendency within the school to focus on disadvantage at the expense outcomes, and changing this thinking and lifting expectations was a major challenge in its journey of improvement.

To this end the school began with the introduction of whole school approaches with agreed pedagogy, shared language and common understandings with the stated aim of growing teacher capacity. But the full benefit of this decision only began to be reflected in student outcomes from 2008, and this coincides with the introduction of the Western Metropolitan Region (WMR) Blueprint for School Improvement. Although the WMR provided Literacy Coaches to work with teachers in the school the initiative had limited success at first. Since teachers had a history of working alone with closed classroom doors it is understandable that a sense of wariness prevailed. However, being a region wide initiative did lend a sense of authority so as the school sharpened its focus with a full commitment to Literacy and Numeracy staff have come on board. Indeed teachers now see the common approaches as a strength, they say it brings people together and gives coherence in the school’s direction. Others see professional kudos in the school’s engagement with the WMR on school improvement; they find it exciting and they see the school as progressive, working on new approaches, and what they described as cutting edge.

Undoubtedly, professional reading played a significant part here since the school determined that the improvement initiative would be based on research, to ensure a strong foundation on which to determine best practice for improved outcomes. Having committed to improving Literacy and Numeracy outcomes the school then put in place a structure, protocols and processes, supported by a generous resource allocation to support the initiative. This allowed the school to introduce School Based Coaches and hire in Consultants for both domains. Feedback from teachers suggests that the work done here has proved to be the major catalyst for change. The coaches and consultants work with the teachers in the classroom, with their students. They model and coach as well as support the teachers to model for their peers. The emphasis is on working with the PLT, encouraging the sharing of ideas and knowledge. Teachers say that they feel well supported in their teaching and like that all teachers are involved in the coaching, that is not just for the inexperienced. The other outcome of coaching that teachers spoke very favourably about was the feedback from the coaches. Teachers described the coaches/consultants as very approachable and good listeners, and claimed their feedback was “spot on” because it is relevant and constructive, and they appreciate that it leads to their professional growth. It is noted that some teachers also talked about feeling empowered. It would seem that this also relates to the quality of the coaching program. Teachers are conscious of the level
of resourcing that is being invested here in improving professional practice. From their perspective it is not only support for teachers but an acknowledgement of the importance of the teacher’s role.

The Principal acknowledged the improvement that coaching has made including more collaborative practices. The teachers are said to have become advocates for coaching and are beginning take it to the next level by taking greater responsibility to effect the program.

It is also important at this point to acknowledge the great improvement in the tone of the school which coincides with the introduction of the program School Wide Positive Behaviours for Engagement and Learning. (See Engagement and Wellbeing section for further detail) All focus groups raised the improvement in student behaviour management and the achievement of a more orderly learning environment as an important factor in lifting the school’s performance.

It should be noted here that the SO Survey (variable Appraisal and Recognition) would appear to be at odds with responses from teacher focus groups regarding feedback. However, focus group discussion with ES staff indicates the Survey is more reflective of the views of ES staff. Whilst the ES staff said they felt part of the team they were concerned about their changing roles. It would seem timely to review the roles of all ES staff, to give greater clarity and to ensure their work continues to add value in supporting student learning.

Data has played a major role in achieving improved student outcomes. Whole of staff meetings have been central to the professional learning program with a great deal of time and emphasis given to the analysis and interpretation of school data. As data sets become available members of the leadership team have been responsible to prepare and present the analysis. They lead staff in discussions around the implications for the school as well as strategies for improvement, and this appears to have been very effective to date. But focus group discussion indicates teachers now see the need to shift the data emphasis from the whole school to the unit. They believe it is timely that the focus be on analysing the data for the PLT and the implications for teaching and learning at the year level.

The school curriculum P-6, which is documented and accessible to all staff, includes scope and sequence P-6 and is underpinned by the approach ‘Planning for Learning’. Much of the coaches’ work has been on improving learning outcomes through formative assessment and improved planning. That is, knowing where the student is at on the learning continuum and how to take them to the next level. However, the discrepancy between the VELS assessment and NAPLAN suggests that despite work done with the teams on data analysis and moderation and now the introduction of triangulation of data, teachers are still being conservative in their judgements, especially at the upper end. This has implications for their teaching and catering for the learning needs of the individual, which is dependent on placing students accurately on the learning continuum. Clearly there is a need for further professional learning around assessment which remains a work-in-progress.

Throughout the focus group discussions the teachers presented as a lively and enthusiastic group. Whilst teams were an interesting mix of experienced teachers and relatively inexperienced graduates, in most instances the energy of the team was palpable. They were animated and excited by their work in the classroom, especially working with the coaches. It is surprising then to compare this firsthand experience with the SO Survey which suggests staff may be feeling the weight of heavy work demands and feeling a little ‘done to’. There is no doubt that the school has undergone significant change in its work practices over
these last few years and that the stress of change has impacted on staff at all levels. School leadership is confident that as professionalism within and across the PLTs improves so will the levels of morale and distress. It is important then that the school continue to monitor these areas and ensures the way forward is through helping staff to work smarter, not harder.

Staff are conscious that the school takes on many challenges and they appreciate the improvement that has been achieved to date. But rather than introduce new initiatives teachers believe there is work still to be done in refining and further developing the Literacy and Numeracy initiative. It is also most important that the school ensures that the improved practices are embedded across the school and integral to the Werribee PS culture.

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

The school enjoys very strong leadership from the principal class team which comprises the Principal (1.0 EFT) and two Assistant Principals (2x 1.0 EFT) all non-teaching positions. The Assistant Principals each take responsibility for the leadership and co-ordination of one of the domains in the Literacy and Numeracy initiative.

In addition the school has also allocated 2 non-teaching positions for School Based (SB) Coaches- Literacy 1.0 EFT and Numeracy 1.0 EFT. As well as working with teachers in the classrooms the SB coaches shadow the Mathematics and Literacy Consultants in their work with teachers. This not only aids continuity of the consultants work but also supports the professional growth of the SB coaches.

The funding to hire the Mathematics (0.2 EFT) and Literacy (0.2 EFT) consultants is sourced through National Schools Partnerships (NSP) funding. In addition school funds have been used to employ another Maths Consultant to work with teacher teams particularly with respect to planning for teaching.

The school believes that by having the SB coaches work alongside the consultants this has helped to up-skill the SB coaches who they believe will be capable of maintaining a quality coaching program if and when the NSP funding is no longer available.

To support the teaching and learning program the school employs 3 Teacher Aides (1.33 EFT) working in the Literacy and Numeracy initiative and 7 (3.24 EFT) Integration Aides who assist students funded through the PSD to access the curriculum.

Many students in the school (25.5%) are classified as new arrivals in the country and qualify for additional assistance through the ESL program. The ESL team which comprises 5 EFT teachers and 3 x (1.83 EFT) Multicultural Aides (MEAs) work with teachers in the mainstream classroom as well as providing small group withdrawal to support these students. This level of support seems to be adequate at this time although the ESL team say they are being stretched because of the rapid growth in numbers. The number of unfunded students is growing too and, given the rapid growth in the proportion of LBOTE students over the last five years, it is likely that the level of resourcing here will need to be increased. Also needing to be taken into consideration is the request by the Karen parent community for additional time for the Homework Club. The club, run by volunteers from Werribee New Hope Foundation, is limited by the number of volunteers.
However, it would seem appropriate that the school investigate how it might help augment the volunteer team or consider other options for meeting the growing demand for additional support for these ESL students.

The other areas where additional resources are being invested to support student learning is for intervention at Years 3/4 - 0.5 EFT for Literacy and 0.5 EFT Numeracy, and at Years 1/2 - 0.5 EFT for literacy support and 0.5 EFT Numeracy.

At Werribee PS the Library is an integral part of the Literacy program. To this end the Library has been revamped with an upgrade of the book stock and technology resources. The library program includes a Teacher Librarian (1.0 EFT) and a Library Technician (0.47 EFT).

The school strongly promotes professional learning and provides for this in-house, particularly through the PLTs and the coaching program. The school has also invested in its leaders who have all undertaken a leadership training program through the Bastow Institute. A further two teachers who are not part of the leadership team have recently been offered a place in a Bastow leadership course, courtesy of WMR funding. In addition to this all teaching staff participate in the extensive WMR Professional Learning Programs.

All teams reported that the time commitment for Literacy teaching was 2 hours per day with 300 minutes per week allocated to teaching Numeracy. It should be noted that priority on the timetable is not always given to Literacy and Numeracy with specialist subjects taking precedence even at the Prep level. However, a further explanation offered here was the need to consider engagement for boys which may see the first hour of the day committed to Numeracy. Whilst the daily time commitment for Literacy and Numeracy holds the timetabling is left flexible to meet individual class needs.

On the matter of teaching resources teachers report that resources for Mathematics teaching are excellent. They are readily accessible to all and in good order. Whilst the teachers of the Years 3-6 were very satisfied with the quality and quantity books available to students through classroom libraries and the school library the teachers of the junior classes, P-2, were unanimous that they need more books. There is a big demand for books at the P-2 levels and teachers agree that in maintaining student enthusiasm for reading it is important not only that books be suited to students’ interests with wide choice, but also, they be in good order, not tired, tatty and grubby. The school did become aware of this concern and additional resources were provided in 2010 in an endeavour to begin to address the issue. However, the school has followed through here and committed to meet the new WMR recommended approach including the quality and quantity in reading books for students. This will require ongoing funding over a number of years and, it is anticipated, will fully meet the needs of the junior classes.

Altogether these resource allocations represent a very generous investment in the initiative to improve student outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy. The improvement in student outcomes as seen in 2009 and 2010 NAPLAN indicate that the investment is paying dividends, that the input of these additional resources is making a difference. However a school population is dynamic, sometimes changing very quickly as we have seen here with Werribee PS, especially in the last five years. Will the school be able to continue to fund the present leadership structure including five non-teaching positions?
present egalitarian style of leadership in the PLTs with designated responsibilities rather than a leadership position continue to foster professional growth and improved outcomes? The alternative would be to expand the distributed leadership model beyond the Leading Teacher level. Will the school be able to continue to operate with 19 classes? These are just a few of the questions that the school will need to revisit with respect to resources and the next SSP.

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

The goals and targets will be negotiated with the RNL. The following are suggestions for consideration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td>To improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students and, in particular, increase the proportion of students achieving above the expected level.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Targets</th>
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<tr>
<td>• As measured by teacher judgements against the VELS, for students deemed capable, by 2014 all students will achieve at least the expected level or above for Reading, Writing, Number and Measurement, Chance and Data: Prep - 1.0, Year 1 - 1.5, Year 2 - 2.0, Year 3 - 2.50, Year 4 - 3.0, Year 5 - 3.5, Year 6 - 4.0.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As measured by NAPLAN the school mean for Reading, Writing and Numeracy at both Years 3 and 5 to be at or above the State benchmark by 2014.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key improvement strategies</th>
<th>Suggested actions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Embed the high quality leadership practices established including the instructional leadership role while building leadership capacity at the teacher level.</td>
<td>• Continue to build leadership capacity through a distributed leadership model</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Continue to enhance teaching capacity through a whole school commitment to coaching in the classroom.</td>
<td>• Enable leaders to increase their knowledge and effective use of the full range of leadership competencies particularly in terms of instructional leadership through professional reading and learning.</td>
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<td>• Embed the practice of principal class regularly visiting classroom as part of their role as instructional leaders.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Continue to grow the capacity of school based coaches to improve teacher capacity for effective teaching and improved student outcomes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Continue the focus on data and build teacher confidence and capacity around assessment practices through professional dialogue and moderation of student work.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Undertake a review of the roles and responsibilities for ES staff to provide greater clarity.</td>
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Student Engagement and Wellbeing

What student outcomes was the school trying to achieve?

The SSP **goals** for this area were:

- *To increase students’ social and intellectual engagement in learning.*
- *To improve student behaviour.*
- *To improve student attendance.*

To support these goals the set **targets** included:

- Improving the score for the variable Connectedness to School as measured by the student ATS Survey, from 4.19 to at least 4.41 by the end of 2011.
- Improving the SO Survey variables Student Misbehaviour from 60 to 30, and Classroom Misbehaviour from 31 to 20, on a 100 point scale.
- Reducing student absenteeism from 15.4 days to less than 13 days and
- Undertaking the next steps of the Masterplan to provide better facilities to enable programs that will improve student engagement and learning - It should be noted that although stated as a target this is an action rather than a measurable target.

What student outcomes did the school achieve?

At the time of setting the goal to improve student attendance, the school’s baseline data for 2007 was 14.2, that is the average days absent per student years P-6 over the school year was 14.2 days. But absences increased markedly in 2008 to 16.1 days on average across the school. The strategies implemented have been successful in arresting the escalating absence data. Days absent reduced in 2009, and again in 2010, with average days absent now below the State benchmark at 13.5 days across Years P-6.

Average absence is trending down at Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, as well as school wide P-6, with mean absence for each of these year levels below the State benchmark. At Year 2 the trend is flat but mean absence here is also below the State mean. It is only at Years P and 1 that absence is trending up and in both instances the mean is above the State mean.

Measured against the SFO percentile range it can be seen that the school is performing within or better than expected except at the Prep level.

Although the school did not achieve its target, that average days absent be less than 13 days, it did clearly achieve its goal to improve student attendance.

The school also aimed to improve student engagement and learning through undertaking the next step in the Masterplan to provide better facilities. The improvement in facilities has been achieved through the implementation of the Commonwealth funded BER program. The completion of the gymnasium complex including a specialist music room and canteen completes stage 3 of the plan. In addition the school has
received sufficient funding to upgrade the oval with synthetic turf and to make some additional improvements to passive play areas.

Whilst the target, to improve student connectedness to school from 4.19 to at least 4.41, as measured by the student ATS Survey was not achieved the school did achieve its goal. The ATS survey shows improvement in this area has been achieved with the ranking for the score for the variable Connectedness to School moving from the first to the second quartile.

The target focussing on Student Misbehaviour and Classroom Misbehaviour as measured by these variables in the SO Survey was achieved. The improvement for both variables is pronounced with each moving from around the lowest 15% of the state-wide distribution in 2008 to now be approaching the 50th percentile.

As part of the program School Wide Positive Behaviours for Student Engagement and Learning (SWPBSEL) the school gathered data with respect to suspensions and detentions. The data for suspensions shows a significant reduction from 2009 to 2010. In 2009 the data reflected 10 individuals, all in Years 5/6 with total suspensions of 34.5 days. In 2010 the data concerned only three students with a total of 6 suspension days. In 2011 suspension again involves a small group of 4 students, mainly Years 5/6, and the total suspension days has risen again to 23.5 days. However, putting aside suspensions for one high needs individual within this group would bring the data back in line with the 2010 suspension data. A comparison of the detentions data for 2008 and 2009 on a term by term basis shows a marked reduction in detentions in 2009 when the SWPBSEL was introduced.

Why did the school achieve/not achieve improved student outcomes?

Efforts to reign in student absence were increased around 2007 with the introduction of strategies from “It’s Not Ok to Away” resources, and greater involvement of the principal class in monitoring absence data. The school has an ongoing educative program for parents in general, published in the school newsletter, pointing out the importance of regular attendance and the consequences of absenteeism for their child’s education. It also offers constructive suggestions to support parents in managing issues around attendance, including proactive approaches.

The school does have a process in place to ensure prompt follow up of absence, beginning with the classroom teacher. Where appropriate the SWC and Chaplain may also be involved. The school is aware of a few families with issues around transport and health which are impacting on attendance. Unfortunately the school is finding that for some of these families their response to intervention is to move on. Transience is a concern in the area. The high level of rental housing in the area sees some families moving on a fairly regular basis, often from school to school within the local government area.

The school plan is to continue the current approach to managing student absence with its high profile role for teachers, but with back up and support. Since the problem areas for student absence rests in the junior levels the introduction of any program focussing on rewards and recognition, to encourage further improvement, would be unproductive.
Views of staff as expressed in the staff interviews were unequivocal that the ‘tone’ of the school has improved. Teachers were generally agreed that behaviour has improved and this is reflected in the scores for the SO Survey variables Student Misbehaviour and Classroom Misbehaviour which have both improved significantly over the last three years. Much of this improvement would appear to arise from the SWBSEL program which was introduced in 2008. In the first instance the program focussed on behaviour in the playground, developing a positive approach to managing student behaviour, and ensuring consistency in implementation. To complement the SWPBSEL program the school also introduced “Friendly School, Friendly Families” P-6 to provide teaching of social skills, in line with the school values of Courtesy, Cooperation, Responsibility and Respect. The “Werribee Kids are Wonderful Kids” award program which is used to recognise and reward those students who are seen to be living the school values in their work and play has been in place for many years, but it is now align with the SWPBSEL. The combined effect of these initiatives is reflected in calmer classes, a marked reduction in serious behaviour incidents in the playground, and hence a significant reduction in detentions and suspensions.

The school is aiming to continue the SWPBSEL program and shift the focus to behaviour in the classroom. Unfortunately, in early 2011, the Leading Teacher who has led the program left the school temporarily and, although the Principal has stepped in to help fill this role along with two other teachers, it is possible that the program lacks the level of leadership and momentum it has enjoyed over the last three years. It is feared that some staff may have fallen back to former more punitive approaches. It is expected these concerns will be addressed when the Leading Teacher returns to the school in 2012.

It is noted that the school did have a bias towards boys 55:45 over the years 2000-2007 and there were some staff who believe that gender played some part in the behaviour problems. To some extent this perception may be related to the school’s reputation for managing students with challenging behaviours, especially in its PSD autism program which is generally skewed to the enrolment of boys. The school believes it also was a victim of mobility attracting students with behaviour issues, generally boys, who tend to move from school to school in the area looking for a ‘fresh start’.

Despite the improvement as registered by the teachers the ATS Survey and PO Survey continue to reflect concerns around behaviour and safety. Further investigation through the parent and student focus groups highlighted that in the main these concerns relate directly to a few high needs students. Parents and students are concerned about safety in those incidents where there is a sudden and severe outburst in the classroom, as well as the disruption they cause to learning. The school does have in place processes for managing such incidents including debriefing and counselling for students. It should also be noted here that the negative comments in the PO Survey concerning this issue have decreased 2008-2010. However, this will be an ongoing issue which the school needs to continue to monitor and manage closely.

On the matter of the school’s code of conduct including the school rules and values the students acknowledged direct teaching along with them being displayed in all classrooms. But there was an interesting difference of opinion between the student leaders and other students regarding enforcement. The leaders believe the rules are generally enforced consistently and fairly where as other students perceive there to be special treatment for some. Some parents also supported this view and queried the appropriateness of the rewards and recognition program. To maintain parent support the behaviour
management program needs to stand up to scrutiny on the question of fairness and consistency and the school is strongly encouraged to address these concerns.

In the student focus group discussions up to a third of students claimed concerns around safety arising from bullying. They alleged that complaints were not always followed through until the problem had escalated, “till someone snaps”. It is noted that these students were not part of the leadership group and likely lacked the skills and confidence to deal with such incidents. However, the parent forum also raised the issue of bullying saying they felt students need more help with strategies for managing bullying. Although it would appear that the bullying is generally of a lower level it is important that the school provides on-going support in assisting students to develop a level of confidence and life skills for successfully manage these situations.

Feedback from the student leaders indicates that the student voice is being heard in the school. The students demonstrated a clear understanding of the role of the Junior School Council (JSC) including opportunities for student input. The SO Survey suggests that staff would like to see students take a bigger role in decision making in the school. A possible starting point for this would be to have the JSC report to School Council. This would not only lend a sense of gravitas but would also provide an opportunity to build the student learning experience and recognise the efforts of the students.

During the course of the parent focus groups the issue of catering for the needs of the high achieving students was raised repeatedly. Parents spoke of unsuccessful efforts to try to address this need through external programs, which are usually expensive and inaccessible. Concern about catering for student needs is also raised in the PO Survey, in the variable Learning Focus, where the need to provide rigour and challenge is highlighted. Parents believe that the needs of the able students has been largely over looked and that there is a need for greater extension and enrichment in the teaching program to keep these students stimulated and engaged in their learning.

A further piece of evidence highlighting the need for rigour and challenge can be seen in the NAPLAN reports. Despite the significant lift in student achievement with the school mean for Year 3 now just under the State mean, a closer examination of the data shows that Werribee PS’s high achievers are generally achieving well below the highest achievers at the state and national level. If the school is to achieve further improvement in student learning outcomes then it will be the lift in outcomes for the high achievers where the improvement will be realised. To do this the school will need to provide appropriate levels of leadership and support to ensure there is rigour and challenge in all programs and at all levels across the school.

It is noted that the school has determined the need to place a heavy emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy. To this end there has been a reduction in specialist studies. Students did express some disappointment here, especially with respect to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Boys in particular miss the specialist ICT classes now that ICT has been integrated across the curriculum. Students also asked for more Performing Arts and Science (with better equipment). Further on the question of engagement the ATS Survey highlights the boys of Years 5/6 are generally very negative about themselves, school, and teaching and learning. To what end then is the narrowing of the curriculum affecting these students? This is a question worthy of further consideration.

The setting of goals for Literacy and Numeracy can play a valuable step in helping to motivate students and encourage them to take greater responsibility for their learning. It is suggested that the next step here be to
introduce student led parent teacher interviews for Years 5 and 6. Not only will this heighten student participation in the process but will likely have the added benefit of improving student learning confidence. Such a process can help them to understand more about themselves as a learner as well as helping them to appreciate the progress achieved in their learning growth.

The school does enjoy the support of many parents including a very enthusiastic band who give generously of their time as volunteers, including in classrooms, with sport and fundraising. The school is committed to the home-school partnership and encouraging parents to be involved in supporting their child’s education. Good communication is fundamental to further enhancing the partnership and this is an area to which the school needs to give further attention. Although the Ultranet is here the value of the school’s own website should not be underestimated and further development and use of the site would appear appropriate. The other issue impacting on the partnership is the matter of consistency. To provide the best education possible for our students the school needs the support of its parents. But parents will only give their full support when they have confidence in the consistency and quality of the programs including the expectations, the educational experiences, and learning opportunities provided. Consistency across year levels remains an issue to be addressed.

The school has reached out into the community for additional support for its students. The Kids Hope program run by volunteers from the local Uniting Church has proved to be very successful. It aims to provide mentoring for individual students, a positive adult role model who meets 1:1 with the student on a regular basis. The school also enjoys support from local government especially with respect to recreation and encouraging active lifestyles. As well it has been able to garner external support to develop a biodiversity program with Werribee Zoo, and a sustainability program with the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (CERES).

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

There has been a considerable investment of resources in the area of engagement and wellbeing.

The wellbeing team comprises the SWC 1.0EFT, the PWO 0.5 EFT and the School Chaplain 0.4 EFT. All are non-teaching positions.

The PSD is well established with 17 students supported through this program. The range of students’ disabilities has been variable over the years but given the expertise within the school it has been decided that the school will now specialise in provision for autism and to that end is working in conjunction with the Western Autistic School. Whilst 7 of the PSD funded students qualifying under the criteria for autism there are considerable numbers who do not meet the criteria and hence are not supported with additional funding. An A Leading Teacher (0.5 EFT) has been allocated to the PSD program and she is supported by the school’s 7 (3.24 EFT) Integration Aides.

The school enrolment includes 10 Koorie students. It is reported that the majority of these students are making sound progress and do not require additional support beyond what is provided in the mainstream classroom program. There are however two students who do receive support through the Tutoring Program.
Specialist teachers are employed to provide programs in the Arts 1.0 EFT (mainly visual), Physical Education (0.5 + 0.5 EFT) and Library (0.5 + 0.5 EFT). The school buys in sessional teachers to augment the Performing Arts programs with programs in dance and drama.

The SWPBSEL program has been strongly supported with the allocation of a Leading Teacher 1.0 EFT to oversee the program. Presently the position is filled by two teachers supported by the Principal for the remainder of the 2011 school year. To support the implementation of SWPBSEL the school committed resources for the provision of a professional learning program for the whole staff. The program is now into its third year and it would appear there is a need for a professional learning update generally as well as for new staff. Ensuring that a program of professional learning around the school’s wellbeing programs including SWPBSEL is part of the school’s induction process for new teachers, including Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs) is fundamental to its long term success.

All classrooms, with the exception of the relocatables, are recently built and as such are light and airy and lend themselves to innovative teaching approaches, especially the learning gallery in the Year 5/6 area.

The grounds are clean and tidy and well maintained and will benefit greatly from the upgrade including the installation of synthetic turf. It is most unfortunate that the school oval has been out-of-action for over 7 months whilst the works are in progress. It is then a very great credit to the school that despite this significant reduction in what is already a small play area, it has still been able to progress its program for improved student behaviour and achieve improved learning outcomes.

However, the size of the school grounds is a concern, especially given housing growth in the area and the likely increased demand for places. Relative to its enrolment, presently at 471 but which peaked at 507 in 2007, the school grounds are small. Furthermore, the grounds are shared with the students from the Western Language School which is co-located with Werribee PS. The school is strongly encouraged to seek an enrolment ceiling at 500 to ensure there is no further diminution of playing space for the Werribee PS students.

The provision of reliable ICT infrastructure is yet to be delivered. It is a source of considerable frustration for teachers with constant drop outs and an inability to access and download teaching materials. The school does employ a Technician to support ICT however it appears this resource is thinly spread and back up expertise within the school is lacking. Whilst the introduction of Netbooks at Years 5/6 would seem a good decision, especially given the student view on ICT, teachers cannot confidently use ICT as part of their regular tools for teaching and learning until the system is reliable. Giving priority to resolving the ICT issue is strongly recommended.
What can the school do in the future to continue to improve?

The goals and targets will be negotiated with the RNL. The following are suggestions for consideration.

### Goals

To improve students’ sense of wellbeing and ensure a safe and secure learning environment.

### Targets

- **By 2014, as measured by the ATS Survey:**
  
  The school mean for Years 5/6 to be at or above the following scores for these variables:
  
  Student Morale 5.72, Student Distress 5.94, Learning Confidence 4.12, Student Safety 4.36

- **By 2014, as measured by the PO Survey:**
  
  The school mean score to be at or above the following scores for these variable:
  
  Student Safety 4.7, Classroom Behavior 4.0, Learning Focus 5.7, General Satisfaction 6.0

- **By 2014, as measured by the SO Survey:**
  The variable score for Student Motivation to be 4.5 or better.

### Key improvement strategies

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Suggested Actions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Further enhance and embed the SWPBSEL program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Further enhance teacher capacity to cater for individual learning needs, in particular extension and enrichment for the high achievers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Expand the SWPBSEL program into the classroom and provide ongoing professional learning for all staff to ensure full understanding of the program’s principles and to support commitment for consistent implementation school wide.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- To review the school’s anti-bullying policy in an action research model to ensure the inclusion of explicit teaching of strategies for managing bullying incidents across the levels P-6.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Review and refine the reward and recognition program supporting SWPBSEL program to meet expectations for fairness and consistency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Further develop and enhance the role of the student voice including the role of students in decision making through an enhanced role for the JSC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Enable teachers to consistently provide rigor and challenge in the learning program with high expectations for all students as evidenced in all planning documents and teachers’ performance plans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Improve the resourcing for ICT infrastructure to ensure its reliability as a tool for supporting teaching and learning.</td>
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Student Pathways and Transitions

What student outcomes was the school trying to achieve?

The SSP goals for this area were:

- To improve pathways for all students across the school.
- To provide smooth transition programs between each level within the school.
- To improve the transition of students from Western English Language School into mainstream.

In support of these goals the school set the following targets:

- To have appropriate programs for all students who require individualised learning.
- To increase parent satisfaction with the quality of student transitions programs by a minimum of 10% by 2011 after establishing base line data in 2008.
- To improve staff satisfaction with transition programs for ESL students transferring from the Western English Language School into mainstream by 10% after establishing baseline data in 2008.

What student outcomes did the school achieve?

Although the school aims to cater for the individual learning needs of all students it was with respect to the students in the PSD in particular that the focus on Individual learning Plans (ILPS) was placed. In the first instance all 17 students supported through the PSD have a plan in place, a plan which is reviewed each semester. Consideration has been given to providing ILPs for the high achievers and students who are not achieving at the expected level but they are yet to be implemented.

For a few students the need has been for an individual plan for behaviour management rather than classroom learning. The plans which have been developed in conjunction with parents, aim to help students become more aware of their behaviour patterns and to help them to develop strategies which will see them behave in ways appropriate for the learning environment.

Unfortunately the SSP target does not clearly identify who/which students are to be provided with ILPs and hence it is not possible to measure the outcome here.

The school has a well developed transition programs for students entering primary education, the kindergarten to Prep (K-P) program, as well as for the students exiting the primary program after Year 6, the Years 6-7 program. Transition across the school, as students move through the year levels is receiving closer attention and is seen as a work-in-progress.

The school target to increase by 10% parent satisfaction with the quality of student transition programs as measured by the PO Survey 2000-2010 was not achieved. However, there was overall improvement including improvement in each element of the variable.
The third SSP target focussed on transition programs for ESL students transferring from the Western English Language School and aimed for a 10% improvement in staff satisfaction with the transition program. Unfortunately it appears baseline data for 2008 was not established and hence the outcome cannot be measured in this instance.

Why did the school achieve/not achieve improved student outcomes?

The K-P transition program begins with the school’s liaison with the feeder kindergartens, a task undertaken by the K-P Transition Co-ordinator and the Leading Teacher-Student Welfare. The liaison process provides an opportunity to see the incoming students at work in the kindergarten setting and to gain an understanding of their learning needs. The sharing of information is important, particularly with respect to special needs students in order to ensure a timely application for additional support through the PSD program.

The teachers report that they always feel a sense of welcome in the kindergartens and a willingness to share information. It is during these visits that the school is able to distribute information and extend invitations to attend the orientation program.

The K-P transition program includes an orientation program offered in November/December each year for all incoming Preps. The program involves 4 sessions where the children have an opportunity to meet the teachers and experience a range of activities from the Prep program, as well as become familiar with the Prep classroom and play area. Parents do not accompany students in these sessions. An information session is provided for parents along with an information folder which includes material outlining school policies and programs and operations.

Given the high number of LBOTE parents in its community the school has developed a DVD which helps these parents to gain an understanding of school operations and expectations. The MEAs also have a high profile during transition activities supporting the LBOTE parents and welcoming them into the school.

The school reports that participation in the orientation program from the kindergarten enrolees is very strong at around 100%. Unfortunately 18% of the Prep intake does not attend a kindergarten program, often because of socio-economic circumstances and they miss out on this valuable preparation for formal learning. But overall the teachers see the K-P as a successful program reporting that the new Preps settle readily and happily into school and are quickly out playing in the yard. But a growing concern yet to be addressed relates to the readiness of incoming prep students for the formal learning process; that is to be able to sit, to focus and engage in the learning program.

Exit data for Year 6 students shows that Werribee PS students usually choose to transition to either the local State secondary provider, Werribee SC, or the local catholic school McKillop College, with a fairly even split between the two. There is a good working relationship between Werribee SC and Werribee PS and this underpins the liaison by the Transition Co-ordinators and the sharing of information between the schools. Students do have an opportunity to sample the secondary curriculum in Term 2 when they attend the program “A day in the life of …..”, as well as attend the Open Night offerings of the local government secondary colleges. Additional sessions are provided for the PSD students according to need. The State-wide designated orientation day in December then completes the Year 6-7 transition program which students and their teacher celebrate with a graduation evening. Although the school has not undertaken a
formal feedback process it reports that anecdotal evidence gleaned from students on their return visits, usually on curriculum days, indicates that from the student perspective their transition has been successful.

A matter of concern raised in the parent forums related to homework and preparation for secondary school. Parents claimed that their children “get a big shock when they hit secondary school”. Although Werribee PS does have a homework policy parents are concerned that expectation are not consistent across the year levels and that the demands placed on Years 5/6 do not adequately prepare students for secondary school. This was followed up with Werribee SC who assured the reviewer that Werribee PS students do make a successful transition to secondary school and as further evidence pointed that Werribee PS was represented in the school’s Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) high achievers, the top 10%.

Until recently, time committed to transition through the school has been a low key activity, mainly limited to a short opportunity to ‘meet your new teacher’, done on the State-wide orientation day. Since the school has composite classes based on the VELS levels this transition experience only involves the Preps and Years 2 and 4. Students begin with a preparatory session with their class teacher discussing their fears and expectations about moving to the next level, followed by debriefing after the session. The consensus is that the activity is meeting student needs but that it would benefit from an extension of time.

The handover of information as students move through the school is covered with the Werribee PS ‘maroon’ Folders P-6. There is a folder for each student and it includes ILPs, reports, work samples, and records of interventions. These folders aid in tracking the students pathway through the school. In the case of PSD students or other high needs students the Co-ordinators meet directly with the teachers concerned to share information, providing an opportunity for discussion and clarification about individual needs. Highlighting the importance of the information hand over the school has announced that, in preparation for the start of the 2012 school year, the handover of Literacy and Numeracy folders will be done in December 2011 rather than just prior to the start of the school year, as was the previous practice.

The other significant transition point for the school is for students new to the school, excluding Preps. In the main this involves the students transiting from the Western English Language School. To support their transition to mainstream school these students spend one day each week in the mainstream school throughout the year in addition to sharing the playground with the mainstream students. The school also has a well established ESL program including ESL teachers and MEAs who support the students and their parents to settle into the school. The high level of participation of the Karen parents in the school is testament to the effectiveness of this transition program.

But how aware parents are of transition programs generally and their purpose and place in the school program is debatable, especially beyond the K-P and 6-7 transition. It would appear there is a need to educate parents, to raise their awareness, and to help them develop an appreciation of the contribution the transition program makes to ensuring a pathway for all students and minimising disruption to their education.
How effectively did the school manage its resources to support the achievement of improved student outcomes?

Responsibility for the transition programs K-P and 6-7 is shared. For the K-P program a Prep classroom teacher has been designated the K-P Transition Co-ordinator supported in that role by the Leading Teacher - Student Welfare. Year 6-7 transition is co-ordinated by a Year 5/6 class teacher supported by an Assistant Principal. Each Co-ordinator is given time release for liaison visits as needed.

Further resources are invested in the K-P program particularly with respected to the provision of time for teachers to prepare the orientation program activities and materials, and the provision of teaching space and personnel to run the four sessions. Resources are also allocated for the provision of materials to distribute to parents and time committed to the parent information program.

Commitment to transition is mostly reflected in time given by the staff. At Years 5/6 all classroom teachers contribute through incorporation of 6-7 transition into the classroom program. Transition is also supported by a generous commitment of time from the Principal and her principal class team. The team leaders for Integration and ESL and their respective teams of ES staff also make an invaluable contribution to the transition programs. Transition is in essence a whole of school effort. Although not all staff will be directly involved the others will make their contribution through their co-operation and support which frees colleagues to undertake these extra responsibilities and ensures coverage of the regular programs and duties.

The number of new arrivals in the area continues to grow steadily. But the enrolment capacity of Western English Language School is limited and so places are not always immediately available for newcomers. However, in the interim the mainstream school meets this challenge, enrolls the student and uses its ESL team and resources to support the student. This is putting pressure on resources allocated for ESL, including .5 EFT teachers and 3 (1.83 EFT) MEAs. The school does access the additional resource provided by the network, the ESL Transition Co-ordinator. It has also sought to skill its teachers by providing professional learning around how to cater for ESL students in mainstream classes. But keeping up with the growing demand is an on-going challenge for the school. Feedback for staff suggests a need for further professional learning regarding ESL in the mainstream is needed, particularly teachers new to the school, and that this should be a regular part of the professional learning calendar. It is also likely that the school will need to review its overall resource allocation to the program including exploring ways to increase resources for this area.

Whilst there has undoubtedly been some good work done to ensure pathways for all students and provide support to minimise disruption, particularly at the point of the key milestones, there has been little done to inform and educate the parent community of the need for such programs and the goals they seek to achieve. It is timely then that the profile of the transition programs is lifted and attention be given to improving communication with parents about the purpose and intent of the programs.

Another point worthy of comment here relates to parent involvement. At present the school does have a team of enthusiastic parents who give generously of themselves to support the school but many wonder how to grow this team. Feedback for the parent forum indicates the focus here should be on welcoming the
parents new to the school, particularly at the Prep level, making parents feel included from the outset. A review of parent involvement in the orientation program could be a starting point. But the other area appears to be with the Parent and Friends Group, a hard working team who has been mainly focussed on fundraising activities to date. Perhaps it is now time to add a social dimension as a way of engaging newcomers into the life of the school. A major challenge for the Council and Parents and Friends will be how to harness the enthusiasm and interest of the parents who are LBOTE, the growing group within the school community.

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

The goals and targets will be negotiated with the RNL. The following are suggestions for consideration.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Targets</th>
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<tr>
<td>Further improve transition into and across the school particularly for ESL students.</td>
<td>As measured by the PO Survey the mean score for the variable Transitions to be 5.6 or better by 2014.</td>
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<td>As measured by NAPLAN each year 2012-2014 the mean growth for the school matched cohort will be greater than mean growth for the State in Reading, Writing and Number.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Key improvement strategies</th>
<th>Suggested actions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Further develop and enhance the supportive school culture that fosters relationships with students, parents and the wider community.</td>
<td>Embed the tracking process to monitor learning growth for each student.</td>
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<td>Track progress of ex-Werribee PS students - open discussions with secondary providers for the exchange of information.</td>
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<td>Implement ILPs for high achievers.</td>
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<td>Review the intervention program to provide systematic invention coverage P-6.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop an educative program for parents highlighting the importance of the transition program in supporting learning growth.</td>
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<td>Further strengthen the home school partnership through parent relationships ensuring inclusion is built into all school bodies.</td>
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