

## Executive Summary

From Review of the 2012 – 2016 Strategic Plan

Review June 2016, Reviewer – Anita Forsythe – Monash University

### 1.1 School Context

Croydon Hills Primary School (Croydon Hills PS) is located in Melbourne’s outer eastern suburbs. School facilities were comprehensive and well-maintained. They included a Performing Arts Centre, a specialist Visual Arts room and a full size stadium for Physical Education and Sport. Accommodation also included a recently developed facility to house a range of school programs, including the school’s Out of School Hours Care program.

Classrooms presented as well-resourced and stimulating learning environments where a range of charts displayed cues for independent learning and technology was accessible to support student learning. The school buildings were set in extensive grounds which included playing fields, hard courts, several sets of adventure play equipment, areas for passive recreation and landscaped gardens.

The school has an award-winning sustainability focus which led to the installation of water tanks, solar panels and low-energy lighting.

Over the review period, the school experienced enrolment growth with over 100 students enrolled at Foundation level each year and smaller cohorts graduating at Year 6. There were currently 649 students enrolled in the middle of 2016 and this number was expected to reach over 700 over the next four years.

Enrolment growth, and the retirement of a number of staff members of long standing, resulted in a staffing profile which included 24 teachers new to the school in the last four years. Many of these teachers were also new to the profession. Mentoring and induction of new staff had become a major focus, as had professional learning related to newly established whole-school approaches to teaching and learning.

The school developed a strong, positive culture with considerable emphasis placed on student engagement and wellbeing. The school values of Respect for self and others, personal, social and environmental responsibility, and Understanding, tolerance, inclusion and creativity were embedded in the day to day operation of the school.

The school provided a comprehensive curriculum for its students. In addition to the core subjects of English and Mathematics, there were specialist programs in Art, Music, Physical Education and Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Indonesian. Other areas of the curriculum were integrated into the school’s Inquiry Learning program. There was a focus on Asian Studies

and the school had two sister schools in South Korea with which there was a program of student visits.

## 1.2 Summary of the School's Performance

### 1.2.1 Summary of the School's Performance against the Previous Strategic Plan

The School Strategic Plan (SSP) for 2013–16 included this goal: To maximise the achievement levels of all students across the Australian Curriculum: Victorian Essential Learning Standards (AusVELS) learning domains. The school worked systematically to document the curriculum and to develop agreed whole-school approaches to teaching and learning. Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) were set up and have worked collaboratively to use data to plan programs to meet the learning needs of every student.

The school achieved mixed success in meeting its student achievement targets. National Assessment Program–Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) targets for Year 3 English were achieved. The proportion of students achieving above the expected level improved and the proportion achieving below the expected level fell. There was a steady improvement in mean scores for all aspects of English, consistently exceeding State means.

An increasing proportion of students achieved high learning growth for Reading and Writing between Year 3 and Year 5. The school outcome was above the State benchmark. However, learning growth was not as strong for Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation.

At Year 5, school outcomes for Reading were in line with those of similar schools and mean scores for Spelling and Writing were at or above State-wide means. However the school did not achieve its target to have a higher percentage of students score above the expected level.

The school was not successful in achieving its specific targets for improved student outcomes in Numeracy. Considerable work was done in establishing a new whole-school approach to teaching and learning in this area of the curriculum. This approach was not fully embedded in classrooms and its full impact on learning was yet to be realised. Nevertheless, the NAPLAN data indicated that mean scores for Numeracy were steadily growing at Year 3. An increasing proportion of students have made high learning growth between Year 3 and Year 5, and the four-year average score for Numeracy at Year 5 is in line with the predicted score for schools with similar characteristics.

The SSP also included a goal to enhance the engagement and wellbeing of all students in a safe and secure environment. The evidence indicated that the school worked effectively to establish a strong, positive culture through the consistent day-to-day application of an agreed set of values. A student focus group confirmed the strength of the school culture and showed evidence of their pride in the school. The school worked systematically to

give students a greater say in their learning and to build their resilience and wellbeing.

The student Attitudes to School Survey (ATS Survey) showed that students rated the school well above the State mean on all measures of student relationships, wellbeing and teaching and learning. Particular strength was evident in students' connectedness to the school and their peers, student morale and learning confidence.

A third goal in the 2013–16 SSP was to ensure effective transitions for all students at key points in their school life. The school developed a range of policies, processes and programs to ensure a smooth path for students moving into and through the school and on to secondary schooling.

### **1.2.2 Summary of the considerations for the next Strategic Plan**

The review panel considered the extent to which the school had robust curriculum documentation and planning, ensuring a whole school, consistent approach to teaching and learning. The panel concluded that the school should consider the following goal and strategies for inclusion in its next SSP.

To optimise individual learning growth across all areas of the curriculum and for all levels of ability by:

- Auditing the school's existing curriculum content to ensure that it:
  - is aligned with the Victorian Curriculum
  - is documented in sufficient detail to ensure it informs consistent and guaranteed teacher and team planning
  - can be covered in sufficient depth within available teaching and learning time.
- Establishing agreed term and weekly planning expectations and templates and develop monitoring and accountability processes for these.
- Developing a whole school instructional model that includes agreed pedagogical approaches for Reading, Grammar and Punctuation, Spelling and Speaking and Listening and embeds agreed approaches to the teaching of Writing and Numeracy.
- Further building individual teacher and PLTs knowledge of what constitutes practice excellence, including their capacity to differentiate curriculum and teaching and learning practices based on analysis of data and evidence to ensure challenge and progress for every student.

The panel considered the extent to which the school developed students' cognitive engagement in their learning and their sense of ownership of that learning. The panel

recommended that the school build on the strong foundation it laid in student wellbeing and engagement by adopting the following goal and strategies.

To create a stimulating learning environment where there are increased opportunities to maximise the social, emotional and cognitive engagement of all students by:

- Further creating opportunities for students to develop a 'growth' mindset and be actively involved in their learning by ensuring that every teacher is equipped to support the Resilience Project and embeds the program in their classroom and the broader school environment.
- Identifying a set of explicit Croydon Hills PS personal, social and academic attributes to be developed in students by the end of Foundation, Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6 and develop a process to assess the achievement of these.
- Investigating a more structured role for STEM in the curriculum as a way to further build student engagement and raise stimulating learning levels.

Finally, the panel discussed the extent to which the school has been aligned with the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO). In its deliberations, the panel reviewed the 2016 Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) which aligned the school's strategic intent with the FISO model. It concluded that in pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning, the school had progressed its work to build quality practice through whole school targeted professional learning and the work of the professional learning teams which were increasing the use of evidence-based, high-impact teaching strategies.

The development of a positive climate for learning was identified as a strength of the school given the school's recent student and staff opinion outcomes and the work on embedding the Resilience project. In the area of professional leadership the panel recognised the effectiveness of the work done by the school to develop its positive values and culture. In consideration of the school's growing enrolment and many new staff, the panel recommended the following goal and strategies to broaden and strengthen leadership school-wide.

To strengthen instructional and shared leadership capacity across all levels of the organisation to sustain the school's high performance culture and enhance the effectiveness of the school as a professional learning community by:

- Building instructional and shared leadership capacity, including through greater leadership visibility and giving more accurate and regular feedback.
- Developing the knowledge and capabilities of emerging leaders to empower them to contribute their full potential to school improvement efforts.

The panel agreed that the school worked to strengthen community engagement in learning. The school reported examples of partnerships and relationships with community

locally and globally that collectively encouraged students' learning and enhanced student outcomes.

### **1.2.3 Next steps**

The school has demonstrated the capacity to initiate and plan comprehensively for school-wide improvement. Strengthening leadership capacity at all levels, developing greater consistency in pedagogy and planning and ensuring greater monitoring and accountability will position the school for its next stage of improvement.