September 2020

Strengths Based Review

Gowrie St Primary School

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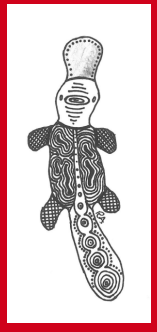

ACKNOWLEDEGMENT OF COUNTRY

Nyanak gaka yawal yenbena woka.

On behalf of the Gowrie Street staff and community, we acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which our school sits and pay our respects to their elders both past and present - they contribute great strength to our school and community. It is our great privilege to play a part in educating the elders of the future.

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> ***We are a community that takes strength from who we are: our diversity, our cultures, our histories. We will empower our students to seize life's opportunities and overcome its challenges.***
>
> -Gowrie St PS Vision

INTRODUCTION

Two years ago, Gowrie St Primary School completed a year long consultation process to finalise a new school vision - one built upon the considerable strengths of the community. Its spirit is captured within our DREAM BIG (Nurratj Dungudja) initiative. We also completed our Department of Education and Training School Review, and commenced our work with the Differentiated School Support Initiative's Leadership Partners.

Since that time, our school community has worked tirelessly in the spirit of continuous school improvement to achieve the best possible outcomes for our students.

To gauge our progress in improving these outcomes, and realising our vision, over the past two months we have undertaken a strengths-based review.

This review had **three clear objectives**:

1. To document the school's current Theory of Change (pg. 4-5)
2. To take a strengths-based approach to its evaluation (pg. 6-16)
3. To identify opportunities to further amplify the school and community's strengths (pg. 17)

To complete this review, a panel was convened comprising GSPS School Improvement Team Members, Department of Education & Training representatives and School Council representatives.

The panel thanks you for considering these findings, both the strengths and opportunities, contained within this report.

Review Panel, September 2020

Gowrie St P.S. Theory of Change

1. The Challenge

- Our students are consistently not achieving the outcomes we would hope for them.
- Significant intergenerational poverty within the school community contributes to:
  - The inability of some of our families to have a broader vision of success (now and in the future).
  - Challenges with readiness for learning, the development of communication & social-emotional skills, and basic needs being met.
- Negative perspectives about some of our students by the broader community.

2. Community Needs & Assets

Needs
- Teachers need to believe they have agency
- A number of factors can impact student learning progress
- Students and their community seeing them as learners
- Families having the skills to best support their children

Assets
- Diversity and strength of different cultures
- Level of community support from wide range of organisations
- Range of parent engagement and connection
- Level of resources
- DREAM BIG

3. Influential Factors

Barriers
- Lack of attendance
- Lack of school readiness
- Negative perspectives of students by community taken on by students and staff
- Past experience of school among some families

Enablers
- Caring and committed staff
- Culture of improvement
- A number of school-wide structures and processes in place
- Many students who love school and for who it is a safe space
- Strong relationships between students and staff
- Strong DET focus on school improvement

4. Desired Results

Outputs (1-2 years)
Observable and demonstratable mindsets and behaviours of staff and students (see Appendix 2, pg. 19).

Outcomes (3-5 years)

Students make consistent or accelerated progress in line with the curriculum that is planned and delivered each day.

Improved attendance.

Pride in their school and learning.

Impact (5 years and beyond)
Our vision is a reality for our students and our community.

Note: The full Theory of Change, including the assumptions upon which the Strategies are based, can be found in Appendix 1, pg. 18.

5. Strategies

High expectations relationships leading to improved learning, engagement and attendance

Prioritising a calm and productive learning environment to address the developmental needs of students to allow successful engagement in learning

DREAM BIG - explicit teaching about hopes & dreams, whole community engagement

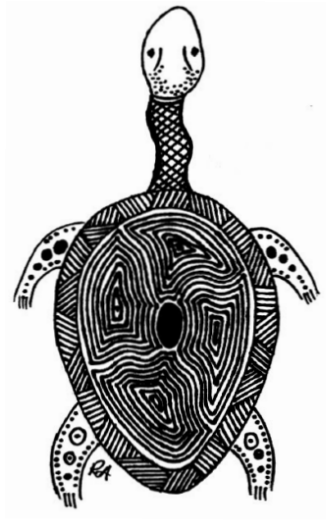
School improvement cycles & action plans

Effective use of data to plan whole school curriculum and to case manage individual students

Ensuring consistent high impact teaching practice

Focus on Literacy

Student voice and agency critical to high levels of engagement



The Gowrie St Student

To place our students at the centre of this review, our staff prepared case studies on our students.

These excerpts of various case studies present a snapshot of a Gowrie St Student.

What are this student's strengths?

- L is a great story teller and loves sharing their imaginative side.
- When D puts his mind to things, he will work hard to achieve them.
- J excels with hands on learning tasks.
- S is brave and academic.
- D is very caring and takes great care of his Nan.
- T has very strong family relationships.
- E takes learning risks and enjoys sharing her work.
- F demonstrates the school values at all times and helps others to follow them also.
- O enjoys maths and is good at problem solving.

What is the student working towards?

- M wants to be a teacher or police office because she loves to help others.
- E wants to be a vet and to be a school captain next year.
- S has a dream to travel to many places around the world.
- D wants to build his own house.
- S wants to be a football player and to be the best cook so he can make food for his family.
- L is very passionate about his plan to go through university and becoming a marine biologist.
- O would love to be a professional chef, to own her own restaurant and make amazing meals.
- L wants to be a entomologist (lizard scientist).
- V wants to write a book.
- O wants to complete high school and then study a trade.
- D wants to complete Year 12, attend university and study law.

Note: Further information on the background of our students can be found in the School Profile in Appendix 3, pg. 20.

What are we doing to push this student's learning?

- We ask E her thoughts on what she can improve in her work. We provide constructive feedback.
- We make sure L's goals are at his point of need, so that growth can continuously occur.
- We regularly confer with O and expose her to a variety of new strategies that she can try in her own learning.
- V takes part in regular small groups with Mrs L to push his writing. He is part of an extension group for Numeracy.
- We have high expectations of F's completed work.
- D needs to be provided with challenging tasks, goals and regular feedback.
- A is given extension versions of some lessons.

If challenges arise, what do we do to support?

- We provide J with explicit teaching of expectations and frequent reminders.
- Take the time to talk with J about their feelings, and the feelings of others.
- Providing B with work in small groups to help with any learning missed.
- M is receiving literacy intervention to make sure we scaffold learning at her level.
- S is doing play therapy with Ash.
- We work closely with D's family to encourage him and to improve his attendance.
- Providing O with breaks, take-up and cool down time.

What success are we seeing?

- J has increased independence with learning.
- M is using what she is learning with Ms G to help her reading and her spelling.
- S loves Maths - he challenges himself and always wants to grow his maths knowledge.
- J is showing more empathy towards others.
- J is engaging in learning for more sustained periods of time.
- T is becoming confident when working with others and sharing her thoughts.
- E is proud of her work, especially her writing.
- We are seeing continual growth in O's learning data as she builds up new strategies.
- D is growing so much in his self esteem, self care and confidence.

They are there 100% for us. They encourage us to do more more learning. They make us feel safe.

Student Survey Results

What is the best part of school?

The responses for this question were evenly split between:

- The Learning
- The Teaching
- Facilities
- Their Friends

What things should the school keep doing for ever and ever?

The majority of responses concerned additional activities to the core curriculum including: Peer Support, the Lighthouse Program, DREAM BIG, Concert, PE/Art/Yorta Yorta/STEM, NAIDOC and Ashletics.

Other responses mention Literacy, Numeracy, 'taking care of kids' and 'looking after one another'.

Tell us about the adults...

Overwhelming the students identified that the adults care about them and support them, both in terms of their learning and their wellbeing.

'Encourage students who doubt themselves'. 'They learn stuff and they teach us'. 'They teach us that mistakes are good for learning'.

We work as a team.

We get to know each other.

We acknowledge all cultures.

Student Survey Results

Tell us about the learning...

Fun

10 responses.
'Fun and challenging'.
'Magnificent'.
'I like maths, writing, PE - my mind gets pumped'.

Not too hard, not too easy

8 responses.
'Hard sometimes but makes me smile because I learn something'.
'Challenges at times but pays off'.
'There are many different ways to learn'.

What are you proud of at Gowrie St?

'The determination we all use'

'Everyone having a go at the learning'

'They teach us really well'

'Only school to teach Yorta Yorta'

'How long it has been standing - even my mum went here'

'Try to make sure students are safe and have a fun time'

Staff Survey Results

1

Critical Mindsets

Many responses concerned these critical mindsets:

- That our students can improve in their learning
- A strengths-based approach
- Our students are all individuals, just as we are - 'with so much to give and so much that we can learn from'
- The student always comes first
- Patience, passion, flexibility and understanding

'They have the ability to do well given the opportunity'

'Our students want to learn and love to learn'

2

A calm and productive learning environment

Staff consistently identified these key contributors:

1. Forming relationships with students and teachers - working together
2. Explicitly teaching clear and consistent expectations and routines
3. Focusing on positive acknowledgement of behaviours
4. Utilising whole school behaviour processes (incl. BSPs)
5. Key mindsets - understanding student needs (including trauma and regulation) and adjusting, remaining calm
6. Learning and engagement critical

> ***Our students are capable of achieving success and reaching their hopes and dreams if we all work together to support them.***

Staff Survey Results

3

Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Across the responses, the most commonly identified components of excellence in T & L at Gowrie St were:

- Knowing each of our students, their goals and where they are up to in their learning.
- Providing targeted, high impact teaching to meet the needs of all students learning.
- Collaborative planning

4

Continuous school improvement

Staff identified a range of ways in which they contribute to school improvement.

Many staff identified a clear focus on the priorities identified within the AIP and various ways they work towards these. Additionally, a number of stuff identified the school's 5 week School Improvement Action Plans.

Other responses included participating in walk throughs and observations, taking on new ideas and feedback, and reflecting on their own practice.

> ***High expectations - a focus on the journey not the result. Collective efficacy - collaboration on the focus and direction of learning, continued sharing of ideas.***

They support me in every way. If we have had a problem with my child's learning or any other needs, they have always been there for me.

Family Survey Results

Key Theme - Relationships

A very clear theme of the family responses, when asked about the strengths of the school, concerned the relationships within the entire school community.

'Being a team'

'Staff and parents working together'

'Very approachable'

'Everyone is so caring towards everyone'

'Community - my kids love that everyone knows everyone'

'The teachers care about the kids. They are focused on getting the best for them.'

'The language you use to talk about the kids - we don't see them as a problem, we focus on how we can help'

Key Theme - Learning Environment

A number of families identified that the learning environment is organised and orderly, and that this has improved over time.

Many families identified that key to this is us meeting the the needs of each child, being aware of them as an individual, and being flexible.

Families also identified that there is a clear focus on learning.

My daughter loves school and loves her learning. It is so sophisticated compared to when we were at school. The language they use around their learning - they will be able to use it for a bigger future.

Family Survey Results

Key Theme - Student engagement in learning

Targeted learning

'Students have their own goals. They voice them and bring it home'.
'They are learning at the level they need to be'.
'Modified programs and learning at his own speed'.

Variety of learning

'Allowing for different ways of learning' - Hands on Learning, cooking, extra curriculars, art, writing clubs.
'Allowing students choice in what they do'.
'Trying different ways to engage students in their learning'.

Other Strengths

A range of further strengths were identified by families:

- DREAM BIG - it is a family event, we look forward to it, 'we love how they are focusing on the kids dreams for the future'
- Additional programs and supports - the Lighthouse Program, Smith Family, the Community Hub
- Jo in the office
- Communication from teachers with families
- How we acknowledge all different cultural backgrounds, have cultural activities and teach Yorta Yorta

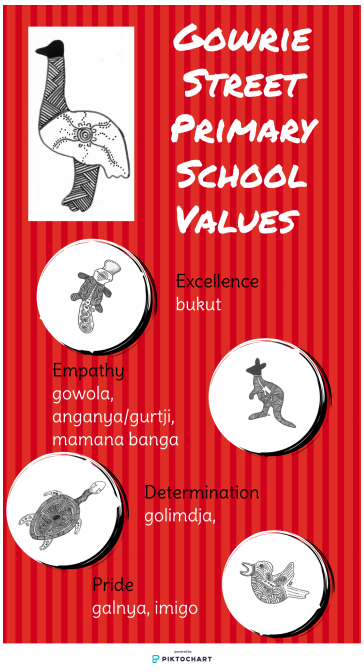
School Improvement Highlights

AIP Goal: Establish a calm and productive learning environment

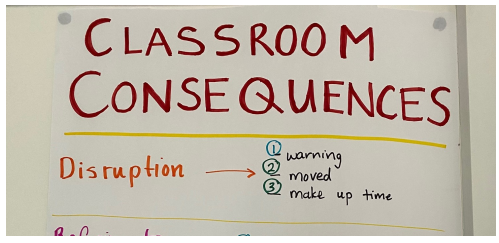
Key Improvement Strategy:

Embed an orderly learning environment with agreed, documented high expectations for learning and student behaviour management with staff, students and parents.

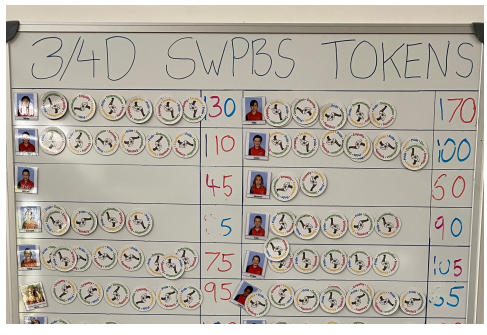
2020 Key Actions:



Implemented new **GSPS Values**



Explicit teaching of classroom expectations and routines



Strengthened use of **SWPBS tokens** for positive acknowledgement

Strengthened supports for **Tier 2 & 3 students through BSPs**:

- Identifying students through data collection
- Collaborative development and implementation of BSPs with teachers, ES, Wellbeing and SSS support
- Regular monitoring of implementation and review

2020 Progress:

Decreased major incidents

Decreased suspensions

Decreased office referrals

Next Steps:

- Ensure consistent use of SWPBS tokens for positive acknowledgement across all classrooms.
- Finalise new school matrix
- Utilise matrix to develop scope and sequence for teaching expectations across the school
- Continue to embed use of behaviour response flowchart and BSP processes

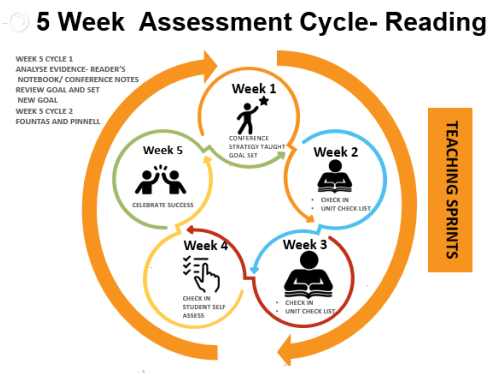
School Improvement Highlights

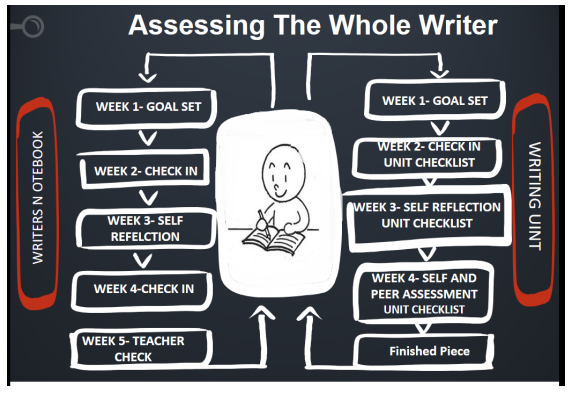
AIP Goals:
To maximise learning growth for all students in literacy and numeracy F to 6.

Key Improvement Strategies:

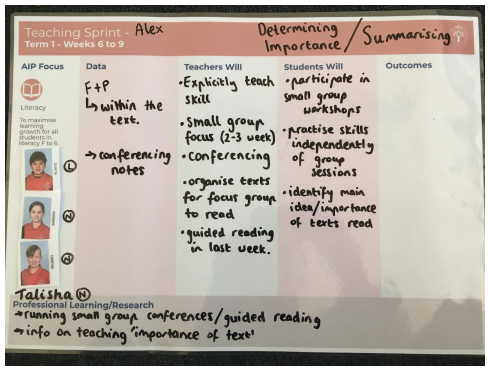
- Build the capacity of professional learning teams to regularly collaborate to use formative and summative data to inform planning to meet individual learning needs.
- Develop teacher knowledge and skills to embed high impact teaching strategies.

2020 Key Actions:

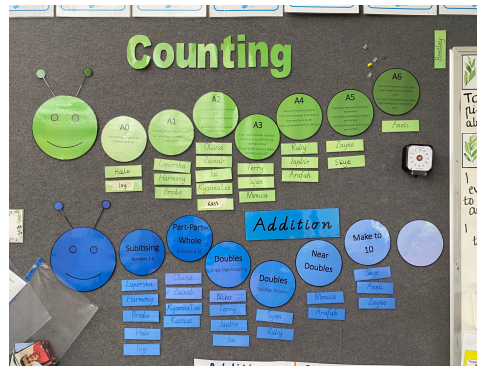




Implemented **5-Week Assessment Cycles** for Reading and Writing

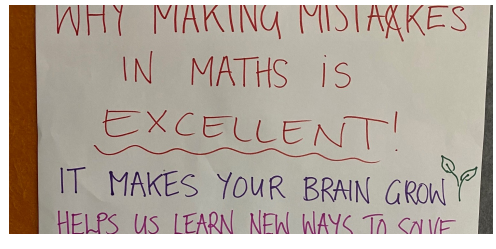


Implemented **Teaching Sprints** to strengthen targeted teaching



Strengthened **goal setting** for all students

Collaboratively planned units of work **explicitly teaching oral language**



Collaboratively planned units of work **explicitly teaching maths mindsets in Years 3-6**

Next Steps:

- Embedding use of the assessment cycles, along with teaching sprints and case management.
- Building capacity of teachers to conduct formative assessment of oral language and to plan based upon this.
- Extending the explicit teaching of maths mindsets across the school and continued monitoring of these mindsets in students.

Strengths

The 2020 Strengths Review Panel identified the current strengths of Gowrie St Primary School to include:

1 Relationships are fundamental

- There are strong, trusting two way relationships between staff and students. This contributes to an environment based on love, care and safety.
- A strong culture of inclusion, fundamental to which is recognition of the our local First Peoples (reflected in part by the teaching of Yorta Yorta Language and Culture).
- Strong relationships are present between staff and families, contributed to by both DREAM BIG and remote learning.

2 A calmer and more productive learning environment has been achieved

- Critical to this has been classroom teaching practice that supports all students, including clear expectations and routines.
- Additionally, strong supports are in place for Tier 2 and 3 students, recognised by both staff and families. Our families know they will be supported - and in turn support us.

3 A mindset across the community that all students are learners

- That all students can learn when supported at their point of need, underpinned by individualised learning, student goals, DREAM BIG and interventions.
- This is accompanied by teachers constantly striving to improve their practice to best meet their students' learning needs.

4 A culture of continuous improvement across all layers of the school

- Whole School (School Improvement Cycles), Classroom (Assessment and Planning Cycles) and Student (Teaching Sprints, Case Management)

5 Collaborative planning is well established, contributing to consistency in T & L

- This has allowed rapid adoption of instructional models in literacy and numeracy that give all students the chance to engage with high quality, evidence informed learning.
- Whole school consistency in these models has supported student metacognition and learning.

6 Partnerships with a range of organisations that enhance learning and wellbeing.

Opportunities

The 2020 Strengths Review Panel identified the following opportunities for the school to amplify its current strengths for continued growth:

Leverage a strengthened culture of students as learners, as well as two-way relationships between staff and students, and staff and families, **to raise expectations across the community towards attendance.**

Continuing to leverage the strong relationships with families to achieve increased engagement in student learning.

- This could include using technology to share learning.
- Ensure this connection remains two way, as it has been during remote learning. And that a strengths based approach is taken.
- The Community Hub presents a considerable opportunity for this.

Utilise model classrooms, which demonstrate an extremely calm and productive learning environment, accompanied by coaching, to support graduate staff and to ensure a consistent learning environment across the school.

Calmer and more productive learning environments will allow teachers to go deeper with curriculum and pedagogy.

- This could include greater student voice and agency, collaboration and reflection (also developing student metacognition of this).

Embedding the work of teaching to the point of need through a focus on teaching sprints and case management.

- Aiming for students being consistently aware of where they are at with their learning and their next point of learning.

Explore opportunities to ensure that the progress the school and its students are making is transparent to, and felt by, the entire school community.

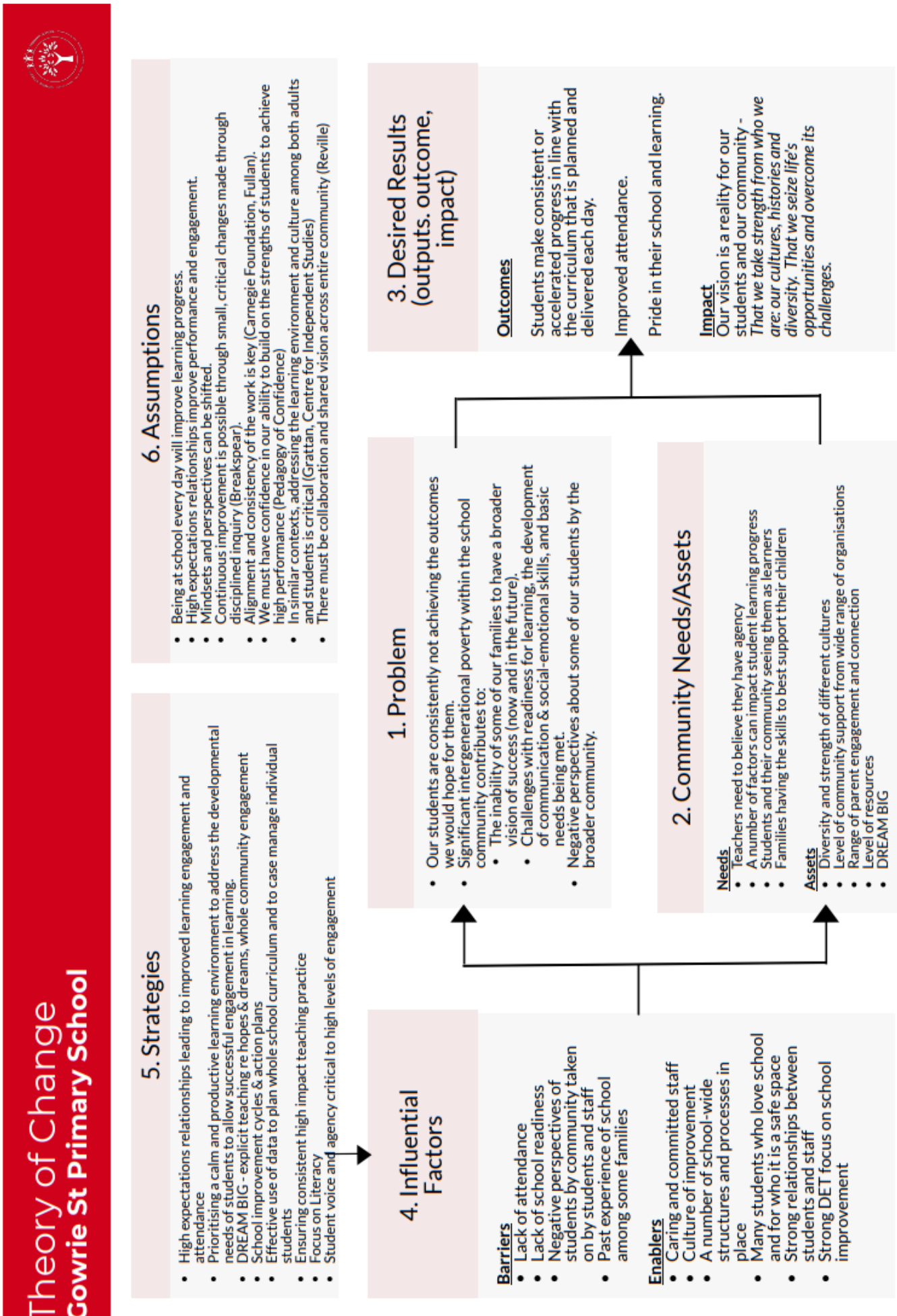
- Ensure teachers and ES are aware of the progress they are seeing, including in their practice.

Utilise relationships and initiatives involving DREAM BIG, student voice and agency, to ensure **Year 5/6 students consistently feel pride in their learning**, and that of their peers.

Continue the work that has been done to **strengthen connections and continuity of learning with the Gowrie St Pre-School**.

Continue to **align the work of our external partners to our improvement priorities and Theory of Change**, particularly focusing upon attendance**.**

Appendix 1 - Theory of Change



Source: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Logic Model Development Guide, 2004

Theory of Change - Program Implementation

Gowrie St Primary School

Strategies	Outputs	Outputs	Outcomes
	Teachers Will	**Students Will**	
• **High expectations relationships** leading to improved learning engagement and attendance	• Demonstrating care and support for our students • Knowing each of their students (e.g. interests, hopes, goals) • Regular two way, open and honest conversations, centred around the needs of the student	• Students will identify high expectations held for them • Identify and engage with adults who care for them at school, who look after them and who support them to do their best learning	Students make consistent or accelerated progress in line with the curriculum that is planned and delivered each day. Improved attendance. Pride in their school and learning.
• Prioritising **a calm and productive learning environment** to address the developmental needs of students to allow successful engagement in learning.	• Use our school values to positively acknowledge student behaviours (6:1) • Explicitly teach Gowrie St SWPBS expectations using the matrix • Teach and follow the Gowrie St Behaviour Flow Chart and BSPs • Use Classrooms Systems to develop calm and productive learning environment. • Utilise Tier 2 and 3 supports to meet needs of students	• Know the expectations, routines and procedures for every aspect of their classroom • Know the values and positive behaviours that demonstrate them • Be consistently engaged in their learning	
• **DREAM BIG** - explicit teaching re hopes & dreams, whole community engagement	• Explicitly teach the DREAM BIG units (personal strengths, mindsets, occupations, pathways etc) and refer to regularly. • Work with students and families to develop Hopes and Dreams Plans at school and during conferences • Connect with local community to support DREAM BIG	• Identify what DREAM BIG means to them and their hopes for the future • Identify their strengths and how to build on them • Identify their interests and how this can relate to what they want to do when they grow up.	
• **School improvement cycles** & action plans	• Understand their role in continuous school improvement • Contribute to and reflect on 5 weekly action plans.	• Demonstrate the evidence of the current school improvement plan.	
• Effective use of **data** - planning, case management	• Establish 5 weekly assessment cycle (as outline in Rigour and Routine doc) to plan and monitor units of work, teaching sprints and case management	• Know their current reading, writing and mathematics goals and be able to articulate strategies to improving these. • Be able to reflect on progress using examples.	**Impact** Our vision is a reality for our students and our community - *That we take strength from who we are: our cultures, histories and diversity. That we seize life's opportunities and overcome its challenges*
• Ensuring consistent **high impact teaching practice**	• Collaboratively plan with their colleagues (including reflection on success and impact) • Follow Gowrie St Instructional Models • Incorporate relevant high impact teaching practice within all lessons • Ongoing formative assessment (learning walks, peer observations) of practice to support consistency	• Be able to explain the learning intention and success criteria • Be able to answer the 5 questions • Provide evidence of their understanding via exit tickets and self-reflection • Provide feedback to their teachers	
• Focus on **Literacy**	• Establish Gowrie St Reading and Writing Workshops • Establish learning communities of Readers & Writers • Create literacy rich environments • Prioritise rich oral language experiences in F-2 • Prioritise read alouds • Implement Gowrie St Early Reading Model • Deeply understand each students' learning needs in relation to reading, writing, speaking and listening	• Make sustained progress in Literacy • Explain what makes a great reader and writer and how to display these things • Describe the benefits of the Workshop models, their roles and responsibilities and be observed to do so.	
• **Student voice and agency** critical to high levels of engagement	• Assist students to become increasingly self-directed over time, and to gain confidence in their ability to complete learning tasks. • Actively seek student feedback about their teaching practice. • Collaborate with students to identify appropriate goals to progress their learning.	• Take responsibility for their learning and are, on the whole, independent and self regulating learners • Give feedback to peers and teachers • Negotiate learning goals and assessment	

Appendix 3 - School Profile

Gowrie St Primary School is located in Northern Shepparton, just 200 metres from the Goulburn River. Our 2020 enrolment is 235 students, representing a diverse range of communities.

32% of our students identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 16% of students have English as an Additional Language.

Our SFOE is 0.71. Some additional demographic data includes:

- Families with active engagement with a support service (e.g. family support, mental health, domestic violence) of some kind account for 60% of total families
- 150 families have a Health Care Card, equivalent to roughly 94% of the school families
- Families with active involvement with Child Protection account for 20% of total families
- 51% of families are in a single-parent household
- 11% of families are formal or informal out of home care arrangements

Gowrie St Primary School's vision is to be a community that takes strength from who we are: our diversity, our cultures and our histories. We will empower our students to seize life's opportunities and overcome its challenges. Working alongside our community is a core part of this and is reflected in many of our programs: our Wellbeing team, our therapeutic play program, our Paediatric clinic, our engagement programs and our Community Hub.

Gowrie St Primary School's values are also very important to us and are part of our School-Wide Positive Behaviours Supports (SWPBS). Our values are Excellence, Determination, Empathy and Pride.

We have a strong focus on Literacy. This includes implementations of Readers and Writers workshops, establishing learning communities of readers and writers, creating literacy rich environments and prioritising oral language development in F-2. Across the school, we have established strong practices around collaboratively planning with colleagues and incorporating relevant high impact teaching strategies within all lessons. Finally, we believe effective use of data is critical, reflected in our 5-weekly assessment cycle, which we use to plan and monitor units of work, teaching sprints and case management.

Some other special and important features of our school include our LOTE program – we are one of a few schools in the state to teach our local Indigenous language – Yorta Yorta – as our LOTE subject to all of our students. A further special part of our school is our on-site Kinder and Occasional Care service.

Appendix 4 - Strengths Based Review Process

The Purpose

Underpinning this Strengths Based Review, are two critical mindsets.

The first is the importance of being explicit about the school's Theory of Change (TOC). A TOC provides a clear understanding of the logic behind why the school does what it does, including how and why certain changes are expected to come about (Earle and Timperley, 2015).

We believe that effective strategies, and efforts to achieve change, must have a clear line of sight between the needs they are responding to, the resources available, the activities undertaken with those resources, and how activities will deliver (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2016). It is important to be explicit about the beliefs and assumptions upon which the strategies are based - a theory approach links theoretical ideas together to explain underlying assumptions and the program's design and plan (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004).

The second mindset is the importance of taking a strengths based approach to evaluating the school's progress for implementing its Theory of Change. It is important that all schools go through a process of continuous improvement and evaluation (Department of Education & Training, 2018). However, we believe it is important to resist the deficit focused approach that can often be taken - one that asks questions such as what outcomes are not being achieved? What is not occuring?

Rather, we wanted to explore what was possible when you focused on the strengths that are present within the school and its community - and critically, what is the nature of the improvement you achieve when you focus upon amplifying and leveraging these? A culture of continuous improvement emboldened by positivity, passion and belief?

Accordingly, three clear objectives for the Strengths Based Review were identified and are presented within this report:

1. To document the school's current Theory of Change (pg. 4-5)
2. To take a strengths-based approach to its evaluation (pg. 6-16)
3. To identify opportunities to further amplify the school and community's strengths (pg. 17)

The Panel

Similar to the Department of Education & Training's existing school review model, a panel was convened to conduct this review and to ensure a diversity of viewpoints contributed to the evaluation of the school's Theory of Change and identification of opportunities to amplify the school's strengths.

The panel for this review consisted of:

School Improvement Team members
Tim Warwick (Acting Principal), Eron Chapman (Assistant Principal), Michelle Conley (Leading Teacher - Behaviour Support), Geri Doornkamp (Acting Leading Teacher - Intervention & Oral Language), Mason Argus (5/6 Teacher & Acting Learning Specialist), Stephanie Hayes (F/1 Teacher & SWPBS Leader), Elise Clarke (5/6 Teacher)

School Council Parent Representatives
Di Tripoli (School Council President), Ane Fotu (School Council Vice President), Emma Aitken

Department of Education & Training Representatives
Marian Lawless (SEIL for Gowrie St PS), Barbara O'Brien (previous DSSI Leadership Partners Executive Principal with Gowrie St PS), Julie Walsh (previous DSSI Leadership Partner with Gowrie St PS).

The Process

A Review process was designed to evaluate the school's progress towards achieving and implementing its Theory of Change.

This was informed by an understanding that continuous improvement across an organisation depends on aligning everyone's behaviour to a collectively owned vision and strategy (Dixon & Palmer, 2020). Alignment will mean that everyone understands how their work contributes towards this strategy and achieving this vision.

To assist with this, a comprehensive set of 'Outputs' to accompany the TOC strategies were developed by the school's School Improvement Team. These were in the form of behaviours and mindsets that could be observed in teachers and students ('Teachers Will', 'Students Will'). They are set out in Appendix 2 (pg. 19).

The following process was followed as part of this review:

1

Documenting the school's Theory of Change

This was completed by our School Improvement Team.
Each SIT Member completed their own draft Theory of Change and then they were reviewed collectively.
Once the Strategies were agreed upon, the team developed the Program Implementation guide, including the agreed evidence - 'Teachers Will' and 'Students Will'.
A briefing was held with the Review Panel to take them through the Theory of Change.

2

Gathering Evidence

Student Case Studies

Teachers and ES collaborated to develop a set of case studies.
One case study was for an 'at risk' student, and focused upon how we were supporting the student and the success we were seeing.
The second case study was for a 'high achieving' student and focused upon the student's mindsets, how we were pushing the student, and the success we were seeing.
These were presented in small groups at a whole staff meeting, with some Review Panel members present.

Surveys

Surveys, focused upon the Theory of Change and the Strengths of the school, were conducted with:

- Year 3-6 students (55 video responses)
- Families (25 written responses)
- Staff (35 written responses)

Reviewing School Improvement Initiatives

Our School Improvement Team members each completed a review of the school improvement initiatives they were responsible for in 2020.
They considered:

- the Key Actions taken;
- evidence of progress (including relevant data);
- which actions were most effective - and what can be learnt from this; and
- next steps.

3

Determining the Strengths and Opportunities

At a meeting of the entire Review Panel, the evidence that had been gathered was presented.

Over the course of this meeting, the Panel continuously reflected upon:

- What evidence was being presented of the Theory of Change's outputs?
- What were the clear strengths of the school's implementation of its TOC?
- What were the clear opportunities for future implementation?

Survey Questions

Student Survey

- What are the best parts of Gowrie St?
- What things at Gowrie Street should we keep doing forever and ever?
- What is the learning like at Gowrie St?
- What do the adults do well at Gowrie Street-teachers and ES?
- What are you proud of about Gowrie St?
- What do you have to do to be a successful student at Gowrie St?
- What do you have a say over at Gowrie St?

Staff Survey

- In your own words, what are the most important things we do as a school to improve outcomes for our students?
- Each year we have some specific improvement priorities included in our AIP. How do some of our current priorities influence your work?
- What are the important mindsets we have as staff about students?
- What contributes to a calm and productive learning environment at Gowrie St?
- How do you contribute to School Improvement at Gowrie St?
- What is critical to strong teaching & learning at Gowrie St?

Family Survey

- What are the strengths of Gowrie St? What are the most important things we do as a school?
- What do you notice about the learning students do at Gowrie St?
- What do you notice about the learning environment and conditions at Gowrie St?

Future Considerations

The findings of the Strengths Based Review will now serve a number of purposes. They allow the school to ensure it is monitoring its progress towards our Theory of Change. To this end, the findings - especially the Opportunities - will play a central role in developing the Annual Implementation Plan for the subsequent year. The Outputs identified as part of the Theory of Change, will be key pieces of evidence to be monitored moving forward.

It should be noted that some aspects of the proposed methodology for this review were not able to be completed due to COVID-19 restrictions. These should form key methods of monitoring further implementation of the Theory of Change. These include learning walks to monitor the proposed Outputs. Due to a number of limitations with gathering data over such an interrupted year, more extensive consideration of data will ideally occur in the future.

References

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