

School Review Report

The MacRobertson Girls High School

8135

South Eastern Victoria Region

Validation Day: 27 July 2023

Fieldwork Day/s: 10 and 11 August 2023

Final Panel Day: 14 August 2023

Strategic Plan 2019-2023

School Principal	Name: Susan Harrap
School Council President	Name: Richard Chan
Senior Education Improvement Leader	Name: Rachel George
School Reviewer	Name: Wendy Larcombe Review Company: Valad Solutions
Challenge Partner 1	Name: Peter Corkill
Challenge Partner 2	Name: Tammy Stubley

1. Public section

1.1 School context	
Location and history	<p>The MacRobertson Girls' High School is located adjacent to Melbourne's Albert Park, in the City of Port Phillip. The school opened on this location in 1934, after originally being part of the co-educational Melbourne Continuation School; the first Victorian state secondary school which divided into the Melbourne Girls' High School and Melbourne High School (for male students) in 1927.</p> <p>The school is named after entrepreneur and chocolate maker, Sir MacPherson Robertson, who donated funds for the construction of the school on its current site.</p>
School facilities	<p>The school's hall, administration area, wellbeing centre, conference and meeting rooms, staff facilities and a number of classrooms are located in the original multi-storey Kingsway building.</p> <p>More recent additions include the two Lakeside wings, which provide a range of classroom spaces, the Learning Resource Centre and library, a gymnasium and theatre, music rehearsal rooms and a function room. The school grounds offer limited outdoor space, with an area referred to as the Grass Patch, along with courtyard and garden areas.</p>
Enrolments	<p>Enrolments at the time of the review were approximately 1190 students. Over the past four years, enrolments have increased by 200 students.</p>
SFO and SFOE	<p>The Student Family Occupation (SFO) index was low and the Student Family Occupation Education (SFOE) index was 0.138 in 2023.</p>
Staff profile	<p>The staff profile includes the principal, three assistant principals and the business manager, six fulltime equivalent (FTE) leading teachers, five FTE learning specialists; 40 FTE level 2 teachers, 27 FTE level 1 teachers, four Instrumental teachers and 28 FTE Education Support Staff (ESS).</p>
Curriculum	<p>The school provides a program for students in Years 9 to 12; with core compulsory subjects in Year 9, a mix of core and elective subjects in Year 10, and senior secondary pathways into the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP).</p> <p>Entry to the school is by a competitive selection process that tests for both achievement and academic potential.</p>
Additional information	<p>The school offers a range of wellbeing services and pastoral care, including a weekly Connect program and provision of Tier One and Tier Two services. There is a strong House culture. Musical and theatrical productions are run in conjunction with Melbourne High School. Japanese, French, Indonesian and German languages are offered at the school, and many students also elect to undertake the study of others through the Victorian School of Languages. The school has had a sister school relationship with the Shinwa Girls' High School in Kobe, Japan for 20 years.</p>

1.2 School and community highlights

Highlight 1

Title: Introduction of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP)

The panel found that a key school community highlight had been introduction and implementation of the IBDP. Throughout the period of the previous Strategic Plan, the school undertook the required professional learning and compliance tasks to be authorised by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO). Significant leadership work was required to achieve this authorisation and to build the school community's understanding of the opportunities provided by this diploma program. In 2022, an inaugural cohort of 21 students commenced IBDP Year 1, and those students will graduate at the end of 2023. In 2023, the Year 1 cohort has increased to 25 students, and the panel heard that 44 students have expressed interest in beginning the IBDP in 2024 at the time of the review, although 14 had actually selected it at this time.

Highlight 2

Title: Introduction and implementation of the Connect program

The school had identified that student survey results indicated need for a focus on improving students' wellbeing and connectedness, particularly after the periods of COVID19 remote learning. It introduced the Connect program with a weekly time allocation and developed a curriculum to offer social-emotional learning and an enhanced careers and pathways program. Students meet regularly with their group of age-peers and a Connect teacher, who offers pastoral care and a regular point of contact for advice and support.

The panel heard that the Connect curriculum has been developed collaboratively by members of the Wellbeing Team and instructional leaders. Students in Years 9 and 10 described the Connect program as a key support for building positive relationships with each other and their teachers as they settled into and progressed through the school.

Highlight 3

Title: Implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

The panel heard about the successful introduction of PLCs in 2023. Work done in 2022 to prepare for this had included development of a PLC Handbook that documented clear, agreed norms and protocols, and provided comprehensive information and guidance on effective inquiry cycle practices. Time for groups to meet had been privileged in the school's professional learning and meeting schedule. Teachers and leaders described how this PLC approach had enhanced their work together. The panel heard that the efficacy and the proficiency of groups were building over time, and that teachers better understood the value and benefits of this collaborative work.

Highlight 4

Title: Vision and Values

Throughout 2021, the school had engaged a consultant to work with its community in developing agreed school values. The panel heard how the values (Community, Growth, Responsibility, Compassion). were launched in August 2021 and were now embedded in daily practice and language. During 2022, the school leadership team developed a new School Vision and a Mission statement. Engagement and input from staff, students and parents assisted in refining and defining the school's core purpose and aspirations. In 2023, this work was continuing with staff; through identification of expected behaviours that demonstrate the values.

1.3 Summary of key review findings

Performance against the School Strategic Plan (SSP) goals and targets

SSP Goal 1	The 2019-2023 SSP for the MacRobertson Girls High School set a goal to maximise student learning outcomes. The panel found that the school had not met the three targets for this goal.
SSP Goal 2	The second goal set for the school was to improve student engagement with their learning. The panel agreed that the two targets had not been achieved and the goal was not met.
SSP Goal 3	The third goal was to develop balanced and resilient students. This goal was also found to be not met, with the two targets not achieved.

Findings against the Terms of Reference Focus Questions

Terms of Reference Focus Question 1: To what extent are the school's curriculum, pedagogical and assessment practices consistent and maximising learning growth for all students?

The panel concluded that there had been a concentrated focus on a guaranteed and viable curriculum, as part of the work done in the introduction of PLCs. This had led to increased use of common assessment tasks, and increased sharing of curriculum resources by teachers. The panel found there was currently no agreed instructional model in place and that teaching approaches were variable. It recommended that the school continue to strengthen pedagogical practices, so as to offer students a predictable, consistent and coherent learning experience.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 2: To what extent is teacher practice data-informed and responsive to students' needs?

The panel found the use of assessment and testing at the school was usually aimed at providing teachers and students with a summative appraisal or score. It heard there was increasing use of rubrics to assist students in self-assessment and reflection on their work, and some use of pre-testing to inform teachers' planning. Provision of feedback for improvement was described as being dependent on the teacher. The panel noted that students' data was collected and used, but that this data could be more accessible to provide a comprehensive profile of each students' learning across subject areas. It recommended a key improvement strategy in the next Strategic Plan be to increase whole school effectiveness in using data to inform and target student growth in learning and wellbeing.

Terms of Reference Focus Question 3: To what extent are wellbeing approaches linked with, reflected in and supported through learning approaches at the school?

The panel found that the school had introduced a number of measures to develop staff, students' and families' capacity to focus on and improve wellbeing. The panel agreed that, as part of its next Strategic Plan, the school should extend and embed its approaches in this area; particularly by explicitly linking wellbeing and instructional practices.

1.4 Summary of areas of focus for the next School Strategic Plan

The school review panel recommends the following areas of focus be captured in the next School Strategic Plan:

- Evidence-based wellbeing approaches linked with instructional practices
- Professional learning communities
- Formative assessment and feedback
- Effective collection and use of data to inform planning and practice
- High Impact Teaching Strategies within an agreed instructional or learner model
- Students' agency in their learning and wellbeing.