



SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

Updated: 08/2018

School number: 0326

School name: Palmer Primary School

School Profile: Palmer Primary School is a vibrant, small community school 60 kilometres from Adelaide. The nearest regional centre is Murray Bridge. Our current enrolment is 28 students, with a Reception-3 class, and a year 4-7 class, consisting of 14 students in each. Palmer Primary School has two classroom teachers, a full-time finance officer, four SSO's who share classroom support and intervention, and a Principal with a teaching load. Our current index of disadvantage is 3. Out of our 22 families attending Palmer this year, only four families reside in Palmer itself, with the remaining 18 families living in Mannum, Murray Bridge and surrounding areas. Our priorities for 2018 are Literacy, Numeracy, STEM, and Powerful Learning. Students continue to be involved in extra-curricular activities including SAPSASA and participating in the Murraylands Partnership priority, Student Learning Communities.

We continue to progress in our pursuit of Literacy excellence. In addition to continuing our 'Literacy loops' literacy block, staff have undertaken training and development in the 'Big six of reading'. This has seen an increased focus on early literacy skills in the JP class, including phonological awareness and phonics, as well as fluency, vocabulary and comprehension across the school. Student data supports our focus on this, with students in the early years making great gains in running record levels, and especially in the number of sight words recognised by sight and also spelt correctly.

In Numeracy, we have our new Whole School Numeracy Agreement, a universal set of daily 'non-negotiables' in every Numeracy block. This has enabled consistency across classrooms and better transition processes between the junior and upper classes.

We have invested in upgrading our IT opportunities for students. We now have two new 'Prowise' computers to replace our 'Mimeo whiteboards' and students experience many ways to engage with this new technology. Students in the JP class especially enjoy the interactive maths and literacy games that allows for greater teamwork and collaboration and the opportunity to reinforce automaticity in an engaging way. Upper Primary students are now beginning to interact with the prowise through apps on the ipad, allowing for instant quizzes and surveys to be conducted at the touch of a screen. Our involvement with the 3D STEM printing in schools project this year has allowed students to develop their designing and 3D creating skills, as well as a continued focus on coding.

Student voice is embraced through PSC- Palmer Student Council, as well as student leaders in the Partnership SLC, and opportunities for students to have input into their learning through five weekly goals and student-driven curriculum. We are working hard every day, to ensure that Palmer Primary School enacts our motto, 'Small School, Enormous Opportunities'.

1. General information

- **School Principal name:** Lauren Poole
- **Year of opening:** 1882
- **Postal Address:** C/O Palmer General Store, Palmer SA 5237
- **Location Address:** Olive Grove Avenue, Palmer, SA 5237
- **DECD Region:** Murraylands
- **Geographical location – ie road distance from GPO (km):** 73 Kilometres
- **Telephone number:** 08 85694050
- **Fax Number:** 08 85694124
- **School website address:** www.palmerps.sa.edu.au
- **School e-mail address:** dl.0326_info@schools.sa.edu.au
- **Child Parent Centre (CPC) attached:** N/A
- **Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service:** No
- **February FTE student enrolment:**

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Reception	0	3	3	1	2
Year 1	6	0	2	3	1
Year 2	3	6	3	3	4
Year 3	3	2	4	4	4
Year 4	3	4	1	4	5
Year 5	5	3	3	1	4
Year 6	3	5	4	4	4
Year 7	1	3	3	8	4
Total	24	26	23	28	28
NEP Students					
A level	0	0	0	1	0
D level	1	1	2	2	2
I level			0	1	1
Aboriginal Students	0	3	2	3	3
School Card	11	10	9	11	17

- **Student enrolment trends:** Numbers have increased steadily since 2016, with many new students enrolling mid-year from local schools. Our percentage of school card holders continues to increase each year.
- **Staffing numbers (as at February census):** There are two classrooms with 1 x 1.0 teacher, 1 x 0.6 and 1 x 0.4, 1.0 Principal, and currently 98.75 hours of SSO time incorporating a full time Administration/Finance Officer, 10 hours district SAPSASA, SWD Support, intervention, classroom support and supporting the Kitchen/Garden program.
- **Public transport access:** None

2. Students (and their welfare)

- **General characteristics**

Currently, 60% of the total school population hold a school card. A high percentage of the school's students come from low socio-economic backgrounds.

- **Student well-being programs**

Wonders of wellbeing is a wellbeing program implemented by Katie, one of our SSO's, of which over 50% of students attend weekly. This focuses on mindfulness, positive affirmation and developing learning resilience. Faye, our PCW, also supports students in their wellbeing.

Our schools became a 'Kids Matter' School in 2015.

- **Student support offered**

Students receive a large amount of classroom support through small class sizes and SSO support. Intervention programs offered include MiniLit, MultiLit and speech programs implemented with guidance from Speech Pathologists.

- **Student management**

In accordance with the Department for Education's School Discipline policy, we have developed our Behaviour Management Policy. Students are encouraged and praised for positive behaviour choices through a variety of ways including class dojo and 'Kindness Kid' and 'Powerful Learner' awards.

We have developed consistent whole school behaviour expectations and procedures for when poor choices are made. TRT's are familiarised with these prior to the day starting, so that students experience consistency at all times. TRT's are well supported through the presence and support of SSO's in the classroom and regular leadership presence.

Restorative practices are utilised wherever possible, and students on individual plans are catered for through learning and behaviour goals and incentives. This is constantly reviewed with the child and family involved.

We work collaboratively with Support Services including Disability Coordinators, Special Educators, CAMHS, Department for Child Protection and Third Party providers.

- **Student government**

Student voice is embraced through weekly 'PSC' – Palmer Student Council, meetings. During these meetings students are actively setting directions for school fundraising, learning programs, special interests and enacting our school values.

- **Special programmes**

Differentiation is one of our greatest strengths at Palmer Primary School, and we pride ourselves on consistently developing our engaging pedagogy. Some of the ways in which we cater for all students include:

- * Developing individual SMARTAR student learning goals with every student every five weeks.

- * Our Literacy Loops program enables teachers to listen to every student read, every day. This also allows for explicit instruction daily.

- *A strong focus on the Big Six of reading – embedded across R-7. Phonics is taught using Jolly Phonics and the associated Jolly Learning resources, and this phonics understanding is strengthened through the implementation of decodable readers.

- *Whole School Numeracy Agreement enabling students to experience real world, problematised situations and authentic and engaging learning opportunities.

- *our STEM focus is continuing to develop, with students encouraged to develop their problem solving skills across curriculum hours, as well as 'Genius Hour' - promoting the critical and creative thinking capabilities.

- *Our Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program continues to develop with students cooking once a fortnight, promoting the importance of living a healthy lifestyle.

3. Key School Policies

- **Site Improvement Plan and other key statements or policies:**

Our 2018 Site Improvement Plan details our priority areas for 2018 and beyond. This is available on our website.

- **Recent key outcomes:**

In 2017 the bigger cohort of year 7 students has enabled us to examine cohort strengths and areas of growth for our year 7 students, and we were pleased that 75% of our year 7 students achieved the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement in both Numeracy and Literacy. Whilst it is pleasing that one of our eight students achieved in the upper two bands, it remains to be a challenge for Palmer Primary School students to achieve in the upper bands and remain there throughout NAPLAN testing in years three, five and seven. When exploring individual student responses from NAPLAN testing, there were some common areas of improvement identified that we have committed to strengthen in 2018. In reading, the area of growth identified across years 3,5 and 7 testing was the ability to infer meaning from texts, both fiction and non-fiction, and also interpreting the

meaning of vocabulary within texts. Both of these areas will be a focus during our 'Literacy loops' guided reading sessions with a range of text types. When examining NAPLAN Grammar and Punctuation student responses, we identified an area of growth being the correct usage of pronouns and speech when there is indirect or reported speech. Again, this will be a teaching focus in 2018. When examining NAPLAN Maths results, the common area of growth was identified to be reading and understanding word problems in multi-step mathematical problems. Supporting our students in understanding to read the mathematical questions and determine what mathematical operation is required will be a focus for 2018.

Progressive Achievement Testing (PAT) was completed by all students in September, and allowed us to measure individual student growth in the areas of Reading Comprehension, Maths, Grammar & Punctuation and Spelling. One of our targets was that PAT Grammar & Punctuation, and PAT Spelling results are consistently improved upon previous years, and this target has been achieved this year. All students showed progress on their Grammar & Punctuation scale score in comparison to 2016 scores who had been at Palmer for both year's testing, and all but four students showed an improvement in the PAT Spelling scale score. In the area of PAT Reading Comprehension, 10 out of the 13 students who sat PAT Reading Comprehension testing in both 2016 and 2017 showed a notable improvement in their scale score, and in PAT Maths, 9 out of the 12 students who sat PAT Maths testing in both 2016 and 2017 showed a notable improvement in their scale score.

Running record data in the early years was largely positive. In the period between the end of January 2017 and beginning of December 2017, every student on levelled readers progressed between 5 and 14 levels. Our continued focus on recognition of the 500 Oxford Sight Words also saw students make outstanding gains in their sight word recognition between January to December of 2017.

4. Curriculum

- **Literacy** – Our Literacy Loops enable all students to participate in guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, writing about reading, and word work in our daily Literacy Block. This is a whole school agreement so that teachers can hear every student read every day. This is vital to ensure that students are developing their reading comprehension skills as well as their decoding skills. We use Jolly Phonics as our synthetic phonics program, and strengthen this with other Jolly Learning resources including Jolly Grammar. Decodable readers are sent home with our JP students so that they are given the chance to strengthen their phonics at home. Assessment across Literacy includes ongoing assessment of reading, phonics check, PAT reading, spelling and vocabulary, moderating writings samples and NAPLAN testing in years 3, 5 and 7.

Numeracy – Our whole school Numeracy Agreement has been developed throughout 2017 and 2018 to ensure that there is consistency in expectations and pedagogy in the teaching of mathematics. Our Whole School Numeracy Agreement is enacted to ensure all learners are provided with an engaging, differentiated, problem rich learning experience that fosters student resilience, creating powerful learners. Assessment across Mathematics includes ongoing

assessment, PAT mathematics annually, moderation of student portfolios and NAPLAN testing in years 3, 5 and 7.

- **Special needs** - Students are well supported at Palmer through the collaborative development of OnePlans, which we create using the 'team around the child approach'. Targeted intervention programs include MiniLit, MultiLit and speech programmes implemented by our SSO's under guidance from third party speech pathologists. Wellbeing, mindfulness and positive behaviour education programs are also implemented on an individual, small group or whole class basis and can include 'The way to A' and the emotional thermometer. We are also in the beginning stages of implementing the emotional and resilience toolbox.
- **Teaching methodology** – Differentiation is our greatest strength here at Palmer and we pride ourselves in this. ICT is used and integrated across learning areas to support, strengthen and deepen student's understandings. SSO's are employed to allow for small group tasks and learning opportunities. Our STEM focus has enabled students to develop their creative and critical thinking skills in authentic learning opportunities, developing 21st century learners.
- **Student assessment procedures and reporting** – We have developed our whole School Assessment and Reporting Policy to ensure that assessments are consistent across the school and that students and parents are constantly kept informed about their learning. Written reports are sent home in terms 2 and 4, and interviews are held in terms 1 and 3. We report using the Australian Curriculum reporting guidelines and promote open communication between parents and staff through the use of class dojo, newsletters, emails, phone calls, meetings and our private facebook page for parents and staff.

5. Sporting Activities

- We implement the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education in both classes, as well as provide opportunities for students to participate in local SAPSASA events, and in our small schools combined sports day. We also regularly hold clinics of various sports throughout each year.

6. Other Co-Curricular Activities

We are a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden school and students participate in cooking lessons fortnightly. We also celebrate Book Week in term 3 of each year, Sports Day, Swimming lessons at Woodside, and host a variety of visiting artists and offer a variety of excursions linked to curriculum areas throughout the year.

7. Staff (and their welfare)

- **Staff profile** - We have two permanent teaching staff who are both 0.6 permanent. One of these works full time in the Upper Class, the Junior class is also taught by a 0.4 contract teacher. The Principal has a teaching load of .4 providing NIT to both classes.
- **Staff support systems** - Staff are involved in setting the directions of our Site Improvement Plan and Operational Plan, and guide the focus for each term's professional development focus in staff meetings.
- **Performance Management** – This is documented each term and recorded onEduPortal, and follows our performance management policy. We believe that transparency, collaboration and consistency is the key to ensuring that students outcomes are achieved for all, and this is shared by all staff.

8. School Facilities

- **Buildings and grounds** – Our grounds are small but well managed. We have two classrooms, a library, an administration building and a general purpose room. Several sheds skirt the oval. Our upper primary classroom was built in 2005 with the Government BER funding. Recent upgrades have included the library being repainted and furnished with new furniture and fixtures in 2017, and the General Purpose room being repainted and getting all new benchtops, sinks and ovens installed at the end of 2017. Current plans for upgrades and improvements include playground redevelopment and upgrading our IT resources.

9. Operations

- **Decision making structures** – Our Palmer Governing Council meet twice a term, and our Palmer Student Council meet every week. Fundraising by families is well supported and enables upgrading of facilities and resources.
- **Regular publications** – We publish our fortnightly newsletters on our school website, and also utilise our private facebook group for communicating with parents, which has been received positively. Our school website also has a parent handbook which contains all the necessary information needed.

10. Local Community

- **General characteristics** – Palmer is a very small town, with a population of just 80. The majority of employment is found outside of Palmer, with our working families seeking employment in a range of industries, including farms, production, and health services.
- **Parent and community involvement** – Parent and Community members support Palmer Primary through various fundraisers throughout the year, the biggest being the Palmer Rockarama and the Hot Rod Show, We also have parents volunteering when they are able to, in the areas of supporting reading and cooking.

- **Feeder or destination schools** – Students usually enrol here from either Mannum Kindergarten, Mt Pleasant & Districts Kindergarten or preschools in Murray Bridge. High School destinations vary, with students choosing between Birdwood High School, Mannum Community College, Murray Bridge High School, or local private High Schools.
- **Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities** – The Palmer General Store is open Monday to Friday and provides students with lunch orders. Murray Bridge is the nearest large regional centre, being 34 kilometres away.
- **Other local facilities** – Opposite to the school is Collier Park, which has a local hall which students regularly use, as well as the Palmer oval.
- **Local Government body** – Palmer is part of the Mid Murray Council.