

2021 Annual Report

Royal Far West School

Royal Far West School

partners in learning



5504

Introduction

The Annual Report for 2021 is provided to the community of Royal Far West School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the Strategic Improvement Plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

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Message from the principal

As Relieving Principal I am proud of what the staff, students and community achieved in 2021. Royal Far West School (RFWS) faced another unusual year where both school operations and teacher practice rapidly changed to meet the continued challenges faced by the COVID - 19 pandemic.

Teachers liaised virtually with students and offered teaching and learning strategies to assist the continuity and re-engagement of education for our students and provided support for staff in rural and remote area schools.

The continued connection with rural and remote staff was valuable in ensuring the safety and well-being of our students. Royal Far West School staff worked on its current school plan to support students and work collaboratively to implement enhanced teaching and learning. The well-being of all stakeholders is a constant focus of our school.

I could not be prouder of the team during the year we will all remember for its capacity to cause rapid, constant change!

Sharon Smithies

Message from the school community

Royal Far West School is an important partner in supporting students and families. The Royal Far West (RFW) Clinical Services supports children in rural and remote areas of New South Wales. During the face-to-face component of a child's journey, they attend RFWS. Clinicians and allied health professionals report that the school is an important partner within their multidisciplinary approach to supporting their clients. All students are parent / carer accompanied.

School vision

Royal Far West School aims to improve the quality of, and the access to, educational services of rural and remote students to learn to their fullest capability, achieve demonstrable learning and wellbeing outcomes in a safe, supportive and healthy environment.

School context

Royal Far West School (RFWS) provides educational services to the clients of the Royal Far West's (RFW) integrated health, education and disability service. All students are from rural and remote New South Wales (NSW)

Students present with a range of medical conditions, including developmental, learning, behavioural, emotional and communication difficulties and disorders. The school works with school aged students, with 25% identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. RFWS respects the cultural safety and identity of enrolled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families. All children are accompanied to RFW, a short stay facility, by a parent or carer. The school works in partnership with families, RFW, rural and remote schools and local services to provide information, consultancy, resource advice, professional development and program assistance. RFWS has a strong focus on building capacity in schools across the state using video conferencing and communication for individual, ongoing student support. Within RFWS sits a NSW Centre for Effective Reading (CER) hub and the Sounds, Words, Aboriginal Language and Yarning (SWAY) team.

The CER Manly Hub is a joint initiative with the NSW Department of Education and NSW Health. CER provides a comprehensive assessment by multi-disciplinary teams including special education teachers, psychologists and speech pathologists.

SWAY is an evidence based oral language and early literacy program based on local Aboriginal knowledge, culture and stories developed by teachers, Aboriginal Education Officers and Speech Pathologists at RFWS. Through professional development and mentoring, SWAY builds the knowledge and capacity of participants to improve oral language and literacy outcomes of children within rural and remote communities.

The development of the 2021-2024 Strategic Improvement Plan was achieved through a comprehensive situational analysis and the results of the 2020 External Valuation . Our genuine consultation process involved representatives from RFW, home school representatives, the local AECG, our Aboriginal Education Officer (AEO) and external providers. At RFWS we will address the needs of students from preschool to Year 12 through personalised learning and differentiation to engage and enable students to continue their learning journey. We will streamline administrative processes to increase the planning for, and support of, student learning time. We will strengthen communication with all key stakeholders. At RFWS collaborative performance processes will ensure flexibility and high quality service delivery for every student and family within our care.

Self-assessment and school achievement

This section of the annual report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework. The Framework is a statement of what is valued as excellence for NSW public schools, both now and into the future. The Framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

Each year, we assess our practice against the Framework to inform our Strategic Improvement Plan and annual report.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine our Strategic Improvement Plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/school-excellence-and-accountability>

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

Elements	2021 School Assessment
LEARNING: Learning Culture	Excelling
LEARNING: Wellbeing	Excelling
LEARNING: Curriculum	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Assessment	Sustaining and Growing
LEARNING: Reporting	Working towards Delivering
LEARNING: Student performance measures	Working towards Delivering
TEACHING: Effective classroom practice	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Data skills and use	Sustaining and Growing
TEACHING: Professional standards	Delivering
TEACHING: Learning and development	Delivering
LEADING: Educational leadership	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School planning, implementation and reporting	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: School resources	Sustaining and Growing
LEADING: Management practices and processes	Sustaining and Growing

Strategic Direction 1: Strengthening processes and practices to support engagement in learning

Purpose

To enhance teachers' capacity to meet the individual needs of all students supporting high levels of engagement within a collaborative, multidisciplinary and complex learning environment.

Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year Strategic Improvement Plan and the achievement of system-negotiated and school-determined targets.

- Personalised Learning
- Time to Teach, Time to Learn

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

SSP Supplementary Funds: \$141,450.00

Professional learning: \$10,500.00

QTSS release: \$34,302.00

Summary of progress

In 2021 staff participated in professional learning in differentiating and annotating teaching and learning programs, adjusting programs to introduce content, adapting teaching strategies and utilising provided resources.

Through participating in professional learning, What Works Best (WWB) and working with the Principal Coach Mentor all staff have completed the CESE reflections tasks for the 8 themes.

This led to increased understanding of the fluid and adaptable teaching and learning programs at RFWS to cater for the various academic and social and emotion needs of RFWS students.

As a result, the focus for 2022 will be on annotations and reflecting on teaching and learning programs as engage and cater to the varied needs our students.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

The annual progress measures indicate the expected annual level of achievement for each improvement measure, aligned to the initiatives, in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
All staff understand the need for reflection on teaching and learning programs. and have identified evidence based best practice Staff strengths and areas for improvement have been identified.	100% of current staff understand the need for reflection on teaching and learning programs. Through the PDP process 100% of current staff identified strengths and areas for improvement
All staff have understanding of NESA requirements. RFWS scope and sequences were reviewed. Staff have enhanced understanding of differentiation through ongoing professional learning based on What Works Best (WWB) documents,	100% of staff have an understanding of NESA requirements. RFWS scope and sequence was reviewed. 100% of staff have engaged in professional learning on What Works Best.
Administrative practices and systems were evaluated to ensure they effectively support school operations	100% of staff have benefited from additional teaching time through streamlining processes and having more effective RFW and RFWS partnership.

and increase time for teaching staff to plan and prepare teaching and learning programs for incoming students.

Strategic Direction 2: Strengthen partnerships and support a collaborative culture

Purpose

To enable a holistic and collaborative approach with our partners including Royal Far West, home schools and parents/carers to ensure best practice optimises support for rural students with complex health and learning needs.

Initiatives

This year our school implemented the following initiatives to support the realisation of the four year Strategic Improvement Plan and the achievement of system-negotiated and school-determined targets.

- Communication
- A Culture of Success

Resources allocated to this strategic direction

School support allocation (principal support): \$14,117.00

QTSS release: \$2,330.00

SSP Supplementary Funds: \$32,305.00

6101 SSP Supplementary Funds: \$32,496.00

Aboriginal background: \$77,661.00

Socio-economic background: \$70,730.00

Summary of progress

In 2021 all classroom teachers have been provided the opportunity to participate in Case Conferences

Through the enhanced awareness of the process and value of the class teacher's input alongside the multidisciplinary teams this has led to the ongoing implementation of the teachers participation in 2022.

This has resulted in strengthened communication across site and deepened knowledge of individual students needs and diagnosis.

In 2022 we will continue to develop systems and practices based on DoE policy in supporting RFWS, RFW, home schools with a focus on welfare, wellbeing, programming, and planning.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

The annual progress measures indicate the expected annual level of achievement for each improvement measure, aligned to the initiatives, in the Strategic Improvement Plan. Schools evaluate their achievement against annual progress measures to determine progress and inform future planning.

Annual progress measure	Progress towards achievement
Classroom teachers and executive participate in, and contribute to, Case Conferences.	100% of teachers contributed to Case Conference for students on the Paediatric Development Program..
RFWS staff facilitate multi-disciplinary Video Conferences to strengthen communication and understanding of individual student needs.	100% of teachers facilitated multi-disciplinary Video Conferences to strengthen communication and understanding of individual student needs.
An MOU is created between RFW and RFWS	An updated Memorandum of Understanding was created between RFW and RFWS.
Trialing a range of tools to accurately determine satisfaction with collaboration to support students.	All staff trialed a range of individual strength based surveys to support a greater understanding of student satisfaction and engagement,

Funding sources	Impact achieved this year
<p>Socio-economic background</p> <p>\$70,730.00</p>	<p>Socio-economic background equity loading is used to meet the additional learning needs of students at Royal Far West School who may be experiencing educational disadvantage as a result of their socio-economic background.</p> <p>Funds have been targeted to provide additional support to students enabling initiatives in the school's strategic improvement plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Culture of Success <p>Overview of activities partially or fully funded with this equity loading include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional staffing to implement [program/initiative] to support identified students with additional needs • equitable access to specialist resources • professional development of staff through [program] to support student learning • employment of additional staff to support [name] program implementation. • resourcing to increase equitability of resources and services • employment of external providers to support students with additional learning needs <p>The allocation of this funding has resulted in: 270 children from 13 schools and preschools across the state participated in the whole class SWAY program with 100 of the students participating in the targeted speech intervention sessions. "80% of students achieved expected end of program outcomes during the targeted intervention program" New schools and centers took part in the 3 day intensive initial training of the SWAY program resulting in educators being empowered and skilled to deliver the language and literacy program based on Aboriginal knowledge, culture and stories.</p> <p>After evaluation, the next steps to support our students with this funding will be: To maintain and expand the SWAY program. The continuation of support to Lightning Ridge, Kooloorra and the on boarding of Roseville Public School. Ongoing support and collaboration with Noah's Inclusions Service in the Shoalhaven and Illawarra Districts.</p>
<p>Aboriginal background</p> <p>\$77,661.00</p>	<p>Aboriginal background equity loading is used to meet the specific learning needs of Aboriginal students at Royal Far West School. Funds under this equity loading have been targeted to ensure that the performance of Aboriginal students in NSW public schools, across a broad range of key educational measures, improves to match or better those of the broader student population, while maintaining cultural identity.</p> <p>Funds have been targeted to provide additional support to students enabling initiatives in the school's strategic improvement plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Culture of Success <p>Overview of activities partially or fully funded with this equity loading include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community consultation and engagement to support the development of cultural competency • employment of specialist additional staff (SLSO) to support Aboriginal students • creation of school literacy resources embedding local language • employment of additional staff to deliver personalised support for Aboriginal students <p>The allocation of this funding has resulted in: 523 students engaged in the SWAY whole class program</p>

<p>Aboriginal background</p> <p>\$77,661.00</p>	<p>84 students were supported through the targeted speech sessions with a Speech Pathologist</p> <p>Educators engaging in the SWAY program indicated they had more capacity and confidence when engaging in authentic teaching and learning experiences based on Aboriginal culture, language and history.</p> <p>The capacity of rural and remote educators to include specific speech strategies within teaching and learning programs was enhanced through observations and participation of sessions led by the speech pathologist.</p> <p>After evaluation, the next steps to support our students with this funding will be:</p> <p>To engage additional speech pathologists to support the expansion of the SWAY program.</p>
<p>QTSS release</p> <p>\$36,632.00</p>	<p>The quality teaching, successful students (QTSS) allocation is provided to improve teacher quality and enhance professional practice at Royal Far West School.</p> <p>Funds have been targeted to provide additional support to students enabling initiatives in the school's strategic improvement plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to Teach, Time to Learn • Communication <p>Overview of activities partially or fully funded with this initiative funding include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional staffing to support staff collaboration in the implementation of high-quality curriculum • additional teaching staff to implement quality teaching initiatives • staffing release to align professional learning to the Strategic Improvement Plan and develop the capacity of staff <p>The allocation of this funding has resulted in:</p> <p>Through effective collaboration, support and guidance staff developed an enhanced understanding of effective pedagogy, including differentiation, strength based curriculum and interest based learning to meet individual student needs.</p> <p>After evaluation, the next steps to support our students with this funding will be:</p> <p>To co-create a school wide teaching and learning program template inclusive of differentiation, evaluation and adjustments.</p>
<p>COVID ILSP</p> <p>\$21,900.00</p>	<p>The purpose of the COVID intensive learning support program is to deliver intensive small group tuition for students who have been disadvantaged by the move to remote and/or flexible learning and were identified by their school as most likely to benefit from additional support in 2021.</p> <p>Funds have been targeted to provide additional support to students enabling initiatives in the school's strategic improvement plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other funded activities <p>Overview of activities partially or fully funded with this targeted funding include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employment of paraprofessionals to deliver small group tuition • providing intensive small group tuition for identified students who were educationally at risk • providing targeted, explicit instruction for student groups in literacy <p>The allocation of this funding has resulted in:</p> <p>The majority of the students in the program achieving significant progress towards their personal learning goals.</p> <p>After evaluation, the next steps to support our students with this funding will be:</p> <p>The continuation and implementation of small group literacy tuition for the next cohort using data sources to identify specific student needs.</p>

Attendance

NSW student attendance data in 2020 is not comparable to previous years due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Government encouraged students to learn from home, where possible, for a seven week period from 24 March to 22 May 2020. During this period, schools monitored engagement with learning to determine whether students were marked present. This changed the attendance measure. There was also some evidence of varied marking practices as schools adjusted to the learning from home period, with some schools recording higher attendance rates while others recording markedly lower rates.

Attendance figures in 2021 were calculated differently to align with the third edition of ACARA's National Standards for Student Attendance Data and Reporting. Changes include treating partial absences over 120 minutes as a half day absence (instead of their actual value, calculated as a proportion of a nominal 6-hour day) and covers all weeks during Semester 1. Prior to 2021, the final week of Term 2 was excluded.

Furthermore, the Department implemented an automated attendance feed (AAF) system in Semester 1 2021. AAF transfers data automatically from third-party attendance management systems to the Department's centralised data warehouse every night. The AAF has significantly improved data quality in 2021, which has affected data comparability with previous years.

Although there were no state-wide or regional lockdowns in NSW during Semester 1 2021, COVID-19 continued to affect student attendance. Analysis of attendance codes showed a change in the structure of absence reasons in 2021.

Management of non-attendance

Attendance at school has a big impact on longer term outcomes for children and young people. When a child is not at school they miss important opportunities to learn, build friendships and develop their skills through play. Regular attendance at school is a shared responsibility between schools and parents. By working together we can have a positive effect on supporting our children and young people to regularly attend school.

Our teachers promote and monitor regular attendance at school and all our schools have effective measures in place to record attendance and follow up student absences promptly. They are guided by the School Attendance policy which details the management of non-attendance.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal(s)	1
Assistant Principal(s)	2
Classroom Teacher(s)	5.88
Teacher Librarian	0.2
School Counsellor	1
School Administration and Support Staff	7.61

*Full Time Equivalent

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce composition

The Department actively supports the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees through the use of identified positions, and scholarship opportunities to become a teacher and by providing a culturally safe workplace. As of 2021, 4.3% of the Department's overall workforce identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People.

Workforce ATSI

Staff type	Benchmark ¹	2021 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation ²
School Support	3.30%	4.40%
Teachers	3.30%	3.20%

Note 1 - The NSW Public Sector Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2019-2025 takes a career pathway approach in that it sets an ambitious target of 3% Aboriginal employment at each non-executive grade of the public sector by 2025.

Note 2 - Representation of diversity groups are calculated as the estimated number of staff in each group divided by the total number of staff. These statistics have been weighted to estimate the representation of diversity groups in the workforce, where diversity survey response rates were less than 100 per cent. The total number of staff is based on a headcount of permanent and temporary employees.

Teacher qualifications

All casual, temporary and permanent teachers in NSW public schools must hold a NSW Department of Education approval to teach. Teachers with approval to teach must be accredited with the NSW Education Standards Authority, and hold a recognised teaching degree. All NSW teachers must hold a valid NSW Working With Children Check clearance.

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Professional learning is core to enabling staff to improve their practice.

Professional learning includes five student-free School Development Days and induction programs for staff new to our school and/or system. These days are used to improve the capacity of teaching and non-teaching staff in line with school and departmental priorities.

Financial information

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021. The Principal is responsible for the financial management of the school and ensuring all school funds are managed in line with Department policy requirements.

	2021 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	489,203
Revenue	2,474,462
Appropriation	2,444,084
Sale of Goods and Services	6,000
Grants and contributions	24,243
Investment income	136
Expenses	-2,197,038
Employee related	-2,111,921
Operating expenses	-85,117
Surplus / deficit for the year	277,424
Closing Balance	766,627

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

Financial summary - Equity loadings

The equity loading data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' line item of the financial summary above.

	2021 SBAR Adjustments (\$)
Targeted Total	0
Equity Total	148,391
Equity - Aboriginal	77,661
Equity - Socio-economic	70,730
Equity - Language	0
Equity - Disability	0
Base Total	1,742,617
Base - Per Capita	23,089
Base - Location	0
Base - Other	1,719,528
Other Total	508,807
Grand Total	2,399,814

Figures presented in this report may be subject to rounding so may not reconcile exactly with the bottom line totals, which are calculated without any rounding.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Our parent community reported positive interactions with the school and were complimentary of the programs delivered by the staff.

The parent community is approached, at the end of their visit, to comment on whether their expectations were addressed from both the school and clinical services' perspective.

How we obtain parent feedback at Royal Far West School will be reviewed in 2022.

Some testimonials from parents and students:

"My child was hesitant to attend school at first but all the staff were very friendly and my son was soon engaged and did not want to leave."

"We gained so much from our time at RFWS and couldn't be more grateful. Our daughter also enjoyed her time on the sand and being spoilt rotten by the teachers in school".

Policy requirements

Aboriginal Education Policy

The responsibility for enacting the Aboriginal Education Policy rests with all Departmental staff. The policy should underpin and inform planning, teaching practice and approaches to educational leadership in all educational settings.

Evidence of effective implementation of the policy included:

- Establishing, building and strengthening relationships with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Aboriginal people and communities.
- Providing, in partnership with Aboriginal people and communities, education which promotes quality teaching, is engaging, and is culturally appropriate and relevant.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will match or better the outcomes of the broader student population.
- Implementation of Personalised Learning Pathways for all Aboriginal students in a school culture of high expectations.

Anti-Racism Policy

All teachers are responsible for addressing incidents of racism and supporting students to develop an understanding of racism and discrimination and the impact these may have on individuals and the broader community. The Principal is responsible for examining school practices and procedures to ensure they are consistent with the policy. The school has an Anti-Racism Contact Officer who is trained to respond to concerns in relation to racism.

Multicultural Education Policy

Teachers are responsible for addressing the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds through their teaching and learning programs. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that school policies, programs and practices respond to the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the school community, and provide opportunities that enable all students to achieve equitable education and social outcomes.