



Riverland Special School

2021 annual report to the community

Riverland Special School Number: 0962

Partnership: Berri & Barmera

Signature

School principal:

Mrs Natalie Coote

Governing council chair:

Minyon Smart

Date of endorsement:

24 March 2022



Government
of South Australia
Department for Education

Context and highlights

The Riverland Special School is located in Berri, and offers students from Reception to Year 12 education based on the Australian Curriculum in a specialised and inclusive programme and context. We focus on a range of individualised learning and development programmes for students to ensure functional skill building in all areas in particular communication, literacy, numeracy, life skills, community participation and positive post school pathways.

The Riverland Special School caters for students with an intellectual disability and multiple disabilities. Our school is focused on providing students with a learning environment where they have the opportunity to thrive, through the development of skills that will support them in their individual learning and life journey. In 2021 the school had 52 enrolments across 7 classes, with 32 staff members providing support across the school.

The 2021 school year was one of significant change at the Riverland Special School with a new principal and staff joining the team, and a focus on our External School Review, Education Standards Board Review, and upgrading of outside learning areas and resources to support a shift in learning and school culture. The school purchased new Interactive Whiteboards for each learning area, upgraded ICT systems, had new Shades installed over the shared playground areas, fencing removed and new fencing installed to create tailored Primary and Senior play areas including the installation of swings in both of these areas and a natural Sand/Water Play space created in the Primary play area. These upgrades have had a significant positive impact on student learning and safety across the school.

Although hampered by restrictions throughout the school year, we were able to ensure that many activities connecting the Riverland Special School to the wider community were able to occur. We were particularly thrilled for our biannual Fashion Parade to take place which was a great success, as well as our Presentation Day which highlighted the achievements of our students throughout the year as well as recognising those graduating who had all spent a significant amount of their schooling at RSS.

We recognise our Governing Council for their ongoing support in ensuring that we have the opportunity to enhance our learning spaces and develop our school in the best interests of the learning and development of all students.

Governing council report

The Riverland Special School commenced the 2021 school year with new staff members, a new principal and the ongoing global pandemic, but our school tackled these challenges and enjoyed another tremendous year of achievements.

Throughout the year, we placed an emphasis on extending Community involvement, ensuring that our students were given a range of opportunities to engage in and showcase their abilities to others and to communicate with the wider community. Activities that have been successful in achieving this despite restrictions include the SALA Exhibition, Gymnastics, Swimming, Lawn Bowls, Aquatics, Remembrance Day, School Sport Cross Country, Cricket, Bike Education, Whoosh, Restless Dance, Girl Guides, Riverland Primary Schools Music Festival, Play Me Piano Project, Splash Day, Patch Theatre, Fashion Parade, as well as additional learning activities such as access to TAFE, Work Experience and regular shopping excursions and life skills learning. Our Student Leaders were active in their organisation of a number of whole school activities such as Footy Colours Day, Karaoke, Book Week Dress Up, and Teddy Bears Picnic.

Our school was also able to end the year with our biannual Fashion Parade and a Presentation Day, which showcased the students hard work and dedication they displayed throughout the year.

Thank you to the students, parents, our teaching staff and our principal for yet another amazing year for our school.

Minyon Smart

Chairperson

RSS Governing Council

Quality improvement planning

The Riverland Special School Improvement Plan for 2021 was developed in line with the previous goals and targets for improvement set in 2019 and 2020 in conjunction with previous leadership, whilst building on the understanding that the SIP runs across the whole school with the inclusion of a third goal linked to SACE. The targeted outcome for Literacy and Numeracy in 2021 focused on students displaying improvement in their learning at a developmentally appropriate level, and the targeted outcome for SACE in 2021 focused on student completion and achievement. Our emphasis across improvement in these areas was on aligning site based actions to achieve continuity in classroom learning structures and agreements, to ensure that all students were provided with the opportunity to engage at their developmentally appropriate learning level.

Literacy Goal included:

- To improve individual students' level of Reading Achievement at a developmentally appropriate level from R-10.

Target: 75% of identified students with low or no progress will make appropriate, incremental and developmental progress in the area of

Reading, Speaking and Listening using ABLES baseline data.

Learning Outcome: 78% of students made incremental or developmental progress, with 15% of students remaining at within the same

developmental level and 7% of students regressing a developmental level.

Numeracy Goal included:

- To improve individual students' ability to apply Number skills at a developmentally appropriate level from R-10.

Target: 75% of identified students with low or no progress will make appropriate, incremental and developmental progress in the area of

Mathematics using ABLES baseline data.

Learning Outcome: 65% of students made incremental or developmental progress, with 22% of students remaining within the same

developmental level and 13% of student regressing a developmental level.

SACE Goal included:

- To increase student achievement in and completion of SACE subjects to support successful post school pathways.

Target: For those students enrolled in SACE subjects in 2021, 100% of students will complete their enrolled subjects, with 5 of 5

achieving their SACE certificate.

Learning Outcome: 90% of students completed their enrolled subjects in SACE with Modified Subjects in 2021, with 4 out of 5

achieving their SACE with Modified Subjects certificate. In addition to this, 3 students achieved TAFE certificates in Hospitality and/or

Horticulture, and 2 students achieved their L License. All students who graduated at the end of the school year, did so with post school pathways.

Key recommendations from Review and Evaluation of the 2021 School Improvement Plan highlights the need to continue with similar goals for 2022; however, focus on refining targets utilising PAT-R and PAT-M data as a source and being very specific, targeted and intentional about the success criteria that we are looking for to ensure students achieve. The Literacy and Numeracy goals and targets for 2022 are directly connected to the ESR Directions with a focus on the review and identification of datasets including ABLES to inform relevant, high-impact goals for improvement; with the actions focused on developing, implementing and sustaining a whole-school approach to classroom observations and feedback to collectively build teacher capacity across the school.

Aboriginal Learner Achievement Leaders' Resource (ALALR)

Key element focused on for school improvement in 2021: Quality Teaching

New improvement actions implemented via the Aboriginal Learner Achievement Leaders' Resource to raise the literacy and numeracy achievement Aboriginal learners:

The Riverland Special School focused on supporting Aboriginal learners by creating environments in the classroom and across the school to enable consistent high-quality teaching practice to occur, ensuring all students achieve learning outcomes at their developmental level. Teaching staff focused on creating tailored made learning environments that support literacy and numeracy development of individual students increasing the use of visual supports, communication tools and the inclusion of cultural specific learning tasks in planning, to increase engagement and support wellbeing of Aboriginal learners at school. Staff were engaged in supporting Aboriginal learners through the development of targeted One Plan goals in Literacy, Numeracy and Wellbeing, and collaboratively created documentation to identify and provide adequate support for those students deemed at risk. Progress of student One Plans and goals were shared with families and key stakeholders, and a regular schedule of review was implemented to inform the need for new goals and to ensure consistent tracking and monitoring for progress and achievement. The key element of the ALALR known as Tracking and Monitoring Growth and Achievement will be the focus for 2022.

Improvements achieved in literacy and numeracy outcomes for Aboriginal learners (Including individual student successes):

As a result of the improvement actions implemented for Aboriginal learners at the Riverland Special School, students displayed engagement in their classroom and whole school learning environments in a more positive way, translating into an increase in attendance of Aboriginal learners during the 2021 school year to an average of 77% across the year. Aboriginal learners engaged in literacy and numeracy learning in the classroom with a focus on the development and achievement of targeted individual One Plan goals, with 80% of students achieving their individual learning goals in Literacy and 76% of students achieving their individual learning goals in Numeracy. When considering Wellbeing goals, these students displayed an increase in functional communication at school with staff, particularly when speaking about challenges they were experiencing within their family and community.

School performance comment

The Riverland Special School curriculum is structured using the Ability Based Learning and Educational Supports programme - ABLES (Pre-Foundational), the Australian Curriculum (Foundation to Year 10) and SACE with Modified Subjects (Year 10, 11 and 12). Utilising all three of these curriculum, learning and assessment platforms, allows us to ensure that we provide a scope of developmentally appropriate learning opportunities and relevant curriculum to all of our students at an individual level.

Each student at the Riverland Special School has a One Plan. These are overarching documents that address students individually and link directly to ABLES, the Australian Curriculum, and/or SACE. A students One Plan focuses on the development of targeted individual learning goals that support them to achieve in areas of most importance for learning and life. These goals can be linked to Literacy, Numeracy, Communication, Functional Life Skills, Health and Personal Care, Social Skills, Emotional Regulation or Behaviour. One Plans allow us to ensure that we provide a scope of developmentally appropriate and individualised learning opportunities for all students, linked to the curriculum. These are regularly reviewed and extended where possible to ensure that students are displaying consistent growth and achievement in their goals.

In the 2021 school year, 80% of Riverland Special School students engaged in the PAT-Reading (PAT-R) and PAT-Mathematics (PAT-M) tests for the first time. All individual student tests were reassigned a lower level by teachers based on the level in which they were working at school, to enable positive engagement and increase students capacity to understand and experience success with the testing tool. Inclusion in the PAT-R and PAT-M tests has provided clear baseline data about the Literacy and Numeracy capacity of each individual student, and a clear pathway for testing in 2022 and determining growth and development in the future. School Improvement Plan targets for the 2022 year will be based on PAT data, with the expectation that some students will be reassigned the same level or higher, in order to accurately determine growth and achievement since 2021.

In 2021, 4 students successfully completed and achieved the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE with Modified Subjects), with one student graduating having not enrolled in SACE throughout their senior schooling at the Riverland Special School. This continues the 100% completion rate for RSS Year 12 SACE students who undertake this pathway for their schooling.

Attendance

Year level	2018	2019	2020	2021
Primary Other	82.2%	82.0%	77.0%	74.9%
Secondary Other	86.5%	81.8%	84.4%	83.4%
Total	84.0%	81.9%	80.4%	78.9%

Data Source: Site Performance Reporting System (SPER), Semester 1 attendance.

NOTE: A blank cell indicates there were no students enrolled.

Attendance comment

The Riverland Special School ensures that policies and procedures for non-attendance are adhered to, and staff are consistent in following up on student attendance on a regular basis. Parents/carers are reminded throughout the year in regards to the attendance expectations at school, whole school attendance data is included within the school newsletter, and parents are provided with a report of attendance twice per year in the student reports. Student attendance totals were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the course of the 2021 school year. As many of our students and families have additional health concerns, it was important to recognise the impact of this on the community and provide understanding and support to those families who opted for students to learn from home.

Behaviour support comment

The Riverland Special School has a Behaviour Support Policy which is underpinned by the ethos that all behaviour is communication. As a school we support student behaviour in a proactive way, providing all students with a safe and supportive environment to express their needs and wants. We work with students to assist them to de-escalate at times of high emotion, anxiety or when there is a communication barrier, and take into account each student's individuality and disability when supporting them through any challenging situations. The Governing Council are kept informed of incidents of Bullying or Challenging Behaviour occurring within the school and the processes being undertaken in response to these incidents.

Parent opinion survey summary

The Riverland Special School provided parents / caregivers with the opportunity to feedback to the school in a variety of ways throughout the year, in particular through the use of the DfE Parent Engagement Survey with access available online. The feedback from this survey is thoroughly considered, and enables the school to plan specific improvement outcomes based on this information to best support students and families into the future.

In 2021 we had 17 parents / caregivers respond to the survey in comparison to 10 in 2020, which is a great increase in feedback for the staff and school to work with moving forward.

Of the 17 parents / caregivers that completed the survey, 100% agreed or strongly agreed that:

- People including teachers and students respect each other at this school and that children are important at this school.
- Parents receive enough communication from the school and that the methods of communication are effective.
- Education is important for their child and students are encouraged to learn at the school.
- Parents talk with their children about what happens at school.

Of the 17 parents / caregivers that completed the survey, 80-90% agreed or strongly agreed that:

- Useful discussions are had with the school regarding student learning.
- Teachers provide useful feedback and the opportunity for parents to have input into their child's learning.
- The school encourages parents to help students to learn.

Areas for improvement identified from the feedback included a need to focus on supporting parents about how to help with their child's learning, providing tips about how to help students learn at home, and giving additional support to equip parents to plan for what their child will do after school. Although these areas were between 70-80% agreed or strongly agreed, it is evident that parents / caregivers are wanting some additional support to work with their child to support their learning outcomes and broaden future plans and post school options.

Intended destination

Leave Reason	Number	%
PE - PAID EMPLOYMENT IN SA	1	16.7%
U - UNKNOWN	5	83.3%

Data Source: Education Department School Administration System (EDSAS) Data extract Term 3 2021. Data shows recorded destinations for students that left the school in the previous year.

Relevant history screening

The Riverland Special School is compliant with the requirements for all Department for Education employees and volunteers to have a current relevant history screening or working with children check, in order to work with children and young people in SA government educational sites and services. All relevant staff documentation is recorded and updated regularly, with a copy stored for each staff member employed on site. All relevant documentation for volunteers or visitors to the site is also stored and updated as required. The Department for Education screening guide is used to determine the type of screening required, when utilising volunteers within the school setting.

Qualifications held by the teaching workforce and workforce composition

All teachers at this school are qualified and registered with the SA Teachers Registration Board.

Qualification Level	Number of Qualifications
Bachelor Degrees or Diplomas	18
Post Graduate Qualifications	8

Data Source: Department for Education HR Management Reporting System, extracted Term 3 2021 .

Please note: Qualification data is indicative only and reflects what has been recorded in the Department's HR system. Staff who have more than 1 qualification will be counted more than once in the above qualification table. Therefore the total number of staff by qualification type may be more than the total number of teaching staff.

Workforce composition including Indigenous staff

	Teaching Staff		Non-Teaching Staff	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Full-Time Equivalents	0.0	10.8	0.0	13.7
Persons	0	13	0	20

Data Source: Department for Education HR Management Reporting System, extracted Term 3 2021 .

Financial statement

Funding Source	Amount
Grants: State	\$3,119,481
Grants: Commonwealth	\$3,100
Parent Contributions	\$21,250
Fund Raising	\$5,020
Other	\$17,463

Data Source: Education Department School Administration System (EDSAS).

2021 School Annual Report: Tier 2 Funding Report*

*Tier 2 funding provides additional resources to support students who are unlikely to obtain the desired outcomes without further support.

Tier 2 funding section	Tier 2 category (where applicable to the site)	Briefly describe how the 2021 funding was used to improve the relevant Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) outcomes	Outcomes achieved or progress made towards these outcomes
Targeted funding for individual students	Improved wellbeing and engagement	Additional staffing was employed to increase 1:1 student support in the classroom and during break times, to support improved behaviour, attendance and achievement of individual student goals.	Increase in student self-regulation due to additional support.
	Improved outcomes for students with an additional language or dialect	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	Inclusive Education Support Program	Additional staffing was employed to increase the ratio of students to staff in the classroom, to support learning of all students with a disability across the school.	Improvement in individual developmental growth and achievement of learning goals
Targeted funding for groups of students	Improved outcomes for - rural & isolated students - Aboriginal students - numeracy and literacy including early years support First language maintenance & development Students taking alternative pathways IESP support	Provide students with access to learning inside and outside of the classroom environment that complements and enhances areas of curriculum learning and development such as Literacy, Numeracy, Communication and Functional Life Skills. Purchase of Literacy and Numeracy resources such as reading programmes, hands on manipulatives, sensory resources and professional learning courses, as well as support participation in subsidised excursions.	Enhanced environments and resources to support learning across the school, and positive outcomes through participation in extra-curricular activities.
Program funding for all students	Australian Curriculum	Staff participation in collaborative structuring of whole school agreements to support teaching and learning in the Australian Curriculum and ABLES with a focus on Literacy, Numeracy and schoolwide differentiation.	Consistent whole school structures for teaching and learning implemented.
	Aboriginal languages programs Initiatives	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	Better schools funding	Development of key learning areas to ensure safe and intentional spaces to support learning across the school with a focus on Communication, Oral Language, Social and Emotional development and Positive Behaviour.	Significant number of students made incremental developmental progress in ABLES.
Other discretionary funding	Specialist school reporting (as required)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	Improved outcomes for gifted students	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

