



Riverland Special School

2022 annual report to the community

Riverland Special School Number: 962

Partnership: Berri & Barmera

School principal:

Mrs Natalie Coote

Signature

Governing council chair:

Ms Minyon Smart

Date of endorsement:

20 March 2023



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 future 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 2022 the school had 54 enrolments across 8 classes, with 35 staff members providing support across the school.

The 2022 school year was one of continuing significant change at the Riverland Special School with new staff joining the team in Administration, Finance and in the classrooms, with many Teaching and SSO staff new to the school. There was a clear focus on the continued upgrade of outside learning areas and the re-structure of internal learning areas throughout the school, to provide students with suitable spaces to support the development of individual self-regulation skills and encourage positive transitions. The school was awarded with a Schools Plus grant which financially supported the schools contribution for the development of two key Multi-Sensory areas. This enabled the purchase of appropriate sensory equipment including a sensory projection system, creating environments with a clear purpose to support a range of sensory needs for all students. In addition to this we had new Shades installed within the Primary play area, a complete grounds upgrade in the Senior play area, significant vegetation clearing to create safe learning spaces across the school, and continued our ICT upgrades to support student learning. All of these upgrades have had a significant positive impact on student learning and safety across the school.

Although hampered by restrictions for the first six months of the school year, we were able to ensure that many activities connecting the Riverland Special School to the wider community were still able to occur. We held our first Open Day which was a great success, with many families and community members coming to visit the school for the first time and witness our senior students leading the school tours with pride. We were excited to be able to hold our biannual Riverland Special School Prom and this year invite students from the Berri Regional Secondary College Special Class to join our students and staff for a wonderful night. Another highlight was hosting James Parker, a visiting artist, who came and spent a week with the students to create some outstanding murals to be displayed within the school. We finished the year with our Presentation Day which highlighted the achievements of our students throughout the year as well as recognising our one graduating student.

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

Governing council report

Wow, it's hard to believe that another year has past. However, I am not surprised at our schools successes and overall brilliance.

2022 was a very busy year and our school celebrated a first. The Riverland Special School held its first Open Day. Parents, family members and the public were invited to see our school and have a peek at how we do what we do. It was a complete success with a higher than expected attendance and the decision to hold another in 2023. We also commenced information sessions about NDIS with Mission Australia.

On top of these amazing events we participated in our normal yearly activities; SALA, The Festival of Music, sporting events and celebrated our Senior students at PROM. Our school yard was given some TLC with a few areas made over and playground upgrades. And as if these many and varied incredible accomplishments weren't enough we celebrated certain success with staff and students winning awards.

To say that the Governing Council is proud is an understatement. Congratulations and thank you all for another mind blowing year.

Minyon Smart

Chairperson

RSS Governing Council

Quality improvement planning

The Riverland Special School Improvement Plan for 2022 was developed in line with the previous goals for improvement set in 2019-2021 and consideration of the key recommendations from the Review and Evaluation of the 2021 School Improvement Plan. The review process highlighted the need to refine the targets for improvement with the decision to utilise PAT-R and PAT-M data as the source to determine student progress. Connected to this was the recommendation to ensure that the success criteria was specific, targeted and intentional so that teachers could identify what they were looking for to support determination of student growth and progress, in addition to the information gained from PAT diagnostic testing. The target outcome for Literacy, Numeracy and SACE in 2022 focused on students improvement at a developmentally appropriate level and the use of diagnostic PAT data to determine this improvement.

Literacy Goal included:

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

Target: Students will improve their reading scale score as measured by PAT-R data.

Learning Outcome: 100% of students displayed negligible if any growth with some displaying negligible regression when comparing individual students PAT-R data sets from the 2021 and 2022 school years.

Numeracy Goal included:

- To improve individual students Number understanding at a developmentally appropriate level from R-10.

Target: Students will improve their numeracy scale score as measured by PAT-M data.

Learning Outcome: 100% of students displayed negligible if any growth with some displaying negligible regression when comparing individual students PAT-M data sets from the 2021 and 2022 school years.

SACE Goal included:

- To increase individual students SACE Achievement and Completion at a developmentally appropriate level from Years 10-12 .

Target: Students will demonstrate improvement in their learning as measured by PAT-R and PAT-M data.

Learning Outcome: 100% of students displayed negligible if any growth with some displaying negligible regression when comparing individual students PAT-R and PAT-M data sets from the 2021 and 2022 school years.

Review and Evaluation of the 2022 School Improvement Plan clearly highlights that PAT is an unreliable and inconsistent source of data to display improvement or growth for students with an intellectual disability. In addition to this, whilst making sense to the teaching staff when reviewing student learning and achievement against ABLES and the Australian Curriculum, the success criteria within the 2022 School Improvement did not connect directly with the PAT diagnostic testing and therefore could not be accurately represented within the target outcomes. Key recommendations from the Review and Evaluation process again highlights the need to continue with similar goals for 2023; however, focus on refining targets using key assessments as agreed upon by teaching staff. This will ensure that the success criteria is set according to the assessment and will clearly define the level of growth, achievement and outcomes for individual students. In 2023, whole school agreements will ensure that all students are engaging with consistent assessment and data collection to enable a narrow and deep focus on the development of Reading Achievement and Number Understanding for all students, in turn supporting SACE achievement and completion. The Literacy and Numeracy goals and targets for 2023 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 2022: Continuity of Learning

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 scaffolding continuity of learning in the classroom and across the school to enable consistent and connected skill development to occur. Teaching staff focused on creating teaching and learning experiences that support the literacy and numeracy development of individual students incorporating hands on learning and explicit teaching whilst 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 teaching strategies and adjustments within One Plan goals, 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.

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 an increase in retention of skills learnt throughout the year and knowledge of how to use their learning in context. There was an increase in positive engagement of students in the classroom and whole school learning environments, translating into an increase in attendance of Aboriginal learners towards the end of the year (post-Covid) to an average of 79% 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 78% of students achieving their individual learning goals in Literacy and 80% 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 related to their skills and abilities within the correct context.

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 student's 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 2022 school year, 80% of Riverland Special School students engaged in the PAT-Reading (PAT-R) and PAT-Mathematics (PAT-M) tests for the second time. The majority of individual student tests were reassigned at the same level as the 2021 school year or lower, based on the achievement of students during baseline PAT testing. The level in which students were assigned was also 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 in 2021 provided clear baseline data about the Literacy and Numeracy capacity of each individual student, and as such created a clear pathway for testing in 2022 and the hope for determining growth and development. However, as addressed in 'Quality Improvement Planning' within this document, the data comparing student growth and achievement results from 2021 and 2022 was inconsistent and unreliable. In addition it did not provide a clear picture of growth for individual students or link directly to the sequence of learning information within the success criteria. School Improvement Plan targets for the 2023 year will be based on student growth and achievement using key assessments, with both baseline and growth data tested on individual students within the same year to assist with both a measure and outcome of growth.

In 2022, one student successfully completed and achieved the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE with Modified Subjects), with two students leaving school 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 their pathway for their schooling.

Attendance

Year level	2019	2020	2021	2022
Primary Other	82.0%	77.0%	75.3%	71.1%
Year 12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Secondary Other	81.8%	84.4%	83.4%	70.5%
Total	81.9%	80.4%	79.1%	70.8%

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 2022 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 2022, we had 15 parents / caregivers respond to the survey in comparison to 17 in 2021, which is fairly consistent feedback for the staff and school to work with moving forward.

Of the 15 parents / caregivers that completed the survey, 90-100% agreed or strongly agreed that:

- Education is important for their child and students are encouraged to learn at school.
- Parents receive enough communication from the school and that the methods of communication are effective (the preferred method being Class Dojo).
- Teachers provide useful feedback and the opportunity for parents to have input into their child's learning.
- Parents talk with their children about what happens at school.

Of the 15 parents / caregivers that completed the survey, 70-90% agreed or strongly agreed that:

- People at the school are respectful and that teachers and students are respectful to each other.
- Useful discussions are had with the school regarding student 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, giving clarity around what the learning expectations are at school, and providing additional support and information 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 pathways.

Intended destination

Leave Reason	Number	%
PA - PARENTING/CARER	1	50.0%
U - UNKNOWN	1	50.0%

Data Source: Education Department School Administration System (EDSAS) Data extract Term 3 2022. 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 2022 .

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 2022 .

Financial statement

Funding Source	Amount
Grants: State	\$3,010,196
Grants: Commonwealth	\$34,472
Parent Contributions	\$20,571
Fund Raising	\$0
Other	\$9,206

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

2022 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 2022 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 SSO staff were employed to increase 1:1 student support in the classroom and during break times, for improved behaviour, attendance and the achievement of individual student goals and outcomes. Funding was also utilised to support the purchase of sensory equipment for the development of multi-sensory spaces within the school, assisting with improved engagement in learning, transition, and an increase in individual students self-regulation strategies to support wellbeing.	Across the school, students demonstrated an increase in general wellbeing provided with access to tailored spaces designed to support the development of self-regulation skills and decrease sensory load. Given additional staffing within the school, students were able to more readily access these areas when required, and as a result more support to positively transition back into the classroom environment and increase engagement in learning.
	Improved outcomes for students with an additional language or dialect	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	Inclusive Education Support Program	Additional SSO staff were employed to increase the ratio of staff to students in the classroom and during break times, to support the learning and safety of all students with a disability across the school. Funding was also utilised to ensure that students requiring 2:1 support to meet additional needs such as health and personal care, are provided with the required staffing ratios to adequately and safely provide care and support.	Across the school, students were provided with the staffing ratios they require both in the classroom learning environment as well as in the outside play environment, to support individual student safety and the development of positive learning outcomes. Given additional staffing within the school, students were able to access support as required for more complex additional needs and specific care supports.
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	The funding provided students with access to resources to support the achievement of individualised and targeted learning outcomes both inside and outside of the classroom environment, complementing and enhancing areas of key curriculum learning such as Literacy, Numeracy, Communication, Functional Life Skills and supported participation in Excursions and Community Access activities. Literacy and Numeracy resources were purchased such as targeted reading programmes, hands on manipulatives, sensory resources and professional learning courses. Communication and Life Skills resources were developed within the upgrade of outside learning areas.	Across the school, learning environments were enhanced and redeveloped with a focus on the creation of key areas to support the positive learning and engagement of all students across the school. Outcomes experienced through participation in extra-curricular community based activities created an increased sense of belonging for students within the school and wider community.

<p>Program funding for all students</p>	<p>Australian Curriculum</p>	<p>Staff participated in collaborative consultation and structuring of whole school agreements to support teaching and learning connected to the Australian Curriculum and ABLES with a focus on Literacy, Numeracy and school-wide structure and differentiation. Engagement in professional learning with the Curriculum Lead and Curriculum Implementation Leader supported staff knowledge and understanding of the Units of Work and engagement in implementation to support targeted and individualised student learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Across the school, an increase in the consistency of teaching and learning through engagement in whole school structures has begun to gain traction. Teaching staff have been focused on the use of the Australian Curriculum and ABLES to support key planning for individual student goals as well as to support their classroom teaching routines for individuals and small cohorts of students. This will continue to progress with the further development of whole school initiatives.</p>
<p>Other discretionary funding</p>	<p>Aboriginal languages programs Initiatives</p> <p>Better schools funding</p> <p>Specialist school reporting (as required)</p> <p>Improved outcomes for gifted students</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p> <p>The funding provided students with access to resources to support the achievement of individualised and targeted learning outcomes in the key areas of Communication, Oral Language, Social and Emotional development and Positive Behaviour. Funding was utilised to support the purchase of key AAC communication resources and professional learning to support active and positive communication within the whole school environment, assisting with improved engagement in learning, transition, social understanding, regulated behaviour and an increase in individual students self-regulation strategies to support wellbeing.</p> <p>Not Applicable</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p> <p>Whole school learning environments were enhanced and redeveloped with a focus on the implementation of key communication structures and supports to enable positive learning and engagement of all students across the school. Outcomes experienced through the access to and use of a wider range of AAC devices created an increased sense of connection and understanding for students within the school and wider community.</p> <p>Not Applicable</p> <p>Not Applicable</p>

