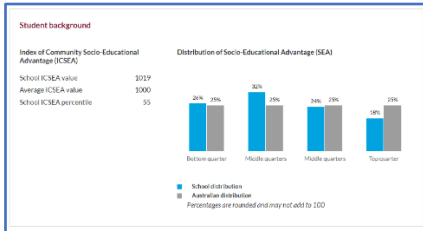
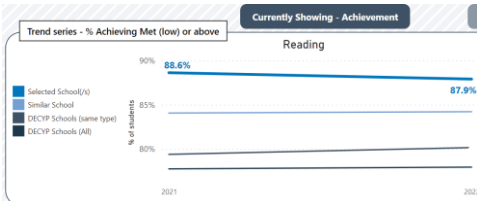


Context Statement

Riverside is a large regional primary school of 797 students RPS has a diverse community, with 26% of students being in the bottom quartile of disadvantage. Over half of our population are in the bottom 2 quartiles and despite this our data remains well above the achievement of all Tasmanian schools and similar schools



Please note PAT R data for 2022



Our school is a professional learning community with a focus on school improvement and improved learning outcomes achieved through high expectations and student engagement in an engaging curriculum. Students are encouraged to be thinkers, communicators, researchers, collaborators and self-managers through an inquiry-based approach. The school values focus on respect, excellence, resilience, learning and equity and our students are encouraged to be caring, inclusive and responsible citizens.

Key statements we agree/challenge & why

Agree:

- We agree with the principle key themes of Equity, consistency, the learner is at the centre, and underpinning work with evidence-based research
- Reading is an issue of social justice and is a fundamental human right
- There are six components of reading known as The Big 6 (However, we note that some components of the big six are inconsistently labelled). We also note that the Active View of Reading (Duke and Cartright) is a more current model of reading than the Big Six. The Active View of Reading incorporates the components of the Big 6, in addition to others such as motivation and engagement. It also expands upon the component of Comprehension and is therefore a more balanced and current model of the acquisition of reading.
- We agree to the use of phonics as part of a wider, richer balanced literacy program. Explicit instruction of phonics definitely has a place, particularly in the Prep-2 grade groups, however this should never be advocated as a step-by-step scripted program or 'one size fits all' approach. The DECYP scope and sequence provides an excellent guide to the phonics instruction required at each of these levels and allows for teacher knowledge and experience to develop the appropriate strategies to suit the students in the class. Synthetic phonics programs are another resource to add to the toolbox of pedagogical practices, however they should never be advocated as the only tool in the toolbox.

Challenge:

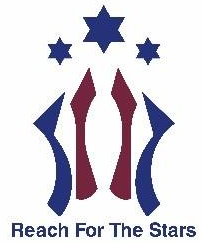
- The paper opens by stating that ‘literacy involves listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing, creating texts and using language for different purposes’ in the opening paragraph, however it goes on to only unpack strategies for reading. What is the plan for the teaching of the other components of literacy? It is our belief that our state-wide data will be impacted in other areas of literacy as a result of this narrow focus.
- We are concerned that the body of evidence being used to build this framework was designed for those students experiencing difficulty with reading or those ‘at risk’. Our school data reflects that our model using a range of differentiated approaches and the valuing of reciprocity between reading and writing works for the majority of our students. We recognise that those who experience difficulty require a different model of intervention (i.e., for some it may need to be more explicit around the systematic teaching of phonics).
- We have an issue with the use of programs designed specifically for students with dyslexia and learning disabilities being applied to all. We are challenged by the use of decodables as the primary resource in this approach to the teaching of reading. They are one type of book to support beginning reading. Many do not engage the reader and contain irrelevant text purely because the words can be sounded. They do not support an authorial style of promoting writing.
- We are concerned about the use of the terminology of SOR being used by publishers to develop and promote highly scripted ‘non evidence based’ programs as a one size fits all approach to the teaching of reading. There is no quality assurance around many of the websites linked to the Science of Reading – our concern is that schools will be unregulated in their adoption of these as their school practices
- Footnote 43 affirms our concern of unregulated use of ‘SOR’. This links to a scope and sequence document created by ‘Mrs Winter’s Bliss’ a random website from a non-practising teacher with no scientific background who also sells theme based busy work sheets!
- The use of decodable texts as the main source of texts in early instruction is of great concern. The actual purpose of reading is to understand, and young readers need a meaningful context to support this understanding. The science of reading demonises the use of any other strategies other than ‘sounding out’. The result of which makes quality books inaccessible to students who require cuing in order to make meaning.
- We believe that pedagogy is what make the difference. The only pedagogical strategy mentioned in the paper is the Gradual Release of Responsibility. The approach focuses totally on the content and sequence of delivery rather than how to deliver it. If you have unskilled teachers with limited pedagogical knowledge using this approach, students will fall through the cracks.
- We believe that engagement and enjoyment of literacy are of the utmost importance. This is supported by The Active View of Reading model (Duke and Cartwright) that shows Motivation and Engagement as key components that are needed in order for reading to be successful. We believe that a prescriptive framework for the teaching of reading that has limited scope for flexibility and doesn’t respond to the needs of the students will impact the motivation and engagement of many in the classroom setting.
- The paper talks about the need for consistency between schools in an effort to provide workload benefits for teachers particularly for those moving between schools. This fails to recognise that school contexts are very different and therefore differentiation between schools must apply. Children’s home experiences are vastly different; hence the socio-economic factor plays a big part in the vastly different needs of students. We cannot apply a one size fits all approach for all schools because the needs in each context are vastly different.



Tasmanian
Government

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What a successful school sees as evidence-based practice

Key practices embedded at RPS include:

- A set of embedded English Schoolwide Expectations (non-negotiables) that include teacher responsibilities, and what students will be involved in.
- Dedicated reading blocks every morning where explicit teaching, small group and individual instruction occurs
- School wide practices of Guided Reading (Fountas and Pinnell model) P-3. These 30 min x 4 times per week sessions are inclusive of Word study (phonemic awareness, phonics, and morphology teaching), High Frequency word recognition, benchmark tracking using PM assessment
- Shared Reading
- Modelled Reading
- Reciprocal Reading
- Literature Circles (Gr 5 and 6)
- Read Alouds
- Focused independent reading

Supporting these key practices are the following strategies

- Explicit teaching of comprehension
- Explicit instruction with quality literature (referencing the 4 Resources model and QAR)
- Anchor Charts displayed for comprehension and word study
- Reading goals for all students not reaching MET LOW on PAT R
- Using quality literature for phoneme/grapheme inquiry

Other supporting programs include

- Home reading program
- Reading club (before school intervention)
- Use of buddy classes to read with students
- Online subscriptions to erabooksonline (formally Wings Online)/ Literacy Planet

Assessment includes:

- Regular monitoring of reading progress over the year however data is collected once per term for analysis
- Early Years – Gr 6 PAT R
- Letter, sound assessments, phonological awareness tracking, Gr 1 phonic test, intervention students have a sound/phonic check

Key intervention strategies used for students not reaching benchmark

- 4 x 30 min intervention with a specialist reading teacher per week (students work in groups of 6 at same level)
- Key strategies used in intervention are phonological awareness strategies, decoding, decodable texts, high frequency word lists

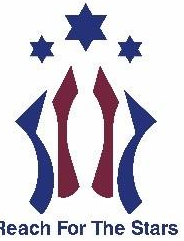
- According to the paper we are a successful school as per our NAPLAN and PAT results.
- We have a focus on the big six (but not synthetic phonics)



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Implications if we go ahead:

- What does this look like in a classroom? Where are the pictures of practice?
- Where is the balance in this approach? Can teachers use the framework in a flexible manner that is responsive to the children they are teaching?
- What happens to all of the resources and successful practices we have developed that will no longer align to the Government policy?
- How will this approach be differentiated across different school contexts?
- What happens to those students who acquire literacy skills easily? how are they to be catered for?
- How are we supporting average and above average Tasmanians to meet their reading needs?
- How do we measure reading levels? (will there be statewide consistency with this?)
- How do we measure comprehension?
- What resources will we use to teach children how to read? Will there be an expectation of consistency with this?

Summary Statement

Riverside Primary School believe the approach being advocated by the Literacy Advisory Panel is restrictive and will not allow for our school to continue to perform at the level we currently do.

Achievement in literacy is defined not just by reading. You cannot be functionally literate using just a reading score. We value the work we do in writing. High expectation schools work to deliver success in all areas of literacy. Let us be professionals with a range of practices in our 'teacher toolbox'.