



# SCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

Updated:

**School number:** 0326  
**School name:** Palmer Primary School  
**School Profile:** Reception to Year 7

Palmer Primary School is a small rural town approximately 60kms from Adelaide. It is situated about 15kms from the River Murray, with its nearest regional centre is Murray Bridge.

The school has 26 students from Years Reception to Year 7. Students are divided into 2 classes, one for years R- 3 and one for Years 4-7. We have one SSO employed as a Finance Officer/Office Manager and three who share classroom support.

Many families live out of town, travelling in by car from nearby farms or by car from the township of Mannum. Our school bus service was withdrawn at the end of Term 2, 2015.

Our Index of Disadvantage is 3.

The school's priorities in 2015 are Literacy and Numeracy, and Wellbeing for Powerful Learning.

We are involved in extra-curricular activities such as Mannum Christmas Pageant and WaterWatch.

We are fortunate to have the strong support of the local community, with whom we often work.

We have a small school garden and access to local courts and town oval. (Situated next to the school).

We have a Christian Pastoral Support Worker who runs weekly lunch-time activities for students and hosts a weekly morning tea for parents/carers.

Our school vision is 'To be powerful, life long learners who have the skills to thrive in and help shape the broader community'.

This is underpinned by our values, Being responsible, Excellence, Always trying and Respect – our BEAR Values.

# 1. General information

- School Principal name: Lynne Noll
- Deputy Principal's name, if applicable: N/A
- Year of opening: circa 1884
- Postal Address: Olive Grove Ave, Palmer
- Location Address: as above
- DECD Region: Murraylands
- Geographical location – ie road distance from GPO (km): 67kms
- Telephone number: (08) 85694050
- Fax Number: (08) 85694124
- School website address: [www.palmerps.sa.edu.au](http://www.palmerps.sa.edu.au)
- School e-mail address: [dl\\_0326.info@schools.sa.edu.au](mailto:dl_0326.info@schools.sa.edu.au)
- Child Parent Centre (CPC) attached: N/A
- Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service: N/A
- February FTE student enrolment:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<i>Reception</i>	1	0	3	0	3
<i>Year 1</i>	3	0	3	6	1
<i>Year 2</i>	5	2	2	3	5
<i>Year 3</i>	4	5	2	3	2
<i>Year 4</i>	4	6	6	3	4
<i>Year 5</i>	4	3	4	5	5
<i>Year 6</i>	1	5	3	3	4
<i>Year 7</i>	3	0	3	1	3
<i>Total</i>	25	21	26	24	27
<i>ATSI</i>	3%	3%	0	0	11%
<i>School Card</i>	10 students	11 students	16 students	9 students	10 students

- **Student enrolment trends**

Many students (about half) come to us from Mannum or other outlying areas. Although our numbers have fluctuated over the years they have remained fairly consistently in the low twenties. Our feeder pre-schools most recently, have been Mannum and Mt. Pleasant. Our Year 7s go to a range of High Schools (although there is a bus service from Palmer to Birdwood High School).

- **Staffing numbers (as at February census):**

Staff is made up of:

Principal (female) (1.0) – with a teaching component

Teaching staff (all female) (1 Years R-3 – 0.8), (1 Years 4-7 – 1.0)

SSOs (all female)- Finance Officer 37.5 hours (This position is shared as the Finance officer also has the role of Regional SAPSASA convenor)

-Classroom support – 32 hours /week

PCW – 10 hours/week (female) (funded by Federal grant)

Contracted Groundsman – 2 hours / fortnight (male)

## 2. Students (and their welfare)

- **General characteristics**

Students are well behaved and respectful. There is a real family feel amongst students who mix together well. Students are generally very responsible of each property and others.

Families are predominately Anglo/Australian and almost 50% are school card holders. Only two families live in the town, with the remainder travelling to school by car from other areas.

- **Student well-being programs**

All students participate in the Child Protection Policy and are supported by the smallness of class sizes. The Pastoral Care Worker provides in class support for students as well as offering lunchtime programmes, twice per week. We offer a daily Breakfast for students who need it and also provide emergency lunches as required.

We also have a volunteer mentor who visits weekly to provide student support.

- **Student support offered**

Students with special needs receive additional learning intervention in class. This is carefully planned using learning data, and in consultation with DECD support staff. This is also negotiated with parents at twice yearly, 3 way meetings. Some students continue these support programmes at home.

- **Student management**

We have a negotiated Student Behaviour Management policy that is based on our School values and the principles of Restorative Justice.

Parents are involved in decisions regarding student behaviour and are generally supportive. All parents and students sign to support the policy upon enrolment.

Positive behaviour is acknowledged in class, at weekly assemblies, and with TERRIFIC Kids awards in partnership with the Murray Bridge Kiwanis Club.

Students can also work towards achieving a Year Level medal each year by earning 100 Year Level points for positive school and learning behaviours.

- **Student government**

Students meet weekly for Palmer Student Council (PSC). All students attend these meetings. Students in Years 5, 6 and 7 campaign for Executive positions and all students vote to elect students to these positions.

Students use the meetings to discuss learning and school improvement, and to plan fun and fundraising events.

Students who represent our school by attending local students events in the Partnership/district use this venue to feedback.

Student voice is also employed in classrooms as teachers use the principles of TfEL in their classroom work.

### 3. Key School Policies

Literacy and Numeracy improvement continue to be areas of focus in our school. We were a part of the TfEL Pilot programme with other local schools in 2014 and have continued to be involved with this in 2015.

Resilience in learning is also a focus for us. This has come about because of our work with the TfEL group. Student data has strongly supported this need.

A range of other policies are available to families, in brochure form, from the school's Front Office or on the school's website.

- **Recent key outcomes (From our 2014 Annual Report):**

Our school uses PAT-R and Reading Progress Tests to gather Reading Comprehension data,

PAT-Maths and 'I can do Maths' for maths data, PAT-V for Vocabulary (Years 4 – 7 only) and Westwood test for Spelling.

In the **Junior class** (over the period from November 2013 to November 2014):

-the number of students who were achieving at 1 year above their chronological age in Numeracy, moved from 21% to 60%.

-the number scoring more than 1 year above their chronological age in Reading, moved from 28% to 40% in the same period (all more than 1.5 years above)

- the number of students scoring more than 1 year above their chronological age in Spelling remained constant at 50%

There are students who have received additional support during the year, but all students have shown growth with the additional allocation of staff resources, in the form of SSO hours, in the classrooms.

In the **Senior class** (over the period from November 2013 to November 2014):

-the number of students who were achieving at 1 year above their chronological age in Reading, moved from 33% to 50%.

-the number of students who were achieving at 1 year above their chronological age in Vocabulary, moved from 8% to 41%.

-the number of students who were achieving at 1 year above their chronological age in Numeracy, remained consistent at 16%, with the number of students achieving at more than 6 months below their chronological age decreasing from 32% to 2%.

Spelling in the Upper primary class continues to be our greatest area of improvement challenge. The number well above their chronological age remained at 25%, but there are many students who are not at chronological age.

Despite the seemingly satisfactory NAPLAN spelling results for our Year 5 and 7 students, we did not achieve our target of 75% of students in the Upper class reaching chronological age in November testing.

We plan to implement more of the Jolly Grammar (of which Spelling is a part) in the Upper primary class in 2015, since we have had good results with this in the Junior class.

We will also continue to provide support to students identified in specific data analysis.

## 4. Curriculum

- **Subject offerings:** The school provides a comprehensive curriculum, currently based on the Australian Curriculum (AC) and SACSA. In 2016, we will teach and assess using AC only.

- **Open Access/Distance Education provision:** N/A

- **Special needs:**

The school works closely with families and district support staff to ensure that students with special needs receive the appropriate interventions to support their learning and emotional/social wellbeing. Some students have 'One Plans' in place, others Health Care Plans. We work closely with CAMHS, FamiliesSA and other agencies as needed.

- Teaching methodology:

Palmer has committed to using a whole school approach to Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar for Literacy and to Natural Maths for Numeracy.

- Student assessment procedures and reporting  
School based testing occurs twice each year and is used along with class data, NAPLAN and PAT testing to track students' achievement.  
Palmer holds an Acquaintance Night very early in Term 1, followed by 3 way meetings with families and students at the end of Term One. Formative assessments are sent home at the end of Term 2 and this information forms the basis for conversations at our second round of 3 way meetings at the start of Term 3. Written reports are sent home at the end of the year. These are more summative in nature.

## 5. Sporting Activities

Students are involved in curriculum based fitness and sporting programmes. We participate in a Small School Sports' day with Cambrai, Keyenton, Light Pass, Truro, Mt. Pleasant and Springton Primary Schools each year. Students are given the opportunity to participate in SAPSASA sporting teams. We also hold a number of sporting clinics at the school each year.

## 6. Other Co-Curricular Activities

The school participates in a number of local community activities. We perform each year at the Mannum Christmas Tree festival. We have displays in the Mannum Show and a float in the Mannum Pageant.

We participate in the Australian Maths Competition.

## 7. Staff (and their welfare)

- **Leadership structure**  
The school has one Principal position and staff take on leadership of projects according to strengths, interest and trainings.
- **Staff support systems**  
Staff work closely together in a co-operative team. Training and Development is a component of weekly staff meetings and the content of this is negotiated each term.
- **Performance Management**  
Each staff member has 2 Performance management meetings per year with a partly negotiated agenda. Other aspects of the agenda relate directly to the Site Improvement Plan. Staff receive written feedback from these meetings.
- **Access to special staff**  
Access to Special support staff is done through the established processes of our local DECD District office.

## 8. Incentives, support and award conditions for Staff

- **Complexity placement points**  
n/a
- **Isolation placement points**  
2.0
- **Housing assistance**  
A small number of private rental properties are available in Palmer and in Mannum, which is nearby.
- **Principal's telephone costs**  
Yes

## 9. School Facilities

- **Buildings and grounds**  
Palmer has 2 classrooms, one library building and a shared art/drama room with a wet area. One building is used for the School's administration area, Principal's office and staff room. There are plenty of undercover areas in the yard for play and we are located adjacent to the town oval and Hall, both of which we use regularly.
- **Heating and cooling**  
Teaching and office areas have adequate heating and cooling.
- **Student facilities**  
School lunches are ordered through the Palmer General Store. Banking is also available for students in this way.
- **Staff facilities**  
Palmer has a staffroom for staff use. Staff resources are available to all staff. Staff have significant input into our staff teaching resources. Purchases for this collection are also aligned to our school priorities.
- **Access for students and staff with disabilities**  
At this stage, we have ramp access to one room only. DECD assure us that priority for ramps etc would be given to the school should a need arise.
- **Access to bus transport**  
Palmer has no school bus. For excursions, we rely upon parents and staff to provide transport. In the absence of adequate transport, we hire buses from private bus companies or are able to use DECD buses from Birdwood High School (paying travel costs).

## 10. School Operations

- **Decision making structures**  
Governing Council meets twice per term in line with the end of month statements. These dates are set each year and publicised clearly.  
Governing Council, Staff and Palmer Student Council work together for school decision making.

- **Regular publications**

A staff and parent handbook is published each year. We also print a yearly calendar for staff, marking in all data collection and reporting dates as well as other significant dates. A parent calendar is also sent home each term.

A weekly newsheet is published for all staff and is used in classrooms with students for the events of the week.

A newsletter is sent home each week and a celebration of the term's learning 'The Bear Essential' is sent home and into the community each term.

- **Other communication**

Palmer School contributes to the local newsletter, 'The Palmer Pipeline', which is published four times per year.

30 minutes of each week's staff meeting are set aside for administration/communication.

There is a white board calendar in the staff room and the Front Office.

- **School financial position**

The school is in a strong financial position. Money is saved for ICT upgrades over 3 year periods.

- **Special funding**

Money raised by school groups and grants received are managed within our general budget processes.

## 11. Local Community

- **General characteristics**

Palmer is a small community and there is little local work available. Most families come into the Palmer School from outlying areas.

- **Parent and community involvement**

:Parents of the school are supportive and demonstrate their interest in a variety of ways. (Working in the school, fund-raising activities, providing transport for excursions etc etc)

The school is supported by local groups. For example, the Community Association recently purchased 4 raised garden beds for us. We also are often involved in community fundraising activities with the community.

- **Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities**

Palmer has a General Store and a Hotel.

- **Other local facilities**

Palmer's closest medical facilities are in Mannum. The town hosts an annual Gem and Mineral Fair (March) and Hot Rod Show (October).

- **Accessibility**

There is no public transport from Palmer to other regional or city areas.

- **Local Government body**

Palmer is in the Mid-Murray Council area.