ACT Government
Education

Chapman Primary School

Report of Review, 2019

Date of School Review: 20, 21 and 22 August 2019
Principal of Review School: Anne Simpson

National School Improvement Tool Review Report prepared by:
- Lead Reviewer: Ron Bamford, *ACER Senior School Improvement Consultant*
- ACT Review Team members: 1. Angela Spence, *Principal of Gold Creek School*
                            2. Chris Jones, *Principal of Miles Franklin Primary School*

Report Date: 13 September 2019

Report of Review, 2019 prepared by:

ACT Government Education Directorate
Education Services Division, School Improvement Branch

Report Date: 24 September 2019

Overview of the School Review process

Approximately a fifth of all ACT public schools are reviewed each year. Reviews provide quality, independent, feedback tailored to individual school contexts. Findings from Review are considered alongside system and school level student achievement, perception and demographic data as the evidence base for development of the school's next 5-year School Improvement Plan.

Reviews are undertaken by a team of experienced educators trained in the use of the *National School Improvement Tool* (NSIT) and are led by a Lead Reviewer from the Australian Council of Educational Research. Review Team size depends upon a range of factors, including the size and context of a school.

Through the lens of the NSIT, an internationally recognised framework for reviewing teaching and learning practices, reviewers gain an accurate picture of current school practices. During Review evidence provided by schools is considered alongside evidence gathered through consultation with staff, students, parents and community members.

Following Review, the school receives a planning report, which is used as an internal working document, outlining key findings and recommended strategies for continued school improvement. The Education Directorate uses this planning report as a basis for the final *Report of Review* provided to school communities.

The *Report of Review* includes detailed Review Team findings for each of the nine Domains of the National School Improvement Tool, and Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations for continued school improvement.

Where does School Review sit within the broader school improvement cycle?
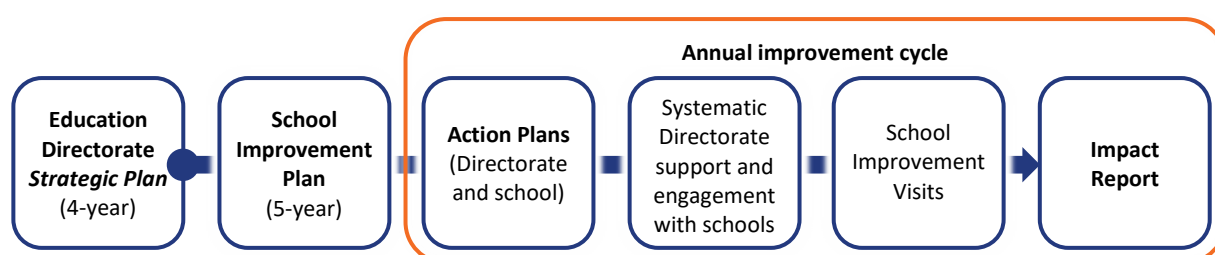
ACT public schools utilise systematic integration of evidence and data collection, access and analysis to inform sharp and narrow 5-year School Improvement Plans. Annually, all schools utilise a suite of tools to expand, monitor and report on these priorities. School Improvement Visits (SIVs – which include School Review) provide differentiated support and feedback to schools through varying levels of in-school immersion. SIVs progress in relation to a school's needs and improvement cycle, with School Review typically occurring at the end of this cycle.

What are Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations?

Commendations
The commendations highlight positive actions the school has taken over its last improvement cycle. Typically these actions are either complete, or embedded in school practice.

Affirmations
The affirmations verify specific actions being undertaken by the school that are impacting positively on school improvement. These actions are typically either not yet complete and/or not yet embedded.

Recommendations
The recommendations provide the school with evidence-based advice regarding high-value areas for future school improvement efforts. Drawn from the NSIT, recommendations are key to the school developing a sharp and narrow improvement plan.

NSIT Domain 1: An explicit improvement agenda

Domain descriptor

The school leadership team and/or governing body have established and are driving a strong improvement agenda for the school, grounded in evidence from research and practice and expressed in terms of improvements in measurable student outcomes. Explicit and clear school-wide targets for improvement have been set and communicated to parents and families, teachers and students, with accompanying timelines.

Findings

- The *Chapman Primary 2015-2018 School Plan* describes two priorities, improved student outcomes from P-6, and to enhance school and community connections. In general, the desired outcomes described in annual action plans (AAPs) relate to strategies to improve student learning. The target, 'increase the proportion of kindergarten students who achieve expected growth or better in PIPs[1], reading and numeracy' has remained consistent over time.

- Annual School Board reports and AAP reports are available on the school website. Annual School Board reports describe the required information on school performance. In line with system requirements, the *Impact Report 2019* has described performance against some planned targets over a number of years.

- The school Board described a strong involvement in the planning process through considering data and suggesting areas for improvement. Board members described how in mathematics, the school (in addition to school-based strategies), helped parents support the improvement process by offering an opportunity for parents to learn contemporary mathematics techniques. Board members were satisfied that improvements were beginning to be seen in student outcomes.

- The school has developed focus groups to facilitate all teaching staff being involved in the school planning process. Each focus group is responsible for key sections of AAPs, designing, communicating and implementing improvement strategies. Action planning in most focus groups utilised an inquiry process and incorporated national and international research. The focus groups are also responsible for evaluating progress in implementation of strategies and achievement of milestones. This information is compiled by the school leadership team in annual reports to the school community.

- The leadership team provided evidence of how it had communicated the school's direction, although teachers and parents were not aware of all aspects of the broad strategic agenda.

- Teachers displayed a strong understanding and ownership of their focus area, particularly as it applied to their year level. Teachers talked about their strong desire to improve student outcomes by implementing planned strategies.

---

[1] Performance Indicators in Primary Schools

NSIT Domain 2: Analysis and discussion of data

Domain descriptor
A high priority is given to the school-wide analysis and discussion of systematically collected data on student outcomes, including academic, attendance and behavioural outcomes, and student wellbeing. Data analyses consider overall school performance as well as the performances of students from identified priority groups; evidence of improvement/ regression over time; performances in comparison with similar schools; and, in the case of data from standardised tests, measures of growth across the years of school.

Findings
- The *Chapman Primary School Assessment & Data Plan* describes assessments used across the school for school planning and classroom teaching. A key aspect of the plan is a description of the purpose of collecting data and the timeline in which it is collected. Major data sets include NAPLAN, PIPS, Australian Early Development Census, Words Their Way Spelling Inventory, PM Benchmark, TORCH[2], Schedule for Early Number Assessment (SENA), Middle Years Mental Computation (MYMC), Oxford Maths, and quality classroom assessments.

- While wellbeing data are not specifically referenced in the data plan, the school has satisfaction and climate survey, attendance and behavioural data, and information captured through the previous KidsMatter[3] initiative.

- The school uses a 'Faces on the Data' strategy to display student achievement across the school in PM Benchmark, Words Their Way Spelling Inventory, and SENA assessments. More recently, data trackers (spreadsheets) have been developed to track student progress in each year level in these areas.

- In line with past practices, student outcome targets set in the *Chapman Primary 2015-2018 School Plan* were generally set through the ACT Education Directorate analysis of school data. There is evidence of the school leadership team analysing whole-school data. Recently, the school has contracted an external consultant to assist in the analysis of data in preparation for the new school improvement plan.

- There is evidence of a disciplined dialogue process with staff in the consideration of whole-school data.

- The school's timetable for year level teaching teams discusses student data to plan for starting points for teaching. There is a minimum requirement to devote three team meetings a term to the analysis of data. Teachers however, report that this practice is more widespread.

- Staff expertise in data analysis varied across the school.

- In general, parents were unable to comment on specific information regarding the performance of the school, but were confident the school was performing well.

---

[2] Tests of Reading Comprehension (TORCH)
[3] KidsMatter is a mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiative.

NSIT Domain 3: A culture that promotes learning

Domain descriptor
The school is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents. There is a strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers and school leaders and parents are treated as partners in the promotion of student learning and wellbeing. The school works to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant, inclusive and that promotes intellectual rigour.

Findings
- The school's 'FRIENDS' values of friendship, respect, integrity, everyone cooperates, never give up attitude, diversity and support are embedded in the school community.

- Parents said they felt the school was "welcoming", "inclusive" and "supportive". They believed that there was a "strong sense of community". Students talked about "a place where they always have a friend", "teachers who care", and that "there are plenty of opportunities".

- The review team observed calm and focused students in all classrooms, who were engaged in purposeful learning. Students felt they could learn without disruption and teachers always expected them to do their best. School satisfaction surveys demonstrate a very high-level agreement by staff, parents and students that the school has high expectations for students. This was evidenced across the school.

- The *Chapman PS Classroom and Playground Student Management Procedure 2018* describes a flowchart of actions to manage behaviour. Restorative practice[4] underlines the school's current approach to helping students learn appropriate behaviours.

- The *Chapman Communication Framework* outlines, in part, expected protocols for staff in communicating with parents and families.

- A previous school cluster *Reconciliation Action Plan* and work on a new *Cultural Integrity Plan* describes school efforts to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and to welcome and engage their families and communities. An example of a strategy within the plan is year 5 and year 6 students designing and contributing to the construction and celebration of the Indigenous garden and flag raising ceremony.

- The recent introduction of the Seesaw online application (app.) has given parents real-time information on their child's learning. Parents who spoke to the review team understand this is a new strategy and would like the information in the future to be more than just documenting learning. Students said that they valued Seesaw as a way of engaging parents in the celebration of their learning.

- Parents appreciated how teachers were very supportive in tailoring learning experiences to suit their child's needs. Parents spoke about the benefits of the Kindergarten bush program and suggested that the school team considers how it could further use community resources to enrich learning. Many parents volunteer their time in the school.

---

[4] Restorative practice is a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged, including those damaged through bullying.

NSIT Domain 4: Targeted use of school resources

Domain descriptor
The school applies its resources (staff time, expertise, funds, facilities, materials) in a targeted manner to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of all students. It has school-wide policies, practices and programs in place to assist in identifying and addressing student needs. Flexible structures and processes enable the school to respond appropriately to the needs of individual learners.

Findings
- The school's student support team consists of the deputy principal, disability education coordinator, and school psychologist. The school uses a Response to Intervention (RTI) model to inform required adjustments to student learning in line with the systematic analysis of available evidence.

- Teachers are released at the beginning of the year to discuss each of their students with the student support team. A referral form is used throughout the year by staff and parents when concerns are identified that require additional attention.

- Curriculum specialists support student learning from Kindergarten to year 6 in music, physical education, Indonesian and in library inquiry. Students in years 5 and 6 also have a specialist STEM and grammar teacher.

- Current opportunities to enhance the learning for the more academically-able students include the DaVinci Decathlon, G.A.T.E.WAYS[5] and Maths Olympiad.

- Intervention is provided by literacy and EAL/D[6] specialists for identified students requiring targeted support. This is also enhanced by a team of volunteers who are provided with appropriate training.

- Targeted support is provided by executive teaching staff for each of the year level teams. This includes support for mathematics and English, as well as some extension opportunities.

- All inclusion support program students have an individual learning plan (ILP) developed collaboratively with families. Professional learning has been provided to upskill staff in writing ILPs to support learning.

- Learning support assistants (LSAs) are used across the school to support students with identified needs. This may include funded and non-funded students.

- The school has upgraded their facilities to include 'sensory' spaces in the classroom and outside learning areas.

- Students have access to technologies such as iPads, Chromebooks, Bee-Bots, and Lego robotics to support their learning. Technology is available to students, however, many staff commented on the need for further investment.

- The school collaborates with the Network Student Engagement Team to support students requiring intensive intervention.

---

[5] Gifted and Talented Education, Extension and Enrichment
[6] English as an additional language or dialect

- The school has invested in the upgrade of physical spaces and furniture to create an attractive and more effective learning environment.
- Teachers maximise team teaching arrangements to provide targeted in-class support.

NSIT Domain 5: An expert teaching team

Domain descriptor
The school has found ways to build a school-wide, professional team of highly able teachers, including teachers who take an active leadership role beyond the classroom. Strong procedures are in place to encourage a school-wide, shared responsibility for student learning and success, and to encourage the development of a culture of continuous professional improvement that includes classroom-based learning, mentoring and coaching arrangements.

Findings
- Staff engaged in action research in areas of literacy.

- Staff have access to professional learning within and beyond the school, and the leadership team places a high priority on building capabilities amongst all staff.

- Weekly year-level team meetings with the team leader support teachers in sharing practice, reflecting on the progress of learners, using data, and collaboratively planning the curriculum.

- Leaders have recruited staff with specific skills to support the school-wide focus on building a professional learning community. They have also ensured that teaching teams include experienced and new educators. Staff were able to clearly articulate the skills they had and how they complemented the needs of the school. There are opportunities for staff to provide leadership in areas of expertise.

- A school-wide model of coaching focused on supporting teachers and teams to improve their pedagogies is being developed.

- The school has a schedule of meetings for all staff, focus groups, and professional learning teams. The school can articulate the need for the range of professional learning provided, but this has not yet been formalised into a plan.

- High expectations are in place to encourage a school-wide, shared responsibility for student learning and success, although it was evident strengths and understandings were shared more within teams than across teams.

- Staff reported to the review team that individualised attention, including principal meetings, provision of school and student information, and mentoring, supported strong formal and informal induction processes.

- It was evident that building system knowledge and skills is given a high priority amongst the leadership team.

- Chapman Primary School has built a strong culture of mentoring and this is valued by staff.

- The school's chosen model of classroom observations and reflections by peers is well structured and successful in de-privatising practice across the school. Evidence was sighted by the review team of the feedback given from the observations and the reflections of the teachers observed.

NSIT Domain 6: Systematic curriculum delivery

Domain descriptor
The school has a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and a clear reference for monitoring learning across the year levels. The plan, within which evidence-based teaching practices are embedded, and to which assessment and reporting procedures are aligned, has been developed with reference to the Australian Curriculum or other approved curriculum and refined collaboratively to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice. This plan is shared with parents and families.

Findings
- Teachers participated in professional learning to support their understanding of the Australian Curriculum, moderating tasks and reporting to parents.

- All teachers continue to build their capacity to deliver an inquiry-based curriculum. This is supported by the use of learner assets across the school, including a focus on skills such as collaborator, researcher, communicator, self-managers, and thinkers.

- Mathematics has been an area of focus across the school. Staff have collaboratively developed a common planning template that is used from kindergarten to year 6.

- The school uses the Australian Curriculum standards to develop yearly curriculum maps for English, mathematics and inquiry. Teachers use these to develop termly planners and unit planners.

- Chapman Primary School is an accredited KidsMatter school. The school uses the 'Bounce Back' and peer support programs to enhance social emotional learning.

- A scope and sequence document has been developed by the ICT focus group for students in Kindergarten to year 6. This is aligned with the technologies learning area and ICT general capability.

- Many staff commented on how they incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in their programs. An example is the Kindergarten bush kids play-based inquiry unit.

- The leadership team allocates time for each year level team to collaboratively plan. During this time teachers use data to plan, assess and moderate learning.

- The school offers a wide range of enrichment programs including a Friday sport program for students in years 3-6 and other student interest clubs.

- The school reports student learning through three-way conferences, learning journeys and semester reports. The school has also begun implementation of Seesaw as an electronic portfolio of student learning. A clear set of protocols for the use of Seesaw was sighted.

- The school utilises the primary connections program to support the teaching of science in the inquiry units.

- An early literacy language program in Indonesian is implemented in preschool and kindergarten. Indonesian is taught across the school.

- A termly overview of learning for each year level is provided to parents.

NSIT Domain 7: Differentiated teaching and learning

Domain descriptor
The school places a high priority on ensuring that, in their day-to-day teaching, classroom teachers identify and address the learning needs of individual students, including high-achieving students. Teachers are encouraged and supported to monitor closely the progress of individuals, identify learning difficulties and tailor classroom activities to levels of readiness and need.

Findings
- Inquiry learning has been a significant focus throughout the plan and there is strong evidence of its implementation across the school.

- Teachers are expected to use learning intentions and success criteria to make explicit to students what is to be taught and learnt within the lesson. Learning intentions were commonly observed in use and spoken about by students. Less evidence existed around the consistent use of success criteria.

- Individual learning plans (ILPs) and personal learning plans (PLPs) inform the work of teachers and LSAs. These plans guide the provision of goals and adjustments and are established for students requiring additional learning.

- Interventions are in place to support students who have diverse needs. These operate fluidly and are responsive to evidence across the cohort showing what support needs are to be targeted.

- School-wide professional learning about differentiated teaching and learning has been provided and there is an expectation by the leadership team that individual needs of all students are met.

- The school leadership team and staff are moving towards a more systematic approach in responding to student learning needs through curriculum differentiation.

- Semester reports demonstrate achievement and provide information about how parents and carers can support the learning at home. This reporting is complemented by three-way conferences, kindergarten interviews, portfolios and a learning journey. This is enhanced by the recent introduction of the Seesaw online application. Parents are welcome to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress outside of these planned sessions.

- Students have learning goals but the targeting and application of them varied across the school.

- Discussions around student learning data occur at the weekly year level meetings and planning is adjusted accordingly to meet the needs of students.

NSIT Domain 8: Effective pedagogical practices

Domain descriptor
The school principal and other school leaders recognise that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning throughout the school. They take a strong leadership role, encouraging the use of research-based teaching practices in all classrooms to ensure that every student is engaged, challenged and learning successfully. All teachers understand and use effective teaching methods – including explicit instruction – to maximise student learning.

Findings
- A focus on mathematics occurred through the school's participation in Principals as Numeracy Leaders (PANL), improved pedagogical knowledge through the professional learning from the reSolve initiative, and prominent mathematics educator Peter Sullivan.

- The leadership team has been working to achieve consistency in approaches to teaching and learning.

- Leaders actively support teachers through mentoring, team teaching, modelling or releasing teachers to learn with, and from, others about their pedagogies.

- It is noted the school has developed a pedagogical framework. The school acknowledges there is further development required to unpack and articulate the signature pedagogies expected across all staff.

- There is an emphasis on improving teaching methods in English through recent ACT Education Directorate professional learning on the 10 Essential Literacy practices.

- School leaders and staff experts in various areas model effective strategies to their teams.

- In discussions with students, many felt that the work was aligned to their needs.

- The school has commenced on a journey in the use of questioning and provocation to drive inquiry and is using external expertise to guide this practice.

NSIT Domain 9: School-community partnerships

Domain descriptor

The school actively seeks ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing by partnering with parents and families, other education and training institutions, local businesses and community organisations. Parents and families are recognised as integral members of the school community and partners in their children's education. Partnerships are strategically established to address identified student needs and operate by providing access to experiences, support and intellectual and/or physical resources not available within the school. All partners are committed to the common purposes and goals of partnership activities. Procedures are in place to ensure effective communications and to monitor and evaluate the intended impacts of the school's partnerships.

Findings

- The school partners with community volunteers from All Souls Church and the School Volunteer Program ACT to provide targeted literacy intervention to students. This partnership has clearly defined goals to improve student outcomes and training is provided to the volunteers by an in-house teacher expert. The partnership is reviewed, and success is celebrated within the group. Parents also volunteer their time for this intervention.

- A range of other informal partnerships were identified including:

  > All Souls Church (Anglican Church). The church partners with the school to coordinate and deliver a weekly school breakfast club.

  > Australian Training Company Partnership. The school supports students from other schools undertaking a school-based training program. This has included, over the years, supporting trainees in horticulture, business, IT, and early childhood learning.

  > Indonesian Embassy Partnership. The school hosts a native Indonesian speaker in terms 3 and 4 to support the teaching of Indonesian at the school.

  > Sporting Schools. The school maximises opportunities to work with community sport coaches to deliver expert coaching in a variety of sports.

  > Menslink. This program encourages boys in years 5 and 6 to speak up about their problems and understand that 'silence can be deadly'. This program enhances the school's focus on supporting the wellbeing of students.

Commendations

- The strong energy and enthusiasm by leaders and staff at Chapman Primary School to improve student outcomes, which is exemplified by the successful implementation of many evidenced-based improvement strategies over the life of the school plan.

- The way the school strives to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, and inclusive, and which promotes intellectual rigour. Parents said they felt the school was "welcoming", "inclusive" and "supportive". They believed that there was a "strong sense of community". Students talked about "a place where they always have a friend", "teachers who care", and that "there are plenty of opportunities". The school has a strong focus on quality learning.

- The way the school actively promotes parents and families as integral members of the school community and partners in student learning. A recent example of this is the implementation of the Seesaw app. to give parents a real-time understanding of their child's learning.

- The school leadership team's provision of time, structure and training for teaching teams to regularly use the ample data on student achievement to reflect on the progress of learners, and then collaboratively plan teaching strategies to best meet the needs of individual students.

- The school's investment in the upgrading of learning environments. Teachers maximise the use of new class spaces and furniture and are using the flexibility to team-teach to provide targeted support for students. Attractive and purposeful outside spaces give students alternative environments in which to learn.

- The school's clear and concise model for supporting students with additional needs. The school invests time for teachers to discuss the learning needs of all their students with the student support team.

- Staff access to professional learning within and beyond the school, and the leadership team's high priority on building capabilities amongst all staff. School leaders actively support teachers through mentoring, team teaching, modelling or releasing teachers to learn with, and from, others about their teaching practices. A school-wide culture of mentoring is appreciated by all staff.

- Chapman Primary School is an accredited 'KidsMatter' school and uses both the 'Bounce Back' and peer support programs to address the social and emotional needs of students.

- The school has a strong partnership with All Souls Church and the School Volunteer Program ACT for supporting literacy intervention. This is a highly valued and celebrated program by both the partners and the wider school community.

Affirmations

- Staff actively participate in focus groups to facilitate the school improvement processes in the school. This has allowed staff to take on leadership roles within the school.

- Staff use a disciplined dialogue process to consider whole-school data to reflect on the

progress of students as a result of interventions, and to identify other areas worthy of exploration.

- The school leadership team provides common release time for year level teaching teams. Teachers appreciate the opportunity to sit and plan with their peers.

- Staff have committed to developing an inquiry-based curriculum. The school is supporting life-long learning through the development of learner assets across the school.

- The school places a high value on, and genuine commitment to, embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into its curriculum.

- The school has developed a strong culture of mentoring, and a classroom observation model which shares practice and builds a culture of continuous professional improvement.

- The school leadership team and staff are strengthening their approach to differentiating teaching and learning.

- The recent introduction of Seesaw has further enhanced the school's ability to provide timely information to parents about where students are in their learning, their progress over time, and ways parents can support their children at home.

- The school leadership team is committed to a consistent, evidence-based approach to effective teaching practices.

- The school has successfully initiated the use of questioning and provocation to drive inquiry and is using external expertise to guide practice.

Recommendations

- Collaboratively develop a Chapman Primary School Improvement Plan 2020-2024 that is consistent with the school's vision for teaching and learning and provides a narrow and sharp agenda focused on student outcomes, by incorporating explicit targets for student achievement and wellbeing that are well communicated to the school community.

- Further develop the school's data plan to incorporate the full range of school data. Develop processes to broaden analysis of school data to include trends over time, the achievement of priority groups, and ensure that through summarising, displaying and communicating, there is a common view of school progress over time. Build leadership and staff data literacy skills.

- Continue to develop a professional learning plan to assist teachers to develop and share a deep understanding of how students learn. Within the plan, attention should be given to aligning all aspects of professional learning within the school with a strong focus on the school's improvement plan.

- Continue to refine a plan for curriculum delivery that identifies curriculum, teaching and learning priorities and requirements. The curriculum delivery plan should reflect a shared vision for the school and provide a context for delivering the Australian Curriculum, with a particular focus on the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.

- Continue professional dialogue around how teachers can respond to differences in cultural knowledge and experiences and how to cater for individual differences by offering multiple means of representation, engagement and expression.

- Continue to develop a clear position on the evidence-based teaching strategies that should be common across the school, or within sections of the school.

- Continue to develop or refine strategic partnerships to particularly support the improvement agenda of the school.