



**ACT**  
Government  
Education

# **Macquarie Primary School**

Review Report Summary, 2018

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## Overview of the school review process

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Approximately a quarter of all ACT public schools are reviewed each year. The reviews are an important part of how the Directorate supports and monitors school improvement. Reviews provide schools with quality and independent feedback, tailored to the school's context. Each school is reviewed at least every five years, providing valuable opportunities for self-reflection, planning and improvement.

Reviews are undertaken by experienced educators trained in the use of the *National School Improvement Tool* (NSIT), a nationally recognised framework for reviewing teaching and learning practices. Each review team generally consists of two to three reviewers, however, the number of reviewers and length of review depends upon a range of factors, including the size and context of the school.

Reviewers closely consider each school's performance data and speak with a wide range of staff, students, parents and community members to get an accurate picture of the school. Following the review, the school receives a comprehensive report. The report outlines the key findings and recommended improvement strategies to maximise student outcomes. The report concludes with a set of commendations, affirmations and recommendations to assist in future planning and to support school-wide improvement planning.

The following summary contains the commendations, affirmations and recommendations from the review report.

### 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.

## Commendations

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Macquarie Primary School is commended for the following.

- Macquarie Primary School is well known in the local community as a welcoming place where diversity is valued and celebrated.
- The school leadership team expects all teachers to be highly committed to the continuous improvement of their own teaching. The school has made a significant investment in providing access to professional learning, frequent exposure to experts and participation in active research. Inquiry-based learning is the school's signature pedagogy and teachers are encouraged to be inquirers themselves. Teachers who have been part of this learning over a sustained period of time present as experts in the use of inquiry as an approach to learning.
- Teachers are encouraged to respond to individual student interests, backgrounds and differences and develop learning attributes as described in the school's inquiry model. Students are encouraged to be researchers, to critically analyse, and be creative. Students investigate their wonderings and take ownership of their learning.
- All teachers develop research plans consistent with best practice in practitioner-research and communicate their findings to a variety of audiences. This has been a practice for some time now and has been supported by senior leaders and external critical friends. Teacher research projects have been showcased at Belconnen Network meetings, and at ACT Education Directorate and national forums.

## Affirmations

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The Review Team offers the following affirmations for Macquarie Primary School.

- Parents speak highly of how committed classroom teachers are to their students and express gratitude for the way in which teachers do their best for their children.
- Teachers are encouraged to be innovative in their practice, research and trial new practices and then share this learning with others.
- The school leadership team is exploring whole-of-school evidence-based approaches to encouraging appropriate behaviour.
- The PCA and school Board are active partners at Macquarie Primary School and express a strong commitment to supporting the school and families.
- Google Communities provides families with examples of the learning taking place in classrooms. Consistency of approach in terms of how often content is uploaded will support school-wide use of this digital platform.
- Collaboration is valued by some teachers in the school as a way of building capability and learning from one another. Shared Google documents and drives enable teachers to share planning, resources and ideas.
- Teachers are working to strengthen their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. This work includes a partnership with a critical friend, dedicated time for professional learning and a focus on connecting to country.

## Recommendations

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The Review Team recommends Macquarie Primary School pays attention to the following opportunities for school improvement during the next planning cycle.

- Develop an explicit school improvement plan in close partnership with the wider school community which identifies the specific improvements in student learning and wellbeing to be achieved. These improvements should be well defined, time-bound and measurable. Ensure that leaders are explicit about their core objective of improving outcomes for students, building shared ownership with all teachers and the wider community. Develop clear targets and ensure that progress towards these are monitored.
- Determine which data sets will best inform the school about student learning and wellbeing outcomes. Ensure this includes academic performance, attendance, behaviour and student wellbeing data. Develop and document a school plan and timetable for the annual collection of these data sets. Give consideration to how software can be used to support analysis and how data are stored electronically and centrally to provide ease of access. Build the capability of all teachers to use data effectively to identify and respond to individual student needs.
- Build a school culture that is reflective of high expectations for learning and behaviour through the implementation of a whole-of-school approach to managing behaviour, and by maximising available time for learning. Develop a school-wide process for identifying and responding to specific learning and wellbeing needs and support teachers in catering for these complex needs.
- Develop and document a whole-school plan for curriculum delivery. Ensure that this plan enables strong alignment between curriculum, assessment and reporting. Develop long term planning documents that will guide team planning and support the vertical alignment of the curriculum. Ensure that mapping processes are in place to identify and address any gaps in the content and skills expected. Provide opportunities for teachers to meet together to collaboratively plan and review the curriculum.
- Ensure that leaders actively promote a range of evidence-based teaching strategies with a particular focus on effective teaching practices in English, mathematics and science. Consider how observations of practice, feedback to teachers, and coaching and mentoring models can align to these practices. Support teachers in creating learning environments in which all students are engaged and challenged.