



ACT
Government
Education

University of Canberra High School Kaleen

Report of Review, 2020

Date of School Review: 26, 27, 28 and 29 October 2020
Principal of Review School: Daniel Mowbray

National School Improvement Tool Review Report prepared by:

- Lead Reviewer: Ron Bamford, *ACER Senior School Improvement Consultant*
- ACT Review Team members: 1. John Alston-Campbell, *Deputy Principal of Lake Tuggeranong College*
2. Shaun Haidon, *Director School Planning and Review*
3. Kerri Clark, *Senior Director Education Support Office*

Report Date: 30 October 2020

Report of Review, 2020 prepared by:

ACT Government Education Directorate
Education Services Division, School Improvement Branch

Report Date: 10 November 2020

Foreword

2020 has been characterised by extreme weather events and the COVID-19 pandemic. ACT public schools, as community hubs, have been greatly impacted by these events. Despite this, they have continued to deliver high quality education to all students whilst also supporting their communities.

As noted further in this document, school improvement in the ACT is based on a five-year cycle. School Review (Review) considers the entire journey a school has undertaken during this period.

Impact of COVID-19 on School Review

Findings from Review are based on what external and local experts read, see and hear in a school. In preparing findings from Review consideration has been given to the rapid response ACT public schools undertook for the COVID-19 home learning period, and the impact this had on observed practices and processes.

Additionally, due to travel restrictions some Lead Reviewers from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) were unable to lead Reviews on the ground. In these cases streaming technologies, and the support of experienced ACT reviewers, enabled the review to continue. Careful attention was given to ensuring the Review methodology and findings were not compromised.

This Review had an on-the-ground Lead Reviewer from [ACER](#).

OR

This Review had a Remote Lead Reviewer from [ACER](#).

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 support annual implementation of a school's 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.

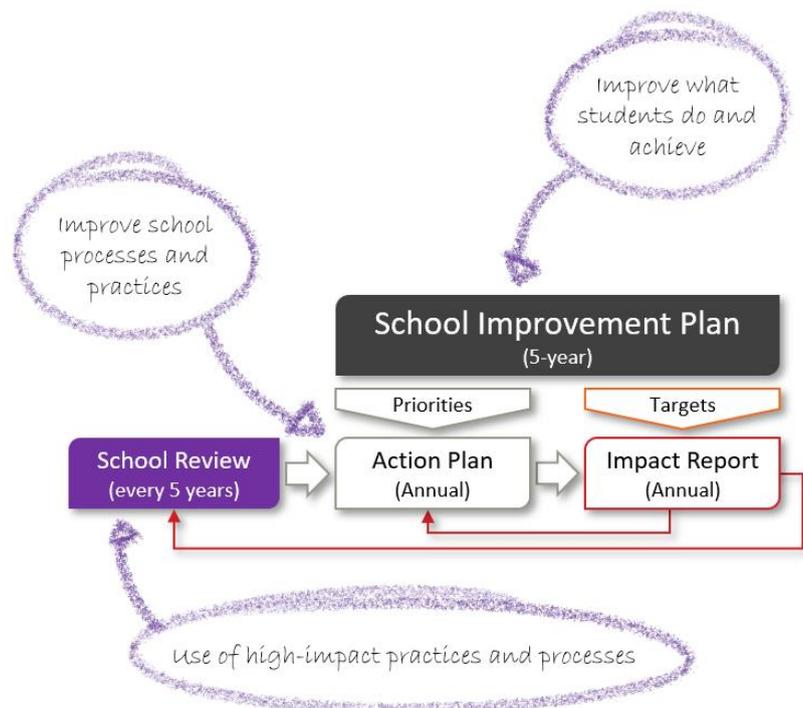
Through the lens of the NSIT, an internationally recognised framework for reviewing teaching and learning practices, reviewers gain an accurate picture of current school practices. During Review evidence provided by schools is considered alongside evidence gathered through consultation with staff, students, 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 findings for each of the nine Domains of the National School Improvement Tool, as well as Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations for continued school improvement.

Where does Review sit within the 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. Additionally, schools are provided differentiated support and feedback by internal and external experts. School Review is one way that this differentiated feedback is provided and typically occurs at the end of the 5-year school improvement cycle.



What are Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations?

Commendations

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

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

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 effectively implementing its 5-year School 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 University of Canberra High School Kaleen Strategic Plan 2016-20* outlines three broad strategic priorities: 1. embed an explicit agenda across the school; 2. develop an expert teaching team; and 3. develop high levels of connectedness to the school and wellbeing for all stakeholders. The first and second priorities have student outcome targets in NAPLAN reading, writing, and numeracy, and the last priority has student outcomes in wellbeing. The school used key strategies from Solution Tree's 'Transformative Schools' framework including Professional Learning Communities at Work and Dr Robert Marzano's *Proficiency Scales and Essential Learnings*, to enact this improvement agenda. Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) was later added to the key strategies. As part of developing this agenda, staff undertook significant professional learning and visited schools in Queensland that are performing well after implementing similar Solution Tree strategies.
- In 2016, the school went through a significant consultation process on developing mission and vision statements. Several staff talked about the intention to "do whatever it takes to ensure all students achieve success".
- Annual School Board reports are located on the school website and communicate to the community the required annual performance data. Board members talked about a high level of involvement in the school agenda and a school facility master plan. There is evidence that the school community was involved in the formation of the strategic plan.
- Impact Reports are also available on the school website and have recently allowed the school to track progress on the strategic plan over the years with some commentary. A data committee has been established to examine whole school and classroom data.
- Staff were able to talk about their involvement in many of the key strategies but were less clear about the guiding three priorities and targets. All staff had their annual professional development plans linked to the strategic agenda. Many staff talked passionately about their role in the implementation of planned strategies.
- The school has created three Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) to focus on, and guide, school improvement strategies in data, cultural integrity, and PBL.
- While there has been considerable effort to communicate the strategic agenda to families, parents/carers interviewed had little understanding of the strategic agenda.

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

- Throughout the life of the strategic plan there has been an ongoing strategic intent to develop a data culture within the school.
- There has been a strong focus on establishing formative data through pre- and post-testing in all learning areas and using this in faculty based PLTs to develop curriculum delivery responses to suit student needs. Proficiency scales are used to strengthen and moderate learning area grades. The ACT Education Directorate's 'Sentral Markbook' has provided teachers with easy access to this data.
- At the school level, data in NAPLAN and satisfaction surveys are displayed in Scout and Qualtrics tools. The leadership team talked about their commentary on the graphs and data sets from these tools. Some of this discussion is presented at staff meetings.
- PAT-M and PAT-R data are used by the mathematics and English faculties as both a moderation tool and for student grouping. Some staff commented on a need for further training in these data sets.
- Each year level coordinator maintains a data tracker that monitors behaviours and interventions, and this is analysed on a fortnightly basis by the wellbeing PLT. The school aligns Sentral (negative incidents) data to the PBL triangle tool. These data inform the pastoral care program and other interventions.
- The transition coordinator uses a comprehensive tool to gather year 6 academic and wellbeing data from primary schools which contributes to the 'special considerations' list.
- A data PLT has been established to support the development of a comprehensive data plan for the school. This work is still in progress. The data PLT has provided some commentary on data to staff, however the discussion focuses on whole cohorts.
- Several staff talked about the need for broader wellbeing testing such as social and emotional learning to support intervention strategies.
- While there is evidence that the school is communicating performance data to its community, parents/carers interviewed were unable to talk confidently about how the school was performing.

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 culture is founded upon strong, friendly relationships between all stakeholders. Staff and students talk about the importance of relationships to learning.
- The PBL program has been adopted by the school through the life of the 2016 - 2020 plan. School spaces are adorned with large posters outlining behavioural expectations for that particular area. The school has aligned its existing school values of Kindness, Achievement, Respect and Endeavour (KARE) to the PBL program. The school remains on the PBL journey, embracing ongoing review and renewal of expectations for improved accessibility and efficacy.
- School learning environments are arranged to support learning. Along with signs indicating learning behavioural expectations, student work and important concepts are displayed on classroom walls signalling the purpose of the space and promoting the learning area.
- The review team evidenced productive learning in every classroom however there were some students clearly not engaged.
- The school façade is attractive, and a master plan is in development to protect the school grounds and provide stimulating indoor and outdoor learning spaces.
- The school has been proactive in seeking meaningful parent/carer involvement in students' learning. Google classroom is used widely to enable parents/carers to support their students in accessing the curriculum, classwork and assessment. The timing of parent-teacher nights has been strategically altered to engage parents/carers formatively in students' learning progress.
- Over the life of the strategic plan, the school has established and embedded processes for managing student behaviour. These processes are clearly articulated to staff, students and parents/carers. They are almost universally used. Some staff report significantly improved communication about student outcomes where they have referred a student to the student wellbeing team, fostering greater restoration and increased positive behaviour over time.
- The Enrich program has empowered staff to innovate in areas of mutual staff and student passion. It is in these areas that a culture of inquiry is spotlighted, and students have the opportunity to apply essential learnings in new contexts.
- Many staff thrive at UCHSK and it is their workplace of choice. The school is focused on managing both changes of staff and pressures arising from enrolment growth.

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 has processes to identify learning and wellbeing needs of students through its special considerations list, student wellbeing/academic referrals, Sentral records, year 6 transition tool as well as standardised testing and wellbeing data sets. The school's data PLT and wellbeing PLT examine the data and determine any priorities or trends. Some gaps in data around personal and social capability and cognitive ability prevent the school from having a systematic view of the whole child.
- The school nurse and school psychologist meet once a week with the wellbeing executives to determine appropriate levels of adjustment and/or interventions and then design a care team to support students as required.
- The school is resourced for a Learning Support Unit (LSU) as well as a LSU (Autism) and the school runs these settings flexibly with a consideration for mainstream inclusion. Learning support assistants work with students in small groups and mainstream across the school.
- The school has identified funding allocations to support the delivery of professional learning aligned to the strategic priorities in a draft professional learning plan.
- The school has provided targeted interventions to meet a range of needs, including UCAN Excel, Achieve, iSteam, Macq Lit, and extra-curricular clubs such as maths, farm, homework and debating.
- The school has established a student wellbeing team consisting of two executive teachers, four year-level coordinators (with an executive teacher teamed with each coordinator), deputy principal, youth worker, school health nurse and school psychologist. A student wellbeing hub was established to support students in need; students can access the teacher and space as required. A variety of student groups exist to support like-minded students or those requiring assistance with a specific aspect of schooling. These include Rainbow Connection, Girls Group and Friendship Group.
- The school has a pastoral care program which supports student wellbeing and social emotional learning. The program is built upon the PBL tool. The school identifies common trends in behaviour and there is a collective response to negative incidents through this program.
- The school has an executive team member with responsibility for ICT across the school, a part time assistant for technology and the arts, and school library assistant to support access to technology.

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

- School leaders recognise that teachers have a fundamental role in the school's improvement agenda and have adopted a PLC model to realise key elements of the strategic plan. In this model, the school operates as one PLC.
- PLTs are established for the purpose of collaborative inquiry and continuous improvement in three priority areas aligned to the school's strategic plan. These include data, cultural integrity, and PBL. Each team has representation from each faculty where possible and work is progressed through to the faculty PLTs for sharing of information and developments.
- Each faculty PLT is led by a school executive with focus on data discussion and curriculum development including the development of the essential learnings and proficiency scales.
- The draft professional learning plan identifies the multiple opportunities across the year for staff to engage in whole-school targeted learning that is linked to the strategic and action plans. This document has yet to be shared with staff.
- The leadership team has initiated Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) tours as an observation model across the school. Some teachers have been visited in their classroom by two executives and three to four colleagues to observe teaching practice related to an identified focus. Teachers commented that they appreciated feedback provided although acknowledged that the visits have been somewhat sporadic. Some teachers outlined a need for observation and further discussion of practice within their PLT.
- The school's professional development plan process supports teachers to engage in their professional growth. School leaders and teachers develop plans which have SMART goals aligned to the school's strategic plan. Personal goals are designed to support the individual pursuit of areas of interest or an identified area for development.
- Teachers are willing and encouraged to take leadership roles beyond the classroom.
- The leadership team is developing a strategic intent in the recruitment of staff to meet the growing number of students and further goals in curriculum delivery across faculties.

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

- Aligned to the school's mission and vision, staff have defined essential learnings from all Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards for units in English, mathematics, science, physical health and education, studies of society and environment, design and digital technologies, the arts and Japanese.
- Within the Inclusive Education program, the school has identified essential learnings for English, mathematics and science from kindergarten to year 10. These inform the delivery of 'P' units which are units of work derived from the ACARA-P scales for students with disability. In this program the school has combined learning areas into an interdisciplinary inquiry unit.
- For each of the essential learnings the school has created proficiency scales to indicate student achievement. The scales use a four-point system where a score of 3.0 indicates proficiency at the expected standard of knowledge for the essential learning.
- To develop the essential learnings, the school uses a common 'filtering' approach that emphasises 'endurance, leverage, readiness, teacher judgement and assessment connected' to prioritise what is essential.
- Essential learnings, proficiency scales, and topic scope and sequence documents are regularly discussed in faculty PLTs.
- The school communicates its essential learnings, proficiency scales and assessment tasks to its community for all learning areas on its website.
- All faculties in the school have scope-and-sequence documents that provide an overview of the topics taught across year groups, over the period of a term, semester and year. These documents are generally accessed only by teachers in the faculty and come in a variety of formats across the school.
- All faculties develop common formative assessment items aligned to the essential learnings. Moderation of student achievement in these items occurs between teachers in a faculty if there is more than one class.
- The school is in the process of developing an Indigenous language, history and culture course that will be offered in years 7 and 8 to enable students to explicitly learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.
- The school delivers a social and emotional program in pastoral care.
- The school offers students the opportunity to undertake nationally recognised vocational

training in construction (Statement of Attainment), hospitality (Certificate I) and agri-food operations (Certificate I) with pathways offered for each through the network registered training organisation, Belconnen Training.

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

- Across the school, proficiency scales are used to help staff identify where students are at in their learning and where they need to go next. Alongside essential learnings, teachers generally use these as success criteria and learning intentions respectively.
- Common formative assessments, based on topic, are the main way teachers identify student learning gaps in knowledge and skill. Standardised assessments for mathematics and writing help determine appropriate class mixes.
- Data of student achievement in common formative assessments is used to re-group students in English and mathematics according to progress against the relevant proficiency scale. Other faculties are also exploring this approach.
- There is varying use of the proficiency scales to provide feedback to students and set goals for their learning.
- In physical education and health, students have the opportunity to access 'girls only' or 'boys only' classes.
- Generally, students who are identified as 'below proficient' will receive increased levels of explicit instruction or re-teaching in the class. Students identified as 'above proficient' will generally receive additional learning tasks at a higher level or will have the chance to choose self-directed further study on the topic.
- Across most learning areas, teachers of students in 'P' units are provided with strategies to enable differentiation.
- The review team sighted long- and short-term goals in students' individual learning plans focused on behavioural expectations. These goals were created with parent/carer input.
- In some subjects, students can choose an area of interest to learn about or show their learning within the essential learnings.
- Across the school, students generally complete the same learning activities and demonstrate their learning through the same common assessment tasks.
- Faculty PLTs include some discussion about modifying learning activities to better meet student learning needs.
- Parents/carers are able to see their child's completion of learning activities via the Google classroom guardian summary.
- The school offers two parent-teacher interview times to discuss student progress; one prior to the mid-semester progress report and one afterwards. The school no longer includes comments on the end of semester report, instead emphasising the opportunities to meet.

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

- The school has developed proficiency scales aligned to the essential learnings filtered from the Australian Curriculum. The proficiency scales are designed as a rubric and articulate what a student is able to do. The scales are used with students for the purpose of providing feedback and determining next steps in learning as well as by teachers in moderation processes. Teachers reported using the scales to varying degrees.
- Teachers provide feedback to students using common formative assessments.
- There was an inconsistent understanding about expected teaching practices/pedagogies in faculty areas and across the school. Teachers acknowledged the value in TPL tours as a mechanism to observe and reflect on teaching practices.
- There is some reference to learning intentions and success criteria using the proficiency scales. Whilst reviewers saw examples of a range of teaching practices, the leadership team has yet to fully articulate the pedagogies underpinning delivery of the intended curriculum that they expect to see at the school.
- There are areas of the school implementing some evidence-based pedagogical approaches to deliver curriculum and assessment in different ways. For example, the human-centred design approach in technology subjects.
- The school uses 'The Bumps' to support students in making appropriate behaviour choices to support learning. Visual supports are evident in every classroom to remind student of expectations.

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

- University of Canberra High School Kaleen (UCHSK) has cultivated a partnership with the Canberra Model Railway Club which enhances the school's Enrich program. Adults involved with the club mentor students, leading to improved social capability for students. Through their work with the club students have opportunities to learn new skills in design, building, and programming as well as applying the learnings of the mainstream curriculum.
- The school's partnership with Warehouse Circus extends beyond facility and equipment sharing. 'Circus' is a fully realised elective for students in years 7-10. Staffed by the school, students participate in a program of social and emotional development in the context of developing such skills as aerials, equilibristics and acrobatics. The partnership is regularly monitored for effectiveness.
- UCHSK is a 'full program school' under the University of Canberra Affiliated Schools agreement with the ACT Education Directorate. The school uses this partnership to develop staff through their involvement in teacher training clinics, the teachers as researchers project, masterclasses, Masters scholarships, and pre-service teacher mentoring.
- Each of the school's formal partners are proactive in their desire to review and evaluate the effectiveness of their arrangements with respect to student outcomes.
- Parents/carers are a valued part of the UCHSK community. The school is fostering improved levels of parent/carer engagement in their student's education through strategic placement of parent-teacher nights to affect students formatively. Parents/carers are kept informed of academic progress through weekly guardian summaries provided by the Google classroom platform.
- UCHSK works closely with local community service providers to enhance wellbeing outcomes for students. Through the school's youth worker and wellbeing team students are connected to Capital Region Community Services via the Belconnen Youth Centre youth services team. Students are also encouraged, where appropriate, to connect with a broad range of services including Lifeline and Menslink.
- The Communities and Schools Together (CAST) partnership has enabled specialised assistance to identified students and their families.

Commendations

- University of Canberra High School Kaleen has developed a focused change agenda centred on the evidence-based framework of Transformative Schools. This agenda has been sustained through the life of the plan. Staff across the school have shown a high level of personal commitment to this change agenda.
- Students say the best thing about this school is its staff and the way they care and support them.
- The school has taken a consistent school-wide approach to the implementation of its curriculum. The essential learnings and proficiency scales are used across the school to drive teaching and learning. Common formative assessment is a key aspect of this approach.
- The school has implemented PBL and student support systems to promote safe and respectful behaviour as well as engagement in learning.
- The school has a well-established inclusive education area that provides response to intervention, and small group and flexible learning for the academic and wellbeing needs of all students.
- The school has developed strong and mutually beneficial relationships with a range of external organisations. The partnerships with the Circus Warehouse and Canberra Model Railway Club show obvious student growth in general capabilities.

Affirmations

- PLTs drive strategic initiatives in data, PBL, and cultural integrity.
- The school is developing a data culture linked to common formative assessment.
- The four driving questions used by PLTs promote the responsiveness of teacher practice to evidence.
- The school leadership team is committed to staff wellbeing.
- Students recognise the importance of their relationships with teachers as intrinsic to their learning.
- Staff and students express a high level of connection to the school.
- The master planning process has been effective in generating important discussion about how school spaces can best meet the learning and wellbeing needs of students.
- Teachers are observing the practice of others to reflect on their own.
- The school is offering a diverse range of electives and enrichment activities in response to student need and interest. Students talked about the many opportunities they have at this school.
- Programs such as circus, Role-play and Gaming, and Agri-foods are grounded in robust interdisciplinary studies.
- Proficiency scales are identified by students as the articulation of learning expectations.

They know what to do next to improve.

Recommendations

- Collaboratively develop a University of Canberra High School Kaleen Improvement Plan 2021-2025 with the wider school community, which:
 - > is consistent with the school's vision for teaching and learning
 - > provides a narrow and sharp agenda focused on student outcomes, derived from analysis of performance over a number of years; and
 - > incorporates explicit targets that are monitored over the life of the plan.
- Develop a data plan that incorporates a full range of school data (student achievement and wellbeing) that:
 - > clearly outlines the purpose of data at each level of the school as appropriate
 - > provides clarity around the performance of priority groups
 - > clarifies roles and responsibilities for the leaders, teachers and students in their use of data
 - > specifies how software can be used to support data analysis and communication at all levels; and
 - > provides opportunities for increasing the data literacy of school leaders and teachers as appropriate.
- Further develop systematic processes to identify student need; identify and/or develop and implement interventions; and measure success.
- Build upon the professional learning community model to collaboratively refine the whole- of-school professional learning plan to cater for the individual needs of each staff member, particularly in respect to the strategic agenda of the school. This should include a tailored approach to observation, feedback, mentoring and coaching of staff with clear roles and responsibilities.
- Enhance the plan for curriculum delivery to provide a whole school view of curriculum including the use of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.
- Develop a collective understanding of differentiated teaching and learning to guide staff adoption of evidence-based classroom practices to cater for the diverse range of cultures, experience and individual differences of students.
- Continue to refine and document common expectations of teaching and learning that are grounded in evidence-based research.
- Develop or refine partnerships to support the strategic intent of the school.