



**ACT**  
Government  
Education

# **Lanyon High School**

Report of Review, 2021

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## Publication and independent Review Team details

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Date of School Review: 15, 16, 17 and 18 March 2021

Principal of Review School: Barbara Monsma

*National School Improvement Tool Review Report* prepared by:

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Report Date: 18 March 2021

***Report of Review, 2021*** prepared by:

ACT Government Education Directorate  
Education Services Division, School Improvement Branch

Report Date: 13 April 2021

## Overview of the School Review process

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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.

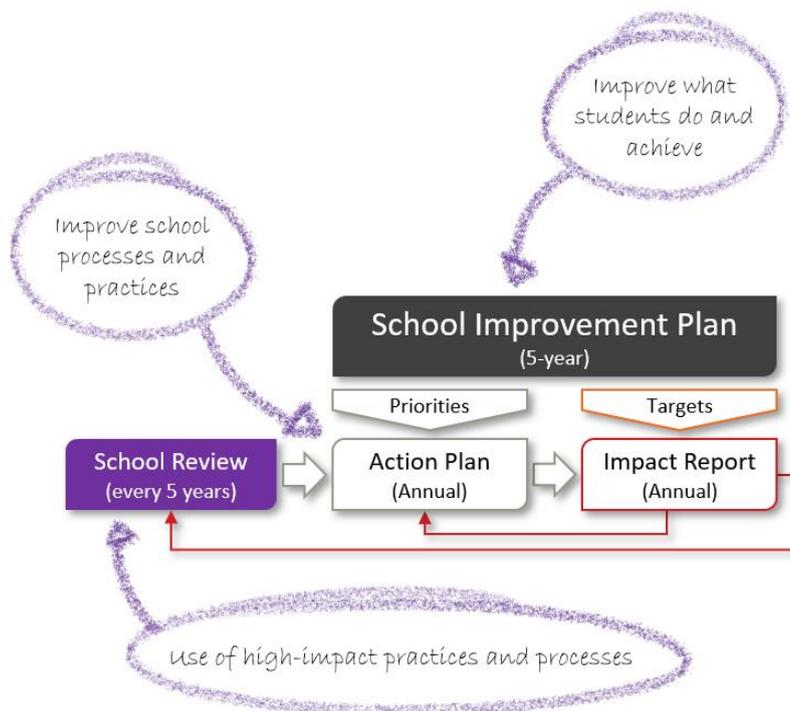
Following Review, the school receives a planning report, which is used as an internal working document, outlining key findings and recommended strategies for continued school improvement. The Education Directorate uses this planning report as a basis for the final *Report of Review* provided to school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

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### 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

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### 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

- Lanyon High School has made an effort to understand current student achievement levels, particularly in literacy, numeracy, and for positive behaviours, and analysed how these measures have changed over time. These measures consider students in social inclusion priority groups, students at risk of disengaging or who have already disengaged from schooling, and students facing disadvantage, including students with a disability, those from non-English-speaking (EAL/D) backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and those from low Socio-Economic Status (SES) backgrounds. These measures and accompanying targets with timelines are communicated to parents/carers and families, teachers, students, and the ACT Education Department.
- Members of the school Board report that the school leadership team makes them aware of the agendas, and that they are supportive of these agendas. In the past agendas focused on student behaviour and are now shifting the focus to research-based learning and pedagogy. The Board members express that more detailed background information about the agendas would be helpful for their decision-making. The Board, which includes teacher and student members, meets twice every term for a minimum of half an hour and for an hour at the maximum.
- The agendas are inconsistently implemented across the school, and teachers state that the cognitive load in addressing the research base, concepts, and principles in each agenda is quite significant and at times overwhelming.
- School staff are united in their commitment to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and to address obstacles to school-wide improvement, including behaviour that distracts students and staff from active participation in teaching and learning.
- The school leadership team communicates its expectations on behaviour and learning goals to students. Despite the support provided, students report that they do not give their best at times. Students also report that there is inconsistency in the way that staff communicate these expectations.

## NSIT Domain 2: Analysis and discussion of data

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### 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

- Lanyon High School's data plan describes the range of national, system, and school-based datasets collected by the school. For each data set, the plan outlines the timing of assessments, staff responsible for collating, analysing, and sharing data, and the dissemination of the general points for analysis. The deputy principal has developed a school-specific website providing guidance on understanding and using Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) data.
- Data referenced in the school data plan include: A-E Grades, report comments, work habits, and personal and social capabilities, National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data, PAT data, data from the school nurse, attendance data, and data emerging from positive and negative incidents. Data can be in the form of spreadsheets, word documents, or even hand-written notes. Staff members identify that some data sets are difficult to extract or centrally locate in the student management system, Sentral, and therefore systematic analysis of the data is challenging.
- The principal and deputy principal are experts in data analysis and offer staff professional learning on data literacy. This allows staff to collate and analyse achievement from the range of data accessible under the data plan. Staff have varying degrees of access to data across the school. Staff capabilities vary in the understanding and use of data. Staff referenced individual student cases or whole-year cohorts rather than systemic data.
- The Student Services Team (SST) meets weekly to provide timely behavioural, and attendance data about individual students each fortnight. The SST is developing student profiles which include relevant wellbeing information, students' strengths, interests, hobbies, and case management matters for teachers.
- In Curriculum Banks (CB), Staff Learning Centre (SLC) leaders lead their staff through reviews of a range of data outlined in the data plan. Staff report inconsistency in these meetings, in particular around how the data will inform future actions for learning and teaching.
- Parents and carers commented that despite having access to school and individual data, they did not have a clear understanding of the data.

## NSIT Domain 3: A culture that promotes learning

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### 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

- Parents, staff, and students report substantial improvement to the school environment over the past three years. Developing clear policies and ensuring that an evidence-based approach is deployed has led to a reduction in serious behavioural incidents. The school supports staff in implementing these new approaches.
- The physical environment of the school has also improved as buildings have been renovated.
- Parents express that the reputation of the school within the local community has improved. This can be seen in the increased enrolments, and an overall improvement in the perceptions of all stakeholders interviewed.
- Staff place a high value on developing and sustaining positive and caring relationships with students and colleagues. Students report that the positive relationships with their peers and staff is a key reason that they enjoy coming to school. The wellbeing of staff and students is a clear priority. While parents appreciate the high levels of support and care the staff at the school provide for their children, they feel that more timely and regular information on their child's progress would enable them to support learning from home.
- Stakeholders consistently cite high staff morale as a key strength of the school. Staff members enjoy high levels of trust. Formal and informal observations, and collaboration are a regular feature of classroom practice. The school has a wide range of flexible learning options, both onsite and offsite, to meet the diversity of academic and non-academic needs. The school has established processes which match students to the various programs that are identified as being most likely to meet their particular needs.
- Classrooms are owned by teachers, and overall, are well presented, demonstrating care and commitment. Many classrooms feature learning stimulus material as a reference for students.
- Work has commenced on building cultural competence within the school. This includes the drafting of a cultural integrity plan, mapping of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in curriculum documents and staff professional learning.

## NSIT Domain 4: Targeted use of school resources

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### 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

- Under the current improvement agenda, the school applies its resources in a targeted manner to focus on the provision of student support services to the inclusive education program. The school budget aligns well with local and system priorities. The school agenda has provision for providing discretionary funding to the inclusive education program, the management of behaviour amongst students, and the refurbishment of the school.
- Some areas of the school require significant upkeep. A few buildings now house fewer students than they did initially. Some rooms in the main classroom block can barely accommodate classes due to their small size, and this limits teachers who want to arrange classes to incorporate flexible learning. Teachers report using more traditional classroom arrangements to manage behaviour.
- The school has invested in the Enrichment Centre (EC) and the re-designed Learning Support Unit (LSU) allows students with identified learning or social and emotional needs to continue their learning. The school has just begun identifying students who are 'high-capacity' and supporting their needs is beginning to be addressed now.
- The school has school-wide policies, practices, and programs in place to assist in identifying and addressing student needs. Programs are resourced from within the school and the local community. There is a targeted and timetabled English as an Additional Language/ Dialect (EAL/D) curriculum for a small group of students. The provided teacher allocation is able to support this group. There is an Indigenous Liaison Officer (ILO) who is working with families, the school community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Staff and the buildings are deployed in ways that best address the behaviour management needs of several students in the school, so that the learning needs of the majority of students and teaching and learning are protected.
- Most teachers report that they are teaching in their area of expertise and are timetabled accordingly. Although some teachers are working outside of their disciplines of expertise, the school makes the best use of available staff expertise and interests to meet the learning and management needs for all students. Teachers in some learning areas report that 40-minute lessons are challenging.

## NSIT Domain 5: An expert teaching team

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### 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

- The school has found creative ways to build a school-wide, professional team of able teachers who take an active leadership role. The executive team is an example of how leadership is distributed and serves as evidence of the professional development and mentoring of staff. There is a budgeted Professional Learning Plan (PLP).
- Clear procedures are in place to encourage a school-wide, shared responsibility for the management of behaviour to allow for productive student learning. The school has documented processes for teacher feedback emerging from formal and informal classroom observations, and teacher collaborations.
- The school is working towards developing a culture of continuous professional improvement that includes classroom-based behaviour management and focusing on learning outcomes. This culture is actively promoted by the principal and the deputy principal, as they have started training the staff on these aspects themselves.
- The development of the Professional Learning Community (PLC) and the Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) is allowing for a greater focus on student learning outcomes and for distributed leadership. Leaders lead and model professional learning.
- Teachers report that the diverse professional learning offering develops them as teachers and improves teaching and student learning. Teachers, particularly teachers new to the school, report that the weekly meetings and the diverse program which covers research, cultural inclusion, PLC, and classroom behaviours and management creates cognitive overload.
- Most of the teachers in the school are experts in the fields in which they teach. Those teaching outside their immediate area of expertise have high levels of confidence in teaching in other fields and are eager to learn how to improve on their current teaching practices. Teachers and staff report feeling respected and supported as professionals and colleagues. The school expects all teachers to be highly committed to the continuous improvement of their own teaching.
- There is limited evidence that teachers, the principal and other school leaders build networked school relationships with teachers and leaders from nearby schools.

## NSIT Domain 6: Systematic curriculum delivery

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### 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

- The school has developed a coherent and sequenced plan for curriculum that includes some unit and lesson plans. The curriculum scope and sequence plans for each year level are clearly specified in most subjects and shared on the school website. Parents comment that they would like more information on their child's learning progress and assessments. This would help them be proactive partners. Formal reports are issued four times each year regarding student performance.
- Students comment that they are not clear on the sequence of assessment and learning tasks, and how this informs their achievement grade. A few students comment that in some learning areas they receive regular, detailed feedback that helps move their learning forward. Students state that they want to access additional academic support to improve their learning achievement.
- Professional learning is conducted with staff to build curriculum knowledge and facilitate curriculum development. The curriculum document format is consistent across the school and includes unit outlines, assessment tasks, and rubrics. These details are mostly shared with students.
- Staff and students describe curriculum and learning activities for pastoral care as being misaligned with student needs. Staff and students see a benefit in learning about personal and social capabilities but wanted more voice in the program.
- Students speak positively about enrichment lessons. Even though they are not assessed they still value the time to engage in activities of their choice. Some students shared that they would like learning activities to focus more on life skill and community/citizenship topics.
- Students report that explicit teaching and quality assessment, as documented in curriculum outlines, varies greatly between classes. Students appreciate teachers who give quality explanations.
- Assessment processes are aligned with the curriculum in most subjects and teachers are working on curriculum design to clarify learning intentions to support student achievement of outcomes.

## NSIT Domain 7: Differentiated teaching and learning

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### 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

- The school has enacted a range of approaches to flexibly cater for its student profile and support teachers to adjust for student learning in the classroom. Staff display a willingness to grow their capabilities in differentiating teaching and learning. School leaders and LSU teachers explicitly referenced the Tomlinson Differentiation Framework<sup>1</sup>.
- The Enrichment Centre (EC), established in 2020, provides students with a learning space which is sensitive to their social-emotional needs. The school has established clear processes for students to access the learning space. Links with a classroom teacher are maintained for students utilising the EC space. The school utilises the MacqLit<sup>2</sup> program for small numbers of identified students who have poor reading skills within the LSU and in mainstream classes. Students' progress is closely monitored.
- The school has commenced a process of case managers co-designing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and/or learning agreements to support the learning of students who have disengaged from learning or displayed other risk-taking behaviours. These learning agreements include parent/carer, student, teacher, and other professionals' input (where appropriate). The case managers then support the students' teachers to enact adjustments and utilise the strategies in class. Case managers also monitor the learning and wellbeing progress of students, reporting to the Executive Teachers Continuum of Education Support and Inclusion, where appropriate.
- There is variability across the school in staff understanding of and confidence in how to differentiate their teaching. Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) meet regularly to discuss student learning support needs and ILPs.
- Some staff outlined how they present information in different ways to students, provide students with a choice of learning activities, and allow students to choose how they want to demonstrate their understanding.
- Students and staff point out that learning can be made more challenging and rigorous.
- Some summative assessment tasks cited by the review team provide opportunities for students to demonstrate learning 'well above' or 'above' the standard. Students interviewed indicated that they rarely completed the 'above' or 'well above' questions and said they are rarely challenged to extend their learning in class.

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<sup>1</sup> The Differentiated Classroom-Responding to the Needs of All Learners; By: Carol Ann Tomlinson, ASCD 2014

<sup>2</sup> Macquarie Literacy program from Macquarie University

## NSIT Domain 8: Effective pedagogical practices

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### 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 senior school leadership team take a strong leadership role in encouraging the use of research-based teaching practices in all classrooms to engage, challenge and support student learning. The school leadership team keeps abreast of research on effective teaching practices and began professional learning in 2021 around Marzano High Yield<sup>3</sup> effective pedagogical practices with all teaching staff. However, teachers could not describe what student outcomes they were improving by implementing the high yield instructional practices.
- Some teachers understand and use research-based effective pedagogical practices in their classroom practice. There is some evidence of teachers using these practices to maximise student learning. Students describe the classes where they feel challenged, as being those classes in which teachers explicitly teach the content, share quality criteria, and give adequate and timely feedback to move their learning forward.
- Formal and informal feedback is given to teachers about their classroom practice through their Professional Development Plan, CB meetings, and PLT time. Literacy and numeracy coaches are available to staff to develop pedagogical strategies. Teachers are mostly positive about this process being beneficial to improving their teaching practice
- Students receive feedback from teachers informally and formally. Students speak about feedback being given mainly through rubrics at the end of an assessment item or through informal discussion in class. They would like to have more ongoing feedback about their achievement and how they are progressing, as well as more detail about the requirements of a learning task.
- School staff are working hard to build students' beliefs in the abilities to learn successfully. There is evidence of staff working collectively to build students' understanding of the effort needed to improve learning. Teachers' efforts are spent on building positive working relationships with students to focus on learning.

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<sup>3</sup> Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement; By Robert J. Marzano, ASCD, 2001

## NSIT Domain 9: School-community partnerships

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### 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

- Parents report that timely access to information on learning progress would assist them to support learning.
- There are a wide range of partnerships in place to support student learning needs. A small number of these have been formalised through a partner agreement, such as a Memorandum of Understanding. Some of the partnerships are informal and have been established by individual staff members for a specific purpose.
- There is evidence that the partnerships are working well for several students. There is limited evidence regarding the impact on learning outcomes. In some cases, this is because of the limited time the relationship has been in place.
- The range of informal school partnerships include: Teen Clinic, Rotary, Gordon Youth Centre, Gordon Community Centre, Network colleges and primary schools, volunteer learning organisations and secondary school work experience providers, for example – Paint and Panel, Police Citizens Youth Club, Young Women's Christian Association, Lanfest, Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre, Young Carers, Woodcraft Guild, Kulturebreak, Gugan Gulwin. This list is not complete.
- Parents are aware of the school's improvement focus and the purpose of these partnerships; however, they are not actively involved in decision making around these school directions.

## Commendations

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- The school has found creative ways to build a school-wide, professional team of able teachers, and a variety of support staff, including teachers who take an active leadership role beyond the classroom to meet the social and emotional and learning needs of the students.
- Teachers report that the principal, deputy principal and other school leaders lead and model professional learning in the school and that they value and welcome this approach.
- The school applies its resources (staff time, expertise, funds, facilities, materials) in a targeted manner. This resourcing has had a significant positive impact on the school's 'tone', and the attitudes and behaviour of students.
- There are school-wide programs for students with identified learning needs, and some specific programs for those who need to be challenged in their learning.
- The school gives priority to initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for students in its use of discretionary school funds. There is a commitment by the school in staffing to support student behaviour to facilitate learning.
- The leadership team is committed to working from an evidence-base and uses a selection of data in a range of formats, (including anecdotal and verbal information), to inform the range of agendas, primarily behavioural, that they have established.
- The school has an understanding of current student achievement in literacy, numeracy, and behaviour, including how measures have changed over time, in a range of identified priority groups. The united and strategic approach of the school leadership team and staff to student behaviour has elevated the learning culture of the school and resulted in a more positive and settled environment.
- Lanyon High School is providing a broad range of flexible learning options not available within the school context to support identified student need. These additional educational programs are supported and delivered by a range of community organisations, education, and training providers. Comprehensive case management practices ensure a strong wrap-around service, offering valuable insights to ensure a range of support measures are in place to support students' learning and wellbeing.
- CB meetings for curriculum planning and reflection provide clear evidence of staff contributing to and discussing curriculum documents and planning, resulting in consistency in curriculum documentation across the school.

## Affirmations

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- There is the development of a culture of continuous professional improvement that includes classroom-based behaviour management, a growing focus on learning outcomes, and formal and informal mentoring and coaching arrangements, including strategies on how students learn.
- The development of the PLC and the PLTs is allowing for a greater focus on student learning outcomes and for distributed leadership in the areas of teaching, learning and pedagogy.
- The school expects all teachers to be highly committed to the continuous improvement of their own teaching and to be focused on the development of knowledge and skills required to

improve student learning.

- The newly introduced Cultural Inclusion Framework is designed to assist staff and students to build culturally safe and inclusive practice.
- The school leadership team is re-focusing the agendas to learning, pedagogy, and research-based practice to support and extend the existing focus on behaviour management.
- School-wide targets for improvement have been set and are being communicated to parents and families, teachers, and students, with accompanying timelines.
- The school leadership team is collating datasets, creating structures, and providing time for teaching teams to get together to analyse data focused on student learning, and to then determine appropriate actions within their teaching.
- A range of spaces have been purposefully refurbished to support students with complex needs. This includes the establishment of the EC and re-designing of the LSU in a fit-for-purpose space.
- Work has commenced on designing a mechanism to track and review the school's community partnerships in a systematic way.
- The school's systems and processes supporting student wellbeing allow the School Youth Health Nurse Program partnership to work in meeting young people's needs.
- There are high levels of collegiality, trust, and support amongst staff. This has been a priority of the school leadership team.
- The commencement of cultural integrity action planning, appointment of the IIEO, and plans for engaging with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community provide a solid foundation to continue work on cultural competence across the school.

## Recommendations

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- Narrow the explicit improvement agenda to one domain or aspect/strand of learning, with specific measurable data on student learning outcomes. This explicit agenda should enable the professional learning program to be narrowed, whilst still retaining the PLC, PLTs, cultural inclusion, positive behaviours, and classroom management.
- Informed by the school's explicit improvement agenda, determine the most appropriate and relevant datasets for analysis of student learning and wellbeing, and reframe the school's data plan to incorporate those data sets. Develop consistent processes across the school for staff to engage with the school's data to know where students are in their learning, and to inform teaching and to measure growth in student cohort achievement over time. Data auditing should also enable the provision of more regular and timely feedback on student learning progress to include students and parents as genuine partners in learning.
- Audit current community partnerships, affirming both cost and benefit, prior to moving toward formalising partner agreements. Such agreements would provide mechanisms for reviewing present and future partnerships for impact, including learning and wellbeing outcomes, as well as confirming mutual benefits for both parties.
- Develop a curriculum plan across the school ensuring consistent delivery and design that focuses on constructing learning experiences for all students to access engaging and challenging learning experiences.

- Develop a professional learning plan that aligns with regular feedback cycles of coaching, mentoring, and observation across the school that allows teachers to collectively share and improve teaching practices. Include a framework for pedagogy that establishes and communicates clear expectations and shared beliefs consistent with the narrowed explicit improvement agenda.