



ACT
Government
Education

Charles Conder Primary School

Report of Review, 2022

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Publication and independent Review Team details

Date of School Review: 1, 2, 3 and 4 August 2022

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National School Improvement Tool Review Report prepared by:

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Report Date: 5 August 2022

Report of Review, 2022 prepared by:

ACT Government Education Directorate
Education Services Division, School Improvement Branch

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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.

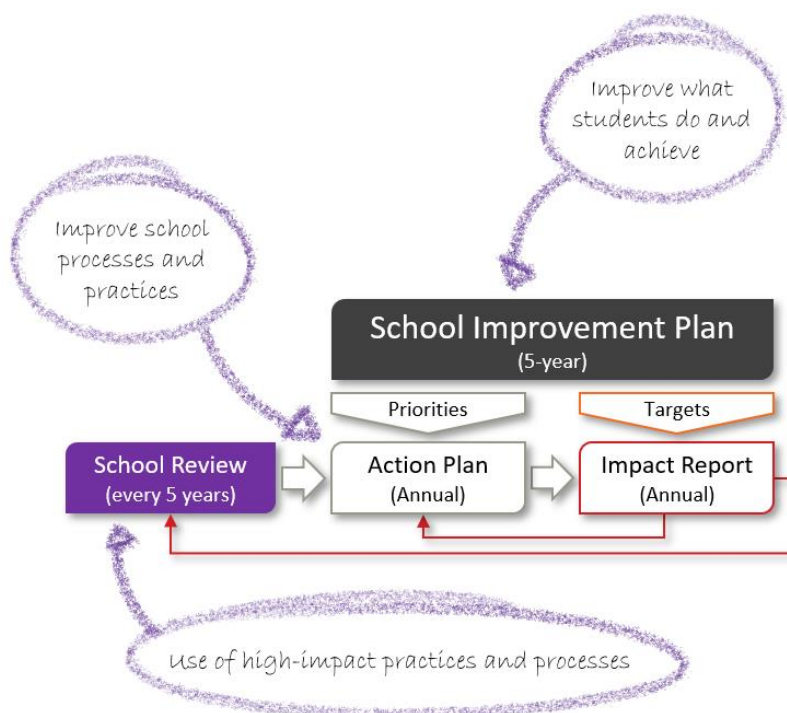
Through the lens of the NSIT, an internationally recognised framework for reviewing teaching and learning practices, reviewers gain an accurate picture of current school practices. During Review evidence provided by schools is considered alongside evidence gathered through consultation with staff, students,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

- Discussions with Board members, the principal and leaders confirm the commitment to the improvement of learning outcomes for all students attending Charles Conder Primary School (CCPS).
- Documents and discussions with staff demonstrate that CCPS uses a wide range of system, school- and teacher-generated data to understand student achievement levels. The data cover students who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from school, those facing disadvantage and from non-English speaking backgrounds, as well as how achievement levels have changed over time. The data include Progressive Achievement Test (PAT),¹ NAPLAN and teacher-developed formative and summative assessments.
- Targets identified in the 2018-2022 strategic plan and 2021 and 2022 action plans are general and yet to be based on student outcomes or, in some cases, able to be measured. Discussions with the school leadership indicate an appetite to develop more explicit targets based on measurable student outcomes. Targets and priorities have been communicated to staff and parents.
- Discussions with the staff confirm their united and enthusiastic commitment to continuing to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- CCPS's planning and curriculum documents demonstrate that the school has a wide range of clearly articulated strategies for improving levels of student outcomes and wellbeing.
- Staff, parent and student surveys, together with discussions with these stakeholders, confirm that the school has high expectations for student attendance, engagement and outcomes. These expectations are communicated widely within the school community.

¹ PAT is an integrated approach to improving learning by measuring a student's knowledge, skills and understanding in a subject. For example: PAT-M – mathematics, PAT-R – reading, PAT-S – science.

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 school has an extremely strong data culture. All staff discuss data being a fundamental aspect of school and individual student improvement. Data discussions drive all aspects of the school and underpin the vision of: “Know the child, grow the child”.
- The school has implemented systematic collection, analysis and discussion of summative academic and wellbeing data sets to inform actions and set priorities around student learning.
- The CCPS data plan describes the various data sources and tools, the timeline for collection and responsibilities, and the type of analysis required. The school uses research on multiple sources of evidence to categorise its data-collection tools.
- Cohort planning teams spend time each week in collaborative planning. These meetings include sharing assessment data to inform planning and monitor progress of student learning.
- Standardised testing is conducted and recorded by executive teachers. Data collected by teachers inform their practice on a day-to-day basis. There is a strong focus on literacy, numeracy and social and emotional learning (SEL).
- Student achievement data collected by teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) are used to establish groups within classes, levels of intervention and differentiation within the classroom.
- Leaders are working with deliberate intent to further develop a stronger data culture within the school’s professional learning community (PLC) groups. The school executive leads fortnightly PLC team meetings. Teachers are required to bring individual student work samples and whole-class data to share with the PLC. Minutes of PLC team meetings provide evidence of discussion of teaching strategies identified to support students.
- Positive and negative behaviour incidents are routinely entered on to the Sentral school management system. The principal and positive behaviours for learning (PBL) team have recently been trained in the use of the Sentral PBL dashboard. The staff acknowledge the importance of being able to review behaviour reports to inform the PBL lesson focus and look for patterns of behaviour that will inform the SEL program which uses the assets for life and Play is the Way² models.

² Play Is the Way is a social and emotional learning methodology using physically interactive games and activities, five guiding concepts, an empowering self-reflective language and six key virtues that form a pathway to empathy.

- The CCPS SEL continuum is used for small-group and cohort intentional teaching focus areas.

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 CCPS vision: “Know the child, grow the child” and the values of support, respect, diversity, cooperation and honesty are prominent within documentation and visible on signage throughout the school. This vision is lived through the students as they follow the mantra – “We are: self-managers, thinkers, researchers, collaborators and communicators”.
- The school stakeholders enthusiastically speak of an environment reflecting high expectations that all students will learn successfully, to the best of their ability.
- The reviewers have observed interactions between staff, students, parents and families as being warm, caring, polite and inclusive.
- The school has prioritised the development of inquiry-based learning as a focus.
- Principles underpinning the pedagogy at CCPS are those of personalised and social and emotional learning, an inquiry approach, purposeful collection and use of data, consistent practices, capacity building and community engagement.
- The school has clear strategies in place to promote appropriate behaviour. The PBL Framework has created a language and processes which underpin the management of behaviour in the school. The SEL continuum identifies the explicit skills needed by students to be active and engaged citizens.
- CCPS has a significant number of students from varying cultural backgrounds. A teacher is developing a school focus intended to build cultural competency.
- Discussions and surveys confirm that CCPS views families as integral members of the school community and partners in student learning. This is further evidenced by the large number of parents attending the wide range of workshops and information sessions presented by the school staff.
- Reviewers have observed an obvious sense of belonging and ownership of parents, staff and students towards the school. Discussions with these stakeholders show they are proud of their school, especially in the CCPS improvement journey undertaken in the past five years.
- The student leadership group provides an authentic voice to the school executive. The group formulates plans and activities to improve its community.
- The safe, respectful and positive learning atmosphere is evidenced in the immaculate presentation of the school, the stimulating classroom environments and the calm, engaged learning being conducted by teachers and students. Outdoor environments, the sustainability garden, rock garden, sensory garden and grass amphitheatre are inviting

and provide enriched opportunities for outdoor play and learning.

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

- About 40 students in the school have individual learning plans (ILP) as a result of being identified as having additional needs. The plans are detailed, and staff can describe the way in which they are enacting the adjustments articulated in those plans. Learning support assistants (LSAs) provide in-class help for many of those students.
- There are specialised, small-group programs operating for students who require significant additional support. Response to intervention (RTI) groups are formed, based on student achievement and growth data. Identified students are supported by the executive teachers who conduct small-group and one-on-one targeted learning.
- School leaders play a significant role in supporting teams, including working collaboratively with staff within classrooms.
- There is evidence of the school making the best use of staff expertise. For example, experienced teachers are partnered with beginning and/or new teachers in a teaching team and act as mentors for them.
- The open-plan, learning house classrooms enable seamless collaboration and dynamic movement of students for purposeful learning. Reviewers have observed technology being integrated purposefully into learning.
- The leadership team has allocated school funds to employ a family and community engagement coordinator whose responsibilities are to build community relationships and engagement. Discussions with the school community confirm that the work of the current coordinator has been a major factor in the success of this service. There are two youth workers to help students who are not part of the inclusion support program. There is an active student with additional needs team which identifies students who would benefit from small-group support such as the life skills program, which is part of the school's tier-two strategy. This resourcing has strengthened teachers' belief that there is a team around the child and that the students' learning and wellbeing are a collective responsibility.
- English as an additional language/dialect (EAL/D) students are supported by a teacher who provides an individual and small-group withdrawal program. Teachers also receive in-class support.
- The two learning support units (LSU) cater for the needs of 12 children with a diagnosed disability. Both units are staffed with teachers and LSAs experienced in supporting students with complex learning needs. The staff support the integration of students into mainstream classes where appropriate.
- Furniture, technology and classroom spaces are used flexibly to support the academic

and SEL needs of classes, small groups and individual students. There are a number of outside spaces used to support the diversity of learning.

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

- The school leadership team members, as instructional leaders, have established comprehensive coaching and mentoring agreements with all staff. This process has been embraced by staff. It has been a significant catalyst for the development of a cohesive staff where morale is very high.
- The coaching and mentoring flowchart details a formalised seven-stage cycle of development which underpins the coaching and mentoring agreements. The coaching and mentoring agreements establish explicit tracking sources aligned with achieving a teacher's professional learning plan goals.
- Planned walk-throughs are informed by instructional-practices surveys of staff, which occur at least once a term.
- Classroom teacher observations are documented, along with a set of recommendations to support the observed students' learning. Explicit teacher feedback is aligned with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.
- Teachers provide written self-reflections as a thinker, researcher, collaborator and communicator, which contribute to the development of their professional development plan (PDP).
- Teachers participate in PLCs with explicit improvement goals and strategies for the year.
- All teachers use the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership self-assessment tool to reflect on their teaching practice on an annual cycle.
- All staff meet with their coaches to formalise their professional learning goals for the year. The goals are documented in personal PDPs. Staff reflection and feedback are regularly collected from multiple sources.
- The school professional learning plan provides details for the purpose, resourcing, responsibility and frequency of engagement of each PLC.
- The school provides regular scheduled time for teachers to undertake professional learning.
- The executive team meets regularly to lead and review progress of the professional learning teams. Multiple sources of data and feedback inform their review practices.
- The school has a professional learning schedule which outlines planned professional learning activities during team, staff and PLC meetings, as well as planned professional learning days.
- All staff state that resourcing for individualised professional learning, identified in

professional learning plans, is made available when requested.

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

- Each learning area has a detailed scope and sequence document, based on the Australian Curriculum, showing the progression from Kindergarten to Year 6.
- The curriculum plan document unpacks the inquiry pedagogical approach at the school and details four conceptual lenses which umbrella the curriculum. They are:
 - identity, creativity and wellbeing
 - social responsibility
 - environmental sustainability
 - physical world.

The general capabilities, cross-curriculum perspectives and assets for life are interrelated within the curriculum plan.

- The approach and expected outcomes for the school's annual inquiry learning focus are explained through the four conceptual lenses. In 2022, the inquiry focus is connecting and caring for our natural world.
- Curriculum documents align with the capacity matrices which are used to capture formative and summative assessment of student progress.
- Minutes of meetings, together with discussions with LSAs, confirm that they are involved in planning the learning for year groups.
- SEL is explicitly described for student skill attainment from Kindergarten to Year 6. The areas of skill development are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management.
- The Play Is the Way approach is supported by detailed curriculum documents aligned with key Australian Curriculum subject areas and general capabilities. The 2022 adoption of this SEL for all years has been strongly supported by the teachers.
- The curriculum is shared with parents and families through the mobile phone application Seesaw.³

³ Seesaw is a platform for engagement and communication.

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

- The school executive team places a high priority on supporting teachers to tailor their teaching to the individual needs of students. The workshop model is used as a primary strategy for differentiating learning for English, mathematics and SEL. Workshopping and conferencing enable discussion of each student's achievements and challenges and the regular co-development of individual learning goals.
- Teachers speak confidently about the range of strategies they employ – particularly student goal setting and individual conferencing to differentiate learning.
- Inquiry learning is viewed by staff as an effective pedagogical practice to differentiate learning for all students. Staff clearly articulate their belief that inquiry learning harnesses student choice and voice.
- The school uses an RTI approach for early identification of student learning needs. School data sets, along with parent and teacher consultation, are used to identify those needs.
- Individual learning plans for identified students are developed in consultation with family members, the school executive and class teachers. A cycle of review is in place to monitor the success of those plans.
- Discussions with parents acknowledge the willingness of the school to accommodate the specific learning and wellbeing needs of students.
- Staff recognise that all students are at different stages of learning. Teaching practices across the school reflect the belief that all students are capable of growing their learning. Support is in place for all students.
- The school is utilising the expertise within LSUs across the school to support inclusion. Programs are responsive to the individual needs of learners. Structure, routine and appropriate adjustments to learning are the keys to success.
- Seesaw is used to communicate learning to parents/carers. Parents/carers articulate that they value this platform as it supports conversations at home regarding learning.
- Teachers use a range of formative assessments to inform teaching – including letter identification, oral language assessment, word vocabulary, capacity matrixes, bee spelling, Marie Clare hearing, writing samples, literacy and numeracy progressions, observations, anecdotal notes and student conferencing. These data allow teachers to implement differentiated practices to promote learning and monitor growth.
- A profile that includes previous achievement levels enables teachers to know student progress across the year and the exact point of need.

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 established its Pedagogical Framework built on six core principles: SEL, inquiry approach, purposeful collection and use of data, consistent practices, capacity building and community engagement.
- Demonstrating a commitment to the Pedagogical Framework, teaching teams undertake self-reflection of the essential instructional practices at the beginning of each term.
- Classrooms throughout the school have on display a variety of applications of visible learning.⁴
- The school conducts targeted and research-informed professional learning to support the instructional practices of the PLC groups.
- Instructional practices are supported by formative and summative assessments.
- Each student has a personalised learning plan which informs the differentiated learning they receive.
- The inquiry lens is reflected across all key learning areas by considering the “big ideas” and drives the teaching and learning cycle.
- Complementing the PBL Framework and trauma-informed practices, the Play Is the Way approach provides teachers with strategies to teach social and self-capabilities through games. This approach has been enthusiastically adopted by teachers.
- Students express a high level of satisfaction with the feedback for learning they receive on an individual basis. This mode is referred to as conferencing with the teachers.
- Classroom teaching practice reflects highly motivated teachers collaborating to provide differentiated approaches to learning.
- Staff value the highly effective leadership provided by the executive PLC.
- The 2021 school satisfaction survey data reflect that teachers receive quality feedback on their instructional practice (22.6 per cent above the ACT P-6 school mean).

⁴ Visible learning is all about **children taking ownership for their learning and is the result** of the research undertaken by John Hattie to understand what provides the most success in learning. It is based on over 68,000 studies and 25 million students. Through visible learning, teachers are able to learn and implement different techniques that will increase their impact on their students.

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

- CCPS has been proactive in developing partnerships with parents, families, local businesses, community organisations and allied health services to improve opportunities and outcomes for students and families. The most significant of these include:
 - Warehouse Circus – teaches circus skills as a means of supporting students with challenging behaviours
 - ACT Health EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia) program – an early intervention program for students pre-primary and below
 - Lanyon High School mentoring group – supports Year 6 students in transitioning to high school
 - Menslink – provides counselling for targeted year 5 and 6 boys
 - Allied health services – part of the Education Directorate to support students with developmental deficiencies
 - Tuning Into Kids – parenting course for parents in the school district
 - Fathering Project – aimed at encouraging fathers to be involved at school
 - Kids Hope – mentoring program for children facilitated by Anglicare
 - Dogs Connect – provide training and accreditation for the school to have a wellbeing dog
 - Smith Family – provides financial support to individual students to help them participate in educational programs
 - YWCA – before- and after-school care
 - Go Foundation – provides financial support for Indigenous families to fully participate in school education
 - University of Canberra (affiliated schools) – PE and sports program.
 - More informal associations have been made with Mura Lanyon Youth Centre, IGA, Gugan Gulwan,⁵ Tuggeranong Bunnings, Domestic Animal Services, Gordon Community Centre, Aquatic Achievers, Abilities Unlimited, Black and White Coffee Shop and the Conder Surgery.
- Currently, there are few formal agreements with the partners. Discussion with the principal indicates his intention to develop written agreements with a number of these partners so that these partnerships can be more strategically managed and that their

⁵ Gugan Gulwan is an Aboriginal youth centre located in the ACT suburb of Wanniasa.

sustainability can be maintained.

- The school leadership team confirms that the capacity of the partners to contribute to the improvement of student outcomes and/or wellbeing is integral to the development of partnerships.

Commendations

Charles Conder Primary School is commended for:

- The development of a strong collegial and collaborative culture among staff. Teachers have an overt and shared commitment to the improvement of teaching and an openness to critique by colleagues. This is reflected in the fact that teachers welcome leaders and colleagues into their classrooms to observe their practice.
- Implementing a wide range of strategies to ensure the curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs of all students.
- Instituting professional learning communities where groups of staff work collaboratively to continually improve the teaching and learning at CCPS.
- The development of a family and community engagement role within the school which has become integral to the provision of a wide range of student, parent and family support mechanisms.
- The innovation, support and leadership provided by leadership team members which contribute significantly to the high level of staff retention.
- The development of comprehensive mentoring and coaching processes which have been implemented by all staff, including the principal, deputy, executive teachers and teachers.
- Implementing a research-based inquiry curriculum-delivery system based on individualised learning for all students. The system includes vertical alignment of the curriculum and has built a highly successful culture for teaching and learning.
- The safe, respectful and positive learning atmosphere, as evidenced by the immaculate presentation of the school, the stimulating classroom environments, and the calm, engaged learning being conducted by teachers and students. Outdoor environments, the sustainability garden, rock garden, sensory garden and grass amphitheatre are inviting and provide enriched opportunities for outdoor play and learning.
- Embedding PBL common language and expectations for all student behaviour across CCPS, helping to create a safe and supportive school environment.
- Ensuring the data literacy of all staff.
- Embedding personalised learning of all students as the primary practice. This ensures differentiated teaching and learning within the school.

Affirmations

Charles Conder Primary school is affirmed for:

- Implementing a broad range of school partnerships with parents, families, government agencies and businesses that are designed to improve student outcomes, and for recognising the need to formalise these agreements with documentation.
- Prioritising the implementation of inquiry-based learning.
- The willingness of teachers to actively share their practice.
- Developing the Pedagogy Framework which provides an effective scaffold for teachers to

enhance their teaching practices.

- The executive team regularly engaging with the teaching practices of staff through observation, walk-throughs, coaching and mentoring.
- The considered approach and choices teachers make, based on knowledge of students and data, to plan differentiated learning and groupings.
- Incorporating the general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities from the Australian Curriculum.
- Aligning curriculum documents with the capacity matrices which are used to capture formative and summative assessment of student progress.

Recommendations

- Develop a documented explicit improvement plan that:
 - is consistent with the school's vision for teaching and learning
 - provides a narrow and sharp agenda focused on student outcomes
 - incorporates explicit targets for student achievement and wellbeing
 - is monitored regularly
 - is evaluated for effectiveness.
- Develop formal agreements with community partners which include the purpose and objectives of the partnership, roles and responsibilities of each partner and monitoring, evaluation and review of the partnership.
- Document a whole-school professional learning plan that:
 - aligns with the school's improvement agenda and focuses on individual staff performance enhancement including observation, feedback, mentoring and coaching
 - references the implementation of agreed and explicit, evidence-based teaching and learning strategies across the school
 - references the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.
- Strengthen the targeted intervention of EAL/D students, including cultural awareness within the school.