



ACT
Government
Education

Lake Tuggeranong College

Report of Review, 2019

Date of School Review: 30, 31 July and 1 August 2019
Principal of Review School: Julie Murkins

National School Improvement Tool Review Report prepared by:

- Lead Reviewer: Christina Rogers, *ACER Senior School Improvement Consultant*
- ACT Review Team members: 1. Liz Wallace, *Principal of Farrer Primary School*
2. Andy Mison, *Principal of Hawker College*
3. George Palavestra, *Senior Director Planning and Review*

Report Date: 23 August 2019

Report of Review, 2019 prepared by:

ACT Government Education Directorate
Education Services Division, School Improvement Branch

Report Date: 26 August 2019

Overview of the School Review process

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

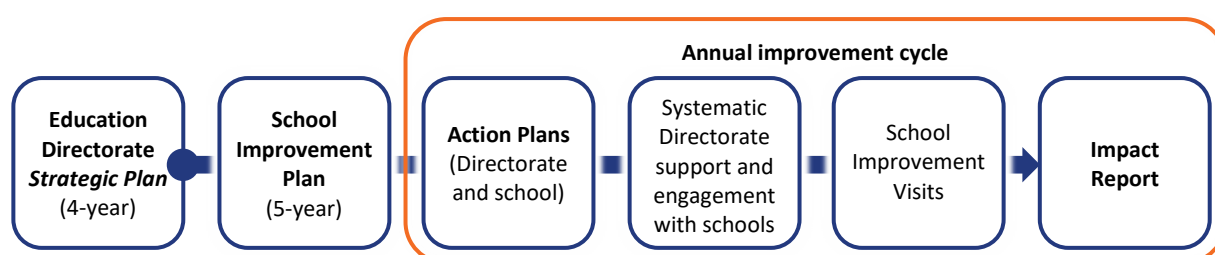
Reviews are undertaken by a team of experienced educators trained in the use of the *National School Improvement Tool* (NSIT) and are led by a Lead Reviewer from the Australian Council of Educational Research. Review Team size depends upon a range of factors, including the size and context of a school.

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

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

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

Where does School Review sit within the broader school improvement cycle?



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

What are Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations?

Commendations

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

Affirmations

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

Recommendations

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

NSIT Domain 1: An explicit improvement agenda

Domain descriptor

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

Findings

- The college has a clearly articulated strategic plan for improvement supported by the School Board. This is expressed through the three priorities of LEARN: Develop our expert teaching team; THRIVE: Strengthen college culture of student connectedness; and CONNECT: Authentic partnerships with our community.
- Plans and priorities are published in detail on the college website. The three priorities are prominently displayed throughout the college.
- The school improvement agenda is expressed in terms of specific improvements sought in student performance, including measurable targets for growth, teaching and learning indicators, engagement and wellbeing, and pathways and partnerships in support of learning.
- These targets have been tracked and analysed over the life of the college plan by the senior school leadership team, and they are accompanied by clear timelines and implementation strategies. There is recognition by senior leaders that the resulting annual performance data do not reflect the intended progress, and that the selected targets may not have supported them in effectively measuring student learning growth. Beyond the senior leaders, staff were not able to make a clear connection between the targets and their classroom practice.
- The improvement agenda has been particularly focused on wellbeing and connection across the college, and there is widespread affirmation of this from students, staff and parents.
- Reviewers noted in conversations with leaders and staff members, a clear intent to shift the strategic emphasis to a narrow and sharp focus on improving student learning outcomes in the next college improvement plan. Leaders acknowledged that the commitment to reflective and collaborative approaches in responding to the evidence of student achievement is inconsistent across the college.
- Many staff can articulate the broad intent of the schools' improvement agenda and are engaged in collaborative efforts to implement it through 'Activated Teams' and more recently a whole-school focus on engagement through professional learning teams (PLTs), based on the DuFour model of inquiry practice.
- The school drives a strategic agenda influenced by a broad and contemporary body of educational research, and senior leaders demonstrate high levels of commitment to integrating effective principles and practices for increased impact.

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

- A range of academic performance data are collected, analysed and shared across the community by the senior school leaders. Academic data sets include Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranking (ATAR) and ACT Scaling Test (AST) scores, Vocational Education and Training (VET) competency and certificate attainment A-E and Void (V) grades, scaled scores in each of The ACT Office of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) course and National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).
- A strategic data plan underpinned by a clear set of beliefs about the performance of data has been developed. A data tracker mapping the college's progress against the identified targets over the past four years is published and visible to the college community. Senior leaders have held workshops and presentations to build data literacy with staff.
- Reviewers observed inconsistency of routines in analysing and discussing data and variability in how it is applied in practice.
- The ACT's BSSS database software ACS informs most data conversations with classroom teachers. Regular moderation of assessment data at faculty levels is monitored and adjusted through the ACS database.
- Trial AST tests and scaled scores in courses studied by students in year 11 inform ATAR estimates and approaches to intervention strategies.
- A range of tools to monitor student wellbeing are evident and utilised by the 'College Life' team. Approaches include monitoring attendance data, student perception surveys, case management notes, student referrals, Motivation and Engagement Scale (MES), and the Flourish Scale surveys. Regular discussions of student wellbeing data inform resource allocation, intervention, and support strategies.
- Year 12 destination and exit surveys map transition from college to employment, training, and university.
- Student personal profiles, attributes and performance data are systematically collected as part of the transition data from high school into year 11.
- PLTS have been set up for teachers to share and analyse student performance data.
- Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (OLNA) and Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT) testing have been trialled over the five-year improvement cycle.
- An online personal student data profile system to track absences, wellbeing, academic reporting and ATAR estimates (known as AWARE) is used by the College Life team to

monitor student progress.

- School board members reported having a deep understanding of school performance data. There is evidence that parents are regularly engaged through discussion of their child's progress throughout the school year, including ATAR estimates and academic package monitoring.

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

- Staff at the college demonstrate commitment to developing and maintaining positive, caring and mutually respectful relationships with students. Staff articulate the importance of positive relationships as the foundation for successful learning.
- Students communicated a strong sense of belonging to the college and this connection continues beyond graduation. Former students mentor current students, attend events, and eight current staff members are graduates – this includes school leaders, classroom teachers and members of the administration team.
- The review team observed the happy and optimistic feel in the college, evident in the way that students and staff spoke about the college. The learning culture is based on growth mindsets and positive psychology.
- Staff comments reflected their commitment to supporting every student to succeed in their chosen pathway. This was evidenced through the flexible, responsive learning packages negotiated with each student as well as the systematic monitoring of attendance and progress by academic officers (AOs).
- A high priority has been placed on student wellbeing through the establishment of College Life, an integrated service delivery model providing support in academia, wellbeing, careers and transitions.
- Explicit information is provided to students in a range of documents including the prospectus, a student handbook, course outlines and unit outlines. Welcome packs to new families also support transition.
- The library team has developed a 'Keys to Success' program and the team works alongside teachers in classrooms to support students in strengthening their literacy skills and ability to research effectively.
- Celebrations and successes are shared with stakeholders through various social media platforms including a blog, Facebook and Instagram. A student radio activity runs throughout the week to provide music and information on school events.
- The college celebrates and shares student success through a range of events and initiatives. These include the success assemblies which parents attend.
- Staff report that morale is high throughout the school. Several staff have negotiated to extend their placements or return to the college.
- Students indicated an enthusiasm to have a stronger voice in school-wide matters.

- Front office staff reported that agreed protocols exist to provide timely and effective customer service.
- A school leader monitors the support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and another supports students from language-diverse backgrounds.

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 college has invested considerable resources to establish 'College Life'; a team of staff in a centralised location, who are responsible for implementing a coordinated response to student need. Referral processes have been refined and a case management approach triages the response to student need.
- A multi-faceted approach to supporting students with additional learning and wellbeing need is evident. Three supported learning environments, The Hub, the Resource Room and Retreat offer a flexible yet integrated support model. These include a range of small group learning programs and individualised support for the completion of course work in a designated area.
- Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are in place for students with diagnosed disabilities. Copies are provided to course teachers. ILPs are reviewed by the staff teams working directly with each student. Program goals are informed by diagnostic testing.
- Wider opportunities for students with talents and gifts has been identified as a key focus for the next improvement planning cycle.
- A Financial Strategic Plan provides a framework for how funds are allocated, including a five-year maintenance plan. Budget allocations are determined annually through submissions from faculties to the Finance Committee. The college has assigned funds for major and minor capital works.
- Reviewers observed teachers using technology in a range of ways in all curriculum areas. All students have received a laptop for school use.
- Through Commonwealth funding, a purpose-built Trade Training Centre is on-site and provides for a range of VET programs.
- The college allocates funds for training and development of all staff.
- The physical environment is well maintained and provides a stimulating environment conducive to learning and wellbeing. There is increasing consideration of how classroom spaces can be utilised to support a range of learning styles.

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

- Building a professional learning community has been an area of focus for the college. A range of strategies are evident in teacher collaboration. For example, the college has provided opportunities for teachers to work in cross faculty teams and engage in action research. PLTs have been operating since 2016 and their focus has evolved over time. Currently, a model of collective inquiry focused on engagement and the unpacking of 'small data' has emerged within and across faculty PLTs.
- Teachers also belong to 'Activated Teams' that have defined functions and deliverables with explicit links to the Strategic Plan.
- The focus of leadership team meetings has shifted to privilege time to engage in professional dialogue (Stretch) over operational matters (Senate).
- Senior leaders actively encourage and support staff to access leadership opportunities and develop their skills. For example, teachers have pursued formal accreditation as 'Highly Accomplished' teachers.
- Staff induction processes are evident, and a comprehensive staff handbook provides clarity to teachers, who are new to the college, about expected processes and practices. These staff participate in formal workshops with the senior leaders and are linked with an experienced mentor teacher.
- Staff are supported to gain or retain appropriate qualifications to deliver nationally accredited VET programs and specialist courses (e.g., Flight). LSAs have been supported to gain additional qualifications.
- Career development plans demonstrate alignment to school and system priorities.
- 'Teach Meets' have enabled teachers to share practice across the college sector.
- Library teaching staff share resources and collaborate with colleagues in the development of pedagogical and assessment practices.
- Leaders are working to develop an observation and feedback framework.
- Strategic recruitment of specialist teaching staff through the Teach for Australia program and system teacher transfer rounds has ensured the delivery of courses with staff who have expert content knowledge.
- The college is currently developing a Professional Growth Framework which will underpin and align the way in which the college supports teachers' professional development.

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

- The college is delivering a curriculum plan that is approved by the BSSS.
- Students have access to a wide range of tertiary, accredited, and VET courses.
- A prospectus provides comprehensive information about curriculum pathways to students and their families. Key information is provided on the website.
- The 'College Life' team provides individual guidance to students to support decisions about programs of study from year 10. High levels of support continue to ensure that students are on track in their learning and pursuing options best suited to their needs.
- The 'Curriculum Futures Activated Team' is currently developing a framework that will articulate a vision for curriculum aligned to that of the ACT Education Directorate and requirements of the BSSS.
- Courses are delivered in single year cohorts, mixed or simultaneously. Some courses also incorporate a VET component. This flexibility enables the college to deliver a wide range of options. Interdisciplinary course offerings are available.
- Flexible VET opportunities are delivered through the ACTIVE Tuggeranong Registered Training Organisation (RTO), and through Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASBA) and traineeships with external providers. Students can also participate in Work Experience (WEX).
- Unit outlines provide clarity about the goals of courses, a content overview, the assessment tasks, and accompanying criteria.
- Teachers have a degree of autonomy about how they translate BSSS courses into Programs of Learning (PoL). Teachers shared with reviewers how they collaborate within their faculties to develop assessment tasks, moderate, and discuss course implementation.
- Internal and external moderation processes occur. There has been a recent focus on identifying how the General Capabilities are realised across the curriculum and how literacy and numeracy can be explicitly connected to all learning areas.
- There is some evidence that cultural understanding is emerging in curriculum practice.

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

- Lake Tuggeranong College places an emphasis on teachers knowing their students as individuals and personalities.
- Four key questions about teaching and learning are beginning to form the basis of how teachers discuss and reflect on how they know where students are in their learning, and how they can best respond to their individual needs.
- Some staff members can articulate how they use evidence to monitor growth and make appropriate adjustments in teaching programs to support student learning. Teachers describe how they use Google Classrooms, quizzes, check-ins and pre-tests to monitor learning and provide individualised support.
- Teachers are aware of students with individual support plans and can articulate the ways in which they enact the recommended adjustments. Professional learning has been provided to support teachers in understanding and making adjustments as defined by NCCD¹ processes.
- There is evidence of some flexible and rich assessment tasks being used in faculties to support students in being able to express their learning in a range of ways.
- Faculty leaders are exploring how they can best support teachers to use data effectively to understand gaps in learning and respond accordingly. The unpacking of AST results is an example of how teachers are scrutinising individual and group results to better understand how programs, including assessment, can be refined and gaps addressed.
- Extensive curriculum offerings provide opportunities for tailored learning programs.
- Students participate in the Australian National University (ANU) extension program, accredited with the BSSS.
- Staff surveys have been initiated to benchmark current differentiated practices.
- The ATAR estimates process supports students to reflect with parents/carers about whether they are on track to achieve their tertiary goals.
- Assessment feedback and semester reports provide explicit advice to students on how they can improve.

¹ Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability - an annual collection of information from all Australian schools on the numbers of students with disability and the adjustments they receive.

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

- In 2016 the college developed a pedagogical framework which has not been fully realised during this improvement cycle. School leaders recognise the need for an explicit focus on identifying the evidence-based practices expected across the college.
- Work has commenced on developing a school-wide approach to pedagogy that maintains flexibility and allows for existing expertise, experience and good practice. Discussions in PLTs and faculties support dialogue on effective pedagogical practice.
- Though classroom observation occurs in some teaching areas, it is not implemented by design. Collaborative planning and discussion of teaching strategies occurs informally in faculties, particularly where teachers share responsibility for delivery.
- Unit outlines provide clear learning intentions and success criteria for students, though students reported inconsistencies between teachers in the quality and timeliness of feedback.
- Reviewers observed that students are mostly engaged in learning; and noted examples of innovative practice and the way teachers demonstrate high expectations. Students reported their perception that teachers articulate high expectations but there are inconsistencies in how this is enacted across classrooms.
- Teachers expressed a strong investment in the learning progress of students. They also indicated their desire to receive detailed feedback on their practice.
- There is variability across classrooms in teaching modes and methodologies.

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

- Aligned with the core value of 'Connect', the college has positioned itself as an active participant in the local community, evidenced by deep and broad connections to local organisations. These include the partnership with the local library, Tuggeranong CIT, and Tuggeranong Art Centre.
- The college is an active partner in the ACTIVE Tuggeranong RTO and plays a pivotal role in influencing the way VET is positioned in the Tuggeranong schools network. The college principal is the CEO of the RTO and leads a Steering Committee which oversees the design and delivery of VET. Evaluation is captured through ASQA compliance processes. The college also has broad reach across industry to support its apprenticeship and work experience opportunities.
- A seminal partnership with the University of Melbourne has supported the college in
- achieving a cultural change based on the principles of positive psychology. Professional literature and access to experts has helped leverage change in thinking about learning and wellbeing.
- A strategic partnership with clear intent is emerging through the connection formed with the Australian Government Department of Human Services (DHS). An early association which facilitated work experience has now matured to a partnership that has resulted in students employed and supported to complete tertiary qualifications. The college is working to formalise the partnership in documentation. Regular communication between senior leaders of DHS and the college ensure that the partnership is one of mutual benefit with clear commitment its objectives.
- The college is a pilot school for the development and implementation of a national literacy course in partnership with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC). Students and staff have been contributing to the development of the curriculum, trialling materials and providing feedback. This partnership is another example of how the college seeks to forge connections for mutual benefit.
- A partnership with Headspace provides additional expertise through professional learning and programs focused on mental health and wellbeing.
- The college is part of the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME), which

provides support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families.

- The college is also active in the University of Canberra's Affiliate Schools Program, which connects teachers with research.

Commendations

- The college has been explicit in communicating and building commitment to its core beliefs captured in the values of Learn, Thrive and Connect. These are well understood, highly visible in documentation, and displayed throughout the college.
- Lake Tuggeranong College enacts a clear commitment to supporting the wellbeing of its students, underpinned by the belief that successful student learning is inextricably linked to wellbeing. This is a college that cares for, and nurtures, every student. Students, alumni, staff and parents express a deep sense of connection, belonging and pride in the college.
- 'College Life' provides a comprehensive suite of integrated services with deliberate intent to connect with and support every student.
- Senior leaders have created a positive culture of trust across the college, and members of the community work collaboratively and harmoniously. The college maintains a respectful, and inclusive learning environment, the key to which are very genuine positive and caring relationships.
- College staff members are highly qualified and experienced, and very well regarded by the school community. The college is well served by several teachers who demonstrate high levels of innovation and pedagogical skill.
- The college has positioned itself as a dynamic participant in the local community and works with deliberate intent to forge highly strategic partnerships with educational institutions, government organisations, and agencies that provide access to resources and opportunities beyond the school.
- The ACTIVE Tuggeranong RTO is a model that has influenced the evolution, governance and operation of other RTOs in the ACT. It provides high quality and comprehensive vocational and training pathways, resulting in nationally recognised qualifications.
- Library services have been positioned to provide outreach services within and across classrooms to support students to be effective researchers and writers.
- Students can access flexible and tailored educational packages drawing on a broad range of courses, opportunities and experiences.
- There has been a clear, well connected narrative around school improvement, underpinned by a deep understanding and application of evidence-based practices.

Affirmations

- Teachers demonstrate a deep commitment to knowing their students well and supporting them in the attainment of their pathway goals. The mantra of teachers 'moving towards the students' underpins the emphasis the college places on meeting the individual learning and wellbeing needs of every student.
- Senior leaders are positioning their PLTs to firmly focus conversations on how teachers identify and respond to individual student needs.
- The review team affirms the work undertaken to develop a curriculum framework that

will provide a clear vision for teaching and learning with key operating principles. Recent work in mapping curriculum, assessment and the General Capabilities will strengthen the development of a cohesive whole-school curriculum plan.

- A range of key events, processes and procedures have been developed to support prospective students to successfully transition to college.
- The college maintains a range of connections with previous students. Alumni are employed, they volunteer, and frequently return to school for events and general visits.
- The college actively explores ways in which parents can be active participants in college life.
- Aspiring and current leaders are encouraged and supported to develop their leadership capability.
- The college has allocated resources to the provision of a range of programs to cater for students with additional learning needs.
- Collective work on action research in PLTs has supported teachers to work collaboratively, explore practice, and experiment with a range of strategies to support learning and wellbeing.
- The college campus presents as a stimulating and well-maintained learning environment, conducive to learning and wellbeing.

Recommendations

- Continue to build a strong professional learning community characterised by:
 - > leaders who spend time working with teachers modelling, evaluating and providing feedback on classroom teaching
 - > a culture of collective responsibility for improving student learning
 - > routines that enable teachers to work together and learn from each other's practice
 - > formalised mentoring and coaching
 - > professional learning tailored to individual and group need
 - > ensure that resources are targeted to support this.
- Develop a consistent and commonly shared approach to the delivery of high-quality learning and teaching based on best practice research and relate it to the most effective ways that students learn.
- Develop targets for the next planning cycle that measure growth in student learning. Ensure that the college data plan enables the collection and analysis of evidence of progress towards targets. Embed data routines in all faculties, at executive level and in key teams.
- Support teachers in using data to identify individual student need and apply a range of strategies to skilfully differentiate teaching and learning.