



ACT
Government
Education

**EXTERNAL REVIEW
REPORT for
GORDON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

2016

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Introduction: Overview of the School Review Process

As part of the Territory's school improvement approach, public schools and colleges in the Australian Capital Territory are required to participate in an external review process every five years. This document captures the findings of the panel during this cycle of school review.

In broad terms, the panel sought to determine, through evaluation and validation, the extent to which the school is meeting its agreements, achieving its priorities, and addressing its challenges in the context of a continuously improving educational environment.

The external review was conducted over three days and involved a wide variety of data gathering approaches including observations, interviews and documentation. This approach provided evidence for the panel to consider against the nine inter-related domains in the National School Improvement Tool that informed our commendations and recommendations.

Section A: School Context

Gordon Primary School is situated in the Lanyon Valley in the south of the Tuggeranong district. It was established in 1993. The current School Principal, Mr Murray Bruce, has been at the school since July 2005 and was joined by the current Deputy Principal, Mr Peter Kent, in early 2015. Over the period of the School Strategic Plan 2013-2016 (the plan) for Gordon Primary School there has been relative stability within the school leadership team, with the exception of the Principal accepting a temporary transfer for semester 1 2015.

A significant feature at Gordon Primary School is its strong involvement within the Murrumbidgee Learning Academy (MLA) and with the three other schools in the Lanyon Cluster of Schools. Gordon Primary School identifies that a high priority is placed on inter-school collaboration and that this has contributed to continuous improvement of programs and outcomes.

Gordon Primary School strives to enable its students to be confident, respectful, tolerant and joyful about learning in an environment where warm, courteous relationships (in which the rights and needs of all are respected) and resilience are developed.

The school values are responsibility, honesty, tolerance and respect with the following additional values emphasised: personal best, integrity, understanding, care, compassion and inclusion.

Gordon Primary School also pursues the vision of the Lanyon Cluster of Schools.

Gordon Primary School's Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) draws from the suburb of Gordon. The percentage of in area students rose in 2015 to 98 percent from 67 percent in 2014. It then dropped again in 2016 to 76 percent.

The school's average ICSEA value has remained relatively stable over the past four years and is currently 1007, with the highest value in 2013 and 2014 of 1018. Over the period of the Strategic Plan the school's enrolments have also remained relatively stable. In 2012 enrolments were at 525 and currently they stand at 515.

Staffing across the life of the plan has seen the provision of an extra School Leader C (SLC) since 2014 (from 4 to 5). This has enabled an Executive Teacher Professional Practice with coaching and mentoring responsibilities to be appointed. Administrative Officers have reduced from 18 in 2012 to 12 in 2015. The total number of teachers in 2015 was 26.

The school has seen a marked decrease in the number of students for which English is an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) enrolled at the school in 2016 (23 in 2015 down to 12.) The number of students who are identified as having a disability is 5 percent. The school has not identified any infrastructure or environmental changes over the course of the plan.

Section B: School Performance

Gordon Primary School has identified three priorities in its Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016:

- build teacher capacity and collaboration
- improve student learning outcomes
- strengthen the positive culture for all members of the school community

The panel noted a very strong alignment of priorities between reviewed schools within the Lanyon Cluster of Schools.

The school has provided longitudinal NAPLAN and PIPS data and school based student data for the purpose of the review.

The panel noted that the PIPS data has shown consistent growth patterns in both reading and numeracy over the life of the plan, and that the growth has been more noticeable in numeracy than in reading. In 2013, 64 percent of students made expected growth or better for reading, and in 2015 this was 69 percent. In numeracy however 2013 showed that 79 percent of students made expected growth or better and in 2015 this was still 79 percent.

The relative strength of this numeracy growth was noted with interest by the review panel, as the NAPLAN results provided for the same period have not reinforced a sustained strength in numeracy across the school. The school used their NAPLAN data to identify numeracy as a focus area for improvement and have indicated to the review team that they will reflect on the link between 2013 PIPS and NAPLAN after the relevant NAPLAN data set is made available.

The panel acknowledges that while the 2012 NAPLAN data provided does not live within the plan, it was not available at the time of the last review and so we have considered it relevant in terms of growth data here. From 2012 to 2015 the year 3 and 5 NAPLAN trend data in reading, writing and spelling was below that of the ACT mean. When compared to the mean scores of schools within the Tuggeranong Network however the school has been able to demonstrate better than average growth in the last two years in year 3 reading. In all four years the school year 3 and 5 growth has been above the network average for writing with the exception of year 5 in 2015.

The school has analysed, and then summarised, additional data to supplement the PIPS and NAPLAN findings and this has included First Steps Literacy (reading and writing), PM Benchmarks, A-E grades and Di Siemen's Numeracy Phases of Development. For the PM Benchmarks, growth was measured using effect sizes based on the understanding that for research purposes an effect size of 0.4 would indicate a year's growth. PM Benchmarks were provided to the panel from kindergarten to year 4 between 2015 and 2016, and demonstrated growth of at least twice what would be expected in a 12 month period. This dropped off at year 4 with the assumption that most students are already proficient readers at this time and it's therefore difficult to demonstrate further growth against this measure.

The Gordon Primary School PM Benchmarks have been used in conjunction with their First Steps continuum as a measure of reading growth over the life of the plan. Analysis to identify students above, below and at Directorate benchmark reading levels are routinely displayed and communicated through the use of 'Venn Diagrams'. A change in 2015 to the way the school collated and stored First Steps data made it problematic for the panel to triangulate growth over time using these two data sets.

The school has also analysed the year 7 cohort NAPLAN data which indicates that reading achievement exceeds the Tuggeranong Mean.

School wide moderation is used to determine the validity of A-E grades awarded to students for English and mathematics. By far the greatest percentage of students have received C or B grades from the 2013 – 2016 period with a significantly smaller number of A's and even less D grades. The school has a policy of not awarding any E grades.

School Satisfaction Survey data provided has shown that the parent and carer community has strong faith in Gordon Primary School, with satisfaction in most cases in 2014 and 2015 being higher than system averages. Student satisfaction results were notably higher than the system in 2015, with the exception of, the response to the statement how well student behaviour is managed at the school. Staff satisfaction data indicated better than system results in 15 out of 17 items in 2014. The wording in 2015 changed for 5 of the 17 items so there was no correlating data. In 2015 the areas worth noting for attention might be effective communication among staff and receiving constructive feedback about teacher practice.

Gordon also collects data related to teacher capacity and the panel has noted that in the period from 2013 to 2015 teacher confidence levels around their ability as a teacher in relation to literacy, numeracy, pedagogy and behaviour management has increased significantly.

Evidence cited

- School Summative Evaluation Report 2016
- NAPLAN growth data 2012 – 2015
- PIPS data 2013 – 2015
- PM Benchmark effect size data 2015-2016
- First Steps Literacy (Reading) attainment 2015
- A-E Grades for English and mathematics 2013 – 2016
- School Satisfaction data
- Teacher Capacity Matrix 2013 – 2015 Summary

Section C: School Improvement Planning and Implementation

Gordon Primary School has identified three key priorities in its Strategic Plan 2013-2016. Drawing on most of the recommendations of the 2012 external validation, and in collaboration with the school staff and the Lanyon Cluster executives, the priorities which have remained consistent for the duration of the plan, are:

- build teacher capacity and collaboration
- improve student learning
- strengthen the positive culture for all members of the school community.

The Summative Evaluation Report provided an understanding of the process that engaged the school's executive and staff, however the panel has had difficulty finding evidence that supports the external validation panel's first recommendation in 2012 to focus on 'developing, implementing and celebrating future strategic plans in consultation with key stakeholders of the school community; [staff], parents and students.'

Priority 1: Build teacher capacity and collaboration

Key Improvement Strategies for 2013

- Provide differentiated and targeted system and school professional learning for teachers.
- Implement structures that cultivate staff collaboration through coaching and mentoring.

Key Improvement Strategies for 2014/2015

- Provide differentiated and targeted system and school professional learning for teachers.
- Strengthen planning structures that cultivate staff collaboration.
- coaching and mentoring

The Key Improvement Strategy for 2016

- Provide a differentiated and targeted system and school professional learning for teachers that embeds endorsed school approaches, coaching, mentoring and peer observation.

Achievements

The panel commends the school on its approach to building teacher capacity with the provision of a suite of professional learning opportunities that strive to meet the needs of the cluster and school, and at the same time recognise the individual stages of teacher development. The school recognises the value of a range of different professional learning including action research, collaborative planning, case conferences, executive and peer coaching, classroom observation and feedback, discussion of shared readings, and the direct delivery of learning modules.

Building teacher capacity is enhanced greatly by the rigorous coaching program evident at Gordon Primary School. While conducting the school visits, the panel were able to affirm that the coaching model enhances professional growth while supporting school wide programs and practices. Teacher confidence levels to engage with school endorsed programs and pedagogical strategies, as measured by the capacity matrices, has increased over the life of the plan. Teachers speak with enthusiasm and pride about their engagement in and presentation of their

action research projects. The panel can confirm that one hundred percent of teachers engage in action research projects and over 90 percent have presented them to the cluster.

The panel can also confirm as a result of interviews with staff that the school has met its target of more than 90 percent of teachers implementing whole school practices and meeting Professional Pathways goals.

Evidence cited

- Professional Learning Audit
- 2013 and 2015 Teacher Capacity Matrices
- Planning Placemats
- CG Scholar Units of Work
- Professional Pathways mid cycle and summative documents
- Interviews with leadership team and teachers

Priority 2: Improve Student Learning Outcomes

Key Improvement Strategies for 2013

- Strengthen the nexus between numeracy data interpretation, planning, teaching and learning.
- Differentiated professional development for use of assessment and data
- Enhance social skill learning by the implementation of KAGAN cooperative strategies.
- Enhance implementation of Learning by Design
- Increase student ownership of learning.

Key Improvement Strategies for 2014/2015

- Strengthen the Personalised Learning approach across the school.
- Strengthen the nexus between numeracy data interpretation, planning, teaching and learning.
- Implement Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT)

Key Improvement Strategies for 2016

- Strengthen the nexus between Numeracy data interpretation, planning, teaching and learning.

Achievements

The improvement of student learning outcomes at Gordon Primary School is underpinned by the Lanyon Cluster Learning and Teaching Model. The Quality Teaching Model and the Learning by Design Framework support a range of school-wide strategies and approaches, including personalised learning, student self-assessment, Choice Theory, First Steps, Count Me In Too and Middle Years Mental Computation.

The panel commends the school for its systematic collection of student achievement data over the life of the plan and the manner in which it has responded to advancements in technology to house this data centrally where it is monitored and accessed regularly.

The school has monitored closely, and reported on their results against the NAPLAN targets set by the Directorate for the past three years, acknowledging that at the time of the preparation of the Summative Evaluation Report the 2016 results had not yet been made available. In 2013 the school achieved three out of four of the targets; year 3 reading and year 5 reading and numeracy. In 2014 year 3 reading and numeracy and year 5 reading were achieved, with the year 5 numeracy only slightly below target. In 2015 the year 3 reading and numeracy targets were both met, but neither of the year 5 targets.

In addition to NAPLAN the school has collected and monitored a range of student data based on teacher judgement including First Steps Reading and Writing, PM Benchmarks, Count Me In Too, Middle Years Mental Computation and Di Siemon Benchmarks. The review panel recommends to the school the inclusion of some standardised assessments to triangulate teacher judgements as a useful objective measure of student growth over time.

Evidence cited

- NAPLAN data
- PIPS data
- First Steps data
- PM Benchmark data
- Leadership team and teacher interviews
- Data Walls
- Data Tracker
- Evidence for Learning App

Priority 3: Strengthen the positive culture for all members of the school community

Key Improvement Strategies for 2013

- Improve communication processes for staff, parents and students.
- Build collegial relationships and leadership opportunities focused on building literacy and numeracy outcomes.
- Build student agency and support students to see themselves as members of a reflective learning community.
- Build parent agency through collaborative partnerships with parents.
- Build teacher agency through leadership opportunities coaching and mentoring and action research.

Key Improvement Strategies for 2014/2015

- Develop student agency regarding positive relationships and wellbeing.
- Improve effectiveness and use of open classrooms.

- Improve parent agency, community links and celebration of success including video and audio sharing with parents and the community.
- celebrating success
- Improving agency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and students.

Key Improvement Strategy for 2016

- Develop student agency regarding positive relationships and wellbeing through the refining of systems for increasing student satisfaction, Growth Mindset, connectedness and whole school well-being.

Achievements

The school review panel was very impressed by the overall tone of Gordon Primary School. Students, parents and teachers feel valued and are happy to be a part of the school community. Parents reported to the panel that they were very happy with the communication channels and the opportunities the school provided for their involvement in events. They feel that any concerns they have are dealt with promptly and that their suggestions for improvements are listened to and considered. Students that were interviewed by the panel also spoke highly of the school and their place as learners. The review team were impressed by the passion of the staff to improve their own practice with the specific purpose of improving student outcomes.

The target to measure this priority articulated in the school plan was to achieve five percent better than the system mean. Although this aspirational target was not met, the overall responses remained high in most areas. The panel noted the consistently high rates of satisfaction from parents, students and staff in regard to their perception that the school has high expectations.

Evidence cited

- Satisfaction Surveys; parents, students and staff
- Staff interviews
- Student interviews
- Leadership team and teacher interviews
- Panel observation

Reflections

Narratives for Key Improvement Strategies for the three school priority areas across the life of the plan were provided to the review team. These were difficult to align to each year's Annual Operating Plans. Some key improvement strategies that were reported against, changed from year to year (see above). The review team found that the school's Summative Evaluation Report lacked clarity because of this, however the use of a new Directorate AAP template should allow for better clarity in the future. The review team suggests keeping the Key Improvement Strategies for each Priority the same. The actions articulated underneath each Key Improvement Strategy will reflect the foci for that year.

Section D: National Tools Self-Evaluation Results

National School Improvement Tool

In 2016 the school leadership team created a narrative for each National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) Domain reflecting on guiding principles, systems and processes and indicators of success.

These narratives also informed a panel comprising of two principals, a deputy principal and an independent consultant who conducted a one day site visit and provided a shaded assessment and listed evidence back to the school.

At two staff meetings the narratives and independent assessment was provided to teachers for feedback, verification of panel findings and for the executive to make an on balance assessment of where the school was placed against the NSIT descriptors.

The school conducted a similar process with board members focusing on the domains, Explicit Improvement Agenda, A Culture that Promotes Learning, Differentiated Teaching and Learning, and School-Community Partnerships and with a specific focus on Differentiated Teaching and Learning with the P&C.

The self-evaluation report reflected the consolidation of teacher, School Board and P&C assessments.

The review team appreciated the insight these narratives provided and believe they would have been a useful starting point for the staff and the board members to use for the school self-evaluation.

At Gordon Primary School the combined time reviewers spent across the three days, in conversations with the principal, leaders, teachers, Learning Support Assistants, students, parents and board members was approximately 39 hours. Another 16 hours was spent on reviewer moderation, writing and preparation for presentations to leaders and staff.

The review team was satisfied that they had substantial, quality evidence through reading, questioning and observing, to be confident of the accuracy of their findings.

The panel noted the following in relation to the **Explicit Improvement Agenda** domain.

- *There is a strong and optimistic commitment by all staff to the school improvement strategy.*
- *The school has developed an agenda for improvement in partnership with parents and the community and school leaders can describe the improvements they wish to see in student behaviours and outcomes. This agenda is communicated in staff meetings using a variety of formats to suit local needs.*
- *The leadership team has analysed school performance data over a number of years and is aware of trends in student achievement levels.*
- *The school leadership team is clearly committed to finding ways to improve on current student outcomes. This is reflected in an eagerness to learn from research evidence, international experience and from other schools that have achieved significant improvements.*
- *There is evidence of a school-wide commitment to every student's success*

In discussion with members of the leadership team, either as a group or individually, it was clear that they each demonstrate a very strong commitment to school improvement and are able to articulate how they would be successful.

Evidence both stated and seen by the panel showed that tracking student progress and taking that seriously was seen to be important work of the whole staff.

The leadership team has engaged 'critical friends' Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis to assist them in this work. An example of how Cope and Kalantzis have impacted on the practice at Gordon is the school's engagement in the use of their online portal CG Scholar, originally designed for university and secondary school students, but in this context being used to refine the tool for wider school use.

The leadership team also engaged the assistance of an external consultant Peter Henry who has provided the school with website support and assistance in the preparation of the Summative Evaluation Report required for this review.

Within the **Analysis and Discussion of Data** domain, the panel verified the following.

- *There is evidence that the principal and other school leaders view reliable and timely student data as essential to their effective leadership of the school. There is a documented school plan and timetable for the annual collection of data on student achievement.*
- *One or more members of staff have been assigned responsibility for implementing the annual plan, displaying and communicating student outcome data for the school. The school has ensured that appropriate software is available.*
- *Time is set aside (e.g. on pupil free days and in staff meetings) for the discussion of data and the implications of data for school policies and classroom practices. These discussions occur at whole-school and team levels. The school can illustrate through case studies, meeting minutes and project plans how data have been used to identify priorities, take action and monitor progress.*

Interviews with teachers confirmed the close attention that is paid to monitoring individual student growth, and can attest to the range and quality of the data collected by all teachers.

Leadership team members were able to demonstrate their ability to summarise student data and articulate how this information might be used by teachers.

The panel sighted the original student 'data walls' and the more recent iteration of online tracking tools, and gained an understanding from the leadership team of how these tools have been utilised.

Discussion with leadership team members and demonstrations by teachers showed the panel the application of the Evidence for Learning App that was introduced in term 1 this year. The panel noted the approximate 1500 student observations that have been made on the App.

Many teachers attested to the success of the 'case conference' approach as a way to reflect on and monitor student growth.

Venn diagrams for reading, writing and mathematics demonstrated how teachers used their judgement to place students on a continuum. Each semester the leadership team reflects on the spread of student achievement. Linking this information to targets would be a natural progression.

With respect to **A Culture that Promotes Learning** domain, the panel noted the following.

- *There is a happy, optimistic feel to the school.*
- *High levels of trust are apparent across the school community.*
- *There is a strong sense of belonging and pride in the school.*
- *A strong collegial culture has been established.*
- *The 'tone' of the school reflects a school-wide commitment to purposeful, successful learning.*
- *There is a strong focus on quality learning and on the creation of a culture in which all students are expected to learn successfully, in their own ways and at their own pace. Individual talents are valued. Class 'busy work' is kept to a minimum.*
- *Respectful and caring relationships are reflected in the ways in which staff, students and parents interact.*
- *Parents and families are encouraged to take a genuine and close interest in the work of the school and are welcomed as partners in their children's learning.*
- *Staff morale is generally high.*
- *Classrooms are generally orderly, although some are more so than others.*
- *The school effectively implements its policies, for example, by ensuring that disruptive behaviour, bullying and harassment are dealt with promptly. The school has clear expectations for how students should behave and interact with one another. Some staff time is taken up dealing with behaviour problems.*

Parents interviewed, representing both the School Board and the P&C, spoke highly of the wide range of communication channels, planned events, being heard and having a voice for change.

The parent/carer satisfaction data examined by the panel supported what was said at interview; that there were high levels of faith in the school

Interviewed teachers made a special point to highlight the collegial and executive support, particularly through coaching and mentoring, they received.

Students understand what constitutes positive school behaviour and were able to articulate what strategies they personally had at their fingertips to make learning more successful and positive.

The school may consider further increasing its consistency across the school in behaviour management beliefs and practices.

Teachers also made note of the high levels of trust, teamwork and collaboration they enjoy. An example provided was the weekly team meetings where teachers raise students of concern through the Case Conference model. Mostly these are children who are not meeting learning outcomes, but there is also facility for high achieving students to be discussed. Teachers described the collaborative approach to planning a range of intervention strategies and then after a 3-4 week trial period, reviewing the success of the suggested strategies at a follow up meeting.

The panel noted the following in relation to the **Targeted Use of Resources** domain.

- *School records of individual student needs are maintained centrally and shared across year levels.*
- *The principal and other school leaders have introduced programs and strategies to identify and address the needs of students in the school and are sourcing and applying available resources to meet those needs.*
- *The school has developed processes (e.g. systematic testing and assessment) for identifying student learning needs.*
- *Learning spaces are organised for whole group work, small group work and individual work.*
- *The school uses its human and physical resources to address the needs of students.*

Learning areas in permanent buildings can be fully open to allow team teaching across four classes. In some units, some teachers team teach together. Large central spaces, withdrawal spaces, wet areas and offices in learning areas provide flexibility for group work. The opportunity exists for the school to think creatively about resource provision and utilisation of spaces that might better meet the learning and social needs of all children.

Gordon Primary School has funded a Reading Recovery/special needs teacher to support both literacy and numeracy in years 1 and 2. Individual Learning and Behaviour Plans and appropriate interventions are in place for all identified students.

Japanese and library programs provide teacher release time. The panel suggests it investigate its use of school resources to highlight the arts, health and PE as specialty areas.

Gordon Primary School has invested heavily in ICT including Chromebooks, interactive flat panel displays and iPads. Over the course of the plan the technical support for the school's BYOD policy has been provided by a team consisting of: SLC IT Coordinator, IT Australian School Based Apprentice (ASBA), ITO position and the teacher librarian who also offers an enrichment coding program for students.

The targeted use of staff time and expertise in establishing the numeracy Response to Intervention (RTI) program was a direct response to address an identified school need.

Within the **An Expert Teaching Team** domain, the panel verified the following.

- *School leaders place a very high priority on the ongoing professional learning of all staff.*
- *There is evidence that the principal and other school leaders see the development of staff into an expert and coherent school-wide teaching team as central to improving outcomes for all students.*
- *There is a documented professional learning plan and the school has arrangements in place for mentoring and coaching. Teachers visit each other's classrooms and welcome opportunities to have principals and other school leaders observe and discuss their work with them.*
- *The school provides opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles outside the classroom.*

The leadership team described and provided evidence of the rigorous and ongoing Professional Learning (PL) program provided at Gordon; school based and through the Lanyon Cluster and

Murrumbidgee Learning Academy. This was confirmed many times by teachers in panel interviews. Both groups acknowledged that there were some challenges associated with customising PL for all staff, from beginning teachers to those with high level of expertise. They recognised however that this was a work in progress.

A strong coaching culture was clearly evident by the resourcing of dedicated staff to facilitate this and the way the teachers spoke positively of their coaching experiences.

Teachers and leaders described with enthusiasm their involvement in the RTI program, and how their involvement provided them with both leadership opportunity and ownership of the project outcomes.

Within the **Systematic Curriculum Delivery** domain, the panel verified the following:

- *The school's curriculum delivery plan identifies curriculum, teaching and learning priorities and requirements. The curriculum delivery plan reflects a shared vision (by the school's governing body, principal, school leadership team, and teachers) for the school, and provides a context for delivering the curriculum as detailed in the Australian or other approved curriculum and, where relevant, system curriculum documents.*
- *The school curriculum plan and curriculum delivery (including the time allocated to particular learning) balance requirements to address all learning areas, to give priority to English, mathematics and to embed the fundamental skills of literacy, numeracy.*
- *The school leadership team ensures that the enacted curriculum remains a focus for discussion among, and collaboration between, teachers and that the curriculum plan is the reference against which flexible delivery is designed, assessment tasks are developed and student learning is reported.*
- *The school has a documented plan for curriculum delivery that includes year level and term plans, but the progression of learning from year to year is not always obvious and the relationship between the pieces of the plan (the year, term and unit plans) would benefit from further clarification.*

'Bump up' walls and 'I Can' statements allowing students to demonstrate learning across a wider range of outcomes were evident for numeracy. Teachers are keen to progress this to literacy.

Mapping the current curriculum to ensure there is vertical alignment of Australian Curriculum standards, general capabilities and cross curricula standards is being worked on.

Teacher Placemat curriculum planning is based on Learning by Design and this is a professional learning cluster priority. Teachers commented that the template does not easily enable planned unit differentiation and in some teams different templates are being trialled. A systematic approach by team leaders to the monitoring and feedback of Placemat planning including the use of cover sheet checklists, may improve consistency.

The whole school approach to literacy is based on First Steps Literacy, to numeracy on Count Me In Too and Middle Years Mental Computation. The BYOD policy provides infrastructure to allow self-assessment.

Learning intentions based on deep conceptual understandings feature in every teacher's planning. The school is committed to reducing the variability of quality across the school.

In consideration of the domain **Differentiated Teaching and Learning**, the panel found the following.

- *School leaders explicitly encourage teachers to tailor their teaching to student needs and readiness. This includes the systematic use of assessment instruments and teacher developed assessment tools to establish where individuals are in their learning and to identify skill gaps and misunderstandings.*
- *Reports to parents show progress over time and include suggestions for ways in which parents can support their children's learning.*
- *Some use is made of differentiated teaching (e.g. differentiated reading groups in the early primary years), but in most classes teachers teach the same curriculum to all students with similar levels of individual support.*

Moderation for writing is conducted within teams but not across teams. Moderation for A to E grades occurs prior to semester reporting.

For the purpose of this review, the review team has interpreted 'reports' to be 'reporting to parents'. It includes the suite of opportunities offered at Gordon Primary School, as well as formal summative reports. These include; learning journeys, three way conferences and multiple whole school opportunities for parents to visit classrooms and talk about how learning might be supported at home. Parents feel well informed about their child's progress and value the opportunities provided.

The school may consider the use of longitudinal objective and normed assessments to triangulate the measurement of student growth over time.

The school has created structures to provide computer coding and Japanese language extension for students.

The panel noted the following regarding the domain **Effective Pedagogical Practices**.

- *The principal and other school leaders have accepted personal responsibility for driving improvements in teaching throughout the school. They demonstrate a strong conviction that improved teaching is the key to improved student learning.*
- *School leaders spend time working with teachers to improve their teaching practices, including modelling, evaluating and providing feedback on classroom teaching.*
- *There is a particular focus on improved teaching methods in reading, writing, mathematics and professional learning activities are focused on building teachers' understandings of highly effective teaching strategies in these areas.*
- *Clarity about what students are expected to learn and be able to do, high expectations of every student's learning, explicit teaching of skills and content, individualised attention as required, and timely feedback to guide student action are key elements of the school's push for improved teaching and learning.*

Teachers commented that they felt the peer observation program, which was in place prior to 2015 was a valued opportunity to reflect on their own and others practice by watching someone work and providing feedback. The school may consider including this as an element of choice in action learning or in their approach to differentiate and personalise professional learning.

Gordon Primary School is continuing to enrich the repertoire of cooperative learning strategies used by teachers. The review team found reference to the use of these strategies in Learning by

Design Placemats. Some of the strategies observed were turn and talk, think pair share, peer feedback, round robin.

Quality of teaching is enhanced with the support of Choice Theory, Quality Teaching Framework, a balanced approach to literacy and numeracy and the GROWTH model used for coaching.

The school is committed to reducing the variability of formative assessment and success criteria relating to learning intentions.

An enriched personalised learning approach could include inquiry and creativity options for all learners.

In the final domain **School-Community Partnerships**, the panel found the following.

- *The school has established one or more partnerships with families, local businesses and/or community organisations with the express purpose of improving outcomes for students. Partnerships have generally been initiated by the senior leadership team and have their support.*
- *Each partnership brings staff and students of the school together with external partners such as families, other education or training institutions, local businesses and/or community organisations. All partners have a high level of understanding of, and commitment to, the purposes of the partnership.*
- *There is evidence that the school's partnerships are being implemented as intended.*

Gordon Primary School has a wide range of connections with families and outside organisations. These partnerships range from highly organised and formal such as: the Lanyon Cluster of Schools and Murrumbidgee Learning Academy, P&C, Chaplaincy service, Ride or Walk To School, Kulture Break, community service agencies and Australian School Based Apprenticeship placements; through to a wide range of more informal partnerships providing extra curricula activities, such as; aged care facility visitors, bike club, pre preschool play group.

Parents commented that they had many opportunities to be engaged in their child's learning at Gordon Primary School. The establishment of a volunteer skills register for use by teachers to tap into parent expertise to support learning may be considered.

While the school has been successful in improving communications and strengthening relationships with parents and the community, we would encourage continued effort to explore new opportunities to support learning and wellbeing and using a structured approach to reflecting on the effectiveness of existing partnerships.

The unveiling ceremony of the Reconciliation Rock in NAIDOC Week included Ngunnawal Elders, two of whom have continued to meet with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for ongoing discussions.

National Safe Schools Framework: School Audit Tool

Gordon Primary School identified to the review team that six members of the executive staff reflected on the National Safe Schools Framework: School Audit Tool to build consensus in order to complete the Safe Schools Audit. Each statement was considered and discussed based on the executive team's experiences with the wider community. Results were recorded online and show that three elements were definitely true and six elements were both mostly and definitely true. Gordon Primary School did not consider the slight variations between the online tool statements and the National School Improvement Tool statements. The timing of the audit process is not known to the review team.

Section E: Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

Gordon Primary School is commended for the following.

1. The development of a culture of continuous improvement and personal commitment to:
 - coaching as a means of improving teacher reflection and practice
 - resourcing of dedicated coaching staff
 - the sharing and showcasing of best practice through action research projects across the cluster.
2. The planning for, and provision of, a rigorous and comprehensive professional learning program which:
 - recognises action learning, collaborative planning, case conferences, executive and peer coaching, classroom observation and feedback, and discussion of shared readings, as adjuncts to direct delivery of learning modules
 - serves to address cluster, whole school, team, and individual teacher need.
3. The deeply embedded shared responsibility for school improvement expressed in terms of:
 - high levels of involvement in the RTI project
 - commitment to cluster and school initiatives and school programs
 - school improvement is everybody's business at Gordon Primary School and everyone has a role to play.
4. The comprehensive collection of student learning data that is housed centrally, accessible to all staff, and utilised frequently by teachers.
5. Engagement in the RTI numeracy project as a means to reflect on current teaching practices, vertically align the curriculum, enrich student self-assessment practices, distribute leadership, and drive the change agenda for improvement.

Recommendations

The panel recommends that during the next planning cycle in the development of Gordon Primary School's narrow and sharp improvement agenda that the school pays attention to the following opportunities.

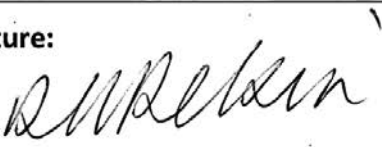
1. Develop specific and measurable school developed targets against all levels across the school within the next school plan and use these targets to regularly monitor and reflect on teaching practice and student growth over years of schooling.
2. Establish targets for whole class, groups and individuals so that all children can demonstrate success.
3. Communicate the targets and timelines for achievement to students, teachers and parents and carers.
4. Include standardised testing within the assessment schedule to triangulate other assessment data used to monitor growth over time. Include this and all other longitudinal summative data into existing tracking systems.
5. Establish a schedule for the annual collection and sharing of wellbeing data for example; Counsellor File, National Disability Insurance Scheme, Individual Learning Plans, Behaviour Support Plans, EAL/D, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Child and Youth Protection Services, Attendance, Behaviour Records.
6. Apply the learnings identified from the RTI numeracy project to:
 - vertically align and make visible the curriculum across literacy followed by other key areas
 - provide high quality feedback to students through embedding rich formative assessment strategies to enable classroom activities to be tailored to levels of readiness and need
 - develop student self-assessment strategies utilising technology as a tool.
7. Continue to grow extension opportunities for students with demonstrated interests and skills so that high achieving students are optimally engaged and challenged.
8. Continue to find ways and opportunities for students with challenging behaviours and complex needs to optimally engage in challenging, contextualised tasks to support an optimal learning environment for all students all the time.
9. Build on teachers' commitment to take personal and collective responsibility for each other's learning, continuous professional improvement and reflection of pedagogy by:
 - refining the coaching skills program for all members of the leadership team, aspirational leaders and teachers
 - using the AITSL professional standards and tools for teachers and leaders
 - providing coaching opportunities for distributive leadership and succession planning
 - enabling coaching to be a regular feature of everyone's professional improvement embedded in classroom practice.

Section F: Record of School Review Process


The following people were members of the external School Review Panel for Gordon Primary School conducted on 23-25 August 2016.

Name: Dianne Pekin	ACER: Lead Reviewer
Name: Liz Bobos	School: Principal, Latham Primary School

As chair of the Panel I endorse that this is a true and accurate record of the findings from the external School Review process.

Name: Dianne Pekin	
Signature: 	Date: 23 / 09 / 2016

As Principal of Gordon Primary School I accept the School Review Report on behalf of the school community.

Name: Murray Bruce	
Signature: 	Date: 10 / 10 / 16