



ACT
Government
Education

Theodore Primary School

Review Report Summary, 2018

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Overview of the school review process

Approximately a quarter of all ACT public schools are reviewed each year. The reviews are an important part of how the Directorate supports and monitors school improvement. Reviews provide schools with quality and independent feedback, tailored to the school's context. Each school is reviewed at least every five years, providing valuable opportunities for self-reflection, planning and improvement.

Reviews are undertaken by experienced educators trained in the use of the *National School Improvement Tool* (NSIT), a nationally recognised framework for reviewing teaching and learning practices. Each review team generally consists of two to three reviewers, however, the number of reviewers and length of review depends upon a range of factors, including the size and context of the school.

Reviewers closely consider each school's performance data and speak with a wide range of staff, students, parents and community members to get an accurate picture of the school. Following the review, the school receives a comprehensive report. The report outlines the key findings and recommended improvement strategies to maximise student outcomes. The report concludes with a set of commendations, affirmations and recommendations to assist in future planning and to support school-wide improvement planning.

The following summary contains the commendations, affirmations and recommendations from the review report.

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.

Commendations

Theodore Primary School is commended for the following.

- Parents describe Theodore Primary School as a warm, welcoming and supportive place to learn. Parents have a high level of confidence in the work of the school.
- The review team evidenced a strong commitment by all staff to continually grow their own practice to improve the outcomes of students.
- Staff believe the strength of the school is the strong collegiate culture.
- The staff demonstrate an understanding of the importance of positive and caring relationships to successful learning and this is seen throughout the school.
- Significant resources are dedicated to effectively supporting students with additional needs.
- Teachers encourage and assist students to monitor their own social learning behaviours with flexibility and empathy.
- Students describe the school as a safe, happy place to learn. They convey that their voice is heard, teachers care and that learning matters.
- The school has developed a broad range of partnerships across the areas of social and emotional initiatives, student and family support services, and academic progression.

Affirmations

The Review Team offers the following affirmations for Theodore Primary School.

- The Theodore Primary School Board members feel that they a significant part of the school's improvement journey.
- The school leadership team has created and presented a data spreadsheet outlining student growth indicated by tests such as PM Benchmark and PAT. This provides an initial picture of student achievement at both the classroom and school levels.
- Staff, student and parent perception data has been consistently positive over the duration of the plan. This provides a positive base for school growth in the strategic learning agenda.
- External spaces have been created to provide additional opportunities for social emotional re-engagement.
- The school is implementing professional learning community structures to explore identified areas of English and mathematics and student wellbeing. This has been well received by teachers as an opportunity to build a culture of collaboration and teamwork across teaching teams.
- Creation of sensory hubs has provided spaces for students to better manage social and emotional issues allowing them to re-engage in learning.
- Professional learning has occurred around the Australian Curriculum and teachers are building their skills in curriculum planning through use of 'backward by design' from the achievement standards.
- The school's intentions in regard to conceptual learning and differentiation within an inquiry mindset is a strong foundation for curriculum delivery.
- The school has introduced a broad range of initiatives and programs aimed at supporting

students' social and emotional development.

- The school's partnerships in relation to academic progression have become more focussed in recent years.

Recommendations

The Review Team recommends Theodore Primary School pays attention to the following opportunities for school improvement during the next planning cycle.

- Collaboratively develop a Theodore Primary School Strategic Plan 2019-2023 that is consistent with the school's vision for teaching and learning, and provides a narrow and sharp agenda focussed on student outcomes, by incorporating explicit targets for student achievement that are well communicated to the school community. The plan should clearly articulate the measures and strategies for improvement in a timeline that acknowledges capacity for change. Progress towards targets should be monitored and initiatives and programs systematically evaluated for their effectiveness in producing the desired improvements in student learning and performance.
- Build upon the school's assessment schedule, to develop a data plan that incorporates the full range of school data. Develop processes to broaden analysis of school data to include trends over time, and ensure that through summarising, displaying and communicating, there is a common view of student achievement across the school community. Continue to develop structures and professional understanding to support classroom teachers to use data to plan starting points for teaching and learning, and to evaluate growth in academic and social and emotional outcomes.
- Continue to build a school-wide professional team of teachers by developing an explicit plan for continuous professional improvement through classroom-based learning, mentoring and coaching. The plan should utilise teacher expertise by refining collaborative structures to enable teachers to learn from each other and other learning communities.
- Continue to develop, communicate and implement a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery across the years of schooling which makes clear what (and when) teachers should teach and students should learn. The plan should provide a strong focus on general capabilities and cross-curricular priorities. Priority should be given to constructing learning experiences that are accessible, engaging and challenging. Assessment processes should align with the curriculum, clarify learning intentions, establish where students are at in their learning and monitor learning across the years. Continue to provide professional development in staff skills in curriculum planning and development.
- Promote deep learning and set high expectations for all students. Appropriately engage, challenge and extend students, provide classroom experiences to meet individual student learning needs, including student readiness, interest, aspirations and motivations. Teachers should encourage students to monitor their own learning and to set goals for future learning.
- Document the school's philosophy and develop evidence-based agreed approaches to teaching and learning.
- The school should strategically evaluate current partnerships and explore further partnerships to address identified needs and make best use of partner expertise in the context of school resources.