



ACT
Government
Education

**EXTERNAL REVIEW
REPORT for
TURNER 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 validate through evidence based practices, 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

Turner School is a unique educational setting with educational programs offered to both mainstream classes and seven small group special education classes for children with disabilities. Learning spaces across the school are designed to enable small group classes to work in close proximity to mainstream classes and in some classrooms in the same large space. Teachers and learning support assistants collaborate closely and have a shared responsibility for all students.

Turner School is a truly inclusive school which positively views and celebrates individual differences. Cultural, academic, social and emotional differences are embraced by the school and its community. The school values of Support, Acceptance, Respect, Friendliness and Fun have enabled the school to build a strong culture of giving. Creativity as well as high academic achievement and commitment to every child are key elements of the school's culture.

The school's total enrolment has increased minimally over the life of the School Plan, from 563 in 2013 to 573 in 2016. The school has now reached operational capacity and no longer accepts out of area enrolments. Careful monitoring by the Directorate due to future rezoning changes along the Light Rail Corridor will be essential to manage operational capacity at the school.

Another impact on enrolment was the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in 2014, resulting in a loss 32 enrolments in 2015. New K-6 mainstream in-area enrolments quickly subsumed these places. The overall special education enrolment is 56. There are also additional children accessing the Integration Support Program (ISP) in mainstream classes.

The number of English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EALD) students has increased significantly over the past four years. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students has remained fairly consistent. Turner's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is consistently high.

The largest number of students who transition to high school do so to Lyneham High School.

Over the life of the current School Plan, the leadership team has been largely stable. A second Deputy Principal position was removed and an additional School Leader C position was created with the main role being that of disability coordinator and coach.

Specialist curriculum programs including visual arts, music and Indonesian have been strengthened by the appointment of teachers who have these specific areas of expertise. Music in particular has become important and valued part of the school's culture.

Over the past four years the school has been effectively managed and administered by a relatively constant office team.

The focus on collaborative teams at Turner School, its balance of highly experienced and new educators, and a large number of part time staff has meant careful planning is required in relation to resource allocation. The school has maintained the valued and vital roles of its coaches previously funded from outside their budget.

Section B: School Performance

During the four-year improvement cycle, the review team found that Turner School has maintained a high level focus on improving student performance and all aspects of school life, contributing to positive learning outcomes. The school has placed emphasis on building teacher capacity, maximising the learning outcomes for every student, improving communication and processes and creating an environment which supports contemporary teaching and learning. The leadership team clearly defined their Theory of Action to support improved performance to the review team.

Turner School uses Directorate measures of PIPS and NAPLAN to measure academic achievements of students. The school has consistently met or has exceeded the targets set by the Directorate, in reading and numeracy. Student NAPLAN data provided to the review team shows the Turner School mean in all aspects is consistently higher than other schools in the Gungahlin Network and in the ACT. The data also showed the percentage increase of students in the top two bands in both reading and numeracy over the life of the plan. Writing results for Year 3 students indicate a positive shift of 45.1 percent in 2013 to 61.1 percent in the top two achievement bands in 2015. Decreasing the percentage of children in the bottom two bands continues to be a challenge. The review team evidenced strategies to improve outcomes for these students. The school used SMART data sets to “dig deeper” to disaggregate the NAPLAN data to identify the achievements of boys and girls over the life of the plan. This analysis has supported the actions that have been put into place to target professional learning for staff to maximise the reading, writing and mathematical learning for students.

The academic achievement of students in Kindergarten is measured by Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS). Generally over the life of the plan scores reflected solid expected growth between the start and the end of the year, though the target “increase by 2 percentage points was not achieved in 2014 and 2015”. The PIPS data was triangulated with other assessments including the ACT Reading Benchmark Assessment, the Crevola and Vines Oral Language Assessment, the SENA 1 Maths Assessment and the Turner School Place Value Assessment.

The school’s involvement and high level commitment to the Principals as Literacy Leaders ACT (PALLs) by the leadership team and all staff has had a significantly positive impact on teaching and learning. A high level of satisfaction has been recorded by staff. Evidence strongly indicates that staff are consistently satisfied with their teaching, with support from the leadership team, with 100 percent of teachers having high expectations of student achievement and with levels of communication throughout the school.

Data indicates the parents were highly satisfied with their child’s education at this school across all items of the School Satisfaction Survey showing increased parental satisfaction levels from 2013 to 2015.

Students at Turner *like being at school*. The Satisfaction Survey data indicates overall growth in percentage agreement for students against each item of the national option items in the survey. All the positive initiatives that have been put in place to enhance communication is evidenced in the shift in data.

Evidence cited

- 2013-2016 School Strategic Plan for Turner School
- 2014 Turner School Board Report
- 2015 Turner School Board Report
- My School April 2016
- School Satisfaction Data
- Turner Feedback Statement
- Sample Professional Pathways and Performance management Plans
- Staff Learning Room and TAD data tracker
- Student Forum data
- School Climate Survey Reports 2014 and 2015
- Turner Theory of Action

Section C: School Improvement Planning and Implementation

Priority Areas

In its Strategic Plan, Turner School identified four priorities for improvement. There has been a clear sustained improvement agenda over the four years of the plan. The consistency of these priorities can be attributed to the high level strategic vision of the principal, leadership team and the support provided by the Board to enact these key improvement strategies for each of the priorities. By developing shared beliefs and the schools relentless focus on high expectations, quality teaching and learning, evidenced based research, data, whole school professional learning and targeted teaching were factors that ensured that the priorities of the plan were met. The four key improvement priorities for 2013-2016 Strategic Plan were to:

- Continually improve the quality of teaching
- Maximise the individual learning outcomes and engagement of every student
- Continually improve communication and school processes
- Improve the school environment to support contemporary teaching and learning.

Achievements

Strategic Priority 1: Continually improve the quality of teaching

The performance measures used by Turner School to measure priority area one were teaching staff capacity matrices for literacy, numeracy, administrative staff, capacity matrices for learning technologies, coaching feedback data and the system survey question "I get constructive feedback about my practice". Targets were established each year and included the use of capacity matrices to demonstrate percentage growth in staff capacity from the start to the end of the year, percentage point improvement in coaching feedback at the end of each coaching cycle and staff and student satisfaction responses relating to constructive feedback.

The review team noted that in reviewing the progress against the priorities of the 2013 Annual Action Plan, some minor changes in the wording of the plan were required which resulted in the

alignment and merging of two key improvement strategies. Over the four year planning cycle, Turner School has built an exemplary model for professional learning where all teachers inquire into their own practice and collaborate with others to build their capacity to be quality teachers in a highly supportive environment. The review team was provided rich high level examples of the school's commitment to improving the quality of teaching. These included data walls, observed lessons, coaching and co-coaching by executive teachers, professional learning communities in action, learning walks, interviews with individual teachers and students, analysis of capacity matrices and school satisfaction surveys.

The focus on inquiry learning through the key improvement strategies has had a positive and sustained impact on building teacher capacity. The review team recommends that the school continue to facilitate and sharpen the Turner School model of professional learning to analyse and improve the variances in teaching skills across the school.

Targets for this priority have been achieved with noted improvement in the staff system survey I get constructive feedback about my performance from 63 percent in 2013 to 88 percent in 2015.

Evidence cited

- Action Learning Model and its associated artefacts
- Professional learning survey data
- Turner feedback statement
- Observation of professional learning communities, team meetings, learning walks, coaching and coaching conversations.

Strategic Priority 2: Maximise the individual learning outcomes and engagement of every student

The performance measures used by Turner School to measure priority area two were system survey question for students I have a say in the things I learn, PIPs (kindergarten), NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy for Year 3, NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy growth data for Year 5 and annual tracking of Individual Learning Plans (ILP).

Targets identified related to improving student growth in PIPS reading and number data and NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy data. The school tracked the percentage of children meeting or exceeding their long term ILP goals.

It was highly evident that in endeavouring to maximise the student individual learning outcomes and build a growth mindset that there was a high level of engagement by students in every class observed by the review team. It was also highly evident from teacher's planning documents, assessment schedules, the suite of reporting mechanisms and classroom practices that the school places a high priority on embracing differentiated teaching and learning to identify and meet the needs of all students in their class and across year levels.

The key improvement strategies of this priority have enabled and embedded a strong inquiry learning approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data has been evidenced by the review team demonstrating that students are positively engaged with their learning and making growth each year. The review team found that the targets for PIPS reading growth data were achieved in 2013 and 2014 but decreased by 3 percentage points in 2015. Similarly for number growth, targets were not achieved in 2014 and 2015, with a decrease of 1 percentage point from 2013 to 2015.

Turner's NAPLAN scores are consistently at the high performing end of all ACT schools and is commended by the review team. The school has increased the percentage of children in the top two bands in both reading and numeracy over the life of the School Plan and writing results show a positive shift, reflecting a major focus in the School Plan. Decreasing the percentage of children in the bottom two bands and improving the percentage of students making greater than or equal to expected growth from Year 3 to Year 5 is a continuing challenge for the school.

There are over sixty students at Turner School in either a small group or on integration support in a mainstream class with an ILP. Processes and practices such as shared beliefs about assessment, goal setting, a case management approach, literacy and numeracy monitoring, teacher and team collaboration have put the school in a position where they are able to track achievement of short and long term goals and have met this target. There is recognition by teachers of the complexities of individual children in both small groups and mainstream classes. The case management approach and deep analysis of student learning should continue to address the additional and complex needs of these students.

The school has increased the opportunities for students to have a say in the things they learn by engaging students in choice and a range of activities. The review team met with student leaders and the SRC and individual students who attested to having more influence on what they say and do. Students at Turner set their learning goals, participate in enrichment activities including the STEM and writers festivals, focus groups and feel empowered to speak up. In 2015, 97 percent of students believed I can have a say in the things I learn compared to 61 percent in 2013.

Evidence cited

- Turner School document of Beliefs and Practices
- Staff learning room as evidence of visible data analysis
- Learning walks and PLCs
- Assessment and monitoring schedule
- Individual teacher assessment – white folder and student portfolios
- Case management folders
- Team goals
- Audits of writing and mathematics
- Capacity matrices
- Turner School 2013-2016 Professional Learning Plan

Strategic Priority 3: Continually improve communication and school processes

The performance measure used by Turner School to measure priority area three was to increase the percentage of agreement by staff and parents in the system survey question Communication between this school and parents and carers is effective. The target for ongoing improvement across the life of the plan was established in 2012.

Evidence provided to the review team during discussion with Board, P&C and members of the wider school, indicated there was high agreement, that parents viewed themselves positively as partners in their child's education. Parents also articulated a high level of trust in the leadership team and staff at Turner School. The review team cited a range of processes and strategies that

had been put into place to enhance communication links including the renewed website. This along with analysis of the survey question and records from formal and informal parent forums indicated the target of this priority was met with a high level of satisfaction.

The review team suggests that the school seek ways to become more strategic in forming partnerships with families and the wider community, utilising these partnerships to better engage the differing needs of different families with the school, in the context of their child's learning. The school would also benefit from continuing to seek feedback from parents about how they are engaging with the school community.

Strategic Priority 4: Improve the school environment to support contemporary teaching and learning

The performance measure used by Turner School to measure priority area four was to increase the percentage of spaces inside and outside the buildings that reflect contemporary learning and teaching, maintenance and capital works projects undertaken by both the school and central office, teaching and LSA staff capacity matrices on learning technologies and the system survey question The use of learning technologies is an integral part of learning and teaching. Performance against these targets was tracked annually by the qualitative and quantitative documentation of the improvements.

Significant collaboration between the principal, the Turner School Board, the P&C and the ACT Education Directorate, resulting in improvements to the physical indoor-outdoor environments, has had a high impact on parent, teacher and student perception about the improved school environment. The design and age of the school has impacted on the school's ability to improve its infrastructure and embed Information Technology (IT) teaching and learning across the school. Directorate support to install Wi-Fi has aided teachers to more effectively use IT as a tool to support student learning. The focus for teachers and LSAs through a range of professional learning opportunities including workshops and coaching to improve pedagogy as indicated by the capacity matrices has strengthened their confidence in developing their student's capacity to use devices effectively.

The Satisfaction Survey question the use of learning technologies is an integral part of learning and teaching was asked of staff, parents, and students. In 2013 targets were not achieved but the school saw significant improvement in both staff student and parent perception with targets achieved in both 2014 and 2015.

The review team noted that the school has recognised the barriers in keeping abreast with new technology. The vision and desire of the leadership team to have whole school beliefs and understandings of twenty first century learning, skills and pedagogy should continue as a priority into the future. Identified barriers should be unpacked and be included as key improvement strategies in future planning. Using Turner School's exemplary model of professional learning, the targeted building of teachers' skills to confidently use IT as a tool for teaching and learning should be another consideration.

Evidence cited

- Turner School Style Guide
- P&C Master Plan for improvements to playground
- Observation of internal and external areas of the school
- Parent, teacher and student conversation

Reflections

At the end of each school year the school, aided in 2014 and 2015 by the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) Turner School staff reflected carefully on the progress of the school's Strategic and Annual Action Plans and considered future priorities. The review team noted the rigor which the school improvement committee applied to the process of school review against the plans.

The review team was provided with strong evidence that the leadership team has built through its clear and strategic vision and a culture of high expectation, a learning environment that is committed to excellence. It was also evident that there has been a sustained and clear improvement agenda over the life of the plan with all teaching, learning support and administrative staff contributing to the improvement cycle.

The review team was provided and cited an extensive body of evidence which indicated that the school had consistently met the targets of their identified priorities.

The review team believes that to ensure the school continues to operate at its current exemplary level that an ongoing clear improvement agenda is imperative. This improvement agenda should enable all stakeholders to continue to work professionally and in collaboration and maintain beliefs and systems which are upheld by all.

Continued use of the NSIT will assist the leadership team to lead the school to review and reflect on their future goals and continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning at Turner School.

Section D: National Tools Self-Evaluation Results

National School Improvement Tool

The review team can confidently validate the school's own self assessment against the National School Improvement Tool. The external review team assessment undertaken by two reviewers over three days came to very similar conclusions as the school.

At Turner School the combined time reviewers spent in conversations with the principal, leaders, teachers, learning support assistants, students, parents and board members was approximately forty two hours. Another five and a half hours was spent on reviewer moderation and preparation for the school improvement committee feedback.

For some domain descriptors the review team found Turner School to be higher than they had assessed themselves. The school is a high performing school that contributes to building the capacity across the Directorate through its active network involvement. The network leader was involved in both the school reflection of their journey and the feedback from the review team.

Reviewers found that every teacher spoken to knew about the Tool and leaders, teachers and Board members all spoke about their experience in the extensive process the school undertook to both understand the tool domains and to complete their self assessment.

We had substantial, quality evidence through reading, questioning and observing that enabled a clear line of sight across all domains and domain descriptors. Turner School's beliefs, values and vision were espoused and enacted across the whole school community.

In 2015 and 2016 Turner School leaders, teachers, Board, parents and learning support assistants developed their knowledge and made determinations as to where the school was

placed in each of the nine domains. The principal spent time with the school improvement team preparing them to lead the process with the staff and School Board.

The school improvement committee worked to use the evidence to write narratives to accompany the NSIT to tell the story of the school under each of the Tool's domains. Extensive stakeholder feedback on these narratives was sought from all of the Turner School staff and the School Board. Feedback on the narrative for domain nine was sought from the community.

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

- *The school leadership group, including, where appropriate, the governing council, has developed and is driving an explicit and detailed local school improvement agenda. This agenda is expressed in terms of specific improvements sought in student performances, is aligned with national and/or system- wide improvement priorities and includes clear targets with accompanying time lines which are rigorously actioned.*
- *The school improvement agenda has been effective in focusing, and to some extent narrowing and sharpening, the whole school's attention on core learning priorities.*
- *There is a strong and optimistic commitment by all staff to the school improvement strategy and a clear belief that further improvement is possible. Teachers take responsibility for changes in practice required to achieve school targets and are using data on a regular basis to monitor the effectiveness of their own efforts to meet those targets.*
- *There is evidence of a school- wide commitment to every student's success and staff of the school tell stories of significant student improvement.*

Comments and Findings

Prior to the review visit, Turner School took the initiative to ask all staff to provide feedback to the review team about what they would like the review team to notice or know about. These reflections were highly informative and the team appreciated the key messages from these reflections. A second initiative the school undertook was to write a narrative description of progress across each Domain. Substantial supportive evidence was found to validate the accuracy of the domain narratives.

All components of the school self reflection have been validated. The report was comprehensive, it reflected the unique nature of Turner School's context well and the review team believe that it could be used as an exemplar by the Directorate.

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

- *The principal and other school leaders clearly articulate their belief that reliable data on student outcomes are crucial to the school's improvement agenda. The school has established and is implementing a systematic plan for the collection, analysis and use of student achievement data. Test data in literacy, numeracy and science are key elements of this plan.*
- *Data are used throughout the school to identify gaps in student learning, to monitor improvement over time and to monitor growth across the years of school. A high priority*

has been given to professional development aimed at building teachers' and leaders' data literacy skills.

- *Teachers are given test data (including NAPLAN) for their class electronically and are provided with, and use, software (e.g., Excel) to analyse, display and communicate data on individuals and class performances and progress, including comparisons of pre- and post-test results. Teachers routinely use objective data on student achievement as evidence of successful teaching.*
- *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 and wellbeing.*
- *One or more members of staff have been assigned responsibility for implementing the annual plan, analysing the full range of school data, and summarising, displaying and communicating student outcome data for the school. The school has ensured that appropriate software is available and that at least these assigned staff have been trained to undertake data analyses.*
- *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.*

Comments and Findings

Turner School's self evaluation on performance and measurement of progress over time shows very high levels of competence over four years by the school improvement committee to analyse, discuss and use data to impact outcomes. Relevant evidence was able to be verified including teacher conversations that demonstrated a school wide data culture exists.

The creation of a staff learning room, where all data is on display as well as specifically designed Turner assessment data software ensures that achievement and well being information for both mainstream and small group classes are centrally housed, easily accessed and made visible. Inquiry unit planning meetings are held in the staff learning room to enable the inclusion of appropriate differentiation strategies to meet the needs of all learners, by using the assessment growth data for Reading, Writing and Numeracy for every photographically identified child. A disciplined dialogue approach is embedded across the school. Turner School provided the review team with timetables, meeting schedules and protocols for data discussion, professional learning community meetings, team meeting and staff meetings, all of which the review team observed being used at meetings attended.

It is evident the school makes regular extensive time available for teams to have in depth discussions about student achievement including regular reflection on how the data collected is fit for purpose.

Examples of a culture of self reflection were highly visible and commented on by leaders, board members, parents and teachers.

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

- *The school ethos is built around high expectations and a commitment to excellence. There is an expectation that every student will learn and achieve positive outcomes. Classrooms are calm but busy and interruptions to teaching time are kept to a minimum. Staff morale is sustained at a high level. There is a happy, optimistic feel to the school.*
- *High levels of trust are apparent across the school community. Interactions are focused on the learning and wellbeing of students and on continually improving the school's ability to meet the needs of all students. Parents and families are valued as partners in student learning, and parents, school leaders and teachers work together in mutually supportive ways. There is a strong sense of belonging and pride in the school.*
- *A strong collegial culture has been established. 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 regularly invite leaders and colleagues to visit their classrooms to observe their teaching.*
- *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, and an attempt is made to ensure that all students are engaged in challenging, meaningful learning.*
- *Respectful and caring relationships are reflected in the ways in which staff, students and parents interact and in the language they use in both formal and informal settings.*
- *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. There are agreed guidelines on such matters as greeting visitors, taking messages, and responding to queries promptly and respectfully.*

Comments and Findings

The review team discussed with the school the instances where NSIT descriptors didn't quite reflect the inclusive way learning is arranged for all of Turners' students. Statements around student behaviour have not been highlighted above for this reason, however students commented that they enjoy working closely with small group classes and that the nature of any disruption is not noticed and doesn't get in the way of their learning. Reviewers also observed this. Teachers commented positively that they felt supported when faced with challenges around student behaviour and wellbeing issues.

The learning of students at Turner School is highly visible. Classrooms are stimulating and print rich, with constructed learning examples, scaffolding prompts, student learning goals and learning intentions visible in every room reviewers visited. Students could talk about why they were learning what they were.

Teachers' first names are used by students thus strengthening the building of rich, open and trusting relationships.

Reviewers interviewed school captains and vice captains and observed an SRC meeting which demonstrated to reviewers that student leaders have a real and authentic voice with clear pathways for initiatives to be explored right through to taking actions to board meetings for

consideration. Teaching programs and timetables reflect weekly opportunity for students to have choice in their learning through language enrichment groups and genius programs.

The recent appointment of a disability coordinator and coach has streamlined policy implementation, focusing on academic excellence and having high learning expectations for special needs teachers, learning assistants, parents and students alike. A strong coordinated team approach is a feature of the way special needs resources are used flexibly to enhance learning and well being outcomes. Learning support assistants and specialist teachers also provide coordinated, effective and timely intervention for mainstream students with individual learning needs, including EALD students.

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

- *The principal and other school leaders have given a very high priority to understanding and addressing the learning needs of all students in the school. This is reflected in the implementation of systematic strategies for identifying student needs and the development of creative school-wide solutions for addressing those needs.*
- *A school-wide process has been established for identifying specific student learning needs. This process includes systematic testing to establish learning gaps and special needs. School records of individual student needs, achievements and progress are maintained centrally and shared across year levels.*
- *A range of initiatives (e.g., across- class and across-grade groupings for literacy and numeracy; the sharing of specialist teachers with neighbouring schools, if they exist) is being implemented to make more effective use of available resources to enhance teaching and learning. The school deploys staff in ways that make best use of their expertise (e.g., specialist reading/science teachers).*
- *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.*
- *Programs to meet individual learning needs (e.g., programs for gifted students, students with learning difficulties, students for whom English is a second language, Indigenous students, refugees) are prioritised, where possible, in the school budget.*
- *Physical spaces are used effectively to maximise student learning. Learning spaces are organised for whole group work, small group work and individual work.*

Comments and Findings

The school has worked hard to connect classrooms, modernise its open spaces with technology and provide furniture to make the best use it can of a range of aging learning spaces. Recent IT upgrades support contemporary teaching practice and with the help of a very active parent community, creative solutions within a limited budget are being found to maximise all of Turner's available resources to create contemporary learning spaces where it can. Teachers commented that connections to outdoor spaces were valued and it was widely felt that a space big enough for the all students, teachers and parents to showcase learning would be an asset.

The school's hydrotherapy pool is valued by parents of special needs students and it is also hired to outside users. The school finds ways to continue to fund its operation within tight budget constraints.

Many teachers commented about the need to continue to upgrade both the physical learning environments and their own capacity to regularly include and utilise technology as another tool to enhance learning outcomes.

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

The teaching staff of the school are experts in the fields in which they teach and have very high levels of pedagogical knowledge and skill, including expert knowledge of evidence-based teaching strategies.

- *Teachers and school leaders take personal and collective responsibility for improving student learning and wellbeing, working together and learning from each other's practices. The sharing and showcasing of best practice are common. In team meetings there is an emphasis on the joint analysis of student work and on teaching strategies for improving student learning. Teachers collaboratively plan, deliver and review the effectiveness of lessons.*
- *School leaders place a very high priority on the ongoing professional learning of all staff and on the development of a school-wide, self-reflective culture focused on improving classroom teaching.*
- *School leaders participate in professional learning activities, learning alongside teachers.*
- *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.*
- *Attention is paid to strengths and weaknesses in the school-wide team, with strategies in place to recruit staff with particular expertise, to train staff to address particular needs, and to support staff who find it difficult to commit to the school's improvement agenda.*
- *The school provides opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles outside the classroom.*

Comments and Findings

Building the capacity of all staff as instructional leaders has been a focus for the school. Coaching has been privileged and exemplary classroom teachers along with executive teachers have honed their skills as literacy, numeracy and disability coaches. Teachers highly value learning from and with each other. Without exception the teachers asked, acknowledged that they are in the best school they have ever been in. Frequent comments were made about communication being effective and that they felt listened to by the principal, leaders and each other. There are high professional expectations of teachers that are matched by high levels of support.

Significant evidence existed to support Turner's success in reference to priority one, to continually improve the quality of teaching. Parents, teachers and students commented on the positive change the strong shared leadership has had to reduce variation between classes over the last four years.

Best practice was evident around embedded strategies based on research to develop teacher's deep understanding of how students learn. Teachers overwhelmingly commented that they would welcome more opportunities to learn from and with each other in collaborative ways, including more coaching and 'walk-throughs.' The principal and leaders take an active role in the facilitation of professional learning community action learning meetings.

Turner School is part of an active network which shares best practice across a number of schools. There were many examples of attendance at professional learning, the provision of readings for professional discussion, and the contribution being made more widely at ACT and national conferences by leaders and teachers as well as presenting at significant conferences. Sharing learning and applying new knowledge to practice was being embraced.

In the domain **Systematic Curriculum Delivery**, the panel noted the following.

- *The school has a clearly documented whole- school plan for curriculum delivery. This plan is aligned with the Australian or other approved curriculum and, where appropriate, system curriculum documents. The plan makes explicit what (and when) teachers should teach and students should learn. The curriculum delivery plan is being implemented throughout the school and is shared with parents and the wider community.*
- *A strong alignment has been achieved between the overall curriculum delivery plan, term and unit plans, classroom teaching and the regular assessment of student progress in relation to curriculum expectations.*
- *Considerable attention has been given to ensuring 'vertical' alignment of the curriculum so that there is continuity and progression of learning across the years of school, with teaching in each year building on to and extending learning in previous years. General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are understood, valued and used as active learning streams for all students.*
- *A high priority in curriculum planning is given to the progressive development of students' deep understandings of concepts, principles and big ideas within learning areas, as well as to the ongoing development of cross-curricular skills and attributes, including teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, and the evaluation of information and evidence.*
- *The school places a priority on making the curriculum locally relevant and accessible to all students and values and builds on to students' existing knowledge and varying backgrounds.*
- *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 science, and to embed the fundamental skills of literacy, numeracy and higher order thinking in all school subjects.*
- *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.

- *Curriculum delivery is designed to meet the needs of the range of students within each year level as well as those with disabilities and other particular needs.*

Comments and Findings

Curriculum design and assessment for multi-aged classes is the starting point for professional discussion at weekly team meetings. Evidence that curriculum is authentic and reflects the school's context is strong. The school's values are reflected in the language of inclusion heard by reviewers especially noticed during learning walks. There was evidence on these walks that the planned and enacted curriculum were closely aligned.

There is also a close alignment between curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment and reporting. When asked, every student could articulate why they were learning what they were; and why that was important.

Kath Murdoch acts as a critical friend to the school. She will be visiting next week to support teachers and leaders to reflect on their units of inquiry.

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

- *The school leadership team actively promotes the use of differentiated teaching as a strategy for ensuring that every student is engaged and learning successfully. It is recognised throughout the school that some students require significant adjustments to their learning programs (e.g., accelerated programs, special support) if they are to be optimally engaged and challenged, and individual learning plans have been developed for those students requiring them. Differentiation is a priority of the school and a feature of every teacher's practice.*
- *Regular data on the achievements, progress, strengths and weaknesses of individual students are used in all classrooms to make judgements about individual needs, to identify appropriate starting points for teaching and to personalise teaching and learning activities. Reports to parents and carers include details of how learning opportunities have been tailored to individual needs and of the progress individuals have made.*
- *School leaders explicitly encourage teachers to tailor their teaching to student needs and readiness. This includes the systematic use of assessment instruments (standardised assessment tasks and teacher developed assessment tools) to establish where individuals are in their learning and to identify skill gaps and misunderstandings. Teachers also are encouraged to respond to differences in cultural knowledge and experiences and to cater for individual differences by offering multiple means of representation, engagement and expression.*
- *Planning shows how the different needs of students are addressed, and how multiple opportunities to learn are provided.*
- *Reports to parents show progress over time and include suggestions for ways in which parents can support their children's learning.*

Comments and Findings

Over the life of the recent School Strategic and operational plans, Turner School has prioritised initiatives to maximise the individual learning outcomes and the engagement of every student. The review panel verifies student progress data reflects success across this priority and its key improvement strategies.

Turner School supplements Directorate parent reporting requirements by providing a learning journey portfolio, giving parents a good knowledge of their child's growth over time. Parents were satisfied that there were ample opportunities to either find out and to be told how their child's learning was progressing.

The workshop model of 1/3 intentional teaching and 2/3 individualised workshop tasks embeds differentiation by providing point of need feedback to students during most of the lesson. The review team noticed teachers conferencing was a feature of lessons across the school. Students were encouraged to find answers based on open tasks or questioning, learning at their own rate based on their own short term learning goals for each subject and unit of inquiry. The review team heard students comment on their use of their classrooms as 'the second teacher'. Teachers also commented they would often differentiate through year level splits, flexibly using the expertise of other teachers to differentiate learning opportunities across other year levels.

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 and have clear and well-known positions on the kinds of teaching that they wish to see occurring.*
- *All teachers and leaders are committed to identifying, understanding and implementing better teaching methods, and a high priority is given to evidence-based teaching strategies (strategies that have been demonstrated through research and practice to be highly effective).*
- *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 science, 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.*

Comments and Findings

The coaching and intervention support provided by leaders in classrooms combines a modelled approach with learning intervention for identified students. The un-timetabled nature of the feedback provided on occasions, at mutually convenient times was appreciated in it allowed teachers, coaches and students to have maximum time together in class. Reviewers observed high quality feedback being provided to teachers, demonstration lessons, small group and individual teaching during these sessions.

Embedding the use of professional reading aligned to school priorities and beliefs has been a key element of the successful change achieved by Turner School. There was wide knowledge and evidence of the use of a 'Plan, Act, Notice, Reflect' planning cycle.

Evidence indicates that teachers value the structured and consistently implemented approach developed for learning walks as well as their action research in professional learning community meetings. Personal pathway plans, team and personal goals all connect effectively to embed Turner's beliefs and school priorities.

Evidence strongly reflects the principal is the lead learner at Turner. She is an instructional leader who has the skills and passion to drive improvement and take the whole school community on the same improvement journey. The board articulated their desire to resource the building of capacity of teachers and leaders as the highest priority.

Teachers indicated to the review team that they value opportunity to access and use ICT to enhance learning and are keen to extend this further across the school, visiting best practice classrooms.

Students acknowledged that there has been a notable change in their environment and learning over the past 4 years. They mentioned that it was now more engaging collaborative and co-operative and there was less class work. Parents of mainstream children affirmed that their children felt challenged and were happy to come to school every day.

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

- *The school leadership team makes deliberate and strategic use of partnerships with families, local businesses and community organisations to access intellectual, physical and/or other resources not available within the school for the purposes of improving student outcomes.*
- *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.*
- *There is evidence that the school's partnerships are being implemented as intended.*

Comments and Findings

Turner School has extensive connections with families and outside organisations. These partnerships range from highly organised and more formal such as, 'Little Afters', 'Pegasus', 'Police Citizens Youth Club', Lions Club, ACT Volunteers, Canberra Institute of Technology, Lyneham High School and Dickson Colleges; through to a wide range of more informal partnerships providing extra curricula activities, such as; STEM, Tournament of the Minds, debating, the bike program, environment centre, just to name a few.

Parents commented that they had many opportunities to be engaged in their child's learning at Turner and were aware of the parent skills register that is an expansive list of expertise. Staff readily access this to enrich learning opportunities. In 2015 there were 1500 hours of volunteer time recorded which is a significant contribution.

Turner School has a Parents and Citizens Association which has a constitution, board reporting responsibilities, an annual report and general meeting.

While the review team commends the schools for its success in improving communications and strengthening relations with parents and the community, we would encourage Turner School to continue their efforts to reflect on the effectiveness in communicating its strategies. Turner School is encouraged to continue to explore new community opportunities that support learning and well-being, with National Institutions, businesses and neighbouring schools to maximise future opportunities for all students.

National Safe Schools Framework: School Audit Tool

The National Safe Schools Framework Audit Tool was used to evaluate the school's performance. The executive team and teachers worked collaboratively in both 2015 and 2016 to identify areas of strength and areas for development. All staff critically examined indicators from multiple perspectives from Pre-School to Year 6. Staff were asked to indicate at which level the school was currently operating in and the evidence indicated this level. The reflections of staff were collated and annual action planning reflected actions from the audit for improvement.

The review team agrees with these reflections.

Areas that the school identified they were doing well in were:

- Leadership commitment to a safe school
- A supportive and connected school culture
- Policies and procedures
- Professional learning
- Positive behaviour management
- Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
- A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership
- Early intervention and targeted support
- Partnerships with families and community

Section E: Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

Turner School is commended for the following.

1. Building a strongly inclusive and an embedded culture that promotes learning and behaviours that are reflective of its clearly articulated beliefs, vision and values.
2. The success of a truly inclusive learning model where mainstream and special education classes work side by side.
3. Collaboratively creating a vision based on the Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians 2008 of high expectation and excellence.
4. The manner in which it has sustained continuous improvement over the four years of the School Strategic Plan.
5. Its unrelenting focus on the School Improvement Agenda, its priorities, targets and the measurement of success by using data and research, and embedding reflective practices across the whole school.
6. The initiative to bring the school priority areas to life through the creation of Theory of Action posters for each priority has been successful in developing shared commitment to Turner's vision.
7. The dedication and hard work of the School Improvement Committee is to be highly commended.
8. The ways in which the school has developed a teaching staff, inclusive of learning support assistants, to have demonstrated expertise and pedagogical knowledge across all levels.
9. The instructional, distributive leadership models along with the creation of layers of accountability and support have impacted on successfully achieving priorities and explicit targets in the school improvement plans.
10. The extent to which Turner School has embedded student voice.
11. Increased opportunities that the school has created to enable students to have choice and voice in what they are learning have empowered students to take ownership of their learning and become active and informed citizens.

Recommendations

Turner School already operates at an exemplary level. The review team believe that maintaining beliefs and systems already embedded as staff change in the future will require ongoing efforts to ensure all stakeholders come together with the same vision.

Also close attention will need to be paid by the school to 'catch' opportunities that come up from its highly reflective practices to enhance embedded practices.

The review team recommends Turner School pays attention to the following opportunities for improvement during the next planning cycle:

1. Continue the school's strong focus on improvements to learning environments, especially the provision and use of technology by teachers to embed contemporary learning and teaching pedagogies; enabling students to access, create and communicate information and ideas, think critically, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas, and in their lives beyond school.
2. Develop ways to evaluate critical and creative thinking in ways that are authentic to the context of Turner school.
3. Extend teacher knowledge of curriculum and their belief that all students are capable of learning successfully if motivated and given appropriate learning opportunities and necessary support. By the further development of teacher content knowledge, expressed through the creation of high quality inquiry units linking to the existing 1/3:2/3 workshop model; personalised learning outcomes and aligned assessment and feedback for all students will be strengthened.
4. Continue to facilitate and grow the Turner professional learning model, sharpening the existing school-wide self reflective culture to improve consistency of practices within and across each year level.
5. Seek ways to become more strategic in forming partnerships with families and the wider community, utilising these partnerships to better engage families with the school in the context of their child's learning.
6. Further refine parent communication strategies and continue to seek feedback from parents about how they are engaging with the school community.
7. Investigate and create opportunities outside the network, in collaboration with the Directorate to strategically and formally share the exemplary practice that exists at Turner School thus helping to build the capacity of leaders and teachers across the ACT.

Section F: Record of School Review Process

The following people were members of the external School Review Panel for Turner School conducted on 19-21 July 2016.

Name: Dianne Pekin	ACER: Lead Reviewer
Name: Anne Simpson	School: Principal, Chapman 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:	29 / 8 / 2016

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

Name: Jo Padgham		
Signature: 	Date:	29 / 8 / 2016