



ACT
Government
Education

**EXTERNAL REVIEW
REPORT for
THE WODEN 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 two 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 (NSIT) that informed our commendations and recommendations.

Section A: School Context

The Woden School is a secondary school situated in the South Western district of Canberra. It provides individual education programs for eligible students in years 7-12 with an intellectual disability and/or autism. The school motto is 'Independence and Responsibility' and in 2015 the school collaboratively developed an agreed set of values, philosophy and practice which now underpin the culture of the school.

The school has a current student population of 107 students. Students enrol from a broad geographical area, predominantly the southern side of Canberra. The school expanded to include year 11 in 2011, and year 12 in 2012 and therefore enrolment numbers increased significantly during that time. The school has capacity for approximately 105 students, due to classroom spaces, and therefore caps enrolment accordingly. Total enrolments have remained reasonably constant since 2012, close to or exceeding capacity for most years of the *School Strategic Plan for The Woden School South Weston Network 2013-2016* (the plan). The school has 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 1 student for which English is an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D).

Staffing at the school has remained stable over the life of the plan with only minor changes due to transfers, retirement and/or resignation. This is particularly apparent with the non-teaching Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). Similarly, the leadership profile has also remained stable. The current principal was appointed to the school in 2010. A new executive position, Executive Teacher (Professional Practice) commenced in 2013.

The panel noted that there has been a significant commitment by the leadership team and staff to the building of a high school learning environment in which students can participate in a rich array of both academic and co-curricular programs. During the life of this plan the school has implemented the Australian Curriculum in years 7-10, providing students with a rigorous academic program, adjusted to meet individual needs. The school has implemented the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network program (ASDAN) which has been endorsed by the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS). Along with other endorsed senior courses, students in years 11 and 12 have the opportunity of graduating with either an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate and Record of Achievement or Statement of Attainment.

During the life of the plan, The Woden School has undergone significant refurbishment. An overall facilities master plan has been developed for the school and in stage one of the plan, a double demountable classroom building has been replaced with two purpose built classrooms. Significant work to the exterior of the school has occurred including expansion of the car park,

lighting upgrades, a new electronic sign, playground and assembly area improvements. Extensive carpeting and painting, classroom and restroom upgrades and ceiling refurbishments have improved the interior learning environment.

Section B: School Performance

Student Learning Data

All students at The Woden School have an Individualised Learning Plan (ILP), which is reviewed annually. The majority of students are exempt from National Assessment Program, Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and A-E reporting. Individual performance data for students with a disability is not currently aggregated at the system or school level.

In 2013, The Woden School became the first secondary specialist school in the ACT to present year 12 students with either an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate or Statement of Attainment (Secondary College Record).

- In 2013, 100% of year 12 students graduated with an ACT Year 12 Certificate.
- In 2014, 63% of year 12 students graduated with an ACT Year 12 Certificate and 37% of year 12 students received a Statement of Attainment.
- In 2015, 67% of year 12 students achieved an ACT Year 12 Senior Secondary Certificate (formerly the ACT Year 12 Certificate) and 33% of year 12 students received a Statement of Achievement.

In 2014, 100 % of year 11 and 12 students received ASDAN certificates for the courses studied. The panel found evidence of opportunities for students to participate in work experience and vocational education. The development of post school plans for each year 12 student supports the transition beyond school for both students and their families.

Stakeholder Perception Data

In 2015 the proportion of parents/carers in agreement with national and ACT Satisfaction Survey data was predominantly above other specialist schools in the ACT. The panel noted this was a significant improvement from previous years in this planning cycle where there were items both above and below ACT averages. The panel spoke with representatives from both the Parent and Citizens Association (P&C) and School Board who spoke highly of the education and support offered to their children, and improved opportunities to both visit the school and be involved in the school community.

Community partnerships have been strengthened over the course of the plan. The P&C, inactive in earlier years, now meets twice a term and has successfully organised a number of community events. The data below indicates the positive direction of the community partnerships.

The parent satisfaction data for 2014 indicates that 95 percent of parents/carers (21 respondents) agreed that community partnerships are valued and maintained. This was an improvement from 81 percent (21 respondents) in 2013. 88 percent of parents/carers (26 respondents) agreed that community partnerships are valued and maintained in 2015. These results support the very positive response from parents/carers when they met with the review panel.

Staff satisfaction survey data shows varied levels of satisfaction against each element throughout the improvement cycle. The panel noted that from this survey data, that in 2015,

fewer staff were in agreement with each National opinion item. However, only seventeen staff members responded on this occasion.

In contrast with this, during interviews with a random sampling of staff members, the review panel found evidence that teachers on the whole had a strong sense of pride and belonging in the school and staff morale was generally high.

The panel recommends that the school continues to interrogate this data and explore the reasons for the variability in these data sets.

Demographic Data

The introduction of year 11 and 12 students has changed the demographic distribution of students over time. The enrolment of the school increased significantly because of this expansion - from 81 students in 2010 up to 114 students in 2014 (40%). The school, due to classroom spaces, has had to restrict enrolments to a maximum of approximately 105 students.

It should be noted that 10% of the school population identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Attendance data indicates a slight decline over the course of the plan. However no statistical significance is attributed to this given the small sampling size and the significant and complex health issues of some students.

Process Data

Professional Development

Ongoing opportunities for staff professional development have been a very high priority in this strategic plan. In the 2015 School Climate Survey, 100% of teachers indicated that they have been involved in professional learning. This is an increase of 15% from 2014.

Quality Teaching Model

The school has implemented an observation and feedback program during the life of the plan and has measured the success of this. The executive team conducted school based surveys of staff about their involvement in this program. There were 100% of teachers agreed that mentoring, coaching or peer observations are arranged at this school as part of professional development. Staff are offered programs to develop their teaching knowledge and skills and participate in professional development as a whole school team. There are 90% of staff agreed that teachers frequently discuss and share teaching methods and strategies with each other.

The panel noted that limited whole of school data sets and analysis of these are currently available and have made recommendations about this for the next planning cycle at the end of this report. A recommendation about the use of data was suggested in the previous validation report.

Section C: School Improvement Planning and Implementation

Priority Areas

The Woden School focused on the following priority areas in the 2013-2016 School Plan.

1. Provide an appropriate and relevant curriculum for students at The Woden School.
2. Improve pedagogical practice across the school.
3. Enhance community involvement and recognition of the School in the wider community.

The priorities were selected on the basis of the feedback and recommendations outlined in the 2012 external validation report and further consultation with the school community. Particular input was sought from the school staff and school board.

Strategic Priority 1: Provide an appropriate and relevant curriculum for students at The Woden School.

- Embed BSSS endorsed courses into year 11 and 12 programs.
- Embed ASDAN courses into the school curriculum.
- Further incorporate the Australian Curriculum into the school programs.

The review panel noted the school has made significant progress in the development of curriculum documentation aligned with the Australian Curriculum across years 7-10 during the course of the plan. This has included the development of comprehensive scope and sequence documents and unit outlines for geography, English, science, Pastoral Care and health and physical education. Staff also completed planning for a range of electives including: Food Technology, Horticulture, Road Ready, Wood Technology, Art, Dance, Water Skills, Hospitality and Canteen.

All units being offered in the senior secondary (Year 11 and 12) program at the school were endorsed by the BSSS as either Modified (M) or Registered (R). The school worked closely with the BSSS to review, evaluate and improve the content and assessment tasks within each of the M units. This resulted in the BSSS endorsing new M courses designed for students with a disability. In 2014 the school successfully had all ASDAN courses offered through the college program recognised by the BSSS.

All students in the senior secondary program received externally generated ASDAN certificates from the United Kingdom (UK) for courses they studied. Student portfolios were sent to the UK for external moderation. During 2015 The Woden School was accorded 'Direct Certification Status' from ASDAN. This was a reflection of the very positive reviews from the ASDAN UK accreditation section with regard to the standard of the portfolios submitted.

The school has been exploring ways to appropriately and effectively capture academic progress of students with high levels of disability. Through research, the school has identified and adopted the Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) tool which has been designed to assess the progress of high needs students and is aligned to the Victorian version of the Australian Curriculum. The school, with the support of the Directorate, is trialling ABLES in 2016. Teachers have also received training in the use of Mathematics, Reading Eggs, and the Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) as both formative and summative assessment tools. These are being trialled in 2016 with the aim of full implementation in 2017.

In 2016 the school has introduced a new reporting format in line with the ACT Education Directorate's common reporting format.

Targets have been set in relation to this priority in each Annual Operating Plan. The school has met its 100% target of implementing the Australian Curriculum and the mandated curriculum for years 11 and 12 across these plans. In 2015 the school set a target of 30% of year 12 students achieving an ACT Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) and Record of Achievement (RoA). There were 67% of students who achieved an ACT SSC and the other 33% received a SoA. The target in 2014 was 50% and 63% achieved an ACT Year 12 certificate. The school met these identified targets.

Evidence Cited

- Annual Operating Plans (2013, 2014 and 2015)
- Annual School Board Reports (2013, 2014 and 2015)
- Australian Curriculum Scope and Sequence, Unit Outlines and 20 week programs
- ASDAN presentation to staff
- ASDAN booklets
- ABLES assessment tool

Strategic Priority 2: Improve pedagogical practice across the school

- Develop and implement a sustainable model of coaching and mentoring across the school.
- Engage staff in professional learning around their own identified needs and the wider school needs.
- Embed assessment and evaluation tools across the school.

A Quality Teaching Model (QTM) coordinating group was established and professional learning sessions were held in 2013. Two rounds of quality teaching occurred in term 2 and 3 in 2014, four rounds, one per term in 2015 and two rounds in 2016. Teachers and all school leaders were allocated to a mentor/mentee partnership. After teachers planned their lesson, they were involved in a pre-lesson observation workshop where lesson structures were discussed, and the identified QTM elements were explored prior to the lesson observation. Teachers then observed each other's lessons using the QTM coding tool. Opportunities were provided for teachers to feed back to their partners and then to the whole teaching staff on both the lessons and the process. The panel noted that staff provided very positive feedback about the QTM approach and in particular having opportunities to have professional conversations with colleagues.

In 2015 the school met its target in 100% of teachers involved in an observation and feedback program. In the previous year a similar target was reached. The school set a target in 2015 of 85% of teaching staff indicating on the school satisfaction survey that they get constructive feedback about their performance. There were 80% of teaching staff who agreed.

Evidence Cited

- Annual Operating Plan (2013, 2014 and 2015)
- Annual School Board Report (2013, 2014 and 2015)
- QTM documentation including samples of coding sheets
- QTM professional learning presentations

- QTM staff survey data
- Professional Learning Plan

Strategic Priority 3: Enhance community involvement and recognition of the School in the wider community.

- Increase communication with families and strengthen parent/community voice in decision making in the school.
- Create and promote opportunities for families to participate in school community events.
- Strengthen involvement with key stakeholders in transition processes and programs.

The School has implemented a range of strategies to connect the wider community over the course of the plan.

- A conscientious effort to involve every family in the educational journey of their child has been made through engaging them in ILP meetings and parent/teacher interviews.
- Wodenstock, a one day music festival, has become an annual event. Musicians are invited from other schools to showcase their work. Community organisations and businesses are involved in sponsoring and running the event. This has become a highly successful event on the calendar.
- The development of working relationships with post school option providers for young people with a disability became integral to the college program. With the introduction of the NDIS these have grown rapidly. In response to this the school has funded a role to support the placement of students in the college program in appropriate work experience or social experience options. Flexible Learning Options (FLO), Transitions and Carers, coordinated by the Education Directorate, have been a key feature of post-school option planning and preparation.
- Re-establishing the P&C: the P&C has been active in supporting events and activities to provide greater opportunities for families to be involved in school life. The P&C have also taken on the responsibility of running major fundraisers.

The school, over the life of the plan set targets for 100% of parents/carers involved in the ILP process. In 2015, 100% were contacted and 95% attended the meeting. The school has introduced a new format for parent/carer meetings over the past three years, whilst not always meeting the target, attendance has improved.

Evidence Cited

- Annual Operating Plans (2013, 2014 and 2015)
- Annual School Board Reports (2013, 2014 and 2015)
- Videos highlighting community events
- Meeting with P&C and School Board Representatives
- ILPs including post school plan
- School Satisfaction data
- Meeting with Pastoral Care teacher

Reflections

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum for students with a disability has resulted in the school being able to confidently say that their curriculum is relevant and rigorous. It has led to consistency across the school in terms of classroom programming and is driving the need to establish an assessment and data collection regime that is also rigorous and relevant.

The school leadership team has been invited to speak at a range of conferences about the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in a school with students with high needs. The success in having the ASDAN materials endorsed by the BSSS was significant not only for The Woden School but for all colleges in the ACT.

The implementation of the QTM has resulted in a significant increase in professional reflections and conversations around pedagogy. QTM has given the teaching staff a framework to use to articulate their reflections and improvements in their classroom practice.

This period has also seen a significant improvement in the school's connection with the community. P&C meetings are now a regular event on the term calendar, with some very successful events taking place. Parents/carers attendance at meetings about their child's learning and progress has also significantly improved.

Section D: National Tools Self-Evaluation Results

The school has used the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) to reflect on the life of the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan. Teams were established for each of the nine domains and each team evaluated the school's progress against the statements, collected evidence to support their evaluation and made suggestions for improvement that could be considered for the next planning cycle. All staff were invited to participate and executives led the teams in discussion. Community input through the School Board and the P&C was also sought, particularly for 'An Explicit Improvement Agenda' and 'School-Community Partnerships'. The progress and results of all the teams' deliberations were also shared with the School Board for further comment.

National School Improvement Tool

The combined time reviewers spent in conversations with the principal, leaders, teachers, students, parents and board members was approximately 21 hours. Another 18 hours was spent on review, moderation, writing and preparation for school leadership team feedback. A combination of individual and small group interviews with staff members, students and parents/carers were held.

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

- *The school has developed an agenda for improvement and school leaders can describe the improvements they wish to see in student behaviours and outcomes. This agenda is communicated in staff meetings, school newsletters, parent-teacher meetings and on the school website using a variety of formats to suit local needs.*
- *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.*

Comments and Findings

- The school has identified three priorities in this planning cycle: provide an appropriate and relevant curriculum; improve pedagogical practice across the school; and enhance community involvement and recognition of the school in the wider community. There is evidence that these priorities have remained the focus for the life of the plan.
- Targets aligned to each of the priorities, with associated timelines, have been set in relation to each of the priorities and are evident in each of the annual plans.
- Performance Planning and Professional Pathways Plans show evidence of alignment to the school priorities.
- The school leadership team has sought evidence based practice, working closely with ACARA and other organisations to implement the Australian Curriculum in a special school setting.
- The school has researched leading practice in catering for the learning needs and assessment of students with disability (ASDAN and ABLES).
- A number of teachers identified the implementation of the Australian Curriculum as the key priority for the school.
- There is evidence of regular discussion of the school priorities and staff and parents alike are aware of these.

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

- *School leaders pay close attention to data provided to them about the performance of the school (e.g. NAPLAN results; Year 12 results) and identify areas in which the school is performing relatively poorly or well.*
- *Tests (e.g. commercially available reading tests) may be used by some teachers, but generally are not used as part of a whole-school assessment strategy.*
- *An ad hoc approach exists to building staff skills in the analysis, interpretation and use of classroom data.*
- *Software may be used for the analysis of school results, including the performances of priority groups, but analyses generally do not extend to studies of improvement or growth.*
- *School data are presented to staff in meetings, but presentations tend to be 'for information' rather than a trigger for in-depth discussions of teaching practices and school processes. Information about the school's performance is communicated to the school community, but may lack explanation or analysis. There is limited engagement with parents and families around school data.*

Comments and Findings

- There is evidence that teachers decide on appropriate data collections for their own classes/subschools and are drawing on data from a range of diagnostic testing to inform their teaching.
- The school is currently trialling the Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) program to monitor learning progress and assess student readiness to learn for higher needs students.

- There is evidence of attention being paid to school satisfaction survey and year 12 outcomes data and discussion of these data sets with staff.
- Teachers are using a range of innovative formative/summative assessment strategies to collect data to inform their teaching.

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. There is a happy, optimistic feel to the school.*
- *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.*
- *There are very few obvious behavioural, attendance or engagement problems and behaviour management takes up very little, if any, time of school leaders and classroom teachers.*
- *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.*
- *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.*
- *Staff morale is generally high.*

Comments and Findings

- In this planning cycle the school has collaboratively developed a vision for the school.
- Students, despite some very complex disabilities, are engaged in purposeful learning and the school is ensuring that all have access to the Australian Curriculum.
- The school encourages communication with parents through email and phone contact, face to face meetings and through updates in newsletters.
- Through the development of Individual Learning Plans for every student and identified personal learning goals, students are encouraged to learn successfully in their own ways, at their own pace.
- There is a strong sense of belonging and pride in the school.
- The school has a well-established and documented pastoral care program.
- The school has developed a Proactive Behaviour Support Framework to embed a whole of school approach to establishing and maintaining positive behaviour.
- Teachers and LSA's skilfully and calmly respond to complex behaviour needs.

- Staff have developed very positive relationships with their students, know them well and support their needs through a range of strategies.

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

- *The school has developed processes (e.g. systematic testing and assessment) for identifying student learning needs, although there may not always be good school records of student achievement and progress.*
- *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 and technology are used effectively to maximise student learning. 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, although this may not be preceded by a systematic analysis of those needs.*

Comments and Findings

- The school has made a significant commitment to resourcing so that students and staff have access to quality information technology devices to support learning. Funds have also been allocated to support the capacity of staff to embed ICT in learning.
- Resources have been targeted to improve the facilities in the school with refurbishment of classrooms, toilets and the grounds. New classrooms have replaced demountable buildings.
- The school has targeted resources, both human and physical, to minimise disruption to the learning environment resulting in calm and focussed learning.
- Resources have been allocated to support a broad range of initiatives and programs that support students with disabilities. For example, ASDAN, vocational education programs, transition, Healthcare Access at School (HAAS) nurse and swim programs.
- The school engages staff trainees and ASBA to maximise its human resources.

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 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, and the school supports teachers to continue formal study and celebrates professional success.*
- *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.*

- *The school provides opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles outside the classroom.*
- *Teachers are open to constructive feedback and provide feedback to colleagues, although there may not be formal mentoring or coaching arrangements in place.*
- *The school is implementing a formal process for conducting professional discussions with staff.*
- *The school's professional learning agenda is made explicit to staff at induction, and in staff handbooks.*

Comments and Findings

- Teachers are visiting each other's classrooms to observe and provide feedback on elements of the Quality Teaching Model (QTM). Pre-observation discussions are held and post oral and written feedback provided.
- A funded leadership position Executive Teacher (Professional Practice) supports new educators through observations and oral feedback.
- Beginning teachers are supported through an induction program and by colleagues and leaders.
- Staff members have engaged in a range of whole of school professional learning in curriculum development, pedagogy, ICT, behaviour and ABLES.
- Staff have developed Professional Pathways Plans and these are reviewed three times a year.
- A number of staff have been asked to present at Directorate, interstate and international conferences about their work at The Woden School.

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.*
- *General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are understood, valued and used as active learning streams for all students.*
- *The school places a priority on making the curriculum locally relevant and accessible to all students and values and build on to students' existing knowledge and varying backgrounds.*
- *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.*
- *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

- A school Teaching and Learning Philosophy document has been developed and this underpins curriculum development and delivery.
- The school has developed scope and sequence documents for each Key Learning Area.
- The school has developed unit outlines for each of the Key Learning Areas.
- Teachers are planning and reviewing the curriculum in teams.
- The school has introduced ASDAN courses to support the development of skills for life and employment for its students. The school has been successful in having these ASDAN courses endorsed by the BSSSS.
- The school has been recognised for their leadership in introducing the Australian Curriculum in a special school setting.
- A range of vocational education programs support the learning needs of senior students.

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.*
- *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, including multiple pathways for transition to external studies (e.g. apprenticeships) for students in Years 10-12. Students' workbooks also illustrate differentiated tasks and feedback.*
- *Some use is made of assessment instruments to identify individual strengths and weaknesses and starting points for teaching, but this appears to be at the initiative of individual teachers rather than a school-wide expectation.*
- *Reports to parents generally do not show progress or provide guidance to parents on actions they might take.*

Comments and Findings

- All students at The Woden School have Individualised Learning Plans and these are developed in partnership with parents and the child.
- Adjustments are made to the learning programs for students according to identified need and this includes adjustments to the Australian Curriculum to include content descriptions from junctures other than the age appropriate year level if required.
- Teachers use a range of diagnostic test instruments to plan programs and individualise learning for students.
- All students have learning goals.
- Staff members are committed to knowing their learners and manage significantly diverse learning needs in the classroom.

- The school is trialling the collection of ABLES data, and this information will support teachers in determining current progress, identifying gaps and implementing strategies to bring about improvements.
- Parents value the current reporting processes both written and verbal but expressed a desire for more regular feedback about their child's progress both in academic and life skill development.

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

- *School leaders are committed to continuous improvement in teaching practices throughout the school and expect team leaders and teachers to identify ways of doing this, although the principal and other senior leaders may not themselves have clear positions on the kinds of teaching they wish to see occurring across the school or be 'hands on' in driving improved teaching practices.*
- *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.*
- *There is some clarity about what students are expected to learn.*

Comments and Findings

- Through the observation and feedback model using the Quality Teaching Model, teachers are engaging in conversations about their teaching.
- High expectations of learning are evident through the implementation of the Australian Curriculum for students with disabilities.
- A high ratio of staff to students, coupled with individual plans for learning supports an environment where individualised attention is prioritised.
- There is a focus on developing the teaching skills of beginning teachers using the Essential Skills framework.
- Teachers use a range of innovative practices to skilfully provide feedback to their students.

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.*
- *Attention has been given to communication and to the sharing of experiences within the partnership; however, there may be no formal plan for reviewing the partnership's outcomes and effectiveness.*

- *There is evidence that the school's partnerships are being implemented as intended. However, there may be limited evidence of improved student outcomes as a result of partnership activities – possibly because there has been insufficient time for them to demonstrate an effect.*

Comments and Findings

- There has been a strong focus on developing partnerships with a wide range of post school disability service providers to support graduating students in their post school life plans.
- A partnership program with three local high schools has been established and mentors from each of these schools support students at The Woden school. Through visits and combined school events such as camps, discos and formals, students have the opportunity to engage with learners from other school settings.
- Through community events like Wodenstock, hosted by The Woden School, students have the opportunity to interact with a number of students and community members from a wide range of other schools and organisations.
- The school is an affiliate member of the PE Pulse Network to support students becoming more active through physical activity, sport and active recreation. The school actively involves its students in a wide range of sporting activities.
- There has been as significant focus on involving parents as partners in the education of their children, through partnership in the development of their child's Individual Learning Plans and by actively encouraging attendance at parent/teacher meetings.

National Safe Schools Framework: School Audit Tool

The school leadership team took the lead role in evaluating the school against the National Safe Schools Framework: School Audit Tool. Each member of the leadership team consulted with their staff team to reach a consensus. These results were then aggregated for an overall evaluation. The school identified three key areas of strength: positive behaviour management; partnerships with families and community; and engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum. Two areas have been identified for further development:

Key Characteristic 1.5: Facilitation of access to resources to support the implementation of the school vision for a safe and supportive school.

Key Characteristic 3.2: Clear procedures that enable staff, parents, carers and students to confidentially report any incidents or situations of child maltreatment, harassment, aggression, violence or bullying.

The panel noted that the school will be implementing the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program, an initiative of the Directorate.

Section E: Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

The Woden School is commended for the following.

1. The school culture is built around high expectations and a commitment to excellence. There is an expectation that every student will learn and achieve positive outcomes. The principal, school leaders, staff and students are to be commended on the learning culture where students have an academic program, where learning and enriching experiences are aligned to that of a regular high school setting. There is a strong focus on quality learning and the creation of a culture in which all students are expected to learn successfully, in their own way at their own pace. There is a very positive, caring, optimistic and friendly tone throughout the school that promotes respectful relationships and positive student wellbeing.
2. The school has systematically developed and implemented the Australian Curriculum across the school years 7-10. As well as approved BSSS programs, the school has also implemented an ASDAN curriculum for years 11-12, which has recently been endorsed as an approved program of study. The principal, school leaders and staff are to be congratulated for their commitment to the development of scope and sequence documents, unit outlines and 20 week programs for all Key Learning Areas. A comprehensive Pastoral Care program has been developed and successfully implemented using elements of the Australian Curriculum.
3. The school has built a culture of peer observations and sharing of classroom practice through their commitment to the establishment and implementation of the Quality Teaching Model (QTM), and teachers are open to constructive feedback from colleagues. The QTM has supported teachers to observe peers through formal observations. This has deprivatised practice in the school and maintained a focus on effective teaching and learning.
4. A strong sense of community is evident in the school. Over the life of the plan, the school has strengthened partnerships with outside organisations, neighbouring schools and other institutions. These partnerships are highly valued by parents/carers. The leadership team and staff have developed a sense of community by working hard to maximise parent involvement in the school, through the development of Individual Learning Plans, and through increased attendance at a wide range of school organised events. The mentoring program with Alfred Deakin High School is a well embedded and sustained partnership which is valued by students, staff and parents/carers. The partnership has a positive influence on students from both schools.
5. At The Woden School all staff demonstrate an exceptionally high level of skill in managing students with diverse learning and behavioural needs. The tone of the school reflects a school-wide commitment to purposeful and successful learning. All staff demonstrate a high level of knowledge, respect and care about the needs of individual students.

Recommendations

The panel recommends The Woden School pays attention to the following opportunities for improvement during the next planning cycle.

1. Consider the development of an explicit improvement agenda in the next planning cycle expressed in terms of improvements in measurable student outcomes. Ensure that progress towards targets is monitored and that initiatives and programs are evaluated for effectiveness in producing the desired improvements in student learning and performance.
2. Consider which data sets will be pertinent for The Woden School and then document a whole of school data collection plan and timetable for the annual collection, communication, analysis and use of individual student performance data. Use this data to systematically identify and address individual student needs and monitor whole of school performance. Support teachers in continuing to interpret and use this data as a tool to differentiate the learning for students.
3. Continue to develop a professional learning culture where teachers observe and learn from each other's practice and consider how formalised mentoring and coaching arrangements could support continuous professional improvement.
4. Continue to explore ways to maximise the very rich resource of Learning Support Assistants aligning their professional development and allocation to the school's identified improvement priorities.
5. Continue the focus on supporting students transitioning beyond year 12 in close partnership with parents/carers and appropriate providers.
6. Review and research teaching strategies that have been demonstrated to be highly effective. Use the review and discussions with teachers to identify and implement an appropriate pedagogical model.
7. Consider the development and implementation of a whole of school approach to enhance staff well-being to support a very committed team who are working with students with very high levels of need.
8. Continue to develop a relevant and rigorous assessment regime to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum with a strong focus on the alignment of planning, assessment and reporting.

Section F: Record of School Review Process

The following people were members of the external School Review Panel for The Woden School conducted on 25-26 August 2016.

Name: Christina Rogers	ACER: Lead Reviewer
Name: Sue Norton	School: Principal, Fraser 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: Christina Rogers	
Signature: 	Date: 23 / 09 / 2016.

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

Name: Ian Copland	
Signature: 	Date: 28 / 10 / 2016