



**ACT**  
Government  
Education

**EXTERNAL REVIEW  
REPORT for  
LYNEHAM HIGH SCHOOL**

**2016**

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## Introduction: Overview of the School Review Process

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

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

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

## Section A: School Context

Lyneham High School has a strong reputation across the local and wider community as a school which values its traditions and its vision; aspiring to always exercise care, take pride in quality teaching and foster creativity and innovation.

The school was established in 1959 on a modest site in urban Canberra. Over the life of the plan, Lyneham High School has operated at, close to, or over capacity. It draws upon students both within and beyond its Priority Enrolment Area (PEA). The total number of students residing in the PEA fell over the past four years, however the school has identified that with the expected growth along Northbourne Avenue, in the future, the number of students living in the PEA will increase thus reducing out of area enrolment placements able to be offered.

Over the life of the plan the Index of Community Socio-economic Advantage (ICSEA) score has remained relatively constant and close to its highest level, recorded in 2015 of 1140. Since 2012 the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) students and Learning Support Unit (LSU) students has also remained constant. In relation to students with disabilities there has been a reduction in the number of Learning Support Centre (LSC) students and an increase in the number of Inclusion Support Program (ISP) students. While the school has a high ICSEA the school leadership team has indicated that there are pockets of considerable disadvantage in the school. With the loss of some funding for literacy and numeracy, the school has used its LSC and ISP funding more flexibly to meet individual learning needs.

The current principal took up the position at the end of 2007. A new deputy principal and business manager were appointed in 2011. In 2014, the other deputy principal position was substantively filled. Therefore the school has had relative senior leadership stability over the life of the plan. Over the life of this school plan there have been changes in seven of the executive in the school; and there has been a 45% staff turnover since 2013. Induction challenges as well as the benefits that staff renewal brings have been features of note.

Changes to the student resource allocation will require the school to change its staffing profile. In 2015 four, and in 2016 six, new educators were appointed to the school. In response to this the school appointed an Executive Teacher Professional Practice to support beginning teachers.

Directorate technology upgrades at Lyneham High School over the life of the plan have been welcomed. A year 7 student Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy was introduced in 2016.

The Directorate with Board support provided considerable funds from 2014 to refurbish the grounds and front office.

## **Section B: School Performance**

### **A: Student Learning Data**

The academic achievements of students at Lyneham High School as measured by the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) have been strong. The school in years 7 and 9 has consistently met or exceeded ACT mean scores in all areas except for year 9 writing in 2013. An analysis of this data also revealed that school means have been above or substantially above national means with the exception of writing which was close to the national mean (2012-2014) and above in 2015. These mean scores were generally close to those of similar schools, with the exception of writing. As a result of this data, the school has a current focus on improving writing. The panel sighted growth data in NAPLAN and found that there has been growth in reading (2012 to 2014) and writing (2013 to 2015). The writing growth was however from a lower starting point. There was variable growth in all other elements of NAPLAN testing.

The panel found evidence of deliberate analysis of particular student group data including gender, EAL/D, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education (ATSIE). An analysis of A to E achievement data was also evident. The school has identified the need to further consider grade distributions in English, mathematics and science.

The school has also identified that the recent move to assessing against the Achievement Standards may have had some impact as teachers work to build their capacity in making these professional judgements.

The panel found evidence of opportunities for students to participate in work experience and career preparation programs. In 2013, 217 students in years 9 and 10 participated in private/employer based work experience; 184 in 2014 and 212 in 2015.

### **B: Stakeholder Perception Data**

The school identified from stakeholder perception data that student responses to the question about having opportunities to participate in decision making was below the system average in 2011 and 2012 and subsequently prioritised this in the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan. Although student satisfaction did fall in 2013 and 2014, the panel found evidence that the school continued to implement a wide range of strategies to address this, resulting in significant improvement in the satisfaction of students about opportunities to participate in decision making - 13 points above the system average in 2015.

The panel found evidence of two key initiatives - Student Forum and Student Voice - both of which have been implemented in this planning cycle. Through discussions with a range of the students, the panel noted the high levels of student satisfaction about their ability to contribute to improvement in classroom teaching practices and the governance of the school through these initiatives.

Through the Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) sponsored parent forums and through whole of school evaluation of flagship programs, the school leadership team has focused on eliciting feedback from parents and improving communication. The 2015 School Climate Survey from parents indicated a 33 percentage point increase in excellent responses to parent involvement at school. The panel spoke with representatives from both the P&C and School Board who spoke highly of the effective communication between the school and home as well as the opportunities for parents to contribute to the strategic direction of the school.

The panel found evidence in the Climate Survey data that over this planning cycle perception rates of staff have remained consistent and the level of satisfaction in many elements is above ACT percentage points.

### **C: Demographic data**

The panel noted the school's reflections upon demographic data over the life of the school plan.

Lyneham High School attendance rates have remained largely in the 90%-95% range, and with the exception of semester two in 2014, the attendance rates for boys and girls have remained relatively similar.

The school captures and monitors attendance by students through regular roll marking. SMS notifications go out to parents if students are absent from morning Home Group sessions. Each year level has a year team that supports Home Group teachers in following up absences. Chronic absenteeism is referred to an executive member of the student services team.

Suspension data from 2013 – 2015 is recorded term by term and shows the total number of suspension episodes, the average number of incidents per student and the number of days lost through suspension each term. Data specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is also recorded. Lyneham High School has a relatively low number of students suspended as an average percentage of enrolment

The following table shows the number of students receiving a suspension and the total number of days lost to suspension across the planning cycle.

**TABLE 1: Number of suspension vs. days lost 2013 – 2015**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>No of students</b>	<b>No of days lost</b>
<b>2013</b>	28	39
<b>2014</b>	15	36
<b>2015</b>	9	10

*Source: Lyneham High School data and the School data tool*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students make up a very small proportion of the number of students receiving suspensions (noting, however, that they also make up less than three per cent of the total student population); and Lyneham High School has a very low level of repeat suspensions for individual students (ranging from between one and 1.5 per student suspended).

The school ascribes these relatively low rates of suspension to the work carried out in creating a positive school culture. It has drawn upon data from student satisfaction surveys and system tools such as the National Safe Schools Framework to suggest that its high levels of student agency and ownership are contributing to this picture. The panel noted the calm and orderly climate throughout the school with little inappropriate behaviour.

## **D: Process Data**

The school pays attention to locally-driven improvement data through a range of processes. The panel was able to gain insight into how the school draws upon its stakeholder groups to inform practices. Four explicit examples were provided to the panel as part of validation.

### 1. The Student Voice Project

Pre and post test data was gathered in 2013, 2014 and 2015 to gauge student perceptions about actual and preferred elements of the classroom learning environment. As a result, each year's Annual Operating Plans have included a focus on items with low student satisfaction. In turn, the work of teachers in Quality Teaching workshops each year has paid attention to particular items.

### 2. QTM Coding (2013-2016)

The panel found sophisticated process data relating to the disposition of teaching staff to the QTM coding of lessons being observed. This data drilled down to faculty level and was consistently applied across the years of the planning cycle. School leaders then ensured areas for improvement were built into the following year's Annual Operating Plan.

### 3. Parent Teacher attendance rates

The school collected data on parent participation at parent-teacher nights as part of measuring communication lines with families. As a result of the data, changes were made to the structure of these events.

### 4. Teacher feedback on progress and processes used to progress the three improvement strategies

The panel noted the variety of sources of data curated by the school in measuring progress against the improvement priorities. From the data, school leaders were able to fine tune and adapt professional learning planning and closely attend to suggested changes gleaned from the data relating to the Student Voice project.

The panel commends the school for the range and depth of process data drawn upon to inform the ongoing improvement agenda. The school has identified what it needs to measure in order to be able to understand the impact of their improvement strategies. This data allows the panel to validate the success of these strategies.

## **Evidence cited**

- Demographic data
- NAPLAN data and analysis documentation
- School Climate data – analysis and documentation
- Student academic performance data sets
- Stakeholder perception data (2013-2015)
- School data and the School Data Tool
- Pre and post test data on student voice (2013-2015)
- QTM coding data (2013-2016)
- Parent teacher night longitudinal data
- Staff and student surveys – Student Voice, PLTs and Curriculum implementation

## Section C: School Improvement Planning and Implementation

The school has articulated a clear and accountable school improvement agenda, documented and reflected upon at regular intervals during the life of the school plan. The school's leadership team is to be commended for maintaining a strong focus on the school targets and for communicating progress to the wider school community.

### Priority Areas

The school has focused on three strategic priorities in 2012-2016:

1. Increase student voice and influence across the school
2. Build a culture of continuous improvement through giving, receiving and acting on feedback from colleagues
3. Implement the next stages of the Australian Curriculum, including assessment against the achievement standards

School planning documents reflect a further refinement of one of the strategic priorities: in 2015, the second priority area was modified and now reads:

2. *Build a culture of continuous improvement through giving, receiving and acting on feedback.*

The reality of this change is that teachers and leaders at Lyneham include feedback from many sources – not only that from colleagues – in improving their practice.

The panel found evidence of a continuous thread of improvement intent at Lyneham High School. The school's leadership team has identified priorities that emerged from the previous External Validation process, and from analysis of student learning and wellbeing data. Structural revision and attendant resourcing is evident in the way the school articulates annual actions in support of the overarching priority areas, and these actions have permeated all teams established during the life of this school plan.

The following table summarises Lyneham High School's key improvement strategies.

**TABLE 2: Key improvement strategies**

<b>Priority Areas</b>	<b>Increase student voice and influence across the school</b>	<b>Build a culture of continuous improvement through giving, receiving and acting on feedback.</b>	<b>Implement the next stages of the Australian Curriculum, including assessment against the achievement standards</b>
<b>Key Improvement Strategies</b>	Develop the capacity of staff to understand the nature and importance of student voice and influence	Develop a process to deliver, analyse, reflect and act on constructive feedback on classroom practice for staff at all levels	Develop the capacity of executive staff to lead implementation of the Australian Curriculum

<b>Key Improvement Strategies (Cont.)</b>	Develop a variety of mechanisms that can be used by teachers to gather student feedback about courses of study and teacher pedagogy	Provide effective professional learning and in-class coaching to meet the literacy and numeracy requirements specific to all KLAs	Provide time and support for faculties to access relevant professional learning to implement the Australian Curriculum in identified areas, including the alignment of assessment to the achievement standards
	Develop the capacity of staff to accept, reflect and act upon feedback	Ensure that all executive teachers accept this priority as a key component of their leadership role	
	Provide systems and structures that enable students to influence decision making in the school	Evaluate programs using feedback from all stakeholders and embed improvements	

## **Achievements**

### **Strategic Priority 1: Increase student voice and influence across the school**

This strategic priority has been supported by four key improvement strategies.

- Develop the capacity of staff to understand the nature and importance of student voice and influence.
- Develop a variety of mechanisms that can be used by teachers to gather student feedback about courses of study and teacher pedagogy.
- Develop the capacity of staff to accept, reflect and act upon feedback.
- Provide systems and structures that enable students to influence decision making in the school.

Key indicators for this priority (as found in student satisfaction survey results and student responses to the surveys generated through the student voice project) suggest that the school has broadly achieved its targets. Early efforts in 2013 and 2014 clearly laid the foundations for the cultural change evident across the school.

The review panel found deep embedding of student voice in school governance and reflection on teaching practice in their classes. The school altered its student organisational and representative structures and modified the use of Home Groups in order to have at least two student representatives go on to be members of the Lyneham Student Forum. This has allowed a larger proportion of the student population to engage deeply with governance matters, and has provided a conduit between all students and the decision-makers of the school. Evidence of

improved student satisfaction to the system survey question, 'I have the opportunity to participate in decision making at this school' increased significantly since 2013 (where it sat at 49%) and at 2015, it exceeded 60%.

Teachers routinely administer surveys inspired by the Constructivist On-line Learning Environment Survey (COLES) with their classes in order to gain feedback and there were multiple stories of how the results led to changed teacher practice in subsequent unit planning and lesson delivery. This data is also used by teachers as members of PLTs when describing practitioner research into their practice.

The school community has reflected upon its work against this priority and a clear example of this is the response to student concerns at over-surveying. As a result, the leadership team up skilled teachers in the building of a suite of alternative feedback mechanisms when working with students and suggested a more streamlined approach to formal surveying.

### **Evidence cited**

- Annual Operating Plans (2013, 2014, 2015)
- Annual School Board Reports (2013, 2014, 2015)
- Student Satisfaction Survey results
- PLT records
- Staff attitudes to student voice changes (2014-2015) – survey results
- Student Voice Project pre and post test data (2013-2015) – report
- Evaluation of flagship programs
- Student Forum reflections

### **Strategic Priority 2: Build a culture of continuous improvement through giving, receiving and acting on feedback.**

This strategic priority has been supported by four key improvement strategies.

- Develop a process to deliver, analyse, reflect and act on constructive feedback on classroom practice for staff at all levels.
- Provide effective professional learning and in-class coaching to meet the literacy and numeracy requirements specific to all KLAS.
- Ensure that all executive teachers accept this priority as a key component of their leadership role.
- Evaluate programs using feedback from all stakeholders and embed improvements.

There is strong evidence that over the life of this school plan Lyneham High School has remained focused on the importance of feedback in the learning cycle – both for students in their learning and for teachers in their practice. As a result, there is an open and trusting culture throughout the school.

Key changes to school structures have supported and enabled this to occur. In 2014, the school appointed an Executive Teacher Professional Practice, and throughout the planning cycle, has unpacked the Quality Teaching Model and revised groupings for supervision, mentoring and classroom observations. This has further strengthened the building of an expert teaching team.

An explicit focus on feedback is evident in all of these structures and of particular note is the seamless way in which feedback has drawn upon the school priority of increased student voice. As a result, feedback is not seen as confined to professional conversations, but is part of interactions with students as well. The panel suggests that this and the deliberate strategy of forming cross-faculty PLTs has led to a breaking down of faculty-based barriers and teacher apprehension about being observed and critiqued.

The panel found evidence of the explicit way in which the senior leadership team has built the capacity of its broader leadership group to be instructional leaders. The school invested in the Principals as Literacy Leaders (PALLs) initiative in order to build the capacity of teachers as literacy experts within their disciplines. Time has been strategically and consistently allocated to allow for classroom observations and feedback sessions; and the senior leaders are highly visible alongside executive staff members in PLTs. Executive meetings and staff meetings are deliberately focused on the priority areas and there is evidence of the school moving through the professional learning community progression.

The PLTs have become important forums for ensuring that the cycle of improvement to teaching practice is enacted and that teachers are genuinely reflecting upon feedback given in order to improve their practice. The school is attempting to understand the impact of this work on student learning outcomes.

### **Evidence cited**

- 'Role of the Executive' document and presentations
- Executive Conference agendas
- Executive Teacher professional learning documentation
- 'Support for Executive Teachers with professional conversations' document
- Annual Operating Plans (2013, 2014, 2015)
- Annual School Board Reports (2013, 2014, 2015)
- QTM documentation and presentations to staff
- PLT documentation

### **Strategic Priority 3: Implement the next stages of the Australian Curriculum, including assessment against the achievement standards**

This strategic priority has been supported by two key improvement strategies.

- Develop the capacity of executive staff to lead implementation of the Australian Curriculum.
- Provide time and support for faculties to access relevant professional learning to implement the Australian Curriculum in identified areas, including the alignment of assessment to the achievement standards.

The panel found evidence of the substantial work that has been undertaken at Lyneham High School in the implementing of the Australian Curriculum. Of particular note is the extensive teacher capacity-building in how to make on balance judgments against the achievement standards. Planning documents, local data collection techniques and the various ways teachers

engage with parents about the learning outcomes of students all speak to the way the school has met this priority area within its school plan.

Planning documents (year and unit level) show a deliberate strategy of gaining a shared understanding on the part of teachers and school leaders of what the Australian Curriculum means in classrooms. There is evidence of time and personnel allocations to support teachers, including Professional Pathways Plans, the work of the Executive Teacher Professional Practice and the shift to have all leadership team members concentrate on curriculum – as distinct from maintaining the earlier curriculum committee.

The senior leadership team designed and delivered a number of information sessions for students and their families as part of broader awareness-raising. School newsletters and forums for the P&C and School Board maintained the open lines of communication.

The school notes that it has been a difficult journey to move from assessing within streamed bands in English, mathematics and science to assess across full year cohorts. However, there is also evidence at classroom teacher level that changes to assessment and reporting against the achievement standards is leading to broader discussion of how teachers differentiate within their classes.

### **Evidence cited**

- Staff surveys of understanding and confidence with the Australian Curriculum
- Staff curriculum survey results (2014, 2015)
- Professional Learning plans (2014, 2015)
- Common assessment tools – various faculties
- Guides for staff, parents, students
- Presentations at school assemblies
- School newsletters – various years
- ‘Teacher’s Guide to Assessment & Reporting at LHS’

### **Reflections**

Lyneham High School leaders have paid particular attention to the challenges and opportunities inherent in prosecuting their improvement agenda.

The review panel validates the assessments of the school in terms of implementing the three strategic priorities:

- Students have a greater voice and influence across the school
- The school has developed a stronger feedback culture focused on improved teaching practices
- The Australian Curriculum has been implemented according to the ACT timelines and teachers are reliably reporting against the achievement standards

The review panel notes the positive impact of having the wider leadership team take responsibility for oversight of the school’s improvement plan. This has allowed for a clearer line of sight with regard to the monitoring of progress towards targets set, and it has built the capacity of the school leaders to engage in continuous improvement.

The panel also notes the informed decision, mid-cycle, to explicitly connect the first two priorities. This has helped staff see students as givers of feedback.

The panel supports the school leadership intent that the positive improvements made during this planning cycle are not lost in the next.

## **Section D: National Tools Self-Evaluation Results**

### **National School Improvement Tool**

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

- *There is a strong and optimistic commitment by all staff to the school improvement strategy and a clear belief that further improvement is possible. Teachers take responsibility for changes in practice.*
- *The school has developed an agenda for improvement in partnership with parents and the community. 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.*
- *Targets for improvement are clear and accompanied by timelines.*
- *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.*

### **Comments and Findings**

- The school has developed a Strategic Plan and subsequent Annual Plans. The three identified priorities of: increase student voice and influence across the school; build a culture of continuous improvement through giving, receiving and acting on feedback and implement the next stages of the Australian Curriculum, including assessment against the achievement standards are well understood by all stakeholders and have remained the focus throughout this current planning cycle.
- Clear targets and timelines accompany these targets for improvement.
- Members of the Board and P&C articulated a thorough understanding of the school's improvement agenda. This reflects the school's efforts to communicate the improvement agenda to stakeholders.
- Decisions have been made in regard to school leadership structures and processes designed to focus the work of the Executive on improvement.
- Teachers are taking responsibility for changes in their practice in pursuit of the improvement priorities, particularly through engagement in the 'Student Voice' project and when receiving feedback from colleagues after observation of their teaching.
- The school leaders provide workshops and presentations to stakeholders on the improvement agenda.
- There is evidence of progress towards and the meeting of targets in this planning cycle.

- The school has analysed NAPLAN performance data over a number of years and has a strong performance record.

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

- *There is evidence that the principal and other school leaders view reliable and timely student data as essential to their effective leadership of the school.*
- *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.*
- *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.*

### **Comments and Findings**

- Class and whole of school data, using the COLES Survey, has been collected and analysed by teachers at the classroom level. School leaders are aggregating and analysing this data at whole of school level. This is allowing for reflection and the identification of areas for improvement. A notable example of this is the visibility of learning goals for every class, attending to learning relevance.
- Data is being collected and analysed to measure progress towards key targets as articulated in strategic planning documents.
- Data is being collected and analysed to identify students for flagship programs, for example LEAP, Band, SEAL. Data has also been collected in a systematic review of these flagship programs, and is forming the basis of continued improvement.

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. There is a happy, optimistic feel to the school.*
- *High levels of trust are apparent across the school community. There is a strong sense of belonging and pride in the school.*
- *A strong collegial culture has been established. 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.*

- *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. 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.*
- *Staff morale is generally high.*

### **Comments and Findings**

- Students, staff and parents alike speak about their school with a great sense of pride.
- There is a strong sense of tradition in the school through well established and embedded school values, rituals and symbols.
- There is a strong focus on supporting the well-being of students through access to a range of support personnel and programs. Students involved in programs such as DARE and STAR speak of the benefits of these programs in building their confidence, resilience and motivation.
- The embedding of Student Voice throughout the school has built a very strong culture of quality learning. Additionally, through the student forum, students also have a 'voice' in the governance of the school.
- High levels of collegiality and professional trust are evident amongst staff. Students express a strong sense of belonging and confidence in how staff support and care about their wellbeing and learning.
- The school has a very strong reputation in the community and requests for enrolment exceed school capacity.

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

- *The school deploys staff in ways that make best use of their expertise (e.g. specialist reading/science teachers).*
- *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.*
- *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.*
- *Specialist diagnostic testing is organised for a small number of students with special needs, but teachers do not routinely administer tests to better understand specific*

*learning difficulties (e.g. problems in learning to read) or individual learning needs (e.g. LBOTE, gifted).*

- *Technology is accessible to the majority of staff and students.*
- *School learning spaces tend to be used traditionally, with limited flexibility to support different kinds of learners and learning.*

## **Comments and Findings**

- *Flagship programs are well resourced and are delivering on expected outcomes. For example, through LEAP, students with high academic ability are being systematically identified and supported.*
- *Resources have been prioritised to support the improvement agenda of the school, including human and fiscal resources.*
- *There are examples of Lyneham High sharing teacher expertise with neighbouring schools. There has also been a concerted effort to build the expertise of staff and to shape roles and functions to better deliver outcomes for the school.*
- *Strategic staffing allocation decisions have allowed time for every teacher to engage in observation processes.*
- *There is evidence of a resourcing shift in support of inclusion of students with learning needs. This is widely seen as delivering on improved outcomes for those students.*
- *Significant resources have been committed to improve some ageing facilities within the school.*
- *A large proportion of the school student population are engaged in flagship programs that support the needs of disengaged, instrumental music, talented sportspeople, and those with high academic ability. However, there is no evidence of a systematic process of identifying individual student need through comprehensive data set analysis.*
- *Special funding grants support innovation.*

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

- *Teachers and school leaders take personal and collective responsibility for improving student learning and wellbeing, working together and learning from each other's practices. In team meetings there is an emphasis on teaching strategies for improving student learning.*
- *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.*
- *The school provides opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles outside the classroom.*

## **Comments and Findings**

- In cross-faculty Professional Learning Teams (PLT) teachers identify key elements from the Quality Teaching Model, as well as team based focus areas, to guide observation of teaching and feedback within the team. Attention is also being paid (at PLTs) to feedback gathered from students in classroom surveys. Teachers in these teams observe each other in pairs, then discuss the feedback as a group. Each teacher then identifies key areas for action as a result of that feedback and discusses these actions at future PLT meetings.
- Formal coaching is occurring in a systematic way for New Educators, contract teachers; and Professional Pathways conversations gives teachers the opportunity to access coaching.
- Each teacher builds a professional portfolio which supports regular and formalised reflective conversations.
- There is evidence of a clear commitment on the part of the principal who structures and participates in the PLTs.
- An Executive Teacher Professional Practice role has been established to support beginning teachers.
- The leadership team work with PLT members to build their understanding of elements of the Quality Teaching Model.
- Higher duty opportunities are an example of the way the school is building capacity of staff.

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 curriculum delivery plan is being implemented throughout the school and is shared with parents and the wider community.*
- *The school places a priority on making the curriculum locally relevant and accessible to all students.*
- *The school curriculum plan and curriculum delivery (including the time allocated to particular learning) balance requirements to address all learning areas and to embed the fundamental skills of literacy and 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**

- There is significant evidence of the school having built the capacity of teachers to make on balance judgements against the achievement standards. A comprehensive tracking tool assists teachers in this process. Reports to parents are well aligned to these achievement standards.
- The school has a range of documentation, including course outlines, year level and unit plans to ensure consistent teaching and this documentation has been developed with close reference to the Australian curriculum.
- Teachers in year level teams, plan units of work collaboratively and share a good understanding of the Australian Curriculum. The curriculum remains a focus of ongoing staff discussion.
- The school has collaborated with other network schools in implementing the Australian Curriculum, particularly around quality assessment practices. This extends to some faculty-based work with the college sector in order to provide continuity of the curriculum from Year 10 to senior secondary.

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

- *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.*
- *Multiple opportunities to learn are provided, including multiple pathways for transition to external studies (e.g. apprenticeships) for students in Years 10.*
- *Reports to parents show progress over time and include suggestions for ways in which parents can support their children's learning.*
- *School leaders are committed to success for all, but do not drive a strong classroom agenda to assess and identify individual learning needs or to differentiate teaching according to students' needs.*
- *Some use is made of assessment instruments to identify individual strengths and weaknesses and starting points for teaching.*
- *Some use is made of differentiated teaching, but in most classes teachers teach the same curriculum to all students with similar levels of individual support.*

## **Comments and Findings**

- Students are identified through testing on enrolment for the school's enrichment program (LEAP) and participate in enrichment classes in English, Mathematics, Science and HaSS in years 7 to 10.

- Differentiated groups have been established through the streaming of students in core subjects.
- Through Google classrooms, used across year levels, some teachers are providing differentiated tasks and assignments for individual students.
- It is recognised across the school that some students require significant adjustments to their learning programs - for example, students with ILPs (describing wellbeing and academic needs) and gifted students.
- There is evidence that the work of achievement standard reporting is supporting the adjustments required for individual students.
- There is evidence that the work the school has undertaken in making on balance judgements against the achievement standards is elevating the issue of differentiation in classrooms.

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 evaluating and providing feedback on classroom teaching.*
- *There is a particular focus on improved teaching methods in reading, writing, 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 school has thoroughly embedded the Quality Teaching Model (QTM) as the school's pedagogical framework, and is driving improvement in teaching practices using this framework.
- In PLTs elements of the QTM are identified for deep exploration. Through the PLT observation and feedback mechanisms, teachers are building their capacity in these identified pedagogical practices.
- Through participation in the PALLs reading and writing project, there is strong and clear focus on improved teaching methods in these areas.

- Clarity about what students are expected to learn, and why, is evident in all classrooms. Teachers are being explicit at the beginning of lessons about what students will be learning and why.
- Teachers provide regular and timely feedback to students in ways that make clear to them what steps they can take to further their learning.
- Professional Pathways and the school's PL plans also support teacher development in pedagogy.
- Supervisors systematically observe teacher and provide feedback on practice.

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.*
- *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**

- The school has fostered a number of beneficial partnerships and linkages with entities within the Canberra community.
- The school is developing some key strategic partnerships with local sporting organisations to support the school's SEAL program. The school is currently establishing a formalised partnership with Canberra United Academy to support the school's elite soccer players. A deliberate strategy has been enacted whereby partners are working in the school, thus the number of students gaining exposure to expertise and the attendant professional development of staff is maximised.
- The Performing Arts faculty has developed a key partnership with the Australian National Eisteddfod that is of mutual benefit and supports the needs of students involved in the music program. Another example is the connection being made with the School of Art for students with creative art pathways.
- The school hosts and often resources a performing arts concert - 'Cluster Spectacular' - that includes a number of cluster schools.
- An alumni of musicians is highly active in the school, with past students returning to the school regularly to play as part of a school band.

- Students support reading in the school's primary feeder school and also support sporting activities as coaches and volunteers for key sporting events.
- Through the DARE and STAR programs, students are involved in community-based projects.
- A number of links with local community organisations supports students' wellbeing.
- The school enjoys a high level parent participation in the school for both curriculum-based events, showcases and information forums and the school actively values these connections.

### **National Safe Schools Framework: School Audit Tool**

At Lyneham High School, in 2016, the senior leadership team conducted a self-evaluation using the National Safe Schools Audit Tool. The school sought feedback from staff through a Google survey and held a parent forum during which parents were asked to respond to a number of questions. Ten parents attended the forum. The school leadership team made a decision not to use any additional surveys or forums to gain feedback from students, or further feedback from a wider sampling of parents, but chose to use system survey results from 2013 to 2015 as they believed that a large number of these survey questions related to safety and that these surveys had been completed by a significant number of students and parents.

The senior leadership team of the school then reviewed the evidence collected and produced a consensus view which was shared more widely with the school leaders and the School Board.

A number of key strengths were identified through this self-evaluation, as well as areas for further development. The areas for further development form the basis of recommendation nine in this report.

The panel found high levels of correlation between the data gained from this instrument and others implemented in the school including the National School Improvement Tool.

## Section E: Commendations and Recommendations

### Commendations

Lyneham High School is commended for the following.

1. The manner with which the school has embraced becoming a professional learning community. Of particular note is the role and leadership of the principal. The incorporation of classroom observations of practice using the Quality Teaching Model (QTM) and facility of Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) to both drive and reflect upon practice improvement is highly commendable.
2. The attendant building of strong teacher commitment to reflective practice means that there is a powerful journey to be told at Lyneham High School of cultural change: this is evident in the high levels of professional trust and openness amongst teams of teachers and leaders.
3. Increasing student voice and governance in the school. As evidenced in the deliberate strategies within the school plan, there has been considerable attention paid to elevating the role of the student body in the way they engage in their education and school. The garnering of student feedback, the widespread use of that feedback in teacher decision-making, and the restructuring of student representation at Lyneham are all empowering students and contributing to positive school culture.
4. Commendable work has been carried out in support of teachers reporting against the achievement standards as part of implementing the Australian Curriculum. Evidence exists in planning documents and teacher practices that a significant shift has occurred during the life of this school plan. This work is being shared with other ACT public schools.
5. The school's flagship programs (the school band program, LEAP and SEAL, for example) have high levels of public and school visibility and credibility. They draw families to the school and they contribute to the culture of high expectations that exists at Lyneham.
6. Deliberate restructuring of the school's student support model – in particular, the building of support structures based on inclusivity for those students with specific learning and wellbeing needs - is leading to improved student learning outcomes. The inclusive model provides opportunities for teachers to explore the meeting of individual need on a whole of school level.

## **Recommendations**

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

1. Consider the development of an explicit improvement agenda for the next strategic planning cycle that is expressed in terms of specific improvements sought in measurable student learning outcomes.
2. Decide which data sets will be pertinent for Lyneham 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. Identify those who will be assigned responsibility for implementing this plan and support teachers to interpret and use this data as a tool to differentiate the learning for students.
3. Develop a systematic process for identifying, tracking and addressing the needs of all learners throughout their years of schooling at Lyneham High School.
4. Build a shared understanding in the school of differentiation and effective differentiated strategies to cater for individual differences. Support teachers in building their capacity to use data to determine starting points for teaching, and identify and address gaps in learning. Ensure that teachers document their adjustments in their planning.
5. Draw on the rich discussion in Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) around the QTM lens, to identify the key teaching practices that will support the school's improvement agenda.
6. Continue to build the school's whole of school curriculum plan, paying particular attention to the explicit embedding of the general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities. Consider reviewing the current planning expectations and processes to include ways in which curriculum leaders can check for vertical alignment of the curriculum as well as exploring cross-curricula opportunities and ensure that there is deep understanding of key concepts, ideas and principles.
7. Build upon the well-established professional learning culture in the school by developing the capacity of school leaders and other identified practitioners to model, coach and mentor others.
8. Continue to find ways to increase student governance, voice and agency and to engage the full range of students.
9. Develop a structured well-being and socio-emotional learning plan that is strategic and targeted to address the needs of all students. Inform and up skill all staff in the delivery of this program and continue to develop a balance between care and challenge for students.

## Section F: Record of School Review Process

The following people were members of the external School Review Panel for Lyneham High School conducted on 2-4 August 2016.

<b>Name:</b> Christina Rogers	<b>ACER:</b> Lead Reviewer
<b>Name:</b> Julie Murkins	<b>School:</b> Principal, Lake Tuggeranong College

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

<b>Name:</b> Christina Rogers	
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> 7 1 9 1 16

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

<b>Name:</b> Colleen Matheson	
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> 2 1 9 1 16