# NARRABUNDAH EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOOL

Review Report 2017

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# Contents

# Introduction: Overview of the External School Review process

As part of the Australian Capital Territory's school improvement approach, public schools and colleges in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) are required to participate in an External School Review every five years. This document captures the findings of the External Review Panel during this cycle of school review.

In broad terms, the panel sought to determine, through evaluation against the National School Improvement Tool (NSIT), 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 School Review was conducted over two days and involved a wide variety of data-gathering approaches, including desktop review, observations, interviews and documentation. This approach provided evidence for the panel to consider against the nine inter-related domains in the NSIT to inform the affirmations, commendations and recommendations for this school improvement cycle.

# Section A: School context

Narrabundah Early Childhood School has 142 students from preschool to year 2, of which 76 are male and 66 are female.

The school has a strong focus on relationships, and the integrated service delivery of the Early Childhood Schools Framework encompasses pre-birth to students in year 2, an on-site childcare provider, health services provision, a three-year-old preschool and a Koori preschool.

The school opened in 2009 and since that time there have been two principals. Since mid-2014, there have been significant changes in the executive, with the deputy principal role unfilled for 12 months and the executive teacher position now being vacant due to the reduction of resources that occurred through the Student Resource Allocation.

During the period since opening, the demographics of the school have changed, with a decrease in the number of Indigenous students and an increase in the numbers of students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect. Additionally, while not having a Priority Enrolment Area, most enrolments are from children who live locally. The school is continuing to build their enrolments from preschool into kindergarten, with the proportion of students remaining at the school for kindergarten increasing from 30 percent in 2014 to 48 percent in 2017.

# Section B: School performance

The school has examined longitudinal system data from the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS), school-based data and stakeholder perception data (School Satisfaction Survey), in preparation for the review.

## National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

While there are no students who sit the NAPLAN assessment at Narrabundah Early Childhood School, the school is able to access the data for the Narrabundah students who move into local primary schools. This information is used at the beginning of each year to enable the school to identify trends and patterns and to then adjust and modify their programs in response to this.

Over the life of the plan, the school has achieved less than the annual NAPLAN targets set by the ACT Education Directorate in all domains of NAPLAN.

In reading, the in-school achievements steadily declined between 2013 and 2015; however, there has been an increase in the in-school achievement between 2015 and 2016.

In writing, spelling, and grammar and punctuation, there was a decline between 2013 and the subsequent two years, 2014–15; however, there has been considerable growth between 2015 and 2016.

In numeracy, there was a decline in achievement between 2013 and 2014–15, but strong gains were made between 2015 and 2016.

## Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS)

Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) data show that in reading, students in kindergarten from 2013–16 had less growth than the ACT mean scores although the gap between the school and the ACT mean scores was diminishing each year. The strongest increase was in 2016 when 84 percent of students made expected or better than expected growth in reading.

In mathematics, students in kindergarten from 2013–15 had results indicating less growth than the ACT mean scores. The 2016 PIPS data for mathematics show that the end of year achievement was above the ACT mean, with 73 percent of students making expected and better than expected growth.

## Stakeholder perception data

Over the life of the plan, parent survey data has demonstrated a mixed response with a decline in parent satisfaction in 2014, and a reversal of trends from 2015 to 2016 with parent satisfaction indicating improvements on 13 of the 21 items. While 'Student behaviour is well managed' is the item with the lowest parent satisfaction, 'I can talk to my child's teacher about my concerns' received the highest proportion of agreement at 98 percent.

Staff surveys have been conducted in the last two years. The responses to 'Student behaviour is well managed' and 'Students feel safe at this school' are well below the responses for schools of similar type. The staff responses indicate strengths in 'My professional achievements are celebrated at this school', 'The use of learning technologies is an integral part of teaching and learning at this school' and 'I receive useful feedback about my work at this school'.

## Attendance data

Attendance in 2016 averaged out at 89 percent. A breakdown of this is 90 percent for non-Indigenous and 86 percent for Indigenous students.

In examining attendance for more than 90 percent of the time, the average is 64 percent. Attendance for Indigenous students is not shown due to the small numbers.

*Evidence cited*

- MySchool website
- SMART data
- school survey data
- NAPLAN and PIPS data.

# Section C: School improvement planning and implementation

## Priority areas

The Narrabundah Early Childhood School 2014–17 Strategic Plan contained two strategic priorities:

- **Priority 1:** To improve literacy and numeracy results for children
- **Priority 2:** To develop sustainable systems and practices to support the early childhood school setting.

These priorities remained consistent over the life of the plan.

Strategic Priority 1 has six key improvement strategies and Strategic Priority 2 has three key improvement strategies. The original strategic plan of 2014–17 contained a series of targets that contained no specific numerical measure, as per Directorate requirements, while the accompanying annual operating/action plans for the period 2014–17 set specific targets for each of the performance measures within the plan.

## Strategic priority 1: To improve literacy and numeracy results for children

### Targets

- *Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children receiving A and B grades by 5 percent.* In 2014, the target was not met; in 2015, the target was achieved with 87 percent of students receiving an A or B grade; and in 2016, 50 percent of the students received an A or B grade.
- *Increase the number of A and B grades received by children by 5 percent.* There has been an increase in the proportion of students achieving an A or B grade in year 2 in 2015 with a decline of 1 percent in 2016.
- *Increase the number of children from birth to year 2 demonstrating growth in Principals as Literacy Leaders oral language by 5 percent.* The school deemed that the Principals as Literacy Leaders oral language assessment was not providing the specific data required to assist the achievement of this priority, and consequently introduced a more informative tool: the Renfrew Action Picture Test to replace the Principals as Literacy Leaders tool. This tool is beginning to be used more effectively and the results detail a comprehensive picture of student oral language development.
- *Increase the proportion of children who achieve expected growth in the literacy component of Performance Indicators in Primary Schools assessment by 5 percent.* The percentage of students achieving expected or better than expected growth in Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) reading has increased from 47 percent in 2013 to 84 percent in 2016.

**Achievements**

The school has introduced or developed:

- a formal assessment and reporting schedule
- analysis of PIPS and NAPLAN data at the beginning of each year, identifying trends
- the Narrabundah Acceleration Program, using volunteers to work 1:1 with selected students
- twice-yearly staff and executive meetings to share information about students
- professional learning meetings that focus upon high expectations and consistent approaches to curriculum
- team planning days supported by executive
- workshops for families regarding how to support their children with reading
- learning journeys designed to have a focus on literacy and numeracy
- collaboratively authored publications regarding science and mathematics in early childhood and the Bush School
- a comprehensive process to observe practice and provide feedback aligned to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Professionals Standards for Teachers
- a reflective coaching project called TRUST (Trauma, Understanding and Sensitive Teaching)
- an Australian Curriculum display that provides insights into expectations for each year level
- a Bush School program for all students from the three-year-old preschool to year 2
- Individual Learning Plans and Personalised Learning Plans written using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely) goals
- developed a Response to Intervention plan
- a positive coaching process aligned with the AITSL Professional Standards for Teachers
- a peer coaching program with neighbouring school, Red Hill Primary School.

**Reflections**

Over the life of the plan, the school has maintained a consistent focus on both the targets and the improvement strategies required to achieve the desired outcome. In this priority, to improve literacy and numeracy for students, the development of a formal assessment and reporting schedule has been designed to support staff to systematically collect the same data across the school. The executive reported that while 'a systematic approach to data is in place and data analysis is beginning to be embedded in professional learning team meetings, storage of data and adherence to the schedule has been problematic'.

The feedback process has also assisted in the achievement of strategic priority 1. The executive has stated that 'all staff are observed in their practice during the year and receive written feedback in relation to the AITSL Professional Standards for Teachers'. Connecting with families about expectations of learning and achievement related to the Australian Curriculum is supported by a formal display that highlights grade appropriate expectations in reading.

Support is provided to staff to ensure that their written Individual Learning Plans and Personalised Learning Plans support student learning and achievement. Additionally, the Narrabundah Acceleration Program provides targeted intervention for those students who are assessed as performing above or below benchmark for their age cohort.

# Strategic priority 2: To develop sustainable systems and practices to support the early childhood school setting

## Targets

- *Increase the proportion of children who continue their education to preschool and beyond by 5 percent.* The target was met in each year of the plan, 2014–16, with the proportion of students continuing their education increasing by as much as 15 percent. While the 2017 data indicate that the percentage remained static, there was a higher number of students remaining at Narrabundah Early Childhood School from 2016 into the 2017 academic year.
- *Achieve a rating in the National Quality Framework of meeting the national quality benchmark across QA3, QA6 and QA7.* The target was met with Narrabundah Early Childhood School being rated as exceeding the National Quality Standard in 2016.

## Achievements

The school has:

- introduced a comprehensive staff handbook
- developed signature behaviours and related processes and procedures
- initiated school improvement teams
- participated in the TRUST project, supporting school culture
- developed a staff health and wellbeing plan
- presented a waste strategy and accompanying PowerPoint presentation of information for families
- conducted information evenings for parents
- achieved a rating of Exceeding the National Quality Standard in the preschool ratings process
- established a range of successful partnerships across a broad range of service providers
- received an award from ACT Health for their partnership with Woden Community Services.

**Reflections**

Over the life of the plan, the school has maintained a consistent focus on both the targets and the improvement strategies required to achieve the desired outcome. In this priority, to develop sustainable systems and practices to support the early childhood school setting, the school has developed a restorative approach to behaviour management and developed signature behaviours and procedures. While the school has focused on these actions and the Positive Behaviour for Learning, and is building staff capacity to plan for and manage students presenting with complex and challenging behaviours, the leadership team is not yet seeing a transfer of this professional learning into classroom practice.

Initiatives designed to support increased retention of students between preschool and kindergarten has seen the introduction of learning journeys related to specific learning areas, publications that highlight school programs, and information evenings that showcase learning beyond preschool. Additionally, the work of the community coordinator has progressed and strengthened the strong community partnerships of which the school is rightfully proud. The role of the community coordinator is instrumental and a key driver in programs as varied as Paint and Play, Move and Groove, Story Time, Mums and Bubs Yoga and targeting families 'at risk'.

The partnerships developed also support the achievement of this priority, with the community coordinator working with government and non-government organisations to support children's learning and engage families.

*Evidence cited*

- Summative report
- Narrabundah Early Childhood School Strategic Plan 2014–17
- annual operating/action plans
- school board reports
- NAPLAN data
- PIPS data.

# Section D: National tools self-evaluation results

## National School Improvement Tool (NSIT)

*DOMAIN 1: An explicit improvement agenda*

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

- *The leadership team has analysed school performance data over a number of years and is aware of trends in student achievement levels.*

- *The school leadership team is clearly committed to finding ways to improve on current student outcomes.*

- *There is evidence of a school-wide commitment to every student's success.*

- *Targets for improvement are not specific (e.g. not accompanied by timelines).*

- *The communication of performance data to the school community tends to be sporadic and/or is limited only to information that the school is required to report.*

### Comments and findings

- The Narrabundah Early Childhood School Strategic Plan 2014–17 outlined two strategic priorities: to improve literacy and numeracy results for children; and to develop sustainable systems and practices to support the early child school setting. These priorities remained consistent throughout the planning period. As per ACT planning guidelines, targets were introduced in 2014 and new targets were issued each year; however, the original targets and strategies also changed over time. A focused agenda with targets and timelines is not fully evident within this planning cycle. The planned strategies over the four years were, in general, having a positive effect on a shared agenda which was demonstrated in the board reports, annual action plans, and minutes of staff meetings and parent meetings over the life of the plan.
- School improvement focus meetings are held fortnightly.
- The annual school board reports demonstrate that the school leadership team analyses data to determine trends.
- Ninety-seven percent of parents and 87 percent of staff members believe that the school looks for ways to improve.
- Meeting with the school leadership team and examining planning at the school, the school is constantly looking for ways to improve.
- Evidence-based improvement practices will affirm the directions the school is taking.
- Teachers and leaders talked about how their work has an impact on student success and what they are doing to improve outcomes.

*DOMAIN 2: Analysis and discussion of data*

- *There is evidence that the principal and other school leaders view reliable and timely student data as essential to their effective leadership of the school. There is a documented timetable for the annual collection of data on student achievement and wellbeing.*

- *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.*

- *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

- The school uses data sets that include: Progress with Meaning Benchmark K–2, Schedule for Early Number Assessment K–2, Renfrew Action Picture Test, Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS), A to E reporting and Oxford Wordlist to monitor progress.
- The school has an assessment and reporting schedule. A data plan that incorporates teacher formative and summative assessment is not evident.
- Grade Expert was used as a data collection system. There is not yet a fully embedded and systemic approach for the collection, storage and analysis of data.
- School leaders chair professional learning community meetings, at least once a term, to discuss class data.
- School leaders have analysed PIPS data and tracked this to year 3 NAPLAN data to identify growth.
- Disciplined Dialogue is used to analyse data.
- Due to staff changes, the roles of data analysis have changed and teachers would like more professional learning in this area.
- Parents said they were given PIPS data but with little analysis.
- Teachers were able to recall discussions on school-level data at staff meeting but were unable to recall extensive analysis.

*DOMAIN 3: A culture that promotes learning*

- *The 'tone' of the school reflects a school-wide commitment to purposeful, successful learning. There are very few obvious behavioural, attendance or engagement problems.*

- *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.*

- *The school effectively implements its policies, for example, by ensuring that disruptive behaviour, bullying and harassment are dealt with promptly. The school has clear expectations for how students should behave and interact with one another, and in the main, relationships are caring and respectful. Some staff time is taken up dealing with behaviour problems.*

## Comments and findings

- Ninety-three percent of staff and 90 percent parents believe 'the school expects my child to do his best'.
- Thirty-three percent of staff and 77 percent of parents believe 'student behaviour is well managed'.
- Observations verify that students are generally engaged in productive learning in all classrooms.
- The Classroom Connections program aims to improve parent connection to the learning.
- The school has a behaviour management plan based on restorative practices and signature behaviours.
- In 2017, the school began to implement the Positive Behaviour for Learning program.
- The school is engaged in professional learning in KidsMatter.
- To support retention from preschool to kindergarten, parent information evenings are held to showcase the school.
- The school has agreed guidelines on communication.
- Friendly Schools Plus is a social and emotional learning program implemented from preschool to year 2.
- UR FaB (Understanding and Responding to Feelings and Behaviours) is being implemented as a social and emotional program to support children and their families from kindergarten to year 2.
- The newsletter included 50 ways of asking 'how was your day?' and UR FaB social and emotional information.

- There is a consistency in approach to managing students' behaviour and parents believe that the positive student behaviour approach adopted by the school is very effective.
- Parents say that in the face of changes in staffing, the school maintains a feeling of warmth and inclusiveness. Parents feel welcomed at the school.
- Staff feel supported.

*DOMAIN 4: Targeted use of school resources*

- *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.*

- *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.*

- *There are very few school-wide programs or policies designed to address the learning needs of particular student groups (e.g. gifted students, students with disabilities, students for whom English is a second language). School leaders encourage teachers to address individual learning needs in classrooms, but there are very few agreed school-wide strategies for doing this.*

- *Physical learning spaces are used creatively and technology is accessible to the majority of staff and students.*

## Comments and findings

- In light of future constraints on the budget moving forward, leaders talk about more effective use of human resource allocations.
- The budget is framed around school needs.
- The Narrabundah Acceleration Program aims to cater for students with special needs through the use of school volunteers.
- The school's Bush School program allows students (and parents) to engage in learning outside the classroom. Students felt this was an important aspect to their learning.
- The schools Response to Intervention process is used by a case management team to allocate resources for students with special needs.
- A learning support assistant is timetabled in every classroom and their time is being effectively utilised within classrooms.
- Strategies within annual action plans are resourced.
- The school is planning to improve outside learning spaces.
- Some classes provided elements of a print-rich environment and the school is working to develop a learning environment that promotes intellectual rigour.
- Some teachers would like more access to technologies to support learning. Teacher training to support effective use of technology in the classroom is sought by some teachers.

*DOMAIN 5: An expert teaching team*

- *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.*

- *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 members.*

- *The school's professional learning agenda is made explicit to staff at induction, and in staff handbooks.*

## Comments and findings

- Staff have published works on science in early childhood, mathematics in early childhood and Bush School.
- All staff received observations and coaching through the TRUST project.
- Staff are expected to be on one or more school improvement teams.
- Classroom feedback in early 2016, focused on 10 essential skills for effective behaviour management.
- In partnership with Real Schools, staff were exposed to professional support through walk-throughs, co-teaching and modelling. This work is still emerging in its observable impact on teaching.
- Staff are observed by the executive at least once per term using the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Professional Standards for Teachers and given written feedback.
- In 2017, the school introduced peer coaching in partnership with Red Hill Primary School, based on a peer coaching model.
- There is a teaching staff induction checklist, staff health and wellbeing plan and workload reduction plan.
- The school has a professional learning plan. The plan would benefit from referencing the school's pedagogical framework for observations and then coaching to embed practice.
- Teachers spoke about having the principal as a team leader and her priority of developing a coherent school-wide teaching team.
- All teachers expressed a need to receive feedback and coaching to support their practice.
- Teachers report a preparedness to be delegated leadership roles.

*DOMAIN 6: Systematic curriculum delivery*

- *The school leadership team ensures that the enacted curriculum remains a focus for discussion among, and collaboration between, teachers, and that the curriculum plan is the reference against which flexible delivery is designed, assessment tasks are developed and student learning is reported.*

- *The school has a plan for curriculum delivery that includes term plans, but the progression of learning from year to year is not always obvious and the relationship between the pieces of the plan (the year, term and unit plans) would benefit from further clarification.*

- *School leaders talk about embedding fundamental cross-curricular skills such as literacy, numeracy and higher order thinking within all subjects, but there is little evidence that school-wide strategies are in place to drive a consistent approach.*

## Comments and findings

- Teachers are planning individually and collectively in relation to the Australian Curriculum, however, there are no sequenced plans for curriculum delivery across each year level or progression between years.
- The school has developed and displays a public, grade descriptor document to inform parents.
- There is a policy statement on the use of learning intentions and success criteria.
- Sustainability is a significant aspect of the curriculum.
- Inquiry learning K–2 is used as a way to integrate humanities and social sciences and science in particular. There are discussions occurring about embedding general capabilities and cross-curricula priorities but this is yet to be implemented.
- The Early Years Learning Framework is used in preschool and forms an overarching framework from preschool to year 2.
- School statements on science, mathematics and the Bush School give parents ideas on what they can do to support learning at home.
- Teachers develop Individual Learning Plans and Personalised Learning Plans; however, reports suggest that further support is required to facilitate these adjustments in the classroom.
- Teams undertake moderation in literacy but this isn't required in mathematics.

*DOMAIN 7: Differentiated teaching and learning*

- *School leaders explicitly encourage teachers to tailor their teaching to student needs and readiness. This includes the systematic use of assessment instruments (standardised assessment tasks and teacher developed assessment tools) to establish where individuals are in their learning and to identify skill gaps and misunderstandings.*

- *Planning shows how the different needs of students are addressed.*

- *Reports to parents show progress over time and include suggestions for ways in which parents can support their children's learning.*

- *Some use is made of differentiated teaching (e.g. differentiated reading groups in the early primary years), but in most classes teachers teach the same curriculum to all students with similar levels of individual support.*

## Comments and findings

- Teacher teams use a variety of data sources to determine starting points for teaching for each child.
- The Narrabundah Acceleration Program uses volunteers to provide 1:1 support for reading.
- Staff delivered workshops to help parents support Literacy at home.
- The school uses SMART goals for its Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) to address individual needs. ILPs, PLPs and Behaviour Support Plans were cited.
- A school diversity and inclusivity policy describes the use of the Response to Intervention strategy to address student short- and long-term needs.
- Storypark is used as a communication tool to parents. The communication would benefit from regularly describing learning intentions and what parents can do to assist learning at home.
- Eighty-four percent of parents (and 73 percent of staff) say that their child's learning needs are being met.
- Teachers generally use groups to differentiate in mathematics. Team teaching in literacy allowed for explicit teaching within subgroups.
- Planning supports differentiation in the classroom, however, teachers expressed a need to have improved strategies to cater for the wide variety of need.
- Reports demonstrate progress over time and include suggestions for ways in which parents can support their children's learning.

*DOMAIN 8: 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.*

- *There is a particular focus on improved teaching methods in reading and writing, and professional learning activities are focused on building teachers' understandings of highly effective teaching strategies in these areas.*

- *There is explicit teaching of skills and content and individualised attention as required.*

- *There is some clarity about what students are expected to learn.*

## Comments and findings

- The school has developed curriculum statements to support what teaching and learning might look like. There is an opportunity to distil a list of clear positions of the kinds of teaching for observational and induction purposes.

- Professional learning takes place each week and the 2017 agenda indicates a focus on UR FaB, KidsMatter, Literacy, Positive Behaviour for Learning and analysing data. Examples of some reading and writing strategies were evident in the classroom.

- Learning intentions, success criteria and explicit teaching were evident in some classes.

- Students felt they usually understood what was required of them in lessons.

- Eight-four percent of parents believe teachers provide useful feedback about their child's work.

- There is an opportunity to improve feedback to students to guide student action.

- Learning journeys have specific learning foci of literacy, numeracy, inquiry and social/emotional learning.

*DOMAIN 9: School-community partnerships*

- *The school has established one or more partnerships with families, local businesses and/or community organisations with the express purpose of improving outcomes for students. Partnerships have generally been initiated by the senior leadership team and have their support.*

- *Each partnership brings staff and students of the school together with external partners such as families, other education or training institutions, local businesses and/or community organisations. All partners have a high level of understanding of, and commitment to, the purposes of the partnership and clear objectives have been set.*

- *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 is a partnership with Woden Community Service for children and families at risk.
- There is a partnership with the Smith Family (Learning for Life) to improve outcomes for disadvantaged students.
- The Australian Red Cross partnership supports a community breakfast program from birth to year 2.
- The School Volunteers Program supports 1:1 activities in literacy and numeracy.
- The Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families through their Growing Healthy Families program.
- The Sporting Schools partnership provides students access to multiple sporting opportunities including the Buoyed Up sailing program.
- The Health Department partnership promotes weekly cooking, lunchbox workshops and nutrition advice.
- Government and non-government agencies provide a range of activities and support: Move and Groove (music), Story Time, Paint and Play Saturday, Good Start Breakfast Club, parenting programs (UR FaB, Circle of Security Parenting and Bringing Up Great Kids), transition to school, and health and nutrition.
- The Volunteer Values newsletter outlines the importance of volunteers.
- Partnerships would be enhanced by a deliberate focus on student outcomes.

# National Safe Schools Framework: School Audit Tool

The Narrabundah Early Childhood School's leadership team completed the National Safe Schools Framework School Audit Tool in 2016. Each member of the executive team completed the tool independently. The leadership team members discussed their individual results, and consensus regarding performance across the domains of the tool revealed areas of strength and areas for development in the nine priority areas.

The audit indicated two areas of strength: the supportive and connected school culture, and partnerships with families and communities.

The school has identified four priority areas for further development and improvement:

- leadership commitment to a safe school
- policies and procedures
- engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
- a focus on student wellbeing and student ownership.

# Section E: Affirmations, commendations and recommendations

## Affirmations

The External Review Panel offers the following affirmations for Narrabundah Early Childhood School.

- Parents appreciated that the school has begun to place a high priority on social and emotional support to address student needs.

- The recent introduction of Storypark is welcomed by parents as a means of conveying information about the achievement of curriculum intentions and progress over time.

- The school is developing clear strategies to promote appropriate behaviour based on Restorative Practices and Positive Behaviour Learning.

- Teams are beginning to use a broad range of student achievement and wellbeing data and use it to analyse, study and display individual and cohort progress.

- The school is working to develop a learning environment that promotes intellectual rigour.

- The school is developing inquiry learning as a way of promoting deep learning by emphasising underlying principles, concepts and big ideas that are developed over time.

- The leadership team is encouraging the use of research-based teaching practices, such as visible learning, in all classrooms.

## Commendations

Narrabundah Early Childhood School is commended for the following.

- The school has developed a broad spectrum of partnerships that enhance current and future student learning and wellbeing.

- There is a strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers, school leaders and parents.

- Parents, staff and students believe that the school promotes and maintains an environment of high expectations.

- Students and parents feel this school provides a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant and inclusive.

- Students, staff and parents have a sense of belonging, are welcomed and speak highly of this 'whole community' school.

- Bush School is a positive learning environment in which all students are engaged, challenged, feel safe to take risks and are supported to learn.

- The Narrabundah Acceleration Program is an innovative activity that is designed to meet student learning needs, levels of readiness, confidence, interests, aspirations and motivations.

## Recommendations

The External Review Panel recommends Narrabundah Early Childhood School pays attention to the following opportunities for school improvement during the next planning cycle.

- Develop a narrow and sharp strategic agenda for the coming five years, within the context of the school vision, expressed in terms of specific improvements sought in student performance, aligned with national and/or system wide improvement priorities, using available research and include clear targets with accompanying timelines that are rigorously actioned.

- Refine the school's data (schedule) plan to include teacher judgements on achievement standards and how these moderated judgements can be used for individualised planning, teaching and assessment as well as school-wide planning. The plan should include a consistent approach to the effective storage and accessibility of data. Professional learning on analysing and interpreting data would assist in the implementation of the plan.

- Develop a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery across all learning areas that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and provides clear processes for the monitoring of learning across the year levels. The plan needs to develop clarity around the school's direction on inquiry learning.

- Ensure staff are trained to enable them to effectively use technology to maximise student learning.

- Continue the development of a culture of continuous professional improvement that includes classroom-based learning, mentoring and coaching arrangements to embed practices. The professional learning plan needs to state clear expectations on the kinds of teaching and learning to occur across the school.

- Develop agreed practices for the use of Storypark. Consider the ways in which these practices may impact on student outcomes.

- Support teachers in their development of an in-depth understanding of where students are at in their learning. Support teachers to identify starting points for teaching and ensure all students (including high achieving students) are appropriately engaged, challenged and extended.

- Provide teachers with support for their capacities and capabilities to provide regular and timely feedback to students that makes it clear to them what explicit actions they can take to make further learning progress.

- Develop appropriate and reliable sources of evidence to evaluate whether partnerships are having their intended impact in improving outcomes for students.

# Section F: Record of school review process

The following people were members of the External Review Panel for Narrabundah Early Childhood School conducted on 19–20 September 2017.

**Name:**    Ron Bamford               External Review Panel – Chair

**Name:**    Julie Cooper              External Review Panel – Principal Member

Franklin Early Childhood School

I, Ron Bamford, as External Review Panel Chair endorse that this is a true and accurate record of the findings from the External School Review process.

**Signature:**                                      **Date:**        14/11/2017

I, Bernadette Hayes, as Principal of Narrabundah Early Childhood School accept this Review Report on behalf of the school community.

**Signature:**                                        **Date:**        14/11/2017