



ACT
Government
Education

Erindale College

Report of Review, 2019

Date of School Review: 23, 24 and 25 July 2019
Principal of Review School: Jessie Atkins

National School Improvement Tool Review Report prepared by:

- Lead Reviewer: Ron Bamford, *ACER Senior School Improvement Consultant*
- ACT Review Team members: 1. Kerrie Grundy, *Principal of Narrabundah College*
2. Jason Walmsley, *Principal of Charles Condor Primary School*

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ACT Government Education Directorate
Education Services Division, School Improvement Branch

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Overview of the School Review process

Approximately a fifth of all ACT public schools are reviewed each year. Reviews provide quality, independent, feedback tailored to individual school contexts. Findings from Review are considered alongside system and school level student achievement, perception and demographic data as the evidence base for development of the school's next 5-year School Improvement Plan.

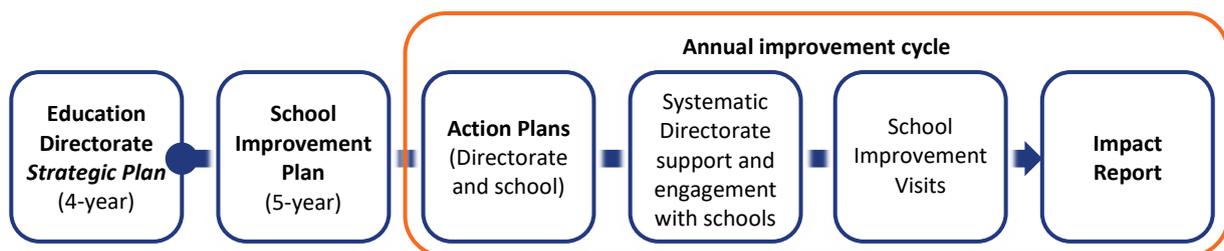
Reviews are undertaken by a team of experienced educators trained in the use of the *National School Improvement Tool* (NSIT) and are led by a Lead Reviewer from the Australian Council of Educational Research. Review Team size depends upon a range of factors, including the size and context of a school.

Through the lens of the NSIT, an internationally recognised framework for reviewing teaching and learning practices, reviewers gain an accurate picture of current school practices. During Review evidence provided by schools is considered alongside evidence gathered through consultation with staff, students, parents and community members.

Following Review, the school receives a planning report, which is used as an internal working document, outlining key findings and recommended strategies for continued school improvement. The Education Directorate uses this planning report as a basis for the final *Report of Review* provided to school communities.

The *Report of Review* includes detailed Review Team findings for each of the nine Domains of the National School Improvement Tool, and Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations for continued school improvement.

Where does School Review sit within the broader school improvement cycle?



ACT public schools utilise systematic integration of evidence and data collection, access and analysis to inform sharp and narrow 5-year School Improvement Plans. Annually, all schools utilise a suite of tools to expand, monitor and report on these priorities. School Improvement Visits (SIVs – which include School Review) provide differentiated support and feedback to schools through varying levels of in-school immersion. SIVs progress in relation to a school's needs and improvement cycle, with School Review typically occurring at the end of this cycle.

What are Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations?

Commendations

The commendations highlight positive actions the school has taken over its last improvement cycle. Typically these actions are either complete, or embedded in school practice.

Affirmations

The affirmations verify specific actions being undertaken by the school that are impacting positively on school improvement. These actions are typically either not yet complete and/or not yet embedded.

Recommendations

The recommendations provide the school with evidence-based advice regarding high-value areas for future school improvement efforts. Drawn from the NSIT, recommendations are key to the school developing a sharp and narrow improvement plan.

NSIT Domain 1: An explicit improvement agenda

Domain descriptor

The school leadership team and/or governing body have established and are driving a strong improvement agenda for the school, grounded in evidence from research and practice and expressed in terms of improvements in measurable student outcomes. Explicit and clear school-wide targets for improvement have been set and communicated to parents and families, teachers and students, with accompanying timelines.

Findings

- The *Erindale College Strategic Plan 2016-2019* outlines two priorities: Create a culture of high expectations in learning and teaching with strong evidence of student achievement; and create a learning community with a diversity of life pathways for students. Each priority incorporates desired outcomes that are essentially strategies to achieve student outcomes. Generally, targets for each priority are related to student outcomes.
- In developing strategies within annual action plans, the school has used evidenced-based research on effective teacher practice.
- Over the life of the plan the school has maintained its focus on the two priority areas, and action plan reports demonstrate the ongoing monitoring of progress for strategies, with less emphasis on achievement of targets.
- The College Board has had some involvement in annual reviews of progress towards the stated priorities.
- Annually, the college outlines to the community key student achievements from the preceding year.
- The college leadership team has analysed some school-level data over the planning period and expressed an intention to develop other data sources to guide decision making.
- School surveys and discussions with staff and students demonstrate that the college has high expectations of all students.

NSIT Domain 2: Analysis and discussion of data

Domain descriptor

A high priority is given to the school-wide analysis and discussion of systematically collected data on student outcomes, including academic, attendance and behavioural outcomes, and student wellbeing. Data analyses consider overall school performance as well as the performances of students from identified priority groups; evidence of improvement/ regression over time; performances in comparison with similar schools; and, in the case of data from standardised tests, measures of growth across the years of school.

Findings

- The college has analysed the planning period certification data from the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS), Satisfaction and Climate Survey results, unit evaluation surveys, Sentral¹ data, including attendance and suspension data, other data on wellbeing, and Vocational Education and Training (VET) completion data.
- BSSS data are accessed and analysed by the college 'Academies' with an expectation that each Academy uses these data to develop performance improvement strategies. At the school level, there is evidence that the data are analysed by the school leadership team and then shared with the whole staff.
- Student wellbeing data led to the creation of the 'learning hub' this year.
- The college attempts to get data at enrolment from previous schools but this is not always possible. Enrolment forms have been modified to source additional data from parents. Significant gaps still exist in student academic and wellbeing levels as they enter the college.
- The college is currently working with all colleges in the ACT to create a system-wide data plan as a foundation for creating individual school plans.
- English and mathematics staff administer pre-tests to incoming year 11 students to indicate their literacy and numeracy needs.
- The college is using the ACT Sentral database as a repository for school data, and staff are being trained on how to access these data.
- The college is considering how to improve communication of whole-school data to the community.

¹ A cloud-based school management platform

NSIT Domain 3: A culture that promotes learning

Domain descriptor

The school is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents. There is a strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers and school leaders and parents are treated as partners in the promotion of student learning and wellbeing. The school works to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant, inclusive and that promotes intellectual rigour.

Findings

- The college has a diverse cultural makeup and is constantly developing its approach to embrace this diversity. A Mindyigari centre has been established to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families. A centre is also being established for supporting Pasifika students. Across the college there is a strong sense of inclusion.
- The college has a well-understood behaviour management policy that maintains a calm and safe environment. Students said that behaviour and attendance boundaries and consequences are clear, and any issues were quickly and appropriately managed. Some staff commented on the need for a more consistent approach to mobile phone access.
- Teachers demonstrated a genuine desire to focus on teaching and learning to the appropriate level for each student while having an expectation that all students will improve, at their own pace.
- Students, parents and teachers showed respectful and caring relationships. One student said that, “she chose this college because she knew that she would be treated as an individual young adult rather than one of many students”. Other students commented that the real strength of the college is that teachers genuinely care.
- Teachers talked about their connection with parents as partners in education. Parent surveys and interviews confirmed this connection. A recent college bulletin article describes how parents can help at home. The college was designed as a community space and this is evident across the campus.
- There is an obvious sense of optimism within the staff for the future direction of the college. While at times there are inevitable workload issues, staff report a high degree of satisfaction with their work.

NSIT Domain 4: Targeted use of school resources

Domain descriptor

The school applies its resources (staff time, expertise, funds, facilities, materials) in a targeted manner to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of all students. It has school-wide policies, practices and programs in place to assist in identifying and addressing student needs. Flexible structures and processes enable the school to respond appropriately to the needs of individual learners.

Findings

- Erindale College is part of a larger Erindale Education and Recreation Complex. This complex provides student access to a modern 450-seat theatre, library and leisure centre.
- The school has many agreements in place for the provision of services to students across the campus. The service agreements between the Kulture Break² social inclusion initiative and Erindale College in the area of dance, and between the Board of Senior Secondary Studies and 'ACTIVE Tuggeranong' Registered Training Organisation (Erindale College and Tuggeranong Network Secondary Schools) for the provision of VET are just two examples.
- The college's 'Compass' program caters for students with disabilities. The program allows students to be in mainstream classes while also having opportunities for specialist small group support. All Compass students have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Recently a 'reverse-inclusion' class was trialled in the form of a 'Food for Life' class. The class provided Compass students with modelling of appropriate social skills by mainstream peers.
- There is significant variation in college entry information for 'Tier 2' students, due to the diverse range of schools that students come from. The college attempts to identify student needs where possible. Students with high level needs are case managed by a student welfare team. Testing and monitoring processes for other students are being developed.
- The college has a number of gifted and talented programs. These include: the Talented Sports, Talented Dance and Cambridge International programs. Applicants wishing to enrol into year 10 are required to meet a range of criteria, participate in a face-to-face interview and complete an entrance test.
- The college has timetabled 'LINK' time for all students to meet their LINK teacher in small groups, for pastoral care and other matters. A further hour of LINK time has been devoted to year 10 groups.
- Support staff have been prioritised in the budget to staff both the Mindyigari and Pasifika centres, and the ESL (English as a Second Language) program.
- A 'learning hub' has been established to provide a space where students can access curriculum expertise outside the classroom. In addition, teachers give their time freely to support students after school hours.
- In general, the use of ICT around the college varies, with some teachers exploring effective ICT teaching strategies. Students expressed a need to have electronic submission of work.

² <https://kulturebreak.com/>

NSIT Domain 5: An expert teaching team

Domain descriptor

The school has found ways to build a school-wide, professional team of highly able teachers, including teachers who take an active leadership role beyond the classroom. Strong procedures are in place to encourage a school-wide, shared responsibility for student learning and success, and to encourage the development of a culture of continuous professional improvement that includes classroom-based learning, mentoring and coaching arrangements.

Findings

- The leadership team has adopted an approach to professional learning through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). These PLCs are Educator Impact, Literacy, Mindyigari, Know Every Student, Cambridge, and General Capabilities. The structure of these PLCs is currently under review.
- Many teachers have participated in one or two rounds of the Educator Impact process. This process involved peer observation and student feedback to develop professional learning goals. In most cases the learning goals were monitored after time with further observations and feedback.
- Some teachers have participated in professional learning on the 'GROWTH' coaching framework.
- All staff participate in annual professional discussions with leaders. Those teachers who were involved with the Educator Impact process were able to incorporate their goals within this annual process.
- Teachers commented that they were able to access relevant professional learning to improve their practice. They felt supported by the college leadership team in accessing this learning.
- Most teachers are open to feedback about their practice. A whole-school process for individual teacher observation, new educator induction, feedback, and aligned coaching is being developed.
- Recent staffing appointments demonstrate a strategic approach to developing a strong college team through filling identified areas in expertise.

NSIT Domain 6: Systematic curriculum delivery

Domain descriptor

The school has a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and a clear reference for monitoring learning across the year levels. The plan, within which evidence-based teaching practices are embedded, and to which assessment and reporting procedures are aligned, has been developed with reference to the Australian Curriculum or other approved curriculum and refined collaboratively to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice. This plan is shared with parents and families.

Findings

- Erindale College, as part of the 'ACTIVE Tuggeranong' Registered Training Organisation (RTO), accesses a wide range of industry standard certificate courses currently on scope, with third party agreements with other parties. Courses are being constantly upgraded to cater for the diversity of students. A significant number of students access and complete these courses.
- The Cambridge International General Certificate in Secondary Education (Cambridge IGCSE) program was introduced for students with an academic focus, and is sought after by students seeking challenging curriculum from years 10-12. Work is currently underway to explore alignment of the Cambridge IGCSE curriculum with the Australian Curriculum.
- The Cambridge IGCSE program involves a 3-way interview process with parents, teachers and students in year 10.
- In general, the curriculum delivered at the college is Board of Senior Secondary Studies approved and consistent with the Australian Curriculum framework.
- Teachers access rubrics for teaching, assessment and moderation.
- Students receive reports each semester, and mid-semester reports to monitor progress during the semester.
- Moderation is undertaken within 'Academies' and at system moderation days which occur twice a year.
- Staff access relevant professional development to upskill and to maintain currency in their curriculum areas. The college leadership team actively supports professional learning in curriculum.
- The 'Compass' students access a modified and personalised curriculum.
- The college is currently trialling a model for delivery and assessment of general capabilities. There is an intention for this model, if successful, to be implemented across the college.

NSIT Domain 7: Differentiated teaching and learning

Domain descriptor

The school places a high priority on ensuring that, in their day-to-day teaching, classroom teachers identify and address the learning needs of individual students, including high-achieving students. Teachers are encouraged and supported to monitor closely the progress of individuals, identify learning difficulties and tailor classroom activities to levels of readiness and need.

Findings

- School leaders actively encourage and support teachers to personalise learning and cater for students' individual needs. There is an intention to improve this process with quality data.
- Most teachers use some form of differentiated practices in their classroom. Some teachers were using rubrics to drive differentiation.
- All teachers use rubrics to inform assessment and moderation in the Board of Senior Secondary Studies curriculum. Some use of rubrics is made in other areas.
- Teachers use rubrics to provide student feedback, however, there is little evidence of analysis of progress of students to inform teaching.
- The college has a process for the creation of ILPs for students in the Learning Support Unit and for some other students with learning needs. These are used to provide access to the curriculum at the student's point of need.
- There is a strong commitment that teachers want students to learn and reach their potential. This is evident in classrooms and with teachers providing tutorials for students after school, on weekends, and during school holidays.
- There is an developing 'learning hub' where students can access additional teacher support.
- Reporting to parents is generally summative in nature. However, teachers do contact parents when progress is of concern.

NSIT Domain 8: Effective pedagogical practices

Domain descriptor

The school principal and other school leaders recognise that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning throughout the school. They take a strong leadership role, encouraging the use of research-based teaching practices in all classrooms to ensure that every student is engaged, challenged and learning successfully. All teachers understand and use effective teaching methods – including explicit instruction – to maximise student learning.

Findings

- Some staff have participated in professional learning on Visible Learning, and the college leadership team encourages staff to use learning intentions in their teaching practice. This was evident in some classes.
- The college has developed a PLC focusing on literacy. Whole-school literacy strategies were developed and published on the college's intranet. Implementation of these literacy strategies varies across the college.
- Some staff have expressed a need for a more consistent approach to classroom pedagogical practices whilst allowing flexibility for particular approaches within their curriculum area.
- There is evidence of building student beliefs in their own capacity to learn successfully and understand the relationship between effort and success.
- Students reported that they appreciate timely individualised feedback in most classes.
- Teachers see explicit teaching, with high expectations, as important factors for students' engagement and success at Erindale College.

NSIT Domain 9: School-community partnerships

Domain descriptor

The school actively seeks ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing by partnering with parents and families, other education and training institutions, local businesses and community organisations. Parents and families are recognised as integral members of the school community and partners in their children's education. Partnerships are strategically established to address identified student needs and operate by providing access to experiences, support and intellectual and/or physical resources not available within the school. All partners are committed to the common purposes and goals of partnership activities. Procedures are in place to ensure effective communications and to monitor and evaluate the intended impacts of the school's partnerships.

Findings

- The Cambridge International General Certificate in Secondary Education (Cambridge IGCSE) program was introduced after consultation with Wanniasa Hills Primary School and Wanniasa School. There is a pathway from the cluster and other interested schools to the college to enable students to start the Cambridge IGCSE in year 10. This program is designed to accelerate student learning.
- In consultation with Caroline Chisholm and Wanniasa High Schools and Lake Tuggeranong College, a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) program was delivered at Wanniasa High School by peer mentors from the college. This partnership is yet to be fully developed.
- A Memorandum of Understanding is being developed for a partnership between 'Kulture Break' and the college to share the facilities known as 'The Drama and Dance Centre' and staff.
- There is an agreement to establish a partnership agreement that commits Sydney FC to building a football development and talent identification program with the college and Wanniasa School.
- There is a third-party agreement between the Board of Senior Secondary Studies, 'ACTIVE Tuggeranong' RTO, the college, and the Tuggeranong Network Secondary Schools for the provision of awarding VET qualifications and Statements of Attainment.
- There is a developing partnership with 'Manteena' to provide an Indigenous mentoring program in the construction industry.
- There is a developing a partnership to strengthen the connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student(s) with the Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation.
- The college leadership team is working towards developing a more strategic approach to these and other partnerships with a more explicit focus on student outcomes to be achieved.

Commendations

- There is an obvious college-wide commitment to using research evidence to improve classroom practice across Erindale College.
- There is a culture of learning where all students are expected to learn. Students feel they are encouraged to do their best.
- There are respectful and caring relationships amongst staff, students and parents. Student language and conduct are very positive and reflective of an adult ethos.
- Students are treated as individuals. One student said that “she chose this college because she knew that she would be treated as an individual young adult rather than one of many students”.
- There is a strong and overt culture of inclusion.
- The Talented Sports program is prominent within the community and has developed systematic processes for identifying student learning needs and using specialist resources to maximise student learning.
- The ‘Compass’ program is an inclusive educational program for students with special needs.
- There is a widespread belief across the college that outcomes for students will improve through a focus on continuous staff improvement.
- There is an effective and well organised curriculum delivery plan for years 11 and 12.
- The college is continuing to develop PLCs to build teacher capacity with a sustained focus on improving student outcomes.

Affirmations

- The Erindale College leadership team continues to explore research-based evidence to drive the improvement agenda.
- The English and mathematics academies run pre-tests for students beginning in year 11 to indicate levels of literacy and numeracy skills.
- The developing ‘Talented Dance’ program is providing improved specialised opportunities for students.
- The college leadership team is resourcing identified areas of student need such as: the learning hub, a centre for Pasifika students, a Mindyigari Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student(s) and the STEM initiative.
- The Educator Impact process has provided many staff with feedback on their teaching to facilitate improved practice.
- The year 10 Cambridge International General Certificate in Secondary Education, TSP programs and associated curriculum development are valuable additions to curriculum offerings at the school.
- Teachers are conscientiously adjusting programs according to student needs.

- Teachers are starting to adopt Visible Learning strategies.
- Erindale College is looking beyond its borders to explore diverse partnerships to improve student outcomes.

Recommendations

- Collaboratively develop an Erindale College Improvement Plan 2020-2024 that is consistent with the college's vision for teaching and learning and provides a narrow and sharp agenda focused on student outcomes, by incorporating explicit targets for student achievement and wellbeing. Progress towards targets should be monitored and initiatives and programs systematically evaluated for their effectiveness in producing the desired improvements in student learning. The progress of this improvement process should be regularly shared with the school community.
- Create a data plan that incorporates the full range of college data, building leadership and staff data literacy skills. Develop processes to broaden analysis of school data to include trends over time. Continue to develop the college's understanding of the needs of specific cohorts of learners and those with academic or welfare concerns.
- Develop a whole-school professional learning plan that aligns with the school's improvement agenda and focuses on individual performance enhancement including feedback, mentoring and coaching. The plan should reference the implementation of agreed and explicit evidence-based teaching and learning strategies across the college.
- Continue to develop a whole-college focus on the implementation of general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities.
- Continue to develop the college's capacity to cater for individual needs by offering multiple ways for students to engage with, and express, their learning. Continue to provide opportunities for staff collaboration to use student data to determine starting points for learning, monitor learning and celebrate progress.
- Continue to develop or refine partnerships, particularly to support the strategic intent.