



**ACT**  
Government  
Education

# **Calwell Primary School**

Review Report Summary, 2018

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## Overview of the school review process

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Approximately a quarter of all ACT public schools are reviewed each year. The reviews are an important part of how the Directorate supports and monitors school improvement. Reviews provide schools with quality and independent feedback, tailored to the school's context. Each school is reviewed at least every five years, providing valuable opportunities for self-reflection, planning and improvement.

Reviews are undertaken by experienced educators trained in the use of the *National School Improvement Tool* (NSIT), a nationally recognised framework for reviewing teaching and learning practices. Each review team generally consists of two to three reviewers, however, the number of reviewers and length of review depends upon a range of factors, including the size and context of the school.

Reviewers closely consider each school's performance data and speak with a wide range of staff, students, parents and community members to get an accurate picture of the school. Following the review, the school receives a comprehensive report. The report outlines the key findings and recommended improvement strategies to maximise student outcomes. The report concludes with a set of commendations, affirmations and recommendations to assist in future planning and to support school-wide improvement planning.

The following summary contains the commendations, affirmations and recommendations from the review report.

### 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.

## Commendations

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Calwell Primary School is commended for the following.

- Throughout the school, the review team observed positive and caring relationships between members of the school community. There is obvious staff collegiality and cohesion.
- The Calwell Primary School Strategic Plan 2015-18 was developed and implemented utilising advice from the school's Board. The Board has a clear understanding of the outcomes sought and the strategies to achieve them. The Board enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on progress over the years.
- Class profiles have focussed teachers on improvement in critical aspect of schooling. The class profiles and other data sets are regularly discussed by teachers and the school leadership team to discuss growth and develop specific strategies to support students where growth is an issue.
- The investigation into impactful data sets on individual student learning is to be commended. Considerable thought has gone into the collation, curation, and accessibility of learner data.
- The Calwell CARES culture and the expectations emanating from Positive Behaviour for Learning, are used in every classroom and across the school as an effective framework for discussing student attitudes, behaviours and effort.
- The school has made considerable effort to engage parents/carers in schooling. The Seesaw application has been widely appreciated by the community as an effective conduit for communication. The benefits of the Seesaw app were expressed by teachers through parent endorsement of posts and increasingly, commentary by parents about their child's learning.
- The school has placed a high priority in having information and technology resources available to support teaching and learning. School leaders are effectively using technology to monitor and drive improved student learning outcomes.
- The development of a coherent and consistent support structure for new educators and new staff members is to be commended. This is critically important in this school, and it is paying dividends in relation to staff confidence and capacity-building. Staff feel supported and they want to work here.
- Staff planning processes are purposeful, regular and linked to key documents such as the Australian Curriculum and the school's assessment schedule. They are providing guidance to less experienced teachers and allowing the school to enact the curriculum with confidence.
- School leaders have worked proactively to address challenges emanating from changes in staff in recent years to develop consistency in pedagogical practices and curriculum planning. Yet within the consistent framework at the school, teachers speak of their agency in relation to their practice and have a sense that they can explore and create.
- The induction process for teachers is viewed by beginning teachers as a comprehensive collection of documents to inform their teaching in this school. Teachers are given ample feedback on teaching and through discussions at the team and school level are supported in their improvement journey. Teachers across the school feel very supported in this school.

## Affirmations

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The Review Team offers the following affirmations for Calwell Primary School.

- The school used self-reflection of the National School Improvement Tool domains in its planning of the Calwell Primary School Strategic Plan 2015-18 and subsequent annual action plans. The school leadership team's engagement with the research underpinning the tool over the last five years, positions the school well for future planning.
- The school has regularly reviewed the quantity and quality of systemic and diagnostic data to support teaching and learning.
- Positive Behaviours for Learning and social and emotional learning programs are having a significant and positive impact on the school climate. Staff speak of the increased levels of positive student behaviour.
- Effective resourcing of the school in relation to student need is evident. For example, the school has this year appointed a full-time teacher to support student learning. School leadership roles change to meet emerging needs.
- The school has strived to develop partnerships to support student learning.
- The introduction of the Seesaw app has been a significant decision; it is very well received by parents and students (particularly younger students), and it is allowing teachers to forge improved communication channels with families.
- The school leaders are seen as an active group of instructional leaders who listen and engage with their staff.
- There is clarity of expectation in relation to assessment and monitoring of student learning. Teachers know how and when to assess, and they are committed to ensuring the currency of learner data.
- The introduction of Visible Learning is gaining traction throughout the school to provide student voice in their learning.
- The school's Differentiation at Calwell Primary School document provides a reference point for teachers to investigate strategies to meet the needs of individual learners.
- Community confidence in the school is rising, with parents saying the school (this year) is a wonderful environment for their children in which to learn. They appreciate the work of staff. Enrolment and retention rates are increasing as new parents walk into the school and feel welcomed and confident in the positive school culture.

## Recommendations

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The Review Team recommends Calwell Primary School pays attention to the following opportunities for school improvement during the next planning cycle.

- Collaboratively develop a Calwell Primary School Strategic Plan 2019-2023 that is consistent with the school's vision for teaching and learning, and provides a narrow and sharp agenda focussed on student outcomes, by incorporating explicit targets for student achievement that are well communicated to the school community. The plan should clearly articulate the measures and strategies for improvement in a timeline that acknowledges capacity for change. Progress towards targets should be monitored and initiatives and programs systematically evaluated for their effectiveness in producing the desired improvements in student learning and performance.
- Build upon the school's assessment schedule and tools, to build a data plan that incorporates the full range of school data. Develop processes to broaden analysis of school data to include trends over time, and ensure that through summarising, displaying and communicating, that there is a common view of student achievement across the school community.
- Continue to embed the use of the Seesaw application as a whole-school strategy to develop a partnership where parents value and are valued in the learning process.
- Continue to implement and embed the school's Positive Behaviour for Learning program. Further develop performance indicators to measure the effect of the program on levels of student disruption, absenteeism, engagement, staff morale and community perception.
- Further develop and communicate a plan for curriculum delivery that reflects a shared vision and draws upon strong curriculum planning already in the school. The plan should have a focus on cross-curricular skills and attributes, embed evidence-based teaching practices and help teachers manage the breadth of curriculum.
- Further develop and communicate a professional learning plan that embeds observation, mentoring, coaching, and professional learning.