

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Nuriootpa High School

Conducted in September 2021

School context

Nuriootpa High School caters for young people from years 8 to 12. It is situated 65kms from the Adelaide

In mathematics, the focus is to increase numeracy achievement in years 8 to 10. All mathematics teachers utilise common evidence-based approaches in Back to Front Mathematics and Big Ideas in number. Greater use of diagnostic testing identifies student misconceptions and provides evidence to implement effective intervention programs. Students are supported in their report writing with scaffolded templates. In year 8 numeracy classes, growth of 2 to 3 years was recorded in 8 months. Reforms implemented by Inclusive Education Centre (IEC) leaders are developing a greater learning focus. All centre staff are taking part in professional learning around the evidence-based approaches to mathematics and numeracy improvement to inform better planning for learning.

Whole-school agreements in writing using tier 3 vocabulary, formative assessment and feedback, and performance development and planning processes (PDP) are developing. PDP processes align with the SIP goals and have expectations of teachers to engage in evidence-based approaches to improve identified students. Established professional learning communities (PLCs) have been utilised to research best practice strategies in formative assessment and pedagogies, while promoting engagement and the use of ICT to support literacy were positively received by staff.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions based on their impact on student learning?

School leadership has promoted collaborative development and refinement of the SIP, which identifies the improvement priorities in writing and numeracy. As a result of this approach, there is collective ownership of the improvement process. Most staff were able to articulate the goals for improvement and many described their actions in class to support their achievement. Many teachers responded that they understood the agreed challenges of practice (COP) in literacy and referred to whole-school agreements in writing, to change current approaches to improve student learning. While restricted to mathematics, numeracy improvement has agreements across the faculty to inform the next steps in the whole-school improvement.

Teachers and leaders referred to greater use of triangulated student achievement and wellbeing data, readily accessible to staff on the learner management system and through constructed reports provided by leaders. Several teachers detailed how access to this information had enhanced their knowledge of the needs of students, planning of learning and decision-making. Teachers described their use of formative assessment strategies in class to gauge student understanding. Students confirmed that many teachers used questioning to check and support them when engaging in new work. Several students pinpointed teachers who sought feedback about their practice through surveys and questions at the end of units or semesters of work.

A presented yearly planner illustrated targeted professional learning supporting SIP actions and the development of the COP. Several staff members positively described how professional learning and the recent use of PLC's provided opportunities for them to investigate and develop their teaching practice. Leaders detailed how they had strengthened PDP processes, aligning individual teacher development goals with SIP priorities and expecting staff to present evidence of improvement.

The executive leadership team are currently

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers using assessment and feedback to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction and support students' learning?

Teachers described the extent of learning needs in many of their classes as a growing challenge. Leaders outlined how developed learning design and assessment task templates supported teachers in planning to meet curriculum requirements while promoting differentiated practices to meet the needs of all learners. Leaders made clear teachers' expectations to engage with the range of accessible student achievement and wellbeing data when planning learning.

In a current school survey, teachers rated themselves highly in designing differentiated learning and assessment tasks to meet the needs of all learners. Several students highlighted teachers in mathematics and science who provide tasks for students working at different levels and more challenging tasks for extension. However, this practice was not consistent across the school, with many describing all students in their classes being given the same task. Learning and assessment tasks provided varied in quality, with some providing students with different entry and exit points or choices in

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Appendix 1