

JUNE 2025

Riverside High School

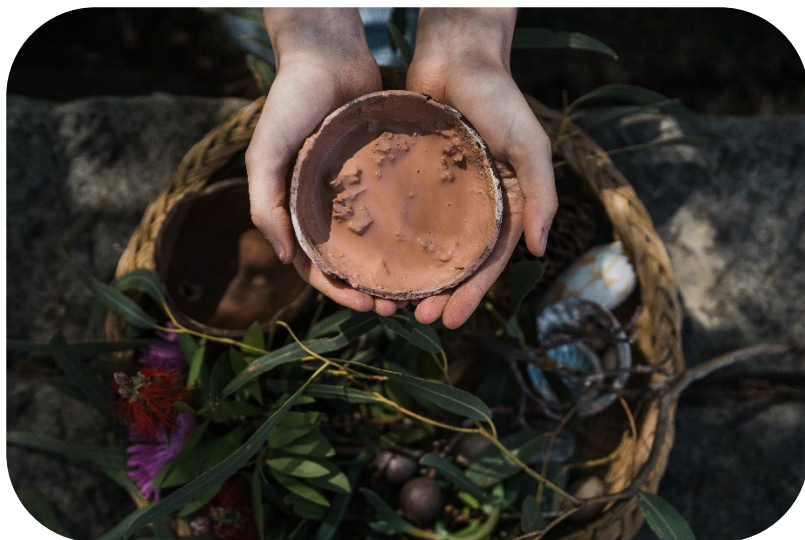
External School Review Report 2025

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Version 1 – 8/05/2025

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Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as the traditional and continuing custodians of Lutruwita, where Palawa have cared for their children and prepared them for life since the beginning of time.

Together we live, work, play and learn on what always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

We honour Elders, past and present, and pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, families, and friends.

We commit to ensuring every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and young person is known, safe, well and learning.

Introduction

The Department for Education, Children and Young People is committed to supporting and improving the educational outcomes and achievements of Tasmanian Government School students. The purpose of External School Review (the Review) is to support schools to raise student achievement and sustain high performance.

The External School Review Framework underpinning the Review identifies the key levers for school improvement and has been shaped and informed by the School Improvement Tool. The School Improvement Tool brings together the findings from international research into the practices of highly effective schools and school leaders. The Framework focuses on the practices proven to impact positively on achievement outcomes for all students at the classroom level. It is not intended to document every aspect of the school's processes, programs, and outcomes.

The overarching review question is “how well does the school ensure students are known, safe, well and learning?”

This External School Review Report outlines aspects of the school's performance verified through the review process and provides recommendations for key improvement strategies. In line with *Our Approach to School Improvement*, recommendations from the External School Review must be integrated into the School Improvement Plan.

This Review was conducted in June 2025 by:

- Grant Armitstead, External School Review Leader
- Fiona Gaby, Principal Peer Reviewer
- Liz Graham, Principal Peer Reviewer
- Nick Dodd, Principal Peer Reviewer.

Disclaimer

The Department for Education, Children and Young People does not endorse any commercial organisation, product or service mentioned in this report.

Focus domains

In considering the school's data, supporting documentary evidence, a presentation by the leadership team and input from Learning Services, the Review panel explored the following School Improvement Tool Domains to evaluate the school's effectiveness towards raising student achievement and sustaining high performance.

During the Review process, the panel focussed on seven key areas from the School Improvement Tool:

Domain 1 – Driving an explicit improvement agenda

Domain 2 – Analysing and discussing data

Domain 3 – Promoting a culture of learning

Domain 5 – Building an expert teaching team

Domain 6 – Leading systematic curriculum implementation

Domain 7 – Differentiating teaching and learning

Domain 8 – Implementing effective pedagogical practices.

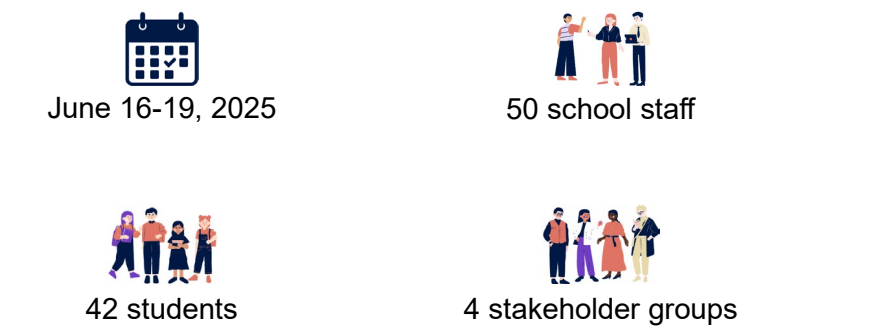
School context

Table 1: School context

Location:	354 West Tamar Road, Launceston
Year levels:	Year 7 – 10
Enrolment:	626.3 FTE
Year opened:	1962
Principal:	Jeanna Bolton
Year Principal appointed:	2022
First Nations enrolment percentage:	5.22%
Students with a disability enrolment percentage:	18.92%
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	1014
Full-time equivalent staff members:	74.08 FTE

Contributing stakeholders

Table 2: Stakeholder overview



Most teachers who were present on the days of the Review were interviewed, along with non-teaching staff, families, and members of the School Association.

The leadership team presented to the panel on day one.

The panel visited most classrooms and learning spaces, and met with student groups from across the school, both formally during interviews and informally in the classroom setting.

The following table will guide percentages for statements made in this report:

Table 3: Guidance on percentages

None	Few	Some	Many	Most	All
0%	1–20%	20–50%	50–75%	75–99%	100%

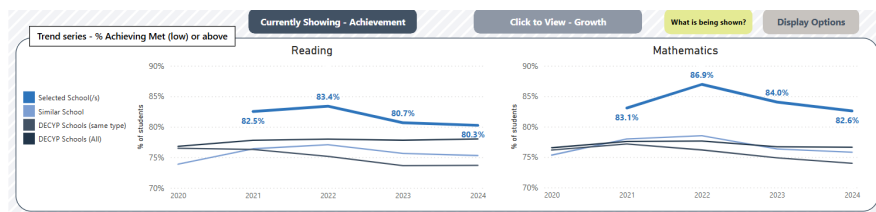
Initial data insights

Supporting documentary evidence

- School Improvement Plan
- Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT)
- School Annual Review
- Attendance data
- Staff and family satisfaction data
- Student and staff wellbeing surveys
- National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)
- ASPIRE / Measuring School Progress
- Student achievement data
- Australian Curriculum Framework ratings
- Retention and Attainment data

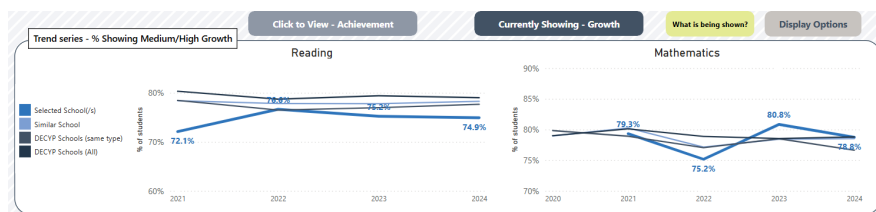
School performance overview

PAT Reading and Mathematics Achievement



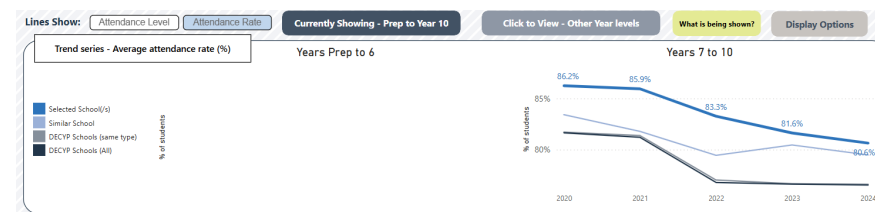
In 2024 PAT measures, 80.3 per cent of students in Year 7-10 met or were above targets in Reading, and 82.6 per cent in Mathematics, compared to a similar school of 75.3 per cent and 75.8 per cent respectively.

PAT Reading and Mathematics Growth



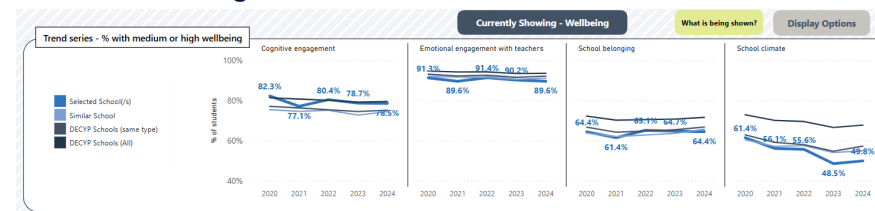
In 2024 PAT measures, 74.9 per cent of students in Year 7-10 achieved increased or maintained growth for Reading and 78.8 per cent in Mathematics, compared to a similar school of 78.3 per cent and 78.5 per cent respectively.

Attendance



The 2024 attendance rate of 80.6 per cent is above a similar school. The attendance rate at 27 May 2025 is 83 per cent.

Student Wellbeing



A review of the 2024 Student Wellbeing Survey results indicates the following for all four wellbeing domains:

- Cognitive Engagement at 78.5 per cent, above a similar school at 74.4 per cent.
- Emotional Engagement with Teachers at 89.6 per cent, below a similar school at 94.9 per cent.
- School Belonging at 64.4 per cent, in-line with a similar school at 65.6 per cent.
- School Climate at 49.8 per cent, below a similar school at 54.9 per cent.

Key affirmations

Key affirmations identify effective practice that has a positive impact on improvement.

Domain 1: Driving an explicit improvement agenda



Leaders are passionately driving a comprehensive school improvement agenda, with a strong and optimistic commitment from all staff and student leadership.

Domain 2: Analysing and discussing data



Leaders and staff analyse individual, cohort and whole school data to inform decisions and monitor School Improvement Plan targets.

Domain 5: Building an expert teaching team



Leaders support teachers to reflect on their practice and improve their teaching through learning walks and coaching conversations aligned to staff individual Performance and Development Plan goals focussing on the Lifting Literacy strategy and DECYP Pedagogical Framework.

Domain 6: Leading systematic curriculum delivery



Leaders and teachers explain with clarity the structures, processes, and artefacts in place to ensure alignment of the three levels of curriculum planning at Riverside High School.

Domain 7: Differentiating teaching and learning



Structures and processes for co-constructing learning plans are ensuring consistent classroom adjustments, as evidenced by feedback from teacher assistants and families.

Domain 8: Implementing effective pedagogical practices



Leaders recognise that continuous improvement in teaching practice is key to improving student learning.

Key improvement strategies

Key improvement strategies indicate the school's priority focus areas in the next four-year strategic planning period.

Domain 2: Analysing and discussing data



Strengthen collaborative practices where staff collect, access, and utilise a broad range of data, to enable ongoing monitoring of progress and responsive teaching, to target student need.

Domain 3: Promoting a culture of learning



Reinforce whole school supports that foster respectful relationships and implement evidence-informed wellbeing strategies to strengthen a positive, inclusive school climate.

Domain 5: Building an expert teaching team



Prioritise and monitor collaborative opportunities to apply professional learning and action improvement strategies to ensure consistency and precision in implementation.

Domain 6: Leading systematic curriculum delivery



Formalise the whole school approach to Common Assessment Tasks (CATs) and Rubrics, to ensure stronger alignment between the curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment.

Domain 7: Differentiating teaching and learning



Clarify differentiated practices through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to strengthen Tier 1 instruction, enabling all students to access appropriate learning opportunities and achieve success.

Domain 8: Implementing effective pedagogical practices



Systematically enact processes for delivering timely, actionable feedback to students to support reflection and clarify next steps in their learning.

Improvement strategies summary

Domain 1: Driving an explicit improvement agenda

- **Embed** a shared vision for improvement for all members of the Riverside High School community to ensure everyone is known, safe, well and learning.

Domain 2: Analysing and discussing data

- **Strengthen collaborative practices where staff collect, access, and utilise a broad range of data, to enable ongoing monitoring of progress and responsive teaching, to target student need.**
- **Prioritise** regular data-informed discussions with students to enable them to co-construct, action, and reflect on individualised goals based on their progress and success.

Domain 3: Promoting a culture of learning

- **Reinforce whole school supports that foster respectful relationships and implement evidence-informed wellbeing strategies to strengthen a positive, inclusive school climate.**
- **Review and implement** targeted strategies for family partnerships in learning to prioritise connection and belonging.

Domain 4: Targeting school resources

- Not included in this Review.

Domain 5: Building an expert teaching team

- **Prioritise and monitor collaborative opportunities to apply professional learning and action improvement strategies to ensure consistency and precision in implementation.**

Domain 6: Leading systematic curriculum implementation

- **Formalise the whole school approach to Common Assessment Tasks (CATs) and Rubrics, to ensure stronger alignment between the curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment.**
- **Review and refine** the pacing of curriculum delivery using a prioritised curriculum, to ensure implementation is aligned with student readiness and need.
- **Establish consistent school-wide strategies and processes** for communicating curriculum intentions, to facilitate family partnerships in learning.

Domain 7: Differentiating teaching and learning

- **Clarify differentiated practices through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to strengthen Tier 1 instruction, enabling all students to access appropriate learning opportunities and achieve success.**
- **Reinforce** clear expectations and agreed ways of working to differentiate teaching and learning to ensure consistency of practice.

Domain 8: Implementing effective pedagogical practices

- **Systematically enact processes for delivering timely, actionable feedback to students to support reflection and clarify next steps in their learning.**

Domain 9: Building school-community partnerships

- Not included in this Review.

Domain 1: Driving an explicit improvement agenda

Affirmations



Leaders are passionately driving a comprehensive school improvement agenda, with a strong and optimistic commitment from all staff and student leadership. Teachers highlight that clarity in the school's direction has been the greatest area of improvement for the school.

- The School Improvement Plan clearly articulates the expected actions for teachers and leaders aligned to each priority area, which is reinforced in the Leadership Roles and Responsibilities document. Student leadership roles are also aligned to School Improvement Plan priorities.
- Leaders monitor the school improvement agenda through weekly meetings, using a traffic light system to track key actions outlined in the School Improvement Plan. Staff feedback is gathered via a survey at the end of Term 2.
- Leaders have developed a 2024-26 Literacy Road Map to support a strategic and long-term direction for the school.

Key findings

- Riverside High School has documented and is implementing a school improvement agenda aligned to Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) priorities and informed by the school's context. All staff, student leadership and the School Association were able to articulate actions for driving school priorities.
- The 2025 School Improvement Plan describes a coherent set of evidence informed key actions that clearly link to the improvement priorities of Quality Teaching for Learning and Wellbeing for Learning.
- School improvement planning indicates that targets and key actions for improvement are informed by key school data sets, with clear monitoring timelines. The principal conducts conferencing sessions with all leaders with a focus on leading their portfolio areas.
- Teachers highlight that they expect all students to make progress and have high expectations for student outcomes, with Australian Curriculum Framework targets being set in Professional Learning Teams (PLTs).
- The school has adopted DECYP's 'Our How' as their vision to set high expectations for every student to be known, safe, well and learning. A few students and staff were able to articulate the school vision.
- Leaders support staff to use research and evidence-informed strategies to achieve targets, as demonstrated through professional learning and collaborative inquiries.
- The Annual Review outlines a clear process on analysing improvement data and progress against identified improvement targets. The Review process informs the establishment of priorities and targets for the ensuing year.

Improvement strategies

- **Embed a shared vision for improvement for all members of the Riverside High School community to ensure everyone is known, safe, well and learning.**

Domain 2: Analysing and discussing data

Affirmations



Leaders and staff analyse individual student, cohort, and whole school data to inform decision making and monitor School Improvement Plan targets.

- PLTs use data to monitor individual and grade student learning outcomes and growth including PAT, NAPLAN, MacqLit, ACF, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and Literacy Smart Lab categories.
- The Wellbeing for Learning Team collect and analyse attendance, behaviour, engagement, learning and observational data to target tiered provision.
- The Student Support Team work collaboratively with grade teams to discuss observational, attendance, and wellbeing data to support allocation of students to student support programs.
- Leaders and teachers' detail that they use data for self-evaluation and reflection as evidenced by the Performance and Development Plan (PDP) process.

Key findings

- The school has developed and is beginning to implement a data plan which makes clear the full range of data to be collected, its purpose, and how it should be used. The plan is yet to be shared with staff.
- Roles and responsibilities have been assigned to leaders and staff for actioning elements of the Data Plan.
- Infrastructure to support the collection, analysis, visualisation, and storage of data is in place. The triangulation report forms the basis of tracking cohort data, with PLTs also adding ACF progress.
- Most teachers highlight NAPLAN, PAT, ACF and Wellbeing data to support their teaching. A few teachers highlight the use of formative assessments to direct teaching.
- Data is shared at School Association meetings and in newsletter articles to celebrate student achievement and highlight areas for growth.
- School leaders provide professional learning and support to build skills in analysing and interpreting data as evidenced by whole school and PLT professional learning and using Ben Jenson's 'Planning for Action' model.
- Leaders work with teams to review data and monitor the effectiveness of improvement actions through whole staff meetings and PLT Inquiries aligned to School Improvement Plan targets.
- A few students are involved in data-informed discussions about their learning, with opportunity to set individualised learning goals.
- DIBELS screening and the MacqLit placement testing is used to determine groupings for tiered provision.

Improvement strategies



Strengthen collaborative practices where staff collect, access, and utilise a broad range of data, to enable ongoing monitoring of progress and responsive teaching, to target student need.

- **Prioritise regular data-informed discussions with students to enable them to co-construct, action, and reflect on individualised goals based on their progress and success.**

Domain 3: Promoting a culture of learning

Affirmations

- Leaders and staff are implementing evidence-informed, school-wide wellbeing initiatives through the Wellbeing for Learning Curriculum, High Impact Wellbeing Strategies (Victorian Government – Monash), REAL Schools, and Berry Street, with a focus on affective language, circles, and restorative practice.
- The Wellbeing for Learning 'Champion Group' has worked with the DECYP Student Engagement and Attendance Team and is investigating evidence informed practices to lift student wellbeing outcomes in peer-to-peer relationships and student to staff relationships.
- Inquiry, creativity, and innovation is supported through a whole school approach to the use of IPADS, many option classes, STEM projects, and the F1 in Schools program.
- The strong grade structure is supporting wellbeing and for students to be well known. Safe spaces, Aspire, the CARE room and access to professional Support Staff were also highlighted by some students as wellbeing supports.

Key findings

- Leaders articulate that there is a belief that collectively, staff can make a difference to student outcome.
- School staff demonstrate an understanding of the importance of positive, caring, and trusting relationships to student success.
- Staff identify that morale is generally high and note the improvement in school culture in the past two years.
- Leaders and staff prioritise a calm, orderly learning environment, guided by the Behaviour Management Guide and Classroom Routines. Observations demonstrate consistent implementation in most classrooms.
- Building positive, respectful, and inclusive student to student and staff to student relationships has been a focus for the school. Many interviewed students stated that this is a positive step forward.
- The School Association is developing a 2025 strategic plan focused on strengthening family and community connections. A few families expressed that improved communication would enhance their sense of belonging.
- The school values students' individual characteristics and backgrounds through cultural celebrations, and the creation of support groups. Circles are used to acknowledge diversity within the school.
- Targeted strategies to support staff wellbeing were detailed by staff as collegiality and support in curriculum teams, the grade team structure and leadership support. Some staff referred to morning teas and the 'Juice Bar.' Most staff highlight 'time' as having the greatest impact on their wellbeing.
- Student voice is gathered through leadership groups and surveys. Many students express a desire to be able to wear their sports uniform to school to maximise learning time and support a more gender-inclusive uniform.

Improvement strategies



Reinforce whole school supports that foster respectful relationships and implement evidence-informed wellbeing strategies to strengthen a positive, inclusive school climate.

- Review and implement targeted strategies for family partnerships in learning to prioritise connection and belonging.

Domain 5: Building an expert teaching team

Affirmations



Leaders support teachers to reflect on their practice and improve their teaching through learning walks and coaching conversations aligned to staff individual PDP goals focussing on the Lifting Literacy strategy and DECYP Pedagogical Framework.

- Aspiring leaders are supported through opportunities to serve as grade leaders, with a focus on the Principal Capability Framework to foster leadership development. All leaders have received coaching training, with most also participating in Professional Learning Institute (PLI) programs.
- School leaders place a high priority on attracting, retaining, and developing teachers and leaders, resulting in a stable and committed leadership and staff team.
- A school-wide plan for professional learning is in place which demonstrates alignment to the School Improvement Plan. Leaders measure the impact of professional learning through a teacher review process, exit tickets and learning walks.

Key findings

- Leaders value the importance of professional learning and working as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) and see this as an important strategic action in improving teaching and learning across the school.
- School-wide processes are in place to support collaboration amongst staff, where teachers work together to learn from each other's practice in PLTs, subject meetings, grade meetings and whole staff meetings.
- Staff highly value opportunities to collaborate with colleagues to improve teaching and learning.
- The principal and leaders lead professional learning aligned to Wellbeing for Learning and the Lifting Literacy strategy with a focus on fluency, subject specific vocabulary, and differentiation teaching strategies.
- PLTs provide a structured space for teachers to reflect on practice, share insights, and engage in Ben Jensen's cycles of inquiry to drive ongoing improvement. PLTs operationalise Vic Zbar's focus on purposeful collaboration, data literacy, and a culture of continuous improvement within the school.
- The Principal and Instructional Specialist lead the explicit instruction and learning of PLT's, with a focus on Ben Jensen's Impact Cycle.
- Leaders highlight that teacher collaboration is supported through team norms, a clear agenda, and the Ben Jensen Inquiry process. A leader facilitates each PLT.
- Many staff indicate the need to embed professional learning in practice through the work of collaborative teams.

Improvement strategies



Prioritise and monitor collaborative

opportunities to apply professional learning and action improvement strategies to ensure consistency and precision in implementation.

Domain 6: Leading systematic curriculum implementation

Affirmations



Leaders and teachers explain with clarity the structures, processes, and artefacts in place to ensure alignment of the three levels of curriculum planning at Riverside High School.

- Learning Area Leaders have been assigned to lead subject meetings to monitor the continuity of learning across the years of schooling.
- Lesson plan documentation demonstrates alignment to the DECYP Pedagogical framework and Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, supporting teacher instruction.
- Learning Area Leaders work with subject teams to review and refine the curriculum at the end of each unit.
- Opportunities for professional learning to build staff capability in curriculum implementation has focussed on Reading, with Learning Area Leaders ensuring alignment to the learning area they are leading, with a focus on fluency and subject specific vocabulary.

Key findings

- The whole school plan for curriculum implementation has focused on the development of Scopes and Sequences, Unit Plans, and Lesson Plans, aligned to the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards and Content Descriptors.
- Teachers outline that Scope and Sequences have been guided by DECYP curriculum maps with further work needed to map the HASS curriculum.
- Subject meetings have focused on curriculum planning and refining Common Assessment Tasks (CATs) with aligned rubrics. However, students report inconsistency in the use of rubrics across assessments.
- Students' broader capabilities and dispositions are yet to be a major focus for core classes; however, Tier 2 Support programs are supporting this for targeted students.
- Curriculum documents are stored on Microsoft Teams, Canvas, and OneNote and organised into folders which are grade specific to support access and collaboration. Some students indicate that having multiple platforms to access curriculum and assessment is difficult to navigate.
- Many students report that lessons often feel rushed, suggesting a need for greater alignment between curriculum delivery and student learning needs.
- Families highlight that they would like subject overviews to be sent home each term to help them support their child's learning.
- Leaders report that Year 11 and 12 curriculum offerings have been shaped by student input and collaboration with training organisations. Option subjects are regularly reviewed, with staff actively seeking student feedback. All students highlighted subject offerings as a strength of the school.

Improvement strategies



Formalise the whole school approach to Common

Assessment Tasks (CATs) and Rubrics, to ensure stronger alignment between the curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment.

- Review and refine the pacing of curriculum delivery using a prioritised curriculum, to ensure implementation is aligned with student readiness and need.
- Establish consistent school-wide strategies and processes for communicating curriculum intentions, to facilitate family partnerships in learning.

Domain 7: Differentiating teaching and learning

Affirmations



Structures and processes for co-constructing learning plans are ensuring consistent classroom adjustments, as evidenced by feedback from Teacher Assistants and families.

- Time is provided in Grade Teams to co-develop learning plans, with families given opportunity to give feedback through email or face-to-face meetings.
- Leaders and staff are united in their belief that all students can learn successfully if given the appropriate time and support. Students voiced that staff provide them with more time and support if they want to improve their assessment.
- Tiered provision through 'ASPIRE' focuses on attendance, engagement, and student learning goals. Berry Street and Trauma Informed Practices (TIP) guide the teaching in 'ASPIRE.'
- Tiered provision for Literacy is being provided through MacqLit, with the Instructional Specialist supporting Teacher Assistants in its implementation.

Key findings

- Leaders and teachers are beginning to develop an understanding of the expectations for differentiated teaching at Riverside High School, through the development of a Summary of Differentiated Strategies Document, aligned to the Good Teaching Guide.
- Teachers differentiate for the learning needs of students by using some of the following strategies: analysing PowerBi Triangulation data and Learning Plans, using visuals and scaffolds, and providing three levels of work.
- Teachers state that they are supported to meet the differing learning needs of students in their class through teacher assistant support, learning plan structures and processes, access to Professional Support Staff, ASPIRE, CARE, and other support programs, and MacqLit.
- Classroom observations highlight most students working independently on the same task.
- A review of Curriculum planning documents reflect the need to differentiate.
- The Year 7 Team will be trialling Tier 1 flexible groupings in term 3 and 4 based on pre-assessments.
- Interviewed students achieving above the standard indicate that they would like to work more in focussed groups with work set at their level.
- The Smart Student Literacy Lab is being used for Year 7 classes, with teachers using differentiated strategies based on growth data.
- Numeracy extension is supported through extension classes in Years 8 to 10, with support from the Mathematics AST in Year 7.
- Students are yet to regularly co-construct individual learning goals, reflect on these and set new goals for the future.

Improvement strategies



Clarify differentiated practices through a Multi-Tiered System

of Supports (MTSS) to strengthen Tier 1 instruction, enabling all students to access appropriate learning opportunities and achieve success.

- **Reinforce clear expectations and agreed ways of working to differentiate teaching and learning to ensure consistency of practice.**

Domain 8: Implementing effective pedagogical practices

Affirmations



Leaders recognise that continuous improvement in teaching practice is key to improving student learning.

- The DECYP Pedagogical Framework, with a focus on the Gradual Release of Responsibility approach is directing expectations for teaching practice. Modelling, observing, and providing constructive feedback has supported growth in these areas.
- Teachers keep abreast of research on effective teaching practices through a focus on professional learning on evidence informed Reading strategies and unpacking the DECYP Pedagogical Framework.
- Teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching through inquiry cycles focussed on pedagogy and differentiated teaching strategies, with the expectation that they share the improvement in student learning data and teacher understanding with other PLTs. This was affirmed by teaching staff during interview.

Key findings

- Teachers identified that the gradual release model, Learning Intentions and Success Criteria, circles, calm and orderly learning environments, differentiation, and developing positive relationships with students are whole school expectations for teaching.
- Leaders monitor the quality and consistency of teaching practice through engagement in PLTs, PDPs, and Learning Walks.
- Leaders voice that professional learning is aligned to evidence informed teaching practices in Reading with a focus on fluency and being able to explain and model to students the Literacy skills needed in their discipline. Previous professional learning has focused on subject specific vocabulary.
- Some subjects are promoting deep learning through inquiry pedagogy, especially evident in STEM and other practical subjects.
- Some students identify that the teacher helps them to learn best through having flexibility in assessment tasks and how you deliver them, making it clear on what they are looking for, and adjusting their teaching based on students learning styles.
- Many students said that they knew they were improving their learning when their assessments improved, they found the work easier and were able to apply their learning.
- Many interviewed students state that they would like a more consistent approach to feedback, indicating that it is teacher dependent, with a few teachers using student conferencing as an effective approach. Students highlight that the feedback is usually given at the end of the unit.

Improvement strategies



Systematically enact processes for delivering timely, actionable feedback to students to support reflection and clarify next steps in their learning.

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