Audit findings for Capalaba State College

An explicit improvement agenda

The school leadership team has established and is driving a strong improvement agenda for the school, grounded in evidence from research and practice, and couched in terms of improvements in measurable student outcomes, especially in literacy, numeracy and science. Explicit and clear school-wide targets for improvement have been set and communicated, with accompanying timelines.

Rating: High

Commendations:
• The school’s improvement agenda is described in the Operational Plan 2011 and has been organised in the eight domains of the Teaching and Learning Audit. The school Operational Plan is supported by Faculty Operational Plans which identifies strategies to enact the agenda and targets and timelines to guide the enactment. All plans document specific outcomes that need to be achieved on a term by term basis.
• There is evidence that the implementation of the improvement agenda is monitored through the line management structure.
• The plan has focused the attention of the whole school on improved student behaviour and the establishment of a school culture which is conducive to learning and achievement with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy. There is strong evidence that the improvement agenda is being delivered.
• There is evidence of a positive and supportive approach by the leadership team in driving the school improvement agenda.

Affirmations:
• School leaders are aware of the school’s performance data over time and have set clear targets for improvement with accompanying timelines.
• School leaders are eager to learn from educational research and good practice from other schools.

Recommendations:
• Continue to build the capacity of teachers to take responsibility for the changes in practice required to achieve school targets and to use data on a regular basis to monitor the effectiveness of their own efforts.
• Continue to develop and extend school targets that are related to gaps in understandings and learnings, aimed at specific cohorts of students over shorter time lines.
• Further develop the accountability procedures to ensure that all staff members are aware of the improvement agenda and fully committed to the implementation.
Analysis and discussion of data

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. 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 like-schools; and, in the case of data from tests such as NAPLAN, measures of student growth across the years of school.

Rating: High

Commendations:
• The principal and other school leaders clearly articulate their belief that reliable data on student outcomes are crucial to the school’s improvement agenda.
• The school has established and is implementing a systematic plan for the collection, analysis and use of student achievement data.
• Data are used throughout the school to identify gaps in student learning, to monitor improvement over time and to monitor growth across the years of school.
• The school has developed a ‘data wall’ which displays the literacy achievements of all students. The wall is generating conversations about the achievements of individual students and discussions are developing about how teaching strategies and school procedures can be adjusted to improve outcomes for students.

Affirmations:
• The school uses software to analyse data.
• Data are used by many teachers to adjust learning experience for their students.
• School data is communicated to the broader school community via open days, newsletters and Parents and Citizens’ Association meetings.

Recommendations:
• Continue to develop the end of term data conversations between teachers and Heads of Department (HODs) to more effectively focus attention on the importance of data and stimulate discussion on how data can be used to improve teaching practices.
• Develop a whole school approach to the use and implementation of a central location for data, for example; Capalaba State College Data Warehouse, around student performance.
• Continue to implement the program of professional development focusing on building the capacity of teaching staff to collect, analyse, synthesise and apply data to plan for individual, group and cohort progress.
• Continue to encourage school leaders to use their developing knowledge to engage in professional conversations that reflect their sophisticated understanding of data concepts. Use these conversations to build the capacity of all staff members to use data to improve learning outcomes for each and every student.
• Continue to encourage teachers to routinely use objective data on student achievement as evidence of successful teaching.
A culture that promotes learning

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. The school works to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant, inclusive and that promotes intellectual rigour.

Rating: High

Commendations:
- A strong collegial culture has been established.
- Teachers work effectively and collaboratively in faculty and year level teams.
- There is evidence to show there has been significant improvement in student behaviour and school culture in recent years.
- The work over the past few years in addressing behaviour issues, social skill development, anti-bullying programs and curriculum relevance for all students has transformed the culture of the school and allowed the curriculum leadership team and support personnel to refocus on their instructional leadership responsibilities.

Affirmations:
- The ‘tone’ of the school reflects a school-wide commitment to purposeful, successful learning.
- The school effectively implements its Responsible Behaviour Plan for students and the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) program.
- Class ‘busy work’ is kept to a minimum and an attempt is made to ensure that all students are engaged in challenging, meaningful learning.
- Respectful and caring relationships are reflected in the ways in which staff, most students and parents interact.
- Staff morale is generally high.

Recommendations:
- Continue to build the school ethos around high expectations and a commitment to academic excellence.
- Encourage all teachers to continue to have a shared commitment to the improvement of teaching, and openness to be coached and supported by colleagues.
- Encourage teachers to regularly invite leaders and colleagues to visit their classrooms to observe their teaching and give focussed feedback.
- Continue to build a feedback and reflection culture in the school as a key element of the improvement agenda for both students and staff.
- Continue to embed the elements of the SWPBS program which will assist in maintaining consistent behaviour expectations across the school and enhance the understanding of the related social skills with students from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Continue to celebrate student success in both academic and behaviour endeavours.
Targeted use of school resources

The school applies its resources (staff time, expertise, funds, facilities, materials) in a targeted manner to meet the learning 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.

Rating: High

Commendations:

• A school-wide process has been established for identifying specific student learning needs.
• This process includes systematic formative and summative assessment to establish learning gaps and special needs.
• Strong community links exists with organisations such as Boystown and the “Helping Friends Program” to support student need.
• School based staff are deployed in creative and flexible ways to support core programs, for example; the Physical Education teacher and the Teacher Librarian on the primary campus are involved in supporting literacy programs.

Affirmations:

• The school has in place a very effective intervention programs for the identification and support for students who require leaning and Special Education Program (SEP) support.
• The skills of support staff and teacher aides are fully utilised to support learning in classrooms.
• Resources are used in creative and effective ways to address the culturally and academically diverse needs of students.

Recommendations:

• Continue to develop the roles and responsibilities of the school leadership team and curriculum support personnel in leading, discussing, modelling, coaching and reflecting on instructional leadership priorities at a classroom level.
• Further develop centrally maintained records of student needs, achievements and progress for all year levels, which provide a ‘One Stop Shop’ for data and class profiles. This information could be stored in the Capalaba Data Warehouse.
• Continue to build the capacity of support staff to be able to model and coach for best practice at the classroom level around preferred pedagogy and practice.
• Give a stronger emphasis on developing a range of strategies and resources to support potentially high achieving students.
• Continue to develop the Gifted and Talented program and the exploration of E-Learning as a tool to support extension programs.
• Continue to develop the links with community agencies to support SEP delivery.
An expert teaching team

The school has found ways to build a 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.

Rating: Medium

Commendations:
- 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.
- The work of the curriculum leadership team is to be highly commented in terms of the outstanding support they provide to curriculum reform and teacher capacity building.
- The Individualised Learning Plan process for staff is comprehensive and effective.
- Feedback to HODs in relation to their role and performance represents exemplary practice.

Affirmations:
- The school undertakes high quality professional learning activities.
- The Principal and leadership team are seen as supportive of the day-to-day practice and learning of teachers.
- A comprehensive professional learning plan is in place.
- The school has collaboratively developed a model for implementing the Department’s Developing Performance Framework (DPF) as the basis for professional discussions with staff.

Recommendations:
- Continue to develop school arrangements for teachers to visit each other’s classrooms and to welcome opportunities to have principals and other school leaders observe and discuss their work with them.
- Foster the school-based professional learning community through the further development of the school mentoring and peer coaching. This could be used for both development and maintenance phases of curriculum development.
- Fully implement the planning and review process related the DPF cycle for all staff.
- Develop and implement an ongoing formal feedback processes for teachers in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of their pedagogical practice.
- Continue to develop the capacity of all members of the curriculum leadership team involved in the classroom supervision and feedback processes.
- Continue to develop opportunities for teachers to share the curriculum leadership load and provide professional growth for aspiring leaders.
**Systematic curriculum delivery**

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 and refined collaboratively to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice. This plan is shared with parents and caregivers.

**Rating: High**

**Commendations:**
- High quality Curriculum Plans are in place and are clearly linked to improvement priorities and teaching practices in classrooms.
- The work of the HODs and the Support Teacher: Literacy and Numeracy (STLaN) in leading the development of curriculum programs and their delivery in classrooms is outstanding.
- The extent and quality of the work which has been completed in the last 12 months in aligning curriculum planning and delivery is outstanding and is transforming practice at the classroom level.

**Affirmations:**
- The school has coherent and sequenced plans for curriculum delivery for all Key Learning Areas (KLAs).
- All teachers have been made aware of the expectations of these planning documents in relation to their teaching and learning programs, from curriculum leaders.
- Common assessment and moderation tasks are in place.

**Recommendations:**
- Formalise and document the ongoing involvement of all members of the leadership team in observing and giving feedback to all teachers on their curriculum delivery.
- Continue to develop Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs (including links with local industry) to meet the individual needs of students in the senior schools.
- Continue to enhance the delivery of higher order thinking skills, consistently across the school.
- Consider the development and use of a preferred Pedagogical Framework or Direct Teaching Model as part of your curriculum plan which will drive a focus on effective teaching across all KLAs.
- Continue to monitor and provide for the ‘vertical’ alignment of the curriculum so that there is continuity and progression of learning across the years of school, with teaching in each year building on to and extending learning in previous years.
- Review common assessment tasks for P-6 curriculum and continue to build a moderation culture.
Differentiated classroom learning

In their day-to-day teaching, classroom teachers place a high priority on identifying and addressing the learning needs of individual students. Teachers closely monitor the progress of individuals, identify learning difficulties and tailor classroom activities to levels of readiness and need.

Rating: Medium

Commendations:

- All units of work have documented adjustments, based on data, which teachers implement to meet the specific learning needs of students.
- There are examples of flexible arrangements, whereby students are placed in classes which are most appropriate to their particular learning needs, for example; a year 9 student studying year 12 Maths B.
- The significant number and variety of VET programs and opportunities for School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships provide quality pathways for senior students.
- In some year levels, ability grouping in reading, maths and spelling have been formed to ensure that students are engaged in challenging and meaningful learning.

Affirmations:

- Processes are in place to identify and support students with learning difficulties.
- The SEP strongly supports their children with significant adjustments to their teaching programs and involves parents, students and teachers in the goal setting.
- There is evidence of differentiated teaching strategies in many classrooms particularly in the junior school.

Recommendations:

- Develop the systematic use of formative assessment, pre and post testing and student data profiling, as a means of establishing where individuals are up to in their learning, identifying skill gaps or misunderstandings and providing structured feedback to students.
- Identify and share best practice in the area of differentiated teaching.
- Encourage teachers to visit and observe classes in the school where differentiated learning is embedded and represents best practice.
- Establish processes to monitor the effectiveness of differentiated teaching strategies.
Effective teaching practices

The school principal and other school leaders recognise that highly effective teaching practices are 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.

Rating: Medium

Commendations:
• The school has developed a clearly defined structure for all teachers to use for their planning. Plans are submitted by all teachers at the beginning of a term and HODs review the plans and provide valuable feedback.
• There is evidence of quality teaching across the school.
• School leaders have led professional development and discussions on Bloom’s taxonomy and some teachers have used this information in their planning.

Affirmations:
• Students are generally engaged in their learning and enjoy their school life.
• There is evidence that most teachers provide regular and timely feedback to students.
• The school leaders have communicated the value of highly effective teaching strategies.

Recommendations:
• Develop a research based pedagogical framework that informs teaching practice. The work already completed in terms of Bloom’s taxonomy will provide a valuable platform for this work.
• Implement a comprehensive professional development program to inform and skill teachers in the implementation of the agreed pedagogy.
• Develop consistent processes to monitor and improve effective teaching and learning around student engagement and differentiation of the curriculum.
• Continue to support teachers in setting high expectations for every student’s progress with ambitious targets for improving classroom performance.