Arts ACT-cover background.jpg

Special purpose review

MARGARET HENDRY SCHOOL

JUNE 2023

CONTEXT

The Director-General approved this Special Purpose Review (SPR) to support Margaret Hendry School (MHS) to identify and respond to areas requiring both immediate and long-term improvement with the review to occur in consultation with and with input from the staff, students, and school community.

Information and data from and about the school supported a focus of the review on operational aspects of MHS to ensure:

* The school meets the learning needs of all students.
* The school meets the wellbeing needs of all students.
* The school manages student complexity – disability and behaviour.
* The school manages workplace health and safety responsibilities including staff well-being.

It considered four key lines of inquiry:

* Student learning and engagement.
* Teaching practices.
* Leadership practices.
* Organisational practices.

Support plans have been implemented in 2020 and 2022 with short term uplift across key areas. Impact was not sustained when the school transitioned to the monitoring phase.

A combination of unfilled vacancies and daily staffing availability pressure has further impacted the school’s overall operations.

METHODOLOGY

The SPR team collected a broad range of information for analysis including:

* Structured interviews with staff, students, and school community members.
* Analysis of school plans including School Improvement Plan, Impact Report, ACER School Review and Support plan.
* Analysis of relevant school documentation and data including school performance and climate data.
* Observation of school routines including classroom visits.

The Terms of Reference and inquiry lines for the review guided the SPR team throughout the information gathering process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

*Evidence-based advice regarding high-value areas for future school improvement efforts.*

Each of these recommendations and the associated dot points should not be considered as discrete. All recommendations are interrelated and need to be integrated into the referenced implementation plan.

**Recommendation 1**: ***Improve strategic oversight, planning and expectations.***

This should include:

* Ensuring the implementation plan reviews and aligns values, beliefs, routines, and structures to support staff and students to thrive.
* Conducting a gap analysis of staff capabilities to identify areas requiring additional support by ESO and targeted recruitment.
* Documenting and delivering a professional learning plan anchored in student need.
* A whole school approach to the systematic use of data and evidence in planning teaching and learning and monitoring student progress to ensure every child reaches their academic potential.
* Developing a communication plan which delivers timely, targeted, and ongoing information to the school community, students, and staff.

**Recommendation 2: *Strong focus on building a united leadership team.***

This should include:

* A commitment to build a united team with clear values, beliefs, and expectations evident in school wide practice and culture.
* Providing clear roles and responsibilities for all members of the leadership team.
* Designated time devoted to coaching, mentoring and feedback to all leaders.
* Establishing a comprehensive induction process for any newly appointed leader.

**Recommendation 3: *Strengthen the links between curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment to improve teaching and learning.***

This should include:

* Using the literacy and numeracy progressions - Australian Curriculum to map student achievement and measure progress.
* Implementing quality processes to ensure high quality planning, assessment and pedagogy of teaching and learning across all learning communities.
* Ensuring every teacher clearly understands the Margaret Hendry School Pedagogical models which includes explicit instruction.
* Aligning formative and summative assessments and protocols.
* Ensuring a whole school approach to a systematic, and consistently applied teacher observation and feedback cycles.
* Strengthening Professional Learning Community (PLC) implementation that focuses on formative evidence/data to plan the next sequence of learning.
* Ensuring a specific focus on the explicit teaching of foundational skills for early learners and those students with learning gaps.

**Recommendation 4: *Strengthen school wide systems for improving student wellbeing.***

This should include:

* Engaging with the PBL coach and an annual evaluation of PBL implementation.
* Building the capacity of staff with an initial focus on effective PBL Tier 1 strategies.
* Leadership to track and monitor student attendance and behaviour data to inform target resources appropriately.
* Ensuring clear processes to monitor the effectiveness of ILPs and BSPs and OVRAs.
* Improving inclusion practices including structures and processes that cater for all students’ needs.
* Consideration of the employment of a social worker to work in partnership with families and the staff.

**Recommendation 6: *Review and adjust the organisational efficiencies and effectiveness of the current structures and processes.***

This should include:

* Reviewing current whole school structures and routines to ensure consistency of teaching and learning to maximise student outcomes.
* Developing whole of school practices for student learning and wellbeing for consistency across learning communities.
* Assessing whether the use of different IT (software) systems can reduce school leader workload or improve the efficiency of current processes.
* Ensuring a common understanding of the structure of the day to focus on learning and wellbeing.
* Regular leadership meetings to discuss implementation of whole school expectations, structures, and processes.
* A strategic approach for school leader Cs to work collaboration with their learning communities including coaching and mentoring.
* Providing opportunities for teachers to plan and collaborate with peers who are teaching the same year level in other learning communities.

**Recommendation 7: *Improve the health and wellbeing of all staff.***

This should include:

* Coordination of ESO supports and targeted recruitment to guide the improvement plan and support staff wellbeing.
* Establishment of a comprehensive induction process for staff.
* Clarity of expectations for teaching and learning, student wellbeing and student behaviour across the school.
* Implementation of the above recommendations in the short, medium, and long term.
* Continuing to provide opportunities for staff to provide feedback on WHS matters.
* Staff to be actively involved in the implementation of the recommendations of the SPR.

AFFIRMATIONS

Based on the information available to the SPRT the following features and practices are currently being undertaken, or in the early stages of implementation, and are impacting positively on school operations.

* Commitment to improve communication, with the SPRT identifying key areas for refinement.
* The WHS committee provides feedback on WHS matters to leadership team to discuss and make adjustments in the workplace.
* Renewal of the PBL team – the PBL framework re-introduced to strengthen the positive school culture.
* The EAL/D program is valued and could provide opportunities for capacity building of all staff to enhance learning for all students.
* The Response to Student Need meeting (RSN) ensures a collaborative process to facilitate consistent interventions and supports for students with additional needs.
* The ‘Booster’ reading program is effective for a small number of children currently, upscaling of this approach to make the program available in every learning community would be beneficial.
* The Learning Support Assistant (LSA) capacity building meeting which has just been implemented has been well received by staff. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the role of the LSA, discuss problems of practice and have consistency of expectations across all Learning Communities.
* Willingness of teachers to work to develop quality curriculum and pedagogies to engage and support all student learning.
* Students, staff, and parents value and seek more whole school/community events as a vehicle for community and school identity building.