

# External School Review

## Athelstone School

Across our education system, we seek growth for every student, in every class, and in every school. The external school review value-adds and supports schools to raise student achievement and sustain high performance by providing an expert external perspective on school performance by verifying or challenging:

- a school's improvement planning and processes and its impact on student learning
- the impact of previous external school directions
- the rigour of a school's improvement practices
- the school's capacity to achieve or sustain learning improvement over time.

The external school review lines of inquiry focus on:

- quality school improvement planning
- expert teaching
- quality leadership
- conditions for optimal learning.

The overarching question in every external school review is: How well does the school improve achievement, growth, challenge, engagement, and equity?

### Reported impact of directions from the previous External School Review in May 2019.

The school has established several structures to build staff understanding, ownership and accountability of site improvement plan priorities. Professional learning communities are operating regularly and are providing opportunities for staff to collaboratively look at multiple measures of data, to evaluate the impact of teaching on learning outcomes. These have evolved from like year level teams, to mixed groups of R-6 teachers to get a broader perspective from across the school. All staff are engaged in analysing and measuring progress against the site improvement plan rather than just one group of staff being responsible for doing this.

Use of learning intentions and success criteria, as well as students setting their own goals, continue to be areas of focus across the school. The school is using a whole school inquiry process to create a greater emphasis on stretch and challenge for its students, so they are reaching their full potential. This is applied to other programs such as the kitchen garden and science lessons.

The school has been working on building consistent and cohesive teaching practices R-6, through more closely aligning professional learning opportunities. The focus of staff meeting in professional learning communities has shifted towards using high impact teaching strategies, with a lens on using metacognition to help students deepen their thinking and reasoning skills. Staff capability is being built in this area through regular opportunities to explore, unpack and discuss this with colleagues. The school is undertaking regular check-ins twice a term and using time in pupil free days, to collectively monitor progress against the site improvement plan's agreed actions.

### Outcomes from the External School Review held in August 2023.

The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1** Strengthen staff capability in use of open-ended task design, creating authentic opportunities for student agency in their learning ensuring productive struggle, high challenge and stretch.
- Direction 2** Create and strengthen opportunities to de-privatise practice through creating regular opportunities for observation, including the provision of timely and documented feedback to build staff capability.
- Direction 3** Foster and build a strong and agreed consensus on what high expectations look like, with a focus on high expectations of student learning, including learner agency.

These directions are published on the school improvement plan and will support the school's ongoing improvement work. **Based on the school's current performance, Athelstone School will be externally reviewed again in 2026.**



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