

Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2024

Merrylands High School 8227



School vision and context

School vision statement

At Merrylands High School, we strive to create a culture of excellence where improvements in teaching and learning are constantly realised. We are committed to establish a rich learning culture and maintain an environment of inclusion and diversity, where students can thrive.

Every teacher will be challenged to continually refine their practice, with a focus on explicit teaching. Staff are encouraged to maintain high expectations of themselves and the students and will be supported through a climate of collaboration. We value meaningful and fluid communication between all members of the school community and will prioritise improved mechanisms to disseminate and receive feedback.

School context

Merrylands High School is a comprehensive High School in Sydney's South West with a growing population that currently sits at approximately 900 students. The school is proud to celebrate its cultural and linguistic diversity, with 86% of students having a non-English speaking background shared across a total of 56 unique languages. The school has six support classes which includes three Multi-Categorical and three Autism classes. The highly skilled teachers of the support unit demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.

In 2020, the school's staffing entitlement was 67.8 teaching staff and 13.8 non-teaching staff. 27% of teaching staff are in their first four years of practice. The school has a vigorous program to support and mentor beginning and early career teachers.

Our school also strategically involves parents in their child's learning. By sharing responsibility for student learning, the school has created an environment where students feel motivated to learn and reach their full potential.

Merrylands High School completed an extensive situational analysis with consultation from all sectors of the school community. The input received informed a clear direction, culminating in three areas of focus for the Strategic Improvement Plan.

Strategic Direction 1: Student Growth and Attainment

In order to improve student learning outcomes and to achieve system-negotiated targets in the areas of literacy and numeracy, a focus on data-driven teaching practice will be prioritised. This will significantly increase the data literacy capabilities of all staff to access, analyse and interpret reliable and valid indicators of student performance and in turn, inform necessary interventions, including effective planning, programming and the delivery of differentiated teaching strategies to improve student learning outcomes.

Strategic Direction 2: Collaborative Practice

By sharing expertise through innovative, research-based collaborative approaches, teachers will improve classroom practice and student results. A consistent implementation of whole school literacy and numeracy strategies through active professional learning teams will help embed effective and appropriate practice, leading to improvements in literacy and numeracy.

Strategic Direction 3: Effective Feedback

Merrylands High School will engender a rich culture of feedback, whereby students will receive constant feedback about their learning. Consistent, whole school approaches towards assessment, including the analysis of data sources will strengthen the quality of feedback provided to students. Effective responses to formative and summative assessment and consistent judgement and moderation of assessment will optimise learning for all students.

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Purpose

Our purpose is to ensure students grow in their learning through explicit, consistent and research-informed teaching. Our teachers will evaluate their effectiveness and reflectively adapt their practice through quality, high impact professional learning and use of student assessment data to inform classroom practice.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2022

Increase the percentage of students achieving in the top two bands of NAPLAN numeracy by 5.3%.

Target year: 2022

Increase the percentage of students achieving in the top two bands of NAPLAN reading by 5.8%.

Target year: 2023

Improvement in the percentage of students achieving expected growth in numeracy to increase by 6.4%.

Target year: 2023

Improvement in the percentage of students achieving expected growth in reading to increase by 8.6%.

Target year: 2022

Improvement in the percentage of HSC course results in top three bands by 6.7%.

Target year: 2024

Improvement in the percentage of English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) students achieving expected growth in reading to increase by 12%.

Initiatives

Data-driven teaching practice

Increase the data literacy capabilities of all staff to access, analyse and interpret reliable and valid indicators of student performance.

- This will include the provision of High Impact Professional Learning in data literacy, data analysis and data use in teaching for all staff to build data capabilities.
- Staff will collaborate to employ data to identify the need for interventions and plan for, program and deliver differentiated teaching strategies with increased effectiveness.
- Establish a school culture in which teachers confidently use data to improve student learning outcomes.

Explicit Teaching Practice

A whole-school approach will create a common language amongst staff to ensure consistent use of explicit teaching practices, focusing on well-planned lessons that offer guidance and support.

- A whole-school approach embracing evidence-based teaching practices will maximise student achievement across the full range of abilities.
- Through research, professional learning opportunities and the modeling of effective explicit teaching strategies, teachers will adopt whole school interventions maximising student learning and growth.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

All staff are committed to identifying, understanding and implementing the most effective explicit teaching methods, with the highest priority given to evidence-based teaching strategies (SEF-Effective Classroom Practice).

Student assessment data is used school-wide to identify students' achievement and progress, in order to reflect on teaching effectiveness and inform future school directions (SEF-Data Skills and Use).

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question:

To what extent have teachers' data literacy skill development contributed to improvements in student learning attainment? Have targeted approaches to addressing the needs of identified student groups led to improvements in student learning attainment?

Data:

Survey, internal assessments, external assessments, reports on SCOUT and PLAN 2 access, EAL/D data, HSC data, collection survey, document analysis, student voice, MHS Teaching and Learning Survey.

Analysis:

Analysis of survey data and evaluations of PL feedback.

Annual assessment of internal and external data sources (PLAN2, NAPLAN, HSC).

Implications:

Findings from the analysis will inform:

- future actions
- Annual Report
- the development of new or additional targeted classes/approaches.

Strategic Direction 2: Collaborative practices

Purpose

Collaborative and applied professional learning strengthens teaching practice which is driven by identified student needs. High Impact Professional learning is designed to meet student needs, identified through analysis of current system, school and classroom data about progress and achievement. Teachers work together, propelled and critically challenged by expert input, to learn, shape and strengthen teaching practice for ongoing progress and achievement.

The situational analysis identified the need for greater teacher collaboration. Teams will be formed across the school to improve teaching practice through observation and reflection, and to equip teachers with strategies to target the improvement of literacy and numeracy to improve student learning outcomes through cross-faculty and intra-faculty collaborative processes.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2024

100% teachers completing Quality Teaching Rounds (QTR) training across the three dimensions of pedagogy (Intellectual Quality, Quality Learning Environment and Significance).

Target year: 2023

All faculty programs and registration reveal evidence of Quality Teaching Assessment Practice Guide (APG) principles applied to all assessments.

Target year: 2024

Consistent implementation of the whole school literacy and numeracy strategies.

Initiatives

Expertise and Innovation

Research-based collaborative approaches will be employed to improve the quality of teaching practice. Peer observation and collaborative reflection will be used to improve individual teacher's classroom practice and in-turn, student results.

Fundamental to this will be the introduction of structured collaborative practices, including QTR and Learning Walks.

Professional Learning Community

An integrated and embedded approach to ongoing professional learning across the school will strengthen practice and embed a common understanding of whole-school approaches to teaching and learning. High-quality collaborative practice will harnesses the expertise of staff at Merrylands High School, critical to improving teacher quality and student outcomes.

- Professional learning teams for literacy and numeracy will be developed and implemented to focus on the implementation of a consistent approach to addressing identified literacy and numeracy needs of students.
- Consistent implementation of whole school literacy and numeracy strategies, progressions and EAL/D pedagogy through teacher collaboration and sharing will help embed effective and appropriate practice.
- QTR Model and Quality Teaching Assessment Practice Guide (APG) approach will be utilised to gain deeper understanding of formative and summative assessments to empower teachers to enrich student learning.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

The school uses embedded and explicit systems that facilitate professional dialogue, collaboration, peer observation and feedback, the modelling of effective practice and the provision of specific and timely feedback between teachers. This drives ongoing, school-wide improvement in teaching practice and student results (SEF-Collaborative practice and feedback).

Whole school and/or inter-school relationships provide mentoring and coaching support to ensure the ongoing development and improvement of all teachers (SEF-Coaching and mentoring).

All teachers have expert contemporary content knowledge and deploy effective teaching strategies. The school trials innovative practices and has processes in place to evaluate, refine and scale success. (SEF-Expertise and Innovation).

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Questions:

In what ways have QTRs improved teaching practice. What has been the impact of the Professional Learning Teams across the school?

Data:

PDPs, pre-assessment, feedback, QTR coding/reflection sheets/survey-feedback, teaching resources, student work samples.

Analysis:

Analysis of the data sources above will be used to determine the effectiveness of the two initiatives in driving collaborative practice amongst teachers.

Implications:

Findings from the analysis will inform future actions including additional professional learning.

Strategic Direction 3: Effective Feedback

Purpose

Feedback is a key element in driving ongoing learning, assessment and reporting. Providing frequent and ongoing feedback is a significant means of improving achievement in learning. Effective feedback to students (from teachers and peers) enables them to understand how to progress from their current state of knowledge and skills to increased proficiency and complexity.

Effective feedback to teachers (from students) ensures that teachers understand student learning preferences and enables them to make more effective decisions about classroom teaching and learning.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2022

Uplift of student attendance data for over 90% of time by 4.3%.

Target year: 2023

100% teachers will use formative assessment to understand student learning progress and plan for future learning.

Target year: 2024

100% teachers provide effective feedback to students enabling them to make effective decisions about the next steps in their learning.

Initiatives

Culture of Feedback

Merrylands High School will develop a whole-school approach to feedback, based on research. This will provide a consistent experience for all students, and promote a common language for teachers to discuss student progress and outcomes.

- Establish a rich culture where students can improve by receiving constant feedback about their learning.
- Teachers will refine strategies that encourage students to self-assess, reflect and monitor their work.
- Teachers will elicit feedback from students, constantly finding ways to know how every student learns best.

Assessment

A focus on effective formative assessment practices will empower teachers to make adjustments and respond to student learning and understanding. Teacher feedback will be used to communicate assessment information and to provide advice on student improvement. The school will embed processes for ongoing collaborative data analysis, leading to the setting of clear targets that address the next steps in student learning.

- Analysis of data sources and other student progress measures will strengthen feedback provided, in order to improve student learning outcomes.
- Teachers will embed formative assessment practices in the classroom.
- Whole school approaches on effective assessment, consistent judgement of and moderation of assessment.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

Parents are presented with clear information on what and how well their children are learning and receive regular information in accessible formats about how to support their children's progress. The school elicits feedback on its reporting from parents (SEF-Parent Engagement).

Feedback from students on their learning derived from assessments (formative and summative) informs further teaching (SEF-Student Engagement).

Student feedback is elicited by teachers and informs their teaching. Student errors and misunderstandings are explicitly addressed until teachers and students are confident that mastery is demonstrated. (SEF-Feedback).

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Questions:

To what extent is teacher feedback improving student outcomes? How has teaching practice been enhanced through student feedback and assessment?

Data:

Student feedback to teachers, annotations on student work, reports to parents, student voice, completed feedback templates, MHS Teaching and Learning Survey and TTFM.

Analysis:

Analysis of the data sources above will support further improvements to feedback, assessment and reporting practices.

Comparison of reports to parents/carers will be used to assess improvements in language to explain student progress.

Implications:

Findings from the analysis will inform future actions.