

# Strategic Improvement Plan 2022-2026

## Thornton Public School 3204



# School vision and context

## School vision statement

In partnership with our community, we are committed to providing a high performing and inclusive public school where every student is known, valued and cared for. Students learn in a safe and supportive environment, which develops respectful, responsible and resilient learners, underpinned by quality teaching and leadership practices.

Teachers work within a culture underpinned by data analysis and high expectations where professional learning is focused on continual improvement of teaching and learning. Instructional leadership drives effective evidence based practice leading to strong outcomes in literacy and numeracy for all students.

## School context

Thornton Public School, situated North West of Newcastle in the lower Hunter, is set on 22 acres with large green spaces, playing fields and a stand of old growth forest cared for by community land-care initiatives. Our school is an inclusive primary school that caters for students from Kindergarten to Year 6 and in 2023 had 769 students in 32 classes with three support classes. Our teachers cater for the individual educational, social and emotional needs of all students.

Our school has approximately 14% of students and 8% of staff members who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Our school has an established Junior Aboriginal Educational Consultative Committee that meets weekly to provide student voice in relation to key initiatives and building student leadership capacity. Cultural Groups, Personalised Learning Pathways and celebrations for significant events including NAIDOC, Reconciliation Week and Indigenous Literacy Day foster respectful relationships and a sense of belonging within an inclusive community. We value our partnership with the local AECG, with a number of staff attending meetings, one staff member being the elected secretary of the Maitland AECG and another staff member the elected Maitland representative of the Hunter AECG.

Within our student population, on average 12% of students come from families with one or more parents working for the Defence Force predominantly from Williamtown RAAF base. We have a significant Defence Housing community within our drawing area. Students from defence families typically attend a number of schools during their school life as a result of regular postings to other bases around the country. Students can also be impacted by parents being deployed overseas throughout the school year. The school employs a Defence School Mentor to assist children and families to integrate into our school and the community and provides a link to defence support services. The mentor also helps to organise commemorative events such as ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day.

Thornton PS has 12% of students with additional needs who receive funding support to enable them to access the best educational and social outcomes possible. We have established a wellbeing hub, sensory room and sensory playground to cater for students with additional support needs. There are currently three support classes housed within the school - ED, AU and IM support classes.

The school encourages students to meet high social and behavioural expectations of respect, responsibility and resilience. A well-being hub has been established, aimed at increasing relational capacities in staff and students. Staff and student connections are built on positive regard and positive emotion. Wellbeing hub staff teach social and emotional intelligence, build friendships and teamwork and develop stamina for attention and strategies for managing distraction. A non-teaching executive member provides regular check-ins with students in their classrooms and opportunities for those students to spend time as necessary in our sensory room. They provide predictable, consistent timetabled support and opportunities for mindful practice using the Berry Street Education Model.

Classroom and whole-school strategies are developed to promote well-being in an attempt to improve academic success. Individual well-being plans with a focus on physical and

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emotional regulation of the stress response and de-escalation are developed for both in school and classroom. These plans offer opportunities throughout the day for students to elect individualised time to both co-regulate and self-regulate emotions, reactivity and impulses.

The school has a *Transition Support Teacher - Early Years (TST-EY)* employed in partnership with the Gateway Learning Community of schools. The TST-EY is a pre-emptive, cross-sector position, engaged to work with staff and families across children's and community services and schools. The focus is on supporting optimal transitions through early identification and support of children and families with additional learning and support needs. The role initiates and leads contact with feeder children's and community services to foster positive partnerships with children and families in the 12-months prior-to-school entry, with an emphasis on all stakeholders "working together" to build capacity and create success for school. This key strategy has recently been recognised with grant funding through the Fair Education, Schools Plus projects, received a 2020 Secretary's Award for Excellence as an Outstanding School Initiative, and was acknowledged in a Parliamentary Mention, by Ms Sonia Horner, in the form of a Community Recognition Statement.

The school continued to use aspects of the Bump It Up Strategy and is self-funding additional learning and support teachers as well as additional Assistant Principals Curriculum and Instruction to support the NSW State Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan. Staff are committed to ongoing professional learning and development that promote reflection on best practice, evidence-based teaching pedagogy while demonstrating life-long learning skills through commitment to improvement for students.

The school delivers strong programs in music, performing arts, sport and our Aerobics team won the National title in 2018 and 2019. We provide a challenging and creative environment where technology enhances student learning and an effective Bring Your Own Device Program is implemented.

We are committed to working with our community to meet their aspirations as identified in our Tell Them From Me data. The school works to embrace ties with the wider community and have developed a range of programs in partnership with and acknowledging community, cultural and individual student needs. Maitland Baptist Church are in partnership with TPS to provide Out Of School Hours care to Thornton families. We also have significant partnerships with local businesses who sponsor programs for music and transition to school programs. A Peace Garden has been established as part of our 100 year celebrations recognising the service of many of our families in the defence of our country and is sponsored by the Defence Force Australia.

Thornton Public School has a strong partnership with the University of Newcastle and connection to its Quality Teaching Academy. Over 70% of teachers have participated in the Quality Teaching Rounds, research, building reflective practices and driving improvement in teaching and learning through the QTA. All teachers engage with the Quality Teaching Model and the Assessment Practice Guide. A number of teachers have contributed to the development of the QTA and its research-based pedagogy. This has led to our school

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leadership team driving the QTR initiative across the Gateway Learning Community to build teacher collective efficacy, improve student outcomes and continuity of learning for all students at transition points. Working in close partnership with other schools in the Gateway Learning Community promotes a strong sense of wider community and supports the learning opportunities for students and staff.

Following a thorough situational analysis in 2021 and completing External Validation, we have identified areas of improvement to implement into our strategic improvement plan. The key areas for improvement have been determined as follows:

**Collaboration** - Time allocated into staff professional learning schedules to promote collaborative planning and build collective teacher efficacy.

**Evidence-based practice** - Integrate professional expertise with evidence-based research to improve quality teaching and learning. This integration of professional expertise will be consistently applied across K-6 and will target expected growth in Numeracy.

**Effective use of data and assessment** - There will be a focus on developing teacher capacity through professional learning to clearly understand how to analyse, interpret and extrapolate data. This process will collaboratively inform teaching practice and direct individualised student learning.

**Wellbeing** - There will be a continued focus on implementing evidence-based practices that promote the positive wellbeing of students and staff. We need to develop opportunities to establish student voice across K-6.

**Leadership** - The core aim of the leadership domain is to focus on implementing and maintaining a consistent and sustainable model of leadership across K-6 that supports a culture of high expectations. Thornton Public School will provide students with the opportunity to be part of a high performing and inclusive school that establishes and builds on genuine positive partnerships with the community.

# Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

## Purpose

Improve student learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy through developing and sustaining whole school processes, which incorporate evidence-informed strategies and embed high expectations. High quality explicit teaching and learning is driven by the use of data-informed practice to attain and promote continuous student growth.

## Improvement measures

### Reading growth

Achieve by year: 2023

An increase in Check-in Assessment mean scaled score for reading in Year 3 and 5 for 2023 compared with Year 3 and 5 in 2022.

### Numeracy growth

Achieve by year: 2023

An increase in Check-in Assessment mean scaled score for numeracy in Year 3 and 5 for 2023 compared with Year 3 and 5 in 2022.

## Initiatives

### Literacy

In Literacy, we will develop and sustain whole school processes for collecting and analysing data. The evaluation of this data will regularly be used to inform:

- Evidence-informed strategies, including Instructional Leadership, that embed high expectations to attain and promote continuous student growth
- Teacher professional learning and school resourcing
- Student learning goals that describe in student language what students should know and be able to do by the end of a period of instruction
- Student success criteria - which is a list of features that the teacher wants the student to include in their work during the lesson.

### Numeracy

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## Success criteria for this strategic direction

- A consistent approach to the collection and analysis of data to inform practice
- Consistent teacher judgment is evident across the school
- All teachers effectively draw upon a range of explicit teaching strategies that are responsive to the needs of the students
- All students articulate, understand their learning goals and take ownership for achieving them
- Professional learning is targeted and its impact on the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes is evaluated. There are explicit systems for collaboration and feedback to support a culture of high expectations, resulting in sustained and measureable whole school improvement.

## Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

### Question

Has the school developed whole school processes for collecting and analysing data to inform evidenced formed strategies, professional learning and school resourcing?

### Data

NAPLAN Student Growth

PAT

Scout

Year One Phonics Assessment

Literacy and Numeracy PLAN Data

Student Learning Goals

Work Samples

Observations

# Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

## Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

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Google Form exit slips

Teaching & Learning Handbook

Assessment Schedule

Class assessment data sheets

### Analysis

Ongoing analysis of data sources will be utilised to monitor our progress towards initiatives and measure impact. Analysis will guide evidence-based teaching and learning programs and drive professional learning opportunities with Instructional leader and dialogue.

### Implications

The findings of the analysis will inform:

- Future actions
- Annual reporting on school progress measures (published in the Annual Report each year and in the newsletter and on the School Website throughout the year).
- School resourcing & budgeting

## Strategic Direction 2: Well-being & Collaboration

### Purpose

Create and sustain a teaching and learning environment that promotes a proactive and positive approach to wellbeing in which every student is known, valued and cared for. Our shared vision is to support students to connect, succeed and thrive within a safe and supportive learning environment. Strong collaborative partnerships underpin all aspects of our school's operation and combine to produce effective citizens of the future.

### Improvement measures

Achieve by year: 2026

In the area of Wellbeing the school is moving from Sustaining and Growing to Excelling.

Achieve by year: 2026

In the area of Learning Culture the school is moving from Sustaining and Growing to Excelling.

#### Attendance >90%

Achieve by year: 2023

The percentage of students attending school 90% of time or more will increase 5% by 2024

#### Wellbeing

Achieve by year: 2023

Highly effective whole school 'Positive Behaviour for Learning' strategies, which promote a positive, safe and supportive learning culture, leading to an uplift in students reporting expectations for success, advocacy, and sense of belonging at school.

### Initiatives

#### Wellbeing

Within the wellbeing initiatives we will create and sustain a whole school approach to effective practices that promote high levels of wellbeing and engagement for student learning and success. This will be achieved through:

- Reviewing current wellbeing processes and how they align to the new Wellbeing Framework to establish areas to be enhanced. Use data from the self-assessment tool to embed the wellbeing framework into school culture, through ongoing staff TPL.
- Creating a shared understanding of wellbeing processes to ensure student behaviour, attendance, wellbeing, learning and engagement data is regularly analysed and evaluated.
- Embedding wellbeing and engagement practices into teaching programs as well behaviour and intervention systems (IEPs, PLPs, BMPs, RMPs, playground plans and support). Adjustments made will be informed by data from ongoing reviews to ensure improvement measures are achieved.
- Embedding the Life Skills Go pedagogy across the whole school, to support the explicit teaching of Social and Emotional Learning and self-regulation.
- Establishing a behaviour support team to run alongside the learning support team.
- Streamlining and strengthening whole school practices in consistent approaches to implementing Positive Behaviour for Learning to promote safe, supportive learning environments.
- Ongoing reviews of updated PBL systems and structures will guide future directions in explicit teaching of positive behaviours for learning.
- Aligning PBL practices with SEL initiatives to closely monitor and provide intervention based on individual patterns of student behaviour.
- Regular and explicit promotion of PBL practices to the whole school community.

### Success criteria for this strategic direction

- There is a high functioning learning community which is focused on the wellbeing of all parties for optimal performance.
- Staff show increased capacity to implement strategies for teaching students with complex trauma and/or behaviour difficulties.
- Through regular PBL, Executive meetings and community consultation, whole-school approaches to wellbeing and engagement are regularly planned, monitored and evaluated.
- Thorough collaborative processes within the Learning and Support team guide and assist all staff and parents to actively support students.
- All staff are responsible for and demonstrate a thorough understanding of wellbeing practices, to support the wellbeing and learning needs of students, in consultation with families.
- Through explicit teaching, effective communication and reflection of school values and expectations, respectful and positive relationships are evident throughout the school community.
- Teachers are engaged in strong collaboration with students and families to inform and support the continuity of learning for all students.
- Explicit systems that facilitate professional dialogue, collaboration, classroom observation and the modelling of effective practice are embedded within the school.
- A commitment to achieving the following targets in improving attendance: a decrease the amount of students arriving late and leaving early, a decrease any disparity of absenteeism between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students by increasing Aboriginal student attendance rates, and an increase the Attendance rate across the school for all students.

### Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

#### Question



## Strategic Direction 2: Well-being & Collaboration

### Initiatives

#### Collaboration

Through the engagement initiatives we will build a culture of effective collaborative partnerships between staff, students, their families and the wider community to ensure consistent and supportive environments where students connect, succeed, thrive and learn. This will be achieved through:

- Establishing high functioning Learning and Support processes where decisions about wellbeing and learning are made through consultation with all parties.
- Explicit teaching and learning programs to support student wellbeing, behaviour and learning are structured through effective collaborative practices across the whole school.
- Regularly planning for, creating and reviewing student learning goals in consultation with the teacher, student and their families to ensure ongoing future success.
- Thornton Public School Attendance Procedures document aims to provide teachers, parents and community members with an understanding of the school processes to ensure that every student has the opportunity to attend school regularly.
- Promoting the regular attendance at school as the responsibility of students, parents and school staff
- Promoting the importance of regular attendance to parents, students and staff through a variety of communication streams.

### Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Is there evidence of strong, consistent, effective wellbeing systems and practices across the school and have they had a positive impact on student and staff wellbeing and engagement?

#### Data

- TTFM staff surveys
- Scout
- Google Form anonymous staff surveys
- School wellbeing audit guided by the SEF and Wellbeing Framework
- Sentral data
- Learning Support Team processes
- Behaviour Support Team processes
- Teaching and Learning Handbook

#### Analysis

Ongoing analysis of data sources will be utilised to monitor the school's progress towards wellbeing and engagement initiatives and measure impact of initiatives on student engagement and wellbeing across the school. Analysis will guide evidence-based professional learning opportunities for all staff and guide teaching and learning programs for student benefit.

#### Implication

Increased level of staff competency in embedding wellbeing and engagement practices in their teaching and learning programs resulting in higher student engagement and increased student outcomes.

The findings of the analysis will inform:

- Future actions for professional learning
- School resourcing & budgeting for future opportunities



## Strategic Direction 3: Leadership & Innovation

### Purpose

Cultivate highly effective leadership to create a learning environment where every student has access to high-quality education. Deliver strategic leadership based on analysis, evaluation and monitoring to build efficacy, raise productivity and efficiency in teaching and learning. Research based innovative practices will underpin a culture where teaching practice is flexible, relevant and dynamic to ensure every student, teacher and leader strives for continuous improvement.

### Improvement measures

Achieve by year: 2026

In the area of Educational Leadership the school is moving from Sustaining and Growing to Excelling.

Achieve by year: 2026

The whole school community is excelling by demonstrating aspirational expectations of student leadership, engagement, motivation and expectations for learning progress and achievement for all students, and is committed to the pursuit of excellence. Effective partnerships in learning are established with parents and students mean students are motivated to deliver their best and continually improve.

Achieve by year: 2026

In the area of Learning and Development the school is moving from Sustaining and Growing to Excelling.

### Initiatives

#### Leadership

Within the Leadership initiatives, we will embed sustainable whole school processes for highly effective leadership to deliver high quality education. The evaluation of the data based on these leadership initiatives will be used to inform best practice:

- Build leadership of staff in leadership domain or an area of expertise and link with their PDP process
- Research based professional learning in leadership (practical and sustainable) for staff and students
- NESA accreditation and mentoring network

#### Innovation

Within the Innovation initiatives, we will embed sustainable whole school processes for highly effective innovation to deliver high quality education. The evaluation of the data based on these innovation initiatives will be used to raise productivity and efficiency in teaching and learning:

- Quality Teaching Rounds (PLCs)
- Current school wide technology capacity
- The use of innovative practice

### Success criteria for this strategic direction

#### Leadership

- A culture of leadership embedded with a high percentage of teachers aspiring to executive roles monitored through the PDP process
- Embedded coaching and mentoring practices ...
- 100% of early career teachers complete NESA requirements to obtain proficiency and support is given to teachers aspiring to higher accreditation levels
- Student leaders and Junior AECG team members all participate and complete targeted student based leadership initiatives to build their capacity

#### Innovation

- Targeted professional learning for teachers to build their skills in innovative practice (including BYOD) to lead, implement and reflect on their practice
- BYOD being utilised to support and engage teaching and learning
- Student motivation and engagement are measured through TTFM survey, BYOD student and teacher survey and focus groups
- Reflective teaching practices increased through teacher engagement in Quality Teaching Rounds, Swivl technology and increased teacher efficacy
- Professional Learning Communities

### Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

#### Leadership

##### Question

Has the school embedded sustainable whole school processes for highly effective leadership?

##### Data

## Strategic Direction 3: Leadership & Innovation

### Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

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Higher percentage of staff apply for leadership positions within the school through the EOI process (grade leader, roles and responsibilities)

Higher percentage of students apply for leadership positions within the school (Captains, Vice Captains, Prefects and Junior AECG and SRC representatives from each class from 2-6)

Completion of accreditation

#### Analysis

Ongoing analysis of leadership training and capacity of staff to monitor our progress towards initiatives. Analysis will guide professional learning opportunities.

#### Implication

Increased level of staff and students with the capacity to hold leadership positions and/or gained leadership positions.

#### Innovation

#### Question

Has the school embedded sustainable whole school processes for innovative practice?

#### Data

TTFM-parents and students

Surveys/focus groups

High percentage of students participating in BYOD program

By the end of 2024, at least 90% of class teachers have participated in Quality Teaching Rounds process

Increased level of innovation being used in classroom and evident in all teaching and learning programs

### Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

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#### Analysis

Ongoing analysis of innovative practice implemented in teaching and learning programs. Measured staff competency levels to monitor our progress towards initiatives. Analysis will guide professional learning opportunities.

#### Implication

Increased level of staff competency in embedding innovative practices in their teaching and learning programs resulting in higher student engagement and increased student outcomes.