

# TEACHING AND LEARNING AUDIT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – MITCHELL SS

### DATE OF AUDIT: 7 NOVEMBER 2012



#### Background:

Mitchell SS is located in the small western Queensland town of Mitchell, which is approximately 600 kilometres west of Brisbane. In 2012, approximately 140 students attended from Prep - Year 10. The student population is drawn from Mitchell, Mugallala and Amby and surrounding properties. The current principal, Mrs Carol Ann Coonan, was appointed to the school in January 2009.

#### Commendations:

- The Principal and school leaders have established and are driving a strong and focused improvement agenda for the school couched in terms of improvements in measurable student outcomes and which is aligned with state-wide improvement priorities. It includes clear targets which are being rigorously actioned across the whole school.
- Since the previous Teaching and Learning Audit significant progress has been made in the systematic and purposeful use of data and in establishing a data culture throughout the school. Regular conversations about student data now occur between school leaders, teachers, parents and students. Students regularly interact with their data through personal learning plans and the school data wall.
- Every student has a Personal Learning Plan, established in an in-depth meeting between teachers, at least one parent or carer and the student. This plan focuses primarily on the priorities identified in the school improvement agenda and is regularly referred to and updated as needed through consultation between the class teacher and student and is instrumental in helping students in developing skills to self-regulate their learning.
- Since the previous Teaching and Learning Audit an Early Learning Group (for children aged 3½ - 4½ years) and a Playgroup (for children aged 0 – 4 years) have been established to engage with local families and to help prepare children for entry to Prep. Both groups meet weekly.
- The school has significantly advanced its curriculum delivery since the previous Teaching and Learning Audit through coordinated curriculum planning and development and also through ensuring vertical alignment of the curriculum so that there is continuity and progression of learning across the years of schooling, with teaching in each year building onto and extending learning in previous years.

#### Affirmations:

- A strong collegial culture and high morale is evident amongst teachers.
- The school places a high priority on student wellbeing and has developed a supportive environment that includes a range of strategies and programs such as a Chaplain, a social and emotional intelligence resource person and the Ollie Up program for Indigenous students.
- Student behaviour is driven by the three school values of: My Job, Society and Safety. The associated 'Mi' approach has been a key strategy in building commitment and engagement with learning within the student body.
- A Stephanie Alexander Kitchen garden (Mi Kitchen Garden –MiKG) is currently under construction.
- The school works to create an attractive physical environment that supports and encourages learning that is reflective of the learning culture that the school is working to establish. This is reflected in a high level of resourcing, well maintained facilities and attractive and very well maintained grounds.

#### Recommendations:

- Continue the development of evidence-based teaching practices through the implementation of a research-based pedagogical framework. Support this with professional development, formal mentoring and coaching arrangements characterised by regular observation and evaluation of teaching practice, modelling and feedback by peers and school leaders.
- Continue to build a shared understanding of differentiation and to ensure that it is a feature of every teacher's classroom practice, by building the capacity of teachers to design and implement differentiated teaching and learning strategies within individual classrooms, including, how the



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different needs of students in their classes can be addressed, and how multiple opportunities to learn can be provided. Ensure that teachers document these adjustments into their planning.

- Continue to build a learning environment characterized by the engagement of students in challenging, meaningful learning in every classroom and consistent high expectations around student management, behaviour and attendance. In particular, investigate and implement strategies that relate specifically to the secondary years - consider alternative programs, multiple pathways, methods of instructional delivery and flexible learning opportunities.
- Review school policies, procedures and practices related to teaching and learning to ensure that sustainable and consistent practices are in place to accommodate staff turnover and experience.
- Further implement a co-ordinated approach to the Department's Developing Performance Framework, aligned with the school's improvement agenda, to inform whole of school professional learning and conversations.

