Teaching and Learning Audit

Executive Summary – Sunnybank Special

Date of Audit: 11-12 June 2013

Background:
Sunnybank Special School is an urban school located south of the Brisbane CBD. The school has a population of 39 students with disabilities P - 12. The Principal, Mrs Nicole Finch, was appointed to the school in January 2013.

Commendations:
- There has been significant progress made since the previous Teaching and Learning Audit in the domain of Systematic Curriculum Delivery. The Australian Curriculum forms the basis for all unit planning in English, mathematics, science and history and Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resources are adapted as appropriate to support individual student learning.
- The Principal and Head of Curriculum (HOC) are to be commended for the development and implementation of a documented process for the systematic collection of a range of student outcome data, including test data and quality classroom assessments, to inform teacher planning and monitor student learning.
- School leaders and staff members have developed an action plan that articulates strategies to promote appropriate behaviour and the school’s Responsible Behaviour Plan for students, outlines agreed procedures and practices, including clearly articulated responses and consequences for inappropriate behaviour. This document clearly reflects the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support processes in place.
- Support staff members have been deployed in ways that best address the learning needs of all students in the school and that make strategic use of available staff expertise and interests. Staff members speak highly of the focused learning opportunities in literacy and numeracy rotations made possible through this flexible resourcing model.

Affirmations:
- The Principal and school leaders have introduced the developing performance process with teachers and used this information to develop the Professional Learning Plan for this school year. The systemic requirements identified are being addressed currently and the next phase in 2014 will be to align teacher capacity building with the explicit improvement agenda.
- School leaders have created opportunities for teachers to work together and to learn from each other’s practice. Encourage teachers to visit other special schools to further develop their pedagogy.
- Curriculum planning time with the Head of Curriculum (HOC) is valued by class teachers and school leaders. This process ensures that there is horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment, collaborative curriculum planning and delivery.
- There are some outstanding teaching practices occurring at different junctures which can provide a platform for peer mentoring and coaching opportunities.

Recommendations:
- Develop an explicit and detailed local school improvement agenda that identifies specific improvements sought in student performance, is aligned with state-wide improvement priorities and includes clear targets with accompanying timelines, which are vigorously actioned.
- Develop a whole school pedagogical framework. Ensure clarity about what students are expected to learn and be able to do, high expectations of every student’s learning, explicit teaching of skills and content, individualised attention as required, and timely feedback to guide student actions are key elements of the school’s push for improved teaching and learning.
- School leaders need to continue to define their role as instructional leaders and to be hands on in driving evidence based teaching practices across the school.
- Continue to build teacher capacity to improve classroom teaching; to take action and monitor progress by developing more sophisticated data literacy skills.
- Develop a strong collegial and self-reflective culture in which teachers invite the Principal and colleagues to observe their teaching, discuss their work with them and provide feedback. Use objective data to reflect on the effectiveness of teaching practices.