ACT Education Directorate
Priorities & Initiatives 2016 - 2017

• SRA — School Resource Allocation (funding)
• SAS — Student Administrative System (data collection)
• AITSL — Benchmarks for teacher professional practice, engagement and growth
• QTm — A model for pedagogy to improve classroom practice and enhance student learning
• NSIT — A framework for performance and accountability
• PBL — Integrating academic and behaviour initiatives
The ACT Education Directorate’s Vision for Schools

Great Teaching By Design

People, Practice, Performance

Great Teachers By Design
National School Improvement Tool (NSIT)

1. An explicit improvement agenda
2. Analysis and discussion of data
3. A culture that promotes learning
4. Targeted use of school resources
5. An expert teaching team
6. Systematic curriculum delivery
7. Differentiated learning and teaching
8. Effective pedagogical practices
9. School-community partnerships

1 – 4 = focus on leadership
5 – 8 = focus on what happens in the classrooms

Closely linked to #3 & #4

5. An expert teaching team:
The school has found ways to build a school-wide, professional team of highly able teachers who take an active leadership role beyond the classroom. Strong procedures are in place to encourage a school-wide shared responsibility for student learning and success, and to encourage the development of a culture of continuous professional improvement that includes classroom-based learning, mentoring and coaching arrangements.

6. Systematic Curriculum Delivery
The school has a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and a clear reference for monitoring learning across the year levels. The plan, within which evidence-based teaching practices are embedded, and to which assessment and reporting procedures are aligned, has been developed with reference to the Australian Curriculum (or other approved curriculum) and refined collaboratively to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice. This plan is shared with parents and families.
7. Differentiated Teaching and Learning
The school places a high priority on ensuring that, in their day-to-day teaching, classroom teachers identify and address the learning needs of individual students, including high-achieving students. Teachers are encouraged and supported to monitor closely the progress of individuals, identify learning difficulties and tailor classroom activities to levels of readiness and need.

8. Effective Pedagogical Practices
The school principal and other school leaders recognise that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning throughout the school. They take a strong leadership role, encouraging the use of research-based teaching practices in all classrooms to ensure that every student is engaged, challenged and learning successfully. All teachers understand and use effective reaching methods – including explicit instruction – to maximise student learning.
5. An expert teaching team

**Outstanding**

The teaching staff of the school are experts in the fields in which they teach and have very high levels of pedagogical knowledge and skill, including expert knowledge of evidence-based teaching strategies.

Teachers and school leaders take personal and collective responsibility for improving student learning and wellbeing, working together and learning from each other’s practices. The sharing and showcasing of best practice are common. In team meetings there is an emphasis on the joint analysis of student work and on teaching strategies for improving student learning. Teachers collaboratively plan, deliver and review the effectiveness of lessons.

School leaders place a very high priority on the ongoing professional learning of all staff and on the development of a school-wide, self-reflective culture focused on improving classroom teaching.

School leaders participate in professional learning activities, learning alongside teachers, and the school supports teachers to continue formal study and celebrates professional success.

**Low**

The development of a professional school-wide team does not appear to be a driving consideration of the principal or other school leaders (e.g., no reference is made to the National Professional Standards for Teachers, there are no mentoring arrangements in place, teachers work largely in isolation from one another ‘behind closed doors’).

There is little evidence that school leaders are proactive in the recruitment and retention of staff.

There is little sense of a whole-school coordinated approach to professional learning and a low priority is given to enhancing staff performance.
6. Systematic curriculum delivery

**Outstanding**

The school has a clearly documented whole-school plan for curriculum delivery. This plan is aligned with the Australian or other approved curriculum and, where appropriate, system curriculum documents. The plan makes explicit what (and when) teachers should teach and students should learn. The curriculum delivery plan is being implemented throughout the school and is shared with parents and the wider community.

A strong alignment has been achieved between the overall curriculum delivery plan, term and unit plans, classroom teaching and the regular assessment of student progress in relation to curriculum expectations.

Considerable attention has been given to ensuring ‘vertical’ alignment of the curriculum so that there is continuity and progression of learning across the years of school, with teaching in each year building on to and extending learning in previous years. General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities are understood, valued and used as active learning streams for all students.

A high priority in curriculum planning is given to the progressive development of students’ deep understandings of concepts, principles and big ideas within learning areas, as well as to the ongoing development of cross-curricular skills and attributes, including teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving, and the evaluation of information and evidence.

The school places a priority on making the curriculum locally relevant and accessible to all students and values and builds on to students’ existing knowledge and varying backgrounds.

**Low**

School leaders and teachers have limited familiarity with national or system-wide curriculum documents.

The school may have a documented plan for curriculum delivery but there is little evidence that the whole-school plan drives the lesson plans of individual teachers.

The enacted school curriculum is not seen as a central concern of all teachers (eg, it is not a regular topic of conversation, a focus for assessment design or a framework against which student learning is reported).
7. Differentiated teaching and learning

Outstanding
The school leadership team actively promotes the use of differentiated teaching as a strategy for ensuring that every student is engaged and learning successfully. It is recognised throughout the school that some students require significant adjustments to their learning programs (e.g. accelerated programs, special support) if they are to be optimally engaged and challenged, and individual learning plans have been developed for those students requiring them. Differentiation is a priority of the school and feature of every teacher’s practice.

Regular data on the achievements, progress, strengths and weaknesses of individual students are used in all classrooms to make judgements about individual needs, to identity appropriate starting points for teaching and to personalise teaching and learning activities. Reports to parents and carers include details of how learning opportunities have been tailored to individual needs and of the progress individuals have made.

Low
School leaders do not place a high priority on teachers identifying and addressing individual learning needs, but are more focused on ensuring that all teachers are teaching the core year level curriculum.

Little or no classroom use is made of assessment instruments to establish starting points for teaching. Assessments tend to be used only to establish summatively how much of the taught content students have learnt.

Teachers tend to teach to the middle of the class, with the expectation that some students will not master the content, and finding ways to occupy more able students who finish work early.

Reports to parents tend to be summative reports of how students have performed, with little guidance on what parents might do to assist in their children’s learning.
8. Effective pedagogical practices

**Outstanding**

The principal and other school leaders have accepted personal responsibility for driving improvements in teaching throughout the school. They demonstrate a strong conviction that improved teaching is the key to improved student learning and have clear and well-known positions on the kinds of teaching that they wish to see occurring.

All teachers and leaders are committed to identifying, understanding and implementing better teaching methods, and a high priority is given to evidence-based teaching strategies (strategies that have been demonstrated through research and practice to be highly effective).

School leaders spend time working with teachers to improve their teaching practices, including modelling, evaluating and providing feedback on classroom teaching.

**Low**

School leaders do not appear to have strong views on the characteristics of highly effective teaching. There is little evidence that they are driving an agenda to change or enhance teaching practices across the school.

The principal and other school leaders spend very little time on issues related to teaching. Questions of pedagogy appear to be viewed solely as the responsibility of teachers. There is little obvious school-wide discussion or consideration of highly effective teaching methods.

There may be a lack of explicitness about what students are expected to know and be able to do as a result of classroom activities, very little explicit teaching, limited attention to individual learning needs, or low expectations on the part of teachers that all students in the room will master the content of lessons. Classroom activities frequently have the appearance of ‘busy work’.
Our Differentiated Curriculum Journey

Stormy Days

Sunny Days
Ongoing Professional Learning

A Scope & Sequence of the Australian Curriculum

Based on Research – Best-practice teaching
Developing Units of Work

Universal & timeless statements

Having an Overarching Concept

Starting with the end in mind.
Delivering a three-column approach (Structured, Core, Extended)

Ensuring ‘Outstanding’ units of work

Refining higher order questions and Abstract reasoning

Developing Benchmarks for Assessment

Assessment: Summative and Formative Assessment Strategies

Driving great teaching/teachers by design
2017...

Helen Cox, Leader of Achievement and Potential