Tinaroo Environmental Education Centre
Audit findings and response
2011

Audit conducted by Deb Murphy
05/09/2011
Audit findings and response for Tinaroo Environmental Education Centre

Below is the completed audit report, including both the auditor's findings and your response where relevant.

An explicit improvement agenda
The school leadership team has established and is driving a strong improvement agenda for the school, grounded in evidence from research and practice, and couched in terms of improvements in measurable student outcomes, especially in literacy, numeracy and science. Explicit and clear school-wide targets for improvement have been set and communicated, with accompanying timelines.

Rating: High

Commendations:
The Principal and teachers are committed and passionate about the centre's improvement agenda and demonstrate a united ownership of the strategic direction. The centre has developed an explicit agenda for improvement focused on refined pedagogy and curriculum, embedding Information Communication Technology (ICT) in practice, building the capacity of staff members to meet the needs of students, and exemplary practice in environmental sustainability. The Principal and teachers can clearly describe and communicate the improvements they wish to see in student behaviours and outcomes as a result of their work in these areas.

Affirmations:
There is evidence of a centre-wide commitment to every student's success and teachers tell stories of student improvement and success. The Principal and teachers have analysed a range of data and use this information to inform the improvement agenda. The team approach and commitment of the Principal and the teachers is clearly evident through the willingness to share in the development of resources and strategies across all areas of the improvement agenda. The Principal and teachers explore best practice in environmental education and they engage in sourcing and reflecting on current research to plan for improvement.

Recommendations:
Further refine and make explicit an improvement agenda focused on the core learning priorities. Continue to collect and analyse student performance data so that the improvement agenda is informed and directed by student achievement data and feedback that you are planning to collect and analyse. Develop and document clear targets and timelines that are aligned to the improvement agenda and describe progress in terms of student achievement and success. Develop processes to support teachers to use data on a regular basis to monitor the effectiveness of their efforts to meet improvement targets.

Principal's response and proposed set of actions:
Implement a trial formal process for identifying environmental and personal goals to be achieved whilst on camp and mechanisms to measure the transference of these goals over time back in the classroom.
Analysis and discussion of data
A high priority is given to the school-wide analysis and discussion of systematically collected data on student outcomes, including academic, attendance and behavioural outcomes. Data analyses consider overall school performance as well as the performances of students from identified priority groups; evidence of improvement/regression over time; performances in comparison with like-schools; and, in the case of data from tests such as NAPLAN, measures of student growth across the years of school.

Rating: High

Commendations:
A range of data is collected, including pre and post visit data and data relating to student learning, client satisfaction and teacher feedback. Time is set aside for in-depth staff discussions and analysis of data and the development of strategies for the continuous improvement of students’ learning experiences and learning outcomes. The Principal and teachers use data to build a culture of self-evaluation and reflection within the centre and to inform programming and planning with partner schools.

Affirmations:
There is clear evidence that the Principal and teachers view reliable, timely student data as essential to their effective leadership of the centre. The teachers effectively use appropriate software to collect, store and support the analysis of data.

Recommendations:
Further refine a systematic plan for the collection, analysis and use of student, teacher and program data to inform planning for program development and delivery. Consider collating and analysing assessment data in the Key Learning Areas (KLAs) to monitor improvement over time and to provide information to support future planning for the centre.

Principal’s response and proposed set of actions:
Develop our iPad surveys to include assessment data on student learning in literacy and numeracy content from our activities.
A culture that promotes learning

The school is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents. There is a strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers and school leaders. The school works to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant, inclusive and that promotes intellectual rigour.

Rating: Outstanding

Commendations:
The Principal and staff members have embedded a culture of high expectation, a commitment to teaching excellence and student engagement in all learning experiences within their programs. There is clear evidence that all teachers work in the belief that through hands on, experiential learning every student will learn, improve and achieve to the best of their ability. All teachers and staff members demonstrate through their day-to-day practice a belief in the importance of positive and caring relationships to successful learning. They design programs and activities that support mutually respectful relationships with students, visiting teachers and partners in environmental education. A strong collegial culture has been established, the Principal and teachers demonstrate a commitment to the ongoing improvement of teaching in the context of environmental education. This is evidenced by their willingness to observe each other’s work and provide feedback about program design and teaching practice.

Affirmations:
There is a sense of purpose and an optimistic feel to the centre and it is clear that the success of students is a high priority for all staff members. There is clear evidence of consistently high levels of student engagement and the wellbeing, safety and success of students is given high priority by all staff members. Attractive and challenging learning environments that support and encourage experiential learning and risk taking in a safe and supportive environment have been successfully created. All staff members have an obvious sense of belonging and pride in the centre and enthusiastically tell stories of student successes and learning.

Recommendations:
Continue to develop and nurture a collegial culture in which teachers are confident and open to inviting each other to critique their practice against a set of agreed standards.

Principal’s response and proposed set of actions:
Continue to develop and nurture a collegial culture in which teachers are confident and open to inviting each other to critique their practice against a set of agreed standards.
Targeted use of school resources
The school applies its resources (staff time, expertise, funds, facilities, materials) in a targeted manner to meet the learning needs of all students. It has school wide policies, practices and programs in place to assist in identifying and addressing student needs. Flexible structures and processes enable the school to respond appropriately to the needs of individual learners.

Rating: Outstanding

Commendations:
The Principal and leadership team give high priority to addressing learning needs of all students across all contexts of learning. Policies and procedures are in place to identify and respond to the diverse range of student needs in all learning contexts through the allocation of staff and resources. Staff members are deployed in ways that best address the learning needs of all students in the centre and that make best use of available staff expertise and interests. Opportunities and creative solutions to further develop its resources and programs are explored.

Affirmations:
Processes have been developed through pre-visit data collection to identify student learning needs and are continuing to refine processes for allocating resources to meet these needs. Physical environment and facilities are developed, maintained and used effectively to maximise student learning to create an exemplary model of sustainability and care for the environment. The centre forms successful partnerships with the other agencies to build and expand available resources to significantly enhance the development and delivery of learning opportunities for its students.

Recommendations:
Continue to explore strategies to collect student profile data that provides information to further refine programs and activities to meet the specific learning needs of students.

Principal's response and proposed set of actions:
Continue to explore strategies to collect student profile data that provides information to further refine programs and activities to meet the specific learning needs of students. See also my response to Dimension 1.
An expert teaching team
The school has found ways to build a professional team of highly able teachers including 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.

Rating: Outstanding

Commendations:
The teachers are experts in teaching environmental education. They have very high levels of confidence and competence in teaching environmental education across the KLAS. All teachers are eager to expand their skills and knowledge, and to learn how to improve on their current teaching practices. There is a clear expectation that all teachers will be highly committed to the continuous improvement of their own teaching. They routinely reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching practice and engage in mentoring and coaching to support improved personal performance.

Affirmations:
The Principal and teachers take personal and collective responsibility for improving student learning, work as team and learn from each other. There is clear evidence that the Principal and teachers see the development of staff members into an expert teaching team as an ongoing priority for the centre. There is a documented Professional Learning Plan that identifies current centre priorities and is linked to the centre’s improvement agenda. The centre is implementing the Developing Performance Framework (DPF) and uses this as the basis for professional discussions with teachers.

Recommendations:
Consider further development of the school Professional Learning Plan to include formalised arrangements for mentoring and coaching. Consider support from colleagues outside the centre to further enrich the learning for teachers. Formalise the processes of critique and feedback to teachers using standards and criteria related to the priorities of the improvement agenda. Continue to embed the expectation that all teachers will be highly committed to the continuous improvement of their own teaching.

Principal’s response and proposed set of actions:
Further develop our Professional Learning Plan to include formalised arrangements for mentoring and coaching. Have all teaching staff complete PD on the coaching (profiling) process.
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 and refined collaboratively to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice. This plan is shared with parents and caregivers.

Rating: **High**

**Commendations:**
There is a shared leadership model for the design and development of the curriculum. All teachers take an active role in the critiquing of program and lesson development. There is a clearly documented whole of school plan for curriculum delivery that includes activity and program overviews that map the relevant Essential Learning’s and Ways of Working in the key learnings of English, mathematics, science, Health and Physical Education (HPE) and Study of Society and Environment (SOSE).

**Affirmations:**
The curriculum plan identifies the teaching and learning priorities and the requirements as set out in the P to 12 Curriculum Framework. The curriculum plan reflects a shared vision for the school and provides a context for delivering the required curriculum as detailed in the Queensland Curriculum and Reporting Framework (QCARF). Higher order thinking skills are taught within the context of environmental education. Literacy and numeracy skills are embedded in the planning and delivery of programs and activities.

**Recommendations:**
Map and document the planned inclusion of higher order thinking, literacy and numeracy across activities and programs to ensure coverage and alignment. Undertake the design and implementation of planned assessment to assess and report on student learning and achievement with particular reference to the assessable elements in the KLAs.

**Principal’s response and proposed set of actions:**
Explore how we can include assessable elements in our whole school Plan and website. Explore how we can get visiting teachers to take the opportunity to assess their students while visiting. Perhaps develop a proforma that will encourage visiting teachers to collect anecdotal observations of every student in their group.
Differentiated classroom learning

In their day-to-day teaching, classroom teachers place a high priority on identifying and addressing the learning needs of individual students. Teachers closely monitor the progress of individuals, identify learning difficulties and tailor classroom activities to levels of readiness and need.

Rating: High

Commendations:
The Principal and teachers actively promote the use of differentiated teaching as a strategy for ensuring that every student is engaged and learning successfully. Teaching practices reflect the belief that, although students are at different stages in their learning and may be progressing at different rates, all students are capable of learning successfully if motivated and given appropriate learning opportunities and support. The teachers consistently work to understand where students are up to in their learning, including their current knowledge, skills, learning challenges and misunderstandings, to identify starting points for teaching. Teachers closely monitor the progress of individual students and continually adjust their teaching in response to the progress that individuals are making.

Affirmations:
Teachers tailor their teaching to student needs and readiness. They respond to differences in cultural knowledge and experiences, catering for individual differences by offering multiple means of representation, engagement and expression. Planning shows how the different needs of students are addressed, and how multiple opportunities to learn are provided.

Recommendations:
Collect, analyse and use student profile data to plan for adjustments in teaching and the differentiation of tasks, learning experiences and assessment to meet the needs of individual students. Continue to explicitly plan for multiple opportunities for students to learn, especially in the context of higher order thinking skills and relevant literacy and numeracy associated with learning experiences and activities. Consider establishing a systematic approach to the development of individual student learning goals to assist students monitor their own learning and to set goals for future learning.

Principal's response and proposed set of actions:
Establish a systematic approach to developing individual student learning goals to assist students to monitor their own learning and set goals for future learning. See also response to Dimension 1.
Effective teaching practices
The school principal and other school leaders recognise that highly effective teaching practices are 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 teaching methods - including explicit instruction - to maximise student learning.

Rating: Outstanding

Commendations:
The Principal and teachers are passionate about teaching in the context of environmental education. They demonstrate outstanding commitment to the ongoing improvement of their planning, teaching and personal performance. Teachers are clear about the pedagogies they employ to maximise student learning in the context of environmental education. They clearly articulate methodologies that engage students in experiential, hands on learning and reflective practice.

Affirmations:
The Principal and teachers have accepted personal responsibility for driving improvements in teaching in all contexts of their work. They routinely spend time modelling, evaluating and providing feedback on each other’s teaching practice. Teachers provide students with timely instructional feedback and model reflective practices to embed deep learning. All teachers are committed to continuous improvement in teaching practices and set high standards in their day-to-day practice of teaching. Clarity about what students are expected to learn and be able to do, high expectations of every student’s learning, explicit teaching of skills, content and individualised attention as required are key elements of teaching.

Recommendations:
Formalise the practices of critique and feedback to each other through the development of specific personal goals directly related to excellence in teaching. Further explore the range of possibilities for providing students with instructional feedback.

Principal’s response and proposed set of actions:
See my response to Dimension 5. Explore the production of short videos (available on our "kids section" on our website) that will assist students to understand the activities they will encounter on a visit. This will assist with students setting personal goals and allow TEEC staff to expose visiting students to the technical literacies of these activities.