

Insights to inform school practice

School and Region Reviews
Insights paper
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School reviews in Queensland provide powerful insights into school practice. With every state school and centre reviewed by the School and Region Reviews branch every four years, reviews are an opportunity to consider changes in practice over time and to identify areas for continuous improvement across the system.

Implementing systematic curriculum for every student in every classroom

Systematic curriculum delivery matters. Curriculum is among Hattie's top six factors statistically linked to academic achievement (Hattie 2009, p. 31).

While the way teachers teach is critical to empowering student learning, curriculum delivery has a significant bearing on students progressively acquiring deep knowledge and key capabilities across the range of learning areas. This underpins students becoming 'successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens' (ACARA n.d.). Systematic curriculum delivery is a key lever for achieving that next lift in quality learning outcomes for students.

Domain six of the *National School Improvement Tool* is systematic curriculum delivery. Located in the middle of the [School Improvement Hierarchy](#), systematic curriculum delivery refers to the mechanisms and processes that facilitate effective curriculum practice. It encompasses planning, monitoring, assessment and reporting aligned to the Australian Curriculum.

This paper shares insights from reviews conducted in Queensland state schools and centres across Semester 2 in 2021 and Term 1, 2022. It identifies steps schools can

take to systematically deliver the curriculum. In particular, it focuses on curriculum planning, building knowledge and understanding, quality assurance and moderation.

How does the *National School Improvement Tool* describe 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.'

ACER 2012, p. 12

School reviews in Semester 2, 2021 and Term 1, 2022 (total: 172)

School types			
P-6	Secondary	P-9/10/12	Other*
127	26	9	10

* Comprises three special schools and seven outdoor and environmental education centres.

Key findings from school reviews

An analysis of review reports illustrates that recommendations about curriculum planning, knowledge and understanding, quality assurance and moderation practices are interconnected and interdependent. Recommendations about curriculum planning included considerations about building staff capability and quality assuring curriculum delivery. Similarly, recommendations about staff knowledge and understanding included building skills in the other three areas: planning, moderation and quality assurance of the curriculum. Together, these practices are integral in every school to systematically implement the curriculum.

Systematic curriculum delivery



► Planning

Nearly two thirds of schools reviewed received recommendations about planning the curriculum. Recommendations suggested that schools:

- develop, embed or refine their curriculum planning **processes or approach**
- provide or strengthen **opportunities for staff** to regularly and collaboratively plan the curriculum
- ensure there are widely understood whole-school **agreed expectations** about curriculum planning.

School review recommendations for some schools emphasised the need for renewal processes to review and refine **curriculum plans**. In some cases, review reports recommended schools to review or develop a clear and accessible assessment overview or schedule.



Review recommendations about curriculum planning identified focus areas for schools to consider. These were about:

- ensuring coverage and **delivery of the Australian Curriculum**, including achievement standards, cross-curriculum priorities, general capabilities, learning intentions, success criteria or locally contextualised curriculum
- **alignment of practices** and documents that support teaching and learning, such as: use of data, elements of the Australian Curriculum, the sequence of curriculum delivery, curriculum intent and assessment, the P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework, or system expectations
- building **staff capability** to enact **quality assurance** of curriculum delivery
- documenting, implementing or enhancing the **three levels of planning**.

► Knowledge and understanding

Over a half of schools were given recommendations related to supporting staff knowledge and understanding of curriculum content and delivery. A significant proportion of these recommendations were about providing opportunities for teachers to build or strengthen their capability to **plan and implement the Australian Curriculum**. This included building knowledge and understanding of:

- general capabilities, cross-curriculum priorities or learning areas
- achievement standards, content descriptions or marking guides to support consistency of teacher judgements
- the intent and vertical alignment of the Australian Curriculum
- how to plan, develop and implement locally relevant and engaging curriculum.

Review recommendations also referred to providing professional development to build staff capability in

moderation or quality assurance. Some suggested using the four phases of moderation to build knowledge and understanding of the Australian Curriculum. These skills supported practices in:

- making curriculum decisions and teacher judgements
- monitoring learning progress or moderation.

Some review recommendations highlighted the importance of building the **instructional capability of school leaders** in curriculum delivery. These skills aimed to support school leaders in:

- coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student progress
- leading curriculum, teaching and learning as part of a cohesive, coordinated and systematic approach to school improvement
- curriculum design, quality assurance and line of sight
- driving a culture of learning.

► Quality assurance

More than half of review reports received recommendations about quality assurance. These suggested that schools:

- develop or implement processes to quality assure the planning of the Australian Curriculum
- establish or implement agreed, systematic practices to ensure the planned curriculum is the enacted curriculum.

Review reports suggested that a review stage of curriculum planning, the four junctures of moderation, and extended moderation processes could be used for quality assurance.

Review recommendations also suggested schools develop a model of **instructional leadership** to support

quality curriculum delivery. These recommendations were about using visible leadership strategies, systematic or whole-school instructional leadership processes, or purposeful classroom-based curriculum leadership routines, habits and behaviours to:

- support teachers' curriculum and pedagogical development
- monitor student progress and outcomes in line with the explicit improvement priorities
- provide curriculum line of sight
- systematically monitor and support the implementation of the curriculum for consistency, fidelity and clarity in classrooms at all levels.

► Moderation

Half of schools reviewed were given recommendations on moderation. These suggested that schools:

- refine, expand or enact **existing assessment practices** or processes (a small proportion of reviews identified the need for schools to develop assessment practices)
- include, enhance or embed the use of **the four-phase model** (before, after, after, end) of moderation.

A large proportion of review reports recommended that schools use or extend moderation with like schools or clusters, as well as within their own school. The objectives of extending moderation were to:

- develop **staff capability** in allocating levels of achievement, making judgements, and enhancing understanding of the Australian Curriculum
- add **consistency or rigour** to assessment practices, teacher judgements, assigning levels of achievement, and applying curriculum standards
- **quality assure** assessment standards or the enactment of planned curriculum.



To generate discussion ...

- How does our school enable regular and dedicated collaborative planning opportunities for year level or faculty teams to discuss, monitor, plan and implement the curriculum across the school?
- What processes are in place for moderation at each stage of curriculum implementation within the teaching and learning cycle?
- How do we ensure the intended curriculum is enacted across all classrooms in our school? What practices help to build consistency and continuity across year levels and learning areas?
- What opportunities for capability development are there for teachers and leaders to continuously build knowledge and skills in contemporary curriculum and instructional leadership practices?
- What planning and review cycles are in place to reflect on the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and inform future planning in our school?



Practical considerations for systematic curriculum delivery

Implement systematic curriculum planning, monitoring and moderation practices

- Collaboratively maintain a documented whole-school plan, as part of three levels of planning, aligned with the Australian Curriculum and tailored to ensure it is locally relevant and engaging for students.
- Dedicate time for regular collaborative curriculum planning opportunities for teaching teams.
- Schedule opportunities for curriculum and assessment moderation in each stage of the teaching and learning cycle.
- Build in curriculum reflection and review processes to inform future planning and implementation.
- Continuously build on curriculum planning and resources available to staff in a centrally-organised and accessible way.

Support the development of curriculum expertise from beginning to mastery

- Provide professional learning opportunities for all staff, differentiated to their role, experience and learning areas, to continue to build their knowledge and skills to plan and implement the Australian Curriculum.
- Draw from in-house teaching expertise to share and develop curriculum expertise across the school.
- Facilitate collegial engagement and opportunities for peer observation and feedback on classroom curriculum and pedagogical practices.
- Facilitate access to professional learning for teaching teams to build shared understanding and practice in assessment literacy and moderation practices.
- Invest in instructional leadership development for school and middle leaders in their respective roles, supporting and enabling school-wide systematic curriculum delivery.

Ensure consistent and coherent curriculum implementation in every classroom

- Ensure instructional leaders have line of sight across the curriculum — seek to ensure the intended curriculum is enacted in all classrooms.
- Implement processes to ensure curriculum delivery, alignment and rigour within and across year levels and learning areas in line with the school-wide plan.
- Engage in face-to-face or online moderation activities with other schools to expand professional networks and quality assure curriculum and assessment practices.
- Engage staff and leaders in monitoring student progress and achievement for the whole school and cohort, and for disaggregated student groups, to identify learning strengths and areas of future focus.
- Implement periodic review processes to reflect and inform curriculum planning for the next stage.

School snapshot

Case study: Lifting staff and student agency at Browns Plains State School through systematic curriculum delivery

'A better place to be' is the motto at Browns Plains State School, a school of about 600 students to the south east of Brisbane. Through sequenced curriculum delivery, Browns Plains is empowering both teachers and students, giving everyone ownership of their learning. Staff and student agency is enabled through ongoing professional learning, collaborative curriculum planning and systematic moderation.

Professional learning

After a school review in 2017, Browns Plains focused on developing a contextually relevant curriculum and building staff capability. To support this work, teachers embarked on a journey of professional development, differentiated and aligned to their annual performance development plans. The principal and school leaders enable this process through ongoing conversations driven by teacher voice. Engaging with New Pedagogies for Deep Learning empowers all staff to deliver a curriculum that gives students opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in different ways.

Curriculum development and planning

Curriculum development and alignment at Browns Plains is led by a core group of teachers who are keen to build their curriculum capability. Through a cycle of inquiry and forward planning, staff examine evidence of practice and analyse student data. The provision of differentiated professional development enables teachers to develop a deep understanding of the Australian Curriculum and ensure that the school's plan for systematic curriculum delivery aligns with curriculum, assessment and reporting framework (P-12 CARF) requirements. Through these collaborative processes, teachers develop leadership skills to drive teaching and learning.

The Head of Department — Curriculum models expectations at a unit planning level through a model of gradual release of responsibility, to build clarity for all teachers. These processes are supported by the three levels of planning, developed in consultation with staff and aligned with units of learning across all learning areas. Student voice is captured to reflect the local context and respond to the needs of all learners.

Moderation

The school is creative in scheduling the four phases of moderation using staff meetings as required to provide

dedicated time for each phase. These meetings are held regularly within the school, and with cluster schools, to share knowledge and quality assure practices. Teachers take on the lead roles as moderation facilitators. Each moderation juncture is used to review and triangulate student progress and achievement results, ensure consistency of judgements and expectations for teaching and learning, and plan targeted teaching and learning for the next stage.

Outcomes

With opportunities to engage in collaborative learning, planning and quality assurance, teacher confidence in delivering the curriculum at Browns Plains has grown. Teachers are empowering their students by delivering an engaging and contextualised curriculum, responsive to student voice. As a result, school leaders and teachers at Browns Plains State School report significant upward trends in student engagement and overall levels of achievement.

'Keeping my students at the centre of their learning and figuring out their likes, loves and their curiosities has allowed me to mould our units in a way where they are all engaged and love their learning.'

— Classroom teacher



For further details about this case study, email the School and Region Reviews branch at reviews@qed.qld.gov.au.

School snapshot

Case study: Collaborative curriculum delivery at Depot Hill State School

Depot Hill State School is working collaboratively with its small school cluster to deliver a quality curriculum to every student. Located on the south side of Rockhampton, the school educates 63 students from Prep to Year 6. Depot Hill State School's improvement journey began with a concerted effort to boost student attendance and engagement, then sharpening the focus on planning and implementing a locally relevant curriculum to ensure every child can succeed.

Curriculum planning

Curriculum planning at Depot Hill is collaboratively undertaken with a cluster of 12 local small schools. A dedicated cluster curriculum coordinator works to forge consistency across the cluster, with emphasis on key learning area integrations, cross-curricular priorities and varied pedagogical approaches to foster engagement and academic success. Cluster coordination and alignment across curriculum planning and assessments, and the development of resources used in joint moderation sessions, are collaborative processes for cluster principals and teachers to access throughout the year.

Moderation

Led by the principal, the school actively participates in the four phases of moderation with their cluster. A full day of face-to-face before moderation occurs in week 10 of each term. On the day, leaders and teachers engage in a session of collegial conversations around potential opportunities for enriched learning before dividing into four groups. Each group drafts the lesson sequence of unit planning for one of the four major subjects and unpacks the corresponding assessment tasks. The information is documented and uploaded to Microsoft Teams for each school to access. At after moderation, two or more cluster teachers have a virtual catch up to discuss the assessment standards prior to marking. During after-after moderation, cluster schools come together for a full day to share work samples and assess them against the guide to making judgements. This is a valued opportunity for teachers to build capability of the Australian Curriculum and make consistent, unbiased judgements. At the end of semester, schools meet for end moderation where teachers can agree on levels of achievement for

reporting by using profile sheets and relevant guides to making judgements.

Professional learning

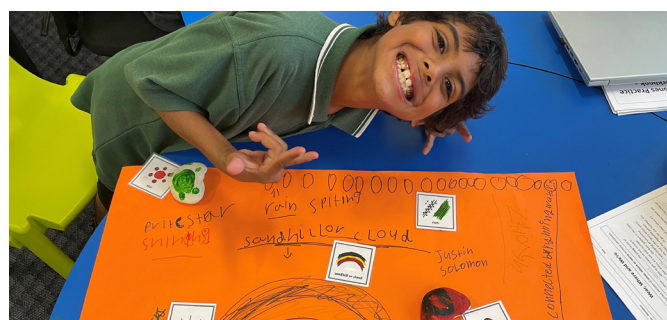
The cluster also provides professional learning opportunities for all leaders and teachers. A staff professional learning day is scheduled each term. Each session focuses on a different topic that aligns with common improvement agendas or identified areas of interest. Schools take turns to host learning walks and talks at the before and after-after stages of moderation. This provides staff with an opportunity to visit classrooms outside their own school to observe practices and artefacts. Visitors are encouraged to interact with students using Lyn Sharratt's five questions and provide feedback to the principal. Some cluster principals also participate in a professional learning community (PLC) centred on Sharratt's book, *Clarity* (2018). Originally, members chose a chapter to unpack, and discussed how the strategies could be applied to their own school contexts. With the support of the region, PLC members are now participants in the Lyn Sharratt learning suite.

Outcomes

Depot Hill's strong relationship with their cluster has ensured teachers have the knowledge, skills and resources to confidently deliver the curriculum to all students. As a result, students are more engaged in the classroom curriculum and excited about learning. This is evident by the increase in attendance rates and a significant lift in student learning outcomes.

‘All our staff are passionate about making a difference for kids.’

— Principal



For further details about this case study, email the School and Region Reviews branch at reviews@qed.qld.gov.au.

School snapshot

Case study: A responsive curriculum at Park Ridge State High School

Park Ridge State High School is a large and dynamic secondary school in the South East Queensland city of Logan. The school has developed a breadth of strategies that deliver a responsive curriculum, by aligning data, teaching and professional development to drive a culture of excellence and support student success in the secondary years.

Aligning data

The school has a strong data responsive approach to ensure curriculum implementation is relevant and accessible for students, and squarely focused on the skills of the 21st Century. Student voice informs curriculum relevance and assessment, thereby strengthening student engagement in their learning. Data placemats inform student needs in the classroom and the targeted strategies used to engage students and maximise their progress. The My Learning Profile provides students with a common approach to owning their own data, setting goals and developing strategies. Student assessment data is used to review curriculum implementation and informs future planning. Fortnightly data cycles provide line of sight for school leaders into the classroom.

Teaching

At Park Ridge State High School, explicit teaching of key capabilities is integral to curriculum delivery. Cross-curriculum priorities are built into teaching across faculties, enabling teachers to discuss common approaches. The school emphasises teaching authentic and relevant skills that address general capabilities. Problem solving, critical thinking and inquiry-based and collaborative approaches to learning encourage student ownership and support them as 21st Century learners. This is enhanced through curriculum offerings, where the school works closely with business, university and TAFE partners to co-design learning opportunities and assessment linked to the real world.

Professional learning

The school makes a substantial investment in staff professional development, which is both extensive and differentiated, to support curriculum delivery. It responds

to the needs of departments, as well as individual teachers and leaders, and is facilitated through regular workshops, a system of professional learning teams and a rich culture of collaboration. There is a strong focus on demystifying data so teachers are equipped to interrogate data and conduct a meaningful data conversation. A colour-coded approach creates a language of cyclic data collection, denoting priority and relevance to the identified learning phase. Classes are de-privatised and staff are welcoming of observation and feedback. Moderation is key to building teacher and leader capabilities.

The school is part of a multi-layered cluster through the Enable Network of 14 schools in the South East region. Principals come together each term and for a dedicated annual retreat, working together on shared problems of practice, data analysis and collegial sharing. Park Ridge invites neighbouring principals to conduct school visits and walkthroughs to provide feedback and encourage good practice. Deputy principals, heads of department and teachers also have networks focused on curriculum delivery. The school engages with a critical leadership friend, who provides an external perspective and helicopter views on the school's progress and assists in the ongoing development of quality assessment and curriculum practice.

Systematic curriculum delivery at Park Ridge State High School is driven by a moral purpose that every student can learn at a high level. An authentic real-world approach to education means that students don't just succeed but excel in a school whose purpose is to provide 'a versatile education for a versatile world'.



For further details about this case study, email the School and Region Reviews branch at reviews@qed.qld.gov.au.

References, further reading and resources

Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) 2012, *National School Improvement Tool*, ACER, Melbourne (online), www.acer.org/au/research/school-improvement-tools-services.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) 2016, *Foundation – Year 10 curriculum* (Version 8.4) (online), www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/foundation-year-10.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) n.d., *Learning areas* (Version 8.4) (online), www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/learning-areas/.

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Hattie, J 2009, *Visible learning: a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*, Routledge, London and New York.

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA), *Australian Curriculum in Queensland* (online), www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/p-10/aciq.

Sharratt, L 2018, *Clarity: What matters most in learning, teaching and leading*, Corwin, Thousand Oaks.

Department of Education

Assessment and Moderation Hub
www.learningplace.eq.edu.au/cx/resources/file/76fc9c5-4485-4fa1-9981-19073ca3865b/1/index.html.

P–12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework
www.education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/stages-of-schooling/p-12.

Ed TV

Adjusting a summative assessment task
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jw9oo080Y1s&list=PLgJv5epyrnQCuxlOL3NlnuVgCvE7bCiHA&index=8

Providing the curriculum in a culturally and contextually relevant way (in two parts)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FDCRyExZoc
www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DgkHHsJTo&list=PLgJv5epyrnQCuxlOL3NlnuVgCvE7bCiHA&index=25

Spotlight on the P-12 Curriculum, assessment and reporting framework: Providing the curriculum
www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1sTKQpJPoM&list=PLgJv5epyrnQCuxlOL3NlnuVgCvE7bCiHA&index=30



Leading Literacy and Leading Numeracy programs:
www.qeli.qld.edu.au/leading-literacy/
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Multi-Phase Leadership Programs:
www.qeli.qld.edu.au/qeli-leadership-development-pipeline-programs/



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