

Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2024

Willoughby Girls High School 8159



School vision and context

School vision statement

Willoughby Girls High School is an inclusive and supportive school dedicated to creating an environment where students grow to be independent, kind and open-minded people with the skills and confidence to thrive in all areas of life. The depth and diversity of our teaching and learning community is a source of connection and strength, empowering all members to pursue their goals and passions. Through rich learning experiences, students develop the creativity, flexibility and resilience needed to embrace the challenges and opportunities of an ever-changing world. Teachers, students and parents work together to foster an educational culture of engagement, effort and academic excellence.

School context

Founded in 1934, Willoughby Girls High School, located on Sydney's Lower North Shore, is recognised as a leader in girls' education in one of the most competitive schooling areas in Australia. In the general community, the school has a strong reputation for setting high standards and for academic excellence, evident in the school's consistently outstanding HSC results with the vast majority of graduates progressing to university studies. Extension streams for selected students of high academic ability operate in Years 7 to 10. Strong values and an effective, proactive support system, along with clear discipline policies and a well-defined uniform code, create a safe and stable school setting. Our school is proudly a local school, drawing students from within a short distance from the school. 54% of our students are from non English speaking backgrounds with 15% requiring significant EALD support and a further 15% requiring some support. In 2021 the staffing allocation for EADL is 4.2 teachers.

The school's staffing allocation for 2021 is 67.7 and 11 non-teaching staff. In 2021 the school has employed the equivalent of six additional teachers to support a broad curriculum and to facilitate effective professional learning, focused on literacy and higher order thinking. Included in this additional staffing is an additional 0.5 Learning and Support teacher to facilitate a more effective program for students with specific learning needs. The school also employs 2.4 Student Learning Support Officers who support these students in their regular classes.

The majority of the school's equity funding is will be used to support EALD students and Learning Support students, including the temporary employment of a Head Teacher EADL and Literacy to lead implementation of our new EALD strategy and Literacy strategy. The school is well supported by families who contribute to resources through voluntary contributions and via donations to the P&C. We have a small but very active P&C group who allocate parent funds to resources for students. In 2021 those funds will be expended on the new netball court, a shade structure over the new basketball court as well as joint funding (with the NSW Department of Education) of science laboratory upgrades.

Our situational analysis has identified several areas for improvement, on which the School Improvement Plan is based. Firstly, we need to support students in improving reading comprehension and writing for academic purposes. Numeracy is a second area where improvement can be supported through professional learning led by specialist mathematics teachers. Students and teachers have identified the level of intellectual challenge as a third area for improvement and this is driving our Strategic Direction 2. Finally, student wellbeing is the focus of Strategic Direction 3. Students, teachers and families have all identified this as an area where we can implement further teacher learning and additional student-focused strategies to support the wellbeing of our students.

The school has recently begun Instructional Rounds, which is a well researched educational strategy for teacher professional learning. This strategy is led by an external provider (a retired principal) and two classroom teachers and involves teachers observing lessons using a framework of proven pedagogical strategies to improve student engagement in learning and achievement. The development of these strategies with all staff will support the improvement targets of higher student learning growth and achievement in Year 9 NAPLAN

School vision and context

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School context

and the HSC.

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Purpose

To ensure students grow in their learning through explicit, challenging and research informed teaching to ensure all students reach their learning potential.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2022

HSC attainment - the percentage of HSC students in top two bands increases by 4.2% from 67% to 71.2%

Target year: 2023

Percentage of students achieving expected growth in **READING** increases by 2.8% to 73.6% by 2023

Target year: 2022

Year 9 Reading - % of students in the top two bands increases by 4.5% to 51.2%

Target year: 2023

Percentage of students achieving expected growth in **NUMERACY** increases by 5.6% to 67.7 % of students by 2023

Target year: 2022

Year 9 Numeracy - % of students in the top two bands increases by 5.6% to 61.3%

Initiatives

Literacy

Improve student learning growth and achievement through a focus on explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy

- **Writing** - focus on developing writing skills for short answer questions; implement ALARM across the curriculum
- **Writing** - engage the support of an external expert to work with teachers in developing skills for teaching writing argument texts for academic purposes.
- **Reading** - led by the Literacy Team, implement the Super Six reading strategies across the curriculum in all subject areas and embed specific strategies into teaching programs, with a focus on vocabulary and inferential comprehension
- **Reading** - strengthen daily Home Room reading time through teacher modelling & peer reading program
- **Numeracy**- led by Mathematics faculty, identify through Year 7 & 9 NAPLAN item analysis the areas in which students are underperforming and adjust the Mathematics programs years 7-9 to develop these skills
- Audit the **numeracy** requirements of all subjects to identify knowledge and skills requirements and teach specific numeracy strategies to all teachers in all faculties to support students' numeracy growth
- Embed specific **differentiation** strategies within all programs to ensure all students are both supported and challenged in literacy and numeracy. Target underperforming and potential **top two band students** to ensure appropriate growth in literacy and numeracy - to be repeated every year when NAPLAN results are available to prep for the next step

Success criteria for this strategic direction

The school analyses student progress and achievement data and a range of other contextual information. Teachers respond to trends in student achievement, at individual, group and whole school levels.

The school achieves excellent value-added results, significantly (above the value added by the average school).*

Most students achieve in the top two bands for NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy.

School data shows that student progress and achievement is greater than students at statistically similar schools on external measures, and this is consistent with strong student progress and achievement on internal measures.

Progress and achievement of equity groups within a school is equivalent to the progress and achievement of all students in the school.

All teachers understand and explicitly teach literacy and numeracy to students at all levels of achievement, in all subject areas, with success that can be measured by improved student progress and achievement data.

The learning goals for students are informed by analysis of internal and external student progress and achievement data. Progress towards goals is monitored through collection of quality, valid and reliable data. Reporting on school performance is based on valid and reliable data and analysis.

A whole school approach ensures the most effective evidence-based teaching methods optimise learning progress for all students, across the full range of abilities. Teachers employ evidence-based effective teaching strategies. Effective methods are identified, promoted and modelled, and students' learning improvement is monitored, demonstrating growth.

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Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question: To what extent are our teaching and learning initiatives having a positive impact on student growth and attainment?

Data: Internal assessment data analysis (formative and summative) in each faculty; NAPLAN data; HSC results; literacy and numeracy strategies embedded in teaching programs; lesson observations (learning groups); student work samples; Instructional Rounds data; ACER testing data;

Analysis: The Literacy team, numeracy team and faculty teams analyse internal and external assessment data to determine students' learning progress and identify what learning progress looks like.

Implications: How do we embed successful strategies across the school for ongoing improvement in literacy, numeracy and HSC growth?

Strategic Direction 2: Pedagogy for deep learning

Purpose

Through rich and challenging learning opportunities students develop the creativity, flexibility and critical thinking students develop effective learning habits that foster an educational culture of engagement, effort and academic excellence.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2024

Students demonstrate their learning through more sophisticated products and responses with work samples analysed using the LaST protocol

Target year: 2024

Increased TTFM scores in Relevance, Effective Learning Time and Explicit Teaching and increased positive responses in parents, teacher and student surveys regarding understanding and engagement of learning in the school community

Target year: 2024

Instructional Rounds evidence shows a positive shift in identified Patterns of Learning teachers demonstrating 80% consistency in:

- Higher order questioning skills
- Challenge
- Differentiation
- Sustainable learning intentions and success criteria
- Task/process oriented feedback
- Explicit teaching
- Technology for thinking
- Student agency /self regulation / metacognition

Target year: 2024

More than a 10% increase in students achieving the top assessment grade (A) in school-based assessment

Initiatives

Pedagogy for deep learning

All teachers are trained in Instructional Rounds to identify high impact pedagogies and monitor their own progress in improved pedagogy through fortnightly learning round groups

Teacher Professional Learning is mapped and targeted across the calendar to ensure all teachers have opportunities to develop understanding of, and skills in features of pedagogy identified in Instructional Rounds:

- Higher order thinking and learning strategies
- Higher order questioning skills
- Visible Thinking Routines
- GATS pedagogies (Blooms, Williams, Maker)
- Explicit & embedded discussion routines

Differentiated challenge in learning led by the Learning Equity team:

- Higher order questioning
- Routine explicit teaching - I do, we do, you do
- Technology for thinking
- Explicit learning intentions & success criteria
- Cultures of Thinking
- Problem Based Learning

Assessment for learning progress

Research, develop and implement as appropriate flexible and purposeful assessment and reporting systems to enhance and monitor learning progress

- The school evaluates current assessment policies and practices with a view to broaden assessment strategies and shift the emphasis from summative to formative assessment of student learning and focus on student learning growth
- **Assessment for learning** - the executive team

Success criteria for this strategic direction

All lessons are systematically planned as part of a coherent program that has been collaboratively designed.

Teaching and learning programs across the school show evidence that they are adjusted to address individual student needs, ensuring that all students are challenged and all adjustments lead to improved learning.

Accommodations and adjustments are made to suit needs as they arise. Lesson planning references student information including progress and achievement data, curriculum requirements, and student feedback, and provides continuous improvement for all students, across the full range of abilities.

A whole school approach ensures the most effective evidence-based teaching methods optimise learning progress for all students, across the full range of abilities. Teachers employ evidence-based effective teaching strategies. Effective methods are identified, promoted and modelled, and students' learning improvement is monitored, demonstrating growth.

The staff evaluate professional learning activities to identify and systematically promote and implement the most effective strategies to improve teaching and learning.

Teachers collaborate with staff in other schools to share and embed good practice.

Students and parents understand the assessment approaches used in the school and their benefits for learning.

Teachers clearly understand, develop and apply a full range of assessment strategies - assessment for learning, assessment as learning and assessment of learning - in determining teaching directions, monitoring and assessing student progress and achievement, and reflecting on teaching effectiveness.

Assessment is used flexibly and responsively as an integral part of daily classroom instruction. Formative assessment is practised expertly by teachers.

Strategic Direction 2: Pedagogy for deep learning

Initiatives

investigates more productive and informative ways of reporting student learning to students with a view to moving away from marks in the junior school

- **Effective feedback** - teachers employ a range of feedback strategies (formative & summative; formal & informal) in their classrooms to show students how to improve their learning
 - **Reporting** - the executive assessment team develops an alternative 'grading' system (based on SOLO) that informs students and parents exactly what a level of annual summative achievement means in relation to student learning & growth
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Success criteria for this strategic direction

Feedback from students on their learning derived from assessments informs further teaching.

The school uses embedded and explicit systems that facilitate professional dialogue, collaboration, classroom observation, the modelling of effective practice and the provision of specific and timely feedback between teachers. This drives ongoing, school-wide improvement in teaching practice and student results.

Teachers routinely review learning with each student both in class and on work submitted, ensuring all students have a clear understanding of how to improve. Student **feedback** is elicited by teachers and informs their teaching. Student errors and misunderstandings are explicitly addressed until teachers and students are confident that mastery is demonstrated.

Student reports are personalised and comprehensive, providing detailed, clear and specific information about student learning, growth, next steps and improvement measures, as well as relevant contextual and/or comparative data.

The school uses a centralised system for analysing and reporting data on student and school performance, including academic growth, non-academic and cross-curriculum data. The school uses data to inform collective decisions about student learning, aligned with improvement measures in the school plan

The school uses systematic and reliable assessment information to evaluate student learning over time and implements changes in teaching that lead to measurable improvement.

The school has processes in place to support teachers' consistent, evidence-based judgement and moderation of assessments.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Strategic Direction 2: Pedagogy for deep learning

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question: Are all of our students active participants in authentic deep learning?

Data: Instructional Rounds observation data (qualitative & quantitative); teaching & learning programs; learning growth data collated from internal & external assessments; annual EALD survey; Learning and Support Team qualitative & quantitative feedback; student work samples

Analysis: reflection & evaluation of teaching and learning programs and practices - use various data to identify positive trends of student learning behaviours and growth.

Implications: how will rich learning experiences challenge the passive students? Can we identify examples of rich learning in each faculty? Are these being evaluated by groups as being engaging and promoting academic excellence? How will the findings encourage teachers to further develop their pedagogies'?

Strategic Direction 3: A safe and supportive school

Purpose

All staff provide an inclusive and supportive learning environment dedicated to ensuring students grow to be independent, kind and open-minded people with the skills and confidence to thrive intellectually, socially and emotionally.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2024

ATTENDANCE:

Increases by 5.2% to 94.3% by 2024

Target year: 2024

WELLBEING: The % of students who feel a positive sense of belonging, expectations for success and advocacy at school as reported in TTFM is above 75.4%

Initiatives

Ensure a collaborative learning environment that supports emotional, social and intellectual strength

- Teachers develop knowledge to provide safe, supportive classrooms where all students work together and are supported to take risks in their learning through self and peer assessment, effective group work and respectful relationships among students and between students and teachers.
- Professional learning for all staff in adolescent mental health and strategies to support students in class - Safe Minds; Be You; Using the Wellbeing Framework for School Excellence Framework PL; Week 7 Term 1 Staff Meeting sharing of Year 7 Data with all staff; SDD Day 1 and 2 Getting to Know Your students
- Strengthen student voice through the student leadership groups - SRC, Social Justice; Reading Groups; Homework Groups; Diversity Groups; Gardening Club; Media Club
- Strengthen students' control of their learning through voice and choice in the classrooms to empower students to manage social, emotional and learning challenges - Teacher/Student collaboration on learning assessment; PBL; Year 7 Learning Logs/Conferences
- Develop and implement a program for explicitly teaching study skills, examination strategies and time management from year 7-12. - Homeroom, Year 7 Wellbeing Lessons, Year 12 Mentoring; Year 11 and 12 Study Days, Homework Club, ELES subscription; Use of Student Diary as part of teaching and learning practices

Build more proactive and streamlined wellbeing structure and systems

- Align Year group wellbeing days with parent and teacher information sessions to broaden the reach and impact of these days - Newsletter/Email for parents; Staff meetings for staff; Sentral Calendar;
- Scope and Sequence for Wellbeing across the

Success criteria for this strategic direction

The school has implemented evidence-based change to whole school practices, resulting in measurable improvements in wellbeing and engagement to support learning.

There is school-wide, collective responsibility for student learning and success, which is shared by parents and students. Planning for learning is informed by sound holistic information about each student's wellbeing and learning needs in consultation with parents/carers.

Positive, respectful relationships are evident and widespread among students and staff and promote student wellbeing to ensure optimum conditions for student learning across the whole school.

Teachers, parents and the community work together to support consistent and systematic processes that ensure student absences do not impact on learning outcomes.

All classrooms and other learning environments are well managed within a consistent, school-wide approach. Well planned teaching is taking place, so that all students can engage in productive learning, with minimal disruption. Teachers model and share a flexible repertoire of strategies for classroom management and promotion of student engagement and responsibility for learning

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Question: Have the wellbeing initiatives made a positive impact on students learning progress and wellbeing development?

Data: TTFM survey data (students, parents, teachers), wellbeing, SRC and Careers surveys.

Analysis: Use snapshots of data to determine strengths and weaknesses of programs.

Implications: Have we successfully embedded strategies to improve student wellbeing? What adjustments do we need to make?

Initiatives

school which is stage based - focusing on belonging and advocacy

- **Home Room:** Year Advisers to develop, implement, evaluate & refine a year-long wellbeing program for high impact Home Room sessions: A clear Role Statement for the Home Room teacher is developed; Purpose statement for Home Room is developed
 - **Wellbeing Gateway** - Wellbeing Gateway for students is developed including: Online Wellbeing google site; Onsite - Wellbeing team, including SSO
 - Improve communication and collaboration between students, parents and teachers through school newsletter, website, email and social media platforms, Skoolbag App and ensure key communications are available in translation to families
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