Challenging POWERFUL LEARNING

A whole school pedagogical agreement

OUR VISION » Working collaboratively to ensure that each student is prepared for our ever-changing world. Promoting the skills of problem solving, innovation, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, imagination and inquiry.

KILKENNY PRIMARY SCHOOL » #TheKilkennyWay

'Lifting student learning is a collaborative enterprise. It relies on students, teachers, and school leaders working together.'
(Hopkins, Craig & Knight, 2016)

About this agreement

Through our professional learning and the development of teaching and learning practices across the school aligned with our School Improvement Plan (2019–2021), this agreement outlines our focus strategies in 2021 to further improve teaching and learning practices in every classroom and lift the level of learning growth and achievement for every student.

The strategies in this agreement are research-informed and are built on best practice and evidence both locally, nationally and internationally.

Key references to inform this work include:

- **South Australian Department for Education Literacy and Numeracy Guidebooks** » Developed by the department to provide direction and support to schools at different stages of their improvement journey. They provide leaders with evidence-based practices aimed at improving learner growth and achievement. (Department for Education, 2018)
- **Related effect sizes** » Based on the meta-analysis of international research, this figure measures of the impact of educational initiatives on achievement. Effect sizes typically range in size from -0.2 to 1.2, with an average effect size of 0.4 equates to a year of growth in learning in a school year – anything above this figure will demonstrate a higher than normal growth in learning achievement. (Hattie, 2009)
- **Months of progress** » Drawing on summaries from global evidence based on 35 different approaches to lift learning outcomes in schools, this figure measures the impact of educational initiatives on achievement. This figure also measures the additional months of growth on top of standard teaching practice if the initiative is implemented effectively. (Evidence for Learning, 2017)

WORKING TOGETHER

Great schools 'row as one'; they are quite clearly in the same boat, pulling in the same direction in unison. The best schools we visited were tightly aligned communities marked by a palpable sense of common purpose and shared identity among staff – a clear sense of 'we'. (Lickona & Davidson, 2005, p.65)

Kilkenny Primary School is proud of the way we work together with our community to maximise outcomes for all students. We strongly believe all students can learn and demonstrate high achievement. We are committed to high expectations, authentic relationships and challenging learning experiences where all students are supported to achieve their personal best and contribute to the community.

Educators across all of the year levels and learning areas, share the responsibility of developing all students as powerful learners. Our vision is to ensure our teaching and learning programs deliver the skills, knowledge and capabilities for students to live and work successfully in the 21st century.

This agreement documents our teaching and learning intentions and our collective focus on providing a consistent learning experience for students that is high impact and evidence-based.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Focus »
Leaders strengthen the capacity of staff to tailor approaches

Strategy »
Establish literacy PLCs where teachers are supported to design learning based on their needs

(Department for Education, 2018a, p.4)

What we value about working in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):

'Time to engage in rigorous professional discussions that challenge and better our practice.'

'Collaboration – sharing of ideas, experience and knowledge.'

'Knowing that each member has similar issues and concerns, so we have solidarity, and support one another in our work.'

Teacher reflection, TfEL learning and teaching survey

'By working together we learn more from each other and also have many more ideas than we would come up with ourselves.'

Student reflection, TfEL Compass survey

OUR COMMITMENT AND FOCUS

'Teachers make the difference to students' learning. It's unequivocal. Teaching is too important to leave to chance.' (DECS, 2010, p.9)

This whole school agreement:

- outlines evidence-based teaching and learning practices that improve learning outcomes for students
- ensures a consistent and coherent approach to teaching and learning that is embedded in all classrooms
- provides students with a voice in the classroom, for collaborative learning to occur and for students to influence their learning and set meaningful, purposeful goals
- ensures challenge and intellectual stretch for all learners and support students to achieve their personal best.

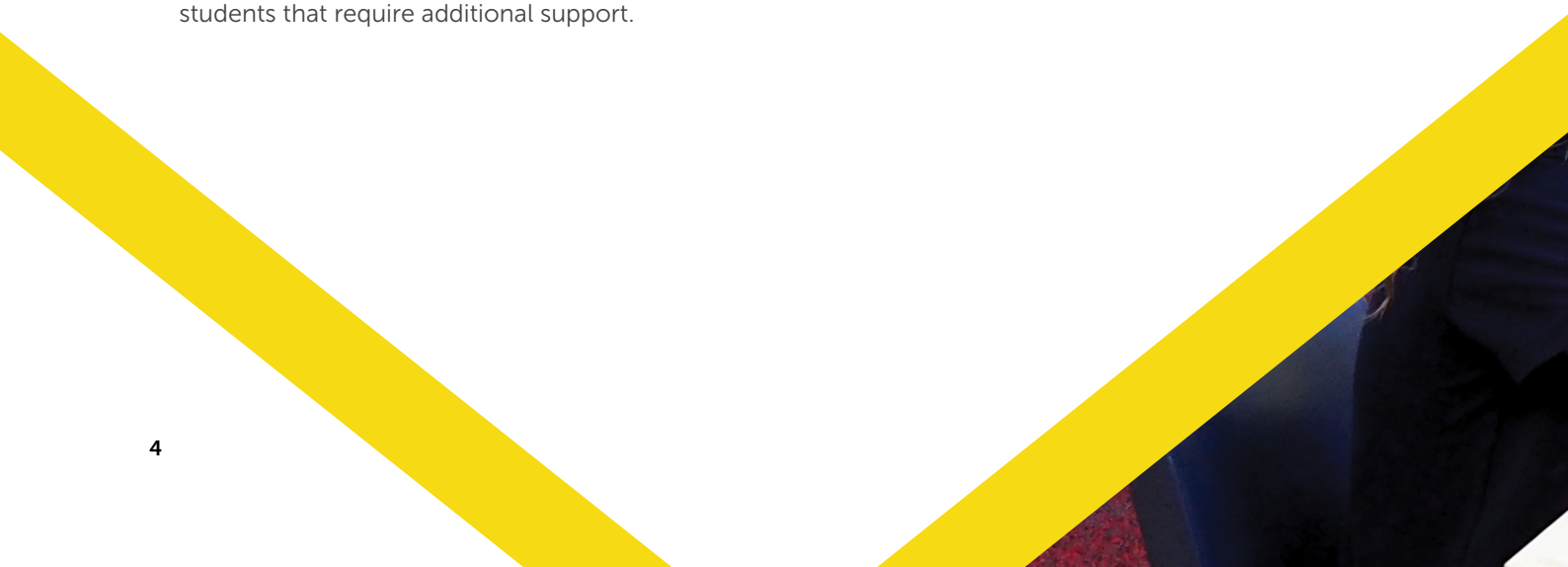
Our commitment

Staff at Kilkenny Primary School will:

- maintain high expectations for student achievement
- enact the agreed approaches outlined in this teaching and learning agreement
- use the Australian Curriculum achievement standards, together with the department's new curriculum resources, to inform planning, assessment and reporting
- create safe and rigorous conditions for student learning and authentic relationships to occur
- provide targeted support and intervention for students that require additional support.

Our 6 key focus areas for pedagogical improvement

1. Teacher clarity: clear learning intentions and success criteria
2. High expectations, challenge and differentiation
3. Effective feedback
4. Collaborative learning
5. Students set learning goals
6. Explicit teaching and structured lessons



TEACHER CLARITY: CLEAR LEARNING INTENTIONS AND SUCCESS CRITERIA

'Students who know what they are learning are three times more likely to actually learn it.' (Fisher, 2018)

We believe that when students understand what they are learning and know what success looks like, they are more engaged and feel more secure in their learning. When students have a clear picture of exactly what they are learning and how they will be assessed, they are more likely to be successful, they are better able to monitor their progress and are more willing to take risks.

Our approach

In every classroom, teachers will set clear learning intentions and success criteria that students understand. The following three questions will be made explicit to students:

- What am I learning today?
- Why am I learning this?
- How will I know that I have learned it?

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Focus »
Leaders prioritise professional conversations to strengthen whole school approaches to literacy learning

Strategy »
Strengthen a shared understanding of the impact of applied reading comprehension strategies

(Department for Education, 2018b, p.4)

EVIDENCE BASE

Related effect sizes »
Teacher credibility 0.9
Teacher clarity 0.75
Cognitive task analysis 1.29
Strategy to integrate with prior knowledge 0.93
Prior ability 0.94
(Hattie, 2009)

Months of progress »
Metacognition and self-regulation +7
Mastery learning +5
(Evidence for Learning, 2017)

'This year and last year my teacher encouraged the Sheena Cameron method. It helps us with our work and writing. The text to self, text to world, and text to text strategy helps us a lot to write and connect with our prior knowledge or things we have previously seen or done. This way we were more able to put ourselves in another perspective to improve our writing.'

Student reflection, TfEL Compass survey

'I identify learning intentions and success criteria prior to the lesson. I then encourage different ways of thinking and showing working out and solving problems.'

Teacher reflection, TfEL learning and teaching survey

'I provide time, routines, a safe environment, structure, rigorous, explicit teaching of skills and then provide time for students to practice the skills in creative and imaginative ways – through open ended tasks with multiple entry points.'

Teacher reflection, TfEL learning and teaching survey

'In class we share and write reflections and talk about our strengths and weaknesses to make us better learners so we can improve in school.'

Student reflection, TfEL Compass survey

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Focus »
Leaders work with staff to develop agreements about shared metalanguage for literacy practices

Strategy »
Develop a metatalk with staff to identify and extend the interaction practices in the classroom

(Department for Education, 2018c, p.4)

EVIDENCE BASE

Related effect sizes »
High expectations 0.43
Response to intervention 1.07
(Hattie, 2009)

Months of progress »
Metacognition and self-regulation +7
Mastery learning +5
(Evidence for Learning, 2017)

HIGH EXPECTATIONS, CHALLENGE AND DIFFERENTIATION

'High achievement by every student depends on the environment we create for learning ... High expectations are challenging. They are demanding, constant, not negotiable.' (Hopkins, Craig & Knight, 2016, p.10)

We strongly believe all students can learn and demonstrate high achievement. We are committed to high expectations and we want our learning environments to be optimistic, challenging and rigorous.

Our approach

In every classroom, teachers will design learning experiences for students that challenge and stretch their learning based on their developmental needs. This will involve teachers designing learning tasks and experiences that are differentiated and adjusted for all students. Differentiation involves continuously adjusting practice to address student misconceptions or to provide additional strategies to help them master a new skill.

'I discuss with students the success or strengths they have shown in a task and what their next steps are to improve. I ask questions of students to challenge them to identify their achievements and what they need to focus on next.'

Teacher reflection, TfEL learning and teaching survey

EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

'The research is clear: effective feedback practices can greatly improve student learning and teaching quality.' (AITSL, 2017)

Effective feedback leads to positive changes in teaching and learning practices and improvement in student outcomes. Effective feedback moves the learner forward and is about closing the gap between where the student is and where they are aiming to be.

Our approach

In every classroom, students will understand that effective feedback addresses the following three important questions about the learning:

- Where am I going? (What are my goals?)
- How am I going? (Where am I right now?)
- Where do I go next? (How will I get there?)

Feedback is also powerful when students provide feedback to the teacher. When teachers seek and are open to feedback, they empower students and activate their voices and citizenship.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Focus »
Leaders strengthen the capacity of staff to tailor approaches

Strategy »
Ensure teachers are able to use formative assessment to engage students and support their progress

(Department for Education, 2018a, p.4)

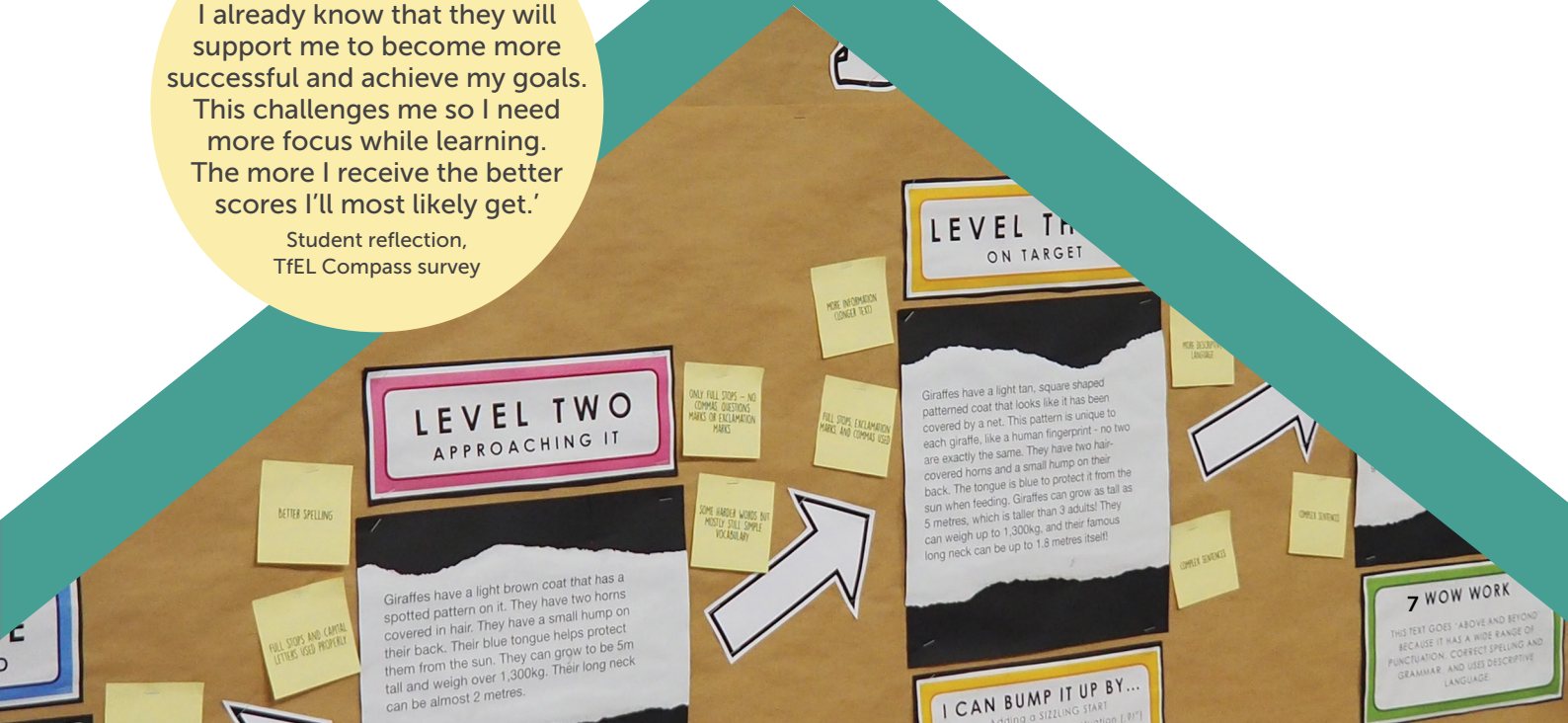
EVIDENCE BASE

Related effect sizes »
Feedback 0.73
High expectations 0.43
Response to intervention 1.07
Self-reported grades 1.33
(Hattie, 2009)

Months of progress »
Metacognition and self-regulation +7
Mastery learning +5
(Evidence for Learning, 2017)

'When I receive strong feedback from a teacher I already know that they will support me to become more successful and achieve my goals. This challenges me so I need more focus while learning. The more I receive the better scores I'll most likely get.'

Student reflection, TfEL Compass survey



COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Focus »
Leaders strengthen the capacity of staff to tailor approaches

Strategy »
Establish literacy PLCs where teachers are supported to design learning based on their needs

(Department for Education, 2018a, p.4)

EVIDENCE BASE

Related effect sizes »
Classroom discussions 0.82
Jigsaw method 1.2
Cooperative learning 0.59
Metacognitive strategies 0.60
(Hattie, 2009)

Months of progress »
Metacognition and self-regulation +7
Collaborative learning +5
Feedback +8
(Evidence for Learning, 2017)

'Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds.' (Alexander Graham Bell)

Learning in groups develops social and academic skills by encouraging collaboration and active participation. Cooperative group work requires our students and teachers to practice and refine negotiating, organising, problem solving and communicating.

Working collaboratively strengthens peer relationships and fosters a sense of belonging, connection and safety in the classroom.

Our approach

In every classroom and across the school community, we will work together to establish and create a learning environment that is safe, supportive and respectful.

'I do believe that every one of us can help each other learn in a positive way and help grow each other's brains in a positive way.'
Student reflection, TfEL Compass survey

'Group work or working in pairs is high on the agenda in my classroom. I believe students learn a lot from each other, so I provide lots of opportunities for them to interact and talk about their learning.'
Teacher reflection, TfEL learning and teaching survey

'I spend a lot of time explaining the purpose of goals and discussing how they can be set from data. And then conferencing 1:1 with students and getting them to paraphrase to me their learning goals.'

Teacher reflection, TfEL learning and teaching survey

STUDENTS SET LEARNING GOALS

'Teachers who use 'assessment for learning' involve their students in ongoing self-assessment in ways that reveal to those learners (a) where they are headed in their learning, (b) where they are now in relation to those expectations, and (c) how each student can close the gap between the two.' (Stiggins, 2002)

Goal setting at Kilkenny Primary School will involve students being assisted to **develop** their own SMART learning goals, **monitor** their progress towards achieving them and **reporting** on the success of the goal. Learning goals may relate to general work habits, specific subjects, areas of learning, or a combination of these.

Students who set their own learning goals have more confidence to take on challenging tasks regardless of their ability and feel more powerful in the learning process. By setting goals, students become active participants in the learning process, more motivated to achieve their full potential and build their capacity to manage themselves as individuals.

When students think metacognitively about their learning and the strategies that support them to achieve their learning goals, they develop an awareness of their own learning, to self-regulate, and to drive and sustain their motivation to learn.

Our approach

In every classroom, students will work collaboratively with their teachers to set realistic and achievable goals based on the analysis of data. Students will be able to articulate these and provide feedback based on their learning growth.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Focus »
Strengthen and tailor the reading program through differentiation

Strategy »
Teachers develop individual reading goals for students based on decoding, fluency and comprehension

(Department for Education, 2018a, p.5)

EVIDENCE BASE

Related effect sizes »
Feedback 0.73
High expectations 0.43
Response to intervention 1.07
Self-reported grades 1.33
Metacognitive strategies 0.60
(Hattie, 2009)

Months of progress »
Metacognition and self-regulation +7
Mastery learning +5
Feedback +8
(Evidence for Learning, 2017)

'My teacher lets me and my classmates make our own learning goals which helps us with our strengths in learning.'

Student reflection, TfEL Compass survey

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Focus »
Design whole-school approaches to improvements in reading instruction

Strategy »
Teachers design reading instruction that explicitly teaches all elements of reading comprehension that effective readers use

(Department for Education, 2018b, p.9)

EVIDENCE BASE

Related effect sizes »
Scaffolding 0.53
Direct instruction 0.59
Classroom discussions 0.82
(Hattie, 2009)

Months of progress »
Early years intervention +5
Oral language intervention +5
Phonics +5
Reading comprehension +5
(Evidence for Learning, 2017)

EXPLICIT TEACHING AND STRUCTURED LESSONS

'The more accomplished teachers set tasks that had a greater degree of challenge; they were more sensitive to context and they had a deeper understanding of the content being taught.' (Hattie, 2013)

Effective teachers use explicit teaching strategies to build student knowledge and skills. In explicit instruction, teachers show students what to do and how to do it by modelling and demonstration. Opportunities are then created for students to practise the skill and apply the learning in different contexts.

At Kilkenny Primary School teachers use a Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework for explicit and instructional teaching. This includes the:

- teacher explicitly demonstrating or modelling the skill or concept (I do)
- teacher demonstrating or modelling the skill with student input (We do)
- students practising and rehearsing the skill or concept individually or with additional support as needed (You do).

Teachers determine the level of mastery and support needed and move around the room providing feedback and guided practice as necessary. Concluding the lesson involves reinforcing the major points and objectives of the lesson and reporting on the success criteria.

Our approach

Every teacher will have a planned sequence of teaching and learning that activates prior knowledge and builds on prior learning, reviews previous content, makes clear connections for all learners and monitors their levels of understanding.

'During lessons my teacher slowly explains some things that are relating to my strengths and tells me the key information to improve my skills. The teaching and feedback that I'm getting has really helped me.'

Student reflection, TfEL Compass survey

'I promote understanding and use of technical terminology, reciprocal reading and writing activities. I provide extra support, extension time and further differentiation, and opportunities for students to teach others and explain their learning.'

Teacher reflection, TfEL learning and teaching survey

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'The culture you create for learning is the critical foundation upon which everything else rests.'
(Dalton, 2010)

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