

Westgarth Primary School is a community of students, staff, friends and family working together to create a diverse, engaging and respectful learning environment.

Rationale

High quality professional development is one of the cornerstones of an effective school. It enables staff to develop the high-level skills and knowledge they need to improve their practice which is central to improving student learning. Like the members of other professions, teachers and education support staff need to be continuous learners who see their own learning as being fundamental to their membership of the profession – rather than something that is incidental or optional. Focused and needs-driven professional development programs provide optimum opportunities for professional growth and the building of leadership capacity among staff.

Aims

- To provide opportunities for all staff to further their professional knowledge and skills in best teaching and learning practices, leadership, student engagement and wellbeing, and student transition.
- To build staff capacity to lead specific areas of the school such as student learning, student engagement and wellbeing and student transition.

Implementation

- The school's delivery of professional development for staff is based on the Department's *Seven principles of highly effective professional learning* (Attachment 1).
- A whole-school professional calendar will be published at the beginning of each school year. (This calendar may need to be modified throughout the year based on school and staff needs).
- A school leadership member will be assigned the responsibility of professional development leader. Their role will be to inform staff of professional development opportunities via email and fliers, which in turn will reflect individual staff needs as identified in performance review plans. The leader will also play a role in coordinating and organising professional development activities for individuals and the whole school.
- Each individual's professional development is a shared responsibility between the school and the staff member.
- Each staff member will develop a personal professional development plan that is embedded within, and is reflective of the Department's performance review process and AITSL standards. The personal professional development plan will allow for both school identified needs, and those of a personal, professional interest.
- Each staff member's professional development will be tracked by the staff member. It is the individual staff member's responsibility to reference their professional development to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards – as required in order for teachers to maintain their teaching registration (See Attachment 2).
- Staff are encouraged to seek from and provide professional development to other staff members. Key staff will be allocated to facilitate coaching and/or mentoring roles within the school.

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- A budget will be allocated to professional development each year. Budget implementation will allow, over time, for equity of resources among staff. The professional development leader will be responsible for its implementation.
- School council will provide adequate resources for funding the professional learning of staff.
- All staff wanting to attend externally provided professional development will need to complete a *PD request form* and submit it to the professional development leader. The requests will be discussed at School Improvement Team meetings where they will be either accepted or declined. Where a request is declined, an explanation will be provided and alternative professional learning experiences will be suggested (where possible). Staff attending externally provided professional development have a responsibility to provide a brief verbal report to the remainder of the staff about the activity and its benefits to enable shared internal learning. This will be done at team and staff meetings.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year strategic plan.

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Attachment 1

Department of Education and Training: Seven principles of highly effective professional learning

The seven principles are designed to underpin the delivery of high quality professional learning to improve student outcomes and apply to all levels of the system – school, network, region and centre.

Principle 1:

Professional learning is focused on student outcomes (not just individual teacher needs)

Professional learning is aimed at maximising student learning so that all students achieve their learning potential. Using multiple sources of student outcomes data, teacher professional learning should be guided by analyses of the differences between goals and standards for student learning and student performance. Such analyses will define what teachers need to learn, make teacher professional learning student centred, and increase public confidence in the use of resources for professional learning. Student outcomes will improve if professional learning increases teachers' understanding of how to represent and convey content in meaningful ways.

Principle 2:

Professional learning is focused on and embedded in teacher practice (not disconnected from the school)

Teacher professional learning should be school based and built into the day-to-day work of teaching. The most potent and meaningful learning experiences occur in the school, where teachers can address the immediate problems and challenges of learning and teaching. Being situated close to the classroom and their colleagues enables teachers to work together to identify problems, find solutions and apply them.

This does not imply that beyond school learning experiences, such as postgraduate studies or attendance at workshops and seminars, are not valuable. External learning opportunities can complement school-based professional learning. Professional learning should be anchored in the school-based work of teachers but enriched with ideas and knowledge sourced from outside the school.

Principle 3:

Professional learning is informed by the best available research on effective learning and teaching (not just limited to what they currently know)

Teacher professional learning that improves the learning of all students prepares teachers to apply research to decision-making. Successful professional learning programs immerse teachers in the content they teach and provide research-based knowledge about how students learn that content.

Results of research need to be made accessible to teachers to enable the expansion and elaboration of their professional knowledge base. This research should include information on effective teaching and learning, how students learn particular content, classroom management, assessment and curriculum.

Principle 4:

Professional learning is collaborative, involving reflection and feedback (not just individual inquiry)

Teacher professional learning opportunities should relate to individual needs but be organised around collaborative problem-solving. Organised in teams, educators take collective responsibility for solving the complex problems of teaching and learning and improving student outcomes. Teams share knowledge, expertise and experience in order to deepen learning and to foster a mutual

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understanding of effective classroom practice. Teams create the conditions for collegial reflection and support and help to spread workloads more evenly.

Constructive, objective and actionable feedback on teacher practice is important for targeting areas where a teacher needs to improve his or her performance and for the purpose of designing professional learning opportunities that address areas for improvement.

Competent, experienced teachers, school leaders or an expert sourced from outside the school can also provide teachers with feedback on their professional learning. For example, feedback from a trusted peer on the operation of a professional learning team or a coaching or mentoring partnership is useful to gauge the effectiveness of such strategies.

Principle 5:

Professional learning is evidence based and data driven (not anecdotal) to guide improvement and to measure impact

Data from different sources can be used to determine the content of teachers' professional learning and to design and monitor the impact of professional learning programs.

Evidence, rather than anecdotes, needs to be collected regularly at the student, teacher and school level to help focus teacher learning. Student journals, for example, can be analysed to identify areas where students are struggling or how students are progressing from one month to another.

Data can be used to measure and improve the impact of professional learning. Formative evaluations allow teachers to make mid-program refinements and corrections, while summative evaluations measure the effectiveness of professional learning activities and their impact on teacher practice, knowledge and student learning.

Principle 6:

Professional learning is ongoing, supported and fully integrated into the culture and operations of the system – schools, networks, regions and the centre (not episodic and fragmented)

Professional learning needs to be ongoing, long term and sustained. Significant and long-term change in teacher practice does not occur in a matter of weeks but more often over months or years. Learning by doing, reflecting and refining is a long, multistage process.

Teachers need support for their professional learning. Solving complex problems and implementing innovative practices may require outside expertise and additional resources. Encouragement and recognition is also crucial to maintaining effort since finding new ways to do things is difficult and often painful. Sustained, immediate and quality support is essential to ensure improvement in schools and classrooms, particularly when unexpected problems arise.

Supported, ongoing professional learning must be embedded in the system. Central and regional staff have a responsibility to model good practice by participating in ongoing professional learning.

Principle 7:

Professional learning is an individual and collective responsibility at all levels of the system (not just the school level) and it is not optional

Professional learning should occur at all levels of the system. It is an individual and collective responsibility encompassing schools, regions and the centre. For teachers and school leaders, professional learning needs to be linked to schools' performance goals. These goals in turn need to reflect the needs and aims of the regions and the centre. Professional learning is inextricably linked to enhancing the capacity of the system as a whole.

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Central and regional offices and key stakeholder groups should work collaboratively to determine strategies for improvement and share best professional learning practices to drive school and system-wide improvement.

Reference:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/profdev/proflearningeffectivesch.pdf>

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Attachment 2: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards: Teachers

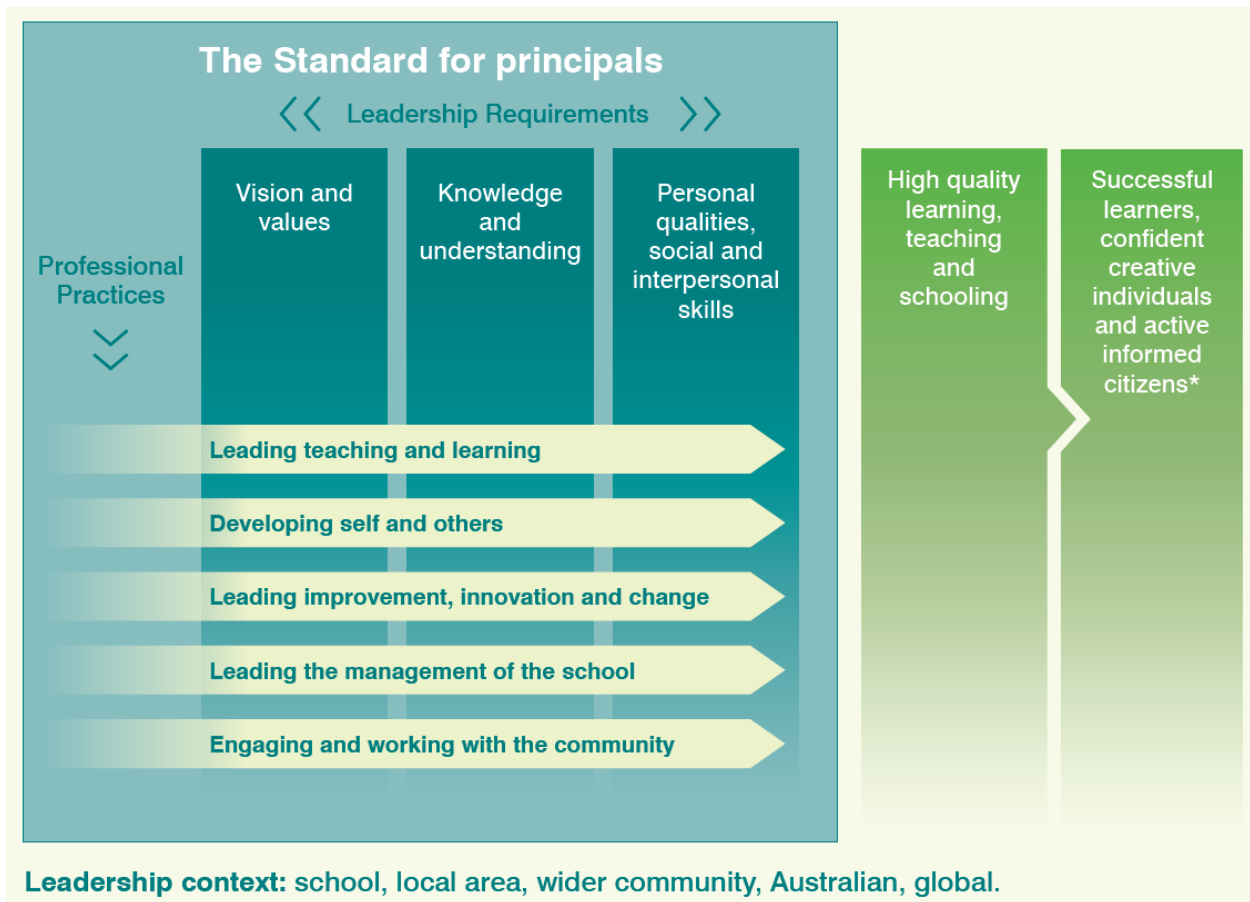
PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE		PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE			PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Know students and how they learn	Know the content and how to teach it	Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning	Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments	Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning	Engage in professional learning	Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area	3.1 Establish challenging learning goals	4.1 Support student participation	5.1 Assess student learning	6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs	7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities
1.2 Understand how students learn	2.2 Content selection and organisation	3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs	4.2 Manage classroom activities	5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning	6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements
1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting	3.3 Use teaching strategies	4.3 Manage challenging behaviour	5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements	6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	7.3 Engage with the parents/carers
1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians	3.4 Select and use resources	4.4 Maintain student safety	5.4 Interpret student data	6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities	2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies	3.5 Use effective classroom communication	4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically	5.5 Report on student achievement		

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1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability	2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs				
		3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process				

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Attachment 2: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards: Principals



Reference:
<http://www.aitsl.edu.au>

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