

# WE AREN'T MARCHING ON THE SPOT WE ARE MOVING FORWARD!

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

The teaching staff shares the belief that all students have the ability to learn and that as educators have a commitment and obligation to provide the very best learning opportunity for every one of our students. The ES learning mentor staff shares the belief that as paraprofessionals they have the commitment and obligation to advocate for students who find learning challenging for a wide range of reasons. They collaborate with the teaching staff to provide the very best learning opportunity for these students. The ES administration staff share the belief and commitment to connect the school in every possible way to the local and broader community and to facilitate the administrative infrastructure that enables optimum student learning.

There is a learning culture where everyone who works in our school is open to learning. This means they can identify something that they have learnt, unlearnt and re learnt in relation to their practice. This has been the vehicle for our journey to new heights.

There is consistent and coherent implementation of focused teacher instructional practices across the school. Classroom timetables reflect the time that is actually spent on each learning area. All classes at Rowville Primary School operate a daily one hour reading block, a daily one hour writing block and a daily twenty to thirty minute Word Study session and a one hour Numeracy block.

Every learning session has a clearly articulated learning intention and success criteria. All lessons are taught using the gradual release of responsibility model (workshop model). This includes: modeling an instructional focus (tuning in), guiding students to practice the topic of instruction with support (collaborative practice) and then providing opportunities for to the student to apply their learning (independent practice). At all points of the instructional process students are articulating their thinking and ideas. Students are able to articulate what they are learning and why they are learning it. The specialist teachers

also utilize this lesson model. This ensures that students are taught in a coherent way in all parts of their day. This is our whole school model of instructional practice.

A learning map for school wide multidisciplinary *The World in Which We Live Inquiry* has been developed and is implemented by all teachers in a way that arouses curiosity in all students. The topics which are studied are connected to the real world and are deep and complex. Each year level undertakes the agreed inquiry topic and the research progresses according to complex questions that students have formulated with the support of their teachers. Students undertake small group research and routinely use a range of multimedia sources during the inquiry. The learning generated is evidenced across the school. Through these units of work students develop critical literacy skills and learn that at times words are not enough and actions need to be taken if we are to have an impact on the real world problems that have been researched.

At least four hours a week is allocated for multidisciplinary inquiry learning. Any field trips, incursions or excursions that are undertaken are clearly linked to the inquiry. Teachers monitor the student learning process and use Victorian Curriculum to report on the students' learning.

Specialist teachers have developed a yearly course of study for their specialist subject. The specialist program is vibrant, engaging and builds school wide culture. The artefacts of the visual arts program are evident across the school. The performing arts program builds culture through performance at assembly and the yearly musical production. The Italian program and the kitchen garden program together reinforce an understanding of Italian culture. The Sporting program builds a culture of fitness and wellbeing.

Our teaching language prompts students to think. All teachers are using elaborating, reflective, probing and clarifying questions routinely in all aspects of their practice- when they are

using the workshop model and when they are conferring with students. In this way teachers are teaching students how to talk about their learning. Teachers are nurturing the development of inquiring attitudes that will enable students to become lifelong learners.

Students are supported to write learning reflection journals. Students across the school keep writing notebooks. There is a classroom library in every classroom. The classroom displays scaffold the learning that is occurring in the classroom with all posters at eye level and all students clearly understanding the purpose of what is on display.

As a means of improving teaching and learning all teachers have been supported to build their capacity in an ongoing and regular way. Professional learning teams at each level enable the professionals to learn together. Teachers discuss and reflect on their current practice and use data and substantive conversations as a means of improving their teaching.

Teachers write reflective journals which refer to the AITSL Standards. The journals reflect the growing skill capacity of our teachers in the standards around: professional knowledge; content; professional practice; safe and supportive learning environments; assessment and professional engagement.

Distributive teacher leadership has been implemented in the school. This is because research has shown that this is the type of leadership that will have the highest impact on raising student learning. The agenda for the work of teacher leaders and members of the Principal class is working side by side on the shared purpose of student learning. Teacher leaders, together with the Principal and Assistant Principal, form the whole school leadership team.

The school's leaders exhibit high capability in all five dimensions of leadership- establishing goals and expectations; resourcing strategically; ensuring quality teaching; leading teacher learning and development; ensuring an orderly and safe environment. Inquiry processes (including a combination of critical dialogue, data interrogation, reflection on practice, and action research) drive the way we solve problems and initiate change in our school. In this way we our actions are systematic and rigorous.

What do we see these teacher leaders doing and what do hear them saying? We see teacher leaders striving for excellence through their own learning and with their own classes. Their classrooms have become "lab sites" where other teachers both inside the school and outside the school can come to observe quality instructional practice in action. Our teachers are highly motivated to make a difference to student learning. They are

willing to stand up for the results that they produce with their students. There is evidence of significant value adding to the student learning in their classes. We hear our teacher leaders engaged in professional conversations about learning with each other and other members of the team. They are avid readers of educational research and challenge both their own practice and that of their colleagues. They use their knowledge to create and build different learning environments across the school. They step up to lead the learning of other teachers by using reference to research and professional reading.

The teachers on the leadership team are a role model for the other teachers in the school. We hear teacher leaders articulating an optimistic belief in all students. We see them assuming a school wide role in student wellbeing and hear them working in a problem solving way to help other teachers to develop creative strategies to engage students in learning, especially those that present challenges and difficulties.

Teachers on the leadership team work with the principal class members and other teachers on projects that heighten student learning. This is a 'can do' team that is focused on supporting student learning and engaging all learners.

So that the teaching is personalized for all students, all year levels produce a Course of Study in Literacy, Numeracy and Multidisciplinary learning which is sent to all families before the end of the first month of the school year. Units of work are developed from this course of study using the agreed whole school-planning template. Every teacher draws upon the unit planner to develop a weekly planner that reflects the learning points of the students in their class.

Teachers at each Victorian Curriculum level and as a specialist block are members of professional learning teams. So what is happening in these meetings? Teachers step up from within to lead the conversation. They are appointed from within the group and may not necessarily be teachers on the leadership team. These leaders facilitate group processes, ensuring that the group develops a shared purpose where 75% of the dialogue is about tracking student learning and how the evidence about student learning will be used to shape future instruction.

Every teacher brings their weekly planner to this meeting. There is talk about instructional practice. Teachers bring evidence of student learning to the meetings. They bring samples of work, student self-assessments and other sources of data about the learning of students in their class. There is a presentation of evidence of student learning. Cohorts of students using the Guttman charts are targeted for discussion and the group brainstorms strategies for moving the learning of these students

forward. There is reflection on student motivation during the past fortnight. Professional readings may be part of the discussion. Teachers use student data including their conference notes to guide the planning for the following week. Every teacher uploads their weekly planner onto Compass where it is monitored by the leading teacher. Teachers across the school are able at a glance view what is occurring in learning across the school at any time.

There is a collective responsibility for administration tasks that are increasingly being managed electronically. These are delegated amongst the various members of the team and occupy 10% of the conversation time.

As a means of tracking the learning of all students a range of strategies are used to gain evidence of learning. Teachers collect ongoing evidence of student learning by regularly conferring with every student and keeping conference notes. As part of this process teachers assist students to identify and monitor student personal learning goals. All teachers also complete formal assessments so that they have an understanding of students starting points and further evidence of progression of student learning. Teachers post assessment tasks onto Compass. Teachers in years 3-6 regularly complete the On Demand adaptive testing with all students in years 3-6. Once this has been completed students complete the linear testing to diagnose optimum learning points. Each student has a portfolio with reflections on their own learning combined with teacher conferencing uploaded on Compass. This is their evidence of learning. Parents receive interim reports of student learning at the end of each unit of work. These are posted onto Compass. The conversations with our parents around learning are ongoing.

We have a school of highly capable teachers who plan by selecting appropriate mentor texts, analyzing conference notes and using all this data to identify students who have common learning needs. They undertake professional reading. They undertake research into the content of our multidisciplinary units and lead the students to undertake research of sufficient complexity.

## STUDENT WELL BEING

All members of the team, teaching and non-teaching, contribute to student well-being by modelling caring and respectful interactions with one another and students based on our values of: respect, perseverance, responsibility and pride.

Quality teaching must engage all students. The teachers at Rowville know their students, their interests, their strengths,

their weaknesses and have an understanding of any factors that may impact on their learning. Prior knowledge of students is important so each year parents are invited to present the new class teacher with a letter in 1,000 words or less about their child. Compass has made communication easier and more interactive with parents.

Teachers ensure that they connect with every child every day and that they have a regular learning conversation with every child. Teacher leaders work with each other and the principal class team to find solutions to issues that affect student wellbeing.

The ES learning mentor staff advocates for students with disabilities and impairments and collaborate with teachers to ensure that these students experience a sense of belonging in our school.

The ES Administration staffs are savvy users of technology and use emerging technologies to connect the school with our parent community and promote engagement. They create and recreate administrative systems to support our students. They exhibit high levels of communication and customer service.

## CONCLUSION

Rowville Primary is an exceptional school that delivers a guaranteed and viable curriculum. We have “raised the bar” and closed the gap with student learning. Teachers at Rowville are significantly adding value to every student’s learning. They routinely inquire research and challenge both their own practice and the practice of each other. They are creators of new knowledge. Their work is based on research and not recipes. They create solutions to problems of practice. The onsite coaching has been made redundant and teachers from within are leading the learning of others. Teachers at Rowville are recognised nationally for their work. The Education Support staff alongside the teaching staff has contributed to the development of sustainable excellence in student learning. All members of the team are proud to work at Rowville.

