

Strategic Improvement Plan 2021-2024

Kotara School 5738



School vision and context

School vision statement

Leading innovative practices through high quality relationships, excelling in academic and wellbeing outcomes that are culturally safe and foster inclusion and positive transitions.

School context

Kotara School is a school for specific purposes across two sites situated in the Glenrock network. The school has a total enrollment of 42 students across two sites. Our student body is drawn from a wide area including Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens area. We provide the opportunity for every student to achieve success. To provide an environment that supports students to find the 'courage to learn' and the 'courage to change'.

The Kotara Campus has 28 places and caters to students between years 2 and 6. Students are offered a place by the district placement panel, made up of staff from Educational Services, psychologists, principals and consultants. Approximately 50% of students at Kotara Campus identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Each class is staffed with a classroom teacher and Student Learning Support Officer.

Nexus Education is a satellite faculty, located at the Nexus Child and Adolescent Inpatient unit at The John Hunter Hospital. Nexus Education facilitates learning for up to 14 students from Years 6 to Year 12. We work alongside NSW Health and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, to support over 300 young people each year, who are admitted with mental health needs.

The length of each students' enrollment at Kotara School is individualised to their need. Academic and wellbeing programs are taught to ensure our students return successfully to their census schools. Our behavioural interventions are based on the work of Dr Bruce Perry and his Neurosequential Model for Education and our pedagogy is based upon the Quality Teaching Framework through the implementation of Quality Teaching Rounds.

The consultation process with stakeholders including students, families, carers, communities, census schools and Muloobinbah Aboriginal Education Consultative Group informed our situational analysis and the development of the strategic improvement plan. As a result of this process, high-level areas for improvement were identified such as the embedding of evidenced based pedagogical practices into curriculum, the implementation of assessment and the analysis of data. This process also highlighted the importance of key systems in effectively supporting all stakeholders.

Kotara School is staffed with a school Principal, three Assistant Principals, Aboriginal Education Officer, Classroom Teachers, Student Learning and Support Officers, Chaplain, Student Support Officer and a School Administration Manager.

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Purpose

To ensure high quality teaching programs and practices are embedded across the school through quality professional learning and curriculum differentiation so that all students can excel in academic and wellbeing outcomes.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2024

Learning and Development

The school will be Excelling in the School Excellence Framework theme of *collaborative practice and feedback*.

Target year: 2024

Student Performance and Measures

The baseline data will show the school is Excelling in the School Excellence Framework theme of *internal and external measures against syllabus standards and that all students achieve or exceed their co-developed individualised goals informed by the English and Maths syllabus*.

Target year: 2024

Curriculum

Kotara School will be Excelling in the School Excellence Framework theme of *teaching and learning programs*.

Initiatives

Implementing Research Based Practices

Identification and implementation of research based pedagogies, curriculum and resources to improve learning culture across the school.

- Staff apply evidenced based practices from targeted professional learning to enhance the learning culture across the school.
- High quality integration of Aboriginal education is embedded in the school's culture and curriculum.
- Resources are strategically implemented to support effective classroom practice and whole school programs
- All curriculum is developed collaboratively among school staff.

Data Driven Processes

The school's decision making processes are data informed, to drive school wide planning and practices.

- Internal and external assessments are differentiated for individual students and are quality assured through evidence based data and examples of best practice.
- Whole school decisions and practices are data driven and are evaluated by all stakeholders.
- Staffing structures are identified and resources based upon data collated from a variety of sources, to drive school improvement.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

- 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, schoolwide improvement in teaching practice and student results
- 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.
- Teaching and learning programs are dynamic, showing evidence of revisions based on feedback on teaching practices, consistent and reliable student assessment and continuous tracking of student progress and achievement.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Q: Have school initiatives, over the life of the plan, resulted in the refinement of curriculum implementation and pedagogical practices at Kotara School, leading to improved student outcome, achievement and engagement in their learning?

D: The following will be utilised in determining our successes and highlighting future focus areas:

Internal and external academic data e.g. PAT, NAPLAN, Progressions, Student IEP and PLP goals, Student/staff/community surveys, PDP process, QTR implementation, collaboration and staff surveys with the University of Newcastle, Teaching and Learning programs, Census school communication, Professional Learning courses, Nexus programs and online educational platforms.

A: Regular triangulation of student achievement data, professional learning opportunities and stakeholder consultation identify consistent improvement of learning outcome achievement.

Strategic Direction 1: Student growth and attainment

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

I: Regular review of initiative impact promote identification of effective systems, structures and processes. Those initiatives that have not supported significant gains will be removed or refined as required.

Strategic Direction 2: Quality wellbeing

Purpose

To be a centre of excellence in the provision of holistic student wellbeing by supporting our school community in a neurologically respectful manner to ensure all students can access an education in an environment that supports their individual needs.

Improvement measures

Target year: 2024

Attendance

The school will be excelling in the theme *attendance* in the School Excellence Framework.

Target year: 2024

Data Skills and Use

Kotara School will be Excelling in the School Excellence Framework theme of *data analysis* to support the creation of individualised student learning goals.

Target year: 2024

Wellbeing

The school will be Excelling in the School Excellence Framework themes of *caring for students* and *behaviour*.

Target year: 2024

Learning Culture

Kotara School will be Excelling in the School Excellence Framework theme of *transitions and continuity of learning*.

Target year: 2024

Educational Leadership

Kotara School will be Excelling in the theme of *community engagement* in the School Excellence Framework.

Initiatives

Attendance and Engagement

Kotara School is identified as a safe and supportive learning environment where students are engaged.

- Authentic collaboration between the school, families and key stakeholders is continuous to support the social, emotional and academic needs of students.
- Data is used to track student attendance, learning and regulation skills.
- Staff are provided professional learning opportunities relevant to the Kotara School setting.
- Personalised goals are collaboratively set and are aspirational.
- Strategic physical and human resourcing ensures students are achieving success across all educational areas.

Transition

Kotara School runs holistic transition programs that ensure students experience success on return to their census school.

- Strong collaborative connections with census schools are developed.
- Data is analysed and shared with stakeholders.
- Planning processes are developed, implemented and systematically reviewed across both sites.
- Student plans are individualised and support their social, emotional and academic needs.

Success criteria for this strategic direction

- Teachers, parents and the community work together to support consistent and systematic processes that ensure student absences do not impact on learning outcomes.
- 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.
- The school is organised so that all students have regular opportunities to meet with an identified staff member who can provide advice, support and assistance to help students fulfil their potential.
- 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.
- The school engages in strong collaborations between parents, students and the community that inform and support continuity of learning for all students at transition points, including highly mobile students and students with atypical enrolment.
- The school is recognised as excellent and responsive by its community because it uses best practice to embed a culture of high expectations, and effectively caters for the range of equity issues in the school.

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

Q - Have initiatives implemented over the life of the school plan ensured that we are a centre of excellence for wellbeing?

D - Data used to inform these decisions will come from: attendance rates, suspension data, Sentral wellbeing data, Tell Them From Me, internal surveys, parent and external stakeholder surveys, Individualised student plans, transition meetings, stakeholder meetings, NME Minimap assessment reports, Nexus data tracking sheets

Strategic Direction 2: Quality wellbeing

Evaluation plan for this strategic direction

and NSW Health data.

A - School staff will regularly work collaboratively with stakeholders to assess the effectiveness and suitability wellbeing programs.

I - evidence gained from data analysis will be used to inform ongoing planning for wellbeing programs that improve engagement and attendance and strengthen the transition processes across both settings.