

Negotiated School Review Report

Prepared for

Coomoora Primary School

and the Department of Education & Training

2005

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Table of Contents

1.0	Executive Summary	3
2.0	Aim / Purpose.....	4
3.0	Methodology	4
4.0	Discussion.....	7
5.0	Conclusions and recommendations for action	7

1.0 Executive Summary

In order to promote continuous school improvement and to support the achievement of goals identified in the School Self Evaluation, the School Review investigated ways of ‘Improving learning and teaching through peer coaching.’

Staff and School Council were consulted in developing the terms of reference.

The Review process involved the following elements:

- Professional development for staff on a range of peer coaching programs
- A staff survey to assess perceptions, current practice and needs
- Input from team leaders
- Visits to other schools
- Input from the critical friend
- A Review meeting to examine and discuss information collected and to propose recommendations to be incorporated into the Strategic Plan.

The Review identified a range of excellent professional development practices currently in place that support and promote professional learning and growth. The recommendations from the Review meeting proposed that the school continue to build on current best practice and to provide further opportunities for professional support and growth through the following:

- Implementation of a formal Induction Program for teachers new to the school
- Building leadership capacity of teachers in leadership roles and of individual teachers.
- Providing regular professional development opportunities tailored to identified individual needs
- Sharing of external professional development attended by individuals or teams
- Documenting school-wide professional development practices
- Working towards school accreditation for Performance and Development Culture.

2.0 Aim / Purpose

The School Self Evaluation identified the following areas for future improvement: reading, thinking skills, comprehension. Other recommendations from the School Self-Evaluation included a continued school-wide focus on the further development of literacy and numeracy, student wellbeing, professional growth, focused program planning, effective monitoring of student progress, effective integration of Information Communication Technology, improved outcomes for 'at risk' students, maintaining excellent student behaviour and high-level engagement.

The School Review focused on 'Improving learning and teaching through peer coaching' as a means of promoting continuous school improvement and the achievement of goals identified in the School Self Evaluation.

3.0 Methodology

Following the School Self Assessment, the leading teachers, assistant principal and principal determined the Review focus and drafted the terms of reference based on the results of the School Self Evaluation. The proposal was presented and accepted by staff at a Staff Meeting and by School Council.

The proposal recommended that the Review investigate the following:

- How expertise/good practice within the school was being utilized.
- How effective mentoring/peer coaching could further promote school improvement.
- Identifying effective peer coaching programs that operate in other schools.
- How to further support the professional growth of staff through mentoring/peer coaching.
- What resources are required to develop effective peer coaching.

The Review involved the following elements:-

Briefing with the critical friend: The principal and critical friend met to discuss the aim and purpose of the Review, to discuss the terms of reference and to provide the critical friend with the School Self Evaluation, School Charter, 2003 Annual Report, 2004 School Level

Report, Parent Survey, Staff Survey, Leadership Survey, Student Survey, AIM data and 2004 School Magazine.

Staff Professional Development: The assistant principal, presented an overview of various models of peer coaching currently operating in the school, as well as an outline of the Mentoring Program run by Tony Ross. Patricia Hill (leading teacher) and Christopher Williams (expert teacher), Ben Talko (graduate) and Ramona Farkas (graduate), outlined the Graduate Mentoring Program and the benefits of the program from their perspectives.

Staff Survey: A staff survey was conducted to ascertain staff perceptions, experiences and needs in reference to peer coaching / mentoring.

Team Leaders: At a Management Meeting, team leaders brainstormed ways in which peer coaching could further support the development of teaching and learning across the school.

School visits: The principal visited three high performing schools to ascertain how they are developing staff and supporting school improvement through peer coaching programs. Schools visited were: Courtney Gardens PS- Nicole Bottrliell; Kilberry Valley PS – Bruce Hillbrick; Bentleigh West PS – Jennifer Small.

Review Meeting: A Review meeting was attended by the critical friend, leading teachers, team leaders, assistant principal and principal. School Councilors had been invited and encouraged to attend. Those present discussed the School Self Evaluation, the staff survey results, team leaders' input, information gathered from other schools, perceptions and input of the critical friend.

Loretta Hamilton, principal of Courtney Gardens Primary School, was the critical friend for the Review. Loretta was approached because she is a very experienced principal of a large school and it was considered that she would bring a great deal of expertise, experience and a broader perspective to the process. Having previously worked in the Springvale Network, Loretta is aware of the needs of our students and our community. Her school is currently involved in the implementation of a number of Blueprint initiatives. Courtney Gardens Primary School is also running a peer coaching program. Loretta's role included examining a comprehensive range of school data to verify recommendations made in the School Self Evaluation. Her role also included recommending programs and strategies that the school could explore as part of the Review and to recommend goals and strategies to be incorporated in the Strategic Plan.

4.0 Findings

The Review confirmed that at Coomoora Primary School there is a wide range of excellent processes and strategies in place that facilitate professional learning and promote ongoing school development.

Currently, there is a considerable amount of informal and formal support available for staff.

There are opportunities within the school for peer coaching that include the following:-

- Mentoring for graduates
- Shadowing teachers in leadership roles within the school
- Support for staff new to roles and areas
- Team planning and sharing
- Support for classroom teachers with program planning, assessment, teaching and learning strategies, provided by the Early Years, Middle Years and Mathematics Coordinators.
- Monday morning team professional development sessions
- Individual coaching to implement initiatives such as the Numeracy Interview.

Within the South Springvale Cluster there are also numerous opportunities for professional learning through Innovations and Excellence and Designer PD.

It was recommended that teachers would benefit from further opportunities to visit other classrooms, and specialist teachers to visit other schools.

Teachers, particularly those in substantive leadership roles, should be encouraged and supported to further develop their leadership skills.

A formal induction program for new teachers and for teachers changing roles should be implemented.

The provision of a range of professional development sessions tailored to individual teacher needs was highly recommended.

It was recommended that teachers share knowledge/good practice gained from professional development through optional workshops offered to staff.

The provision of short term peer coaching at the point of need was suggested.

Teachers should be encouraged and supported to apply for Professional Leave.

It was strongly suggested that the school consider applying for School Accreditation for Performance and Development Culture.

5.0 Conclusions and recommendations

From the Review meeting, it was recommended that the following goals and strategies be incorporated in the school's Strategic Plan:

- Document and implement a formal induction program for teachers new to the school.
- Continue to provide opportunities for professional sharing and support eg Monday morning team professional development, team planning, shadowing opportunities, visiting other classes and schools.
- Implement a transition program for teachers changing areas and changing roles.
- Build leadership capacity of teachers in leadership roles and of individual teachers.
- Provide professional development tailored to individual teacher needs.
- Share knowledge/good practice gained from professional development through optional workshops offered to staff
- Document school-wide professional development practices.
- School Accreditation for Performance and Development Culture.