

## Context

Granville East Public School is a primary school in the western suburbs of Sydney, with an ICSEA of 948. The school leads a dynamic and innovative community, characterised by powerful partnerships, inclusivity and excellence. Granville East PS inspires purposeful, holistic and future-focused teaching and learning that engages students and empowers creative and critical thinkers who experience enjoyment in their learning.

School leaders have been implementing an improvement agenda around student self-regulation in learning for some years now. Staff use formative assessment strategies as a way of increasing student accountability and improving the responsiveness of teaching.

Granville East PS has been working in the area of literacy to deepen student learning, specifically in reading, writing and accountable talk. The school has clear guidelines for the daily Literacy Block and provides specialist staff in every classroom to support implementation.

School leaders identified that they needed to standardise practice and required a platform to guide teaching and learning across the school. They developed a Powerful Learning Framework (PLF) – a blueprint for high quality pedagogy at the school. Leaders then focused their project on developing systems, strategies and cultural forces to embed this framework throughout Granville East PS.

The school aimed for high quality teaching and learning that is flexible, adaptive and steeped in authentic challenge to engage all learners in striving to improve.

## Project overview

### Issues Identified

Powerful learning was not consistent across every space and every place in the school, hence staff needed to standardise practise.

### Vision

By working with every teacher at their point of need, alongside engaging the support of collegiate networks, the school would be able to improve outcomes consistently for all students.

### Actions

Granville East PS provided tailored professional learning with a focus on data analysis and collaboration.

### Outcomes

Improved teacher capacity to monitor, evaluate and share best practice with colleagues for improved impact and student learning.

### Impact

Students are more capable, confident and self-aware learners, with specific, measurable improvements in the quality of student writing.



## What happened during the project?

**“In 2016, we developed a Powerful Learning Framework (PLF) – a blueprint for high quality pedagogy at our school. The framework captures the heart of our vision for students by synthesising research, bringing coherence & balance to teaching and learning, and providing a call to action for all staff.”**

Louise Reynolds, Principal



Granville East PS engaged in a cycle of professional learning based on reflection. Staff set clear goals around an element of the PLF, collaborated on their teaching programs and keenly monitored student progress. They used evidence of student learning to evaluate the impact of teaching, with a focus on students as authentic writers.

The school developed a PLF website and Learning Centre blogs for Years K-2 and 3-6 to help teachers learn, reflect and document their journey. Illustrations of Practice (short videos demonstrating great teaching practice) are regularly uploaded to the platform and teachers actively collect and share their own examples to celebrate, learn and deepen individual reflection for future action. These “illustrations” also assist the executive staff who use the PLF in planning and reflecting on practice.

The number of Learning Centre blogs offered to foster professional dialogue and inspire student learning was increased in 2018, which significantly deepened teacher understanding of teaching literacy and created improvements in student literacy.

Through teacher observation, reflections and professional discussions, Granville East PS has seen a shift in teacher capacity to identify best-practice pedagogy, especially modelled, guided and independent practice. The significant improvement in collective adaptive expertise has improved teacher confidence and competence in planning with intention, while teaching responsively.

Teachers have also deepened their ability to use a range of evidence to assess the impact of their teaching. Staff collaborate on judging evidence and have improved their ability to make accurate judgements according to syllabus outcomes.

## What changed for the students?

The power of collective practices has shifted the model of programming at Granville East PS from collaborative planning to collaborative thinking. Teachers now collaborate around the big ideas they want students to learn and why this learning matters. Staff then adapt and individually plan for the needs of their students through Practice Analysis Conversations (PACs). As a result of this support, from 2017 to 2018 teachers in Years 3 and 4 doubled achievement of personalised goals for students, and in Years 5 and 6 tripled achievement of their goals.

Granville East PS has clear guidelines for data collection, analysis and evidence-based conversations. Teachers moderate student writing at regular intervals as a whole-school and in-stage teams. The depth of insight into teaching literacy has seen significant increases in student learning outcomes in literacy across the school, specifically in the breadth and quality of writing.

Increased opportunities to write for an authentic audience included the Stories of Learning project. In 2018, Kindergarten students created stories to present to their parents using tablets. They included text, pictures and a voice or video recording of them reading (sometimes in their home language) to bring their stories to life. This successful strategy served to deepen students’ awareness of their skills and their ability to self-monitor and was expanded across all of K to 2 in 2019.

From 2017-2019, Granville East PS saw a 45% increase in the number of Year 3 students as proficient writers (as per NAPLAN), a 27% increase in the number of Year 5 proficient writers, and a 17% increase in Year 5 students meeting or exceeding growth in writing. Kindergarten students, meanwhile, have improved by 31% over the past 3 years in achieving the end-of-year syllabus standards in writing.

**45%**

increase in Year 3 proficient writers (as per NAPLAN) since 2016.

**27%**

27% and 17% increase respectively in Year 5 proficient writers and Year 5 students meeting or exceeding growth in writing.

**31%**

improvement among Kindergarten students in achieving end-of-year syllabus standards in writing.

## Where to next?

Granville East PS will continue to use the Powerful Learning Framework as a blueprint for learning and teaching, and the success of this project will feed the school's emerging work in numeracy.

The strengths of leaders and teachers will be foregrounded as they look at thinking more deeply around the big ideas in maths to improve students' mathematical thinking.

The processes of goal setting, strategically planning professional learning and evidence gathering points, and monitoring student thinking, will be applied to this numeracy work.

More broadly, the aim is to continue to build the capacity of the leadership team to drive change and innovation both within Granville East PS and across The Connection.



## Key Insights

Granville East PS learned that the following were important for success:

- **Collaboration** – Developing a process whereby teachers and leaders co-plan, co-teach and co-evaluate learning was necessary for teachers to translate theory into practice.
- **Vision and goals** – Clear articulation of project purpose and goals helped to clarify thinking and strategy around the whole-school focus. Asking staff, parents and students to articulate this also provided valuable feedback and highlighted common aims.
- **Collective thinking** – The school's links with other Hub Schools deepened their thinking as a leadership team and yielded insights around which leadership activities to prioritise.
- **Theory in action** – To deepen understanding around quality literacy teaching, it was important for staff to see theory in action. The Illustrations of Practice videos were created for this purpose.
- **Thorough documentation** – Writing everything down, including processes, products and artefacts, highlights the journey, provides common ground for discussion and celebrates success.



## The importance of collaboration

### Q&A with the School Principal Louise Reynolds

#### Q: What has made SVA a productive partnership for your school?

SVA has deepened my thinking and deepened our leadership conversations around whole-school change. Our involvement in the SVA Bright Spots Schools Connection has highlighted the need to articulate our vision, listen to the voices of our students, and strengthened our evaluative processes.

#### Q: Outside of SVA itself, what has been the most productive partnership you've developed through your SVA project? Why has it been productive?

Key partnerships that we have developed through our SVA project include a partnership with Schools Plus – Fair Education, and a collaboration with two other Star Hub schools in The Connection (Auburn West Public School and Berala Public School, both in NSW) around student leadership. This has led to running a combined student leadership team development day each term for the past two years.



## Contribution of another school to your journey



The opportunity to be on a journey with other schools is not one that we were accustomed to!

Working closely with leaders from Hilltop Road Public School and Auburn West Public School in NSW invigorated our leadership team. We relished their project updates – as student voice and agency was something that we were also working on – and collaborated with key leaders from those schools on other projects and issues. We continued our deep working relationships across the years and have come to rely on their advice, ideas and strategies as ways to enrich our thinking.