

TEACHING AND LEARNING AUDIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – QASMT

DATE OF AUDIT: 20-21 MAY 2013



Background:

The Queensland Academy of Science, Mathematics and Technology (QASMT) was established in 2007 and is located in the Brisbane suburb of Toowong. QASMT caters for high performing students in Years 10 -12 with a particular focus on areas such as the sciences, medicine, engineering, nanotechnology, robotics and health.

Commendations:

- Since the previous Teaching and Learning Audit there has been significant improvement particularly in the domains of An Explicit Improvement Agenda, Analysis and Discussion of Data and A Culture that Promotes Learning.
- The explicit improvement agenda, with a focus on improving student outcomes, instructional leadership and extending and developing partnerships, has been embraced throughout the Academy. This is evidenced in the very strong alignment between the strategic plan, the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP), faculty plans, subject development plans, staff individual performance and development plans, and through line management meetings which reflect the school's explicit improvement agenda.
- The extensive use of data to monitor and track student progress and to inform the starting points for teaching and differentiation. This is supported by the comprehensive data plan.
- The work of the literacy coach and the gifted and talented coach to ensure that the needs of the EAL (English as an Additional Language) and gifted and talented (G&T) students are addressed.
- The line of sight conversations conducted by the Principal and Deputy Principals to give feedback to teachers about their pedagogy using a student voice.
- The comprehensive faculty reviews conducted annually by the Principal to provide feedback to Heads of Department (HODs).

Affirmations:

- The extensive use of Blackboard and EdStudio by teachers to upload extensive curriculum information, including tutorials, for student availability and access.
- The introduction of Certificate II in Active Volunteering and Certificate III in Laboratory Skills to enhance student outcomes.
- The development and recording of SMART goals by students and the intensive monitoring of these goals by subject teachers and Instep mentors to ensure all students reach their potential.
- The establishment of strategic teams to facilitate instructional leadership for all teaching staff members – academic success, pedagogy team and academy spirit.
- The focus upon the G&T students and the introduction of diagnostic testing to facilitate the identification of individual strengths and abilities and to cater for their needs.
- The development of a buddy system for students and the extension of this process to involve members of the Academy's Alumni in the Instep program.
- The evidence of extensive work commenced around differentiated teaching and the work commenced and trialled involving class and individual student analysis and goal setting.

Recommendations:

- Continue to use data to monitor and track student achievement and to inform the starting points for teaching and to facilitate differentiation, particularly to stretch students at the top end. Extend the use of data to also monitor the effectiveness of teaching strategies and as evidence of successful teaching.
- Continue with the implementation of Dimensions of Learning (DOL) and ensure that the DOL strategies are embedded into unit and lesson planning.
- Expand the existing practice of formal lesson observation and feedback by line managers to incorporate a process of peer coaching and mentoring both within and across faculties.
- Extend the model for differentiation involving class and individual student analysis that has been already developed and trialled, and apply to all subjects
- Develop a broader range of partnerships with the wider community to promote QASMT as a school of excellence and to enhance the opportunities for all students.