

What Works Best 2025

Illustration of practice

Assessment at Warrimoo Public School

Warrimoo Public School uses a whole-school approach to identify, plan and embed purposeful and tailored assessments that support learning for all students. The school's approach focuses on building a strong professional learning community that supports student excellence through collective efficacy and data-informed assessment planning. Dedicated collaboration time provides opportunities to strengthen assessment capabilities including using assessments to inform teaching and learning decisions and consistent teacher judgements. Teachers and school leaders have also worked together to identify efficient tools and processes that provide timely assessment data.

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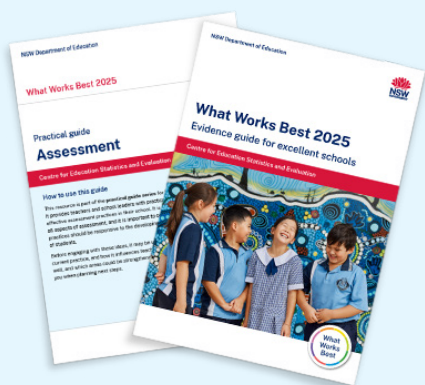
December 2025

How to use this resource

This resource is part of the illustrations of practice series for What Works Best 2025. It provides teachers and school leaders with descriptions of some of the key strategies used at Warrimoo Public School to implement effective assessment practices. It is not intended to capture all aspects of high expectations at the school, and it is important for readers of this resource to consider how strategies and practices should be responsive to the learning needs and goals of students in their own school.

Teachers and school leaders can read, consider, discuss and implement strategies highlighted in this illustration of practice and its accompanying resources as part of school-developed High Impact Professional Learning (HIPL). The appropriate time to use this resource may differ for each school, leader and teacher.

Other What Works Best 2025 resources on assessment



- What Works Best 2025 evidence guide for excellent schools – Chapter 5: Assessment
- What Works Best 2025 practical guide – Assessment



School details

- Warrimoo Public School is a small primary school located on Dharug and Gundungurra Country in the lower Blue Mountains.
- The school has a current enrolment of 144 students, 12% of whom identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and 8% of whom are from a language background other than English (LBOTE).
- There are 6 classes at Warrimoo Public School, 4 of which are multi-age.¹
- The school has a FOEI of 45.²
- There are 9 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff and 2 non-teaching staff, including administrative staff.
- The school's 2024 NAPLAN achievement for Years 3 and 5 students was above or close to students from similar backgrounds for all domains.
- Warrimoo Public School adjoins the Blue Mountains National Park, a landscape prone to bushfire activity. School leaders report that the community's experience of bushfire preparation, planning, relief and recovery has contributed to a supportive, resilient school population closely supported by its local community.

1 Multi-age or composite classes are made up of students drawn from different year levels. They can be multi-stage (for example, Years 2/3) or within the same stage (for example, Years 5/6).

2 Family Occupation and Education Index (FOEI) is a school-level index of educational disadvantage related to socioeconomic background. The average FOEI value is 100. A higher FOEI value indicates a higher level of disadvantage.



Strategy 1: Using a systematic approach to plan purposeful and tailored assessments

At Warrimoo Public School, assessments are planned in a systematic way to ensure they are purposefully embedded in teaching and learning programs. This process starts with cross-checking syllabus outcomes against the school's scope and sequences to identify when and how outcomes will be assessed. Assessments (including mandatory department assessments and school-based assessments) are then scheduled on the school's assessment data management plan, which is accessible by all staff. Assessment planning is a discussion that involves staff at all levels, including school leaders and teaching staff, as well as school learning support officers (SLSOs). The school administrative manager (SAM) also provides information, such as attendance data, so that trends in student engagement can be considered.

Having an assessment data management plan enables school leaders to clearly identify and communicate what needs to be assessed, when the assessments take place and why the assessments are needed. This process allows for discussion about whether an assessment is needed and clarifies the purpose of each assessment with the school community. Carefully thinking through how all staff will use the assessment data encourages a focus on the quality, rather than the quantity, of assessment tasks.

“ We've engaged with NESAs as well to get a real understanding of what the A to E reporting looks like. ... That's been really valuable in building into our assessment platform so that we can make sure that we look at a semester at a time [to] drill down to 'what are the outcomes we're assessing against?', and then [further] drill that down to 'how do we assess that?' ”

Lorraine Husarek, Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Instruction (AP, C&I)



Using the assessment data management plan, school leaders work with teachers to then embed planned assessments into their teaching and learning programs. This includes different modes of assessments, such as planned teacher observations, scheduled in-class assessment tasks and standardised assessments that are used at specific time points in the year to check student progress.

Data from assessments is made available within the school's centralised data platform. Time is then dedicated in stage meetings for teachers and school leaders to discuss the assessment data (refer to Strategy 2 for more details of this process).

“ Every staff member knows where our students are sitting. Every staff member knows if a student requires interventions, whether it's in English, the social-emotional learning (SEL) program or HPGE (high potential and gifted education) program ... and that enhances the efforts to improve all student learning.”

Alena Anderson, Relieving Principal

The school's systematic assessment approach is ongoing and responsive to students' needs. School leaders work with teachers and support staff to ensure assessments are accessible and culturally inclusive for all students. This includes tailoring and adapting assessments so that they are culturally inclusive and responsive for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students, and meet the needs of students identified for HPGE, students from language backgrounds other than English and students with disability. This approach results in a program of purposeful and tailored assessment activities.



Practice point: Using assessments to identify and monitor students needing additional learning support

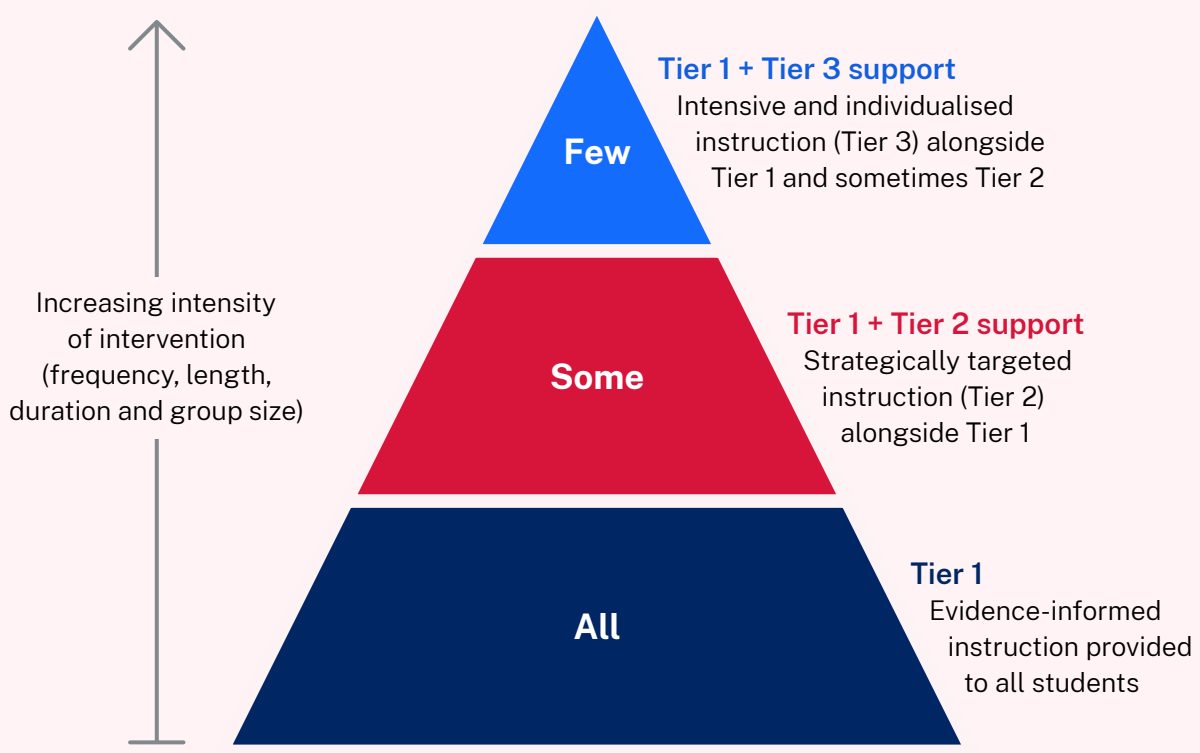
One purpose of assessments at Warrimoo Public School is to identify students who may need additional learning support and to monitor their progress in response to the adjustments, small group and/or individual support they receive. Staff use insights from standardised tests including Best Start Kindergarten Assessments, the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check and Check-In Assessments to identify gaps and misconceptions in student knowledge and skills.

Students identified through these assessments as needing additional learning support (for example, to address gaps in foundational literacy skills such as phonemic awareness and oral reading fluency) are supported using a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) approach described in the following list and in Figure 1.

- Tier 1 –evidence-based, whole-class instruction with adjustments (such as additional guidance, scaffolding or instruction) to respond to student needs.
- Tier 2 –learning and support teacher (LaST) small group support and small group tuition are used to provide additional evidence-based instruction that supplements Tier 1.
- Tier 3 –individualised LaST support that supplements Tiers 1 and 2 to provide intensified and targeted interventions to meet specific individual learning needs.

Assessments are embedded in teaching and learning programs to monitor progress. Students exit Tier 2 and 3 interventions when they have met criteria that indicates they no longer require additional support for the specific skills or knowledge the interventions were targeting.

Figure 1: Multi-tiered system of support



Note: Adapted from AERO's (2024) [Introduction to a multi-tiered system of supports](#).

Strategy 2: Dedicating collaboration time to strengthen assessment capabilities

All staff at Warrimoo Public School recognise the importance of collectively and continually building their assessment capabilities. In recent years, this has included a focus on using assessment data to make timely teaching and learning decisions, and to promote consistent teacher judgements.

Every 3 weeks, stage meetings are dedicated to sessions where school leaders and teachers map assessment results to the scope and sequence of the lessons they are teaching. Information from assessments is used to inform whether teachers should revisit, revise or reteach assessed learning outcomes:

1. **Revisit:** Is there evidence of proficiency? If so, when will students be given an opportunity to practice the knowledge/skill?
2. **Revise:** Does the way this has been taught need to be changed, improved or adjusted?
3. **Reteach:** Do any key skills or concepts need to be retaught to address gaps or misconceptions in student understanding?

This focused time and structured scaffold supports teachers to meaningfully engage with assessment data and make timely, data-informed teaching and learning decisions that are responsive to students' needs and strengths. It also helps promote a shared and common understanding of how to interpret and translate assessment data. School leaders report that investing in collaboration time has contributed to a culture where teachers are confident translating information from assessments to identify where adjustments are needed to support and extend student learning.

“That idea of really making sure that we've all got that collective efficacy around the data and the assessment, making sure that the assessment drives programs as well. So how does our class-based assessment really tap into who we're targeting for small group tuition [or] who we're targeting for our learning support? How are we looking [to support] our Aboriginal students? If [students are] excelling, how are we then providing opportunity in different areas so that we can develop those students as well?”

Lorraine Husarek, AP, C&I

Another area of collective focus at Warrimoo Public School has been consistent teacher judgement. Teachers identified this as an assessment capability they wanted to develop further. In response, school leaders provided targeted professional learning on this topic. One key activity was organising a session delivered by NESA about the A to E grade scale. This professional learning opportunity was extended to other primary schools in the lower Blue Mountains who were invited to take part in the training at Warrimoo Public School. From this session, a plan was developed to create a bank of graded work samples. The samples would cover Kindergarten to Year 6 and be shared between schools in the area. This collective activity aims to share the load of creating work samples, while also promoting consistent teacher judgement beyond the immediate school community.

“A challenge [of working in a small school] – and we've talked about this as we built our capacity in assessing over the past couple of years – is consistent teacher judgement. ... You'd go, 'Well, look at my cohort of kids, it's so small, and I don't have anyone else to [bounce] feedback off.' So, we've been doing a lot of work on not just consistent, but accurate, consistent teacher judgement ... and I've found that is building our capacity as teachers and assessors.”

Julia Hutchins, Classroom Teacher

Strategy 3: Identifying efficient assessment tools and processes that give timely data to inform teaching and learning

All staff at Warrimoo Public School have worked together to find tools and processes that help minimise workload related to assessment while providing timely data to inform decisions about how to support students' needs and strengths.

One assessment tool that teachers at the school have worked together to adapt is an 'assessment bullseye' (refer to Appendix). This tool was adopted as an efficient way to record teacher observations of student learning throughout the day's activities. Teachers plot students' names on the bullseye chart to determine if they have consolidated, demonstrated, partially demonstrated or not demonstrated the learning outcome. It is a quick and easy way for teachers to record their observations of progress toward the learning intentions and success criteria. The tool provides timely information for teachers to make responsive adjustments to meet their students' needs and strengths.



Practice point: Recording and using assessment data efficiently to inform next steps

“ Using the [assessment] bullseye has just made it very easy to use that data as you go ... to work out who needs extending and work out who needs support with foundational understanding [in the next lesson]. That's been just so much easier to visualise ... to identify the students that need that extra support, and the students that ... have really consolidated their learning earlier on.

I use an editable document [of the assessment bullseye] on my iPad. ... As the week goes [on] I'll ... take a screenshot, and then I just modify that on the same that you're seeing the movement every single day of 'Have they demonstrated this? Have they partially demonstrated this?' It is broken down at a content level ... but you can very easily see the trends and where the students are making that progress – and where they're not – in real time. You don't have to then sit back and enter any extra data. ... You've got a record every day [from the assessment bullseye] that takes very little extra time in the classroom, and you've just got that wealth of data that you're able to provide at reporting time. ... You're able to go, 'Okay, this was today, this was yesterday, this was 3 weeks ago, this was 4 months ago.' It's all there very easily visible for anyone to pick up.”

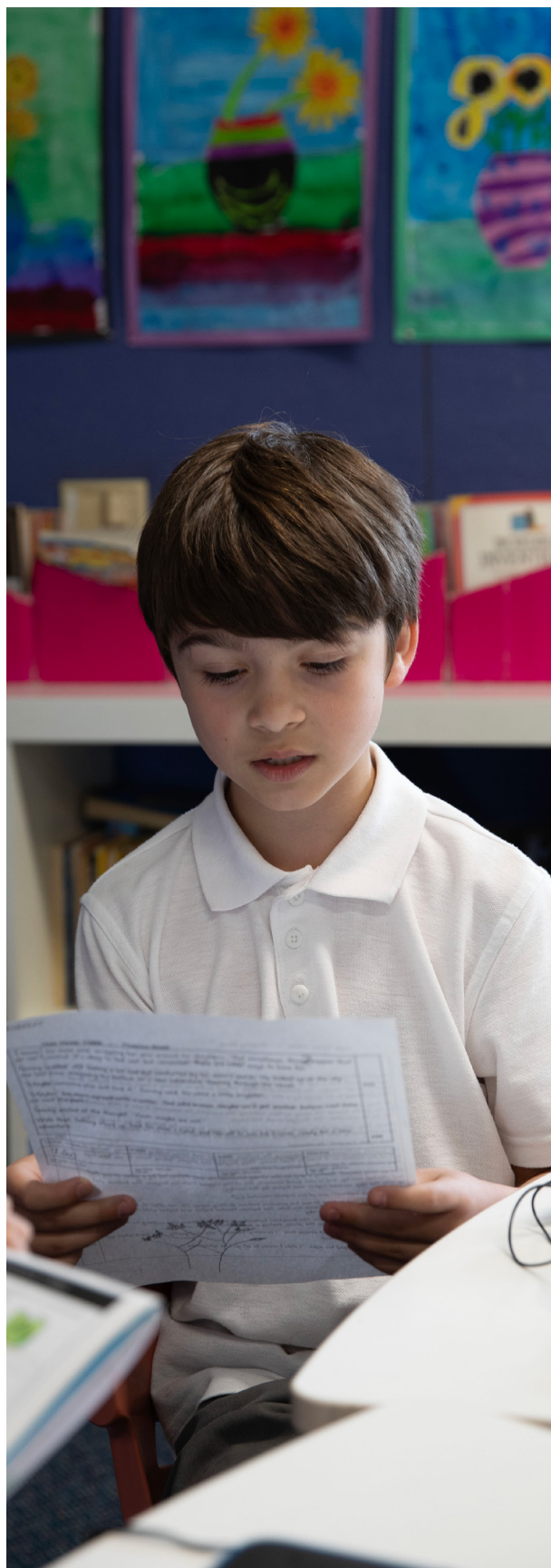
**Ashleigh Berrell,
Classroom Teacher**

Teachers at Warrimoo Public School also use digital assessment tools to efficiently record student progress towards learning outcomes. For example, Year 3 students have a weekly check-in for reading using Reading Progress, a free tool on Microsoft Teams.³ This program assists teachers to assess some components of reading fluency. Students record themselves reading a passage and the platform provides a reading rate and accuracy score. The teacher selects passages that target relevant syllabus outcomes and aligned text complexity. Teachers can also ask students comprehension questions about the passage using the program. The program provides immediate feedback to students and teachers.

“ [Reading Progress] is really powerful feedback for [students]. ... They’ve slowed right down. They’ve realised that it’s not about ‘speed’ reading; fluency isn’t getting to the end, but it’s actually the way it sounds.”

Julia Hutchins, Classroom Teacher

The results obtained from Reading Progress are easily integrated into the school’s centralised assessment data platform with a minimal impact on workload. Teachers and SLSOs then use the Reading Progress data in combination with other assessments and their in-class observations to inform next steps. Teachers and school leaders report that students find the program engaging. For one student, the program has been a more accessible assessment option compared to face-to-face assessment with a teacher. This student is more able and willing to read to a computer than to a person. Before using the program, teachers had not been able to capture reading fluency data for this student.



3 Refer to Technology 4 Learning’s [Microsoft Teams](#) webpage for key considerations when using Reading Progress, including adjusting the pronunciation sensitivity settings to allow for varying accents, using it in conjunction with other reading assessments and not using it for summative assessments.

Resources

Strategy 1:

- NSW Department of Education (2025) [Assessment modes](#)
- NSW Department of Education (2025) [Driving effective assessment practices](#)

Strategy 2:

- NSW Department of Education (2025) [Consistent teacher judgement](#)
- NSW Department of Education (n.d.) [Assessment professional learning](#) (🔒 staff only)
- AERO (2024) [Foundational classroom management resources handbook](#)
- AERO (2023) [High expectations for student behaviour: their role in classroom management](#)

Strategy 3:

- NSW Department of Education (2025) [Forming an on-balance judgement](#)
- Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) (2024) [Monitor progress](#)
- AERO (2021) [Formative assessment: practice guide](#)



Appendix


This appendix presents an ‘assessment bullseye’ tool template which has been modified by teachers and school leaders at Warrimoo Public School to assist teachers to quickly record their observations. The template prompts teachers to identify the outcome/s they are assessing and the success criteria. Teachers then plot student names on the bullseye chart to denote if they have consolidated (centre circle), demonstrated (second circle from centre), partially demonstrated (outermost circle) or not demonstrated (outside the circle) the learning outcome.

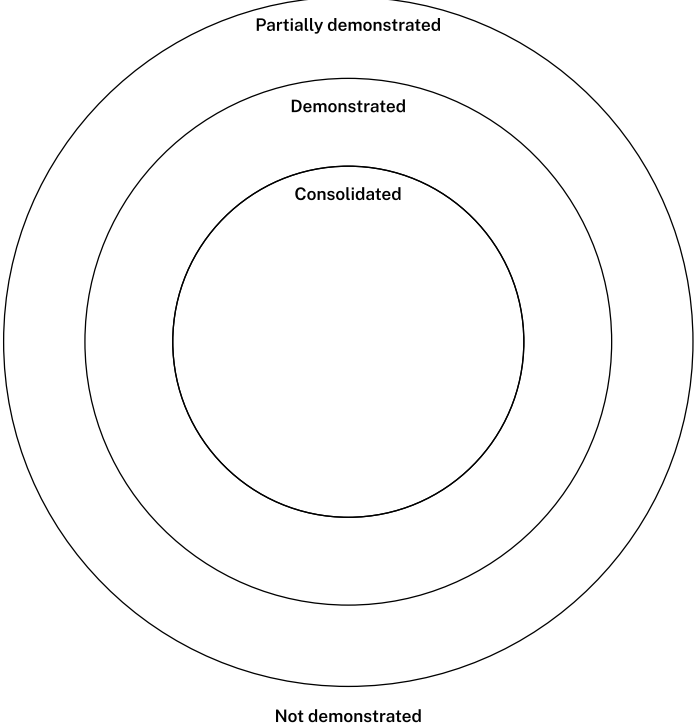
Figure 2: Assessment bullseye template

Warrimoo Public School
Assessment bullseye

Grade: K 1 2 3 4 5 6
Term: 1 2 3 4 Week: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Unit/lesson description:
Outcome/s:
The student/s can:





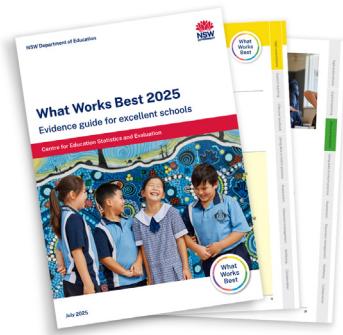
Date:	Class/teacher:
Comments:	Key:

Access the full suite of What Works Best resources

What Works Best 2025 is a suite of resources for teachers and school leaders that outlines 8 effective practices that are known to improve student learning and wellbeing:

- high expectations
- explicit teaching
- effective feedback
- using data to inform practice
- assessment
- classroom management
- wellbeing
- collaboration.

The resources can be used individually or in conjunction with one another to implement evidence-based, quality teaching and learning practices and inform school excellence planning.



The What Works Best 2025 – Evidence guide for excellent schools provides an overview of the evidence that underpins each of the 8 themes.



The What Works Best practical guides translate evidence into practice by providing teachers and school leaders with practical ideas for implementing each of the themes in their classrooms and schools. The guides unpack not only ‘what’ should be done to successfully implement a theme, but also the ‘how’ and ‘why’.



The What Works Best illustrations of practice provide teachers and school leaders with examples of how some of our great schools from across NSW have implemented the themes.

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