

LITERACY & NUMERACY FAIRVALE HIGH SCHOOL

High value-add secondary schools operational case studies

These case studies provide practical examples of how secondary schools have established themselves as high value-add schools in literacy and numeracy. Each of these schools achieved significantly above average value-add for student progress from Year 7 to Year 9, and from Year 9 to Year 12. They are operational examples for schools to draw lessons from to apply to their own unique context.



Southwest Sydney

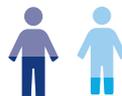
1,378 students
108.5 staff

FOEI
158

89%
LBOTE students

HSC outcomes

At Fairvale **53%** of HSC students achieve 2 or more Band 5-6 results



Only **24%** of students at statistically similar schools achieve these results

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL APPROACH NUMERACY?

Fairvale High School applies a relentless approach to data-driven education, based on the identified numeracy gaps at an individual and school level.

Tailored teaching

- Numeracy strategy **adapts targets to individual student** need. This approach gives student discrete and achievable tasks, and regular and frequent feedback.
- Three **dedicated part-time numeracy School Learning Support Officers (SLSOs)** (former high achieving students from Fairvale) analyse data and develop materials that target individual student needs.
- School significantly improved its value-add by **focusing on the middle 90% of students**. Low-performing students receive specialist support and high performers engage in more self-directed learning.

Data-driven

- **NAPLAN data was used to establish a baseline** of *who* and *what* to target (e.g. numerical literacy). The Head of Maths (an HSC Senior Marker) helped shape *how*.
- The school put **NAPLAN data on SENTRAL** so teachers could see class performance
 - Every child mapped on the **Continuum**.
 - Teachers use **internal testing to monitor and adapt** to students' need.
 - The school appointed a Secondary Studies Head Teacher **who is responsible for all data analysis**.

Fairvale delivers its success by its consistent and relentless focus on literacy and numeracy, and committing to their approach over time

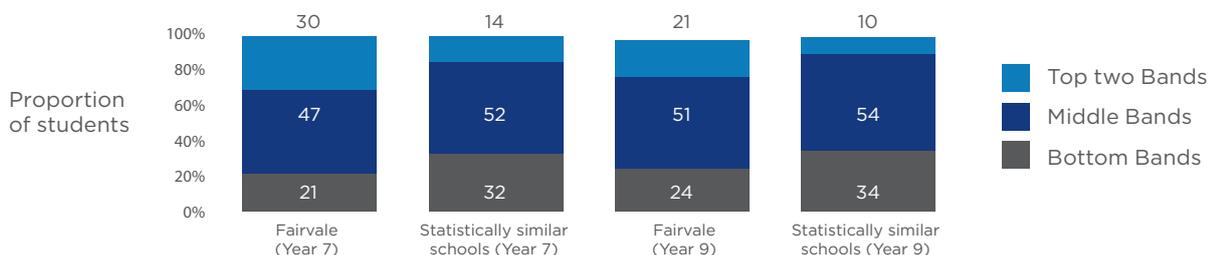
Leadership intensity

- **Maths Faculty** takes clear ownership for numeracy performance and acknowledges its responsibility for outcomes.
- School leaders know students' numeracy (and literacy) backgrounds to **shape targeted learning**.
- **The Principal regularly collaborates** with the school district's principals network to share professional learning and high impact teaching strategies.

Professional learning

- **Head Teacher Mentor** has been appointed to improve teachers' use of data and deliver other professional learning.
- The school has invested in building significant **leadership opportunities for staff across all levels** to empower them to drive change, such as the Head Teacher Secondary Studies, and the Head Teacher Mentor.

Fairvale produces double the proportion of high achievers in NAPLAN Numeracy compared to similar schools



WHERE TO NEXT?

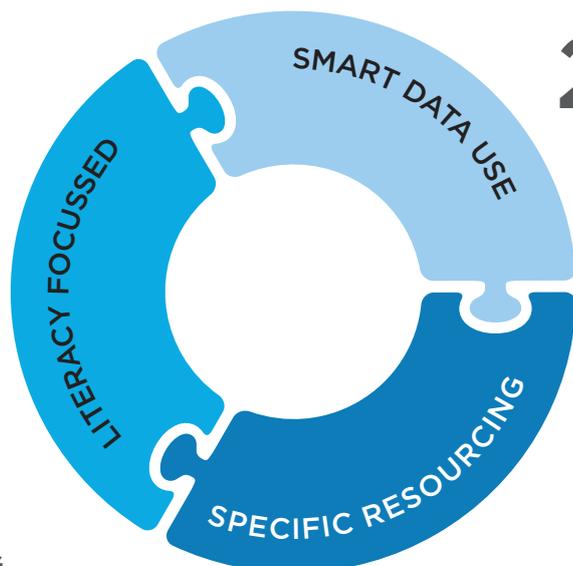
Continue improving data collection by triangulating NAPLAN with internal testing data. Spread tailored numeracy strategy and approach to other Head Teachers and the whole staff via professional learning at staff meetings and professional learning days.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL APPROACH LITERACY?

Fairvale's approach to literacy has evolved over time. Historically, it had a strong emphasis on both specific and embedded teaching, but this waned due to personnel changes. The school has promptly responded to a drop in performance by implementing specific literacy teacher roles and direct teaching: 'If we wanted it to work we needed to resource things well'.

1 LITERACY-FOCUSED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- **Head Teachers attend external training programs in strategic Literacy** throughout the school.
- Literacy is included as a key component of every staff development day.
- **Early career and new teachers participate in Induction** which familiarises them with the school's particular literacy framework.
- Literacy is seen as **"everybody's job and everybody's business"**.



2 DATA USE TO MONITOR PROGRESS AND TAILOR TEACHING

- The school **uses SMART data to identify key weaknesses** and teachers respond with direct lessons in relevant skills.
- The school **monitors performance with four pre- and post-unit assessments per year**, and maps student performance against the reading continuum.

3 SPECIFIC RESOURCING

- The school employs a **Head of Literacy and 3 staff members** who teach literacy in addition to their other subjects.
- The school delivers Intensive marking and meaningful feedback over a number of years. They use a **standardised feedback sheet** across year levels and Key Learning Areas (KLAs) to provide consistent feedback to students on progress across multiple domains divided between 'what went well' and 'areas to improve'.
- The school **prioritises specific time for reading** and building literacy skills.

WHERE TO NEXT?

Spread specific literacy focus through other KLAs. For example, over the next year literacy teachers will move into different faculties and help teachers further embed good literacy practice.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Principal and school leadership view

Fairvale's approach is distinctively consistent – they "relentlessly" pursue higher achievement and stick to proven approaches that give students what they need:

- Complementing data with teachers' experience and expertise ensures students get the tailored support they need.

- Consistent and detailed progress monitoring for individual students that adjusts strategies based on regular and frequent feedback.
- High expectations co-ordinators in every Faculty support development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of course-specific goal setting for students, and faculty-specific

feedback procedures, study skills, and procedures to analyse internal assessment data.

- Year advisors are explicitly responsible for student engagement; they're given dedicated timetabled periods in which to do so.

"Our approach is relentless. You can't just have a one-off injection. We focus on quality teaching, professional learning and high expectations of the staff."
Principal

"Literacy is seen as everybody's job and everybody's business."
English Head Teacher

"The SLSOs do the numeracy data heavy lifting, so teachers can instead focus on asking 'what modifications might I need to make in the classroom?'"
Maths Head Teacher

RESOURCES AND LINKS

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE?

Literacy continuum <https://education.nsw.gov.au/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/literacy/literacy-continuum>

SMART data <https://education.nsw.gov.au/assessment-and-reporting/smart-data>

For training high-expectations co-ordinators and developing their approach: Hattie's *Visible Learning* and CESE's *What Works Best* publication.

School Plan, 2015-17 http://www.fairvalehigh.com/uploads/1/5/7/1/15713008/fairvale_high_school_plan_2015-2017.pdf