

LITERACY & NUMERACY CANLEY VALE 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

1,485 students
95+ staff

FOEI
153

96%
LBOTE students

HSC outcomes

At Canley Vale **61%** of HSC students achieve 2 or more Band 5-6 results



Only **22%** of students at statistically similar schools achieve these results

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL APPROACH LITERACY?

A situational analysis in 2010 showed that Canley Vale had the potential to improve their literacy results. In 2014 the school formed a Literacy faculty and started developing their current Literacy Strategy to improve literacy outcomes.

Literacy leadership intensity

- The school **established a Literacy Faculty** with a Head teacher and five specialist staff, who teach specific literacy classes and support professional learning in other Key Learning Areas (KLAs).
- Literacy classes are prioritised over additional electives, for **two** periods in Years 7 and 8, and **three** periods in Year 9.
- There are staff with **explicit roles** dedicated to literacy in place of some subject teaching.

Tailored teaching

- Subject staff and literacy teachers develop **literacy skills-based programs that are specific to each class and student** in their own KLAs (“nothing is copied from the textbook”). This means that the content changes with the cohort.
- Literacy Faculty staff function as **specialist teachers** who monitor and target literacy learning progress of individuals in direct classes (and support teachers and deliver literacy-specific content through other KLAs).
 - This targeted teaching also includes differentiated teaching tools.

Literacy needs to be a school target

“At Canley Vale a two-fold approach is taken: teaching literacy as a legitimate subject in itself, and embedding literacy as a common skill across the school.”

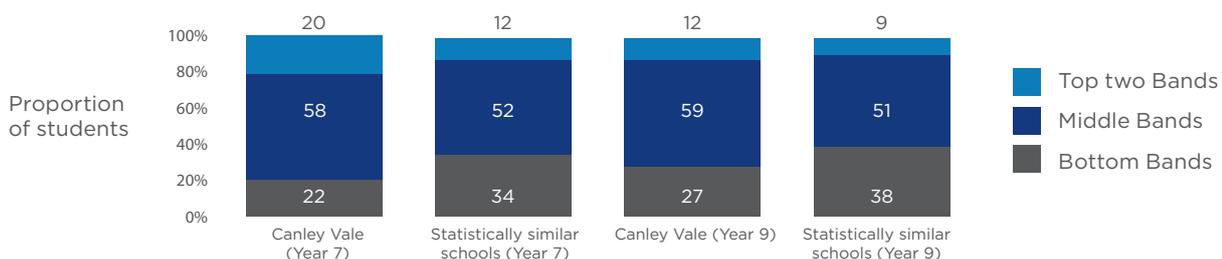
Data-driven

- Student’s writing capability is evaluated** prior to arrival.
- Students are plotted along a **literacy continuum for vocabulary knowledge and reading** to understand their strengths and areas for development to ensure pedagogy is data-driven.
- Ongoing tracking and monitoring** of student progress helps teachers individualise approaches. This includes triangulating SMART data, school designed Literacy tests, and biannual MSAD tests (250-300 students per year group).

Professional learning across school

- The school applies **internally designed and run professional learning**: Literacy Faculty develop and deliver material to other teachers at professional learning days, as ‘buddies’ with staff, and by invitation in other faculties.
- Consistent reading and writing strategies** are used across all subjects (using Reading To Learn and ALARM).
- Literacy Faculty staff are developed into experts** through external conferences and symposiums (like the DoE Literacy symposium, NQLC), regular professional learning sessions, and off-site uninterrupted, collaborative planning opportunities.

Canley Vale outperforms statistically similar schools in NAPLAN reading



WHERE TO NEXT?

Continue ongoing improvement strategy: ‘listen to what the data says’ to learn, evaluate, re-design, and change approach as necessary.

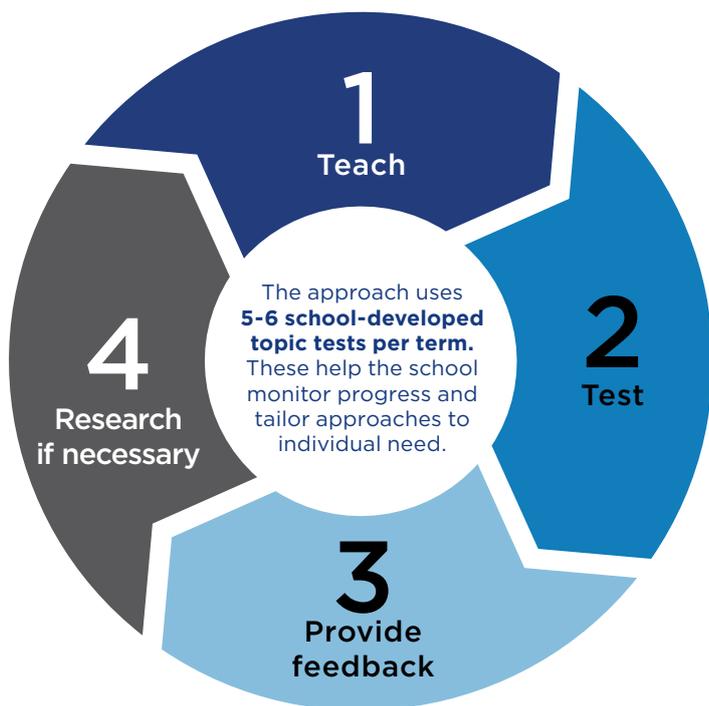
Head of Literacy is considering taking an Instructional Leadership role due to demand from teachers in other KLAs to help faculties to identify how literacy is working.



HOW DOES THE SCHOOL APPROACH NUMERACY?

Canley Vale High School has a long tradition of good numeracy results. High numeracy outcomes result from a standardised teaching approach, focused lessons, and continuous evaluation of teaching methods across the whole school. Improved literacy skills have also created flow-on benefits in numeracy.

Tech/test feedback cycle



Ongoing evaluation of teaching methods across the school

- The school creates a continuous improvement culture by **actively trialling** different methodologies, teaching tools, and organisational structures, and gives these experiments room to fail. For example, the school has found intensive numeracy revision and preparation through one timetabled **40 minute period per week** in Years 8 and 9 has strengthened students' foundations.
- Utilises **data analysis from a range of internal and external sources**, including standardised testing, work samples, and formative assessments.
- **Updates teachers' knowledge and capabilities through professional learning** as new evidence becomes available. Formats include demonstration classrooms, guide by the side mentoring, Instructional Leadership, and group workshops.
- Follows latest academic research on student performance; as a result they are **triallying removal of class streaming** in Year 8.
- Maintains a **bank of resources from historic assessments** to help to ensure the skills necessary for success are integrated into regular curriculum.

WHERE TO NEXT?

Continue to test approaches to learn and improve. This includes a trial to remove maths class streaming in Year 8, and evaluating students' numeracy needs.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Principal and school leadership view

The school's blend of **high expectations** and significant investment in **experimentation and professional learning** underpins its success:

- **School leaders** display relentless pursuit of literacy and numeracy improvements.
- Strong attitude of **'no complacency'** supports improved performance in Top Two Bands, the school, *"doesn't think that that is the limit - the limit is when every child will get there."*
- Involved in continuous evidence-based **experimentation and evaluation**.
- **Legitimising the team, faculty and time spent on literacy within the timetabled structure** deeply embeds literacy into the culture of the school.

"Too often senior leadership get in the way... my role is to be an instructional critical friend. I have the evidence and support and challenge heads of faculty."

Principal

"My role is to break the idea amongst staff that 'literacy is an English thing,' and equip them to embed good practice in every class."

Head of literacy

"Achievement in numeracy is my ultimate responsibility."

Maths Head Teacher

RESOURCES AND LINKS

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE?

- **Reading to Learn** www.readingtolearn.com.au
A Learning and Responding Matrix (ALARM) Strategy
- **SMART data** <https://education.nsw.gov.au/assessment-and-reporting/smart-data>
- **School Plan 2015-17** <http://www.canleyvale-h.schools.nsw.edu.au/our-school>