

LITERACY & NUMERACY ST JOHNS PARK 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

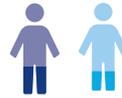
888 students
70+ staff

FOEI
146

91%
LBOTE students

**HSC
outcomes**

At St Johns Park **39%** of HSC students achieve 2+ Band 5-6 results



Only **25%** of students at statistically similar schools achieve these results

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL APPROACH LITERACY?

St Johns Park High School focuses on embedding literacy within each key learning area (KLA). The school also continues to respond to changes in student learning needs. The school has recently reintroduced dedicated literacy classes in response to some decline in performance.

Tailored teaching

- Teachers use **four levels of intervention** to support students' individual needs: whole school; class level; small group; and one-to-one.
- **School-wide reading strategy (STARS)** is embedded across all KLAs and all streams of literacy classes.
- **Teachers talk students through their Individual NAPLAN results** and help them to set focus areas for development.

Data-driven

- **Data is central to daily practice:** all teachers have full database access, are upskilled in how to use and interpret insights, and data guides their planning.
- **Strategic use of data through a school data team** led by a Deputy Principal with teachers from each faculty to focus on analytics and building staff capability to use data to inform teaching focus.
- **Year 7 students sit a diagnostic test** to stream classes, diagnose key issues, and inform program development.

St Johns Park equips all teachers to proactively use data, which is reflected in their leadership, professional learning, and teaching approach: "til teachers own the data the job is not done".

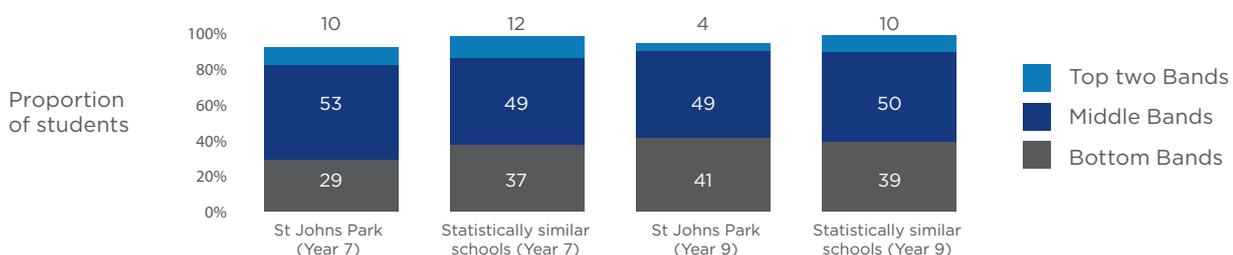
Leadership intensity

- **Literacy co-ordinator** leads curriculum, pedagogy and assessment implementation.
- **Learning and support teachers** develop literacy program content and structure, and follow their specific student through faculties and year levels to improve outcomes.
- **Coordinator, English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EALD) teacher and Language and Support Teachers (LASTs)** each focus on developing resources for, and delivering professional learning to, one specific faculty in the school.

Professional learning

- The school emphasises that the best **learning occurs in house** through research and applied experimentation.
- **Professional learning is a core focus** through research, experimentation and evaluation.
- The **Literacy Coordinator runs professional learning for teachers** to build capacity in reading across KLAs. Teachers then received release time to embed approach in their programs.

St Johns Park catches up to its peers in Year 9 reading, even though its students often start from a relatively lower base than two nearby partially selective schools



WHERE TO NEXT?

Pursue goal of building a strong coaching and collaborative model for staff where each faculty has a professional learning leader.

Continue to upskill staff on the use of data and insights to improve student outcomes.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL APPROACH NUMERACY?

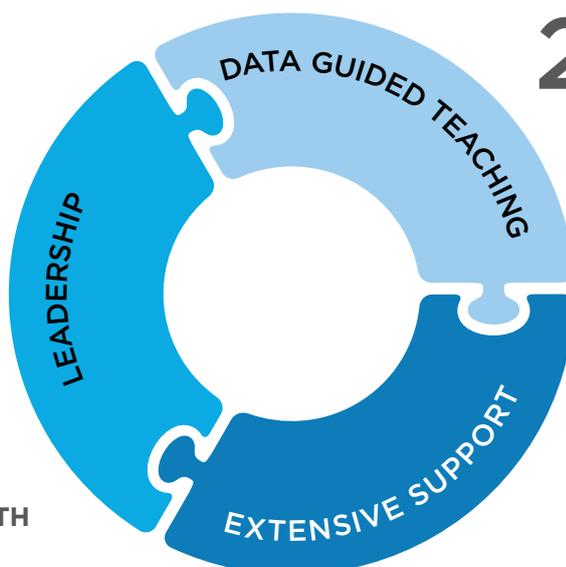
St Johns Park High School is traditionally a high performer in numeracy. The Numeracy Co-ordinator supports teachers to choose teaching strategies underpinned by student data. The school uses strategies such as direct instruction, so that students can see how specific tasks and building blocks fit into the overall learning objectives.

1 LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- The **Numeracy Coordinator** builds teacher capacity in explicit numeracy strategies, and takes charge of lifting results of lower achieving groups.
- **Strong relationships with feeder schools**, including having accelerated program students run a maths olympiad for feeder school students.
- **High expectations of all students** are promoted by all teachers.

3 EXTENSIVE SUPPORT WITH THE RIGHT RESOURCES

- **Past test paper questions and worked example answers** are available for students on the school portal.
- **Teachers work through past exams with students** to shape their development.
- **Mathletics program** supports students to develop essential numeracy skills, where students complete 10 tasks per fortnight.



2 DATA GUIDES TARGETED TEACHING

- **SMART data** is used extensively.
- **Year 7 students undertake diagnostic testing** and a structured approach to teaching is embedded as a result.
- **Targeted numeracy sessions** with the Numeracy Co-ordinator are provided to lower performing students.

WHERE TO NEXT?

St Johns Park continues to adjust teaching for changing student needs. Teachers will include literacy components in numeracy tests to address lower performance in numerical literacy NAPLAN questions.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Principal and school leadership view

- **Funding through Resource Allocation Model is a key enabler** to employing extra staff (i.e. speech therapist), employing staff at higher duties and for investment in professional learning.
- **Collaborate with Western Sydney University academic** to develop professional learning programs and build capacity.
- **Teaching staff are highly professional and take their craft very seriously.** Teachers are committed to understanding their students and differentiating their teaching strategies.
- **Culture of collaboration** amongst teachers to create collective impact.

“The school is located geographically between two partially selective state schools, and is expecting to receive a large number of refugee enrolments. It understands its students’ needs; it has an absolute focus on literacy and numeracy.”

Principal

“In numeracy and maths, high teacher quality is the priority, supported by having the right program and plan in place.”

Maths Head Teacher

“The whole literacy approach is built on STARS (Strategies to Achieve Reading Success) – 12 strategies for comprehension and clear teaching of the metacognitive processes involved with each strategy.”

Literacy Coordinator

RESOURCES AND LINKS

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE?

STARS <https://education.nsw.gov.au/smart-teaching-strategies>

Mathletics <http://au.mathletics.com>

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

School Plan 2015-17 <http://www.stjohnspark-h.schoolwebsites.com.au/Sites/sjphs/CMS/Docs/SJPHS%20School%20Plan%20SW%20THIS%20IS%20THE%20ONE.pdf>