

Using *My School* to support school and student improvement

Schools and systems know that in order to improve student learning the focus has to be on improving teaching quality. The availability of good quality information is integral for helping teachers improve their professional practice and for assisting school leaders to drive school improvement.

Effective teachers need quality information about how and what their students are learning in order to diagnose student learning needs, monitor progress and make sure their students are being taught the right things in the right ways. Effective schools collect quality information from student assessments to evaluate themselves and examine where they need to improve and how they can use experiences of success and failure to generate that improvement.

Parents and carers need access to quality information to help them make informed decisions about their child's education. Access to information on schools helps parents and carers to actively engage in their child's school and support their child's learning.

Teachers, schools and parents already use information at the individual school level. For instance, teachers and schools use regular student assessments and data from the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) to monitor student progress and inform teaching programs and improvement initiatives. Parents receive reports on their child's NAPLAN results and their child's progress in other areas of the curriculum, as well as information about their school through school reports and newsletters.

From 28 January 2010, for the first time, information on all Australian schools is available in one location: the *My School* website (www.myschool.edu.au). This website provides nationally comparable data on students' performance in literacy and numeracy at each school, as well as contextual information on all Australian schools. It is an additional resource for schools and their communities.

However, simply making this information available does not guarantee improvement. It is what schools, teachers, parents and school communities do with the information that counts. Here are some constructive ways in which information from the *My School* website can be used.

Schools can use the information on *My School* to:

- monitor performance and identify priority areas in which to focus improvement efforts
- identify schools with similar students (statistically similar schools) that are performing at a high level, particularly in their priority areas
- explore success factors in statistically similar high-performing schools across the country and incorporate relevant strategies into their improvement plans
- communicate with the wider school community about their performance and gain support for improvement initiatives.

Teachers can use the information on *My School* to:

- integrate the information from the website with system and classroom data and use this to develop intervention programs to support higher levels of student achievement in literacy and numeracy
- determine where they need to make adjustments to teaching programs and strategies
- connect with teachers in other, similar schools to share ideas
- engage with parents in support of their children's learning.

Parents and other members of the school community can use the information on *My School* to:

- understand how their local school is performing relative to other schools with a similar intake of students
- gain a broader understanding of the learning environments and performance of schools in their local community, as well as within their state or territory and across the nation
- initiate communication with a school based on comprehensive and detailed information
- seek a greater level of engagement with a school in support of their child's learning
- become involved in advocating for and supporting improvement initiatives within their child's school.

The *My School* website provides a set of quality data that teachers, schools, parents and the wider community can use, along with other information, to help ensure that every child in every classroom is receiving a high quality education.