

Dear Peter

I am responding to the above in my capacity as Principal of the RBAI. I wish to draw attention to 4 key points.

1. My colleagues and I have tracked the GCSE and A2 progress and performance of pupils on FSM and who receive relief of fees at the school. The FSM band has been -4.99 until this year, although there is over 10 of the school population receiving relief from school fees (this is based on the measures from The Rowntree Foundation and not FSM). Whilst the number of pupils on FSM is too small to demonstrate a robust analysis, none the less, over the 4 years of tracking, we have noticed a slight under performance, at GCSE, AS/A2 of some pupils on FSM.

e.g

2016

At year 14, there were 5 pupils on FSM who performed as follows:

- 3 students above SIMS prediction (based on medial quartiles)
- 2 students below sims prediction
- 4 student's achieved 3 or more A*_C

At year 13, there were 5 pupils on FSM who performed as follows:

- 1 student above Sims predation
- 2 below Sims prediction
- 1 – new to school and no data

At year 12 – 14 students on FSM, performed as follows:

- 4 above CAT prediction (based on median grade)
- 2 equal to CAT
- 8 BELOW cat
- 12 of above achieved 7A*_C ing English and maths

The data above shows similar trends over previous years

The data above does not take into account other factors – e.g – family situation, pastoral needs, making right curriculum choice

2. The strategies which have worked best at RBAI include the following:

Curriculum provision –we have engaged more pupils by widening offer e.g ICT and Computer Science; single award science and separate sciences ; Languages no longer compulsory; (Motor vehicle Studies at GCSE and BTechs introduced 2016)

Parent engagement - we have option and information evenings for parents in year 11 and 13

CEIAG – work Experience in year 12 for pupils at risk of not achieving the 7 A*_C

Tracking of pupils on FSM by ALL teachers

3. Regarding DE initiatives and underachievement – I would draw attention to the work and proposals of the post Primary Task Force – I have forwarded a hard copy, by post.

4. I would also draw attention to the work on **Wellbeing** being undertaken at RBAI, in collaboration with Melbourne University and now QUB – I refer you to the attached and pages 19-25 as

OUTSTANDING BEST INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE .

Regards

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IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF POST PRIMARY MEASURES OF PUPILS' PROGRESS AND ATTAINMENT; VICTORIA STATE, AUSTRALIA

Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and Mercers' Company Travelling Fellowship 2015



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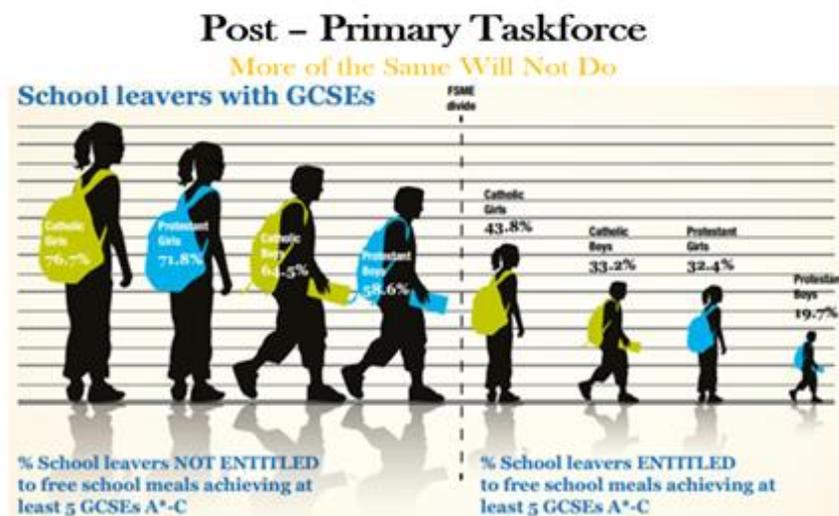
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1) CONTEXT

- 1.1 The focus of my Fellowship:- (“To identify and evaluate measures of pupils’ attainment and progress in post primary schools”) - has evolved over 25 years working in education. My career began as a Geography teacher and Senior Leader in Aylesbury Boys’ Grammar School, England. I was appointed Vice Principal of Wilsons’ School, England, followed by appointment to the position of Head Teacher at Antrim Grammar School, Northern Ireland. My current position is Principal of The Royal Belfast Academical Institution, Northern Ireland. In my capacity as a school leader, I have most recently been President of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL NI), President of Headmasters and Headmistress’ Conference (HMC Irish Division) and am currently working with the Department of Education, Northern Ireland, to identify and evaluate potential school and systems level qualitative and quantitative measures which could inform multiple uses for school improvement.
- 1.2 The wider context and rationale for the focus of the Fellowship is the work being undertaken by the NI Post Primary Task Force (PPTF), funded by Atlantic Philanthropists. The PPTF seeks to address the attainment gap, illustrated below, and as stated in its Mission Statement.



MISSION AND PURPOSE

To help create a Post-Primary education system which promotes the development of the skills, attitudes and personal qualities in all young people so that they may contribute positively to the social and economic prosperity of Northern Ireland.

A range of themes were identified by the PPTF to promote economic prosperity by aligning the entire educational system. The Chairman, John Wright, made the following remarks:-

“In my personal view the key element here is “economic prosperity”. Without that, the wherewithal for the development of social equity is impossible to achieve. So really the focus of our endeavour here has to be on the issue of how we ‘align’ our entire Educational System bottom to top to deliver economic prosperity.

In the eyes of investors a critical component of Northern Ireland’s Value Proposition is the quality of its educational system which for many years has been perceived as achieving the highest standards in the United Kingdom. Regrettably it has also achieved some of the lowest standards, therefore the gap, which is extremely large by any standards, must be closed. However, whichever way one looks at this, the starting point is to examine what ‘economic prosperity’ actually means, identify the components of this and then start to ask the questions as to how we ensure that our Educational System meets those needs and criteria.

If we do not adopt an approach along those lines, in my view there’s a very real danger that we tinker around the edges of the existing system, make modest incremental improvements but don’t actually fully challenge the status quo.

I do think it would be worthwhile to understand where best practice exists around the world.”

I have identified excellent examples of best practice in the schools of Victoria State, Australia. The PPTF, ASCL, HMC (Irish) and DENI are all open to the insights which could be leveraged from the research in Australia.

2) **ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD) REVIEW - IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The OECD review demonstrates how school and national systems of evaluation and assessment can be used to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education. “Compared internationally, pupils in NI perform very well in assessments at primary level, and around average at the post primary level. However, compared to the OECD average, differences in pupil performance at age 15 are more strongly associated with their schools socio-economic intake,” (OECD). NI has a range of school types and management structures; however for the purposes of the Churchill Fellowship, these will not be the focus of the context or recommendations.
- 2.2 There are several recent curriculum developments in Northern Ireland with a focus on cross-curricular skills. Since 2007, there have been tensions in how best to adopt assessment policies to align with the revised curriculum. In many ways, evaluation and assessment policies in NI help to develop a coherent framework for evaluation and assessment. The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment’s (CCEA) levels of progression provide reference standards for assessment of the cross-curricular skills: - Communication (Literacy); Using Mathematics (Numeracy) and Using ICT. However, the majority of schools lack confidence in the credibility of the levels of progression and do not use them as measures of performance, for benchmarking or to report to parents.
- 2.3 At Key Stages 4 and 5, pupils study towards qualifications that are largely, but not exclusively, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE A Level). These include a strong component of external examinations, but may also include coursework and Controlled Internal Assessment.
- 2.3 (i) In Australia, the Australian qualifications framework (AQF) specifies the standards for educational qualifications. The framework has structured levels with descriptive criteria, and formal qualifications aligned to the appropriate levels. The curriculum, assessment and name of the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education is different in each state: Victoria State – VCE = Victorian Certificate of Education; VCAL = Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning; ATAR is the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank, a nationally standardised final score for each final year student.

2.4 The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) evaluates school performance on data and contextual information which includes:-

<p>POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION - STATISTICAL DATA, TABLES, CHARTS AND THE SCHOOL'S EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS</p> <p>CONTEXT – for 4 years Name of School Year 8 Intake Enrolment % Attendance (NI Average) FSME Percentage % (No.) of pupils on the SEN register No of pupils with statements of educational needs in the Learning Support Centre (if appropriate) No. of newcomers % of Y8 pupils with L5 English % of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics % of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English % of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to Free School Meals</p>
<p><i>Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance (non-selective school): (*5 in non-selective schools)</i></p>
<p>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions *Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 7 subjects * *Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects * <i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category¹</i> *Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics * <i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i> *Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* to C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)</p>
<p><i>Data on Year 14 (A2) performance (non-selective school) (* % Yr 14 E+ in at least 2 A2 level – in non-selective schools)</i></p>
<p>GCE A Level or equivalent Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels* The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</p>
<p><i>Source: Data as held and verified by the school, with DE benchmarks</i></p>
<p><i>NB: Data provided for 3 years</i></p>
<p><u>GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS</u></p>
<p>Comparison with the 3-year NI average for each subject at grades A* to B for selective schools; or the comparison with the 3-year NI average for each subject at grades A* to C for non-selective schools</p>
<p><u>OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: KEY STAGE 4</u></p>
<p>Other courses taken in at least 2 of the last 3 years.</p>
<p><u>GCE EXAMINATION RESULTS</u></p>

Comparison with the 3-year NI average for each subject at grades A* to C
<u>OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: POST 16</u>
<u>STAYING ON RATE</u> (Percentage staying on from Year 12 to 13 and from Year 13 to 14)
<u>LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS</u>
The percentage of all of the pupils from this school who leave school to enter Further Education, Higher Education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-selective schools.
Total number of leavers
Employment
Further Education
Higher Education
Training
Unemployed
Unknown

SECTION B
School's evaluation of standard of learning, skills and dispositions: For example:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overall evaluation of standards of work and learning, including levels of motivation, pupils' expectations, communication/using mathematics/ICT across the curriculum • Thinking skills and personal capabilities, independence, working with others • Ability to participate effectively in society and contribute to the local and global economy
School's evaluation of the headline standards achieved by the pupils at GCSE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overall evaluation of performance at GCSE • A summary of the performance of, and trends in, headline indicators
School's evaluation of the standards achieved by the pupils in individual subjects at GCSE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of the performance of, and significant trends in individual subjects compared with the respective 3-year NI average
School's evaluation of the headline standards achieved by the pupils at GCE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overall evaluation of performance at GCE • A summary of the performance of, and trends in, headline indicators
School's evaluation of the headline standards achieved by the pupils in individual subjects at GCE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of the performance of, and significant trends in, individual subjects compared with the respective 3-year NI average (see comparative analysis spread sheet in SSID)
School's evaluation of the standards achieved, including performance in public examinations, by the pupils who receive additional support with their learning:
School's evaluation of the standards achieved, including performance in public examinations, by the pupils who are entitled to free school meals:
School's evaluation of pupils' progression in the standards achieved by the pupils:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary evaluation of the pupils' progression from end of KS2 to end of KS3 • A summary evaluation of the pupils' progression from end of KS3 to GCSE • A summary evaluation of the pupils' progression from GCSE to A Level and/or leaver destinations

2.5 In evaluating the ETI measures and priorities, in the context of my Fellowship, I would highlight the following in Northern Ireland:

There are no official league tables

There is no Systems Value Added Measure or one definition of value added

There are no equivalent point score measures at A Level

There are no gender references

***There is limited reference to qualitative evaluation of skills**

2.6 Additional forms of assessment in NI post primary include the use of commercial standardised tests to monitor academic progress. The tests are paid for by the schools themselves and reflect the lack of a more uniform system. The data, eg, PTiE (Performance in English) and PTiM (Performance in Maths) is used to create a “reliable and robust” baseline from primary to post-primary school. This baseline is subsequently used to track the progress of the pupils and to evaluate the value added by the school. There are mixed views on whether a school value added or uniform system value added measure is best for schools. Whilst feedback from school leaders is that there is no issue with being held to account for those matters over which the school has control; there is concern over wide variations in systems and processes; a lack of trust between schools in relation to assessment and exam information; and concerns about information being used inappropriately for example by the media publishing unofficial league tables.

2.7 A priority for my research in Australia will be how to share best practice in the measurement of wider skills and attitudes. The EU Member States have agreed upon a framework of 8 “Key Competencies” for life-long learning, comprising a mixture of essential knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to carry out tasks in real-life contexts.

The OECD report concludes that the revised curriculum and the “new” Levels of Progression are consistent with European Policy as it particularly focuses on the cross-curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics, Using ICT, Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities. In principle, the levels of progression are designed to “map” the skills that pupils are expected to develop across subjects and year levels, and “describe” pupils’ confidence and ability to apply these skills in a range of meaningful contexts. In practice the concerns about their reliability have undermined their potential implementation and effectiveness.

2.8 In NI there is a lack of alignment between GCSE, A Levels and the skills-based KS3 curriculum. The focus on skills decreases at GCSE and A Level due to the focus on preparing students for examinations. OECD reports, “The strong focus on pupil preparation for summative assessment at the end of KS4 is bolstered by the fact that Year 12 pupil performance on the GCSE qualifications is also used to measure school success.

2.9 The focus in Australia: evaluate which key competencies are measured and how tensions are managed between users of the data. Consideration also given to school use and central benchmarking measures.

2.10 In Northern Ireland the education system is weighted towards measurement by academic outputs; the view of the OECD report and of the PPTF is that a more rounded group of measures are needed to ensure the education system is fit for purpose.

3) DASHBOARD OF MEASURES

- 3.1 At the time of undertaking the Fellowship, the Department of Education is engaged in consultation with education leaders and policy makers to address issues raised in the OECD report with the proposal to develop a system and/or school level “Dashboard” of Measures. The Dashboard could provide a meaningful and agreed framework for school evaluations, communicating context and measures which would focus on progress and attainment. Consideration is being given to pastoral care, extra-curricular involvement, services, the school estate and resources, skills and leavers’ destinations.
- 3.2 The general feedback from school leaders and educators in 2015, is that the Dashboard could be a useful tool to widen what is currently measured and used at a system level. “The focus on attainment data, eg, 5/7 A*-C or 3+ A*-C at A Level; does not give sufficient credit for the ethos, activities and services that may be extra-curricular but which have a significant impact on pupils and their lives beyond school.” (K McCullough, DENI, 2015)
- 3.3 If wider measures were developed and communicated on a system or school Dashboard, the main concerns are how the information would be used and the risk of unfair or uncontextualised comparisons between schools. The majority of school leaders have little or no appetite for a school level Dashboard being introduced by DENI. The consensus is that, regardless of a Dashboard being developed, there needs to be greater recognition and value by DE/ETI of the School context, skills, qualitative information (eg Pastoral Care), value added and pupil/school progress.
- 3.4 My research aims to identify potential measures and uses of measures which could contribute to a Dashboard appropriate to the Northern Ireland context.

4) AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Identify quantitative and qualitative measures of pupils' progress and attainment at system, department and school level.
- 4.2 Identify how measures are used and by whom.
- 4.3 Evaluate effectiveness of measures as a baseline and benchmarking tool, to raise standards of learning and teaching.
- 4.4 Contribute to consultations in Northern Ireland about a potential 'Dashboard' of measures.
- 4.5 Identify and disseminate good practice at school and systems level.

5) **RESEARCH, METHODOLOGY AND CONNECTIONS**

There are 3 strands to the research undertaken in the Fellowship:

- 1) Background reading and research (see Section 8. References);
- 2) School visits: – meeting with Data Managers, Curriculum and Assessment Vice Principals, Head Teachers and students;

Northern Bay College, Geelong (NBC): NBC was formed in 2011 as a result of the merger of 9 schools into one multi-campus college. The process of reorganisation of the Corio and Norlane Government schools began in 2006 and was driven by the communities to ensure young people and their families in the northern suburb of Geelong had access to high quality education in world class facilities. NBC is a learning community which focuses on the establishment of positive attitudes and perceptions between teachers, students and the community. The commitment is to ensure ALL students will progress further in education or into employment.

Geelong Grammar School: An Independent Co-educational boarding and day school, founded 1855; 1400+ students. Their philosophy is one of “Positive Education”, which focuses on specific skills that assist students to strengthen their relationships, build positive emotions, enhance personal resilience, promote mindfulness and encourage a healthy lifestyle. The programme is based on the work of Professor Martin Seligman.

Scotch College, Melbourne: An Independent day school for boys, founded 1851; 1860+ students.

Camberwell College, Melbourne: An Independent day school for boys, founded 1886; 1600 students.

Mentone Grammar School, Melbourne: Co-educational with a parallel learning approach, ie, all year levels are co-educational, except the middle years, when students learn in single gender classes. Founded 1923; 1200 students.

Melbourne Grammar School: Day and boarding school, predominantly for boys, founded 1858; Prep to Year 12 (Year 14 in NI). Their mission statement is “to develop fully within our students the ‘whole person’ intellectually, physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially and spiritually, including creativity.”

3) Melbourne University

Graduate School of Education – Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy.

- One-to-one meeting with Professor John Hattie to discuss ‘value added’ and measures of pupils’ progress and attainment. Professor Hattie is a leading researcher in education; he has been Director of the Melbourne Educational Research Institute at the University of Melbourne, since March 2011. His research interests include performance indicators, models of measurement and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- One-to-one discussion with Dianne Vella-Brodick, Associate Professor at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Australia.



6)

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

There is no Holy Grail or one model fits-all when measuring pupils' progress, attainment and achievements. However, the schools and State of Victoria, Australia demonstrate models of good practice which could contribute to raising standards in learning and teaching in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. There is a healthy regard in Australian schools for retaining a level of autonomy and choice when identifying data measures and frameworks for their application. There is compliance with national tests, which have an acceptable level of rigour and transparency. The commitment, at all levels, to develop the whole person is reflected in programmes to promote wellbeing and to enable students to flourish. The definition of wellbeing balances academic attainment with wider achievements and personal development.

NB: The research outcomes in this report, highlight good practice at National, State and individual level, with evaluations and recommendations for NI and the UK.

(i) MEASURES OF PUPILS' PROGRESS AND ATTAINMENT

VCE/VCAL/ATAR SCORES (see 2.3(i))

There has been a push towards mutual recognition of qualifications, with VET or VCAL courses recognised as a path towards other courses. A process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been implemented to allow competencies gained through work and other experience to be assessed and recognised. The ATAR score, at the end of Year 12, can be used retrospectively by schools to set targets. The Victorian State schools' Inspectorate does not report on the ATAR, thereby negating potential conflict of interest and tensions between school and Inspectorate priorities, such as "teaching to the Inspectorate" which has been a criticism expressed by schools in the UK.

The GAT (General Ability Test) is a statutory assessment taken mid-year by Year 12 (equivalent to Year 14 in NI). The GAT test is taken by all students on the same day, across the State. It is used by the State to correlate actual VCE scores with predicted scores in case a student is absent from an exam, in which case the GAT score is used to award a final score. There is some use of it by schools for target setting. It is a "snapshot" assessment and there are concerns around validity, eg an English score is used to predict a Biology score.

EVALUATION

- The advantage of working towards the final Year 12 assessment is schools and students have greater flexibility with curriculum pathways and content, delivery models and developing wider cross-curricular skills and personal development. The students are not constrained, as in the UK, with Controlled Assessments and preparation for GCSEs at the age 11-12.
- The use of ATAR scores by the universities and other HE providers significantly reduces the burden on schools to organise, collate and administer personal statements and references, unlike that which is required by UCAS in the UK. The ATAR score alone is not necessarily a true measure of what is required for a course and courses are demand-driven.
- The GAT assessment reduces the requirements for special provision intervention as experienced in the UK. If used in Australian Year 10, it could guide subject choices for Year 12.

POST FELLOWSHIP

- Consult with colleagues, through The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), on the merits of UCAS administering entry to universities post awarding of Year 14 examination results. This is periodically debated and discussed in the UK; it may be timely to include references to the Australian system, to further inform the debate.
- Feedback to CCEA NI, the system for awarding an exam qualification using GAT. It may be difficult to equate a rank order score to a grade. However there are MIDYIS scores available to schools, which could be piloted for use.
- Maintain and develop the work of the PPTF (Post Primary Task Force NI) to align employers' needs with school curricula and pathways, particularly the teaching of development and assessment skills.

(ii) NAPLAN – THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME – LITERACY AND NUMERACY

NAPLAN is the National Assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 that is undertaken in early May, with results communicated to schools in March. The NAPLAN comprises 4 areas (or domains):

- Reading
- Writing
- Language Convention – spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Numeracy

The standardised assessments are used by Government, schools and parents to understand and improve the Literacy and Numeracy outcomes of Australian students. The tests “provide point-in-time information regarding progress and are intended to complement teacher judgement”. The data, communicated on the

Government MY SCHOOL website is designed to avoid league tables being generated or direct comparison between schools in close proximity.

EVALUATION

- NAPLAN is accepted by schools as a National baseline and benchmarking tool, for students' attainment and progress.
- The data can be used as a diagnostic tool. The effectiveness is currently limited because of the time delay in communicating results to schools. If the information could be communicated more efficiently the usefulness of the NAPLAN will be increased; there is a move towards on-line assessments to accommodate this.
- Several schools use commercial tests to complement the NAPLAN, eg MYAT (Middle Years Ability Test – available for the last 2 years of primary and first 2 years of post-primary). The MYAT scores can be used to measure value added and growth. By benchmarking against National levels, the school can demonstrate how the learning experiences are adding Value Added to their academic progress against ability ranges.
- The NAPLAN data is transferred, with the student, from primary to post-primary. This reduces the “summer effect” of time taken by post-primary schools to reassess students after primary school. There are some concerns regarding teaching to the test, however the assessments do have a level of credibility and compliance is tied to funding.
- School Dashboards can be generated using the NAPLAN data, with individual “domains” highlighted to identify targets. The school then identifies what is needed, eg resources/time to ensure individual student progress.

POST FELLOWSHIP

- Disseminate good practice to CCEA (NI) and the Department of Education.
- Promote schools having a “basket of measures” to complement statutory assessments and to reflect school context and needs.
- Develop transfer plans to ensure flow of information between primary and post-primary schools is valued, thereby reducing drops in attainment.
- Explore potential for NI Area Learning Communities (ALCs) to use commercial tests for anonymised benchmarking in assessments, Literacy, Numeracy and Students' wellbeing.
- Potential development of School Dashboard.

(iii) COMMERCIAL TESTS – ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT: E G

- PAT – Progressive Assessment Test – benchmarking is against a level and not National or school cohort. The test is set to the individual pupil level to enable growth to be measured and target set. Used in Numeracy and Literacy.
- Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System – a benchmarking system to identify a student’s current reading level and progress along a gradient of text levels over time.
- Academic Assessment Services (AAS) – customised tests to meet a school’s specific need, eg, to target a student population which differs from the normal distribution of the population.

ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENTS (NON-COMMERCIAL) – ACADEMIC: E G

- On-demand testing:- an online resource for teachers to use when, where and how they choose. Tests are designed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority to link to curriculum and standards. They can be administered to a single student and/or a whole class.
- Positive Education Schools Association: Evaluate positive psychology in education, with the aim of improving student wellbeing and academic performance.

EVALUATION

The additional tests complement NAPLAN, reflect the school context and needs. The schools consistently “triangulated” the data, to ensure:

1. The right data is identified by measuring what is valued and not valuing what is measured.
2. The data is communicated to teachers, students and parents, ensuring transparency, accountability and ownership.
3. Actions and intervention strategies are at individual, group, cohort level as appropriate.

POST FELLOWSHIP

- Discussions with CCEA to review opportunity for On-Demand Assessments to complement resources currently available to schools, including the evaluation of learning, tracking leavers’ destinations and wellbeing.
- School level – continue to maintain, evaluate and review how data is triangulated (see Section B); to raise standards of learning and teaching.
- Develop additional evidence based understanding and knowledge of “Positive Education” to complement pastoral provision and education in schools : from pre-school to Year 14: (Reference “Implementing a Strategic Framework for Wellbeing in Schools”, White & Murray).

(iv) PUPIL/PARENT AND TEACHER SURVEYS

It is a statutory requirement for all schools in the Victorian State, as part of self-evaluation, to engage pupils, parents and staff in giving feedback about their learning community. This information is communicated on the national Dashboard MY SCHOOL. The information complements quantifiable measures and includes:

- Attitudes to school survey – annual survey builds up trend data enabling schools to undertake increasingly in-depth analysis on levels of student engagement over time.
- School staff survey – there are core areas and optional modules, eg, staff safety and wellbeing.
- Parent opinion survey – parents are randomly selected to participate in the annual survey which is confidential and anonymous.

NB: It is an option for schools to create their own surveys. Several schools I visited had created their own surveys using Survey Monkey, eg, at Geelong Grammar School, a range of in-house designed surveys track student engagement with the courses and follow-up with focus groups. Other schools used the services of ISV - The Independent Schools' Surveys, eg LEAD

The LEAD report takes the Harvard 'balanced scorecard' approach where traditional measures of performance, such as NAPLAN, are supplemented by the stakeholder perceptions. The resulting assessment is benchmarked against the Victorian Independent sector average.

EVALUATION

- Schools compliant and culture of surveys used to self-evaluate, with feedback informing policy and practice
- Parent input plateaued, as did interest
- MY SCHOOL Dashboard accepted, to varying levels, as a means of communicating responses from surveys
- Surveys on a regular, transparent basis are an effective tool for identifying school priorities.

POST FELLOWSHIP

- School level - Evaluate with the senior management and leadership teams, the potential for additional whole school, pupil and staff surveys to inform development planning.
- Engage with the Department of Assessment & Qualifications as part of their discussions on Dashboard.

(v) **INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

International influences like the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), are impacting on the testing of students, rankings of schools, educational policy and practice. Dr Glenn Savage, Melbourne University, states "PISA has helped drive things like NAPLAN and the increased testing of students, particularly of literacy and numeracy. On the plus side, NAPLAN, PISA and the like have helped expose quite significant areas of inequality in terms of student outcomes. On the negative side, if you go too far down the road, it dominates what schools do, which is clearly not a good thing."

POST FELLOWSHIP

- Critically assess lessons learnt from International Assessments including PISA /Australian models, but also acknowledge and build on strengths in RBAI and NI.
- Include surveys, eg, PISA Wellbeing and Geelong creativity in the "basket of measures" to be used in school.

(vi) **LONGITUDINAL SURVEYS – GOING BEYOND ACADEMIC DATA**

This report recognises the role of external professionals working collaboratively with schools, providing evidence based research to inform interventions for improved outcomes in students' progress and wellbeing. The focus on schools in Australia/UK/Ireland is extending beyond academic achievement: "Schools should have major impacts not only on enhancement of knowing and understanding, but also on the enhancement of character: intellectual character, moral character, civic character and performance character." Shields 2014

The focus on wellbeing in schools goes beyond a focus on one area, eg, resilience; it is looking at wider personal attributes including leadership, self-confidence, mindfulness, entrepreneurship. It can be defined by the needs of a school, reflecting its specific context. Professor John Hattie recognised and acknowledges achievement is part of wellbeing: "Visible learning is more than passing surface level tests. It involves impacting on the love of learning, inviting students to stay in learning and seeing the ways in which student can improve their healthy sense of wellbeing, respect for self and others – as well as enhancing achievement." John Hattie, Visible learning 2016.

There is limited evidence based research of transference between improved wellbeing and improved academic attainment, however longitudinal research involving Melbourne and Deakin Universities collaborating with schools, including Northern Bay College and Geelong Grammar School, are linking wellbeing with retention rates in schools and positive correlation with health, wealth and happiness.

Case Study A – The Wellbeing Project, Northern Bay College

An Outcomes Framework containing a series of outcome areas which are underpinned by indicators that have been validated and tested, including pupils' wellbeing. The focus is on impact.



Fred Clarke, Principal, NBC

The Northern Bay College makes a commitment called ‘The Northern Bay Promise’ that students who actively engage with the Northern Bay College will have the opportunity for successful transition into further education or employment. **The Promise** explicitly shares the social and educational responsibility with the community, with the Northern Bay College at the centre.

The Wellbeing Report provides a framework that not only measures how the children are faring, but will also track the changes into the future: It uses relevant data to focus on 5 domains of wellbeing, which reflect the National framework (NEST), and make comparisons with Victorian averages. The domains are:

1. Developing well
2. Engaged, learning and achieving
3. Safe and secure
4. Happy and healthy
5. Active citizens

The contributions to the report include - Innovation Grant from ‘Give Where You Live’, Good Beginning Australia and Save the Children Australia.

A copy of the report is available at www.savethechildren.org.au. The report is to be reproduced in 2018 to measure the progress of the children and young people's

wellbeing. During that time, Good Beginnings, as part of Save the Children and participating partners will fill data gaps.

An example of the report feedback is shown here:

Ages & stages - 14 to 18 year olds (Year 9 – 12)

“Nobody talks in depth about context anymore or the difficulties within the community. Now I hear everyone talking about aspirations and what students can achieve” – visiting Principal.

Population

14-18 year olds	2006	2011	NBC Years 9 to 12 (2015)
Corio	1,392	1,514	
Norlane	536	532	
North Shore	17	18	
Total	1,945	2,064	366

Source: ABS, 2006, 2011, Basic Community Profiles (B04) NBC, 2015, School Census doc

Student population numbers are less than for the younger years.

Are students leaving school before finishing Year 12 or are they being educated elsewhere?
Also see Indicators No. 12 & 13

Building aspirations: Year 11 Art students’ field trip to explore art and culture in Cairns was supported and funded as one of several projects in Ardoch Youth Foundation’s Broadening Horizons program.

10. Children and Young people are engaged and benefiting from educational opportunities

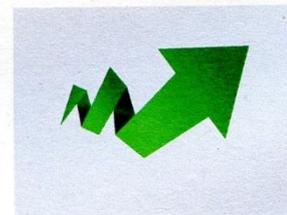
Senior students have previously taken part in Mission Australia’s Youth Survey but from 2015 Communities that Care (Glastonbury, 2015) will be surveying students in years 6, 8 and 10. This online survey asks about different areas of a young person’s life such as: About You, School Experiences, Your Friends & Experiences, Your Opinions, Your Feelings, Tobacco, Alcohol & Other Drugs, Health & Personal Experiences, Your Family and Your Neighbourhood.

Attendance

Being absent from school can negatively affect a student’s learning, however average attendance has improved markedly across all year levels.

Attendance	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
2014	91%	89%	87%	91%
2013	82%	76%	76%	79%

Source: NBC, 2014 pg.13, 2013 pg. 11, Annual Report to School Community



90% attendance is the Federal Government’s recommended target

EVALUATION

- A highly effective benchmarking and baseline framework to raise standards.
- The WELLBEING REPORT provides a framework and tool for collaborative future planning. It demonstrates the powerfulness of aligning key stakeholders in a community to identify, measure and track a range of indicators linked to the wellbeing of children, young people and adults.
- The priority areas are consistent with the over-achieving national framework for the health and wellbeing of Australian children and young people. They are also consistent with the 5 recognised pillars of wellbeing, identified by psychologist Seligman – positivity, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievement.
- Data regularly updated and trends can be identified and evaluated.
- The report provides the foundation for on-going work on shared community led outcomes.
- Data was gathered from the cross-section of the school community – pupils of all ages, teachers, leaders, parents, community working, carers and health workers.

POST FELLOWSHIP

- Review and evaluate with school senior managers and leaders potential for developing a framework for wellbeing, based on the NBC model of good practice.
- Adapt the wellbeing and outcomes framework to school context in RBAI and UK.
- Disseminate the wellbeing framework model to the professional providers of education in NI: including ASCLNI, EA, DENI, QUB, UU, GBA, CCMS, RTU.
- Within NI, seek a collective commitment to wellbeing from the external community, including Department of Education, Area Learning Community, ETI, employers and philanthropists.
- Disseminate the wellbeing framework model to the members of the Post Primary Task Force (PPTF).
- Potential to monitor and focus resources by using the tracking and wellbeing data to inform shared outcomes, measurement and evaluation.

Case Study B – Positive Education, The Institute of Positive Education, Geelong Grammar School in collaboration with Deakin University and Melbourne University

The “Institute of Positive Education” is an initiative by Geelong Grammar School aimed at improving student wellbeing. The Institute seeks to teach students valuable life skills which they can increase their learning capacity. It is also dedicated to nurturing the growth of Positive Education through the provision of training, research and development.

“Internationally focussing on student and staff wellbeing is some of the most important work a school community can and should do” J Robinson, Director, Institute of Positive Education.

Positive Education brings together the science of positive psychology with best practice teaching to encourage and support individuals, schools and communities to flourish. Flourishing is the combination of ‘feeling good and doing good’. Positive Education focuses on specific skills that assist students to:

- Strengthen their relationships
- Enhance personal resilience
- Promote mindfulness
- Encourage a healthy lifestyle

The Positive Psychology movement was founded by Professor Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania.

The team at Geelong Grammar School, Institute of Positive Education is comprised of experienced trainers with strong backgrounds in educational leadership, primary and secondary teaching, as well as qualified psychologists, researchers and professional communication and administration managers.

There are few studies which quantify impact on Positive Education and Wellbeing. This is a growth area, receiving support from the State and the universities.

Correlation tested at GCS between positive mental health in adolescence and healthy pathways into adulthood. The findings suggested that the domain of wellbeing, which encompasses: engagement, relationships, purpose, accomplishment, and health provides a good indication of young people’s positive mental health in their teenage years.

The Project Team included:-

- Dr Meredith O’Connor, Research fellow at the Institute of Positive Education, Geelong Grammar School, and an Honorary Fellow at the Department of Paediatrics, University of Melbourne
- Honorary Professional Fellow Ann Sanson, Department of Paediatrics, University of Melbourne
- Dr Jacolyn Norrish, teacher at Monash University and University of Melbourne
- Professor Craig Olsson, Australia Research Council, Principal Research Fellow and Director of Centre Social and Early Emotional Development at Deakin University
- Australian Temperament Project Management Team

The study using “The Wellbeing Profiler Model” was conducted with 383 Year 9, 10 and 11 GGS students in 2013. To provide a point of comparison, 138 students from other schools who did not have a Positive Education programme, but were similar in socio-economic status, were recruited into a control group.

The findings provide preliminary support for the effectiveness of the GGS positive education programme, particularly in Year 9. A number of ideas emerged for further enhancing the curriculum.

The full description of the research can be seen in:

Vell-Brodrick, D. Rickard, N and Chin T-C (August 2014) “An Evaluation of Positive Education at Geelong Grammar School : A Snapshot of 2013” www.ggs-vic.edu.au/schoolPositive-Education/Research/Independent-Evaluation

The research was funded by Geelong Grammar School and conducted by.

- Associate Professor Dianne Vella-Brodrick (Project Leader), University of Melbourne
- Associate Professor Nikki Rickard, Monash University
- Dr Tan Chyuan Chin (Research Fellow), University of Melbourne

NB: The preliminary findings now lead on to an on-going 2-Year study funded by the Australian Research Council and undertaken at the University of Melbourne.

The Melbourne Education Research Institute, Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne is conducting the 3-Year longitudinal study to test the efficacy of the Positive Education Programme compared to control schools who are not teaching Positive Education. This is a major piece of research involving a survey battery and biological testing (cortisol saliva, heart rate variability). The use of the wellbeing profiler to measure adolescent wellbeing is underpinned by rigorous science. It is systematic and aligns questions with the PERMA model.

EVALUATION

The engagement between school, the universities and the Australian research bodies creates the opportunity to set baseline and benchmarking measures to track and evaluate wellbeing from school into adulthood. There are significant implications from the outcomes as communities seek to align education with health care and employment using an outcomes framework.

The work being undertaken in Geelong Grammar School and Northern Bay College provides a framework and a model which can be delivered across the world. The empirical studies in Positive Psychology are applied to develop innovative learning programmes and resources.

The wellbeing profiler enables schools to determine wellbeing levels, identify target areas and establishes ‘norms’ for baseline and benchmarking tracking.

POST FELLOWSHIP

- *The Research Partnerships between the universities, Department of Education and expert professionals to be fully explored at school, Area Learning Community and National level. I regard this as one of the most significant examples of good practice which could enhance knowledge and understanding, to overcome barriers to learning and to promote lifelong wellbeing.
- Review potential use of in-house (school level) surveys to develop and evaluate a school-based wellbeing programme, eg, Survey Monkey, iPad Touch and Wuzzup
- Review opportunities to align pastoral development curriculum with appropriate modules promoting positive behaviour and wellbeing
- Staff training days to develop understanding and planning re pupil and staff wellbeing, applying a framework for Positive education, using Seligman's PERMA model

PERMA MODEL

The PERMA Model was developed by psychologist, Martin Seligman, in his 2011 book "Flourish". It stands for the 5 essential elements that should be in place for students and adults to experience wellbeing. These are:

P – Positive Emotion

E – Engagement

R – Relationships

M – Meaning - Purpose

A - Achievement/Accomplishment – Academic and beyond

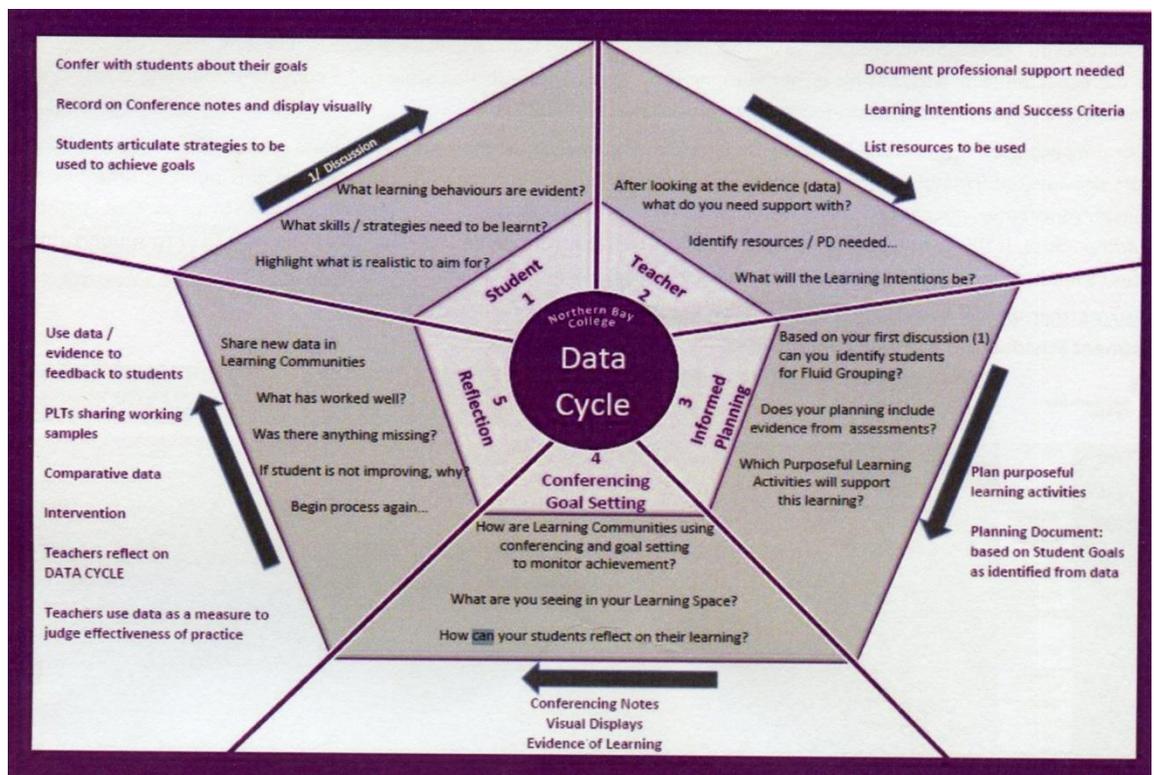
- Evidence based research to inform learning and teaching practice and evaluations
- Recommendation is for "The Professionals" to finance and undertake longitudinal research in consultation with the school(s)
- Transforming the research outcomes in day-to-day practice will be the role for teachers, with time and support given by the management and leadership.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the wellbeing profiler model, as a measurement tool and framework, to align with pastoral and academic curriculums – to promote wellbeing
- Engage in a multi-level approach, exploring the range of surveys to select what works best within school context
- Seek to develop knowledge and understanding of positive behaviour and PERMA model.

(vii) EFFECTIVENESS OF DATA MEASURES

Best Practice

- a. Schools identify ways of discussing progression – (there is a lack of progress measures for schools to access. Teachers and school leaders need to be considering concepts of progression, methods to progress and targets for students). In Northern Bay College there is collaborative use of data for curriculum planning. Teachers are given time to meet every 2-3 weeks in a data team, to discuss and evaluate the data using an agreed framework, as shown below and to set incremental learning and teaching goals, which are monitored and evaluated, eg NBC framework.

The Northern Bay College Data Framework:



The NBC framework reinforces the visible learning principle of: “Schools cannot help all students to learn if educators work in isolation. Schools must create the structures and cultures that foster effective collaboration - collaboration that focuses on factors within one sphere of influence to impact student learning in a positive way and work together to diagnose, recommend interventions and collectively evaluate the impact of teachers and programmes.” J Hattie, Visible Learning – Maximising Impact On Learning”

- b. Schools manipulate data to create a School Dashboard, which communicates “real time” information to teachers, in a simple, straight-forward and accessible

manner. There is no equivalent to the provision for SIMS in the Victoria State and schools have to create their own system.

c. Teacher Action Groups:

Teacher Action Groups identify and work to overcome barriers to learning. The group meets regularly to collaborate, eg, look at Thinking Routines. This is based on Richard Elmore's "Project Zero":- is led by paid experts and represents a significant commitment to the professional development of teachers. This goes beyond using data to raise standards of learning and teaching.

d. Evidence based research, including use of attainment and progress measures, to stimulate creative and innovative teaching and learning.

Case Study : Geelong Grammar School

Research undertaken by the Institute of Positive Education is communicated to teachers who have the opportunity to use the research in their daily practice. The idea is piloted over 4 weeks in "Pop-Up" lessons, at the end of which the option is to Repeat - Reject - Refer - Retain

EVALUATION

- A collaborative and collective discussion and evaluation of attainment and progress measures is effective and efficient; and provides a model framework in schools.
- Where progress measures do not exist or lack "rigour" it is still essential to consider and discuss progress in order to set appropriate incremental targets for the individual student, class, department, year group and school. Time is needed to interpret the evidence for its effect on students.
- Best practice exists where teachers have autonomy to use evidence based research to pilot strategies, confident they have the support of the school leaders
- Emphasis on a daily basis in school is more on progress than levels of proficiency, reflecting global recognition of the importance of both in the right balance.
- "Focus is not on the data, but on the professional judgements, the influencer – the teacher. Internal evidence should be reviewed to ensure high quality outcomes" J Hattie
- Progression is more than academic attainment; it includes wellbeing, respect for self and others, student engagement in learning and self-attitudes like confidence and reaction to failure.
- Evaluation of impact is critical – "evaluating impact is the single most critical lever for instructional excellence – accompanied by understanding this impact and doing something in light of the evidence and understanding". P Brock, 2014.

POST FELLOWSHIP

- Continue to discuss and debate, at school and system level, what achievements are to be valued.

- Develop evidence from teacher, pupil and parent surveys to inform curriculum and pastoral planning.
- Invest in staff professional development to progress evidence based research
- Allocate resources to disseminate evidence based research to teachers, which will then act as a lever for creative and innovative practice.
- Evaluate the data framework model from Northern Bay College as a potential model of good practice for schools in the UK.
- Increase opportunities for collaboration to discuss and interpret data, eg, data teams. The focus to be on the professional judgements and evaluations?
- Develop understanding of attitudes, dispositions of students and their thinking style, to raise standards of academic attainment and to complement attainment data.
- In consultation with Heads of Department, identify ways to discuss and measure progression, eg, collaborative planning, data teams, collaborative marking and moderation/sharing targets.
- Align curriculum, pastoral and career/employability planning and tracking to provide a fully rounded programme for development.
- Build a collective capacity of teachers to evaluate data to improve learning.
- Engage in the Global Creativity Survey – 2016 to contribute to research being undertaken at The Institute of Positive Education.

(viii) **DASHBOARD OF AUSTRALIA - Referred to as MY SCHOOL**

There was a level of indifference from school leaders when discussing SCHOOL. Some minor concerns were expressed over the potential for its misuse if further reporting on VCE scores perpetuated unofficial league tables; however the general feeling was of acceptance/tolerance.

The information communicated on MY SCHOOL includes:

- School Profile – provided by the school, to describe the school’s context and character. A link can be made to the school website
- NAPLAN performance
- Funding levels and sources and other financial information
- Enrolment numbers and staff numbers
- Attendance rates – pupils and staff – pupils updated 2 x year
- Academic staff participation in CPD
- Student retention rates
- Leavers’ destinations (only for schools in Victoria State and Government schools in the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland)
- Proportion of students with a language background other than English

The school leaders expressed mixed views on the use of MY SCHOOL to demonstrate students’ progress. They recognised the potential for retrospective use of data available since 2008 and some trend analysis of NAPLAN, which enables school comparisons and benchmarking.

NB: The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for administration of the website. It is an independent Australian Government authority with functions that include publishing nationally comparable data on all Australian schools.

EVALUATION

- A dashboard in itself does not resolve debates in education
- A dashboard is a resource for parents, educators and the community to readily access information about all schools.
- Eight years + of data enables comparisons to be made between schools of similar socio-educational backgrounds, using the index of community socio-educational advantage (ICSEA) – could transfer to UK
- Individual schools provide information on context and ethos
- National baseline from NAPLAN is communicated on the dashboard and enables progress and attainment to be measured at National level
- The lack of information on wellbeing limits the usefulness of the National dashboard
- Filtering by log-in codes avoids misuse and high levels of privacy ensure school data is reported responsibly

- School comparisons are from different parts of the country – there is a National approach to comparing schools.
- School in-house dashboards can complement MY SCHOOL.

POST FELLOWSHIP

- Evaluate the potential for a school dashboard to communicate relevant information to parents, which will promote their engagement with schools.

CONCLUSION

The innovative, creative and progressive education practices across the Victoria State, demonstrate the significant impact that evidence based research, collaboration and the alignment of professionals’ expertise can have to raise standards of teaching and learning and wellbeing. The NAPLAN is providing baseline and benchmarking data for schools and the state to measure academic attainment and progress. The MY SCHOOL effectively communicates information on schools with strict privacy codes. The move towards inclusion of wellbeing domains on MY SCHOOL is not without controversy; however it will potentially measure and communicate what is valued.

Balancing qualitative and quantitative data, attainment with wider skills and personal attributes is a work in progress at school and system level. However there are valuable insights to be gained from the central evaluation of practices in Australia to potentially address some of the recommendations outlined in the OECD report and presented by the Post Primary Task Force in NI. There is value in having different measures and systems appropriate to a school context, with a level of transparency accountability not driven by the Inspectorate or exam results. There are many strengths in the NI/UK educational system and the aim of my Churchill Fellowship is to add to the debate and discussions to maintain and develop best practice and high standards.



Melbourne Grammar School

7) **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- The use of ATAR scores by the universities and other HE providers significantly reduces the burden on schools to organise, collate and administer personal statements and references, unlike that which is required by UCAS in the UK.
- NAPLAN is the National Assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. It comprises 4 domains: Reading, Writing, Language Conversation and Numeracy. It is accepted and adopted by schools as a national baseline and benchmarking tool for students' attainment and progress. Commercial tests are used by some schools to complement NAPLAN.
- International influences like the OECD's PISA are impacting on the testing of students, rankings of schools, educational policy and practice. On the plus side, these have helped expose quite significant areas of inequality in terms of student outcomes. On the negative side, it can demonstrate school practice.
- The Australian dashboard "MySchool" does not in itself resolve debates in education. However, it is a resource for parents, educators and the community to readily access information about all schools. Filtering by log-in codes avoids misuse and high levels of privacy ensure school data is reported responsibly.
- The focus on schools extends beyond academic achievement to well-being. Well-being can be defined by the needs and context of a school to include engagement in learning, academic resilience, mental health and wider personal attributes of leadership, self-confidence and creativity.
- There is limited evidence based research of transference between improved well-being and improved academic attainment, however longitudinal research including Melbourne and Deakin Universities collaborating with schools, including Northern Bay College and Geelong Grammar School, are linking well-being with retention rates in schools and positive correlation with health, wealth and happiness.
- Well-being baseline profilers, underpinned by Seligman's PERMA model, set baseline and benchmarking measures to track and evaluate well-being from school into adulthood. The implications from the research align education with healthcare and employment using an outcomes framework which focuses on impact.
- Emphasis in schools is on progress. Progression is more than academic attainment; it includes well-being, respect for self and others, student engagement in learning and self-attitudes including confidence and resilience.

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Mr David Lamrock, DLTV

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10) GLOSSARY

ASCL	Association of Schools and College Leaders
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank
CCEA	Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
CEIAG	Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance
CPD	Continued Professional Development
DENI	Department of Education, Northern Ireland
DGP	Dissemination of Good Practice
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GTC	General Teaching Council
HMC	Headmasters and Headmistresses' Conference
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MER	Monitoring, Evaluation and Review
NAPLAN	National Assessment Programme – Literacy and Numeracy
NI	Northern Ireland
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAT	Progressive Assessment Test
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPTF	Post Primary Task Force
PTiE	Performance in English
PTiM	Performance in Mathematics
RBAI	The Royal Belfast Academical Institution
SBALC	South Belfast Area Learning Community)
T&L	Teaching and Learning
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment