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A culture that promotes learning

The school is driven by a deep belief that every student is capable of successful learning. A high priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships between staff, students and parents. There is a strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers and school leaders and parents are treated as partners in the promotion of student learning and wellbeing. The school works to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant, inclusive and that promotes intellectual rigour.

The assessment of this domain includes consideration of the extent to which:

- the school promotes and maintains an environment reflective of its high expectations that all students will learn successfully;
- the staff of the school demonstrate an understanding of the importance of positive and caring relationships to successful learning, and work to build mutually respectful relationships across the school community;
- interactions between staff, students, parents and families are caring, polite and inclusive;
- the school views parents and families as integral members of the school community and partners in student learning;
- the school places a high priority on student and staff wellbeing and has processes in place to provide both academic and non-academic support to address individual needs;
- the school appreciates and values students' varying cultural backgrounds and works to build the cultural competence of school staff;
- the school has clear strategies to promote appropriate behaviour - including agreed responses and consequences for inappropriate student behaviour - and the school provides sufficient support for teachers to implement these policies;
- the school works to create an attractive and stimulating physical environment that supports and encourages learning;
- the school promotes a culture of inquiry and innovation, where creative exploration and independent learning are valued; and
- all students and staff have an obvious sense of belonging, all parents are welcomed and all staff, students and parents speak highly of the school.

Outstanding

The school ethos is built around high expectations and a commitment to excellence. There is an expectation that every student will learn and achieve positive outcomes. Classrooms are calm but busy and interruptions to teaching time are kept to a minimum. There are no obvious behavioural problems, very high rates of school attendance and engagement, and staff morale is sustained at a high level. There is a happy, optimistic feel to the school.

High levels of trust are apparent across the school community. Interactions are focused on the learning and wellbeing of students and on continually improving the school's ability to meet the needs of all students. Parents and families are valued as partners in student learning, and parents, school leaders and teachers work together in mutually supportive ways. There is a strong sense of belonging and pride in the school.

A strong collegial culture has been established. Teachers have an overt and shared commitment to the improvement of teaching and an openness to critique by colleagues. This is reflected in the fact that teachers regularly invite leaders and colleagues to visit their classrooms to observe their teaching.

High

The 'tone' of the school reflects a school-wide commitment to purposeful, successful learning. There are very few obvious behavioural, attendance or engagement problems and behaviour management takes up very little, if any, time of school leaders and classroom teachers.

There is a strong focus on quality learning and on the creation of a culture in which all students are expected to learn successfully, in their own ways and at their own pace. Individual talents are valued. Class 'busy work' is kept to a minimum, and an attempt is made to ensure that all students are engaged in challenging, meaningful learning.

Respectful and caring relationships are reflected in the ways in which staff, students and parents interact and in the language they use in both formal and informal settings.

Parents and families are encouraged to take a genuine and close interest in the work of the school and are welcomed as partners in their children's learning. There are agreed guidelines on such matters as greeting visitors, taking messages, and responding to queries promptly and respectfully.

Staff morale is generally high.

Medium

Classrooms are generally orderly, although some are more so than others. Non-attendance is an issue for a small minority of students. However, many other students appear to be minimally engaged in productive learning activities.

The school effectively implements its policies, for example, by ensuring that disruptive behaviour, bullying and harassment are dealt with promptly. The school has clear expectations for how students should behave and interact with one another, and in the main, relationships are caring and respectful. Some staff time is taken up dealing with behaviour problems.

Most parents take an obvious interest in their children's learning. Engagement is primarily through regularly scheduled parent-teacher interviews.

Staff morale is satisfactory.

Low

Behavioural problems, disengagement and non-attendance are issues for a significant proportion of students. In a number of classrooms students are clearly not engaged in productive learning activities.

The school may have policies and agreed procedures relating to student behaviour but these appear to have had little impact in practice. Much of the time of school leaders and teachers is taken up dealing with inappropriate behaviour. Interactions between parents, staff and students are not always productive and respectful. Staff tend not to value or engage parents as partners in student learning.

Some teachers appear to work in isolation from colleagues. Staff morale is low and staff turnover is high.