

Our Story

Supporting schools to meet the needs of all Australian children

Edition: June 2021



**GOOD TO
GREAT
SCHOOLS**
AUSTRALIA

Great teachers. Effective teaching. Every child.



Our vision

Every Australian child, no matter what their background is, attends a school that develops their academic, cultural, creative, sporting and civic potential so they can live fulfilling lives.

About us

We are a not-for-profit organisation that supports schools on their improvement journey to transition from Poor to Fair, Fair to Good, Good to Great and on to Excellent.

We support Australian education systems and communities to help their schools successfully deliver programs that meet the needs of all their students.

We seek to support children from early childhood through to secondary school graduation.

We have decades of experience developing and implementing innovative education solutions.

Our education model is based on extensive research supported by international evidence.

We invest substantially in innovation and continuous improvement through co-design with students, families, teachers, school education systems and education experts.

We form strategic partnerships and collaborate with experts who have decades of experience in large-scale school implementations.

Our mission

To advance a tectonic shift across the Australian school system by promoting schooling for all Australians and being a great partner to education systems, schools and communities by developing great teachers, delivering effective instruction and caring for every child.



Our growing school partnerships



The Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy delivers our full 6C education model.

We support other schools with components of our model, particularly literacy and numeracy programs.

We support schools in urban, regional, rural and remote communities across Western Australia, the Northern Territory, New South Wales and Queensland.

Our partnerships are increasing with the success of our programs.

Explicit Instruction

Uses well-crafted lessons to explicitly teach grade-level content.

Direct Instruction

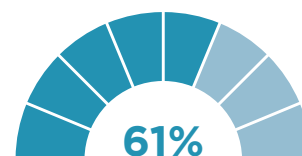
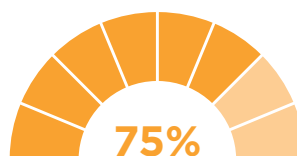
Combines explicit instruction pedagogy with a comprehensive curriculum, student assessment and scripted lessons.

A 2016 independent survey of teachers and principals in schools using our literacy programs showed how, after just a year, the overall learning environment in the school had improved.

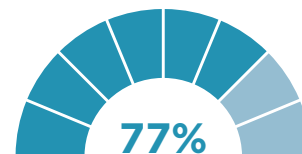
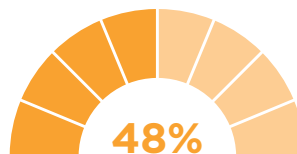
Explicit Instruction

Direct Instruction

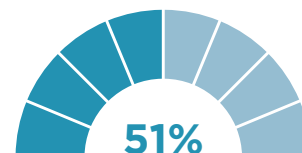
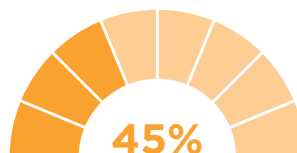
Building better educational habits and routines



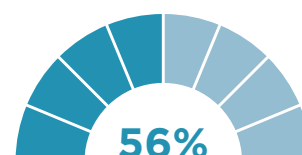
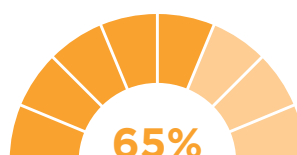
Showing improved English oral language skills



Learning faster



More confident learners



“Direct Instruction is the nucleus. It creates a learning culture in the classrooms and everything else goes with it. The feedback, instructional teaching, orderly learning environment — Direct Instruction has made other initiatives simpler. It’s given a structure for the school to follow — the link has been instantaneous. It created consistency in classrooms and across the region — where the students rotate all the time.”

Ben Slocombe, Principal, Angurugu School, Northern Territory

The national employment challenge

Digital technology is changing our 21st century world and economy.

In the next two decades, almost half of all Australian jobs will be disrupted by technology. Automation will eradicate many low skill jobs and the number of professional jobs will diminish.

Australian schools will need to offer an education that prepares students for future jobs so they have choices in how to thrive in the 21st century economy.

Young people need a range of 21st century skills that span technical capabilities, critical thinking capacity and character qualities.

The foundations for education start with literacy and numeracy. Students first learn to read and write and continue to read in order to learn more.

Along the way they master critical thinking, develop their character and learn how to adapt and thrive in our ever changing world.

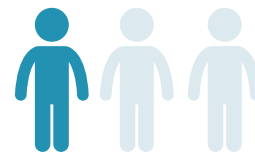
They also continue to adopt new technology.

Australian schools are not meeting the foundations for all students

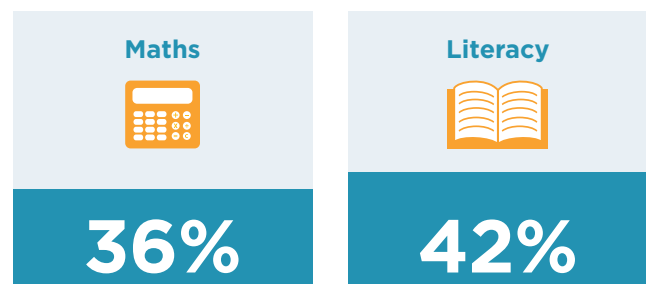
Despite Australia's significant investment in education, classroom instruction is failing too many students across too many schools.

Australia was once in the top 10 best performing school systems, but now sits at 25 and continues to decline.

Even good suburban schools are failing students, with 20 percent of high-performing schools failing to meet the foundational skills expected of every child.



Over a third of Australian students do not have basic foundation skills



Percent not meeting national baseline proficiency.

Schools are more than just places where children gain skills and knowledge. They are soul forming institutions.



School systems have improvement frameworks, but these are not improving Poor and Fair schools. They do not respond to the school's unique starting point on their improvement journey, nor the unique needs of those students.



Education policy for the 21st century

Australians agree that education is the key to national advancement, so we need to ensure that every school can meet the needs of every child. School systems have improvement frameworks, but large numbers of schools are not improving and thousands of Australian children are missing out on an education.

Singapore and many other countries have turned around their education systems and are now at the top end internationally.

Australia's education system can achieve a tectonic lift in performance by targeting the problem areas and focusing on what works best.

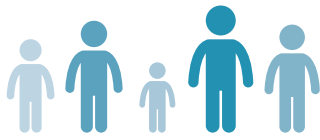
The three distinct school clusters in Australia need three distinct approaches

- 1 Lift poor performing schools**
Implement a customised proven Poor and Fair school improvement framework across struggling schools. Set a 5-10 year turnaround plan for each school that addresses the needs deficit and continually tracks progress.
- 2 Prompt stagnant schools in the middle**
Adopt proven instruction practices that accelerate all students, but ensure the bottom 20 percent are getting the foundations in place.
- 3 Free up Great schools to become Excellent**
Remove impediments and offer more autonomy to consistently Great schools so they can continue to do what they do best.

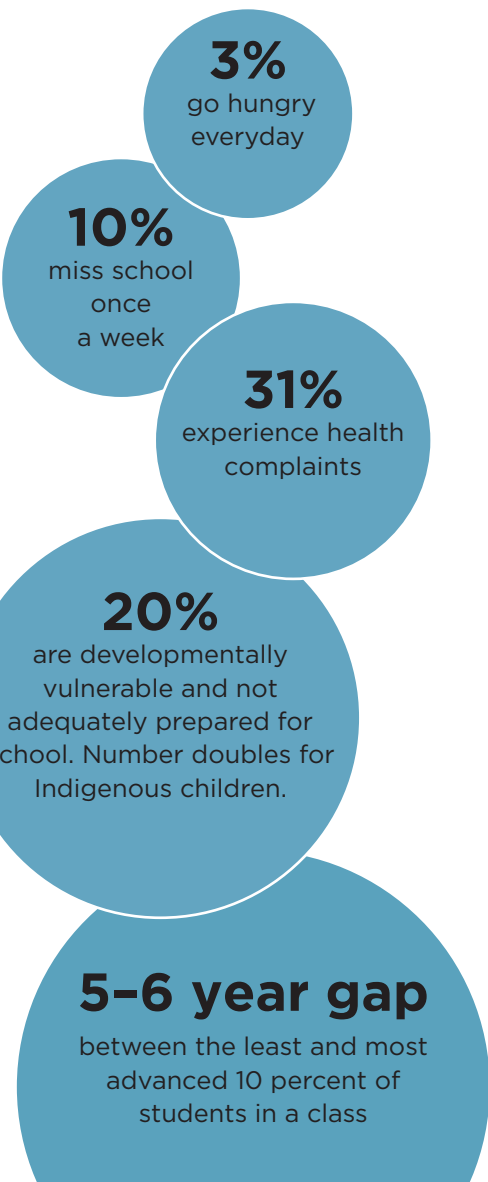


Schools are not meeting the needs of the most vulnerable

Deficient schooling amplifies student disadvantage



Australian children



But they can with the right programs



Australian schools

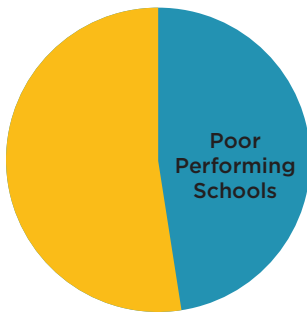


Improvement journey

- Early childhood support through provision, collaboration or coordination of services
- Targeted strategies to address attendance and school readiness
- Targeted evidence-based school-wide effective instruction
- Holistic programs that build students' leadership, social, sporting and creative skills
- Students' cultures and languages incorporated in rich ways into school life and curriculum
- Use of technology to enhance learning

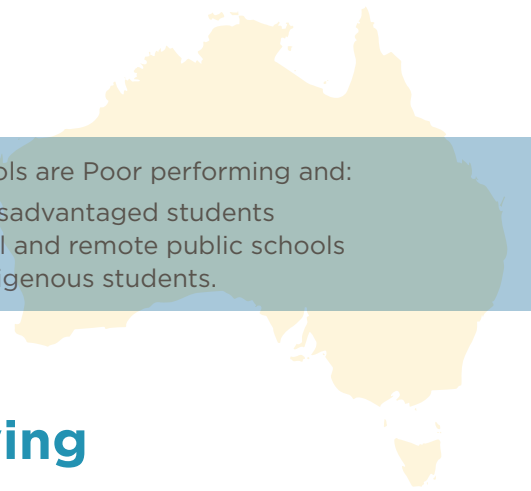
- Limited childhood development services in school or neighbourhood
- No systematic approach to address attendance or school readiness issues
- Ineffective instruction, inappropriate curriculum, inadequate school facility and higher teacher turnover
- Limited ad hoc extracurricular programs
- No formal accommodation of students' languages and cultures
- Limited or no technology use

Schools can turn this around



Almost half of Australian schools are Poor performing and:

- Are over-represented with disadvantaged students
- Are more likely to be regional and remote public schools
- Have high proportions of Indigenous students.



What it takes to start improving

McKinsey & Company's 2010 landmark report, *How the World's most Improved School Systems keep getting Better*, studied twenty education systems at different levels of improvement.

It describes how school systems around the world that started with Poor performance, became Good, and from Good on to Great, and some even Excellent. This shows that even the most challenging school systems and subsystems can improve from any starting point on the poor to excellent continuum.

The report sets out how system leaders started by clarifying what performance stage they were at according to their student outcomes, and put the right interventions in place to achieve the desired improvement in student outcomes. Regardless of their different historical, economic and cultural contexts, these systems implemented a set of common practices for each stage of their improvement journey.

Good to Great Schools Australia (GGSA) found this a compelling model for school improvement as it aligned to the framework GGSA had

developed in shifting its Academy schools from Poor to Fair.

GGSA has partnered with McKinsey to work on a model that combines GGSA knowledge and experience of school improvement with McKinsey global systems knowledge and experience to develop an Australian school improvement framework for schools and systems.



Poor

Fair

- Scripted teaching materials
- Curriculum coaching and instructional time on task
- Getting students in seats, e.g. focus on attendance
- Getting all schools to a minimum quality level with additional support for low performing schools

“As a developed country we should not willingly accept that a child’s background determines their educational success. We can achieve high-performing, highly equitable schools in Australia. The best guarantee of high expectations for all is foundational instruction.”

Noel Pearson, Chairman,
Good to Great Schools Australia



Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy

Our vision

We are determined to ensure that our younger generations achieve their full potential, talent and creativity and have the confidence and capacity for hard work so that they can orbit between two worlds and enjoy the best of both.

GGSA is in a unique innovative partnership with the Department of Education and Training (DET) to deliver the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) in state primary schools in the remote North Queensland communities of Hope Vale and Coen.

GGSA provides school improvement implementation support for its school improvement model, including the 6C education program, 8 cycles of practice, and student and family welfare support. DET operates the school campuses as per normal Queensland state schools, including the employment of all school staff, management of school finances, operations and facilities, and the health, safety and well-being of all students and staff.

The goal of the partnership is to support the school and the community to achieve the mission of CYAAA. CYAAA aims to close the academic, health and well-being gap between its students and mainstream children by addressing the needs of every student case by case, and supporting them to successfully transition into high-quality,

high-expectation secondary schools.

CYAAA offers a comprehensive 6C education model which incorporates the early years development domain of Childhood, the learning domains of Class, Club and Culture, and the Community domain to support student attendance and school readiness.

Our education model is based on extensive research supported by international evidence. We invest substantially in innovation and continuous improvement through co-design with students, families, teachers, school education systems and education experts.

CYAAA has an extended school day and operates after school care to ensure these disadvantaged students have more time to close the education gap. The additional time is spent on literacy and numeracy, and other areas of the curriculum, including rich curriculum activities in music, art and sport through the Australian curriculum.



“When I was growing up we always talked in Guugu Yimidhirr in our home. Our parents were very strict on speaking our language correctly. Children today don’t learn our traditional language at home so we need to make sure we are teaching it at school. My passion is to keep our mother tongue alive so as long as I stand I will continue to teach language.”

Lillian Bowen, Language Teacher, Hope Vale School

Results



- Pre-preps complete a full literacy program so they start Prep with English language and ‘Prep-ready’ literacy skills
- Majority of Preps are at/above year level
- Coen Preps start reading before mainstream average.



- Students are making nearly twice the literacy and numeracy gains against the national average rate of progress
- Each year students are attaining consistently higher scores on NAPLAN.



- Half of Year 3–6 students are learning instrumental music, regularly perform as a band and are at higher than or comparable national music levels for their age
- Students regularly compete at district and regional sporting events.



- Local rangers support Culture lessons
- Year 3–6 students participate in annual homelands camp
- Students in Hope Vale completed a full year on their ancestral language
- Students can articulate mainstream and Indigenous perspectives.



- More students than ever are attending school five days a week, up 12 percent over three years to thirty-five percent
- Teachers regularly meet with families to discuss child’s progress
- Students have had their individual needs assessed using psychometric testing
- Resources for identified students are being acquired
- Coen and Hope Vale Year 6s all transitioned successfully to secondary school.

“I analysed data from 122 students. For Years 3–5, there has been greater than the Australian average growth: 181 percent greater in reading, 98 percent greater in writing, and 181 percent in numeracy. The performance is a result of the dedication, hard work and evidence-based cycle of evaluation by school leaders and teachers.”

Laureate Professor John Hattie, The University of Melbourne, Jack Keating Memorial Lecture, 2016



Our 6C education model

The 6C education model is designed to be delivered in any school for all cohorts of students. Schools can adopt any or all of the 6C domains, depending on the specific needs of students. All learning programs are mapped to the Australian Curriculum.

Childhood

The Childhood domain addresses the social, emotional, intellectual and physical development needs of three and four year olds so they are as prepared for formal schooling as mainstream children.

The domain is relevant to schools where students start school behind their mainstream peers and continue to have significant development gaps.

This domain delivers formal learning components in the Kindergarten and pre-Prep day. It prioritises language and pre-literacy for 20 minutes per day, and music, listening and numeracy activities for 30 minutes per day, along with programmed parent support.

Features:

- Customised programs aligned to evidence-based practice and the National Quality Framework
- Engagement of parents in how to better prepare their child for successful transition to school
- Case management of children, with early intervention strategies to close any social, emotional, intellectual and physical development gaps
- Case management of maternal health and wellbeing to increase mothers' capacity to raise healthy, well-developed children
- Positive parenting program support for parents so they can learn behaviour management to support their child and align school and home behaviour

Class

The Class domain ensures that all are at or above grade level in literacy and numeracy, and are self-actualised scholars engaged in the wider world and academically prepared for success in high school.

This domain is relevant to schools where students are not meeting national literacy and numeracy benchmarks, or where the school has stagnated low literacy and numeracy results.

This domain delivers two and a half hours of literacy and one hour of numeracy per day (prioritised in the morning, with additional afternoon sessions for students below grade level). Students not at grade level do a second reading program, and students at or above grade level who have mastered reading do more in other curriculum areas.

Features:

- Years P-5 literacy and numeracy using Direct Instruction
- Years 5-6 literacy and numeracy using explicit instruction materials and pedagogy
- Positive Behaviours Interventions and Support Systems (PBIS) applied as the classroom and school-wide behaviour management approach
- Alignment with the Australian Curriculum Key Learning Areas of English and mathematics

New program Civics

The Civics domain promotes societal health, and gets students workforce ready and globally competitive. Promotion of civic equality and diversity helps shape character and attitudes.

The domain is relevant to schools with large migrant or disengaged school communities, as it prepares students for informed, effective democratic participation as they connect with the community, learn respectful dialogue, and develop teamwork, decision-making and change-making skills.

Civics improves school climate, reduces destructive behaviours and lowers school drop-out rates. Students who experience a positive school climate, feeling safe and valued, want to be there and want to improve their community.



- Years 3–6 civics using explicit instruction
- Alignment with the Australian Curriculum Key Learning Areas of humanities and social science
- Opportunities for parents to participate in excursions and events to increase community engagement
- Customised options for volunteering or charity work and engagement with other social support groups
- Excursions to own and other cultural groups to spend time engaging in cultural practices, activities and events
- Excursions and participation in parliament and other civic institutions

Culture

The Culture domain ensures that students learn about Indigenous history, people, culture, languages and country, and that they have oral and written mastery of their own traditional languages and are fluent in ICT and digital media.

This domain is relevant where students are Indigenous, or where schools are seeking to prioritise the academic study of First Nation Australians. It is also suited to schools embracing ICT and digital media through rich learning, and is usually delivered in the extended school day, for a minimum of three and a half hours per week.

Features:

- Years P–6 science, technologies, humanities and social science using explicit instruction
- Content covers arts, science, society, environment, technology, character development, creative expression, practical activity and key concepts: mode switching, identity and interconnectedness
- Alignment with the Australian Curriculum Key Learning Areas of humanities and social science, technologies, science and languages
- Fluency in digital media
- Clustered into early, middle or upper years programs and delivered in classrooms and dedicated spaces, and on excursions
- An annual calendar of cultural community events is linked to the learning program, with strong family and community participation

Community

The Community domain supports families to engage in every child's education, health and wellbeing, so that students regularly attend school, are school ready, and are getting the support they need to successfully transition into high school at the same rate as mainstream children.

This domain is relevant to schools in communities where students are not school ready, have poor attendance, and are transitioning to secondary school with significant development gaps and lower secondary school completion rates.

It is delivered through programmed student and parent support activities that occur throughout the school day and extended school day.

Features:

- Teachers trained in parent and family engagement to increase their capacity to ensure their children are school ready and at school on time
- Case management of students and families in priority 'high five' areas of attendance, school readiness, wellbeing, money needs and high school readiness
- Coordinated support between health professionals and parents to address student health and wellbeing
- Links to positive parenting programs so parenting aligns 'school' behaviour with 'home' behaviour
- Teachers promote signing up students to a Student Education Trust to enable parents to purchase education products to meet their child's needs
- Inclusion of graduates in activities like Band Camp and 'big brother' mentoring of primary students

Club

The Club domain ensures that students develop their musical, artistic, educational and sporting talents and passions through formal learning and performance so they are getting the most out of a 21st century education.

This domain is relevant to schools where students have limited access to enriching activities in their school or home life.

This domain is delivered in an extended school day, for a minimum of four hours per week.

Features:

- Years P–6 arts, health and sports using explicit instruction materials and pedagogy
- Alignment with the Australian Curriculum Key Learning Areas of the arts, health and physical education
- Students participate in selective programs in music, arts and sports
- Annual calendar of performances within the school and community linked to the learning program
- Expert partners engaged in curriculum design and delivery
- Strong family and community participation

Our 8 cycles of school practice

Our 8 cycles of school practice enable schools to drive their student learning and school improvement.

The 8 cycles are premised on effective instruction as the keystone to successful schooling and accommodate the range of programs across multiple school settings.

The cycles achieve the goals of the National School Improvement Tool and respond to best practices recommended by the Grattan Institute on teacher appraisal and feedback.

How a school transforms and continuously improves

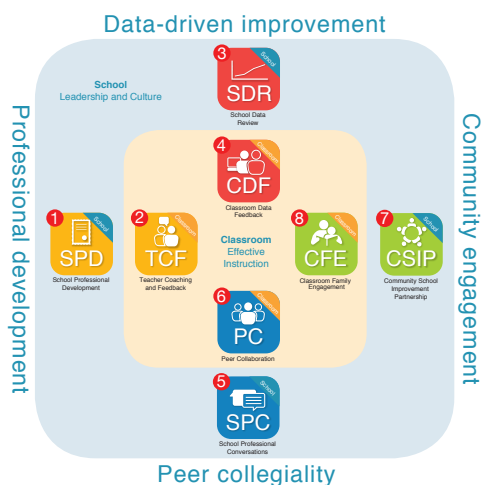
At the core are teachers delivering effective instruction, and around that is everything the school does to support the teacher.

Novice teachers and those unfamiliar with specific programs will not deliver to mastery immediately. It requires training, coaching and experience to develop the program knowledge and teaching practices.

The most powerful driver of the 8 cycles is the strength of the professional collegial group. Teaching colleagues, principals, coaches and trainers are all parts of the profession that affect teacher development and behaviour.

Another powerful driver is learning demand. Student performance exerts influence on the teacher's performance. By having visibility over student data, teachers become responsive to the needs of their students.

Parents exert learning demand when teachers equip them with student performance data and



Cycle 1: School Professional Development

Cycle 2: Teacher Coaching and Feedback

Cycle 3: School Data Review

Cycle 4: Classroom Data Feedback

Cycle 5: School Professional Conversations

Cycle 6: Peer Collaboration

Cycle 7: Community-School Improvement Partnership

Cycle 8: Classroom Family Engagement

invite them into the classroom to observe their child's learning.

The school exerts learning demand when it provides the community with visibility over the school's performance — and partner with it to improve the school.

Management exerts influence over the school's improvement and fidelity achievement.

Management is necessary but judicious. Reporting serves the implementation.



How we support school systems and schools

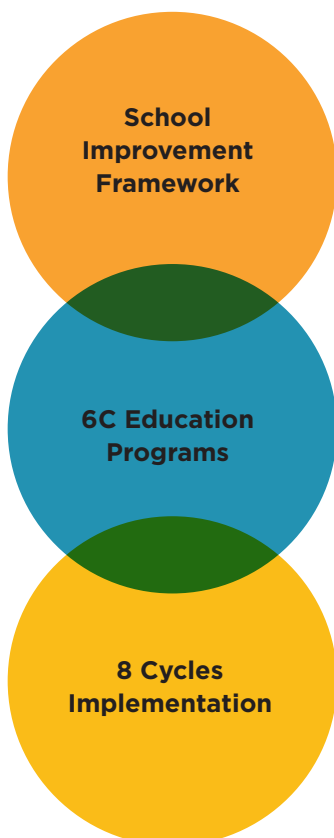
A typical school improvement journey



Our framework enables systems and schools to be in control of their improvement journey from start to finish. They can confidently deliver to a high quality, continuously improve their practice and sustain their improvement.

Our expert team provides step-by-step support which is adjusted to meet the specific needs and capacity of the school.

Our offer



- Holistic framework so schools can identify, plan and deliver their improvement journey
- Identifying student, school and community capabilities and needs
- Confidently deliver to a high quality, continuously improve practice and sustain improvement
- Regular monitoring overseen by GGSA team through data analysis, observation and feedback to teaching faculty

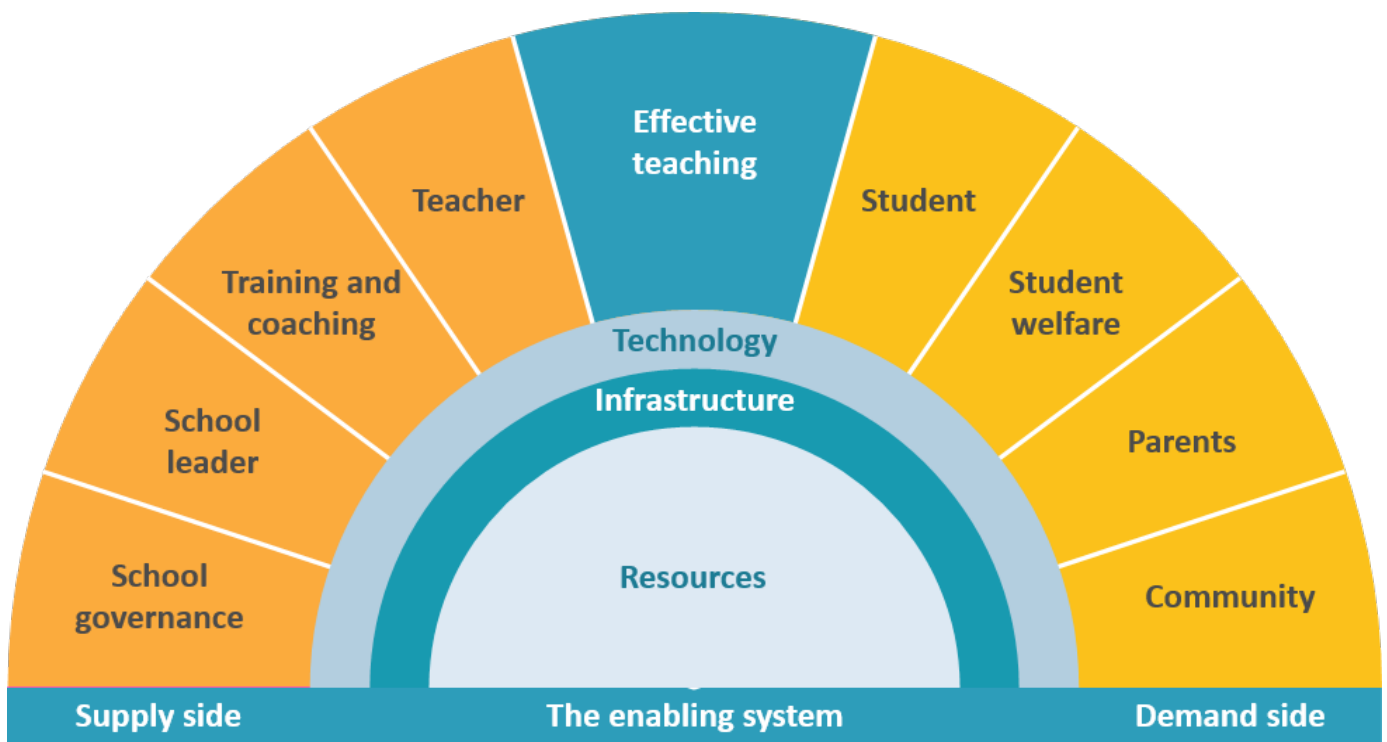
- Comprehensive resources including teaching materials, student texts and workbooks
- Select and adopt evidence-based programs
- Set performance levels and improvement goals
- Certified training over time advances from program proficiency to expert as teachers skills and knowledge develop

- Step-by-step expert support adjusted to meet the specific need and capacity of the school
- Regular training, coaching and data support
- School improvement strategies aligned to behaviour management, student attendance, school leadership and community engagement
- Regular classroom coaching to improve teacher capability and student outcomes
- Strategies to harness school and community leadership of parents and educationalists who lead by example on improvement

“Our close partnership with GGSA is important to the overall school improvement agenda within the NT. Our collaboration contributes to building our staff, school and system capability, so that our students progress and achieve in their learning.”

Ken Davies, Chief Executive, Department of Education, Northern Territory Government

We support school systems and communities to build Great 21st century schools



We assess the building blocks of a school and respond with a comprehensive improvement model tailored to address all their needs



Develop a great teaching team

Great teachers: Equipped with the skills, knowledge and experience to deliver effective instruction.

Training and coaching: School faculty participating in continuous training and coaching targeted at improving instruction.

Instructional leaders: Grow a school culture grounded in effective instruction that meets the needs of every student and harnesses families to support students and school.

Governance: Formal partnership between the school and community that actively oversees the school's improvement plan.



Teach every child 21st century skills through effective instruction

Effective instruction: The central organising principle that provides the logic for the whole-school structure and is the starting point for improvement and critical to its success.



Create a 21st century school environment

Technology: Enhancing delivery of the learning program by using technology as a tool not an identity.

Infrastructure: Meeting the requirements of a 21st century school.



Address needs of every child

Students: Unleash academic, cultural, creative and sporting potential of every child. Every student develops foundation skills, character qualities, and higher order thinking.

Student welfare: Programs that meet the gaps in childhood development, attendance and school readiness of every child.

Parents: Value schooling and support every child to succeed at school and support the school to improve.

Community: Empowered decision-making and action that supports every child and the school to improve.

We start with the keystone: effective instruction



Great teachers delivering effective instruction for every child

At the heart of every school is the relationship between the teacher and the student and the learning that occurs. Effective instruction is the keystone of school improvement.

Teachers	Explicit Instruction	Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt evidence-based teaching strategies • Clearly focused on what students are to learn • Monitor students' responses and learning, and adjust approaches accordingly • Continuously seek to improve own teaching practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students engaged and on task • Explicit learning goals • Demonstrations and examples • Focus on mastery and progress • Frequent practice and review • Feedback and positive motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are set challenging expectations • Increase and maintain engagement • Respond to level of individual learning • Follow routines • Are set consistent rewards and consequences

Effective instruction

High-quality instruction is the keystone to education reform and should be the organising principle of any school.

The body of education research shows that Explicit Instruction techniques far outweigh other pedagogical approaches in achieving student outcomes.

Explicit Instruction is a structured, systematic and effective methodology for teaching academic skills. It is called 'explicit' because it is an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures.

Explicit Instruction pedagogies are effective in many school contexts with students from a diverse range of global, cultural and social backgrounds. Effective instruction will accelerate high achievers, meet the needs average ability learners, and support students with learning needs.

Explicit Instruction has been proven internationally to be the most effective teaching method for getting the greatest learning to the broadest group of students, whatever their learning needs.

GGSA supports schools to deliver effective instruction. Teachers receive significant pedagogy and curriculum professional development to hone their classroom skills. Schools receive considerable support to ensure the implementation is high quality and student outcomes are maximised.

Effective instruction

Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction (DI) is an education program that combines Explicit Instruction pedagogy with a comprehensive curriculum, student assessment and scripted lessons.

Students are taught carefully sequenced and highly structured lessons and are required to 'master' each lesson before advancing on to the next. This ensures that advanced students can be accelerated and that no child is left behind.

Its curriculum and teaching methods have been continually improved and refined through

rigorous field-testing of carefully sequenced and highly structured lessons that are designed around 'big ideas'.

The program covers literacy and numeracy from kindergarten to Year 5 and aligns to the Australian Curriculum.

DI is used in thousands of schools across the USA, Commonwealth countries including Australia, and Asia and Africa.



Spotlight on Warruwi School, South Goulburn Island

In 2014 Warruwi School introduced Direct Instruction programs. They had no external implementation support and only the use of videos and instructional books to help support them.

In 2015 the school joined the GGSA Literacy in Remote Schools program funded by the Australian Government.

The school appointed a School Instruction Coach who worked with the teachers and principal to ensure that behaviour management components of DI were fully embedded.

In 2015 an experienced Implementation Manager and a Teacher Coach were assigned by GGSA.

Throughout the year they conducted school visits to monitor the implementation and provide support to the school team.

The Implementation Manager continues to work with the school team on their journey of school improvement.

“Expectations are higher, behaviour has improved, attendance has improved and teachers are seeing the benefits of the method in their students’ results.”

**Keira Stewart, Acting Principal,
Warruwi School, South Goulburn Island**



Effective instruction

Explicit Instruction

Explicit Instruction (EI) is a teaching practice based on educational theory, brain research, data analysis and DI. The education pedagogy combines a set of instructional practices with well-crafted lesson design. It includes continuous 'checking of understanding' until students master the skills being taught. It is based on the premise that all children can learn.

GGSA partnered with the authors of the EI model, John Hollingsworth and Dr Silvia Ybarra, to develop a customised literacy curriculum for Australian students. This curriculum provides teachers with effective lessons through step-by-step strategies that maximise student learning across all areas of the Australian Curriculum.

EI is used by thousands of teachers in hundreds of schools in the USA and other countries.



Spotlight on St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School, Canarvon

The school began its instruction improvement journey in 2014, when principal and the teaching team were frustrated with their stagnant student outcomes. The principal researched alternative learning programs including the work of internationally respected educationalist, Professor John Hattie. Based on this Steve decided to adopt EI in his school.

The school signed up to the GGSA Literacy in Remote Schools program funded by the Australian Government.

All the school's primary school teachers attended the pre-training in Perth.

The school was provided with the GGSA Explicit Instruction literacy curriculum and is supported by an Explicit Instruction Teacher Coach who visits the school throughout the year to provide implementation support and

one-on-one coaching with teachers.

After only twelve months support, the school is demonstrating success:

- All students in younger grades have shown accelerated growth in all subjects
- Comparison of results between 2014 and 2015 show acceleration for all 2015 English classes and most maths classes, demonstrating that outcomes are improving as EI becomes more embedded in the school
- In 2014 prior to the GGSA implementation, the students in the two classes who were tested for spelling only achieved 0.08 and 0.37. In 2015, the students achieved 0.74, 0.68 and 0.91, benefiting from the EI support they received.



“Explicit Instruction makes students accountable, they see now that school is a place to work and learn and play and they love it because even though it is hard, they are doing well.”

**Trudy Cox, School Instruction Coach,
St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic School,
Canarvon**

Instruction that caters to the needs of all students

Australian children enter schools with vastly different education levels and needs. Some children have educated and English-speaking parents who read and talk with them from a young age. These children start school with English vocabulary and familiarity with reading, and know letters, symbols and sounds. They are able to work autonomously once receiving verbal direction.

Other children start with a distinct disadvantage having limited or no exposure to English language or reading. They are also more likely to have higher levels of learning disabilities and difficulties.

Teachers are required to teach twenty or so students with diverse aptitudes. Learning styles

and personalised or differentiated learning were supposed to respond to this, but the evidence of their effectiveness is weak. These approaches depend on the experience and skill of each teacher. The most effective educator would struggle to identify every student's individual learning style and then develop and deliver a personalised learning experience for each of them in every lesson.

To be effective, teachers need an instruction program that caters to the needs of all students; one that challenges and extends the best students, progresses those in the middle and leaves no students behind. It also requires that students are tested and placed in groups with students at a similar learning ability.

“Students differ in their abilities, interests, and background knowledge, but not in their learning styles. Students may have preferences about how to learn, but no evidence suggests that catering to those preferences will lead to better learning.”

Cedar Riener, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Randolph-Macon College; and Daniel Willingham, Professor of Psychology, University of Virginia

John Hattie (*Visible Learning*, 2009) determined that the average effect size of student learning over one year of schooling is 0.40. Visible Learning found the effect size of Direct Instruction was 0.59. This means students doing Direct Instruction can progress one and a half times faster than an average intervention. Direct Instruction is therefore one of the most effective interventions of more than 130 covered by Hattie.



The growing popularity of Explicit Instruction

Around 70,000 Australian children across about 430 schools are learning with Direct Instruction. The numbers are growing as schools become more aware of the power of these programs.

Direct Instruction programs cover literacy and numeracy throughout primary school and some secondary school programs. These programs are also used to remediate students who have not learned in other programs.

The schools range from small to large public, private and elite schools, located in remote, rural and city settings. Students being successfully taught with these programs come from a culturally and linguistically diverse range of backgrounds and across the spectrum of socioeconomic levels.

In far north Queensland, Goondi State School — which has a low socioeconomic rating — has been using Direct Instruction programs and Explicit Instruction practices for many years. Their NAPLAN results are remarkable, with preliminary 2016 data for Year 5 students surpassing all Australian schools in numeracy, persuasive writing, spelling, and grammar and punctuation.

Elite Sydney private school, Presbyterian Ladies' College, also uses Direct Instruction programs. Their students' achievement is above the national minimum standards across all NAPLAN areas in all year levels.

Many remote Indigenous schools across northern Australia are using Explicit Instruction practices alongside Direct instruction programs.

“For us Aboriginal teacher assistants, it feels good. It could be a bit unsteady at first but then we got used to it. Of all the DI techniques, I really like that everything is set out for us, scripted for us. And we get support from the Instruction Coach and we support each other. I get constant feedback and support.”

**Mena Manado, Aboriginal Teacher Assistant,
Christ the King Catholic School, Djarindjun**

“There are so many professional development opportunities with DI. I have learned so much and been fully supported throughout my teaching career at the Cape York Academy. It's great to be able to make such a difference in the lives of children in remote and rural areas. To see them achieve and know that I have helped to play a part in their success is very special to me.”

Kiriana White, Head of Curriculum, Coen School



The best programs to teach students to read

We promote programs and practices that have been scientifically proven to be the most effective. This is crucial in the early years of school when children are grasping the foundations of literacy and numeracy which set them up for life.

Reading mastery is designed for classrooms where students are starting school unfamiliar with English and reading, or are experiencing

learning difficulties. It uses a special orthography and more continuous blending.

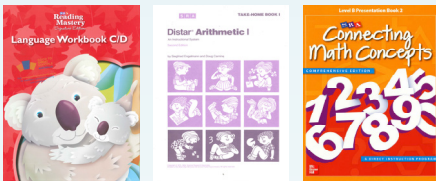
Horizons is designed for classrooms where the majority of students are starting school familiar with English and reading.

There are also programs that educated parents can use at home with their children to increase their literacy and maths exposure and develop skills. They are *Teach your child to read in 100 easy lessons*, *Funnix* and *Fun math*.

Family has little or no education and English background

Prep to Grade 2

- *Reading mastery* (Signatures edition – language and reading)
- *DISTAR arithmetic*
- *Connecting math concepts*



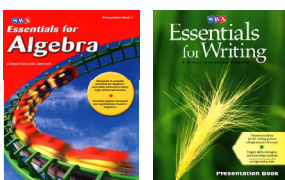
Remedial

- *Direct Instruction for spoken English* (oral language)
- *Corrective reading* (decoding and comprehension)
- *Expressive writing*
- *Corrective mathematics*



Secondary

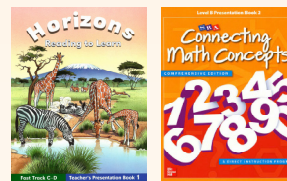
- *Essentials for algebra*
- *Essentials for writing*



Family has strong education and English background

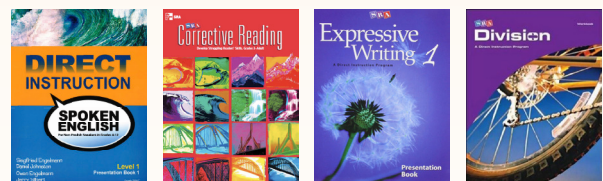
Prep to Grade 2

- *Horizons*
- *Connecting math concepts*



Remedial

- *Direct Instruction for spoken English* (oral language)
- *Corrective reading* (decoding and comprehension)
- *Expressive writing*
- *Corrective mathematics*



Meeting Australian Curriculum requirements

The effectiveness of many programs used in Australian classrooms is questionable. Not all have been subjected to rigorous scientific scrutiny, and many that have are found to be wanting.

The Australian education market is small so it is common for schools to use programs and materials from other English-speaking countries like New Zealand, the United States and Great Britain.

Programs we promote that are not Australian still incorporate some Australian themes. Their international perspectives and universal content cover what Australian students need to master English literacy and numeracy.

We have mapped these programs to the Australian Curriculum to ensure they meet requirements.

For example, the *Connecting math concepts* teaches United States currency, and it is a requirement of the Australian Curriculum that students learn the currency of other countries.

Where there are gaps in what Australian schools require, we have developed supplementary materials which teachers then incorporate into relevant lessons.

The Australian Curriculum encourages learning about other cultures to develop a broader world view. When students are exposed to unfamiliar words or subjects, a good teacher will use this as a learning opportunity and engage students in the different perspectives.

“I have a girl in my class who I thought was always going to be challenged as a learner, as she found it difficult to retain words when she was learning to read prior to DI. Now, she is right up there. To see how happy she is, she is experiencing success and keeping up with the group. This is amazing. With DI, every child in our school can experience success.”

Liz Carroll, Literacy Key Leader, Christ the King Catholic School, Djarindjun

GGSA is working with commercial book publishers on Commonwealth versions that would include more Australian content.



The benefits of using a structured program

Effective instruction requires successful teaching techniques and the best curriculum.

In Direct Instruction programs, information is structured and sequenced, and new material is introduced incrementally in small steps. More complex concepts are broken down into smaller segments which are easier to master and retain.

The Australian Curriculum describes the knowledge, skills and understanding by learning areas. Schools then decide how best to deliver the curriculum. Teachers are provided little guidance in how to sequence and structure material and the degree of detail to provide to students. They must judge the volume of material and pace of delivery.

Curriculum design is a complicated science and a teacher is rarely expert in both the delivery of high-quality instruction and the design of curriculum. These are two entirely different skills, and both require deep experience to develop proficiency.

Even if a teacher is an expert in curriculum design, they often do not have sufficient time to devote to lesson preparation and program design on top of their already busy teaching time.

The issue of expertise and the demands of teaching are compounded by other demands on teachers' time. Australian teachers often participate in school life outside the classroom, and are often required to devote time to activities which do not directly relate to teaching.

“One little girl, she was in our Prep last year and had the program all year, then went to a mainstream school in Cairns. The teachers there were asking where does she come from? Her reading ability and knowledge of sounds was very far ahead of the rest of the class.”

Megan Dempster, Coen Campus

Boys, girls, Indigenous students, students in urban, rural and remote locations, students who are recent arrivals in Australia, other students from non-English speaking backgrounds, children with vision or hearing impairment, or disability, all begin school with the expectation that they will learn to read and write. Their parents share this expectation.

National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy, 2005



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Our leaders



Bernardine Denigan
Chief Executive Officer



“The opportunity they have here in Hope Vale is really amazing. I told the kids here I wish I had that kind of support when I was growing up.”

Indigenous AFL star Anthony “Walla” McDonald-Tipungwuti

Growing up on the Tiwi Islands, Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti spoke little English, could barely read and write and was disengaged from school and community. He visited Hope Vale’s CYAAA to see how GGSA’s program has helped students embrace learning and engages the whole community to help students excel.



**GOOD TO
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