

## ITE Review

Monday, 12 July 2021

### Quality Initial Teacher Education Review

#### To the members of the Expert Panel

My name is Ray Jarratt and I am making this submission to the ITE Review in my roles as -

- The Chair of St Andrew's Cathedral School, Sydney
- The Chair of the Teaching School Alliance
- The Chair of Gawura School for First Nations Children, Sydney

I am grateful that the Review is being conducted and for the opportunity to make a submission. Many things contribute to the educational outcomes of any school, but none of them are as significant as the quality of a school's teachers. I thought the most sensible way to submit a response was to give you a brief outline of how each of these institutions have dealt with the shortcomings of current ITE models and how we set about seeding and sustaining a stream of high quality, classroom ready teachers.

#### St Andrew's Cathedral School, Sydney

Since 1885 – for more than 130 years – St Andrew's has been Sydney's quintessential 'city school', a place as diverse, changing and future-focused as the CBD that surrounds us. Fully coeducational from Kindergarten to Year 12, we have an inclusive admission policy that seeks to enable each student to reach their academic potential.

But we face persistent and worsening difficulties in the following areas -

- **Recruiting well-formed, highly trained, classroom-ready teachers** - as the ATAR required for entry to a teaching degree has declined, so also has the quality of graduating teachers declined. Schools compete to employ the "cream" of any class of graduating teachers, but the truth of the matter is that the quality of the "cream" has been declining for at least the last two decades. While the ATAR alone is not a sufficient predictor of who might make a high performing teacher, it points to underlying contributory skills and whether or not a full range of potential candidates are being attracted to the profession.
- **Keeping graduate teachers in the profession long enough for them to become classroom ready** – among the 'syndromes' associated with declining selection standards, it became clear that the sense of vocation among new trainee teachers has been tested less and less. That may be because traditional tertiary providers do not have the ability to provide sufficient opportunities in which a trainee may test their commitment to the profession, or it may be because teaching as a profession has become less, and less popular and young people are entering a teaching course without understanding the long term commitment required to become a highly proficient teacher. Within two or three years, many decide to leave as they feel unfulfilled and see no

## ITE Review

future for themselves in teaching. The remaining staff profile thus continues to age, and overall quality of new candidates declines.

- **Retaining graduate teachers beyond the point where they are classroom-ready** - the rate at which new teachers leave the profession in the first one or two years after graduation is alarming. It also undermines a school's capacity to plan in a considered way and to make the investment in the professional development of a teacher who is unsure of their vocation.

## The Teaching School Alliance

**Building the framework for a sustainable stream of high-quality classroom-ready teachers** - over the past fifteen years (at least), St Andrew's Cathedral School has engaged intensively in seeking a solution to the problems outlined above.

In an attempt to solve our teacher supply problems, we conducted conversations, in either formal or semi-formal ways, with every tertiary provider of teacher training in NSW. None of the traditional providers have expressed any desire to work with us to devise a new pathway to seeding and sustaining a stream of well-formed, highly trained classroom-ready teachers.

Consequently, it became clear to us that if we wanted a solution to the problems, we faced we would need to do something to help ourselves. We knew that St Andrew's was not the only school facing teacher quality and supply problems, so we brought eleven other independent schools into a conversation to evaluate a unique Teacher Training 'Hub model' developed by Alphacrucis College for Initial teacher Training (and already in the second year of its operation in the Hunter Valley).

Alphacrucis College was the only tertiary teacher training provider we spoke to which was prepared to partner with us and who had an operating teacher training model that addressed each of our concerns.

Five of the eleven schools in our initial planning discussions came together to form the Teaching School Alliance (<https://www.teachingschoolsalliancesydney.org>). They are -

- St Andrew's Cathedral School
- Blue Mountains Grammar School
- The Scots College
- William Clark College
- Inaburra School

This clinical model of teacher training provides practical teacher training that inducts a trainee into the art and craft of teaching. Trainees learn and work in a school (they are employed as a teaching assistant and supported by an experienced Teacher Mentor throughout their whole formation, including their degree work). They also participate in regular face-to-face learning and

## **ITE Review**

regular intensive off-site sessions with Alphacrucis. As is common in professional cadetships in other industries, trainees put theory into practice, studying as a cohort and working in classrooms. Over the length of a degree, a trainee can expect to have at least 350 days of supervised classroom experience.

Each potential trainee is interviewed and assessed before their participation in the course. Candidates increasingly have a relevant undergraduate degree (which means they study with Alphacrucis towards the award of a Master of Teaching (Primary or Secondary) degree. There are candidates both in the BEd and in the MTeach streams.

The Teaching School Alliance is growing, and we expect it to involve at least ten schools by the end of 2022. The Alliance has received numerous requests for information both within Sydney and in the regional areas of NSW and is increasingly acting as a 'demonstrator school' for best practice in innovative ITE. We also expect the Alliance to be offering new layers of accredited professional development by the beginning of 2022. Earlier this year, St Andrew's Cathedral School announced the appointment of Dr Julie McGonigle as the school's next Principal. Dr McGonigle comes from her previous position as Director of the Teaching School for the Emmanuel Schools Foundation in the UK, and so brings 'world's best practice experience' in an approach to ITE which is not unlike that being pioneered by Alphacrucis College and the Teaching Schools Alliance.

## **Gawura School for First Nations Children**

**Stopping the gap forming in the first place by delivering effective culturally specific education -** in 2005 the Council and Executive of St Andrew's Cathedral School, in response to growing levels of concern about the numeracy and literacy gap found in indigenous communities, began to investigate how we might address the issue as a school.

We took the view that 'closing' this gap was simply not enough. We decided that what we would try to do was to stop the gap forming in the first place. We assumed, on the basis of widespread research into the value of early intervention, that stopping the gap forming in the first place would mean that we needed to engage with children in the Aboriginal community as early as we could.

We sought, unsuccessfully, to garner support from State and Federal authorities. In the face of that lack of success, we set about finding a way to fund this initiative on our own. Thanks to the generosity of numerous donors Gawura was opened in 2007. In the past 13 years it has become a highly regarded model for First Nations education. Gawura graduates generally go on to further study. Our graduates pursue training in the arts, and as doctors, lawyers and educators. We have two graduates in Ph.D programs and one graduate who is completing a Master's Degree in Science at Oxford University.

Gawura is a K-6 school and every student is offered a donor-funded scholarship at St Andrew's Cathedral School. But Gawura is more than a school: it's a model for culturally specific first

## ITE Review

nations education that has proved itself to be highly successful. In 2020, Gawura was named the **Australian School of the Year**.

The problems we face around teacher supply and teacher quality are not unique to St Andrew's. They are systemic and are being faced by schools around the country. As such they are beyond the capacity of any single school to resolve.

We have to operate within the regulatory system, so addressing these issues within that system has meant that we have had to develop, with our tertiary partner, both new models and new pathways **within** the system.

- We rigorously assess a candidate's sense of commitment to the profession - their "vocation" - before they are admitted to any course at the Teaching School Alliance. We also assess those non-academic characteristics that we believe will contribute to a candidate's ultimate success. Our candidate retention rate is well over 90% and we are finding that a trainee's vocational understanding grows over the course of their training.
- By placing a candidate in a classroom from the beginning of their course their "classroom-readiness" is addressed and developed in ways that simply do not occur in prevailing training models. This "contextual" model of training is not new to the professions. The Hub Model of teacher training revives it in a way that deeply embeds a practical understanding of the actual craft of teaching in a candidate. We believe that, in the long term this model of training will produce simply outstanding teachers. The evidence from international practice, from the other NSW Hub, and from our current experience, is that this belief is not only well-founded, but that the AC/ TSA approach presents a uniquely better, and scalable, approach to teacher attraction, formation and retention.
- We are finding that process of mentoring a trainee greatly enriches the teaching practice of the mentoring teacher. They are forced to continually assess their own habits and practices in a way that not only lifts the quality of educational outcomes from the top to the bottom of the school but will also, over time, produce the next generation of educational leaders.
- At the moment the number of candidates applying to the Teaching School Alliance is increasingly characterised by high-quality mid-career professionals seeking to transition to teaching. I believe that what is attractive about the Teaching School Alliance to these people is the nature of the pathway being offered.
- The education offered at Gawura is culturally specific. Our students are from urbanised indigenous communities, many of whom have been disconnected from their traditional cultures. So, a Gawura education is designed to reconnect and reinforce a student's cultural understanding and self-respect. We teach indigenous languages, and we employ indigenous teachers - of which (as with teaching more generally) there are not enough. We are therefore planning to build a cohort of indigenous teacher trainees in partnership with the Teaching School Alliance and Alphacrucis. Critical to the success of this plan is the fact that Alphacrucis

## ITE Review

College is willing to partner with us in the first place and has been sufficiently concerned about the mission and structural challenges of actual schools so as to work with us in the process of co-designing and eventually accrediting an indigenous-specific teacher training program.

- We are confident that we will be able to identify and engage with potential indigenous teacher candidates. We are also confident that the Hub model of teacher training employed by the Teaching School Alliance will be attractive to these candidates. We operate in the largest city in Australia (at the moment) but we believe that the training model is “portable” enough to be deployed in regional Australia across a group of regional schools. We are already in conversation with numbers of these schools.
- If all of this has taught us anything it is that the *earlier the intervention the better the outcome*. What the Alliance and St Andrew’s Cathedral School believe is that the answer does not lie in further changes to the standards or more top-down compliance, but rather new delivery models and new entry and career pathways which address the mutual needs of potential high-quality candidates, of existing in-stream pre-service and graduate teachers, and the particular needs of the schools which will be the places in which they are formed and employed. The process of teaching the community to “revalue” teaching as a profession and to understand how foundationally important education is to a community’s wellbeing will be a long one. That ‘revaluing’ is not largely a matter of better advertising or higher pay rates. The problems, rather, are systemic and we believe their resolution also needs to be systemic.

With thanks for the opportunity to submit to this review – SACS and the Teaching Alliance trust you will find this submission helpful in your considerations in some small way.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Jarratt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ray Jarratt

Chairman, St Andrew’s Cathedral School and Gawura

Chairman, The Teaching School Alliance