



School education

Academic achievement among children is stagnating, and the productivity of schools has declined in recent years.

Using school resources more efficiently and innovatively will enable teachers to focus on providing the quality teaching vital to student outcomes (finding 8.1). Current use of resources leaves many teachers stretched. This is concerning given their critical role as the single largest ‘in-school’ factor contributing to student outcomes – explaining 30% of the variation in student achievement.

Increasing productivity in schools is about improving outcomes for students from the inputs (teachers, other staff, and physical capital) or using these resources more efficiently for the same quality outcomes.

This can be achieved through several channels:

- **Better resource allocation:** improving the use of all school staff so that teachers can focus on high value tasks, with lower value tasks allocated to other school staff.
- **Higher quality teaching:** lifting the overall quality of teaching will benefit all students, and have a greater impact on those who are struggling and at risk of falling behind.
- **Ongoing diffusion of best practice:** translating best practice into common practice across all schools, including by leveraging effective digital technologies.



Recommendations

State and territory governments should:

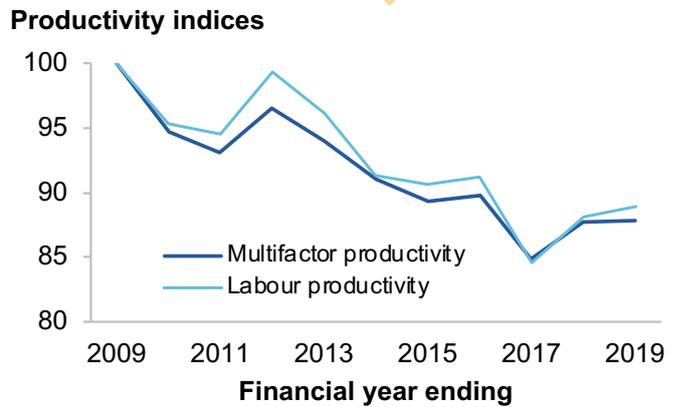
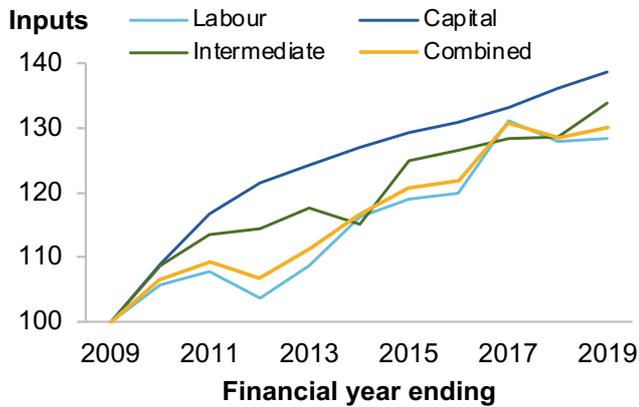
- Work with schools to **extend, improve and embed the use of education technology** to realise future benefits for students (recommendation 8.1). Initiatives should:
 - prioritise the development and implementation of digital tools to support teaching and learning, while balancing flexibility for individual jurisdictions’ needs. This could include developing an online assessment tool and giving the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) responsibility for researching and vetting effective digital technologies to be implemented in schools
 - replace manual administrative processes with technology based and automated solutions where this has not been done already. This could include evaluating technology based solutions for administrative processes currently in place and developing mechanisms to diffuse these to other schools
 - support ongoing professional development modules that help teachers use data analytics to drive student improvement.
- Support more principal and teacher involvement in education research to **ensure evidence-based research provides information that is salient and useful for practitioners** (recommendation 8.2), through
 - facilitating greater classroom access for AERO to support principal and teacher involvement in education research, with initiatives focussed on enabling greater observation of, and feedback on, classroom teaching practices, more support for informal teacher networks and for highly accomplished and lead teachers (HALT) to share in-depth knowledge and skills with colleagues.
 - increasing curriculum implementation support for teachers by providing a single source for high-quality, evidence-based and government-endorsed curriculum resources (curriculum plans, whole subject sequences, lesson plans and classroom tools);

- Experiment with new, innovative school models or operational changes where evidence (including from overseas) suggests Australian student outcomes could be improved (recommendation 8.3).
 - Governments can enable this by removing any legislative, regulatory, administrative or policy barriers that would prevent individual schools varying their operating model, and creating capacity and appropriate resourcing within the local school system to evaluate trials.
 - Other innovative initiatives could aim to:
 - > offer different lesson delivery options to lift quality teaching and learning, including for

example, offering online classes in the absence of a teacher with the relevant expertise in a topic, or trials of untimed syllabus approaches to promote a continuous learning process

- > better cater to student needs to encourage school attendance and lift student outcomes, including through variations in school hours and use of technology to personalise students' learning environment.

In the 10 years to 2018-19, the annual growth in school output has been less than the measured growth in inputs, meaning there has been a decline in both labour and multifactor productivity. (Volume 8, p. 22)



Face-to-face time is just one element of a teacher's week (21-24 hours) - the average proportion of weekly hours spent on teaching tasks by full time teachers during term time (in NSW, SA and NT), 2018. (Volume 8, p. 25)

