

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Torrensville Primary School

Conducted in November 2019



Review details

Our education system aspires to become the best in Australia by seeking growth for every student, in every class and in every school.

The purpose of the External School Review (ESR) is to support schools to raise achievement, sustain high performance and to provide quality assurance to build and sustain public confidence in government schools.

The External School Review framework is referenced throughout all stages of the ESR process.

This report outlines aspects of the school's performance verified through the review process according to the framework. It does not document every aspect of the school's processes, programs and outcomes.

We acknowledge the support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community. While not all review processes, artefacts and comments are documented here, they have all been considered and contribute to the development and directions of this report.

This review was conducted by Phil Garner, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Tobias O'Connor, Review Principal.

Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relevant to the lines of inquiry:

- Presentation from the principal
- Class visits
- Attendance at staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer (ACEO)
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Torrensville Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 4kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 356. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 272. The local partnership is West Torrens.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1030 and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 5% Aboriginal students, 9% students with verified disabilities, 31% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 6 children/young people in care and 31% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 6th year of tenure. The school has a deputy principal and a student wellbeing leader.

There are 22 teachers including 5 in the early years of their career and 8 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Deepen the intellectual quality of pedagogy in order to ensure all students are consistently experiencing challenging and engaging learning that is sustained over time.
- Direction 2** Strengthen the use of data by teachers for intentional teaching in order to increase the growth in student achievement at or above the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement over time and as measured by several datasets.
- Direction 3** Sustain high expectations and a culture of improvement through the regular setting and review of learning intentions with students in order to increase student understanding of learning.

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?

Direction 1

The school has developed English and mathematical collective commitments that were designed to ensure a scaffolded continuum for teaching and learning, consistency of pedagogical practices and equity of learning for all students. However, the school has acknowledged a need to provide greater clarity around high yield literacy and numeracy pedagogical practices and to ensure a whole-school commitment to their implementation. A recent professional learning focus on future focussed learning is providing the catalyst for teachers to engage in high quality pedagogical practices that will, when implemented in every class, have a significant impact on improving student learning.

Direction 2

The school has an improved focus on analysing student achievement data that enables individual students to be selected for intervention programmes. The tracking of identified students is an embedded practice with individual student progress a focus for review meetings and teacher professional

development conversations. Teachers are unpacking assessment data more effectively and collaboratively planning for student learning.

Direction 3

The inclusion of learning intentions in the teaching and learning process is providing students with greater clarity around what and why they are learning. However, as evidenced in a number of classes, when learning intentions are incorporated with progressions in learning and effective success criteria they are highly effective in creating a culture of continuous improvement and high levels of student engagement.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions based on their impact on student learning?

A whole-school professional learning focus on classroom practice and pedagogy this year, has provided staff with the opportunity to develop greater understanding of the most important pedagogical practices that positively influence student achievement. The appointment of a coordinator in 2020 will enable the school to sharpen the focus, ensure consistency of practice and enhance collective accountability.

Currently, the literacy committee is driving the reflection and evaluation of literacy programs and practices across the school as part of the review of existing whole-school agreements. With the panel evidencing a wide variety of differing literacy and numeracy practices, this presents an opportunity to ensure the collective understanding of effective evidenced-based practices, greater consistency of implementation and improved student outcomes.

The ongoing evaluation of the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) is indicating a lack of clarity for most staff with a perceived imbalance between the building of teacher capacity and student improvement. Linked with the review of pedagogical practices in literacy and numeracy, a whole-staff review of the SIP actions will ensure absolute clarity about what the required action is, where the focus lies, what is to be achieved and how this will positively impact on student learning.

While the analysis of student achievement data has been used effectively to identify and track individual students for targeted intervention, in order to enable effective review and evaluation of SIP actions, a variety of datasets and evaluation techniques should to be considered that will provide more timely and ongoing feedback on the success of the SIP.

While staff indicated close professional collaboration within their immediate year level, there was less understanding of teaching and learning in other classrooms across the school. Teachers indicated that a reception to year 7 focus on professional collaboration would enable greater consistency and improved learning outcomes for both teachers and students.

Direction 1 **To ensure equity and improve student learning, collaboratively implement reception to year 7 agreements in literacy and numeracy that have a clear and balanced focus on the consistency of pedagogical practice, explicit teaching, high expectations, and progressions in learning.**

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

How effectively are teachers using evidenced-based pedagogical practices that engage and challenge all learners?

There is evidence of high levels of challenge and engagement for students in most classes, with students able to clearly articulate a variety of strategies that teachers use to challenge, engage and extend their learning. The use of Bloom's Taxonomy and high order thinking strategies are used effectively in a variety of classes, particularly in the units of inquiry. While students are provided with challenge through an inquiry-led approach, care must be taken to ensure that these pedagogical practices continue across all learning areas, in particular, in the explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy.

A focus on learning intentions and success criteria was evident in all classes. However, variability exists in the way in which they are used to inform students about their learning. For example, in writing many students had limited understanding of what the criteria for assessment or success was, or how they could improve their learning.

Differentiation of learning for students was evident in many classes with strategies such as pre-assessments, multiple entry and exit points and catering for a variety of learning styles eg working in pairs or ability groups. The units of inquiry are providing opportunities for learning to be differentiated by outcome and presents opportunities for students to be highly engaged and challenged in their learning. Across the junior school there was evidence of differentiation enabling individual students to be effectively challenged and engaged at an appropriate level of learning.

The panel observed high quality 'just in time' formative feedback in a number of early years classes with students able to clearly articulate where they are in their learning and what they need to do next. However, while there is clearly some highly effective teaching and learning occurring across the school, there exists wide variability in the use of effective formative assessments and feedback in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. With evidence-based research indicating this approach to be highly effective, there is an opportunity to develop a greater consistency from reception to year 7 in providing effective formative assessment and feedback that informs students of their next steps in learning.

Direction 2 Personalise student engagement and challenge in their learning through the whole-school implementation of evidenced-based feedback and formative assessment strategies that provide students with a clear understanding of their next steps in learning.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

To what extent do teachers ensure that students have authentic influence in their learning?

Integrated learning and the units of inquiry approach are providing students across the school with opportunities to co-design and take greater responsibility and ownership of their learning. In early year classes, there was evidence of embedded pedagogical practices that provide students with opportunities to co-design the learning activities, individually set their challenge and influence the success criteria.

The school has developed an authentic learning partnership in the middle school consisting of a small group of representative students working with teachers to review and co-design upcoming inquiry units. However, while the panel acknowledges this high level of student agency, there are less opportunities provided in some classes, particularly in literacy and numeracy, for students to engage with or influence their learning.

Individual student goal setting is evident in most classes across the school and is designed to focus students on high yield next steps in learning. However, in some classes, the goals are quite general and are not providing students with the specifics in learning, for example 'make rapid improvement in spelling' and 'get an A in English', leaving students with limited understanding of what they need to do to achieve their goal.

Students in most classes have limited opportunities to engage with or analyse their own achievement data, leaving them with reduced influence over their learning journey. Linking this with effective feedback and formative assessment, students indicated that it would provide them with a more informed understanding of where they are in their learning and what their next steps in their learning journey need to be.

The teacher survey conducted by the ESR panel indicated a wide variety of differing ways that teachers are providing opportunities for student agency. This comprehensive teacher data provides a catalyst for the school to explore and identify high quality existing practices and bring about whole-school consistency of student agency across the school.

Direction 3 **Embed a consistent whole-school culture of student agency that empowers students by involving them in the key aspects of decision making about their learning.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

The school has embarked on a whole-school journey of sustainability that is engaging students, staff and the community in developing a sustainable environment. The formation of Sustainability Superheroes and the Wipe Out Waste Group involves students in taking on leadership roles in developing the school's capacity to become more sustainable. Learning themes have been embedded into units of inquiry across all year levels, engaging and challenging students in higher level thinking around sustainable issues. Students have gained an understanding of sustainability issues and take pride in their positive environmental impact and sense of achievement.

The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1** To ensure equity and improve student learning, collaboratively implement reception to year 7 agreements in literacy and numeracy that have a clear and balanced focus on the consistency of pedagogical practice, explicit teaching, high expectations, and progressions in learning.
- Direction 2** Personalise student engagement and challenge in their learning through the whole-school implementation of evidenced-based feedback and formative assessment strategies that provide students with a clear understanding of their next steps in learning.
- Direction 3** Embed a consistent whole-school culture of student agency that empowers students by involving them in the key aspects of decision making about their learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Torrensville Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



Andrew Wells
A/DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS



John McCade
PRINCIPAL
TORRENSVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL



GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Appendix 1

School performance overview

The External School Review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the Department for Education Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2018, 65% of year 1 and 65% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 1, this result represents a decline, and for year 2, this represents little or no change from the historic baseline average

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 83% to 65%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 85% of year 3 students, 78% of year 5 students and 86% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement, and for year 5, this represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For 2019, year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2019, 44% of year 3, 36% of year 5 and 29% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 75%, or 9 out of 12 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 40%, or 2 out of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 83% of year 3 students, 72% of year 5 students and 86% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement, and for year 5, this represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year has been upwards, from 64% to 83%.

For 2019, year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 34% of year 3, 14% of year 5 and 23% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 11% to 34%, and for year 5 has been downwards, from 22% to 14%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 75%, or 3 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 80%, or 4 out of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.