

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Reynella South Primary School

Conducted in July 2020



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 Simon Harding, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Natasha Hefford, 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

Reynella South Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 22kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 163. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 135. The local partnership is Panalatinga.

The school has an ICSEA score of 970 and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 4% Aboriginal students, 6% students with disabilities, 13% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 1 percent of children in care and 52% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 4th year of their 1st tenure. There is a Student Wellbeing Leader B1 released 0.5 FTE since 2013 with rolling tenures of between 1 and 3 years.

There are 12 teachers, including 5 in the early years of their career and 4 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Embed agreed teaching strategies consistently across the school to deliver higher levels of student engagement and challenge.**
- Direction 2** **Strategically build leadership actions and strategies that support and challenge staff to build a connected and coherent teaching and learning programme to raise levels of student achievement.**
- Direction 3** **Use multiple measures of data to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the agreed teaching and engagement strategies on student growth and achievement.**

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

The school has placed a significant focus on targeted professional learning, use of experts, modelling of expected practices and increasing levels of accountability, collectively establishing agreed common approaches across the school, particularly in literacy and student wellbeing. This work is being maintained and built upon with the numeracy priority.

Expectations about analysing student learning data are clear. Teachers are focused on how best to use this data to inform teaching and learning to both engage and provide the best opportunities for student learning growth. Teachers engaging in regular data meetings to monitor progress and actions taken demonstrate increasing levels of data literacy, and the development of a common language and understandings to inform teaching and learning programs. This work challenges teachers in their thinking and continues to build trust, working towards teachers' willingness to challenge each other, contributing to a more connected and coherent teaching and learning program for students across the school. There has also been a focus on enhancing learning environments and creating dedicated spaces and structures effectively supporting this work.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How well does the school review and evaluate the effectiveness of its improvement planning processes and impact on student learning to inform next steps?

Reynella South Primary School uses clear processes to support their improvement planning and implementation cycle. Staff are focused on improvement, both in student achievement and building their capacity to best support the students with whom they work. Leadership and staff stated that improvement decisions are made using evidence-based datasets and the targets are aspirational. Tracking and monitoring of agreed data is formalised across the school. Staff are clear about their actions for improving student outcomes being at the centre of regular data conversations with colleagues and leadership.

Professional learning is closely aligned to the site improvement plan (SIP) and staff value having the opportunity for a narrow focus towards their learning, with time to implement, work with an expert and share their learning. They could articulate how specific professional learning and resultant actions have had influence on their practice, particularly in literacy, where agreed practices are consistently implemented across the school. Staff value the opportunity to work collaboratively and the ongoing support of an expert. There are expectations of linking professional development plans to site improvement plan priorities. Parents are provided with regular updates through governing council articles in newsletters and spotlights on practice, focused on learning approaches the school is prioritising and that are of interest to the governing council.

Staff are clearly committed to the SIP, with processes in place involving the development, monitoring, evaluation and high levels of consultation. Staff opinions and feedback are valued throughout the stages of the improvement cycle. Regular staff meeting time is scheduled to monitor the progress of the actions taken and impact on student outcomes. Professional learning is cyclical to ensure focus on the priorities is maintained and progressed. Staff understand they have a key role in the implementation of action plans and measuring effectiveness of actions taken. Strengthening processes to support staff to more effectively monitor and evaluate the impact against the success criteria, both individually and collectively, will continue to enhance the school improvement strategies.

Direction 1 Strategically strengthen staff capacity to understand the links between the challenges of practice, plans of action and the process of evaluating impact based on clearly articulated success criteria.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

The child is the focus when discussing improvement. There is high-level collaboration amongst staff and a recognition of the existing expertise of colleagues to support them in their planning and practice. Support from leadership for regular, aligned professional learning with ongoing access to consultants, is highly valued by staff, and assisted with providing whole-school shift in practice, particularly in literacy. Teachers and leadership talked about the defined structures in place to support this whole-school shift. This included common release time for collaborative planning, regular staff meeting time for aligned and targeted professional learning undertaken by all teaching staff and data review meetings promoting accountability for improvement in student achievement. There has also been a significant focus on improving learning environments and common approaches to engage children in learning.

Students could describe how challenge and struggle is important in learning to continue to grow. Some explained the need for balance between struggle and consolidation of skills to ensure progress can be made without a level of frustration. Parents could discuss common strategies the school is using, including how children have talked to them about being 'in the learning pit'. Teachers talk with students about the 'what' and 'why' of learning, and often provide time at the end of lessons for students to focus on reflection of what they have learnt by sharing with peers. Teachers discussed the variety of ways they use data to inform their planning for intentional teaching, with some focus on task design and individualised planning.

Structured data meetings are held regularly with leadership where teachers discuss their progress and what they are doing to support the learning progress. Teachers could explain some strategies they use to work with students, to develop their understanding of next steps in learning, including individual student goal-setting. Some students could talk about how they reflect on their learning goals through writing self-evaluations for their reports. Effective common approaches of informing students of where they are at with their learning and what their next steps are could be strengthened. This will support developing student awareness of their strengths and how to improve, positively influencing individual student learning progress.

Direction 2 **Provide students with clear information about their next steps in learning, through strengthening common evidence-based practices in effective two-way feedback and students taking increased responsibility for their progression of learning.**

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE STUDENT LEARNING

To what extent does the school promote a culture of learning with high expectations of achievement for all learners?

Staff have a high level of commitment and collective responsibility to build their own capacity through self-reflection and professional learning. They focus on building the capacity of students, both to be engaged positively in their learning and to be successful learners. Children often commented on the learning dispositions the school promotes and how they help with focusing on learning and working with each other. Staff readily take on new challenges and innovation in teaching practice through high levels of consultation with leadership and clear structures to support them in their learning. The whole-school shift in the literacy approach is especially noticeable and staff have requested the learning support is emulated in the current numeracy improvement work. Teachers are clearly integral to decisions made and are keen to learn from each other. They will investigate and incubate new practices that they believe will benefit learning outcomes for students and share their practice. There was some evidence of teachers challenging each other about the 'why' in learning, which is built upon the levels of trust and commitment to established collaborations. Leadership have clear and high expectations of themselves and others, and are willing to work alongside staff and to model the implementation of expected practices. Staff professional development plans are closely aligned to the SIP.

Parents and the school community value the school's positive learning culture and high expectations. They often stated the readiness of staff to provide effective communication about their child's learning in a variety of ways and are supportive of the teachers and their work. The formal and informal reporting processes in place provide parents with a good understanding of their child's progress.

Teachers place high value on the regular data meetings with colleagues and leadership. These meetings continue to support them to gain clarity of the learning needs of children and young people with whom they are working, leading to strengthening practices for intentional teaching. This is also supported through clear, aligned professional learning, mentoring and ongoing use of experts that build teacher commitment to implementing school-wide evidence-based approaches. Using the established collaborative practices and building on the existing expertise, strengthening common understandings and agreed approaches to differentiated learning, will support each learner with challenge and stretch in their learning.

Direction 3 Ensure challenge and stretch for all learners by strengthening common understandings and implementing commonly agreed, highly effective differentiated learning practices.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

The school is committed to building a community of learners who promote the dispositions of learning and aim to transfer these into other situations. The positive school culture places value on building and maintaining collective success and responsibility for improving the learning of all students. There are high levels of support from leadership for improvement acknowledged by the school community.

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

- Direction 1** **Strategically strengthen staff capacity to understand the links between the challenges of practice, plans of action and the process of evaluating impact based on clearly articulated success criteria.**
- Direction 2** **Provide students with clear information about their next steps in learning, through strengthening common evidence-based practices in effective two-way feedback and students taking increased responsibility for their progression of learning.**
- Direction 3** **Ensure challenge and stretch for all learners by strengthening common understandings and implementing commonly agreed, highly effective differentiated learning practices.**

Based on the school's current performance, Reynella South Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



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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 2019, 36% of year 1 and 38% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average for both years 1 and 2.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 2 has been downwards, from 77% to 38%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 76% of year 3 students, 78% of year 5 students and 80% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline averages.

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, 17% of year 5 and 33% 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, 67%, or 2 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 100%, or 3 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 88% of year 3 students, 56% of year 5 students and 73% 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, a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 44% to 88%.

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, 32% of year 3, no year 5 and 27% 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 6% to 32%. The trend for year 5 has been downwards from 25% to nil.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 50%, or 1 out of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.