Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Reynella Primary School

Conducted in March 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 Helen Tunney, Review Officer, of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Paul Harmer and Linda Weetra, Review Principals.

Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relating 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: Governing Council representatives
                       Leaders
                       Parent groups
                       School Support Officers
                       Student groups
                       Teachers

School context

Reynella Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 23kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 543 students. Enrolment was 415 at the time of the previous ESR in 2015. The school is classified as Category 6 on the Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score is 1004, and the local partnership is Panalatinga.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 5% students with a verified disability, 25% of families eligible for school card assistance, 1% of students English as an additional language or dialect background, 4 students with verified challenging behaviours, and 8 children in care.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 3rd year of her tenure at the school, a deputy principal and 1 senior leader. There are 29 (28.6FTE) teachers including 4 in the early years of their career and 13 step 9 teachers.

Previous ESR directions were:

Direction 1   Increase the capacity of students to become expert learners by building the capacity of all teachers to create supportive, challenging and critically reflective classrooms that ensure students are provided with optimal conditions for sustained, relevant and rigorous learning.

Direction 2   Improve student achievement by enabling parents to be involved as partners in their child's learning through a coordinated whole-school approach to communicating the benefits, intentions and outcomes of student learning, wellbeing and engagement.

Direction 3   Evaluate the implementation of the TfEL framework to date and identify areas for consolidation and further development and improvement, with the aim of lifting student achievement across the school.

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?
Students generally are able to identify what good learning is and have high level vocabulary for, and confidence in, talking about learning. Students understand learning is not centred on the teacher and have strong levels of independence in learning. They know and use multiple strategies for self-help. Growth mindset work is embedded in students, transferring their skills and capabilities to settings and situations outside of school. Parents value the openness of the school to parent involvement, communication in a range of modes such as a weekly class blog, accessibility of leadership and teachers, prompt follow up of issues, support for special needs, support for transition and student leadership opportunities. There is clear evidence of improved student learning in the data, in particular reading. An increase in the provision of technologies for learning is engaging and empowering students. Parents are satisfied with the learning growth of students.

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?

Self-review is planned and intentional and involves the whole staff. There was strong involvement of staff in the development of the current school improvement plan (SIP). Leaders drafted the plan and then reviewed it with staff. Teachers have a strong connection to the SIP and accept that it informs all their work. The school has reviewed and tightened its intervention processes through attention to student achievement data. Wave 2 interventions (for literacy) are now intentional, timed and monitored for efficacy. A next step around intervention is to implement numeracy intervention to build fluency for identified students. Teachers apply a range of strategies to judge the impact of their teaching on learning. Examples given include written work, work completion, feedback and reflection sessions/discussion with students, and use of video for student self-assessment and teacher self-reflection about teaching. There were pockets of evidence of students giving feedback to teachers but this was not widespread or embedded.

There are varied practices across the school to monitor the impact of teaching. In order to monitor the efficacy of SIP improvement strategies, the school is well-placed to draw on the collective expertise of teachers and agree on a suite of common practices to more formally monitor for efficacy. This will ensure that the school stays on track and continually makes gains that will lead to the achievement of its SIP targets.

Direction 1   Agree on, and implement, a set of targeted monitoring strategies to ensure that changes in teacher and leader practices are resulting in improvements to student learning.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

It is clear that student learning is the school's core business and this shared moral purpose is strongly embedded across all groups of stakeholders. The value of evidence-based practices and approaches to improving practice is well-established in the school. Teachers are supported to regularly analyse student learning data in teams to intentionalise teaching in a like-year level 'learning community'. In addition to these learning communities, professional learning teams (PLTs) have been established. In each PLT an inquiry topic, informed by research, is selected and teachers work together over time to learn from the research and each other to bring findings into practice. The focus on cultures of thinking through PLTs is influencing teachers to provide for challenging thinking in all learning tasks. Growth mindset work with students is very strong and the school has recently taken steps to link growth mindset work more explicitly to academic learning. The recently co-developed rubrics, 'Mindsets for Learning', which detail qualities of growth mindset in a classroom learning context, are commendable and should provide valuable data in this endeavour.

Engagement and stretch has been a focus in the school and strong impacts on student learning were evident. This has been accomplished through learning design to enable stretch and challenge, critical and creative thinking, the development of student growth mindsets, and authentic student leadership through student action teams. The school is well placed to maintain and extend engagement and challenge for students through consultation with them about learning. When teachers work in partnership with students to make decisions about their learning student metacognition is developed and students are equipped to assess,

monitor and regulate their own learning. Consultation between students and teacher should encompass strong student voice in what and how students learn and in the identification of the nature of success, consistent student goal setting and review, consistent provision of success criteria to students and more regular and rigorous feedback from students to the teacher about their teaching.

Direction 2   Ensure students have authentic influence in their learning.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

How effectively do teachers collaborate and reflect on practice to improve?

Strong, coherent leadership in the school has resulted in high quality collaboration between teachers, evidenced by teacher ownership of their learning, teachers seeking to team teach as a result of their collaboration, teachers trusting each other's data, teachers seeking to observe each other, and teachers seeking further learning and being self-motivated to do this. Collaboration is resourced well with time and non-human resources. Collaboration is purposeful, linked to the SIP, performance and development, and training and development. This high coherence for teachers is having a significant positive impact on improving their capacity. Teachers self-reported significant changes to their planning and practices as a result of their collaborative learning. Teachers appreciate the tight improvement agenda and the narrow and deep focus. Collaboration supports the induction of new teachers and the development of graduate teachers. Collaboration has become normalised in the school and the panel found high levels of professional trust between staff and a commitment to working together. Classroom practice is fully deprivatised. Observations/learning walks have begun and are evolving from generalised feedback to having a targeted and intentional focus. Teachers have begun to ask for observations of specific aspects of their practice.

Teachers are collaborating in deep and effective ways however there was more evidence of collaboration for the planning of teaching and less of collaboration to monitor the impact of teaching on learning. The next step is to push collaboration to a 'critical' level, to go into the space of developing greater awareness of how students are experiencing the teaching. The school is well placed to support teachers to work together in order to see their teaching through the eyes of the child and to use this awareness to improve their practices.

Direction 3   Work collaboratively to understand and pro-actively respond to student perspectives about teaching.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

At Reynella Primary School the influence of previous ESR directions is evident in the school's improvement. Effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions. Teacher and leader practice is positively impacted by effective systems that build capacity.

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

Direction 1   Agree on, and implement, a set of targeted monitoring strategies to ensure that changes in teacher and leader practices are resulting in improvements to student learning.

Direction 2   Ensure students have authentic influence in their learning.

Direction 3   Work collaboratively to understand and pro-actively respond to student perspectives about teaching.

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

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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, 72% of year 1 and 79% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average in both year 1 and 2.

In 2018 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 84% of year 3 students, 88% of year 5 students and 83% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. For years 5 and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2015 and 2018 the trend for year 3 was downwards, from 90% to 84% respectively and the trend for year 7 was upwards, from 69% to 83% respectively.

In 2018 year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN reading the school achieved within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2018 40% of year 3, 44% of year 5 and 21% 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 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading 72%, or 18 of 25 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 38%, or 8 of 21 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.

Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 69% of year 3 students, 66% of year 5 students and 83% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 and 5 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. For year 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2015 and 2018 the trend for year 3 was downwards, from 82% in 2015 to 69% in 2018.

In 2018 year 3 NAPLAN numeracy, the school achieved lower than and for years 5 and 7, within, the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 27% of year 3, 12% of year 5 and 12% 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.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy 55% or 6 of 11 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018 and 27%, or 4 of 15 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.