

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for East Adelaide School

Conducted in August 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 Phil Garner, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Ray Marino and Sue Charleston Review Principals.

## 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:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parent representatives
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student representatives
  - Teachers

## School context

East Adelaide School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 4km from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 734. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 721. The local partnership is Adelaide Prospect.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1123 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 6 Aboriginal students, 4% students with disabilities, 11% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, no children/young people in care and 8% of students eligible for School Card assistance. The school leadership team consists of a principal in her ninth year of her tenure.

The school leadership team consists of:

- Deputy principal, leading deep thinking for deep learning and special needs.
- Assistant principal, innovative and effective pedagogy, mathematics/numeracy.
- Assistant principal, leading learning, whole-school literacy coaching and mentoring.
- Band 1 (coordinator) student engagement and wellbeing leader.

There are 48 teachers including 10 in the early years of their career and 10 Step 9 teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Build the capacity of staff and students to engage in critically constructive feedback that provides task-relevant options for improvement and supports every student to achieve their personal best.
- Direction 2** Implement a range of school-wide approaches that respond to students' changing needs and utilise student voice and influence in the design and assessment of learning.
- Direction 3** Develop and implement a whole-school agreement and planned approach to the integration of intellectual challenge into daily classroom practice that is appropriate for all learners across all year levels.
- Direction 4** Embed a range of strategies that promote consistent language, approaches, and communication tools within and across year levels that support families in being involved as partners in their child's learning.

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

##### Direction 1

Formative assessments are used, particularly in mathematics, where pre- and post-assessments identify and assess growth in learning. Assessment rubrics, self- and peer-assessment and individual writing conferencing processes delivers targeted written feedback to students. While the school focused professional learning on improving the quality of feedback to students, differences remain across the

school in the provision of formative feedback and assessment that gives students an understanding of their performance that meets identified goals in learning.

#### Direction 2

The school implemented a number of pedagogical strategies designed to give students greater ownership of their learning. “Bump it up walls”, amongst others, provide examples of sequenced learning helping students to self-moderate their writing. Early years teachers share a range of learning goals with their students allowing them to identify the most appropriate goal on which to focus. While most students have greater awareness of learning intentions and required outcomes, authentic student influence over their learning is an area in which the school should continue to develop.

#### Direction 3

Collaborative learning design gives greater consistency and emphasis on planning and programming processes across the school. Professional learning teams are focused on collaboratively implementing a variety of pedagogical practices and support structures, centering on intellectually challenging students. Planning for intellectual challenge within a differentiated teaching approach is explored more deeply in the lines of inquiry below.

#### Direction 4

Strategies were implemented to bring consistent communication between school and home. While parents saw improvement, they indicated a variation in policy implementation that remains of concern. The homework policy was just one example of discrepancy across the school. Parents prefer more feedback about next steps in learning for their children in order to further support them at home.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

Improve practice and monitor strategies and actions.

Teachers have ownership and are committed to the school improvement planning process. The school conducted a comprehensive self-review process during terms 3 and 4, with a strong focus on the analysis of multiple measures of data. This included analysing student achievement data, identifying areas of strength and highlighting misconceptions and specific areas for improvement in student learning.

The self-review process resulted in minor, but strategic changes to the challenges of practice and improved explicitness of actions, success criteria and roles and responsibilities. Building the capacity of teaching in writing and mathematics with clear expectations and measurable outcomes for teachers and leaders have been clearly identified.

Teachers meet regularly in their year level teams to track and review how students are progressing in their learning. In addition, each teacher is tracking and monitoring 20% of their students that have the potential to maintain, or achieve in the higher bands in NAPLAN. With focus on engagement and challenge, higher expectations and improved teaching and learning will have a positive effect on raising achievement for all students. Student tracking and progress in learning provides the basis for strategic discussions with leadership throughout the year.

There is improvement in pedagogical practice consistency across most classes, as a result of team collaboration, and provision of targeted professional learning and implementation of site improvement plan (SIP) actions.

The school's challenge of practice and actions centered on building teacher capacity to target learning and explicitly teach the curriculum. Including data from a teaching and learning appraisal perspective, will supply valuable evidence about consistency of implementation, quality of teacher practice and impact on student learning. Teachers discussed the benefits of engaging in a professional collaborative process that offers constructive feedback on performance and improvement. This will also add depth and credibility to the review and evaluation of site improvement actions.

**Direction 1     Refine the process of monitoring the implementation of high-impact teaching strategies to ensure high quality, consistency and impact on student learning in every class.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

The panel observed engaging and challenging learning, particularly in maths in the early years and in problem-solving generally across the school. There is focused intentionality towards teaching of metacognitive strategies across most classes that engages students effectively in the analysis of their thinking.

There is consistent use of learning intentions, with most students able to articulate what they are learning and why. Early years classes provide opportunities for students to discuss and clarify effectively. Expected outcomes of learning in writing are given to students through comprehensive success criteria. This level of clear and explicit expectations is not seen across all areas of the curriculum. Students indicated that success criteria assist them to understand the learning expectations and guide them in what they need to achieve.

There is considerable variation in the use of student learning goals across the school. Dynamic and challenging goals are featured in some year levels based on next steps in learning, while in others, they are long-term and less specific in nature. Teachers would benefit from professional discussions around the purpose of student learning goals in the teaching and learning cycle.

While formative feedback strategies refine student learning in some classes, their use throughout the school fluctuates, and is an area for continued focus. Unmarked learning in some classes indicated little understanding of where students are in their learning and how they might improve.

Across the school, catering for individual student learning needs is inconsistent. Early years teachers use the gradual release of responsibility effectively. In some classes, students are presented with the same learning task, with lower-achieving students struggling and high-achieving students repeating tasks and concepts they have already mastered. Students in these classes indicated that opportunities to participate in flexible student learning groups that collaborate on meaningful learning tasks would provide them with greater engagement and challenge.

The level of engagement and challenge presented to students varies considerably across the school. There are exemplary teaching practices catering effectively for the individual learning needs of students and providing appropriate levels of engagement and challenge. The school is in a unique position to capitalise on this and replicate this pedagogy across the school increasing levels of consistency, engagement and challenge.

**Direction 2 Empower students with their learning through high expectations, intellectual stretch and the consistent use of effective formative feedback strategies.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

To what extent is there coherence, continuity and progression of learning across the years of schooling?

All year-level learning teams embraced writing as a whole-school initiative. This approach provides teachers with a measure of consistency in teaching of writing across the school. Students indicated that the focus on writing increased their engagement, improved their writing skills and gives greater challenge. Similar consistent approaches are being implemented across early years classes in phonics, grammar and vocabulary. Early years teachers are proactive in identifying gaps in learning evident in year 3 NAPLAN results, ensuring teaching and learning will address any identified learning gaps.

Recent analysis of student assessment data indicates a decline in reading achievement leading the school to refocus on the concept of teaching literacy as a whole, rather than a narrow focus on individual components. As a result, a new literacy agreement was developed and includes implementation of a number of reading strategies, such as reciprocal reading. The literacy and numeracy coaches are effective in supporting teachers in different ways. They are valuable in assisting with programming and assessment, working with small groups of students and providing coaching and mentoring for teachers.

Teachers were planning and programming using a modified template based on the Learning, Design, Assessment and Moderation strategy. There are collaborative teams making a difference in teaching and learning through effective planning and programming. However, the learning design in a number of classes is based imprecisely on the year level achievement standards and engaging students with minimum challenge. With exemplary practices evident in some year levels, opportunity exists for professional collaboration to develop a consistent reception to year 7 sequence of learning that challenges students and engages them in high levels of intellectual challenge.

**Direction 3**     **To ensure all students are intellectually challenged and achieve expected curriculum learning outcomes, consistently implement the curriculum and whole-school agreements through high-yield teaching and learning tasks.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

East Adelaide School is a high-performing school with an experienced and dedicated leadership and teaching team. Professional learning and building of teacher capacity is at the forefront of their educational journey, with collaborative professional learning communities providing the channel for improvement in teaching and learning. With continued focus on high-impact teaching strategies that engage and empower students in their learning, the school will continue to strengthen the educational outcomes for students.

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

- Direction 1** Refine the process of monitoring the implementation of high-impact teaching strategies to ensure high quality, consistency and impact on student learning in every class.
- Direction 2** Empower students with their learning through high expectations, intellectual stretch and the consistent use of effective formative feedback strategies.
- Direction 3** To ensure all students are intellectually challenged and achieve expected curriculum learning outcomes, consistently implement the curriculum and whole-school agreements through high-yield teaching and learning tasks.

Based on the school's current performance, East Adelaide 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, 68% of year 1 and 67% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 1, this result represents a decline and for year 2, little or no change from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 96% of year 3 students, 90% of year 5 students and 91% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents little or no change and for year 5, a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved higher in year 3 NAPLAN reading relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 71% of year 3, 43% of year 5 and 44% 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, 65%, or 26 out of 40 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 67%, or 16 out of 24 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 95% of year 3 students, 87% of year 5 students and 91% 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, a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 89% to 95% and for year 7, downwards from 94% to 91%.

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

Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved higher in year 3 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 51% of year 3, 34% of year 5 and 42% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been downwards, from 59% to 51% and upwards for year 7, from 34% to 42%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 57%, or 21 out of 37 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 71%, or 12 out of 17 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.