

# Department for Education

## External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

**Report for Clare Primary School**

Conducted in May 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 Greg Graham, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Belinda Kopania, Review Principal.

## 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
  - Parents
  - School Support Officers (SSOs)
  - Students from R-6
  - Teachers

## School context

Clare Primary School caters for children from reception to year 6. It is situated 240kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 238 students. Enrolment is steady over the last 5 years with enrolment at the time of the previous review 242.

The school has an ICSEA score of 963, and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage. The local partnership is Mid North Clare.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 7% students with disabilities, 4 children in care, and 30% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of his tenure and 3 senior leaders: deputy principal, wellbeing coordinator and curriculum coordinator (numeracy). There are 15 teachers including 1 in the early years of their career and 5 Step 9 teachers.

## Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Increase the proportion of students achieving the Department for Education Standards of Educational Achievement by collaboratively implementing self-review processes that have clear effect on outcomes for students and school processes, and consistently act upon findings.
- Direction 2** Develop a shared approach to leadership in which members of the leadership team have clearly defined responsibilities and accountabilities.
- Direction 3** Increase the number of students making expected or greater than expected progress, by ensuring that the school has reliable and easily accessible data collection and analysis processes for staff to regularly monitor the progress of individual students and cohorts throughout the year.
- Direction 4** Accelerate the learning of students by rigorously and consistently implementing whole-school agreements in literacy and numeracy that include explicit expectations for student achievement. Ensure that agreements are aligned with professional learning and performance development processes.

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

The school has made significant progress in its implementation of the previous ESR directions. The previous directions have been at the forefront of the school's development through the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) and actioned through staff meetings, professional development and classroom actions. It was evident to the panel that staff had a good understanding of the work done in relation to the previous directions.

The school has adopted a cycle of continuous improvement based on the Blueprint for a Successful School model. This has seen the school implement a cycle of improvement through its SIP which is broken down into term goals and actions. The development of mindfulness and the defining of behaviour level systems and processes has strengthened the focus on student engagement. The school has a very clear,

documented and multi-layered process of data analysis that maps the progress of individual students who are then provided with targeted support as required. Achievement data is collected and synthesised, with staff continually working together to analyse this information and plan for improvement.

Clearly defined roles are documented in the staff handbook for all staff, which is continually added to and modified to reflect current practices. A shared leadership structure was introduced in 2018 with a literacy and numeracy coordinator joining the team in 2018, their focus on building teacher pedagogy and embedding whole-school agreements. Whole-school agreements were developed in 2016, in literacy and numeracy that reflect best practice. The literacy agreement was reviewed in 2018 and the numeracy review is scheduled for 2019.

Professional learning and performance and development has significantly changed across the school. The restructuring of year level Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) has increased the professional focus. Professional learning is an ongoing process with a focus on pedagogy. Ongoing staff meetings and year level team time are devoted to data analysis at an individual, cohort and whole-school level in line with the school's whole-school data agreement.

## Lines of inquiry

### EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

#### *How well does the school use evidence from student achievement and growth data to inform relevant and high impact goals and targets for improvement?*

The 2019 SIP identifies 3 goals:

- proficiencies in mathematical number through mental computations and multi-step problem solving
- writing focusing on the explicit teaching of targeted genres
- well-being, focusing on developing students' resilience and perseverance using the PERMA model.

These goals were identified collaboratively with staff. It was evident to the panel that the school uses a variety of assessment tools to both identify, and measure progress towards, SIP goals and targets. These include BliN diagnostic test, Seven Steps to Writing, Jolly Phonics/Grammar, Fontas and Pinnell guided reading and Thinking Maths strategy.

Student achievement data is collated annually and folders are provided to teachers for review. The readily available access to student data has enabled staff to increasingly use it to inform their planning. Historically, diagnostic test results were used for organisational purposes ie ability grouping, rather than to identify the impact of teaching, and this is still the case in some instances.

The school uses student achievement and growth data to identify goals and targets for improvement with an emphasis on the pedagogical development of teachers and leaders. To support capacity building in this area the review panel see an opportunity for PLTs to collaboratively analyse student data that identifies strengths and gaps which will inform teaching, but also progress towards SIP goals. The school also has the opportunity to further explore the use of growth and effect size measures as an adjunct to PLT data analysis and collaborative planning processes.

**Direction 1** Raise student achievement by strengthening internal self-review and quality assurance processes to ensure that the monitoring and reviewing of student learning is robust.

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Students were able to describe the learning process in class including routines such as spelling and reading groups and worksheets. Students can confidently talk about their learning and are compliant with their engagement as witnessed and recorded on the classroom observation matrix used by the panel.

Of the students interviewed, they all indicated that approximately 50% of their work time over an average school week was 'hard'. When asked how their teacher can help them improve, responses included 'explain the learning more clearly' and 'make the work harder'.

Learning intentions were generally used by staff as part of an introductory conversation at the beginning of a lesson or topic. The language of learning intentions varied amongst staff with some using terms like 'learning goals' to describe the learning focus. The students did acknowledge that some of their teachers talked about 'what the class was going to learn' but in the main, learning intentions were not fully understood by students. Not all students could identify the regular use of learning goals.

The teacher pedagogical survey conducted during the review indicated that 64% of staff rated their use of feedback to students as medium. Similar levels of teacher engagement and efficacy were identified in adapting their planning in response to student feedback, creating opportunities for deeper thinking and enabling student to apply their skills in different contexts.

Through discussions and observations it became apparent that teachers working with students in the co-design of their learning was not strongly evident however there were pockets of this practice across the school. The next step for the school to consider is how to increasingly involve students in learning design. To do this, staff may need to review their pedagogical practices, assessment design and decision making if they are to deepen and enrich the level of student agency within the planning process. Student agency has the potential to teach students how to stretch themselves, be persistent and resilient learners, understand their progress and develop ownership of the learning process.

**Direction 2** Ensure authentic student influence in learning by strengthening the development and embedding of learning intentions, goal setting and student feedback as part of regular reviews at the beginning and end of all learning experiences.

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

### *How effectively are teachers analysing assessment and feedback data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction?*

It was acknowledged by teachers that achievement data was predominately used to identify students in need of intervention support. A few teachers occasionally talked with students about their results but only at a surface level. This was confirmed by senior students who indicated that the sharing of achievement data is minimal with some teachers discussing reading and spelling test scores only. The students interviewed knew what NAPLAN tests were but said that their teachers only talked about them as part of the lead up to the testing week. With an increasing understanding of the importance of data, teachers are in a position to engage collectively with achievement data at an individual, cohort and class level to inform their planning.

The use of formative assessment and differentiated teaching practices varied amongst the staff. Most staff were able to speak about the assessments they use, but acknowledged that learning intentions and success rubrics were still areas for development.

Staff recognised that feedback for students was in its developmental stage, with a focus on feedback strategies including 1:1 conversations, checklists, sharing test scores and written comments in books. Most students indicated that feedback was usually verbal or in written form such as ticks and comments. Some teachers have sought feedback from the students after a unit of work has been completed. The teachers recognised that feedback from students regarding the effectiveness of teacher planning was limited. Leadership indicated that the partnership focus for 2019 is formative assessment which will support capacity building across the school.

With a focus on effective teaching for all learners, the next steps in the professional development process are twofold: to develop a collective understanding of differentiated teaching, and strengthen teacher understanding and engagement with formative assessment strategies. By strengthening knowledge in these elements of quality task design teachers will further develop and embed effective and consistent pedagogical practice across the school.

**Direction 3** Continually drive pedagogical improvement in planning and instruction by exploring and implementing evidence-based approaches that integrate and effectively embed formative assessment and the feedback loop process.

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

It is clear from information gathered during the review from teachers, students and parents that a strength of the school is its community connection. The parents and staff have a high level of trust in the principal and appreciate the school's aspiration to deliver quality education for all children. The school community values the high level of consultation which features ongoing open dialogue and a commitment to working together.

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

- Direction 1**      **Raise student achievement by strengthening internal self-review and quality assurance processes to ensure that the monitoring and reviewing of student learning is robust.**
- Direction 2**      **Ensure authentic student influence in learning by strengthening the development and embedding of learning intentions, goal setting and student feedback as part of regular reviews at the beginning and end of all learning experiences.**
- Direction 3**      **Continually drive pedagogical improvement in planning and instruction by exploring and implementing evidence-based approaches that integrate and effectively embed formative assessment and the feedback loop process.**

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



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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). Clare Primary School is reception to year 6, therefore year 7 data is not applicable.

### Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2018, 69% of year 1 and 71% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline for years 1 and 2 from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 76% to 63% respectively.

In 2018 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 70% of year 3 students and 73% of year 5 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3, this result represents a decline and for year 5 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For 2018 years 3 and 5, NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2018, 22% of year 3 and 32% of year 5 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 71%, or 12 of 17 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018.

### Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 63% of year 3 students and 75% of year 5 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this represents a decline and for year 5, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For 2018, year 3 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving lower than, and for year 5 within, the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 11% of year 3, and year 5 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 25%, or 2 of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018.