

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Old Noarlunga Primary School

Conducted in September 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 Kathryn Entwistle, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Nicholas Papadopoulos, Review Principal.

Review Process

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

- Presentation from the leaders
- Class visits
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Information Technology support personnel
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Old Noarlunga Primary School is a reception to year 7 school. The school is located in southern metropolitan Adelaide, 33 kilometres from the Adelaide GPO, in the historic township of Old Noarlunga. The school opened in 1852 and is one of the oldest in South Australia. The local partnership is River Hub.

The current enrolment is 153. At the time of the last review in 2015, there were 115 students enrolled.

In 2020, the school Index of Disadvantage was adjusted from Category 3 to Category 5 and the school has an ICSEA score of 990.

The school population includes 5% Aboriginal students, 11% of students with disabilities, less than 6 students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 35% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The site leadership team consists of a principal in their 2nd year of a 5-year tenure and a newly appointed senior leader, responsible for wellbeing and school operations. There are 9.2 FTE teachers, none of whom are in the early years of their career.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Ensure all students improve as expected by systematically monitoring their learning growth (dispositions and achievement) against agreed targets and standards, and by using this information to track progress and inform planning and evaluate interventions.**
- Direction 2** **Support the development of higher levels of attainment for all students by building teacher capacity to align and transform learning tasks against the Australian Curriculum achievement standards and the general capabilities.**
- Direction 3** **Increase opportunities for families to learn more about the schools vision and values and be involved as partners in supporting their children through their learning journey at school.**

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?
<p>The school is rich in data collated at the whole school, year and individual student levels, which is used to determine school priorities and identify challenges of practice. Reading and writing data was mapped and specific concepts for improvement were established. Programs introduced allow teachers to regularly evaluate student growth in reading and accurately assess improvement in students' writing abilities.</p> <p>Leaders readily discuss the intent to better meet the needs of students performing at higher levels. At the time of the ESR, a small group of older students were identified to participate in an extension maths group for 1 lesson a week. Leaders explained that they are working towards students being provided similar opportunities within their classes and throughout the school week. This concept will be further discussed against lines of inquiry 2 and 3 of this report.</p> <p>Parents, including governing council members, are clear about the school's priorities and appreciate the</p>

strong focus on reading and writing. Some report that their children are articulate in discussing their learning in these areas and use sophisticated terminology. Council members report that GC meetings give them opportunities to contribute to decisions, and parents value the level of communication that keeps them informed of school matters and direction. Parents readily approach staff or access the school's improved communication platforms to ask questions about their children's learning, school events or policies.

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?

Improvement planning is undertaken with clarity and intentionality. Data is explored and specific areas for improvement in students' reading and writing skills identified are reflected in the challenges of practice. Literacy programs have been adopted effectively in almost all classes, and data harvested in terms 1 and 3 clearly identifies the positive impact of these programs on student achievement. A significant increase in early years students' phonemic awareness is noted.

Most teachers report that professional learning is provided to support them with understanding and effectively delivering the expected literacy programs. The principal has a highly strategic and influential approach to building teachers' capacity to respond to the site improvement plan challenges of practice. Regular classroom observations focus fully on site improvement actions and are followed by comprehensive written feedback to the teacher. This is accompanied by evaluation of the use of high-impact strategies, measured against a rubric of effective practice. Additionally, the principal conducts 'leaders' lunches' where students meet with the principal and discuss their perception of teachers' implementation of the challenges of practice. This intentional approach to formative assessment allows the leader to give feedback to teachers and enables continuous improvement in practice.

Site improvement teams meet regularly, align work with school priorities, and all teachers are involved in at least one team. Forums provide opportunities for teachers to discuss resources and reflect on how effectively they are implementing expected literacy programs. Teachers also report that when data is available, they will refer to the information to evaluate impact on student achievement. Establishing regular and accurate evaluation of the impact on students' learning is the next area for development. Employing formative assessment strategies appropriate to students from reception to year 7, will allow teachers and leaders to regularly assess and enhance practice accordingly. Collective conversation to develop a suite of effective formative assessment strategies will ensure widespread commitment and implementation. Reference to the improvement plan's success criteria that identify what skills students are to demonstrate will support accuracy of evaluative judgements.

Direction 1 Continually review and enhance practice through the development and implementation of formative assessment strategies that regularly identify the impact on student learning.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Student ownership and understanding of their learning is promoted through the introduction of success criteria and learning intentions. All teachers are expected to provide class WALT (We Are Learning To) and WILF (What I am Looking For) statements regarding student learning. This initiative has had significant impact in the early years, where students eloquently articulate the purpose of their learning and areas for individual improvement in literacy. Continuing to embed this approach to develop learner expertise remains important, as WALT and WILF are not yet consistently practiced in all middle years classes.

In a few classes, feedback is given to students to understand the next steps for improvement. In one class, students are equipped with information that acknowledges achievement and specifies the next progression point in writing. The provision of confirming, celebratory feedback to students is common. Establishing expectations for formative feedback that specify progression points and areas for development will ensure students are informed learners. This will complement the existing provision of WALT and WILF.

Teaching strategies aligned with the literacy programs are broadly applied in most classes. Moving from program implementation to pedagogical coherence is the next step in the school's improvement process. Students engage with a learning cycle that offers modelling and exemplars (I do), experimentation and trailing (we do), followed by application of learning (you do) in the reciprocal reading approach, adopted in many classes. This gradual release cycle offers a model for staff to refer to when considering how to develop student expertise in learning across the curriculum. In a few middle years classes, and commonly across the school in maths, there is an overuse of worksheets (hard copy and online) that require limited cognition. This indicates opportunity to establish a learning cycle that provokes inquiry, and creative and critical thinking. Reference to the department's literacy and numeracy guidebooks and the TfEL framework will support and inform contemporary pedagogical development.

Direction 2 **Ensure students' cognitive processes are extended and challenged through teaching that is designed to provoke inquiry and experimentation and enables students to apply their learning in varying contexts.**

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Achievement data has been used to identify students' level of understanding and determine next stages of progression in reading and writing. In reading, the program employed in the early years regularly informs students' placement in groups. Grouping students in response to their ability level is practiced commonly across the school. In some classes, these groups are fluid and responsive to changes in students' understanding or miscues, meaning learners can move between the different groups.

Teachers appreciate the importance of meeting the varied needs of their students. Generally, this focuses on ensuring students not at standard of educational achievement (SEA) are provided extra support and attention. When explaining differentiated approaches that respond to diversity within the class, teachers and ancillary staff explain that they hold different expectations of the amount of work students will undertake. For example, students in spelling groups are provided fewer or greater numbers of words to learn, dependent on their level of achievement. Some teachers comment that differentiated teaching is more likely if additional staff are present in their class. The panel encourages staff to explore what effective differentiated practice is, and importantly, is not.

Leaders are committed to establishing an aspirational culture that ensures teachers support and extend the needs of all learners. Data indicates students' high-band achievement is not consistently retained as they progress through the school. Teaching deliberately designed to support higher performing students is limited to one or two classes. When accessing and analysing student achievement data, the importance of recognising and responding to the strengths demonstrated by higher achievers is key in developing a more differentiated approach to teaching.

When responding to direction 2 of this report, to develop pedagogical approaches that inspire and challenge thinking, the school is also well-placed to consider how this connects with and influences task design. Using formative assessment to identify students' existing understandings and developing learning opportunities that respond to this will ensure universal access, and maximise the outcomes of all learners.

Direction 3 Maximise the potential learning outcomes of all students through thorough analysis of assessment data and the subsequent design of teaching that enables each student to access tasks at varied entry and exit points.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

At Old Noarlunga Primary School, intentional leadership resulted in the development of clear and deliberate improvement plans. Goals are data-informed and widely understood across the school. Programs to achieve identified goals had significant impact on practice in most classes, as well as student achievement.

A thorough approach to building teachers' capacity to implement expected practice is in place. Class observations align fully with challenges of practice and comprehensive feedback is provided, alongside a continuum of effective teaching practice. This work is complemented by a highly sophisticated approach to formative feedback that sees students provide leaders with input regarding teachers' implementation of practice and its impact on their learning.

The directions below will support the school to build on existing effective planning and to further establish teaching approaches that maximise learning for all.

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

- Direction 1** Continually review and enhance practice through the development and implementation of formative assessment strategies that regularly identify the impact on student learning.
- Direction 2** Ensure students' cognitive processes are extended and challenged through teaching that is designed to provoke inquiry and experimentation and enables students to apply their learning in varying contexts.
- Direction 3** Maximise the potential learning outcomes of all students through thorough analysis of assessment data and the subsequent design of teaching that enables each student to access tasks at varied entry and exit points.

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



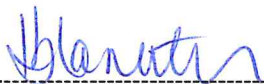
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Appendix 1

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, 77% of year 1 and 62% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change for year 2 and an improvement from the historic baseline average for year 1.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 86% of year 3 students, 70% of year 5 students and 100% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average and for year 5, little or no change.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 77% to 86%.

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

In 2019, 29% of year 3, 13% of year 5 and 20% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3 and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average and for year 5, little or no change.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 50% or 3 of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 100%, or 1 of 1 student from year 3 remains in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 71% of year 3 students, 74% of year 5 students and 40% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average and for year 7, a decline.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 64% to 71%.

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

In 2019, 14% of year 3, 4% of year 5 and 20% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change, for year 5 a decline and for year 7, an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been downwards from 20% to 4%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 100% or 1 of 1 student from year 3 remains in the upper bands at year 5, and the 1 student from year 3 did not remain in the upper bands at year 7.