

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Fulham North 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 Phil Garner, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Julie Hibell, 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:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parent representatives
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student representatives
  - Teachers

## School context

Fulham North Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 10km from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 464. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 435. The local partnership is West Adelaide Shores.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1069 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1% Aboriginal students, 4% students with disabilities, 16% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 11% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in his 1<sup>st</sup> year of their tenure, a deputy principal and 2 learning coordinators.

There are 25 teachers including 3 in the early years of their career and 15 Step 9 teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Support quality learning outcomes for all students by engaging in ongoing monitoring and critical evaluations of the equality and effect of differentiated learning approaches utilised to meet the diverse needs of learners.
- Direction 2** Build teachers' capacity to provide quality formative and summative feedback that helps students to achieve assessment criteria, benchmark their progress, and improve continuously against standards.
- Direction 3** Improve student achievement by enabling parents to be involved as partners in their child's learning through a coordinated and consistent communication strategy and approach.
- Direction 4** Promote high expectations for students learning to increase the number of students achieving at the higher levels of proficiency by critically evaluating current practices, and how these support the implementation of improvement priorities; in particular, promoting opportunities for students to be challenged and engaged in rich, purposeful tasks in meaningful contexts.

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?
<p><b>Direction 1:</b> Play-based pedagogy is being introduced in the early years that provides opportunities for students to be engaged in intentional and differentiated learning experiences. The school has maintained the ability grouping of students in mathematics across years 3 to 7. While most groupings are varied throughout the year, as a result of monitoring processes, this was not common practice in every year level. Students in some classes continue to be presented with whole-class, less-than-challenging learning tasks that are not providing adequately for their individual or year-level learning needs.</p>

**Direction 2:** Students in the early years engage in writing feedback conferences with teachers on a regular basis, including the discussion of learning intentions and reflection time. The use of success criteria rubrics continues to be a feature of the upper primary classes and technology is effectively utilised in the feedback and assessment process. However, there continues to be wide variability in assessment and feedback practices across the school.

**Direction 3:** Parents informed the panel that home/school communication has improved. While the use of communication applications has increased the speed and diversity of communication, parents are looking for consistency in their use across the school. Parents are generally well-informed of their child's progress in learning and value teachers' efficacy in contacting them if they have concerns about their children.

**Direction 4:** Achievement results in years 5 and 7 indicate lower levels of achievement in the higher bands in reading, numeracy and writing, with high percentages of students maintaining their progress from years 3 to 5 and 5 to 7 since the last review. This particular direction is a line of inquiry in this review and is reported in detail below.



## 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?

The school conducted a review and evaluation of the school improvement plan (SIP) in term 4 2019; however, limited data was available to accurately gauge the impact on student learning or its success in building of teacher capacity.

The new leadership team and staff collaborated in rewriting the challenges of practice to include the embedding of whole-school agreements and improving student feedback with a focus on the explicit actions required to achieve this. To ensure outcomes are achieved, explicit and targeted roles and responsibilities identifying the changes in classroom practice will need to occur, and success criteria based on what students will be able to do differently, will need to be clearly identified.

Development of whole-school agreements is the cornerstone of the challenges of practice. These are still in progress in the areas of literacy and numeracy. When completed, they should provide explicit guidance for teachers and promote consistency and excellence in practice across the school.

Staff performance development plans (PDP) need be connected to the SIP actions and expected roles and responsibilities. PDP goals need to be measureable and achievable, and specifically identify what teachers need to do to build their capacity and how they will impact on student achievement.

Consistency in pedagogy and effective year-level collaboration in learning design and curriculum delivery was evident in most year levels. However, there are concerns around compromised educational experience for students, due to the design and sequencing of learning in some classes, as students progress through the school.

Professional learning continues to focus around the implementation of guided reading in every class. With newly introduced initiatives, it is important to develop a working document of expectations and implementation processes, to ensure consistency of skills, knowledge and practice.

**Direction 1**      **Critically evaluate the SIP actions, staff responsibilities and student success criteria to ensure absolute clarity, ownership, commitment and accountability.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

A play-based learning approach is currently being introduced across the reception to year 2 classes. While this initiative is still in its infancy, students are experiencing high levels of success in their learning and development.

Students in the upper years indicated ownership and involvement in their learning through the use of learning intentions and success criteria. This provides a scaffold for their learning and gives understanding of what is expected of them.

Maths streaming operates across year 3 to 7 classes, where students are divided into ability groups. Some year-level groups are fluid, with students assigned to appropriate ability groups following a pre-test, while others remain in the same group regardless of the mathematical concept being covered. Several classes had whole-class learning tasks that were not differentiated, with limited opportunities for students to be challenged or effectively engaged in their learning. With a decrease in high-band achievement in 2019, and improved levels of student progress in NAPLAN remaining low, an opportunity exists for the school to review the approach to teaching of mathematics in primary years.

Some year levels have introduced the concept of 'Genius Hour'. Students design their assignments, learning outcomes and success criteria in consultation with teachers, valuing the responsibility and autonomy this learning provides.

An enrichment program currently operates for selected students across the school. Learning tasks have high levels of stretch and challenge, presenting opportunities for the development of higher-order thinking skills. Learning activities in the program are well-suited to collaborative investigation and would engage and stretch all students in the classroom, allowing for equitable access to a balanced and challenging curriculum.

Across the school there are pockets of engaging and challenging learning opportunities for students. With greater collaboration and a focus on high expectations and effective learning design, all students will have the opportunity to achieve their potential.

**Direction 2     Provide equity of learning opportunity, stretch and challenge for all students through high expectations, collaborative learning design and consistent teaching and learning approaches.**



## Effective teaching and student learning

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

The major influence in the provision of differentiated learning comes with an informed understanding of the student achievement data. It is important for teachers, students and parents to understand where students are in their learning and where they need to be in order to provide the most appropriate learning experiences and learning tasks in their 'zone of proximal learning'.

Pre- assessments and post-assessments are used in a number of year levels to identify where students are in their understanding, individualise the learning experience and assess learning that has taken place. Early years teachers provide modified learning tasks for students across most learning areas and the majority of learning tasks. PAT early years assessments in reading, maths and vocabulary are not being used to influence the learning. In the upper primary years, differentiation is mostly by outcome, with most tasks providing multiple entry and exit points for learners.

Although all teachers have a wide variety of student achievement data available to them, not all are using it effectively to identify gaps in learning to be addressed. Some composite classes are providing the same learning content for both year levels and the same learning task for all students.

Formative student feedback that provides next steps in learning varies across the school, for example, most students when asked about how they could improve their narrative writing indicated 'write neater'. Where feedback was provided, the comments were more about affirmation. Unassessed learning in maths and literacy was observed in a number of classes, with students unsure of whether they had successfully completed the learning task.

Most teachers provide basic levels of formative feedback to students, with some student engagement in self- and peer-assessment of their learning. Upper primary students are provided with comprehensive feedback on their learning tasks and assignments, including how they could improve their learning and what their next steps are. Effective and consistent formative feedback strategies will need to be an embedded practice in all classes to provide for the individual learning needs of all students.

**Direction 3      Identify and provide for the learning needs of all students through consistent formative feedback and the strategic analysis of all achievement data.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

With a stable and committed leadership team, the school is now in a position to focus on developing a collaborative and consistent approach to improvement. The development of whole-school agreements in key curriculum areas, and a commitment by teachers to apply evidence-based pedagogical practices to their teaching, will enhance student learning and achievement. The findings of the review will guide the improvement journey and provide a framework for building teacher capacity and clarity of practice.

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

- Direction 1** Critically evaluate the SIP actions, staff responsibilities and student success criteria to ensure absolute clarity, ownership, commitment and accountability.
- Direction 2** Provide equity of learning opportunity, stretch and challenge for all students through high expectations, collaborative learning design and consistent teaching and learning approaches.
- Direction 3** Identify and provide for the learning needs of all students through consistent formative feedback and the strategic analysis of all achievement data.

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



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Kerry Dollman  
A/DIRECTOR  
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY



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Anne Millard  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND  
PRESCHOOLS



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Nicholas Papadopoulos  
PRINCIPAL  
FULHAM NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL



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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 2019, 77% of year 1 and 90% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change for year 1 and an improvement for year 2, from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 91% to 77%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 98% of year 3 students, 82% of year 5 students and 88% 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, little or no change, from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 78% to 98%.

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

In 2019, 56% of year 3, 18% of year 5 and 15% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement and for years 5 and 7, a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 44%, or 8 out of 18 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 28%, or 5 out of 18 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 97% of year 3 students, 84% of year 5 students and 90% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for years 3 and 7, has been upwards from 78% to 97% and from 85% to 90%, respectively.

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

In 2019, 51% of year 3, 20% of year 5 and 20% 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 in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 62%, or 8 out of 13 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 42%, or 5 out of 12 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

