Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Reidy Park Primary School

Conducted in February 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 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, they all have been considered and contributed to the development and directions of this report.

This review was conducted by Simon Harding, Review Officer, of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Ros Frost and Thomas Harvey 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
- Discussions with: Governing Council representatives
  Leaders
  Parent groups
  School Support Officers
  Student groups
  Teachers

School context

Reidy Park Primary School is situated in Mount Gambier and has an enrolment of 581 students. This is a slight decrease in enrolments from the time of the previous review in 2015, when enrolments were approximately 600 students.

The school has an ICSEA score of 999, and is classified as Category 6 on the DfE Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 2% students with disabilities, 1% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 7 children/young people in care, and 12% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the third year of his first tenure, a deputy principal in her third year, senior leader (STEM) in his third year and a coordinator in literacy in his second year.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

Direction 1: Work with the Governing Council and the school community to revitalise the school vision to ensure that it is collaboratively developed, future focused, student centred and captures the school's aspirations for student achievement and wellbeing and ensure alignment of vision, values and planning as part of this process.

Direction 2: Increase the number of students achieving the DECD standard of Educational Achievement by using the established improvement model to guide improvement processes in relation to numeracy and mathematics teaching and to lift achievement in middle primary literacy.

Direction 3: Accelerate the learning of those students achieving well above the Standard of Educational Achievement using current data systems to identify and explicitly monitor their learning.

Direction 4: Refine current inquiry approach to provide challenge and intellectual stretch in learning opportunities so that students engage in complex thinking and develop high order skills.

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?
The school has demonstrated good progress in relation to the previous directions. They clearly articulated the consultative processes undertaken to develop a new vision statement which has been closely aligned to the school values. Students have a deep understanding of the school values. The school aims to strengthen understanding of the vision statement and its impact on their learning in line with the values. Several actions have been undertaken in relation to student achievement including a Results Plus audit, increased learning and engagement by teachers with data, revision of the implementation of intervention programs across the school and developing increased collaborative work by teachers and de-privatising practice through peer observations and team planning. The school made a strategic decision to change the leadership structure to align with the priorities in their improvement plan. The school is still developing consistent and agreed pedagogy and continuing to focus on improvement of student achievement trends.

Core action teams have been established along with expectations of team planning processes including an Australian Curriculum planning tool to address challenge and stretch. In addition, the school has used STEM as an approach, along with engagement in activities such as Lego League, to further develop opportunities for students to be extended.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How effectively does the school use improvement planning processes to raise student achievement?

The principal outlined the processes of consultation to inform and shape the development of the new Site Improvement Plan (SIP). Staff are involved in analysing data sets, developing success criteria and are regularly consulted throughout the process of development. Goals are established with direct correlation to relevant data sets, in particular NAPLAN. Further review of common agreements, inclusive of the breadth of evidence-based data sets collected and analysed (ie PAT) when reviewing the impact of strategies undertaken would strengthen this work. There are effective structures in place to support the implementation of the plans of action including SIP committees and team leaders who as groups, 'incubate' the trialling of new strategies and share their implementation practices through 'spotlights' at staff meetings. This is also extended to Governing Council meetings with both staff and students presenting to share the development of this work. This was evidenced by a recent example of the successful implementation of Natural Maths strategies across the school. Continuation of this model for both maths and literacy inclusive of further accountability measures, will lead to more consistent implementation across the school and positive learning outcomes for students.

Staff articulated that there are expectations of linking both personal and team goals in their Professional Learning Plans to the goals in the SIP. Staff spoke positively about the processes established to support performance development which include professional meetings, peer and leadership observations and oral and written feedback. Leadership have provided clear expectations and structures in relation to team planning and collaborative work with a focus on the site priorities. Continuing to strengthen expectations of the roles and responsibilities of individuals for improvement will provide staff with a clear understanding of how their work is closely aligned to the SIP and ensure that the targets and goals are owned by all.

The school is now well placed to take the next steps in strengthening their processes to ensure a focus on clear, specific goals in the SIP and measuring impact through a range of commonly agreed data sets.

Direction 1   Strategically strengthen staff capacity to clearly understand and apply the links between the challenges of practice and plans of action.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

It was clear from the principal that work is underway to develop effective and consistent pedagogy across the school. The school has developed clear agreements and other resources in literacy and numeracy. These, along with a strategic approach to implementation, have been valuable in supporting student learning, particularly maths. Staff affirmed the support of leadership, time to work collaboratively with colleagues and tools for planning have led to a more consistent implementation across the school. This consistency was also evident in student discussions through the language they used. The school is trialling 'learning sprints' in literacy and numeracy as an improvement strategy. The implementation of 'learning sprints' presents an opportunity for the school to target the implementation, and impact, of several agreed, coherent and understood strategies across the school. It also provides opportunity to review the extent to which the strategy contributed to learning outcomes for students.

There was some evidence, from both teachers and students, of the use of goal setting, learning intentions and success criteria. The school analyses a range of cohort data regularly to track progress and there are systems in place for individual tracking. The consistency and depth of practice in relation to individual students and how their data influences the intentional teaching is developing. Providing students with clear feedback about their performance (ie. sharing their data) can be powerful for students to construct their goals and have a clear understanding of their next steps.

Student perseverance and resilience may be enhanced from the collaborative identification and embedding of a common language to describe the *'what'* and *'why'* when working through new learning. In this way, challenge is normalised, mistakes are understood and it is acknowledged that they 'may not be there yet'. Using agreed language to support students to understand that new learning includes making mistakes will support the further development and embedding of resilience across the school.

Direction 2   Strengthen practices in effective feedback for learning and setting individual learning goals which embed intellectual stretch and challenge.

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE STUDENT LEARNING

To what extent does the school promote a culture of learning with high expectations of achievement for all learners?

Staff reported that the learning culture of the school has become more open with staff willing to share practice, teachers feeling valued, seeking feedback and willing to ask questions of each other. Leadership value and nurture a team culture as well as building collaborative and consistent practices through a range of strategies including release time for team planning and sharing, modelling processes/approaches to be implemented and ensuring appropriate supports are in place for early career teachers.

Parents have a high level of trust in the school to support children in their learning. Some parents commented that students could be stretched more in their learning with celebrations of significant learning progress recognised across the school.

A number of students indicated that about half of their work was stretching their thinking and they recognised and could articulate why 'learning new things' was a priority at school. Students expressed that they have high expectations of each other, many talked about being in the 'learning pit' and were also able to articulate why this is about stretch and how they could work with others to work through the 'struggle'.

The school has recently reviewed the delivery of intervention and support for students with learning difficulties and those just below the DfE Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). There are clear practices and processes in place that successfully support these identified students. The school's learning data over time indicates high levels of students consistently achieving the DfE SEA. Higher band achievement is strong in some areas of the school but there are not consistent positive trends across all year levels. It should be acknowledged the learning achievement data for many of the ATSI students is clearly tracked, intervention is provided as needed and the achievement data for these students is similar to other cohorts.

Direction 3   Strengthen the processes to support staff to more effectively and rigorously collaborate to ensure all students are challenged to achieve at a higher level.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

There is a good culture of learning throughout Reidy Park Primary School which is nurtured by the leadership team. Teachers genuinely want to support students to do their best and willingly undertake and share professional learning and good practice. Students are confident when talking about their learning.

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

Direction 1   Strategically strengthen staff capacity to clearly understand and apply the links between the challenges of practice and plans of action.

Direction 2   Strengthen practices in effective feedback for learning and setting individual learning goals which embed intellectual stretch and challenge.

Direction 3   Strengthen the processes to support staff to more effectively and rigorously collaborate to ensure all students are challenged to achieve at a higher level.

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

Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY

Kathryn Bruggemann
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS

Stephen Jolley
PRINCIPAL
REIDY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

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, 50% of year 1 and 75% 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 2016 and 2018, the trend for years 1 and 2 has been downwards, from 81% to 59% for year 1 and from 81% to 75% for year 2 from 2016 to 2018 respectively.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 86% of year 3 students, 76% of year 5 students and 81% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement and for year 5 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 81% to 86% respectively.

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

In 2018, 57% of year 3, 15% of year 5 and 27% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading trends. 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, 42%, or 10 out of 24 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018 and 59%, or 16 out of 27 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 85% of year 3 students, 76% of year 5 students and 78% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents an improvement, for year 5 little or no change and for year 7 a decline from the historic baseline averages.

For 2018 years 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving higher than the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018 35% of year 3, 11% 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.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 26% to 35% respectively.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 33%, or 6 of 18 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018 and 65%, or 11 of 17 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.