

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Padthaway Primary School

Conducted in June 2021



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 Katherine Holman, Review Officer of the Department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Jason Sheehy, 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
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Padthaway Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 287kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 57. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 58. The local partnership is Wrattontully.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 1001 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 7% Aboriginal students, 3% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background or children/young people in care, and 18% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 1st year of tenure, who completed 1.5 years in the acting leadership role prior to 2021 and is in their 6th year of teaching.

There are 3 full-time teachers, including 1 in the early years of their career and 1 part-time teacher covering non-instructional teaching 0.6FTE. There are no Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Collaboratively develop tasks to support and embed differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge across all areas of learning and year levels and share the language for positive learning dispositions with families.
- Direction 2** Provide planned and regular opportunities for staff to participate with like schools in moderation processes that are aligned across year levels and the Australian Curriculum.
- Direction 3** Develop and embed authentic student influence for learning as a powerful means of students becoming equal partners in the learning process across the site and share this work with the community.

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

Direction 1

The school used best advice papers, guidebooks and research to develop best teaching practice across the site in teaching reading and writing. Parent information sessions were held to inform parents of Big Write and vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation as strategies to improve writing. Staff worked collaboratively to implement learning sprints. Teachers developed an understanding of explicit teaching, support tools and strategies to support students' learning improvement. There was a greater emphasis on individual student learning needs.

Direction 2

Termly moderation is scheduled to support consistency of teacher judgement. There is also interschool moderation twice a year. The school is moderating student work in reading and writing.

Direction 3

The school has undertaken some outstanding work in goal-setting within writing and reading. Goals are based on student data, and there is a cyclic process for regular review. Processes and timelines for planning and review were established to ensure this practice is embedded. These practices are consistent and cohesive across the school. Students can articulate their learning goals, and what strategies they need and stated that feedback helped them improve. The school reported greater student involvement and engagement in their learning because of this work, for which the school should be commended.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

Quality school improvement planning is essential, as it improves teaching practice and strengthens the impact on student learning. Its cyclic nature highlights the need for continuous monitoring, evaluation and planning and a willingness to discard what is not having an effect. The school should be commended for their improvement planning process. There are clear processes and routines in each step of the improvement planning cycle. Timelines are documented and adhered to. Staff are involved in the implementation and continuous review of the school improvement plan (SIP). There is extensive documentation using termly reflections in steps 4 and 5 of the plan to inform the following year's SIP.

The Principal is strategically using the Breakspear model of 'teaching sprints' to lead improvement of teaching practice. The school is using multiple measures of data from a range of sources to set goals and track progress. Actions identified in the SIP guide the learning sprints and build staff capacity in improving their practice in teaching reading and writing. Professional development and performance management are aligned to the goals of the SIP and initiatives are resourced appropriately.

Staff are able to articulate their practice in each of the SIP goals. They use feedback and collaboratively critique to measure the impact of their teaching practice on student learning outcomes. The local education team support the Principal and staff by engaging with the monitoring and review of the SIP.

There are opportunities to strengthen the SIP by narrowing the challenge of practice to provide greater clarity and precision in teaching practice. Analysing student achievement data to pinpoint the specific weaknesses in the students' ability to comprehend texts would greatly assist teachers to know what skills and strategies they need to teach. Success criteria could be sharpened and more precise. The work around learning goals would support the shaping of measurable success criteria of what students can say, do or understand.

Direction 1 **Narrow the challenge of practice to provide greater clarity and precision to teaching practice and sharpen the success criteria to what students know, do and understand.**

Effective teaching and student learning

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

The way in which teachers teach (ie pedagogies) is critical to student engagement and resulting achievement. The school is implementing proven pedagogies, supported by research, for example, guided reading and Big Write. There is a culture of mentoring others to capitalise on individual strengths and expertise. There are high levels of collaboration, and teachers reported that using the teaching sprints to change specific aspects of teaching practice kept it achievable. Teaching sprints are scheduled, valued, and embedded across the school. Staff reported they could see the impact in student work, particularly in writing.

It was evident through the leader's presentation, interviews and classroom walkthroughs, that there is a common language for, and understanding of, writing and reading goals. The learning goals in reading and writing are explicit and seen in all classrooms. Students can articulate their learning strategies to achieve them. Goals are fluid and reviewed in a continuous way. Conferencing for writing, using teacher and student criterion scales, supports students and teachers to make informed judgements around achievement, and motivates students to improve their writing. Students are taking responsibility for their learning, for example the negotiation to use a laptop for writing to increase work productivity.

The planning and tracking forms for guided reading are effective tools to ensure quality teaching is implemented and learning progress is monitored. Teachers demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of teaching reading and writing. Their ability to identify next steps for reading and writing is commendable.

This school demonstrated a strong willingness to seek and take on board feedback from students, leadership, each other and Partnership colleagues. The teaching sprints model is planned for transfer to improve achievement in mathematics. The school is ready and able to build teacher capacity to stretch and challenge all students.

Direction 2 Build teacher capacity to stretch and challenge all students particularly those with the potential to achieve at higher levels.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Parents, students and staff are proud of their school. Parents and students like the small community feel. Students particularly like the fact that they know everyone, and they all support one another. Parents appreciate teachers, and thought the Principal was doing a good job leading the school and promoting their successes in the wider community. Staff are committed to working together to improve learning outcomes for students.

The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following directions:

Direction 1 **Narrow the challenge of practice to provide greater clarity and precision to teaching practice and sharpen the success criteria to what students know, do and understand.**

Direction 2 **Build teacher capacity to stretch and challenge all students particularly those with the potential to achieve at higher levels.**

Based on the school's current performance, Padthaway Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



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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).

In considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making a judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school. This is done for two reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohort of students. The data below represents a summary of the aggregated data from Padthaway Primary School from 2016 to 2019.

Further information concerning school performance is available in the school's annual report.

Reading

In the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2016 to 2019, 25% of year 1 and 14% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, the reading results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 80% of year 3 students, 80% of year 5 students, and 80% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 24% of year 3, 26% of year 5, and 16% of year 7 achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

From 2016 to 2019, the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 98% of year 3 students, 87% of year 5 students, and 83% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 31% of year 3, 23% of year 5, and 37% of year 7 achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.