

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for South Port Primary School

Conducted in September 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 Nathan Taylor, 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

South Port Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 36kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 269. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 235. The local partnership is River Hub.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 962 and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 6% Aboriginal students, 15% students with disabilities (includes two special classes), 3% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 5% children in care and 31% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school has a Junior Primary and Primary Special Class.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 1st year of tenure, a Deputy Principal in the 1st year of tenure, with focus on learner engagement, and a part time wellbeing leader. There is 1 Highly Accomplished Teacher (HAT) who coaches and mentors' staff in reading improvement.

There are 13 teachers including 6 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Strengthen the whole-school assessment processes to include student voice, qualitative data, and evidenced feedback processes reception to year 7.**
- Direction 2** **Explore and implement approaches that integrate and effectively embed intellectual stretch, challenge and rigour into daily classroom teaching and learning.**
- Direction 3** **Design, implement, review, and embed effective and consistent pedagogical practice within and across all learning areas that use evidence-based data to support student learning and growth.**

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

D1. The school engaged with the learning design and moderation (LDAM) partnership work which has a focus on task design and moderation. They also analysed the progressive achievement tests (PAT) data to a deeper level and established a data wall, that is owned and used by staff. Learning discussions with parents and students take place each semester. The school also looked more deeply at the phonics screening data and implemented a targeted intervention program. Conferencing during the daily 5 literacy program, writing assessment processes (Brightpath) and bookmaking are used consistently, as tools to track and monitor student progress.

D2. The school participated in partnership work with the Big Ideas in Number. Some teachers also worked with the curriculum lead to implement the curriculum modules in maths. Other evidenced programs have been used to guide teaching practice in this direction.

D3. There are a number of pedagogical practices and programs being implemented consistently across the school.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

Effective improvement planning processes are cyclic and are critical to improve teaching and raise student achievement. The staff engagement with, and understanding of, the school improvement plan (SIP) is to be commended. There are strategic processes in place to build staff understanding in each step of the improvement cycle. All classroom teachers can articulate what actions they are implementing in their classroom for each goal in the SIP, changes they have made to their practice and how they use data to monitor their impact on student learning. Staff are making connections between their teaching practice and improved achievement data. There has been some growth in the 2021 NAPLAN literacy and numeracy achievement and significant growth in the phonics screening, which is highly motivating for staff. There is, however, potential for higher achievement for all students.

The previous External School Review directions are aligned to the SIP goals and the partnership improvement plan. Additional support for the school is provided through the local education team (LET) via the Curriculum Lead who has supported the school with the implementation of the maths curriculum units. This is highly valued by those staff currently implementing the units and has led to other staff wanting to be involved. There is intentional alignment of resources, both human and physical, to support the achievement of the SIP goals. Governing council informed the review panel that they know the SIP goals and are kept up to date regarding the implementation progress.

There is a culture of improvement and a shared responsibility for increased student achievement. The creation of the data room has been instrumental in enabling regular conversations with leadership, teachers, and school support officers (SSOs) and strengthens collective ownership of whole-school data across the school, not just in individual classes. The Principal has an in-depth knowledge of students' individual data and learning. Some staff reported, this understanding enables conversations about learning growth and provides opportunities for acknowledgement and celebration.

Currently, the line of sight between classroom assessment measures, and the school's SIP success criteria is not evident. This lack of connection between improved school-wide achievement and how this, transfers into the classroom assessment foci, requires greater clarity.

Direction 1 Create greater connection between classroom assessment measures on what students will be able to know, do and understand and the school's SIP success criteria.

Effective teaching and student learning

Effective Pedagogy

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

There are a number of evidence-based programs and pedagogies consistently implemented across the school to support effective teaching of reading, writing and maths. An evidenced based phonemic and phonological awareness program is being implemented in the junior primary classes each day, to increase students' phonological skills. Documented literacy and numeracy agreements that make it clear to teachers what and how they teach, have been developed and are continually revisited and updated, to reflect new research and to further develop consistent practices.

Coaches, mentors, and external experts are being utilised, to support staff to improve their planning and pedagogy in reading, writing and maths. The mathematics curriculum units are being trialled in the year 5/6 classes and supported by the Curriculum Lead from the LET team. The implementation of the curriculum units across the school, will support staff understanding of formative assessment strategies.

Focused time to collaborate in learning teams to plan and reflect on practice, is valued by staff and provided weekly, by releasing staff at the same time through intentional timetabling. Teachers stated they plan together to improve consistency of the curriculum delivery, across like year level classes.

Analysis of a range of key data sets is used to inform planning and to differentiate learning, particularly for the students at or below standard of educational achievement (SEA). However, students, particularly those achieving in the higher bands or just below, are not being sufficiently challenged. Students reported that their work in reading, writing and maths is mainly just right or too easy. 37% of students, reported that they were most challenged in maths.

All students have learning goals in reading, maths, and writing. Learning discussions that include the teacher, students and parents are scheduled twice a year to share these goals and report their progress against these with families. Some teachers are using individual achievement data to set the goals, however, in some classes, students choose their goals from a generic list. Effective task design and targeted learning goals connected to individual student achievement data will provide opportunities for students to be challenged and stretched in their learning.

Direction 2 Build staff capacity to strengthen their practices in goal setting with students, explicitly teaching the strategies to achieve them with regular cyclic processes to review and reset their goals.

Effective leadership

How well does the leadership facilitate the development for coherent high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?

The leadership team clearly articulates the expectations for learning improvement, and these are known by all staff. Literacy, numeracy and behaviour agreements have been developed and implemented, to varying degrees across the school. Students, staff, and parents have been engaged in the review and update of the school's vision and values.

The use of an effective writing assessment tool is building staff and student knowledge of the language features in a range of genres. It is also strengthening consistency of judgement and confidence, to identify the next teaching points in writing. Some classes have bump it up walls or work samples displayed, using a rating system of 1 to 5 stars to make it explicit to students, where their work sits and how to make it better.

The PAT data has been unpacked and teachers are using the PAT resource centre to support their planning and target their teaching based on student needs. Some staff were excited to view the 2021 PAT data, as they were predicting improved achievement for their students.

There has been a focus on developing consistent and coherent practices across the school. There are pockets of high-quality curriculum planning and effective teaching. De-privatising planning, particularly through implementing structured routines for maths lessons in year 5/6, has been seen by staff as an effective strategy to improve their teaching and capitalise on each other's skills and expertise.

The Principal is strategic with the allocation of resources and support for staff, to collaboratively develop knowledge and skills, to implement agreed programs and practices. Teachers are more open about what they need to support them, to improve their practice. There is significant support from the LET and this has created enthusiasm and motivation. Some staff have invited the Curriculum Lead to observe their practice and provide feedback on how they can improve. Throughout 2021 the school was supported by the Literacy Guarantee Unit to deepen their knowledge and understanding in early phonics and Literacy. In 2022 the school will engage with the Literacy Guarantee Unit and the LET to build staff capacity in using the scope and sequence in English and Maths.

Direction 3 Build staff capacity to use the Australian Curriculum English and Mathematics scope and sequences R to 6 to ensure coherent high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching across the school.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Students and their parents are very proud of the school. They are satisfied with what is offered and like the community feel. Staff are committed to improvement and stated that they enjoy coming to work, as they have a great collaborative team to work with. The students reported that they like the teachers because they are friendly and help them with their work. The parents appreciated the communication they get from the school, are highly supportive and commented on how smoothly the transition to learning at home was in 2021. Parents and students thought the turtle pond was one of the best things about the school. Some of the students also made comments about liking house points and class dojo points and enjoyed working towards rewards.

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

- Direction 1** Create greater connection between classroom assessment measures on what students will be able to know, do and understand and the school's SIP success criteria.
- Direction 2** Build staff capacity to strengthen their practices in goal setting with students, explicitly teaching the strategies to achieve them with regular cyclic processes to review and reset their goals.
- Direction 3** Build staff capacity to use the Australian Curriculum English and Mathematics scope and sequences R to 6 to ensure coherent high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching across the school.

Based on the school's current performance, South Port 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).

There are no year 7 students at the school.

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2019 61% of year 1 and 62% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

In 2019 the reading results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 67% of year 3 students and 68% of year 5 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents little or no change and for year 5 an improvement from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 30% of year 3 and no year 5 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3 this result represents an improvement and for year 5, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, no students from year 3 remained in the upper bands at year 5.

Numeracy

In 2019 the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 72% of year 3 students and 50% of year 5 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents an improvement and for year 5 little or no change from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019 15% of year 3 and no year 5 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3 this result represents an improvement and year 5 a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5. In 2021 there are no year 7 students at the site.