

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Hackham West R-7 School

Conducted in October 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 Shane Misso, 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

Hackham West R-7 School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 28kms south of the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 131. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 109. The local partnership is Beach Road.

The school has an ICSEA score of 868 and is classified as Category 1 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 31% Aboriginal students, 32% students with disabilities, less than 6 students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 5% children/young people in care and 70% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

Large number of students are in kinship care arrangements, rotating parents in domestic violence emergency housing or homeless shelter housing, majority of families are single parents, over 80% of parent population are unemployed, a large parent population is in the justice system, and school is surrounded by housing trust homes.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in 4<sup>th</sup> year of tenure/deputy principal of wellbeing in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a 5-year tenure and special education leader in their 1<sup>st</sup> year of a 3-year tenure.

There are 9 teachers including 3 in the early years of their career and no Step 9 teachers.

## The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1**    **Increase the academic learning growth of students by using data to accurately differentiate for and stretch each student to their next point of learning.**
- Direction 2**    **Use an evidence-base to continuously and closely monitor the impact of student behaviour on the quality of the teaching and learning environment.**
- Direction 3**    **Increase the level of rigor and challenge for students through quality task design that regularly engages all students through inquiry and problem-solving.**
- Direction 4**    **Build teacher capacity to use data diagnostically to inform teaching through the implementation of strategically designed processes of Professional Learning and Performance Development.**

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

#### **Direction 1**

Deep analysis of student achievement data provided teachers with rich evidence of current strengths and next steps in learning. Introduction of literacy support programs that sequence and scaffold the learning caters for individual learning needs for all students. The emphasis is on support and provision of targeted learning that stretches, rather than historical approaches of rescue and reduce.

#### **Direction 2**

The wellbeing for learning changed the way teachers and students respond to complex behavioural situations. This resulted in greater respect, calm dispositions and a sense of genuine care. Profiling of students and trauma-informed training enabled teachers to identify individual, social and emotional dispositions and proactively respond to behaviours before they impact on learning.

**Direction 3**

Explicit Direct Instruction is a very supportive framework for delivering learning. This pedagogical approach unified the design of learning in all classes despite curriculum variations. Staff engaged effectively with this process and now value adding elements that are trialled through the teaching sprint approach and then adopted more widely.

**Direction 4**

All teaching and leadership staff are engaged in the deep analysis of achievement data to drive and verify all actions and decisions around student improvement. This occurred on a global whole-school analysis level down to individual cohorts, class and focus student levels. Tracking, monitoring and the consistent analysis of student achievement data allows teachers to modify and adjust teaching and learning to meet the next steps for students.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

How well does the school critically evaluate current curricular, pedagogical and assessment practice to determine challenges of practice?

A collaborative and collegiate staff culture underpins effective analysis of student achievement data and current practice in the area of reading and mathematics. Collaborative planning led to a collective understanding of requirements to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Developing deep core reading skills at all year levels is at the centre of the improvement journey. Student improvement and progression is founded on understanding the emotional, social and academic needs of every student. Staff use of a digital notebook to capture and organise information enables collaborative access and sharing of classroom practice and evaluative results. This resulted in deprivatisation of classroom practice, a collective understanding of effective teaching and learning strategies, and a sense of collective accountability to improve student achievement. A culture of consistent, scaffolded and steady improvement with many small steps is the cornerstone of the improvement process. There is concentrated effort by everyone to get all students to reading benchmarks.

Four-week learning sprints include a rigorous evaluation every 2 weeks enabling the impact of teaching on student learning to be assessed in a timely manner with actions adjusted accordingly. The process is dynamic and highly regarded by teachers and leadership.

The panel acknowledges the school's efforts and urgency to recover and re-establish learning in reading, with a focus on building foundation skills and addressing significant gaps in reading. There is a strong, consistent focus on the development of reading. Comprehensive student tracking data and assessments indicate considerable growth in reading across the school, as a result of the collective focus on the challenge of practice.

The SIP review and evaluation process this year will need to consider the balance all 3 Australian Curriculum interrelated strands of language, literature and literacy. This will ensure a balanced English curriculum is collaboratively implemented and embedded across the school.

**Direction 1    Ensure equity of access to a balanced English curriculum for all students by implementing and embedding the interrelated strands of language, literature and literacy across all classes.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

Learning sprints are an embedded and effective teaching and learning process that consolidates the design of learning allowing for a deeper and narrower focus. It ensures teachers stay on track, targets specific learning needs of students, and provides a professional level of accountability. Students are aware of this change in practice and how it is used in the design of their learning. Most classes are building executive function, behaviour regulation and self-awareness through:

- Individual conferencing
- Common language
- Targeted goal-setting
- Focus on meta-language.

Currently, sprints are conducted for literacy, numeracy and wellbeing; however, some teachers are introducing them to other areas of the curriculum with positive results.

There is a strategic use of learning intentions across all classes focusing on what learning is, why it is important, and how students can demonstrate it. These are shared and discussed with students prior to, during and at the conclusion of lessons providing authenticity to the learning process.

The school developed a multiple entry and exit point strategy to engage and challenge students in their learning. Based on the Olympic medals, bronze, silver, gold and platinum, student learning tasks include a sliding scale of challenge providing multiple entry point to the learning. This will enhance students' personal success contributing significantly to their achievement. Students are able to discuss their choices and self-extensions.

While this strategy is resonating positively with the majority of students, higher-achieving students need greater clarity around their learning through challenge and developing greater autonomy. Including success criteria and opportunities for students to engage with their achievement data, will provide them with greater ownership of learning, awareness of where they are in their learning, and what they need to do to improve.

**Direction 2    Ensure academic stretch and challenge for higher-achieving students, by designing rich learning tasks that include success criteria, opportunities to moderate learning and analysis of their assessment data.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

Wellbeing for learning is a key element in the underlying approach and success at this school. The approach is not to rescue and clear an easy path, but to foster strength in each child to keep trying, sustain and celebrate each small step. Effective collection and analysis of student achievement data and differentiation of learning was critical to the improvement journey.

Extensive ongoing assessment of student learning in reading, particularly in the early years and 3/4/5 class occurs regularly identifying student progress and growth. Support and intervention is provided where required and targeted to specific student needs.

Pre- and post-assessment strategies ensure that learning is in the zone of proximal development. This enables the identification of realistic learning goals with students confident in discussing their next steps with their teacher.

The school recently introduced a deeper tracking pre/post process that includes a six-week assessment that evaluates the retention of previous learning. This guides the design of learning, ensuring student retention of key learning is maintained.

Buddy reading is an effective teaching and learning strategy students enjoy. It provides consolidation of specific reading skills in older students and practice for younger students. Such is the enthusiasm of students, that training has been requested on how best to support the learning needs of the students they are working with. This will further enhance the outcomes for all students.

As students at this school become more confident in their learning the more they are engaging in the process of learning. At this point in time, there are varying degrees of understanding and implementation of formative assessment and feedback practices. In some classes, formative feedback provided challenges for students to review, reflect on and refine their understandings at various points in a learning sequence. In other classes, there was learning that had yet to be assessed. When students understand what they need to do to improve they feel encouraged and supported to achieve the learning goals.

**Direction 3    Support and encourage students by implementing and embedding formative feedback strategies that challenges them to review, reflect on and refine their learning.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

The school has a tangible culture of nurturing for learning. Wellbeing is the foundation on which teaching and learning is based, with individual needs of students and teachers carefully considered. High levels of respect and professionalism, with all staff equally engaged and committed to improving the learning journey of each other and every child. Leadership have been very strategic in how they valued the needs of students and carefully crafted the strategies and approaches designed to meet the learning needs of students. Teachers' positive and proactive approach towards learning and developing relationships with students and their families drives the improvement agenda and allows everyone to experience success in learning.

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

- Direction 1**    **Ensure equity of access to a balanced English curriculum for all students by implementing and embedding the interrelated strands of language, literature and literacy across all classes.**
- Direction 2**    **Ensure academic stretch and challenge for higher-achieving students, by designing rich learning tasks that include success criteria, opportunities to moderate learning and analysis of their assessment data.**
- Direction 3**    **Support and encourage students by implementing and embedding formative feedback strategies that challenges them to review, reflect on and refine their learning.**

Based on the school's current performance, Hackham West R-7 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, 24% of year 1 and 8% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change for year 1 and a decline for year 2 from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 33% of year 3 students, 42% of year 5 students and 35% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 this result represents little or no change and for year 7 a decline, from the historic baseline average.

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

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

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, none of the 2 students from year 3 remained in the upper bands at year 5, and 50%, or 1 out of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 33% of year 3 students, 37% of year 5 students and 39% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 and 7, this result represents little or no change, and for year 5 an improvement, from the historic baseline average.

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

Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved lower in year 7 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 14% of year 3, 5% of year 5 and 19% 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, 33%, or 1 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 50%, or 1 out of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.