

# **Department for Education**

## **External School Review**

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

**Report for Elizabeth North Primary School**

Conducted in August 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 (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 Rob McLaren, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Ray Marino, Review Principal.

## Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relating 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 groups
  - School Support Officers (SSOs)
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

## School context

Elizabeth North Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 28 kilometres north east of the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 639 students and has been increasing over the last 5 years. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 530.

The school is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education's Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score is 906.

The school population includes 18% of Aboriginal students, 15% of students with a verified disability, 71% of families eligible for School Card assistance, 8% of students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, and 15 students in care.

There are 3 sub-schools: preschool, junior primary (reception to year 2) and primary (years 3 to 7).

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of their tenure at the school. The school has a deputy principal, 4 assistant principals and an intervention coordinator. There are 57 teachers including 8 in the early years of their career and 13 Step 9 teachers.

## Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Narrow and strengthen intervention processes, and ensure teachers deliver more targeted and differentiated classroom learning practices.
- Direction 2** As a priority, continue to focus on significantly increasing attendance in the school and preschool.
- Direction 3** Support students to achieve at the higher levels of NAPLAN and the Australian Curriculum by identifying and implementing teaching practices that lift learning expectations and rigour.
- Direction 4** The preschool and early years team work together to improve early learning literacy experiences for all children and strengthen and align transition processes for children and their families.

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

There has been considerable growth in enrolments with an increase of 23% to 636 students since the previous review. Despite many changes associated with this growth, there has been consistent and focussed leadership from the principal. The team of leaders and teachers is highly cohesive. Staff and parents commented positively about the executive leadership team who speak with a common voice about the schools vision for learning and its improvement agenda. The strength of leadership and collegiate support amongst staff has ensured the improvement direction.

Leadership described improvements in intervention practices shifting away from removing students from classes to an in-class focus of providing support. Leaders, teachers and SSOs meet regularly in year level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) developing teacher practice and co-planning learning and intervention, while referencing student education plans and student achievement data.

Attendance identified as a significant influence on learning success was reviewed by the wellbeing leader, refining processes and making them more explicit for leaders, teams and individual teachers to monitor and act upon. A text messaging alert service was introduced to inform parents of their child's absence with many parents supporting this initiative. The school and partnership, with Senior Leader, Learning Improvement Primary (SLLIPs) support, has been working on transforming tasks and moderation and assessment practices to raise learning expectations and student achievement. The school focus of implementation has been on formative assessment and the use of learning intentions and success criteria. A number of classes were visibly using these to make the learning more relevant and connected to students. This was seen as an area for ongoing development by teachers.

In conversations with leaders, early years and preschool teachers, it was clear that there has been a great deal of cooperation between staff in these teams. Leaders highlighted the sharing and agreements of practice around oral language from preschool to year 2 as being an example.

## Lines of inquiry

### EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

***To what extent has the school drawn on evidence of best practice to determine strategies and actions for improvement?***

The leadership presentation made clear that the development of the school priorities for improvement as documented in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) were collaboratively developed using evidence from NAPLAN, PAT, A to E grades, Brightpath reports, Running Records, Phonics screening and wellbeing data. Teachers described how the strengths and weaknesses in student performance determined the need for a greater focus in developing student achievement in reading, writing, numeracy and wellbeing. It was evident to the panel that this process had provided staff with an ownership and responsibility in supporting the development of these priorities.

Leaders described that in developing strategies and actions for improvement they were provided with support through the partnership, SLLIP, best practice papers and the literacy and numeracy guides. With the advantage of a longer timeline and a deeper understanding of the school improvement process, the strategies and actions were now being reviewed and refined.

The established PLCs with leader, preschool, teacher and SSO membership provided a forum for planning, developing and sharing of best practice to enable the Challenges of Practice within the SIP. Additionally, Professional Development program (PDP) processes support teachers in achieving their goals which are aligned to the SIP goals.

To oversee and monitor progress of the improvement strategies and actions, literacy, numeracy, and wellbeing committees, with representation from each PLC were created. It was clear to the panel through conversations with staff that these teams were relatively new and that their purpose and role was not well defined. There was a lack of clarity and consistency in their links to PLCs and their role in monitoring the progress of the SIP strategies and actions. There is a need to further develop and clarify the role of the SIP committees, their links to PLCs and PDP processes to provide an appropriate forum to monitor the progress of the SIP based on the impact on student learning.

**Direction 1**      **To ensure the impact of the schools' agreed strategies and actions on student learning clarify the role of the SIP committees and their links to PLCs and other Performance Development processes.**

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING & LEARNING

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

The panel observed scheduled year level PLC meetings providing leaders, teachers and SSOs time to plan learning and develop teacher practice. Teacher facilitators guided year level discussions around planning learning and intervention. Student achievement data formed the basis for these discussions with teachers referring to multiple datasets.

Classroom observations confirmed high levels of student engagement in learning. Teachers were well organised in their intentionality of planning and delivery of learning activities. A number of teachers grouped students in their classrooms providing appropriate learning activities and SSO support according to their ability. Some common pedagogical agreements were evident in practice across the school, including the use of learning intentions, success criteria, and elements of literacy and numeracy programs which are considered best practice. Long standing agreements in literacy, numeracy and Aboriginal education were cited and served as guides for teachers, although they are currently being updated.

Students interviewed commented that their teachers had high expectations of them as learners and many felt their learning needs were being met. A number of students believed that they were challenged in lessons but this varied depending on the task or teacher. School survey responses from students rated emotional engagement with teachers and a connectedness with the school as high. Parents commented that there had been a shift in focus towards high expectations in learning.

Teachers and SSOs spoke positively of the shift of the learning intervention processes to an 'in class' approach, and further explained that this was supported through targeted professional learning and collaborative work in PLCs. These initiatives were enabling them to be more consistent and proactive in planning and delivering learning for all students.

Students in year 7 commented positively on the learning approaches and challenges provided in learning and assessment tasks in business and economics. They believed that they had a greater say in their learning, the way in which they worked and how they presented their learning. They felt teachers took on a different role working alongside students in learning as against directing student learning. They found the learning was challenging and had a real life connection. This was not a common feature across the school and could be developed to enhance student engagement and challenge. PLCs and professional learning are providing ongoing opportunities for year level teams to reflect on and develop agreements on best practice.

**Direction 2     Develop agreements of highly effective pedagogical practice that support student engagement and challenge for all learners through the ongoing evidence-based work of PLCs, Performance Development processes and aligned professional learning.**

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING & LEARNING

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

The school has made considerable investment in year level PLCs to improve practice, intentionally review student progress and plan for effective learning and intervention. This co-construction of learning is strengthening consistency of practice and teacher judgement. The year 5 and early years PLCs were seen to be highly effective referencing data and feedback collected in classrooms to plan differentiated practice.

The use of effective formative feedback through questioning techniques, wait time, 'think, pair, share', and reviewing student work to support students in their learning was observed by the panel in a number of classes. In some classes, students were observed using peer assessment to give each other feedback on their learning. Teachers commented that this was an area that needed further development.

While teachers in PLCs were using data and other evidence to plan differentiated learning, there were only a small number of teachers observed that sought formal feedback from students to inform improvement of practice or task design. There is an opportunity to develop agreements on what effective feedback processes to use to strengthen student learning and teacher practice.

**Direction 3** Provide differentiated learning opportunities for all students, through building teacher capacity and efficacy in learning and assessment design and formative assessment.

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

At Elizabeth North Primary School, the influence of previous directions is evident with the school effectively using improvement planning and monitoring processes to support this work. Teacher and leader practice is positively being impacted by effective PLCs which are building capacity. Students feel their teachers genuinely care about them and these strong relationships are evident throughout the school.

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

- Direction 1 To ensure the impact of the schools' agreed strategies and actions on student learning clarify the role of the SIP committees and their links to PLCs and other Performance Development processes.
- Direction 2 Develop agreements of highly effective pedagogical practice that support student engagement and challenge for all learners through the ongoing evidence-based work of PLCs, Performance Development processes and aligned professional learning.
- Direction 3 Provide differentiated learning opportunities for all students, through building teacher capacity and efficacy in learning and assessment design and formative assessment.

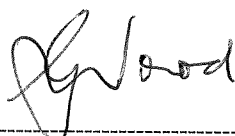
Based on the school's current performance, Elizabeth North Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



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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 2018, 58% of year 1 and 59% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement for years 1 and 2 from the historic baseline average.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 57% of year 3 students, 56% of year 5 students and 68% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline, for year 5 this represents little or no change, and for year 7 this represents an improvement, from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2018, 21% of year 3, 13% of year 5 and 10% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 5 has been downwards from 23% to 13%.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 35%, or 6 out of 17 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 27%, or 4 out of 15 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 56% of year 3 students, 42% of year 5 students and 64% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents little or no change, and for year 7, this represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For 2018 year 3 and 5 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving lower than, and for year 7 within, the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 6% of year 3, 4% of year 5 and 0% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 0%, or 0 out of 1 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 0%, or 0 of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.