

# Department for Education

## External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

### Report for Ascot Park Primary School

Conducted in April 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, 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 Belinda Kopania, 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

Ascot Park Primary School caters for children from Reception to year 7. It is situated 10kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 182 students. Enrolment has been increasing over the last 5 years. Enrolment at the previous time of review was 112 students.

The school has an ICSEA score of 986, and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education (DfE) Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 10% Aboriginal students, 9% students with disabilities, 16% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 7 children in care and 30% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the third year of her first tenure, a deputy principal in the first year of his first tenure with a focus on wellbeing, engagement and support/intervention and a coordinator in her first year of tenure with a focus on literacy.

## Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Increase the number of students achieving in the higher levels of proficiency, especially in the early years and middle years, by promoting high expectations for students learning through strategic planning and implementation of teaching and learning programs that support continuous improvement.
- Direction 2** Support quality learning outcomes for all students by developing a coherent and consistent approach to pedagogy and the implementation of whole school approaches through rigorous and timely monitoring for effectiveness over time, based on student achievement.
- Direction 3** Ensure teachers support more students to be successful by documenting and implementing a systematic approach to the provision of learning programs and practices that are inclusive and responsive to the diversity of student learning needs at the classroom, group and individual levels.
- Direction 4** Improve student achievement outcomes by analysing and evaluating the effectiveness of school arrangements such as class size, cohort distribution, interventions and associated resourcing in relation to the observable impact on student progress.

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

As part of the review of school improvement priorities in 2017 the directions became a significant part of the information analysed to inform the development of the new site improvement plan (SIP).

Whole school professional learning in formative assessment and differentiated learning was provided with clear expectations and support to implement these strategies to improve student learning outcomes. Clearer processes have been put in place to use and review student data both in general classroom work and also in relation to the intervention offered to students. All staff participated in one of the action teams which monitored each priority of the SIP.

Consistent whole school approaches have been supported through the deprivatisation of practice across the school using initiatives such as guided classroom visits, spotlights on practice and a TfEL focus at staff meetings. There has been an increase in transparency of decision making in relation to financial and human resources which support school priorities and improved student learning outcomes. This supports the shared commitment and positive school climate that is evident across the school community.

## **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 used to inform site improvement planning which include analysing commonly agreed evidence-based data sets to develop goals and targets. Time is provided in staff meetings to support teachers to analyse and identify strengths, weaknesses and overall trends in the data which inform decisions when identifying and prioritising goals. Clear expectations have been set and professional learning provided, particularly in literacy, by the principal and the newly appointed leadership team. Resourcing has been made available to support the improvement priorities through release time, professional learning and more recently specialist staff to support priority groups.

It is clear that staff had ownership of the priorities in the previous SIP. However, for a number of reasons, the new SIP has been established by the leadership team. While staff have an understanding of and support the narrow and deep focus on reading, time has been set aside for leadership to consult further with staff on the stages and elements involved in the new SIP. Staff articulated that they are expected to link personal goals in their Professional Learning Plans to the goals of the SIP. Staff talked positively about the processes which are established to support performance development. They value the time spent on sharing of practice through formal structures like spotlights on practice and guided tours where a common framework is used as a base.

Structures to support the implementation of the improvement work include each staff member being involved in one action team to support the work of one priority. Professional learning conducted during staff meetings is closely aligned to site priorities. While there is evidence of improvement in the priority areas, clear structures of how the action teams influence everyone's work could be strengthened. There is some reliance on being a small school where 'we know what everyone else is doing', however the school is increasing in size. Continuing to build capacity of staff to actively participate in decision making in relation to the improvement cycle through regular monitoring of the plan and the next steps/future requirements for professional learning would also strengthen established processes.

**Direction 1** Strategically strengthen the structures and processes to effectively implement the plans of action and monitor progress of the improvement priorities.

## **EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING**

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

Achievement data collected at a system level indicates that there has been improvement in the percentages of students achieving at or above SEA at most year levels, particularly in reading and numeracy. Leadership and staff talked about professional learning that has, and continues, to take place in relation to analysing data and how that impacts on learning programs for students. The school has recently gone through a process to update an agreed assessment schedule, including which assessments and when they are to be collected. Resources have been made available on a regular basis for teachers to be released both for specific tasks and to plan collaboratively. Teachers talked about how they use data however the effectiveness and depth of how they use it to inform their planning or intentional teaching is developing and is not yet consistent across the school.

The literacy agreement has recently been updated with teachers currently working with this new document. However, while there is a numeracy agreement, the school recognises the need for this document to be reviewed and updated. The revision and implementation of these documents is important work to provide further congruence of understanding and practice across the school. When staff understand the rationale behind identified assessments and operate from a common framework, student learning can be reliably tracked, monitored and reviewed.

There has been professional learning and a resource folder provided for staff to support the recent and continuing focus on the use of learning intentions across the school. It was evident in discussions and class walk throughs that all teachers are working towards regularly including learning intentions as part of their lessons. Teachers provided a range of formative assessment tools including formal and informal verbal feedback, rubrics, exit slips and conferencing. Students are clear about being a resilient learner and having a growth mindset and could articulate how this applies to their learning. When talking about the 'struggle' one student commented: 'without struggle, learning would be boring'. Students also identified some examples of feedback they have received to improve their learning including comments to make it better, rubrics and the chance to resubmit after initial feedback. Strengthening the use of success criteria, which is clearly linked to learning intentions, supports students to be powerful learners.

Continuing to build common understandings across the site of high yield formative assessment strategies will further benefit learning outcomes for students. The credibility of assessment to inform instruction is paramount in providing quality learning to meet the needs of all students.

**Direction 2** Strengthen teacher capacity to make more effective use of data and formative assessment with clear links to intentional teaching and learning programs.

## CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE STUDENT LEARNING

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

The learning culture of the school, under the current leadership, has become more open with staff willing to share practice, leaders working together, teachers feeling valued and being willing to ask questions of each other. Staff have a genuine interest in the students and are committed to the school and the improvement journey. Leadership value and nurture a team culture, building collaborative and consistent practices through a range of strategies. These include being consultative and transparent about decision making, release time for collaborative planning and sharing, modelling processes/approaches to be implemented and ensuring appropriate supports are in place for all staff including early career teachers.

Parents have a high level of trust in the school to support their children with their learning. They stated the school environment is very supportive and they are provided with clear and open communication about the school and the progress of their children. The introduction of three-way interviews was seen by parents as a positive initiative. There were some comments by parents that students could be stretched more in their learning. A number of students indicated that about 30-40% of their work was stretching their thinking and while they came up with a range of responses to a question related to the importance of school, all students linked their responses to learning new things. Intervention and support processes have been recently reviewed. Dedicated staff are monitoring and tracking priority groups with data used to identify students to receive support. Smaller class sizes have been established to enable tailored support in classrooms.

Teachers articulated their own personal understandings and practices of intellectual stretch and engagement they use with their students. The examples varied across the school but included asking students to reflect on their work, offering inquiry-based learning opportunities, open ended tasks and varied levels of questioning. Individual goal setting is currently being implemented across the school. All students currently have at least one reading goal. Parents commented that the goals were shared at the three-way interviews. Strengthening teacher capacity to effectively work with students to develop individual learning goals, focused on high expectations, will provide students with clear direction about the next steps in their learning.

**Direction 3** Strengthen practices for effective individual student goal setting which embed high expectations and promote intellectual stretch and challenge.

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

The leadership and staff at Ascot Park Primary School have a genuine interest and shared commitment to the students and community of the school and the current improvement journey. There are clear expectations, communication and support structures in place to assist the change processes being undertaken. There is a positive school culture evident across students, staff and parents. The whole school approach to wellbeing has provided students and staff with a common language and values which underpin the improvement work in other areas.

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

- Direction 1**      **Strategically strengthen the structures and processes to effectively implement the plans of action and monitor progress of the improvement priorities.**
- Direction 2**      **Strengthen teacher capacity to make more effective use of data and formative assessment with clear links to intentional teaching and learning programs.**
- Direction 3**      **Strengthen practices for effective individual student goal setting which embed high expectations and promote intellectual stretch and challenge.**

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




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Tony Lunniss  
DIRECTOR  
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY



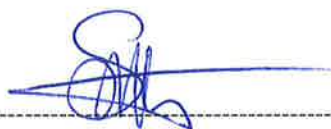
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Anne Millard  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND  
PRECHOOLS



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Julie Hibell  
PRINCIPAL  
ASCOT PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL



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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, 50% of year 1 and 53% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement for both year 1 and year 2 from the historic baseline averages.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 83% of year 3 students, 71% of year 5 students and 71% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 5 and 7, this result represents little or no change, for year 3 this represents an improvement from the historic baseline averages.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for years 3 and 7 has been upwards, from 50% to 83%, for year 3 and for year 7, from 57% to 71% respectively.

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

In 2018, 67% of year 3, 14% of year 5 and 36% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For years 3 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2016 and 2018 the trend for year 3 has been 29% to 67% and for year 7 0% to 36% respectively.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 67%, or 2 of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, 100%, or 3 of 3 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 92% of year 3 students, 72% of year 5 students and 71% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5 this result represents an improvement and for year 7 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline averages.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 7 NAPLAN numeracy has been upwards, from 50% to 71% respectively.

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

In 2018, 33% of year 3, 0% of year 5, 21% 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 14% to 33% respectively.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 0%, or 0 of 0 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, 33%, or 1 of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.