Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Playford Primary School

Conducted in February 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 Simon Harding, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Ronnie Alderman and Lynne Noll, Review Principals.

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 groups
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

School context

Playford Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 31kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 720 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 747. The local partnership is Uleybury.

The school has an ICSEA score of 952 and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 5% Aboriginal students, 14% students with disabilities, 11% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 5 children in care and 38% of students are eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 2nd year of their 1st tenure and a deputy principal – curriculum leadership & learning improvement. There are 4 assistant principals, a literacy coordinator and a wellbeing coordinator.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

Direction 1   **Raise student achievement by using data and formative assessment information about each child to monitor growth and progress and inform targeted teaching practices.**

Direction 2   **Support all students to demonstrate higher levels of proficiency against the Australian Curriculum achievement standards by providing assessment tasks that challenge and support them to apply their learning in new contexts.**

Direction 3   **Increase student engagement and achievement by strengthening pedagogical practices that empower students to pose questions, problem solve and give and receive quality feedback about their learning.**

Direction 4   **Enable all students to maximise their potential by utilising performance and development processes that support staff to implement site improvement priorities and teaching and curriculum agreements.**

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

The school provided evidence to the panel of actions taken to address the previous directions. Staff have access to an electronic data system and have had training in formative assessment practices. Teachers are more effectively tracking and monitoring data over time and could discuss the strategies they are using to inform future teaching and learning.

There has been a number of strategies the school has put in place recently to strengthen staff knowledge and skills in the provision of quality learning tasks and this is relatively new and continuing work. There is evidence in student learning data of some improvement since the last review, however the improvements are not consistent over time.

The focus of ongoing support from external experts in inquiry learning and support from leadership is evidence of inquiry learning being implemented across the school. There are clear agreements in place inclusive of expected practices in English and maths providing teachers with guidance and understandings to work within. Teachers have been involved in moderation both with colleagues and other schools to support greater consistency of judgement and to support improving task design.

Performance Development Plans (PDPs) and professional learning for staff are closely aligned to site priorities.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How well does the school review and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement planning processes and the impact on student learning to inform next steps?

It is evident that decisions taken regarding the priorities in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) are based on a range of data. The plan provides clear and narrow direction, actions are aligned to achieving the goals, they are evidence-based and with significant resourcing in place to support the implementation. Primarily the leadership team has been responsible for the development and monitoring of the implementation of the plans of action over time. Teaching staff have had some time in staff meetings evaluating impact based on the targets. Staff shared they are keen to play an active role in the development and monitoring of the SIP as they understand ultimately they are responsible for enacting the plans of action to support improved student learning outcomes. Governing council stated they believe the school has been providing information about the SIP through its development and in regular updates. Professional learning for staff is closely aligned with the SIP and there are expectations for staff to clearly align their PDPs to the goals in the SIP.

The alignment of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to support smaller groups of staff with ongoing professional learning and the opportunity through release time to share strategies has been both powerful and valued by the staff involved. They have built capacity and common understandings with close links to whole-school agreements in literacy and numeracy. Ensuring the work of teams is shared with all staff will continue to build common understandings and approaches. Intervention teachers across the school to support improvement in student outcomes for maths have been introduced. Continuing to monitor and evaluate effective strategies in using this resource to ensure growth in outcomes for students is an opportunity for the school as they move forward. Developing clarity about the roles of individuals and teams to support the improvement work, would strengthen the effective implementation, review and evaluation of the priorities whilst continuing to build collective capacity and ownership of the plan by staff.

Direction 1   **To gain collective ownership of the Site Improvement Plan, strategically strengthen the structures and processes for all stakeholders to prioritise the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the improvement goals.**

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

It was clear from the principal that the school is working to develop effective and consistent pedagogy across the school. Whole-school agreements for literacy and numeracy have recently been updated. There has been explicit expectations from leadership working towards strengthening consistency of practice in literacy and numeracy across the site. The implementation of these documents is important work to provide further congruence of understanding and practice across the school.

The school has put in place appropriate personnel to support effective practices in evidence-based pedagogies that will improve outcomes for students. PLCs have been established with targeted training and collaborative investigations which have positively impacted teacher practice for teachers involved in either the literacy or numeracy PLC. The planned amplification involving more staff along with check-ins for those who have already undertaken the training, is seen as positive process in which the school is investing to effect positive change and common understandings of effective practice.

Teachers shared the impact of the inquiry professional learning which has been ongoing and how they are incorporating this into their practice. They shared they are working towards providing tasks which are open ended and have multiple entry and exit points. There are examples of leaders working alongside teachers and modelling effective practices to support the implementation of inquiry into practice across the site. There was also evidence of teachers reflecting on their practice and the value they place on the training both internal and external.

Teachers regularly shared the use of learning intentions and success criteria, and some use of individual student learning goals are being used to support students in their learning. There was evidence of good practice however evidence of students being involved in developing success criteria and strategies used to provide students with information about their next steps varied across the school. When discussing the challenge in learning, there was a variety of responses from students including some viewing the challenge as balanced with time to consolidate, to others who are looking for more challenge in their learning. Students understood that struggle is important in learning and could articulate some strategies they use when they get stuck. Providing students with clear feedback about their performance can be powerful for students when co-constructing their goals.

Direction 2   **Strengthen student engagement in their learning through developing common high yield practices for students to actively participate and to clearly understand their next steps in their learning.**

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Leadership and staff talked about discussions which have been undertaken and planned actions to continue to build capacity of staff to more effectively analyse data and the implications 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. When staff understand the rationale behind identified assessments and operate from a common framework, student learning can be reliably tracked, monitored and reviewed. Teachers talked about how they use data however the effectiveness and depth of how they use data to inform their planning or intentional teaching is not yet consistent across the school.

Teachers talked about the range of formative assessment practices they use to support students in their learning, including formal and informal (verbal) feedback, rubrics, exit slips and conferencing. Many talked about the use of verbal feedback being the most powerful as it was immediate and accessible. Parents' stated the reporting processes provided by the school gave them a good understanding of where their child is at in their learning. Students could articulate that feedback is important and how this applies to their learning. Some students shared they have opportunities to self-assess and review the work of their peers. Some students also provide feedback to each other and been provided some guidance about what is effective feedback and how to share this constructively. Strengthening common effective practices in the provision of feedback and high yield formative assessment strategies will support students to clearly understand next steps in their learning. The credibility of assessment to inform instruction is paramount in providing quality learning to meet the needs of all students.

Direction 3   **To provide differentiated learning for students by strengthening common understandings and practices in the effective use of data and feedback for students, clearly linked to intentional teaching and learning programs.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

The review panel acknowledges that the school has experienced change. However, it has maintained a commitment to a positive focus and improvement of student learning outcomes. The school has a strong sense of community and stakeholders are invested in the school and providing students with quality care and learning opportunities.

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

Direction 1   To gain collective ownership of the Site Improvement Plan, strategically strengthen the structures and processes for all stakeholders to prioritise the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the improvement goals.

Direction 2   Strengthen student engagement in their learning through developing common high yield practices for students to actively participate and to clearly understand their next steps in their learning.

Direction 3   To provide differentiated learning for students by strengthening common understandings and practices in the effective use of data and feedback for students, clearly linked to intentional teaching and learning programs.

Based on the school's current performance, Playford Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.

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PLAYFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

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 2019, 47% of year 1 and 42% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline for both year 1 and year 2 from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 67% to 47%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 84% of year 3 students, 71% of year 5 students and 75% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents an improvement, and for years 5 and 7 little or no change from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 35% of year 3, 16% of year 5 and 15% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading 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 reading, 41%, or 9 out of 22 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 67%, or 12 out of 18 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 74% of year 3 students, 62% of year 5 students and 64% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents an improvement, for year 5 little or no change, and for year 7 a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 7 has been downwards, from 76% to 64%.

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

In 2019, 19% of year 3, 7% of year 5 and 6% 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, 46%, or 6 out of 13 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 38%, or 3 out of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.