

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Woodville Primary 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 Tanya Oshinsky, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Christine Bell, Review Principal.

## Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relevant to the lines of inquiry:

- Presentation from the principal, deputy and Early Years' lead teacher
- Class visits
- Attendance at staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parent group
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Students
  - Teachers

## School context

Woodville Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 8kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 315. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 311. The local partnership is Inner West.

The school has an ICSEA score of 987, and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 6% Aboriginal students, 12% students with disabilities, 24% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young person in care and 14% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of tenure, deputy principal in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of tenure, wellbeing leader in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of tenure and a coordinator in STEM.

There are 23 teachers including one in the early years of their career and 13 Step 9 teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Identify, engage, challenge and retain learners in the top bands as they progress across all levels of schooling.
- Direction 2** Improve the learning growth of all students through the strategic influence of staff teams to build collective responsibility and accountability and embedding the agreed curriculum and pedagogical approaches in all classes.
- Direction 3** Raise levels of student achievement through the establishment of strategies that support tracking, monitoring, intervening, challenging and engaging for student learning at the school, class and individual levels.

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

Woodville Primary School's response to all directions was facilitated through a strategic focus on Direction 2: Addressing the culture within the school, including establishing teams for collaborative dialogue, has fostered greater engagement in the improvement agenda. Leaders and staff recognise that, while there is increasing 'collective responsibility and accountability' amongst some teams, achieving buy-in from all staff continues to be a challenge.

Attention to data and how this informs teaching and learning has improved over time. Teachers engage with multiple datasets to identify students' needs. Teachers are focused on raising student achievement levels as their core business; however, attaining and retaining students in the higher bands is continuing work. Building consistency in practice, using effective and agreed pedagogical practice to strengthen both teaching practice and student learning outcomes, was intentional work. Most teachers are able to articulate what is expected of them and committed to improving their practice.

Woodville Primary School is valued by staff, students and community for its improved culture and focus on learning in recent years.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions based on their impact on student learning?

Woodville Primary School has a transient community, with significant numbers of students transitioning in and out of the school yearly. This, and staff changes, presents significant challenge for the school in maintaining a comprehensive and rigorous improvement agenda. Effective induction processes for new teachers and continuously building teacher capacity in agreed practice, are essential.

Performance development plans and professional learning are aligned with the school improvement plan (SIP). There is clear documentation of processes undertaken for school improvement. A variety of datasets are analysed and triangulated to refine the SIP and prioritise further action. Leaders are mindful of further strengthening performance development processes for greater commitment to agreed practice.

A range of self-review practices to identify whether actions are making the required difference to student learning are in place. Teachers are released each term and staff meeting time provides opportunity for staff to look more deeply at data. Leaders explicitly unpack with staff the evidence required to determine 'impact', and work towards measuring this more consistently to plan next steps for improvement.

Professional learning teams (PLTs) are a main driver of the improvement agenda. They were refined over time with norms, role statements and non-negotiables. PLTs take various forms: year level, cross-year level, school priorities and interest groups. Building collective teacher effectiveness is done through learning sprints, where teachers trial the implementation of a pedagogical practice, then share and celebrate their learning within a PLT. Teachers feel well-supported in their work, and most find learning sprints provide them with opportunity for deeper reflection to improve their practice.

Leaders report that renaming 'learning sprints' to 'teaching sprints' improved teachers' engagement in them. A variety of 'Simon Breakspear' tools facilitate the process and deepen conversations. A next step for the school is for teams to critically evaluate the implementation of pedagogical practice on student outcomes and adjust practice for further enhancement. This will identify high-impact strategies, which should be applied consistently in all classrooms and inform whole-school agreements.

**Direction 1      Strengthen collective responsibility and accountability to embed agreed curriculum and pedagogical approaches in all classes, by refining PLT and PDP processes that enable identification and amplification of high-impact teaching strategies.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

Leaders are focused on building consistency and depth of teacher practice across the school. While there are considerable differences in agreed practice, there are pockets of exemplary practice as well. Most tasks observed during classroom walkthroughs were not of a high level, though task designs collected by leaders as part of performance development, indicate teachers are capable of quality planning.

While teachers say they use learning intentions and success criteria to support student learning, these were not visible in most classrooms. Some teachers display them electronically for students at the beginning and end of the lesson. Students; however, did not seem to understand the terms and were unsure how they would know if they were successful.

Teachers described differentiation as grouping students based on assessments, providing multiple entry and exit points within the same task, guided reading and extension tasks. Guided reading is the most consistently applied practice in all classrooms and is well-resourced. Scaffolds for learning, particularly in the SIP areas of writing and mathematics, were evident in all classrooms.

Teachers check in with students during learning and provide them with verbal feedback during tasks. There is little written feedback, other than ticks or praise, in students' books. Teachers acknowledge that seeking feedback from students about their learning is an area for growth. This feedback helps teachers adjust their practice to better meet the needs of students. Formative assessment and feedback described were often after the learning through 'reflection'. It is clear that teachers use a range of strategies and tools in assessment 'of' learning, and deepening practices during tasks to assess 'for' learning, is an area for further development.

Professional learning focused on teachers using a teaching and learning cycle in writing fosters good practice. This includes pre-testing to identify needs of students, task design, learning intentions and success criteria, assessment and feedback during the learning and post-testing students to determine growth. Deepening teachers' implementation of this cycle is continuing work.

**Direction 2    Ensure differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge for all students by strengthening teachers' capacity to embed learning intentions, success criteria, formative assessment and feedback practices, within an effective teaching and learning cycle.**

## Conditions for effective student learning

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

An improved school culture was acknowledged throughout the review. Teachers believe they have high expectations of learners, supported by students and parents. They would like to see the school aim even higher. Behaviour and transience are identified by staff as main reasons for low results. While these may be challenges, continuing to achieve growth for every student is the work of teachers. The school is investigating better ways to track students as they transition through the school.

Another similarity from conversations with students and parents is their lack of understanding of how students are achieving in their learning over time. Parents want more frequent information about their child's progress. Students interviewed assumed they were going okay with their learning from their test scores and reports or because the teacher tells them. Teachers do not regularly share and unpack assessments with students, and students do not have regularly monitored and reviewed goals as part of a continuous cycle in learning. Sharing assessments with students and explicit feedback are essential to build student understanding of what they know and what they need to know. This will help students set explicit learning goals which continuously stretch their learning.

ATSI students have individual goals in their 'one plans' and are supported in their learning by a newly established ATSI team. This team is keen to further build cultural understanding and effective practice of all staff to support these learners. School resources support EALD learners, dyslexic students, and target phonological awareness for early years' students. EALD teachers also mentor their colleagues in implementing the teaching and learning cycle. Staff appreciate these support structures in meeting the needs of all learners.

Shared commitment and responsibility in implementing all whole-school agreements consistently across the school are identified by many staff as a next step. Also, more ownership by students of their learning will foster positive beliefs about themselves as learners. Informing students and parents regularly of where they are at and where they could be, will develop a culture of higher expectations for all.

**Direction 3      Challenge students to achieve higher levels of learning, by tracking and monitoring individual student progress, regularly sharing this information with students and their families and planning with students for their next steps in learning.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

Woodville Primary School is celebrating an improved culture of learning and inclusivity since the previous review. Leaders and staff have genuine interest and commitment to the students and community of the school. Collaboration through PLT structures and performance development processes builds teacher capacity. Further sharing and amplifying of exemplary high-yield pedagogical practices is continuing work. The school's improvement planning processes are evidence-based and targeted, and progress in student achievement is visible.

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

- Direction 1**    **Strengthen collective responsibility and accountability to embed agreed curriculum and pedagogical approaches in all classes, by refining PLT and PDP processes that enable identification and amplification of high-impact teaching strategies.**
- Direction 2**    **Ensure differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge for all students by strengthening teachers' capacity to embed learning intentions, success criteria, formative assessment and feedback practices, within an effective teaching and learning cycle.**
- Direction 3**    **Challenge students to achieve higher levels of learning, by tracking and monitoring individual student progress, regularly sharing this information with students and their families and planning with students for their next steps in learning.**

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



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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 2019, 45% of year 1 and 43% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change for years 1 and 2, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 59% to 45%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 80% of year 3 students, 72% of year 5 students and 67% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents an improvement, for year 5 little to no change, and for year 7, a decline, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 60% to 72%.

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

In 2019, 36% of year 3, 21% of year 5 and 20% 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, 50%, or 5 out of 10 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 54%, or 7 out of 13 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 73% of year 3 students, 72% of year 5 students and 53% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents little to no change, for year 5 an improvement, and for year 7, a decline, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 53% to 72%, and for year 7 downwards, from 73% to 53%.

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

In 2019, 31% of year 3, 12% of year 5 and 14% 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, 50%, or 4 out of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 71%, or 5 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.