

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Ardtornish 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 Simon Harding, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Anna Nayda and Leanne Prior, Review Principals.

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

Ardtornish Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 17kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 526 students. The enrolment at the time of the previous review was 473.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1032 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1% Aboriginal students, 6% students with disabilities, 9% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, and 19% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 5th year of their 2nd tenure. There is a deputy principal in the 2nd year of their 2nd tenure and a 0.2FTE ICT Coordinator.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Develop a clear and focused whole school approach to academic challenge that is monitored and adjusted regularly at the school, class and individual student level, and shared explicitly with parents.
- Direction 2** Improve student outcomes by supporting students to benchmark their learning and achievement over time, building their skills to meet identified criteria by implementing transparent strategies across the school for sharing assessment criteria with students.
- Direction 3** Increase teachers' effective use of ongoing formative assessment practices that focus on constructive and timely feedback for students about learning progress against agreed criteria.

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

There is clear evidence that the school has targeted their work overtime in relation to the previous directions. These directions have been closely aligned to priorities and visible on previous Site Improvement Plans (SIP) working towards developing effective practices across the school.

Professional learning has been undertaken with support provided to more effectively implement formative assessment practices and provide feedback to students. Teachers shared a variety of strategies they have implemented. Professional learning has been supported through a focus in this area across the partnership. This focus has also been supported through moderation processes both at the school, such as with Brightpath writing, and with other partnership schools with a focus on maths.

School agreements have been reviewed with clear expectations of the expected practices across the school. Tracking and monitoring processes of student progress are effective and decisions about appropriate interventions to support learning needs of students are evidenced-based. The school community has high expectations for student learning outcomes.

There has been an ongoing focus on literacy and maths to develop challenge and stretch and common whole-school approaches. All students are setting goals to develop their sense of next steps in their

learning and there are expectations about how these are reported to students and parents. Teachers work in teams to share practice and discuss the effectiveness of their approaches, gaining insight and developing common understandings of each other's work.

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?

It is evident the school uses a range of processes to support their improvement planning and implementation cycle. Staff are focused on improvement in both student achievement and building their capacity to best support students with whom they work. Leadership and staff stated that decisions are made using datasets and the targets are aspirational, with a focus of attaining and maintaining higher band achievement. Success criteria is clear, measurable and focused on learning.

Staff stated that the development of the SIP included high levels of consultation and their opinions with feedback being valued leading to ownership and commitment of the plan by staff. Implementation and progress of the plan is often reviewed through committees linked to site priorities. Regular staff meeting time has been scheduled to monitor the progress of the impact of actions taken and revisiting the priorities as a whole. Staff commented that while these committees take a lead role in the monitoring of the plan, many believe they all ultimately have a role and responsibility in this area. Strengthening processes to support staff to more effectively monitor impact against the success criteria, both individually and collectively, will continue to enhance school improvement strategies.

Implementation of the plans of action is evident, through professional learning, which is prioritised as part of staff meetings and often tailored to best meet the needs of different cohorts and through classroom practice. Leadership have provided clear expectations and structures, including time for like teams to plan and collaborate with a focus on the initiatives outlined in the site priorities. Ensuring there is appropriate time provided for the new learning to be consolidated and embedded into practice is part of the monitoring process, along with balancing professional learning to support each of the priorities to best meet the needs of staff. Cross year level teams have been established for staff to share and collaborate on current practice in relation to the priorities of the plan. Parents feel their opinions are taken into consideration as part of the planning cycle and they stated that they have trust in the leadership and staff to make the necessary decisions regarding improvement.

Direction 1 Strategically strengthen staff capacity to clearly understand the links between the challenges of practice, plans of action and success criteria to impact positively on classroom practice and student learning outcomes.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

The learning data collected at a system level indicates that there are high percentages of students achieving at or above the Department for Education Standard of Education Achievement (SEA) over time. The school has a continuing focus of maintaining students in higher bands as they move through their schooling. There are clear processes, structures and expectations in place for teachers to effectively support students through the collecting, analysing and monitoring of student data. Literacy and numeracy agreements are in place and have been recently revised. The whole-school data schedule and electronic spreadsheets of student data are accessible. These provide staff with clear information about expected practices and data to inform teaching and learning programs.

Teachers value the professional learning on formative assessment and share strategies they are using. Students could articulate how assessment assists teachers to know what to teach and to 'fill the gaps'. Students could locate sources of feedback the teacher provides which focus on supporting them to identify the next steps in their learning. There were examples of students being involved in self and peer assessments, however the level to which this occurred varied across the school. There are expectations that all students have learning goals and processes are in place for both making these visible for all stakeholders at interviews and reported on as part of written reports. Students could articulate how they are involved in these processes. Data, along with teacher consultation, informs decisions taken in relation to intervention processes for students.

Professional learning and sharing practices in moderation have been supported through school and partnership training. Staff have valued these opportunities and can articulate how this focus has impacted on classroom practice when assessing student work particularly in both writing and maths. The effectiveness and depth of how teachers use data to inform intentional teaching to differentiate learning to best meet the varied needs of all learners is continuing to be developed across the school. The school is well placed to continue to strengthen work in this area.

Direction 2 Strengthen processes and practices to provide students with clear information about what they need to do to improve and to differentiate the learning for challenge and stretch.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

How effective are the school's professional learning and performance and development processes in building teacher capacity?

Quality teaching is the single most influential factor on student achievement. It is evident that teachers and leaders are committed to strengthening practices to support students effectively in their learning. There are high expectations and support from leaders for improving achievement for both teachers and students. Professional learning is prioritised in the staff meeting program. All staff value the opportunities they have to undertake targeted training to support teaching and learning, which is closely aligned to the SIP priorities.

Teachers talked about how they willingly participate in peer observations and provide feedback for each other through this process and when involved in collaborative planning. The implementation of the Read Write Inc. program across early year classes is an example of this. Teachers are committed and work collaboratively to provide a high quality program to improve literacy learning for students. Regular review is undertaken and support is provided through a lead teacher. Cross year level teams have been established to promote collaborative discussions. Teachers are provided with clear structures for these conversations, to discuss the impact of their work and to collectively reflect and provide constructive feedback. Continuing to develop skills to deepen the critical collaboration within these groups and other situations are next steps the school is well placed to undertake.

Strengthening capacity of teachers, through this culture of improvement and nurturing the current expertise, to strengthen students' understanding of their learning needs are the next steps. There is evidence, from both teachers and students, of the use of goal setting, learning intentions and success criteria. Teachers, both as individuals and in teams, analyse data to track progress and inform the next steps for learning. The consistency and depth of practice in relation to individual students and how their data influences intentional teaching is continuing to develop. Providing students with clear feedback about their performance can be powerful for students to co-construct learning goals and inform their next steps in learning.

Direction 3 **Utilise current expertise and structures to strengthen teachers' capacity to critically collaborate and to improve practice in increasing student agency in the design and monitoring of their own learning.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

There is clear evidence of a positive and focused culture of learning across the school community. Parents indicated that it is a school of choice and they highly value the sense of community and the dedication, professionalism and care of all staff. Leadership have a clear vision for high quality teaching and learning, they are dedicated, responsive and supportive with a focus of ongoing improvement.

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

- Direction 1** Strategically strengthen staff capacity to clearly understand the links between the challenges of practice, plans of action and success criteria to impact positively classroom practice and student learning outcomes.
- Direction 2** Strengthen processes and practices to provide students with clear information about what they need to do to improve and to differentiate the learning for challenge and stretch.
- Direction 3** Utilise current expertise and structures to strengthen teachers' capacity to critically collaborate and to improve practice in increasing student agency in the design and monitoring of their own learning.

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



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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 2018, 78% of year 1 and 86% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline for year 1, and little or no change for year 2, from the historic baseline average.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 90% of year 3 students, 86% of year 5 students and 84% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under 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.

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

In 2018, 53% of year 3, 44% of year 5 and 21% 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 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 68%, or 25 out of 37 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 50%, or 13 out of 26 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 84% of year 3 students, 87% of year 5 students and 87% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, 5 and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline averages.

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

In 2018, 35% of year 3, 19% of year 5 and 24% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change, from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 36%, or 8 out of 22 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 55%, or 11 out of 20 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.