

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Renmark Primary School

Conducted in July 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 Marg Erwin, 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

Renmark Primary School is located 256kms from the Adelaide CBD. The current enrolment is 279 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was approximately 360 students.

The school has an ICSEA score of 894 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 16% Aboriginal students, 13% students with disabilities, 10% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, no children in care, and 52% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 2nd year of her 2nd tenure, a deputy principal (literacy improvement) and a student wellbeing leader. The school also employs an impact coach 0.4 FTE to support their Visible Learning work.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Monitor and evaluate the upper primary team's numeracy trial to identify numeracy improvement strategies that can be transferred across the whole school.
- Direction 2** Continue to strengthen the focus on positive mindset strategies, develop common curriculum agreements and work with teachers to improve their capacity to use effective assessment and differentiated teaching practices to lift student achievement.
- Direction 3** Ensure there is structured professional learning time for the leadership and staff teams to regularly analyse data for evidence-based planning and teaching.
- Direction 4** Support students by using achievement data to identify and benchmark student learning needs, and by developing targeted learner intervention processes across the school.

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

The school provided clear evidence of the work done addressing the previous directions over time through the principal presentation, and staff and leadership discussions.

The school has and continues to work towards common strategies and approaches. There are clear expectations of teaching and learning supported by literacy and numeracy agreements. Work undertaken in Visible Learning is clearly evident with consistent implementation across the school supported by an impact coach.

A culture of professional learning and focus on improving practice continues to be built across the staff supported by the leadership who work alongside staff: modelling and building capacity. The regular and effective use of clear learning intentions and success criteria in planning and classroom practice is evident from discussions with parents, staff and students. Common language in relation to growth mindset is used by students across the school.

The school has clear processes and structures in place to encourage and optimise opportunities for staff collaboration and planning with regular staff meeting time set aside for this purpose. The school continues to review and evaluate the role and impact teams are having across the school. Teams are used to support staff to collectively analyse data and track student progress, collaboratively plan based on this data analysis, and to work on strategies which are closely aligned to the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How effectively does the school use improvement planning processes to raise student achievement?

It is evident the school uses a range of processes to support their improvement planning and implementation cycle. The staff are focused on the improvement of student achievement as well as building their capacity to support the students with whom they work. Leadership and staff stated that decisions are made using evidence-based datasets. Staff stated that the development of the SIP included consultation processes and staff opinions and feedback, both at the time of development as well as ongoing, and that this was valued. This has led to a collective ownership and commitment to the plan. Parents are fully informed of the SIP priorities and why decisions are made. Parents believe their opinions are taken into consideration as part of the planning cycle and state they trust the leadership and staff to make the necessary decisions in relation to improvement planning.

Impact teams, of which all teaching staff participate, have been established with a focus on supporting the work in implementing the SIP action. These groups work with increased autonomy and are supported by some focus areas for discussion from leadership. There are clear processes of two way communication between the impact teams and leadership in regard to the work of these groups. Staff value the clarity of focus and the time these groups have been provided. Impact teams have been a feature of the school over time, however their use as a key driver in the implementation of the priorities in the SIP has strengthened more recently. Teachers meet as part of these teams during staff meetings twice weekly with regular times set aside for staff to analyse student progress data, collaboratively plan and reflect on practice. Developing clear measures of the impact of this strategy will be key for future decisions when reviewing and evaluating progress of the plan. While there has been some sharing of work by these teams, continuing to find ways to deepen the critical collaboration across the school will continue to strengthen this work.

The focus of Visible Learning over the last few years is clearly evident and it is explicitly linked to the plans of action in the SIP. Visible Learning clearly underpins the improvement work as evidenced through discussions with staff and leadership. It provides a scaffold for students to articulate strategies to enhance their learning and demonstrate their understanding of a growth mindset.

Direction 1 Evaluate and strengthen the effectiveness of the impact teams in the ongoing monitoring and progress to achieve the challenges of practice and targets in the SIP.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

To what extent do teachers ensure that students have authentic influence in their learning?

Visible Learning provides a scaffold for students to articulate strategies to enhance their learning and demonstrate their understanding of a growth mindset. Learning intentions and success criteria are regularly used with students across the school to support students in their learning. Individual student learning goals are evident across the school supported by clear expectations from leadership. These goals are shared with parents through the interview process and followed up each term in the student learning portfolios. Students also talked about the use of short term goals related to specific tasks. However students were often not clear about their longer term goals.

There were examples from teachers of strategies they use to include stretch and challenge in the learning. These include increasing authentic student influence through students using the Australian Curriculum achievement standards, multiple entry points, open ended tasks, varying different learning modalities, providing a 'sting in the tail' and peer mentoring opportunities. The teachers could identify ways they had been successful including students gaining clarity through developing success criteria, students being able to articulate their learning with others, students seeking effective feedback, students asking for the opportunity to 'bump it up' (extra challenge) and the levels of engagement in learning by students. Teachers shared the value they place on impact teams and the opportunity to reflect, share and trial strategies to improve their practice. It is evident that teachers work collaboratively and in a supportive environment as they are willing to seek advice from leadership and peers to improve their practice.

Some students expressed that they have input into their learning including developing success criteria to assist them to monitor and assess their own learning, though this was not a consistent practice across the school. Parents are aware of and support goal setting but would like their children to have increased opportunities of authentic influence in their learning. Students at all levels benefit from having opportunities to be active participants in their own learning. It is acknowledged that while there is good practice in the school, strengthening teacher and student capacity and consistency across the school is an area for growth. The continuing provision of planned opportunities for staff and students to work collaboratively will further strengthen authentic student influence in their learning.

Direction 2 Strengthen the capacity of staff to ensure students have authentic influence in their learning.

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 at some year levels there has been an improvement in percentages of students achieving at or above SEA since the last review. There are clear processes, structures and expectations in place to support teachers in effectively supporting students through the collecting, analysing and monitoring of student data. This is supported by the use of clear agreements in literacy, numeracy and the data schedule, along with the electronic database which is accessible to all teaching staff. Impact teams regularly meet to analyse progress data and there are expectations for these teams to work on collaborative planning. Teachers discussed how they use data to inform their planning. The effectiveness and depth of how they use it to inform intentional teaching is developing and is not yet consistent across the school. The school is well placed to strengthen work in this area.

The professional leaning and ongoing support from the leadership and the impact coach on Visible Learning clearly underpins the work of teachers across the school. It is evident in discussions and class walkthroughs that all teachers are regularly including learning intentions and success criteria as part of their lessons. Students have common language when articulating their learning. Students are clear about being resilient learners and having a growth mindset and are able to articulate how this applies to their learning. Students can identify how teachers assist them to improve, with a number of students sharing that effective feedback was central to their improvement. They articulate that good feedback is constructive and provides them with what they need to do next. They shared that the chance to provide and receive feedback from peers is something that improves their work. Some students talked about the scaffolds the teacher has put in place for them to provide better feedback for their peers. Teachers indicate they use a range of strategies including verbal and written feedback, peer feedback, 1:1 discussions, pre and post tests and exit slips. Feedback for learning is a pivotal component of learning improvement at all levels. Embedding common understandings and practices relating to effective feedback will continue to strengthen feedback for learning for all students.

Teachers provided examples they use with students in formative assessment including formal and informal verbal feedback, rubrics, exit slips and conferencing. 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 3 Strengthen the capacity of all staff to effectively use data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Renmark Primary School has a positive culture with students, staff and parents focused on improving student learning opportunities and outcomes. There are good levels of trust between the school and parents about decisions made in relation to improving student learning. Students can clearly articulate why learning is important and how they seek strategies to improve. Visible Learning is integral to the way staff and students are working. There is strong instructional leadership where review, reflection and innovation is evident. The inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives across the school and the support offered to Aboriginal students is to be commended. The school is developing the continuity of learning in this area through nurturing close links with both the children's centre and the high school.

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

- Direction 1** Evaluate and strengthen the effectiveness of the impact teams in the ongoing monitoring and progress to achieve the challenges of practice and targets in the SIP.
- Direction 2** Strengthen the capacity of staff to ensure students have authentic influence in their learning.
- Direction 3** Strengthen the capacity of all staff to effectively use data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction.

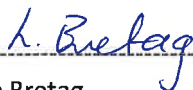
Based on the school's current performance, Renmark Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



Andrew Wells
A/DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS



Lyn Bretag
PRINCIPAL
REMARK PRIMARY SCHOOL



GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
Britnie Hocking

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, 48% of year 1 and 65% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change for year 1 and an improvement for year 2 from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 2 has been upwards, from 47% to 65%.

In 2018, the reading results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 73% of year 3 students, 36% of year 5 students and 68% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement and for year 5 a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018 the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 46% to 73% in 2018.

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

In 2018, 30% of year 3, 9% of year 5 and 10% 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 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 57%, or 4 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, 38%, or 3 out of 8 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 55% of year 3 students, 46% of year 5 students and 69% 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 an improvement from the historic baseline average.

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

Between 2016 and 2018, the school has consistently achieved lower in year 5 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 9% of year 3, 7% of year 5 and 13% 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 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 50%, or 2 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 57%, or 4 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.