

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Stansbury Primary School

Conducted in March 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 Rob McLaren , Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Kylie Eggers Review Principal.

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

Stansbury Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 208 km from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 31 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 29. The local partnership is Southern Yorke Partnership.

The school has an ICSEA score of 990 and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 4 students with disabilities and 11% of families are eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 2nd year of tenure. There are 3 teachers, 1 in the early years of their career. A pastoral care worker (PCW) and 4 student support officers (SSO) provide administrative and classroom support.

A Play Centre operates onsite one day a week.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** To create and sustain a culture of high expectations for every student, develop a whole-school agreement about intellectual stretch and challenge that is inclusive of student agency in learning through explicit learning intentions and enabling student voice in the content, pedagogy, and assessment.
- Direction 2** Support teachers to use multiple measures of student achievement to inform teacher decisions and actions at the individual student and class levels.
- Direction 3** Reframe work in growth mindsets and powerful learning and include evidence of transient student learning growth in the whole-school data narrative to quantify and highlight the ways that the school is reducing the academic, social and emotional vulnerability of mobile students.
- Direction 4** Coherently link training and development and performance and development to embed changes to teaching practice in the interests of site improvement priorities.

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

Directions from the previous ESR in 2016 have had a variable impact on school improvement. Lack of continuity in leadership over the past five years and resistance to change by past staff members were some of the contributing factors cited in interviews.

There was evidence of growing importance in the use of data as a tool for planning and monitoring of student learning progress, especially transient students. At the beginning of this year, the principal expressed concerns for the validity of some student datasets and processes followed in collecting data. To ensure accurate baseline data and teacher processes, retesting of students using agreed procedures was carried out.

Evidence gained through the leader's presentation and interviews with staff indicated that this year a very supportive and collaborative working environment between staff has developed. A focus expressed by all was on ensuring success for all students. Reverse parent student-teacher meetings were organised

earlier in the year by teachers to describe how they would support students in their learning. It was also the first step in developing individual student learning plans.

Student wellbeing programs, supported by the pastoral care worker and the principal, promoting wellbeing and mindfulness have developed in response to past wellbeing datasets. Trained student peer mediators provide support for students in addressing their concerns and resolving issues. Data from 2018 to 2019 shows that this has had a positive impact on student wellbeing.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

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

The teaching staff has engaged in professional learning communities (PLCs) to share and gain consistency of practice in improvement areas through the primary school cluster of Stansbury, Warrooka and Curramulka primary schools. Teachers commented positively on the partnership work in meeting the requirements of the Australian Curriculum, the development of reading comprehension, phonics, and numeracy. They expressed a desire for it to continue.

The current site improvement plan (SIP) goals in developing literacy and numeracy were constructed at the end of 2018 in response to system and school data, learning progressions, and teacher observations referenced to the recommended guide book best practice. The principal acknowledged school performance data with small cohorts of students presented difficulties in analysing trends. Therefore, a more significant focus was on developing individual learning plans for all students to monitor and support their learning progress.

The principal, in her presentation, described how data had become more critical in the planning, monitoring and review of student achievement. Analysis of progress of the SIP goals, actions, and targets took place at scheduled staff and cluster meetings, using data and 3-week cycles of improvement. Teachers believed the developing observations of classroom practice, and feedback from leadership and peers was a vital process for the development of practice.

With a relatively new staff in 2020, a review of the current SIP took place to ensure all were clear of the agreed improvement priorities. Teachers and SSOs commented positively about their roles in the improvement process. Allocated staff meetings in weeks 5 and 10 provide opportunities for staff to reflect individually, or in groups, on progress and share practice. Structures and processes supporting the growth of practice through self-review, while evident, were not prominent in staff conversations. The improvement of teacher practice can increase through opportunities for staff to engage in evidence-based reflection of practice and robust performance development processes.

Direction 1 **To support the advancement of teacher practice, establish effective structures and processes to monitor impact and progress towards goals against the success criteria.**

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Observations of classrooms highlighted a calm, well-organised working environment with students actively engaged in learning. Students interviewed commented that they felt safe and supported by their teachers, whom they believed had high expectations of them. Many could describe what they were learning when asked, but some struggled to articulate their next steps in learning. Teachers explained that many students lack independence in their learning. Several strategies to address the issue described by staff included the development of learning intentions and success criteria and encouraging students to take a more significant role in the co-construction and decision making within their learning. A high percentage of parents with whom the panel met, were very supportive of the school and acknowledged that, while many teachers were new, they saw themselves as partners in their child's learning and were keen to work with them.

In conversations with the principal and teachers, all agreed that the current development of individual learning plans was an effective strategy to document the learning needs and goals of the child and provide clarity for teachers to support students in their learning. Strong supportive relationships between students and teachers were a feature of the school, with teachers commenting that there was a developing culture of collaboration, support, and willingness to share amongst staff.

Teachers described differentiated learning practices as an essential part of their multi-year level classes. The panel viewed examples of students grouped with SSO support in literacy sessions and intervention practices for identified students. In the middle and upper years there are choices in inquiry questions or tasks that allowed options on how students present their work. Teachers observed in class demonstrated several evidence-based pedagogical approaches in phonics, authentic use of measurement in the design of the playground, and inquiry approaches in STEM. When asked how pedagogical practices are developed at the school, teachers described professional learning at staff or cluster meetings, references to guidebooks of best practice and staff meetings at the end of 3-week cycles of review, which provide opportunities for reflection and sharing.

While the current teaching team is relatively new to the school, their responses in interviews showed that they were keen to try a variety of pedagogical practices to support learning for all students. They valued feedback about their practice and welcomed classroom observations from leaders and their peers. There was, however, limited evidence of documented agreements to guide teachers in the effective use of evidence-based pedagogies to support learning from R to 7. An opportunity exists for staff to collectively reflect and come to agreements of what are highly effective pedagogical practices that support all learners. The development of best practice in the use of these can strengthen through supportive performance development processes and professional learning.

Direction 2 Ensure the needs of all learners by reaching agreements of high impact, evidence-based pedagogical practices to guide teachers' work.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

The principal, in her presentation, described students at the school lacking independence in their learning. She described several strategies that teachers had employed to develop student engagement and influence, including advancing student goal setting and co-construction of learning, developing success criteria and learning intentions and designing authentic learning opportunities. Some teachers described how they provided opportunities for students to provide feedback through surveys and learning conversations on the effectiveness of units of work.

Evidence from student and teacher interviews illustrated that the school provided opportunities for students at an individual, class, and cohort level to have a voice in shaping their learning environment. Students described whole-school meetings in which they took part in discussions, recording their thoughts using a parking lot process before voting for strategies in the development of the school's playground, school mosaic, and kitchen garden. Further authentic learning opportunities were described by the principal to expand student agency in learning in the History Museum and Windara Reef projects.

Students were actively involved in supporting student wellbeing across the school as trained peer mediators helping students deal with issues. All members of the school community held this program in high regard and students valued the opportunities for leadership and peer support. While there were many examples of students taking part in decision making about their learning environment, there were only pockets of authentic opportunity for students to influence and shape their learning. In interviews with students, there was little evidence of students having a language of learning to enable them to have greater control of their education.

Direction 3 Further develop authentic student agency in learning by building teacher and student capacity and reaching an agreement of highly effective strategies.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

At Stansbury Primary School effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning, and targeted interventions. Self-review processes are regularly and strategically used to determine the impact school strategies and practices are having on student achievement. The school works in partnership with parents and stakeholders, and there is a coherent and engaging curriculum for students using the Australian Curriculum.

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

- Direction 1** To support the advancement of teacher practice, establish effective structures and processes to monitor impact and progress towards goals against the success criteria.
- Direction 2** Ensure the needs of all learners by reaching agreements of high impact, evidence-based pedagogical practices to guide teachers' work.
- Direction 3** Further develop authentic student agency in learning by building teacher and student capacity and reaching an agreement of highly effective strategies.

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



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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).

In considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making a judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school. This is done for two reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year, and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohorts of students. The data below represents a summary of aggregated data from Stansbury Primary School from 2016-2019.

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2016 to 2019, 64% of year 1 and 67% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, the reading result, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 86% of year 3 students, 75% of year 5 students and 67% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 14% of year 3, 25% of year 5 and 11% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

From 2016 to 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 57% of year 3 students, 88% of year 5 students and 90% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 29% of year 3, 25% of year 5 and 11% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.