Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Auburn Primary School

Conducted in September 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 Marie Wright, 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

Auburn Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 116kms from the Adelaide CBD and is part of the Mid North Clare partnership. The enrolment for 2019 is 42 and has fluctuated over the last 5 years. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 50 students.

The school has an ICSEA score of 997 and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 5% Aboriginal students, 2% students with disabilities, 2% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, no children in care and 23% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 1st year of their 1st tenure.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

Direction 1   Raise student achievement across the curriculum through the use of the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards to design learning tasks that provide a coherent and engaging curriculum for students.

Direction 2   Raise student achievement through engaging students in the analysis of their own learning data to stretch them intellectually and enable them to demonstrate higher achievement against Australian Curriculum Standards.

Direction 3   Unite the school in a shared moral purpose and vision that is student-centred, aspirational, future-oriented and embedded in Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards.

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

Since the last review, Auburn Primary School has had a number of changes in leadership and it was evident that progress in relation to the previous directions was interrupted during this time.

There has been significant work on developing a shared moral purpose and understanding with clear expectations across the school community. The community has been invited to be active participants in the school, strengthening trust and building collective efficacy centred on improving student learning outcomes.

There has been an increased focus on planning using the achievement standards to design learning tasks which engage students. Working with other smaller schools to collaboratively plan, implement and collectively evaluate continues to strengthen teacher capacity and judgement in relation to the achievement standards.

The use of goal setting by students and working towards making learning visible to students in writing through the Brightpath tool are some strategies used to engage students and endeavour to challenge them in their learning.

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?

The principal outlined the range of processes and strategies the school is working through to support the improvement planning and implementation cycle. The school has set realistic targets based on contextualised, evidenced-based data of particular students. Staff stated that the development of the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) included consultation, with their opinions and feedback included and valued, leading to ownership and commitment of the SIP by staff. It is clear that staff have an understanding of the Challenges of Practice and how these relate to implementing changes in practice, especially in relation to reading.

Implementation and progress of the plan is reviewed regularly as part of staff meetings. Staff shared how there are expectations to share their practice in relation to the plans of action as part of monitoring the progress of implementation. Professional learning is planned for staff meetings and is closely aligned to the SIP goals. There are expectations that professional learning undertaken by staff in other settings is shared with colleagues to continue to build common understandings and approaches across the school. Partnership work is linked and is supporting teachers to more effectively develop common expectations in relation to student achievement. Parents are aware and feel their opinions are taken into consideration throughout the process and stated they have a high level of trust in leadership and staff to take the necessary decisions in relation to school improvement.

Teachers have participated in peer observations and post discussions to provide feedback. Clearly linking this work to the goals in the SIP will support the effective implementation of the plans of action and enhance their understanding of each other's work. Continuing to build teacher capacity to critically collaborate when reflecting on practice and analysing student progress will strengthen collective efficacy to understand the impact of this work on student learning outcomes.

Direction 1   **Build the capacity of staff for deeper critical collaboration when reflecting on practice to collectively know the impact on student learning outcomes.**

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 principals' presentation that the school is working towards developing consistent and effective pedagogy across the school. The literacy agreement has recently been revised and linked closely to improvement work in the SIP. There is a plan to have a new numeracy agreement in place for the 2020 school year. These agreements are and will be instrumental, in conjunction with targeted professional learning, and a commitment from staff to continue to build their capacity to support students effectively in their learning, in the implementation of strategies outlined in the SIP. This is evident in the consistent approach to the teaching of reading where there is a common focus across the school each term, along with clear expectations from leadership.

Some teachers and students talked about the use individual student learning goals, however this was not consistent and students were not as clear about how this assists them in their learning. There is some evidence of the use of learning intentions, but this was not consistent across the school and students did not clearly articulate how these are used to support their learning. Students shared that 'struggle' in learning is important and they could articulate the strategies they use if they 'get stuck' in their learning. Students' perception of how much they are challenged varied, and some students commented to the panel about wanting to be more challenged in their learning.

It is clear that teachers are working to provide a positive learning environment for student learning and parents indicated their support for the quality of staff working with their children. There is good practice evident of teachers working to differentiate learning to meet the diverse needs of students. They could provide strategies used including grouping, questioning and multiple entry points in the task. Teachers also shared strategies they use in task design. The work they are undertaking in this area with other schools is building their capacity to more effectively develop tasks which are challenging and meaningful. Continuing to focus on effective task design through developing common understandings and practices which are inclusive of student feedback will strengthen this work.

Direction 2   **Strengthen practice in effective task design to engage students in challenging and meaningful learning.**

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

The school has agreed processes in place to track, monitor and analyse student achievement data. The analysis of data is informing discussions staff are having and decisions taken. Teachers are working within an agreed assessment schedule. Leadership and staff talked about ongoing professional learning in relation to analysing data and how this informs discussions about the intentional use of the data on learning programs. Teachers described processes they are using, from professional learning, the use of the Brightpath tool to both moderate student work and visualising data for students through placing their scores 'on the ruler'. Continuing to strategically share data with students enabling them to have greater influence on monitoring their own learning progress will benefit learning outcomes. Teachers provided evidence of using data for grouping students, identification for support and in the use of goal setting. The effectiveness and depth of how teachers use it to inform their planning or intentional teaching is increasing, but is not yet consistent across the school.

Teachers value the work they are undertaking to moderate student work samples with teachers from other schools, as it is building greater consistency of judgement of student work and the opportunity to collaboratively plan common tasks. Students can articulate that effective feedback is important for their learning. Teachers and students talked about students having the opportunity to provide and receive feedback from their peers. Continuing to develop clear structures and scaffolds for students to provide effective feedback are next steps for the school. Students are clear about the importance of being a resilient learner and can articulate how this applies to their learning. Parents are happy with the reporting of their child's progress through written reports, which are informative and comprehensive. Parents also highly value interviews and ongoing communication from the school.

Teachers provided examples of the formative assessment they use with students, including formal and informal (verbal), exit slips, reflection time, videoing and conferencing. Continuing to build common understandings across the site of high yield formative assessment strategies will further benefit learning outcomes for students.

Direction 3   **Build common understandings and practices to effectively use data and formative assessment to strategically inform teaching and learning programs.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

There is a strong sense of team work across the staff, respect for each other's work and willingness to be involved in professional learning to improve outcomes for students. Value is placed on the 'sense of community' in the school along with the quality of teaching and leadership. The school has developed strong links across the wider community.

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

Direction 1   Build the capacity of staff for deeper critical collaboration when reflecting on practice to collectively know the impact on student learning outcomes.

Direction 2   Strengthen practice in effective task design to engage students in challenging and meaningful learning.

Direction 3   Build a common understanding and practices to more effectively use data and formative assessment to strategically inform teaching and learning programs.

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

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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).

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 cohort of students. The data below represents a summary of the aggregated data from Auburn Primary School from 2015- 2018.

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2015 to 2018, 80% of year 1 and 93% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2015 to 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 96% of year 3 students, 76% of year 5 students and 64% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2015 to 2018, 67% of year 3, 38% of year 5 and 29% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

From 2015 to 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 96% of year 3 students, 78% of year 5 students and 79% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2015 to 2018, 46% of year 3, 32% of year 5 and 21% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.