

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Saddleworth Primary School

Conducted in August 2021



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 Rebecca Pears, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Rob Smyth, 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
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Saddleworth Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 113kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 37. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 54. The local partnership is Lower Mid North.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 953 and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 13% Aboriginal students, 13% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, no children/young people in care and 35% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 3rd year of tenure.

There are 5 teachers including 4 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Collaboratively develop and implement a consistent whole-school approach to learning design with a focus on high expectations, student engagement, intellectual challenge and negotiated learning with the clear purpose of increasing student achievement in the higher bands.
- Direction 2** Collaboratively review and implement the school's teaching and learning agreements to ensure they reflect current educational research and consistency of pedagogical approach for all teachers and staff involved in the learning process.
- Direction 3** Collectively develop and implement a continuous self-review improvement cycle that is rigorous, systematic, transparent and cyclic with a focus on high levels of student achievement.

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

Teachers have participated in professional learning on effectively using learning intentions, success criteria and providing written feedback to students. In 2021 a new writing moderation tool was introduced, and teachers have moderated a sample of student's writing.

The early years teachers have introduced a phonological awareness program and collaborated with the Literacy Guarantee Unit to analyse and improve pedagogy in relation to phonics instruction. Literature circles have been introduced from reception to year 7 to improve student achievement and engagement in reading.

Recently staff have been developing new whole-school literacy and numeracy agreements as per Direction 2 from the 2018 External School Review. The school intends to work collaboratively with the Portfolio Principal Consultant to develop these.

There was some impact from the previous directions, however, these 3 directions remain areas for continued attention and improvement.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) was developed by leadership and shared with staff for their feedback. Teachers have implemented changes in their classroom practice to enact the SIP. They have facilitated literature circles, introduced the Heggerty phonemic awareness program, refined phonics instruction and used the Brightpath writing moderation tool to assess writing. Staff discussed that they have become more explicit when teaching literacy due to the SIP focus, particularly in relation to the teaching of phonics and phonemic awareness skills. Whilst there are some consistent practices occurring across the school, whole-school learning agreements need to be reviewed and implemented to ensure coherence.

Governing Council members are aware of the SIP priorities and reported that they receive information relating to the progress of the plan. The SIP priorities have influenced teacher performance and development goals and their professional learning. Coaches from the Literacy Guarantee Unit have worked with the early years team, and representative staff have accessed training on using the Brightpath writing moderation tool. Teachers identified that it would be valuable to access further professional development on facilitating literature circles and using the Brightpath tool to provide feedback to students on their next steps in writing improvement. Some classroom observations have occurred however further opportunities for observations by leaders and teaching colleagues would support staff to strengthen consistent practices as outlined in the SIP.

Providing planned opportunities for all staff to be involved in the formation and regular review of the SIP would strengthen its implementation and support coherence across the school. Currently most achievement data is collected by classroom teachers, while whole-school processes for the collection of data are being developed. It is important for the school to enhance processes that enable data to be collaboratively analysed by all staff to review and evaluate the impact of changes from the SIP. These processes will allow staff to celebrate successes and improvements in student achievement.

Direction 1 To strengthen and embed the collaborative use of data to regularly monitor the impact of school improvement processes.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

The school has very small class sizes which support differentiated learning and the provision of explicit feedback. The panel observed that throughout the school students were very engaged in their learning. During literacy and numeracy activities students are often grouped according to their next steps in learning. Groupings are fluid with students changing groups to cater for individual learning needs. Teachers are providing students with both written and verbal feedback. Students reported that they receive feedback about next steps in learning from both teachers and peers and that this is helping to improve their learning.

The early years team are facilitating a new phonemic awareness program and have refined their phonics instruction. Phonics and phonemic awareness assessments occur regularly, where students not achieving the Standard of Educational Achievement in year one are retested the following year to monitor their phonics development. Literature circles and the use of the Brightpath writing tool have been implemented by all teachers across the school. Teachers identified that although they are providing opportunities for students to be stretched and challenged, this is an area that could be further developed. Ensuring students have regular access to open-ended problem-solving tasks in mathematics is an area for further consideration.

The use of learning intentions and success criteria, whilst evident in some classrooms, varies across the school. When teaching, some teachers use the term learning intentions whilst others discuss the main intent of a lesson. Students did not demonstrate a deep knowledge of learning intentions in the student forums. To consolidate student understanding and ownership of their learning, it is important that teachers are using a consistent language. Students reported that they are not usually involved in the creation of success criteria. The provision of visible learning intentions and success criteria that explicitly outline the requirements for high achievement and next steps in learning would help challenge all students. Providing opportunities for students to have ownership of their learning will offer further opportunities for them to be consistently stretched.

Direction 2 **To embed consistent whole-school practices in designing learning intentions and success criteria that challenge students and enable them to assess their own learning.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Parents reported that teachers work hard to support student learning and communicate well with caregivers. They believe that school reports are thorough, parent teacher interviews are informative, and the Facebook page promotes the school well. They were very appreciative of the support from teachers. The positive relationships between children, particularly in relation to older students supporting younger students, was also identified as a strength of the school.

The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1** **To strengthen and embed the collaborative use of data to regularly monitor the impact of school improvement processes.**
- Direction 2** **To embed consistent whole-school practices in designing learning intentions and success criteria that challenge students and enable them to assess their own learning.**

Based on the school's current performance, Saddleworth Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



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James Bryant
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Saddleworth Primary School

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 Saddleworth Primary School from 2015-2019.

Reading

In the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2016 to 2020, 56% of year 1 and 58% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 64% of year 3 students, 78% of year 5 students, and 84% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 18% of year 3, 22% of year 5 and 14% of year 7 achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

From 2016 to 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 64% of year 3 students, 78% of year 5 students, and 73% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 12% of year 3, 9% of year 5, and 16% of year 7 achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.