

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Clapham Primary School

Conducted in September 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 Tanya Oshinsky, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Mark Vincent, 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 group
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Students
 - Teachers

School context

Clapham Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 12kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 273. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 228. The local partnership is Mitcham Plains.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1066, and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 5% Aboriginal students, 9% students with disabilities, 21% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 child/young person in care and 22% of families eligible for School Card assistance. Two special education classes are on site.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 5th year of tenure, deputy principal with a focus on special education in the first year of a second five year tenure, and a coordinator in literacy.

There are 18 teachers including one in the early years of their career and four Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Extend levels of student challenge and engagement in their learning by establishing and implementing agreed and effective pedagogical practices consistently across all classes, monitored and supported through teacher performance development and review processes.
- Direction 2** Raise student learning outcomes and school performance through regular and systematic self-review processes that consider various data to inform strategic approaches to learning improvement at the classroom and school levels.
- Direction 3** Further engage governing council and parent groups in understanding and supporting the improvement agenda identified for the school through a strategic and aligned partnership that encourages transparency and collaborative endeavour.

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

Significant progress against the previous directions at Clapham Primary School began with a strategic focus to address accountability, processes and communication. Students, staff and parents all commented on the powerful cultural shift that has occurred over time, to establish the warm and welcoming, inclusive environment that currently exists. Attention to building consistent pedagogical practices across the school, underpinned by clear structures and documented processes, resulted in teachers working collaboratively to achieve this direction. Teachers are committed and dedicated professionals, focused on improving their teaching in order to stretch learners.

Data is analysed through various forums to identify priorities. Performance development practices and self-review processes are clearly aligned to the site's improvement agenda. The intentional association of the school's improvement agenda with partnership and departmental priorities, has been an influential push for change at the school.

Developing and implementing terms of reference, meeting structures and subcommittees, provided

clarity for parents in the roles and responsibilities of the governing council. Parents report clear and timely communication keeps them well-informed. SeeSaw is used across the school for sharing and celebrating student learning, and Skoolbag is used for information-sharing about the school and work of committees. Further communication is enabled through Facebook and school newsletter.

The school is to be commended for the extensive and positive journey it has undertaken, particularly in establishing the cultural shift required for a productive learning environment.

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?

Comprehensive structures are in place to facilitate collective action in response to the school's improvement plan (SIP). A site improvement team of leadership and team leaders meet regularly to discuss the improvement agenda. Team leaders of the 3 teams: junior, middle and upper primary, provide a channel between leadership and staff for information-sharing and implementing agreed actions. A student review team of leadership and other team representatives, meet regularly to discuss the learning needs of students referred by teachers. A well-documented process outlines the roles and responsibilities and varied actions that can be taken as a result of each referral. Identified student needs can be fed back through the site improvement team for any required whole-school action.

Professional development processes (PDP) and professional learning are clearly aligned to site priorities. A strength in building teacher capacity is teachers identifying their own personal challenge of practice, linked to the SIP. Teachers present to the team progress against their challenge of practice and identify strengths and areas for further growth. The team then uses collective expertise to support the teacher to identify their next steps. This strategy, along with peer observations where explicit feedback is provided, are further facilitated through PDP and staff meeting opportunities for deeper reflection. Teachers report that these processes have been very supportive. Building teachers' leadership capacity is purposefully promoted through various roles: representatives for the site improvement team, student review team or partnership groups, team leader and leading professional learning.

Clear documentation of protocols, processes and expectations underlie the work of improvement. This ensures all staff are engaged and actively involved. A positive climate towards continuous improvement is evident. Teachers identify a stronger connection to the SIP than ever before and regularly refer back to it. Further engagement of school service officers (SSOs) and students should be considered. SIP self-review processes include using a traffic light system to track actions and strategies undertaken. Next steps for the school would be to ensure that self-review processes measure the impact of those strategies and actions on student outcomes.

Direction 1 Further strengthen self-review processes by effectively evaluating the impact of actions and strategies on student outcomes, to refine and consolidate effective practice consistently across the school.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

The school worked towards developing consistency across all classes, through implementing programs and high-yield teaching strategies. Clear agreements in literacy and numeracy are in place. There is a commitment to stretching the learning for all students, with a particular focus on middle-range students. The collaborative work and practice of teachers is further strengthened through their professional learning with the partnership's Senior Leader in Leading Improvement Primary (SLLIP). The SLLIP challenges teachers' thinking, deepening their understanding of high-quality practice. Fostering the cycle of implementation and then reflection of practice, in order to further improve the teaching and learning for students, drives change.

An agreed data schedule ensures data is collected at key points in time. Analysis of data enables student needs to be identified and intentional teaching to be at the forefront of planning. Site improvement, student review and teaching teams, all regularly review datasets. Staff believe they know their students well and that all students are everyone's responsibility. While agreed programs are at the base of the curriculum that is provided, it is intended they are a facilitator for effective pedagogical practice. During classroom walkthroughs, students were actively engaged in their learning, often in groups, and could clearly articulate their learning. 'Stretch and challenge' was described as levels of questioning, verbal feedback and peer discussion. The 2 special classes have structured environments that support individualised programs and independent learning.

The school's focus on positive mindsets was evident, as teachers and students frequently articulated that they were happy to be in the "confusion zone, as this is when the learning happens". Students' access to curriculum is further enhanced through learning scaffolds observed in all classrooms. Students and parents reported that teachers cater for individual needs and plan for stretch in their learning. While varied practice exists in how effectively high-impact strategies are implemented for differentiated teaching, all teachers are intent on improving their practice. Further deepening teacher skills in high-yield strategies, within a responsive teaching and learning cycle, will enable them to become more embedded and consistent across the school.

Direction 2 Ensure pedagogical coherence and seamless transition points for learners by embedding agreed, high-yield practices consistently across the school for literacy and numeracy.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Student representative council is a leadership opportunity for all students. Senior students are able to apply for house captain, school captain or to be an 'Eco School Leader'. Eco School leaders are then able to apply to be in the Young Environment Leader Program. All year 6 students are involved in a leadership program as part of succession. When asked about influencing their learning, student responses were: choosing topics, presentation of work or what task to do first.

While leadership roles are one avenue for student influence, teachers provided occasional opportunities for students to provide feedback about their learning. Most students wouldn't consider giving teachers feedback unless it was asked for, which was not often. Student feedback can be a powerful enabler for change in teacher practice and could be further developed by the school. Teachers are mindful of providing explicit feedback during the learning, which is mostly verbal.

Rubrics and checklists were examples of how students could get direct feedback about their work. Rubrics are being used more frequently across the school to provide students with 'success criteria'. Learning intentions linked to success criteria for students to have further clarity about their learning, and differentiating them for targeted teaching, is a practice to be further developed. In the special option classes in particular, students had learning goals. There were opportunities in other classes for students to identify goals; however, in most classes, this was not found to be consistent practice, nor were the goals regularly monitored or reviewed.

While students demonstrated positive dispositions about themselves as learners, they only had a perceptual understanding of how they were going in their learning. Most students thought they were doing well because they could get their work done; the teacher praised them, or through results, such as test scores or reports. More sharing of summative and formative assessments and providing timely, explicit feedback that informs students of the next steps in their learning, will support them to become powerful learners. Having clarity of what they know and what they need to know will help them benchmark their learning, in order to set explicit goals that they can then regularly monitor and review.

Direction 3 Develop student agency in learning, by regularly sharing assessments with students and strengthening timely and effective feedback to and from students, that enables teachers to improve their practice and students to become self-drivers in their own improvement.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

Clapham Primary School has worked diligently to develop a cohesive approach to school improvement and consistency in teaching practice across the school. There is strong, strategic leadership and management of the school. A high level of trust exists for leaders and teachers from the community, and the improved culture at the school is founded in positive and productive relationships. Continuous improvement in staff practice is supported by effective systems that build capacity. There is genuine commitment from staff to meet the needs of all learners. These are solid foundations for the school's future improvement work.

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

- Direction 1** Further strengthen self-review processes by effectively evaluating the impact of actions and strategies on student outcomes, to refine and consolidate effective practice consistently across the school.
- Direction 2** Ensure pedagogical coherence and seamless transition points for learners by embedding agreed, high-yield practices consistently across the school for literacy and numeracy.
- Direction 3** Develop student agency in learning, by regularly sharing assessments with students and strengthening timely and effective feedback to and from students, that enables teachers to improve their practice and students to become self-drivers in their own improvement.

Based on the school's current performance, Clapham 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).

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2019, 64% of year 1 and 54% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline for year 1 and year 2, from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 67% of year 3 students, 83% of year 5 students and 89% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline and for years 5 and 7, an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 74% to 83%.

For 2019, year 3 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving lower than the results of similar students across government schools. For year 5 and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2019, 42% of year 3, 38% of year 5 and 56% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 52%, or 13 out of 25 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 100%, or 6 out of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 67% of year 3 students, 79% of year 5 students and 89% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents a decline, for year 5 little to no change and for year 7, an improvement, from the historic baseline average.

For 2019, years 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 27% of year 3, 24% of year 5 and 67% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 53%, or 8 out of 15 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 100%, or 5 out of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.