

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Prospect Primary School

Conducted in March 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 Phil Garner, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Wendy Moore and Mike Walsh Review Principals.

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 representatives
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Prospect Primary School caters for students foundation to year 7. It is situated 6kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 631. Enrolment at the time of the previous review in 2017 was 488. The local partnership is Adelaide-Prospect.

The school has a 2019 ICSEA score of 1098 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1% Aboriginal students, 4.4% students with disabilities, 52% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6% children/young people in care and 74% of families are eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 5th year of tenure, a Deputy Principal in their 3rd year, and a new Assistant Principal who has been at the school since term 3 2020. The school also employs a 0.2FTE literacy coach and 0.4FTE wellbeing teacher.

There are 32 teachers, including 2 in the early years of their career and 16 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were

- Direction 1** Deepen the use of data analysis and formative assessment to drive school strategies and practices to further improve teacher planning and student learning outcomes.
- Direction 2** Determine and embed the evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs and approaches to be implemented R-7 to provide common expectations and coherence for learners as they progress through their schooling.
- Direction 3** Extend the level of student influence and responsibility for learning by expanding student involvement through a focus on transparent learning intentions, success criteria and the use of effective feedback student/student, teacher/student and student/teacher.

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

Direction 1. The school implemented several highly effective strategies that enhanced the use of student achievement data and focussed on improving student outcomes. Refer to line of inquiry 2 in this report.

Direction 2. The school improvement plan was focussed on this direction and has a significant and positive impact on teaching and learning. Literacy and numeracy agreements were developed and whole-school learning programs implemented.

Direction 3. This direction has been a focus for this review. Refer to line of inquiry 2 in this report.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How well does the school review and evaluate the effectiveness of the improvement planning process and the impact on student learning to inform next steps?

The school invested considerable time and effort into the process of developing a comprehensive and detailed plan for improvement. It was carefully refined to include explicit actions with clear and concise responsibilities and accountabilities. The school improvement plan (SIP) is driving the development in teaching and learning across the school and classrooms.

Consultation teams were strategically created to enable high levels of collaboration and guide the implementation of actions across the school. The analysis of a wide range of student achievement and well-being data is used to monitor the impact of actions on student improvement. The pedagogical shift team monitors implementation of new practices. This shared leadership model is engaging teachers in driving the school improvement journey and increasing ownership and commitment.

Most teachers are engaging with actions and strategies that clearly measure the impact of their teaching on student learning, including:

- Sub-team collaboration on writing moderation and analysis of achievement data to identify next steps in learning
- Students as owners and leaders of their own learning
- Formative assessment practices that guide students and identify next steps in learning
- High levels of student engagement and understanding about their learning
- Opportunities for two-way feedback with a focus on the impact of teaching and learning
- Effective monitoring and tracking of student progress that guides next steps in learning.

Most teachers conveyed their positive experiences in collaborative practices and consistency of teaching and learning within their sub-teams. Whole-school implementation of writing, functional grammar and meta-language is driving the desire for greater consistency and continuity across the school. Areas for further refinement and consistency include:

- pedagogical practices
- organisational structure
- expectations and agreements
- classroom environments
- planning programs
- student learning dispositions.

The school is well-positioned to develop a consistent and collective understanding of what consistency and continuity means, and how this might be reflected in teaching and learning and student progress over their educational journey at this school.

Direction 1 Improve student learning outcomes through the collaborative development and implementation of consistent expectations, pedagogical approaches and organisational structures across all year levels.

Conditions for effective student learning

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

Students have high aspirations for themselves and their peers, and take pride in their learning, with a desire to share their success. There is a culture of doing well and helping others.

The accelerated student focus is an effective strategy in ensuring high levels of challenge. High-achieving learners were identified for differentiation opportunities and play an important role in the classroom as lead learners/mentors in some classes.

The panel saw high levels of explicit teaching, particularly in writing across the school, and reading in the early years. Most students were able to discuss their learning progress and identify their next steps.

The use of success criteria is an embedded practice in most classes, with students able to identify what is expected of them. Strong student voice is reflected in the co-development of success criteria in some year levels.

The use of formative feedback and assessment practices was evident in most classes; however, implementation and teacher/student understanding of its importance in the teaching and learning process varied.

Learning is targeted to the individual learning needs of students through the analysis of achievement data, formative feedback strategies, student voice and collaborative learning strategies. This is particularly visible in the focus on writing and functional grammar. Replicating this consistently across all areas of the curriculum and in all classrooms is the next step in the journey of engaging and challenging all students effectively in their learning.

There is an identified need by all stakeholders to develop consistent expectations, pedagogical approaches, and organisational structures across year levels. The focus on developing learner dispositions in the upper years has a significant and positive effect on student learning. It is an approach to learning that could be adopted as a whole-school model, and has the potential to provide all students with continuity of learning experience as they progress through the school.

Direction 2 Develop and implement a whole-school focus on student learning dispositions through whole-school collaboration and collective accountability.

Effective leadership

How effective are the school's professional learning and performance and development processes in building teacher capacity?

The school provides a wealth of professional learning opportunities, support and year level autonomy to build teacher and potential leader capacity. Using information technology is an embedded practice, effective in all school communication and professional learning.

Learning and action teams provide opportunities for professional discussions and monitoring the impact on student learning, including:

- Sub-teams that plan the program and develop action plans related to the SIP
- Mixed year-level teams consider how changes across the school impact continuity from foundation to year 7
- Challenge action teams to collaborate to analyse student achievement data and associated strategies to monitor the progress of accelerated learners and identify next steps
- Professional learning communities in numeracy, writing, wellbeing and technology provide opportunities for staff to collaborate in professional learning around these areas.

The strategic structuring of these teams is effectively supporting the building of teacher capacity and facilitating shared leadership across the school. The structure has the added benefit of increasing mutual accountability and group expectations.

Performance development meetings occur twice a year and are linked to the SIP. Written feedback is provided to staff about their practice and suggestions for improvement discussed. This year, they will be online and required to include documented evidence of implementation and impact on student outcomes.

Most teachers are interested in pursuing a model of appraisal that provides them with regular targeted feedback about their practice and impact on student learning. Learning walks were discussed with most groups as a way of deprivatising feedback, while providing information about implementation of whole-school initiatives.

Leadership are strategically engaged in developing a shared leadership model that reflects the gradual release of responsibility. The panel saw strong teacher involvement in decision-making and ownership of learning improvement. Collective accountability is clearly developing. This will further be enhanced through a formal appraisal process that will bring about greater consistency and continuity of teaching and learning across the school.

Direction 3 Provide teachers with opportunities to improve their performance through the collaborative investigation and implementation of a whole-school pedagogical appraisal and feedback process.

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, 78% of year 1 and 75% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 92% of year 3 students, 92% of year 5 students and 96% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents little or no change, 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 80% to 92%.

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

In 2019, 66% of year 3, 56% of year 5 and 46% 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 in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 69%, or 31 out of 45 students from year 3, remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 78%, or 14 out of 18 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 85% of year 3 students, 85% of year 5 students and 91% 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.

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

In 2019, 48% of year 3, 34% of year 5 and 37% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 69%, or 18 out of 26 students from year 3, remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 69%, or 9 out of 13 students from year 3, remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

There was a significant change in engagement and culture at this school since the last review with an increased focus on learning improvement. Building and facilitating a culture of professional collaboration supported teachers in trialing new pedagogical approaches and promoted a culture of sharing. The site improvement plan continues to be a key component of this change process; and allows teachers to easily understand responsibilities, expectations and implementation strategies. Consultative, professional learning teams are guiding the improvement journey, ensuring collective responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and learning. Review and evaluation effectively measures student outcomes, achievement and the impact of actions on student learning.

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

- Direction 1** **Improve student learning outcomes through the collaborative development and implementation of consistent expectations, pedagogical approaches and organisational structures across all year levels.**
- Direction 2** **Develop and implement a whole-school focus on student learning dispositions through whole-school collaboration and collective accountability.**
- Direction 3** **Provide teachers with opportunities to improve their performance through the collaborative investigation and implementation of a whole-school pedagogical appraisal and feedback process.**

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



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