

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Woodcroft 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 Greg Graham, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Peter O'Sullivan and Anne Dawe, 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
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Woodcroft Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 24kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 596. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 865. The local partnership is Panalatinga.

The school has a 2019 ICSEA score of 1008 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 8% students with disabilities, 4% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2% children/young people in care and 27.5% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 8th year of tenure. The school has a Deputy Principal and 2 Senior Leaders with responsibilities in student support and curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

There are 37 teachers including 5 in the early years of their career and 18 Step 9 Teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Provide planned and regular opportunities for staff to work in and across year level groups to develop common understanding and greater consistency in the allocation of A-E grades through regular and collaborative moderation of students' work.
- Direction 2** Embed strategic use of self-review processes to determine, and act upon, the impact school strategies and practices are having on both teacher practices and student learning outcomes.
- Direction 3** Strengthen the capacity of students to have greater influence over their learning through a specific focus on feedback and intellectual stretch.
- Direction 4** Work closely with section leaders to align professional learning with SIP priorities and embed resulting whole-school pedagogical practices.

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

Actions were taken to address the previous ESR directions, including the following:

- regular professional learning community (PLC) meeting times focusing on learning design, assessment, moderation and analysis of student data
- tracking and monitoring of A to E data at the individual level
- performance development processes.

Reference groups to inform improvement work were created. Student ambassadors provide student voice for whole-school processes. All staff included a site improvement plan (SIP) goal within their professional development plans. The school engaged ongoing relationships with numeracy and literacy experts to support this improvement.

Elements of the previous directions are still to be addressed and actioned, together with the SIP strategies.

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 review panel acknowledged the work of the Principal and actions taken in addressing the previous directions and their impact on the teaching and learning. The Principal's presentation demonstrated positive changes in practices which impacted on student results. The SIP targets focus on increasing the number of students achieving and retaining higher bands in numeracy and reading. A whole-school approach in numeracy and phonics is the main focus of the SIP and is based on long-term data. All curriculum planning and resources are linked to SIP actions and the accountability of curriculum delivery. Teachers recognised the common thread and connections between SIP targets and actions in class.

Professional conversations and performance development are related to improvement targets and teaching practice. Professional learning is supported by school leadership and local education team (LET) personnel. The principal and staff pointed to a need to continue the current literacy and numeracy practices to ensure they are embedded and sustainable. Next steps to consider involve strengthening the focus of SIP review, emphasising the stretching of all students, but particularly moving the SEA and high-band levels.

Regular check-ins and ongoing data collection at different points during the term are discussed at meetings. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) enabled a collaborative approach to implement and monitor improvement strategies. Teacher conversations around data and teaching strategies is common. Data is now more relevant in understanding the 'where to next' in planning

Assessment data is used as a basis for intervention practices, are more streamlined and focused and have been strengthened with the introduction of a Special Education Teacher. This appointment has been valued and results are emerging.

Understanding the common curriculum between primary and early years sectors and reviewing the curriculum agreements, will strengthen teacher and leaders' practice in targeted and explicit teaching. Staff need to consider how could the new SIP priorities, targets, improvement practices and success criteria outcomes, be more targeted to cater for the R-6 range.

Direction 1 **To improve student achievement, strengthen the efficacy of teacher pedagogy, assessment and the monitoring of school targets and challenge of practice to meet SIP success criteria.**

Effective teaching and student learning

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

As identified via the SIP, using evidence-based approaches in teaching literacy and numeracy, with a specific emphasis on data to plan for student learning, exists within the school. Programs in phonics, reading and maths are the primary focus across the school. The 'Thinking maths' professional learning offered new strategies in teaching mathematics. The strategy employed in developing and improving the teaching of maths is valued. Reading strategies, such as Daily 5, were evident in some classes. Explicit teaching of phonics in early years is evident, however, follow-up programs in the teaching of phonics for primary years, are unclear.

Differentiation strategies varied across the school, with some teachers and specialist teachers identifying specific differentiated practices appropriate to their teaching field. A pedagogical survey indicated that 52% of staff rated their use of differentiated practices at a medium level. Formative assessment processes varied amongst teachers, with the vast majority of staff using summative assessment tasks to ascertain student knowledge and attainment.

The school's involvement in the learning design assessment and moderation (LDAM) work heightened teachers' understanding of the learning design model. Seventy-four per cent of teachers indicated that their use of formative assessment data and information was at a medium extent in their planning. Revisiting the LDAM processes and formative assessment strategies will strengthen the consistency of differentiated planning and teaching across the school.

There is an intentionality by teachers to do their job well and they recognised the diversity of learners within the classes. Strategies to ascertain student understanding using success matrixes are used but not evident in all classes. A small number of teachers surveyed their classes to ascertain the lesson progress. This helps teachers check their responses and change lesson formats.

The next steps to consider are to revisit task design planning quality and implementation, to ensure engagement and meaningful learning for all the students.

Direction 2 To stretch the learning of all students, ensure that teachers consistently plan contemporary teaching approaches that focus on improved student outcomes being a key determinant of the process.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Teachers understood the purpose and timing of data being used. Staff meeting structures enable learning teams to discuss and analyse whole-school, cohort and individual student data. The historic baseline average of the formal achievement data of NAPLAN and PAT in reading and numeracy ranges from little or no change, to improvement in both SEA and high band levels. The school should strengthen the use of achievement data and teaching adjustments to ensure improved outcomes in learning of all students, especially with high-band students.

Staff know their students and their data, and refer to student achievement as growth data, not necessarily achievement results. Teachers use work samples for shared moderation. The pedagogical survey conducted indicated that 74% of teachers used formative assessment data and information to support their planning at a medium level. They consider using data more with the students at an individual level and/or through whole-class discussions. They reflect on the achievement data (NAPLAN, PAT, phonics and Running Records) trends to focus on explicit teaching to stretch the SEA and high-band range of students.

Teachers were regularly checking on work, providing feedback and walking around the class offering explicit instructions. Feedback strategies include traffic light cards, thumbs up/down and conversations with some examples of formal surveys. The pedagogical survey indicated that 67% of teachers provided feedback to students to help them to know how to improve. Teachers who adapted their planning in response to the feedback gained from students was at a medium level. Students want more challenging work and more critical or constructive feedback. Teachers recognised further work is needed in providing opportunity for student input in task design and how work is presented. Next steps for the school are to develop an understanding and consistency of practice in gathering feedback to and from students, to inform teacher practice and enable student agency in their own learning.

Direction 3 **To address meaningful learning for all students, embed consistent high-level differentiated planning that uses all of the formative assessment cycle.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

At Woodcroft Primary School the influence of previous ESR directions is evident in the school's improvement. The school is effectively using improvement planning and monitoring processes to raise student achievement. Leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions. Teacher and leader practice are positively impacted by effective systems that build capacity. The school is providing effective conditions for student learning.

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

- Direction 1** **To improve student achievement, strengthen the efficacy of teacher pedagogy, assessment and the monitoring of school targets and challenge of practice to meet SIP success criteria.**
- Direction 2** **To stretch the learning of all students, ensure that teachers consistently plan contemporary teaching approaches that focus on improved student outcomes being a key determinant of the process.**
- Direction 3** **To address meaningful learning for all students, embed consistent high-level differentiated planning that uses all of the formative assessment cycle.**

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



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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).

Reading

In the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2019 63% of year 1 and 79% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

In 2019 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 79% of year 3 students, 72% of year 5 students and 90% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For years 5 and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

In 2019 49% of year 3, 16% of year 5 and 16% 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 year 7 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, 45% or 9 out of 20 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 30% or 12 out of 40 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

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

Numeracy

In 2019 the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 80% of year 3 students, 69% of year 5 students and 86% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. For year 5 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline

In 2019 34% of year 3, 9% of year 5 and 22% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. For year 5, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 44%, or 4 out of 9 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 71% or 12 out of 17 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

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