

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Redwood Park Primary School

Conducted in July 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 Marie Wright, 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 Support Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Redwood Park Primary School caters for children from preschool to year 7. It is situated 17kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 379. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 420. The local partnership is Tea Tree Gully.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1018, and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 7% students with disabilities, 7% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2 children/young people in care and 27% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 4th year of tenure, a deputy principal in his 2nd year of tenure with the responsibility of leading and building teacher's pedagogy through the lens of numeracy and intervention, and an assistant principal in her final year of tenure with a focus on early years and leading and building teacher's pedagogy through the lens of Literacy and intervention.

There are 25 teachers including 2 in the early years of their career and 8 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Strengthen differentiation and challenge for all students by designing learning with high cognitive demand.**
- Direction 2** **Embed a coherent student-centred approach to teaching and learning by developing and committing to a small number of agreed and visible school-wide practices that result in measurable success for students.**
- Direction 3** **Raise student achievement by enhancing targeted and transparent feedback to students to inform and motivate them to improve.**
- Direction 4** **Improve student voice in learning by building monitoring strategies that engage students in reciprocal feedback and self- and peer-assessment using transparent success criteria.**
- Direction 5** **Personalise and stretch learning by using data with students to develop and set SMART goals for improvement.**

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

There have been several changes to leadership positions at Redwood Park Primary School since the previous review. A significant change agenda, particularly over the past 2 years, is focused on the school's priorities, through strategic educational leadership and includes responding to the previous directions. All stakeholders acknowledge a greater connectivity between the preschool and school, with a strong culture of collaboration from preschool through to year 7.

Dedicated attention to building consistency in whole-school pedagogical approaches with notable gains over a short period of time is demonstrated. While the school continues to make progress in their implementation of the previous directions, there is further work to be achieved in embedding effective

practice. The panel commends the school on the established infrastructure, which provides a solid foundation for the work ahead.

The school measures student achievement against the Tea Tree Gully Partnership's Standards of Educational Achievement (SEA) which are set above the Department for Education's SEA. This focus on aiming higher is further emphasised through the school's motto of "High expectations and achievement for all".

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?

Leaders describe a comprehensive and rigorous improvement agenda. Barriers to the improvement work are identified and actions are taken to maintain momentum. Staff work collaboratively in analysing data to inform site improvement plan (SIP) priorities. Leadership and committee roles and responsibilities are transparent and aligned to the SIP, providing clarity for all staff. All SIP goals reference higher-band achievement and there is intentional work of teachers in tracking students in order to lift their achievement.

All teachers engage with a wide range of achievement and growth data supported by the use of 'MARKiT' as an online collection system. Agreed datasets are collected according to an assessment schedule. Scheduled time through staff meetings, professional learning teams (PLT) and pupil free days ensure staff interrogate data regularly as part of ongoing practice.

The SIP has been rewritten and targeted to each year level with clear actions that teachers are expected to fulfil and success criteria from which to measure their progress. This makes the SIP more meaningful for teachers and encourages more ownership and responsibility. Teachers and school service officers (SSOs) reported clarity of what is expected of them. Governing council parents feel well-informed about the SIP priorities, and trust that the school is continually focused on improvement.

Self-review is planned and intentional with a dedicated staff meeting set aside each term to review actions and outcomes from year level SIP expectations. Documents showed how teachers identify the actions they have implemented so far and rate the depth of their implementation. Leaders indicated that this information is collated and further informed them of required targeted support for PLTs. The next step for these self-review practices is to intently measure the direct impact of implemented actions on improving teaching practices and student learning outcomes.

Direction 1 **Ensure pedagogical coherence and rigour, through ongoing systems of self-review that evaluate the impact of strategies and actions, to embed practices for continuous improvement preschool to year 7.**

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Whole-school agreements in literacy and numeracy were recently reviewed. They are supported by ample resources easily accessible online for staff. Teachers talk of an intentional shift from using programs to building capacity in pedagogical practice, which is at the centre of the school's improvement agenda.

One of the most consistent strategies viewed at the time of the review is the use of learning intentions and success criteria visible in all learning spaces. Students' clarity about what, why and how they were learning and how they would know if they are successful, improves with higher year levels. This practice could be further strengthened by co-constructing and differentiating learning intentions and success criteria for students, across a range of learning areas, to stretch the varied needs of learners.

While teachers report designing learning with multiple entry and exit points to support diverse learning needs, almost all interviewed students rated their learning as 3 on a 1-5 scale. Most parents indicated that they would like more challenge in daily learning. Classroom observations, bookwork and discussions added little further evidence of quality differentiated practice and rigour in learning. Examples of teachers using data diagnostically to intentionalise teaching and inform their practice with students in the classroom, were mostly described as grouping students for Guided Reading.

Feedback and goal-setting varied across the school. While feedback is acknowledged by teachers as an area for further improvement, verbal feedback to students and examples of providing feedback to teachers about the learning was shown in student conversations. Effective feedback to students supports goal-setting. Goals described to the panel were found to be mainly broad and not regularly monitored or reviewed; however, older students indicated that their teachers expect them to provide evidence of achieving their goal.

Examples of formative assessment tools teachers use to gauge the learning included using whiteboards and questioning students. Effective formative assessment practices should enable teachers to differentiate, scaffold learning and provide timely constructive feedback. Paired with the above, regularly sharing assessment with students, is an area for refinement. This would greatly enhance students' ability to benchmark their learning and set explicit goals that are regularly monitored and reviewed for daily stretch in learning.

Direction 2 **Ensure stretch and challenge for all students, by regularly sharing assessment with students and embedding timely formative assessment and feedback practices that enable students to benchmark their learning and become self-drivers in their own learning.**

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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

Purposeful attention to building a culture of learning and high expectations, and improving the work of PLTs, has been a key driver. From preschool to year 7, significant work around growth mindsets and learner dispositions for both teachers and students has underpinned the journey.

The principal builds leaders' leadership capacity through joint weekly meetings and 1:1 fortnightly meetings, establishing a common moral purpose of improving educational outcomes of all students. The deputy and assistant principals have their offices in 2 classroom units. Leaders' roles, professional learning and performance development have been clearly aligned to the SIP. Staff report feeling very supported through the change agenda, including having leaders accessible.

Performance development processes include classroom observations from which leaders provide detailed written feedback to teachers. Staff see performance development structures as supportive and self-driven. A significant and deliberate approach to build teacher and SSO capacity is enabled through leaders and coaches being intentional and differentiating support.

Committees, led by leaders, have a teacher representative from each of the PLTs, which ensures systematic and cohesive progress of the school's priorities. External sources of expertise and partnership priorities further enhance the work of the school. A growth area already identified by leaders is to further share expertise from within the school.

Classrooms are open and deprivatised spaces. PLTs are co-located classes with similar year levels and are cohesive and collegial groups. There has been intentional rebuilding of PLTs of 2-4 teachers over time and SSOs are now integrated members of PLTs. PLTs have a combined 'non-instructional' time, meet regularly in staff meetings and have release opportunities for working with coaches and professional learning. As a significant lever for the improvement journey, a next step will be to ensure PLTs become forums for a narrow and deep focus. This can be achieved through rigorous and challenging discussions that critically reflect practice for continuous improvement.

Direction 3 Consolidate and embed effective pedagogies within the teaching and learning cycle, by strengthening PLT processes to critically reflect, evaluate and amplify practices that have the best impact on student outcomes.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

Redwood Park Primary School has worked diligently to develop a cohesive and comprehensive approach to school improvement. Staff work collaboratively, and there is a positive culture of learning across the school. Leaders provide clear strategic direction, planning and targeted actions which are evidence-based. Active, focused and differentiated support from leaders in mentoring and coaching teachers for improved classroom practice, aligned to the priorities, is a strength of the school.

Parents express a high level of trust and confidence in the leadership team and the directions of the school. Building on the existing positive culture and established systems for improvement places the school well on the path for future improvement work.

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

- Direction 1** **Ensure pedagogical coherence and rigour, through ongoing systems of self-review that evaluate the impact of strategies and actions, to embed practices for continuous improvement preschool to year 7.**
- Direction 2** **Ensure stretch and challenge for all students, by regularly sharing assessment with students and embedding timely formative assessment and feedback practices that enable students to benchmark their learning and become self-drivers in their own learning.**
- Direction 3** **Consolidate and embed effective pedagogies within the teaching and learning cycle, by strengthening PLT processes to critically reflect, evaluate and amplify practices that have the best impact on student outcomes.**

Based on the school's current performance, Redwood Park Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



Kerry Dollman
A/DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS

Ian Dickie
PRINCIPAL
REDWOOD PARK 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).

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2019, 49% of year 1 and 64% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline for years 1 and 2, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 71% to 49%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 86% of year 3 students, 81% of year 5 students and 83% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents little or no change and for year 5, an improvement from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 64% of year 3, 29% of year 5 and 14% 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, 54%, or 15 out of 28 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 28%, or 5 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 81% of year 3 students, 84% of year 5 students and 76% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents little or no change, for year 5 an improvement, and for year 7, a decline, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 7 has been downwards, from 87% to 76%.

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, 36% of year 3, 24% of year 5 and 19% 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.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 students achieving in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands has been upwards from 15% to 24%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 57%, or 12 out of 21 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 60%, or 6 out of 10 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.