

# Department for Education

## External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

### Report for Norwood Primary School

Conducted in August 2019



## 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 Nicole Cawley, Review Principal.

## Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relating 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 Support Officers (SSOs)
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

## School context

Norwood Primary School caters for children and young people from reception to year 7. It is situated 3kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 428 students. The enrolment at the time of the previous review was 368.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1142 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1 Aboriginal student, 8 students with disabilities, 59% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, no children/young people in care and 11% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of their tenure at the school. The school has two assistant principals.

## Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Improve numeracy achievement and retention in upper bands across the school through the consistent implementation of effective pedagogical approaches in numeracy in all classes.
- Direction 2** Challenge and support all learners through teachers collecting, analysing and using the available data to collaboratively plan for their needs and to track student learning progress over time.
- Direction 3** Differentiate the teaching and learning for students using agreed and consistent strategies across all classes that engage students in their learning at a personal level, and allow them to connect their learning to other contexts.
- Direction 4** Collect and analyse student feedback about teaching and learning across all classes, and use this data to consistently implement the agreed teaching practices to engage and challenge students further in their learning.
- Direction 5** Refine the processes and structures to promote further professional dialogue and sharing of pedagogical practice across the staff team to lift student achievement and growth in learning in a consistent and coherent way.

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

#### Direction 1

With strategic analysis of student achievement data and a consistent collaborative approach to the teaching of numeracy, the school has improved NAPLAN numeracy higher band achievement in year 7 and increased the retention of high band students from years 3 to 7.

#### Direction 2

The school has developed strategic processes to enable teachers to collaboratively analyse individual student achievement data and track their progress overtime. Teachers are supported to plan together with a focus on providing engaging and challenging learning tasks and support for all students.

### **Direction 3**

The school has developed whole-school agreements that are bringing a level of consistency of practice to teaching and learning. Improved professional collaboration combined with the implementation of consistent pedagogical approaches is providing students with connected, scaffolded learning experiences and greater clarity around their individual learning needs.

### **Direction 4**

Student ownership of their learning is a strong feature in all classes with opportunities for self and peer assessment providing authentic student engagement and feedback on their learning. Professional teacher collaboration focuses on high expectations, developing agreed teaching practices and improving student outcomes. This combination is having a positive effect on providing students with high levels of educational engagement and challenge.

### **Direction 5**

The school has strategically developed professional collaborative learning teams that focus on building teacher capacity and provide opportunities for professional dialogue. These are highly valued by staff and have been the catalyst for the development of engaging and challenging pedagogical approaches, and whole-school commitment to consistency of practice.

## **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?***

There exists a strong commitment to the ownership of the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) by staff and the Governing Council with many opportunities for consultation provided during the development phase. There is documented evidence of teacher and student engagement with the challenges of practice and the identified actions with significant, highly effective pedagogical shift in teaching and learning evidenced.

Staff Professional Development program (PDP) processes and professional learning is clearly aligned to the achievement of the SIP directions, with identified professional learning strategically designed for whole-school implementation. Strategic trialling of pedagogical strategies and programs prior to whole-school implementation, has enabled the school to make informed decisions ensuring the most appropriate and best evidence-based approaches are introduced.

Staff are currently engaging in the review and evaluation phase of the improvement cycle with a variety of evaluation strategies engaged. The professionalism and commitment of staff to focus on continual improvement is clearly reflected in the progress towards achieving the identified actions and the success criteria. Consistent whole-school implementation of the writing actions has resulted in significant growth and improvement in the quality and depth of writing which is evidenced through the moderation of student learning tasks.

Whilst classroom teachers have clear ownership of, and commitment to the SIP, intervention and classroom support staff are not consciously engaging with these actions. They would benefit from some professional learning associated with the challenges of practice and associated actions.

In discussions with the specialist teachers, it is acknowledged that making relevant connections to the challenges of practice and associated actions is presenting elements of difficulty. However, the specialist teachers are keen and passionate about being involved and are committed to investigating ways of making authentic connections that support improvement in student academic achievement.

#### **Direction 1    Strengthen the achievement of student outcomes through increased collaborative engagement by all staff and students.**

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

The panel has noted a wide variety of pedagogical approaches that adequately provide for the differing learning needs of students across the school. Opportunities for extension and intervention exist with students learning targeted against their learning needs. However, the panel noted that in some classes the provision of multiple entry points for problem solving tasks in mathematics would enable all students to be effectively engaged at the appropriate level of challenge.

Most students could clearly articulate their learning goals with evidence of a high degree of self, peer and teacher assessment influencing student goal setting with clear connections to the SIP.

Discussing the learning intentions with students is common practice across the school, with some classes expanding this to include 'what am I looking for' strategies, with reference to the Australian Curriculum. Used in this way, teachers are providing greater opportunities for students to be positively connected and engaged with their learning.

The use of effective teaching practices is clearly evident with a number of teachers engaging students in the use of 'solo taxonomy'. There is evidence of the highly effective use of this strategy in providing students with a greater understanding of the learning process and opportunities to increase ownership, responsibility and accountability for their own learning.

Most classes are using Brightpath with students engaging with exemplars, descriptors and annotation of their own writing. This is particularly evident in the early years. Most students indicated to the panel that they would welcome the opportunity to evaluate and analyse other diagnostic assessment data, including PAT data that identifies gaps and informs their next steps in learning.

Across the school the panel observed many examples of self, peer and teacher assessment of student learning. However, the panel noted across a range of subjects and in some classes, a high percentage of learning tasks were not formatively assessed, with students unable to explain how they are going with their learning and how they could improve. With evidence in upper primary classes of highly effective formative teacher assessment, self and peer assessment practices, and deep self-reflection on learning tasks, the school is well placed to replicate this exemplary practice across the school.

**Direction 2** To enhance student engagement in their own learning, capitalise on existing exemplary, formative assessment practices and collaboratively design and implement a consistent understanding and approach to formative assessment across the school.

## EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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

The school leadership team is a highly cohesive and professional team that has developed an intentional culture of respect and collaboration. The building of teacher capacity has been a major focus with the provision of opportunities for high quality collaboration. Professional learning communities (PLCs) are extremely valued by staff and provide a platform for change and continuity. They are seen as a powerful time to engage in professional dialogue and strengthen teaching practices across the school. Staff leave the meetings feeling energised and highly motivated. There is clear evidence that this high level collaboration is reflected in improved teaching, consistent pedagogical practices and student learning.

PDP plans are regularly reviewed and concisely written to reflect school priorities and student learning targets. Teachers have indicated that they feel valued and appreciated by the leadership team. There exists high levels of collaboration between same year level learning teams that is leading to improved consistency of pedagogical practices, allowing for deprivatisation of classrooms and providing greater opportunities for

student interactions. However, there does exist a wide variety of approaches and programs used in literacy and numeracy across the school. Reviewing and updating the whole-school agreements will lead to greater focus and increased consistency of practice.

Currently, there are limited opportunities for teachers to receive or provide professional feedback to colleagues on their teaching. The leadership team are often 'observing classes informally', however this is not seen as adding significance to the performance development cycle. With the school having a respectful and collaborative culture for improvement, the school is well placed to develop, implement and embed a formal professional observation process that takes the building of teacher capacity to the next level.

**Direction 3      To build teacher capacity and enhance student learning, develop, implement and embed a formal professional observation process that provides high quality feedback to colleagues.**

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Norwood Primary School (NPS) is providing students with an outstanding opportunity to develop their performing arts skills. Students can learn how to play musical instruments and participate in performances that further enhances their learning. The opportunity to be a part of the whole-school musical is highly valued by the students and the community, and is an embedded tradition at the school. NPS participates in the Festival of Music each year and has provided a long term commitment to an afterschool sports program.

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

- Direction 1** Strengthen the achievement of student outcomes through increased collaborative engagement by all staff and students.
- Direction 2** To enhance student engagement in their own learning, capitalise on existing exemplary, formative assessment practices and collaboratively design and implement a consistent understanding and approach to formative assessment across the school.
- Direction 3** To build teacher capacity and enhance student learning, develop, implement and embed a formal professional observation process that provides high quality feedback to colleagues.

Based on the school's current performance, Norwood Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



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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 2018, 73% of year 1 and 94% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline for year 1, and an improvement for year 2, from the historic baseline average. Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 95% to 73%.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 100% of year 3 students, 87% of year 5 students and 100% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement, and for year 5, this represents a decline, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 7 has been upwards, from 91% to 100%.

For 2018 year 3, and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving higher than, and for year 5, is achieving within, the results of similar students across government schools. Between 2016 and 2018, the school has consistently achieved higher in year 7 NAPLAN reading relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 75% of year 3, 53% of year 5 and 60% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 68%, or 30 out of 44 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 67%, or 12 out of 18 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 96% of year 3 students, 91% of year 5 students and 100% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7 this result represents an improvement, and for year 5, this represents little or no change, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for years 3 and 7 has been upwards from 89% to 96% and 83% to 100%, respectively.

For 2018 year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving higher than the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 49% of year 3, 43% of year 5 and 68% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 78%, or 21 out of 27 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 77%, or 13 out of 17 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.