Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Wynn Vale R-7 School

Conducted in April 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 Greg Graham, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Dianne Dinedios, Review Principal.

Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relating to the lines of inquiry:

- Presentation from the principal and deputy principal
- Class visits
- Attendance at staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Observation of Professional Learning Communities at staff meeting
- Discussions with: Aboriginal Community Education Officer (ACEO)
                                      Governing Council representatives
                                      Leaders
                                      Parent groups
                                      School Support Officers (SSOs)
                                      Student groups
                                      Teachers

School context

Wynn Vale R-7 School caters for children from Reception to year 7. It is situated 16kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 386 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 228. Enrolment has steadily increased over the last 5 years.

The school has an ICSEA score of 979, and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education (DfE) Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 6% students with a verified disability, 22% families eligible for school card assistance, 3% students from an EALD background and 1 student in care.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 5th year of his tenure at the school, 2 assistant principals and 1 co-ordinator. There are 18 teachers including 3 in the early years of their career and 10 Step 9 teachers. There are 6 SSOs and 1 ACEO.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

Direction 1   As a matter of urgency the school will complete the transfer and inputting of student achievement data into the new software package so that collated data is available to inform both the improvement agenda and teacher practice.

Direction 2   Further intensify the focus on improvement by establishing cyclic self-review practices that focus on regular and deep analysis of data and progress against the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities and targets.

Direction 3   Support students by tracking student achievement data to identify and benchmark student learning needs and to develop targeted learner intervention processes.

Direction 4   Maintain and continue to strengthen the intensity of professional learning that focuses on quality teaching and, in particular lifting student engagement and learner achievement outcomes through quality teaching practices that are intentional, differentiated and continually challenging.

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

The school has made significant progress with implementation of the previous directions.

The introduction of a computerised student achievement data collection process has been a positive enabler to assist teachers in recording, tracking and analysing student achievement. Teachers have access to the students' information in Week 0 which enables them to plan for individual student needs and tailor support accordingly. Student achievement and growth data is now part of the professional conversations in Performance Development (PDP) meetings.

The appointment of an assistant principal to manage intervention programs has been implemented and student information folders have been established to identify each student receiving support. SSOs are deployed to support students either through withdrawal or in mainstream classes.

Several actions have been undertaken in relation to cyclic review processes. Data and progress against the SIP priorities and targets have a focused emphasis on growth of an identified number of students over a three year period. All staff were involved in the development of the 2016 -2018 SIP and involved in the development of the goals and targets of the 2019 SIP. The SIP is reviewed annually. Staff provide feedback in term 4 to shape the following year's professional learning agenda. English and mathematics improvement cycles have been established. Data is a focal point of all teacher PDP discussions and reviewed in focused Professional Learning Team (PLT) meetings.

Professional learning and performance and development has significantly changed across the school. Appointment of two curriculum leaders in literacy and numeracy has led to professional development in these two areas. The restructuring of year level PLTs has increased the professional focus, while restructuring of staff meetings to have a professional learning focus has increased professional conversations and led to the trialling of actions in classrooms. PDP meetings and student observations have been successfully implemented. The school reported that professional learning is more focused on pedagogical change and is linked to the SIP challenge of practice.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How well does the school use evidence from student achievement and growth data to inform relevant and high impact goals and targets for improvement?

It has been recognised that the school uses data from a variety of sources to support and plan student learning. Formal measures such as Running Records, guided reading and Maths Misconception testing support the tracking and monitoring of students. The Minilit program is delivered to students at risk and is specifically aimed at early years' students. This readily available, accessible student data has enabled staff to increasingly use it in their planning. Teachers reported that they use this data as a starting point and build on it for each student.

The panel recognised the school's actions in building teacher capacity in collaboratively and systematically analysing data. Leadership and teachers reported that a four quadrant graph model has been used to identify students who have high/low achievement and high/low growth supporting teacher tracking and identification of students at risk. The data also enables a targeted approach by teachers as they plan extension programs for identified cohorts of students. It has also informed the development of 2019 SIP challenges of practice.

A culture of constant improvement was reported to the panel by parents interviewed. They also recognise the use of achievement data to identify the 'next steps' in their child's learning.

The 2019 SIP targets focus on increasing the number of students in higher bands in numeracy and reading. Actions identified to achieve this include explicit teaching in reasoning, problem-solving and developing teacher understanding of the elements that make up the Big 6 reading framework.

Processes are in place for the school to build on existing work and develop the next steps in its cyclical planning process by using achievement and growth data to inform teaching practice. Further work is to be undertaken to enable a broader understanding by all stakeholders of achievement data and its function in improving the learning of students. Going forward the panel suggests considering data sets which focus on both learner achievement and progress that provide meaningful information to students, and their parents/carers, about individual development.

Direction 1   Build on the use of student achievement data, to inform teaching, support intervention and track student performance to implement best practice approaches in supporting parents and carers to engage in their children's learning.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

The implementation of a modelled numeracy strategy via a strong emphasis on professional learning for staff has been introduced by the leadership team as a daily action. The numeracy program is functioning extremely well with focus actions such as Thinking Maths and Masterclass. The use of 'learning sprints' in numeracy has had an impact on student achievement and the mapping of these results has enabled teachers to monitor and modify their teaching practice. It was reported and observed by the panel that this approach was engaging for all students. Students were able to clearly articulate what they were learning in mathematics and this was confirmed by the parents interviewed.

The guided reading program features strategies such as literacy rotations and group activities. There was a desire expressed by staff to gain deeper understanding of, and incorporate, the elements of the Big 6 literacy framework in their pedagogy. The students know the structures of the daily literacy approach.

The use of formative assessment and differentiated teaching practices varied amongst the staff. Most staff were able to speak about the assessments they use but acknowledged that learning intentions and success rubrics were still areas to work on. Learning intentions tended to be verbal descriptions at the beginning of lessons/topics with some teachers printing the learning intention at the top of task sheets. Teacher Survey results indicated student engagement with learning intentions, the effectiveness of learning design and methods to gather and analysis student feedback are all areas for future development.

With a focus on effective teaching for all learners, the next steps in the professional development is to develop a collective understanding of differentiated teaching, strengthen teacher understanding of student agency within the planning process and build on teacher knowledge and use of meta-cognition for learning. Strengthening teacher knowledge in task design that incorporates student voice and the use of learning progressions will further develop and embed effective and consistent pedagogical practice in curriculum planning, leading to high yield practice across the school.

Direction 2   Build on the capacity of staff in the design of consistent pedagogical practices that link student learning from Foundation to year 7 and which include student influence and intentional learning strategies.

Direction 3   Strengthen the teachers' knowledge and integration of the general capabilities by using learning progressions to support clear and structured approaches to teaching.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Building on the recognised successes of the school, the leadership has demonstrated effectiveness in developing a shared vision, strategic planning actions and interventions that are data informed and enable sustainability. A growing culture of improvement characterised by high expectations for students is underpinned by effective teaching that actively engages learners and provides challenging learning experiences for all learners.

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

Direction 1   **Build on the use of student achievement data, to inform teaching, support intervention and track student performance to implement best practice approaches in supporting parents and carers to engage in their children's learning.**

Direction 2   **Build on the capacity of staff in the design of consistent pedagogical practices that link student learning from Foundation to year 7 and which include student influence and intentional learning strategies.**

Direction 3   **Strengthen the teachers' knowledge and integration of the general capabilities by using learning progressions to support clear and structured approaches to teaching.**

Based on the school's current performance, Wynn Vale R-7 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, 70% of year 1 and 77% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average for both year 1 and year 2.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 94% of year 3 students, 85% of year 5 students and 91% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement, and for year 5 this represents little of no change from the historic baseline average.

The trend for year 3 and year 7 has been upwards from 81% to 94% and from 68% to 91% for the years 2016 to 2018 respectively.

For 2018, year 3 and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving above the results of similar students across government schools. For year 5 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2018, 45% of year 3, 31% of year 5 and 31% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement from 2016 to 2018 of 32% to 45%, and 21% to 31% respectively. For year 3 this represents an improvement from the baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 64%, or 7 out of 11 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 61%, or 8 out of 13 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.

Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 77% of year 3 students, 87% of year 5 students and 85% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 5 and 7 this result represents an improvement, and for year 3 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

The trend for year 7 from 68% in 2016 to 85% in 2018.

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

In 2018, 28% of year 3, 18% of year 5 and 21% 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 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 80%, or 4 out of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 44%, or 4 out of 9 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.