

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

On-track evaluation report for Augusta Park Primary School

One-year return conducted in September 2020



On-track evaluation process

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.

All government schools are externally reviewed over a 3-year cycle. After the review the principal and the governing council chairperson receive a written report with a number of directions for improvement.

A copy of the ESR report is available on the school website.

The External School Review framework is referenced throughout all stages of the ESR process.

In some cases, when the review panel identifies limited achievement and growth, together with evidence about the school's capacity for systematic improvement, a school is advised that they will be visited again in 1 rather than 3 years' time (1 year return).

Schools with a 1-year return are assisted by the education director and other department staff to receive additional coordinated and targeted support. This intervention is focused on building the school's capacity to improve teaching and learning across the school, lift expectations and achieve improved student learning results as measured against the Department for Education Standard of Educational Achievement.

Following intervention, which occurs for 12-15 months after the ESR, a review panel conducts an on-track evaluation (OTE) to determine the extent to which the school has, with external support, developed sustainable internal capacity to improve effectiveness and raise student achievement.

The school's school improvement plan (SIP) is the main document used to inform the OTE.

This OTE visit was conducted by Liz Matheson, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate, and Katherine Holman and Linda Weetra, Review Principal.

The OTE report should be read in conjunction with the report of the External School Review conducted at Augusta Park Primary School in February 2019.

Directions from the External School Review report

February 2019

Key focus area 1 Effective School Improvement Planning: Focus school improvement on the consistent, whole-school implementation of strategies to directly address the identified challenges of practice.

Key focus area 2 Effective Teaching and Learning: Support each individual teacher through performance and development and coaching to use data to inform their practice and increase their impact on student learning outcomes.

Key focus area 3 Effective Teaching and Learning: Embed the use of learning intentions and success criteria in all classrooms.

Key focus area 4 Conditions for Effective Learning: Improve the school's effectiveness in responding to students who are not finding school relevant and/or challenging.

Additional information about the school context

The principal advised that prior to, and leading up to, the ESR in February 2019, the leadership team consisted of people in short-term positions, and the ability to provide consistency was challenging. Since the ESR, the composition of the leadership team has been redesigned, including the appointment of a Band 2 senior leader in Aboriginal Education, as well as a special education coordinator, to reflect the high numbers of Aboriginal students and students with disabilities who attend the school. The leadership positions have been filled for 3 to 5 year tenures, enabling the school to provide stable and consistent leadership moving forward.

Student enrolment has decreased since the ESR in February 2019.

Development of a school improvement plan

The education director presented the findings from the 2019 ESR in August 2019. Staff provided input into how the review directions could be addressed. The education director and principal identified the key aspects of the on-track evaluation monitoring tool (known as the OTEMT). Staff input was sought and the OTEMT was refined by the school improvement team (SIT). The OTEMT and the site improvement plan (SIP) 2019 to 2021 are directly aligned and the implementation is regularly monitored by the SIT. The education director has met with the team to review the progress being made.

Strategic support provided to the school over the past 12 months

The school worked 2 to 3 times a term with project officers from the Learning Improvement Division during 2019. This support involved the review of the school's teaching and learning agreements, development of an oral language agreement, and delivery of professional learning aligned to the OTEMT. Throughout 2019 and 2020, the school worked with the local education team, including the partnership curriculum coordinator and, during 2020, with the leadership consultant, to support building capacities of the leadership team.

Evidence and evaluation referenced to directions in the school improvement plan

Evidence of the targets in the SIP being met and exceeded since the ESR in February 2019 is outlined below.

Year 1 Phonics Screening (data provided by the school)

- In 2018, 1 out of 39 students achieved the SEA – 3%
- In 2019, 2 out of 20 students achieved the SEA – 10%
- In 2020, 17 out of 33 students achieved the SEA – 52%.

Five students achieved 40 out of 40, 14 students achieved 34 or above, 7 ATSI students achieved the SEA (ie 41% of students who achieved the SEA were ATSI).

Department for Education Partnership Review in March 2020 revealed:

- The 2019 year 3 reading, result of 50% at or above SEA, as measured by NAPLAN, was an increase from 2018 and broke the previously decreasing pattern of results, above the historic average. Seventeen percent of students achieved in the higher bands.
- The 2019 year 5 reading, result of 29% at or above SEA, remained below the historic average. The Partnership Review report noted that this appears to be an unusual result.
- The 2019 year 7 reading, result of 54% at or above SEA, showed an increase from 2018, breaking the previously static pattern of results.

The pattern of achievement in numeracy was similar, with notable increases in the percentage of students achieving at or above SEA in years 3 and 7. These results appear to be above the level of achievement of students in similar contexts within the partnership.

The school also provided samples of students' writing through 2020, which demonstrated a much greater quality in relation to vocabulary choices, use of punctuation, conjunctions and opening sentences.

Direction 1

Effective School Improvement Planning: Focus school improvement on the consistent, whole-school implementation of strategies to directly address the identified challenges of practice

On-track evidence

- The SIP was clearly aligned to the OTEMT.
- The process for developing the SIP and OTEMT described by the principal was confirmed by teacher representatives on the SIT, with proof of staff input.
- The SIP and OTEMT were informed by a thorough analysis of achievement data.
- The literacy agreement was reviewed, modified and strengthened. Two key program approaches (Read Write Inc. and Big Write) adopted by the school, provided means for consistency in literacy teaching and learning.
- The Read Write Inc. model gave a consistent evidence-based scaffold for teachers in teaching phonics.
- A significant purchase of decodable texts, which are now being used for home reading. Many students reported they are enjoying reading.
- Expectations outlined in the literacy agreement are regularly referenced in performance development meetings, through professional learning community planning and professional development at staff meetings.
- The review panel noted consistency in the language used by students, teachers and the leadership.
- Scaffolds to support the approach to writing (VCOP - Vocabulary, conjunctions, openers and punctuation) were demonstrated in classrooms and students used them as reference points.

- Student achievement progress data is known and used by teachers.
- Development of the oral language agreement and the model of writing, emphasises the importance of oral language as a foundation to improvement in reading and writing across the school.
- A scope and sequence in writing has been developed.
- The data management system allowed leaders and teachers to predict those students close to meeting the SEA, resulting in a clearer targeting of learning progressions.
- There is confirmation of close and regular tracking of the achievement of Aboriginal students.
- Recent junior primary workshops to build whole-school language and understanding in the Big Write criterion scale is building school-wide consistency.
- Members of the leadership team and governing council indicated students are much more willing to read and write. Anecdotally, there were less 'call-outs' for disruptive or refusal behaviour during the literacy block than previously. This claim has not yet been substantiated through a correlation of behaviour data.

Review panel evaluation

There are improvements in student achievement, particularly in phonics screening, writing samples and in reading in most year levels. The SIP provides clarity of the challenge of practice, which is known and understood by teachers. The review panel believes the decision to maintain focus on literacy improvement to enable the new approaches to become embedded practice, rather than jumping to numeracy challenges, has been strategic and effective.

Teacher representatives on the SIT stated they feel their voice is sought and listened to. They were able to provide examples of aspects of school improvement they have suggested, which came to fruition. They feel comfortable to raise workload concerns so that teachers have time to embed new approaches and new learning. The SIT has been an important channel for leading professional learning across the school. The SIP processes were described as more transparent and greater ownership was apparent.

The PLC structures facilitate year-level team planning, discussions and reflections 3 times a term. Professional learning, staff meetings and performance and development plan (PDP) processes are aligned with goals in the SIP.

Direction 2

Effective Teaching and Learning: Support each individual teacher through performance and development and coaching to use data to inform their practice and increase their impact on student learning outcomes.

On-track evidence

- Two of the teams reported using PLC time on matters linked to the SIP and to develop their expertise to provide targeted teaching, particularly in literacy.
- Teachers talked positively about the support they received from the teaching and learning coach.
- Teachers identified students who were close to meeting the SEA in PAT, previous NAPLAN testing, and also those who will be supported to remain in higher bands.
- Teachers worked with coaches and senior leaders using data to map progress, and determine targeted teaching points.
- There is an agreed format for the observations.
- Pre- and post-observation notes were sighted. Teachers indicated they get immediate verbal feedback after the observation and written feedback within 48 hours. At times, observations do not proceed as planned, as other demands 'get in the way'.
- Teachers provided examples of the coaching support they get, including establishing and improving guided reading and access to resources. There were examples of teachers asking for observations.
- There is a common planning template, which requires teachers to outline their differentiation strategies.
- PDP discussions are linked to the planning template.
- Teachers clearly talked about the WAVE 1, 2 and 3 teaching within their class.
- School services officers responsible for providing intervention through MiniLit were guided and coached in their work by the special education coordinator.
- Senior leader Aboriginal education assesses student phonics and reading ability every 5 weeks to provide consistency around Read Write Inc. grouping and feedback to teachers.
- Special education coordinator supported the development of One Child One Plans, and negotiated for targeted external resources as required.

Review panel evaluation

Numerous examples were provided of coaching focused on supporting teachers to plan, and putting the plans into action in classroom teaching. Coaching helped teachers use data and regular analysis of student writing to more accurately identify teaching points. Peer support was evident and is provided through informal sharing, as well as through the formal PLC structures.

Establishing the senior leader Aboriginal education and special education coordinator positions enabled close, frequent tracking of student progress, with timely in-class and external interventions.

The leadership team meets weekly to collaborate about a common and consistent approach to their work. A number of the leaders are engaging in programs and workshops to build their capacities as leaders.

Teachers have a thorough understanding of the levels of their students' achievement. They 'put faces on the data', and this process is transparent to all to gain a whole-school perspective. Within every class there is a range of learning needs, as students have various starting points. Time in staff meetings is spent on developing a clear and common understanding of what is meant by differentiation, what it is not and why it is an important pedagogy. The capacity to plan for and implement differentiation is a work-in-progress. There is opportunity to revisit the learning design to open multiple entry points and further stretch students in their learning.



Key action to incorporate into the school's planning:

Ensure all students receive differentiated learning with appropriate stretch and challenge, by further strengthening teachers' capacity in learning design and assessment.

Direction 3

Effective Teaching and Learning: Embed the use of learning intentions and success criteria in all classrooms.

On-track evidence

- Learning intentions are understood to define the central idea or concept students will understand or be able to do in a unit of work.
- Students described learning intentions as “we will be able to ...” and success criteria as “I can ...”
- Learning intentions and success criteria were evident on white boards, on students’ desks and in some students’ workbooks in classrooms and in PE.
- Many teachers use a fluid approach to defining the success criteria through the learning process. As students demonstrate they have met the success criteria, teachers add or deepen the success criteria. This was evident in Big Write as students improve the quality of their writing through draft and editing processes.
- There is evidence of feedback to students in various forms.

Review panel evaluation

Teachers understand how to use learning intentions and to develop success criteria. Students were able to talk about the purpose of their learning and use the success criteria to varying degrees to improve the quality of their work.

Feedback on strengths and what to improve is provided by teachers, and by peers in the writing process. Several teachers seek feedback from students and adapt their teaching accordingly. Students in these classes saw a strong level of student voice and ownership of their class learning.

Direction 4

Conditions for Effective Learning: Improve the school's effectiveness in responding to students who are not finding school relevant and/or challenging.

On-track evidence

- A class-based student behaviour tracking system has been established.
- The deputy principal meets with teachers regularly to analyse the tracker data, identify patterns and talk about individual case management.
- The student behaviour tracker data for each class is transparent to all teachers.
- The student behaviour flow chart and behaviour refusal responses were revised and are known by SRC students.
- The approach to reconnecting students to their classrooms, after a period of suspension or time out, was reviewed and the process changed so that teachers are more involved.
- Leadership members sometimes respond to teachers' request to take a student out for a break as a diversion or proactive intervention.

Review panel evaluation

The behaviour tracker has been used to provide teachers and leaders with an overview of each classes' student behaviour each day and over time. It shows which students, at what time of the day, exhibit behaviour that is hindering learning.

At the time of the OTE, a whole-school overview of the data had not been enacted. If this was done, the correlation between student behaviours and effective teaching could be more substantiated. Conversely, it will inform more strategic decisions and interventions so that the school can continually improve the conditions for learning.

The school has begun investigating the Berry Street model, designed to provide teachers with in-class strategies to support students who have experienced trauma.

Through the OTE, inconsistencies became apparent where some teachers and leaders actively address claims of bullying within classrooms and in the yard. These comments were made by members of the governing council and several groups of students. Some teachers are very aware when disruptive and 'niggling' behaviours arise, and quickly intervene, whereas others appear to allow and condone such behaviours. Similarly, there is a perception that some leaders tolerate behaviours that others don't. It is noted there are 6 leaders responding to student behaviour concerns at different times.

Response to inappropriate student behaviours is complex, and influenced by the age of the child, their cognitive abilities and circumstances. Although schools strive to be consistent in their approaches, this does not mean that all children require the same degree of support or response. At the same time, it is concerning that there are perceptions amongst parents and students that bullying is condoned by some staff.

It may be timely for teachers, especially in the primary section of the school, to gather feedback from their students using the TfEL compass so that they may be informed by, and responsive to, students' perceptions.

Key action to incorporate into the school's planning:

Further strengthen the school's effectiveness in establishing and maintaining conditions for learning in all classes.

Outcomes of the on-track evaluation

Based on the evidence provided, Augusta Park Primary School is on-track to effectively implement the External School Review directions.

- The school's planning processes are evidence-based and targeted.
- Demonstrated growth in student achievement is at or above what would be a school in a similar context.
- The school is effectively using improvement planning and monitoring processes to raise student achievement.
- Teacher and leader practice is positively impacted by systems that build capacity through coaching, PLCs and professional development.

The principal will continue to work with the education director to implement the OTE key actions.

The principal will continue to work with the education director to implement the findings of the External School Review report from February 2019, in particular, the findings of the on-track evaluation process and a revised school improvement plan.

Further strengthen the school's effectiveness in establishing and maintaining conditions for learning in all classes.

Ensure all students receive differentiated learning with appropriate stretch and challenge, by further strengthening teachers' capacity in learning design and assessment.

Based on current performance, Augusta Park Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



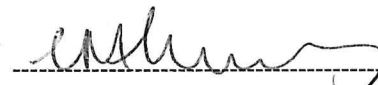
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