

# **Department for Education**

## **External School Review**

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

**Report for Marion Primary School**

Conducted in October 2019



Government of South Australia  
Department for Education

## 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 Alison Lynch, 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:
  - Aboriginal Community Education Officer (ACEO)
  - Aboriginal Education Teacher
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parent groups
  - School Support Officers (SSOs)
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

## School context

Marion Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 10kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 204. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 161. The local partnership is Noarlunga 1.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1001 and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 11% Aboriginal students, 8% students with disabilities, 26% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 1 student in care and 29% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of their tenure at the school. The school has a deputy principal and a B1 leader. There are 10.5FTE teachers including 3 in the early years of their career and 1 Step 9 teacher (who is currently acting deputy principal).

## The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1**     Increase student achievement across all year levels, and build teacher capacity to do so, by positioning the work of professional learning teams as being fundamental to continuous improvement at the school.
- Direction 2**     Support and challenge all students to achieve high standards by implementing consistent processes that empower students as learners, including opportunities to set goals, to give and receive feedback, and to monitor progress against benchmarks.
- Direction 3**     Support consistency in teaching and learning across the school by clarifying the essential elements of a whole-school approach to effective curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

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

#### Direction 1

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are a feature of the school's professional learning calendar and have focussed on whole-school agreements and Site Improvement Plan (SIP) actions. The appointment of a literacy coordinator is having a positive effect on building teacher capacity and on student achievement, particularly in the early years. The leadership team also provides coaching and mentoring for teachers, building their capacity in the teaching of reading and classroom management.

#### Direction 2

The school has implemented a comprehensive approach to data analysis and the tracking of student progress which has the potential to further guide the design of learning and improve student achievement. However, the use of data for this purpose is variable. Students in most classes have limited opportunities to engage with their achievement data and have inconsistent understandings of what they need to focus on to improve.

### Direction 3

The school has collaboratively developed whole-school agreements in literacy and numeracy that when effectively implemented across the whole-school have the potential to bring consistency in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices. However, at this point in time, there is variable commitment and implementation of these policies across the school.

## 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?*

A collaborative approach was used in the development of the SIP with indications that staff have high levels of ownership and commitment. Governing Council has been informed throughout the development and implementation stages with opportunities to provide feedback and seek clarification. Clear Challenges of Practice and high impact actions have been identified that have the potential to build teacher capacity and improve student achievement in reading.

Targeted professional learning has been provided by the leadership team through PLCs and identified professional development, with a strong focus on dialogic talk and reading comprehension. However, there is evidence of varying degrees of staff uptake of this professional learning. All staff have the responsibility and are accountable to engage positively and effectively with whole-school agreements and professional learning that are designed to provide students with equity in learning and consistency of high quality pedagogical practices.

The school has developed an extensive assessment schedule with data stored and presented in multiple formats electronically for ease of access and analysis. In addition, there are a number of differing classroom assessments also conducted, leading the panel to question the quantity of assessments and their validity in gauging student progress and next steps in learning. The school dedicates one staff meeting each term to focus on Aboriginal student achievement data and progress. The individual needs of Aboriginal students are provided with intervention support by the Aboriginal education team.

While the SIP process has led to greater teacher awareness of the importance of analysing student data, most staff have yet to effectively make the connection between the SIP actions, the analysis of individual student and cohort achievement data and the implications they have for learning design, the teaching and learning process and student improvement. This is also reflected in several teachers' performance and development plans.

**Direction 1** Collaboratively develop a common understanding of the SIP actions and their implications for learning design, and implement a whole-school self-review process that effectively determines their impact on student learning.

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

### *To what extent are all students stretched and challenged in their learning including students in the higher bands?*

Understanding the learning needs of all students and getting to know the child is an embedded practice for all teachers across the school, with subsequent positive and strong relationships developed between teachers and students.

As a result of the analysis of student achievement data, differentiation of learning was evident in some classes including: grouping of students, focussed questioning, modified expectations and individual and small group support. 'Stretch your brain' tasks are provided in some classes and students in some composite classes have opportunities to be extended by engaging in learning tasks the year level above.

Some teachers have a focus on changing the complexity of the learning task by 'bumping it up', allowing greater challenge in learning. However, the majority of learning tasks provided to students in a number of classes is the same for all students with little differentiation. This is evidenced in classroom visits and with students rating their learning to be less than challenging and parents highlighting the need for the school to address the continuity of learning and challenge to minimise the adjustment time, repetition of assessments and previous learning at the start of the new school year.

Recent professional learning has been directed towards learning design and the development of a shared planning tool. However, the panel evidenced little consistency of programming and the planning of teaching and learning across the school. The sharing of learning intentions and success criteria with students is used effectively in a number of classrooms and provides an opportunity for the school to embed this practice across all classes.

Across the school there are pockets of effective teaching practices that engage and challenge students in their learning. With the majority of teachers indicating that they would welcome the sharing of good pedagogy and explicit feedback on their teaching, a more formal approach to professional collaboration is understood as an area for development.

- Direction 2** Through a formal process of collaborative professional learning, coaching and mentoring, build the capacity of teachers in designing and implementing evidence-based differentiation practices that provides stretch and challenge for all students.
- Direction 3** Ensure the continuity of student learning across the school by implementing a collaborative whole-school approach to learning design that ensures consistency of planning, teaching and learning.

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

A focussed approach to the teaching of reading comprehension strategies was evident in some classes with formative assessment and feedback providing students with immediate verbal feedback throughout the learning cycle. This approach provides opportunities for students to be active participants in their learning journey. Although the school has recently focussed professional learning on formative assessment, its implementation across the school as a strategy to improve student learning is inconsistent. Teacher feedback is predominantly in the form of affirmation with most students unaware of what they need to do to improve their learning. Students reported to the panel that staying on task, doing lots of writing, trying hard and listening to the teacher are common beliefs students have on how they can improve.

Some teachers are engaging in pre-testing and post-testing students to ascertain growth in their learning. This strategy also eliminates the need for all students to begin at a basic level, providing multiple entry and exit points and enabling the development of a differentiated curriculum that improves student engagement and challenge in learning. However, this is a practice that will need further development and embedding in the pedagogical practices of the school.

The panel evidenced, in most classes, unassessed learning tasks that leaves students with little understanding of what they need to do to improve. Students in most classes are not engaging with their achievement data and have limited understanding of what they need to focus on to improve.

The use of student learning goals is variable across the school with the majority being general in nature, for example, 'write neater' and 'read more books'. Many students were unable to articulate their learning goals or the actions required to successfully achieve them. There is a need for teachers to work with students to clearly identify their next steps in learning and collaboratively develop learning goals that guide students and provide them with an opportunity to engage effectively in their learning.

In discussion with teachers, there was acknowledgement of the need for a whole-school focus on developing greater understanding of how to provide effective feedback and formative assessment in the design of learning.

**Direction 4**     **Improve student learning through the whole-school implementation of evidenced-based feedback and formative assessment strategies that provide students with a clear understanding of their next steps in learning.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

The school has developed close relationships with their local kindergarten and operates a program of transition each Friday morning throughout the year. This program is having positive effects in preparing kindergarten students for the transition into reception and enabling families to develop close and respectful relationships with the school. Older students are effectively engaged in the program and support the development of a friendly and welcoming community.

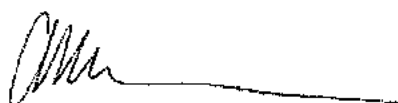
The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1 Collaboratively develop a common understanding of the SIP actions and their implications for learning design, and implement a whole-school self-review process that effectively determines their impact on student learning.
- Direction 2 Through a formal process of collaborative professional learning, coaching and mentoring, build the capacity of teachers in designing and implementing evidence-based differentiation practices that provides stretch and challenge for all students.
- Direction 3 Ensure the continuity of student learning across the school by implementing a collaborative whole-school approach to learning design that ensures consistency of planning, teaching and learning.
- Direction 4 Improve student learning through the whole-school implementation of evidenced-based feedback and formative assessment strategies that provide students with a clear understanding of their next steps in learning.

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



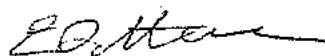
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PRINCIPAL  
MARION PRIMARY SCHOOL



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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 2018, 59% of year 1 and 70% year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change for year 1 and an improvement for year 2 from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 86% of year 3 students, 65% of year 5 students and 85% 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 a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 68% to 86%.

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

In 2019, 46% of year 3, 30% of year 5 and 30% 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, 62%, or 5 out of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 67%, or 4 out of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 86% of year 3 students, 65% of year 5 students and 75% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement and year 5 little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 72% to 86%.

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

In 2019, 32% of year 3, 20% of year 5 and 30% 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.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 60%, or 3 out of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 80%, or 4 out of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.