

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Wasleys Primary School

Conducted in May 2021



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 Rebecca Pears, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Mark Vincent, 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
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Wasleys Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 64kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 34. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 42. The local partnership is Goyder and Light.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 994 and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 6 Aboriginal students, 18% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 29% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 2nd year of tenure.

There are 3 teachers including 1 Step 9 teacher.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Build teacher capacity to design learning experiences with multiple entry and exit points to stretch and challenge all students, as identified through individual student achievement and growth data, supported through further professional learning in and the implementation of the Learning Design and Moderation strategy.
- Direction 2** Increase authentic student influence in their learning through individual learner goal-setting, effective two-way feedback, and collaborative development and sharing of lesson intentions and success criteria, as evidenced through the TfEL framework.
- Direction 3** Refine the professional learning and improvement agenda to ensure it is carefully paced, linked to the SIP, reviewed and further developed with support for staff, so that new initiatives become fully embedded into the learning culture.

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

Teachers are designing open-ended learning tasks in mathematics that involve problem-solving. Two teachers participated in the STEM 500 project in 2020, which further developed their understanding of task design and moderation. In staff meetings teachers discuss an individual student's achievement and the differentiation required for them to improve their learning.

All students from reception to year 7 are involved in individual goal-setting and identified their goals and how to achieve them. Early years students have determined goals in mathematics and English that are visibly displayed in the classroom. Year 3 to 7 students are involved in goal-setting and most students have identified goals in mathematics and English written on the covers of their books. Staff share learning intentions and success criteria with students, although consistent practices were not evident.

Staff participated in training and implemented a new assessment tool for writing, which involved all teachers collaboratively moderating and discussing writing achievement. Staff have also participated in professional development in the Big 6 in Reading and the implementation of Learning Sprints.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How well does the school review and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement planning processes and the impact on student learning to inform next steps?

Teaching staff demonstrated understanding of the current intent and content of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). They identified the changes they have made in their practice through implementation of the SIP and impact of these changes on student achievement. Performance and development processes are aligned to the SIP, and the progress and outcomes of its implementation are communicated with Governing Council. The plan was initially created by leadership with a limited amount of staff consultation. It would be beneficial to develop the SIP as a whole staff to deepen staff ownership.

A data collection schedule was created and implemented to support the development of consistent practice. Staff have participated in professional development in relation to SIP priorities. This included training in relation to a consistent writing moderation tool, learning sprints, the '5 Mental Actions of Reading' and the Big Six in reading. Teachers identified that further professional development in literacy, including grammar would be beneficial.

Staff participated in learning sprints to implement new practices and reflect on pedagogy to enact the SIP goals and improve student achievement. Effective practices from the learning sprints were sustained and some of the new pedagogy was observed by the panel, including students using post-it notes to annotate during guided reading sessions. Staff have also worked collaboratively to moderate student writing and identify writing goals for students.

The school is well-placed to continue to collaboratively develop and embed consistent practices. Whole-school learning agreements were created but are not currently implemented by all staff. Collaboratively refining and implementing whole-school literacy and numeracy agreements that are adhered to would support the development of coherent practices across the school. In addition, providing opportunities for teachers to share practice and observe each other's classrooms would further develop consistency across the school.

Direction 1 Collaboratively develop the Site Improvement Plan and literacy and numeracy agreements to enhance staff ownership and improve the consistency of practice across the school.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

The school created a year 3-5 class from the start of the day until 12:10pm to provide smaller group instruction in literacy and numeracy. Students are regularly grouped according to learning needs to enable differentiation and to meet the diverse learning needs multi-level classes. All teachers were trained in and are using the concepts from the Big Ideas in Number. Concrete materials are being used to support learning in the early years. To provide further consistency, all staff are effectively using a new writing assessment tool. The panel observed students engaged in learning and some very explicit teaching in literacy.

Students are receiving feedback in both verbal and written form. Feedback to students identifies their next steps in learning. In addition, students have learning goals. Primary students have them on the cover of their books and junior primary have a reading, writing and maths goal on display in the classroom. Primary students are involved in determining their own goals and identifying the strategies required to achieve them.

Growth mindset principles are being taught across the school. Teachers reported that they find it difficult to motivate students to challenge themselves as they do not like working outside of their comfort zone. Despite the introduction of Literacy Pro to ensure students are reading more challenging texts, teachers reported few students read outside the classroom.

Teachers use learning intentions and success criteria in the classroom, but identified them as areas for further development, particularly in relation to literacy. Continuing to provide opportunities for students to have ownership of their learning, particularly in literacy, will provide greater stretch. Providing strategies for students to assess the complexity of learning tasks, including identifying whether they are working in their comfort, stretch or panic zone, may also help motivate students to challenge themselves.

Direction 2 Embed the use of learning intentions and success criteria that are designed with students and extend opportunities for students to challenge themselves, particularly in literacy.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

The school is to be commended for creating an inclusive culture which supports students' individual needs. Parents discussed the benefits of their child attending a small school and appreciate that teachers and leadership know every child personally. Teachers work hard to support and cater for individual students' needs. As one parent stated: "my children have found a place where they feel safe, comfortable and belong."

The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1 Collaboratively develop the Site Improvement Plan and literacy and numeracy agreements to enhance staff ownership and improve the consistency of practice across the school.**
- Direction 2 Embed the use of learning intentions and success criteria that are designed with students and extend opportunities for students to challenge themselves, particularly in literacy.**

Based on the school's current performance, Wasleys Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



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Ann-Marie Ellis
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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).

In considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making a judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school. This is done for two reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohort of students. The data below represents a summary of the aggregated data from Wasleys Primary School from 2016 to 2019.

Further information concerning school performance is available in the school's annual report.

Reading

In the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2016 to 2019, 47% of year 1 and 71% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, the reading results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 88% of year 3 students, 82% of year 5 students and 86% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 25% of year 3, 24% of year 5, and 21% of year 7 achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

From 2016 to 2019, the reading results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 88% of year 3 students, 71% of year 5 students, and 86% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 25% of year 3, 12% of year 5, and 29% of year 7 achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.