

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Willunga Primary School

Conducted in August 2020





# 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 Anne Rathjen, 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:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leader
  - Parent representatives
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

## School context

Willunga Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 47kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 446. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 443. The local partnership is Sea and Vines.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1023, and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 5% students with disabilities, 2% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2% of children/young people in care and 22% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a recently appointed acting principal, a deputy principal, assistant principal and student wellbeing/inclusion leader.

There are 27 FTE teachers including 3 in the early years of their career and 8 Step 9 teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1**      **Embed self-review processes to strategically engage staff, students and community in whole school improvement, leading to improved outcomes in learning.**
- Direction 2**      **Develop authentic student influence in their learning by supporting all students to engage with feedback, data and individual goal-setting.**
- Direction 3**      **Embed a culture of learning through deliberate, planned and effective pedagogical practices that are consistently implemented by staff to engage, stretch and challenge all students.**
- Direction 4**      **Develop and embed consistency in the planning and implementation of the Australian Curriculum and Achievement Standards.**

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

The current principal has only recently undertaken the acting principal role, although there were long-term actions taken to address the previous ESR directions. These include:

The improvement agenda and strategies used has been a collaborative process involving the staff and representatives of the parent community. Staff are supportive of site improvement plan (SIP) and directions, and take an active part in addressing targets to achieve these actions. A significant shift in setting the conditions for learning has been implemented, with the development of structures, systems and school agreements to support teaching practice. Consistent use of language and management processes to support the whole-school focus exists in most classrooms. A focus on effective teaching practices has been implemented through professional learning in Learning Design, Assessment and Moderation (LDAM) strategy, teacher observations, the use of an 'Effective Practice' resource-kit for teachers and its regular reference to performance and development plan (PDP) goals.

Student involvement in their learning has grown with the introduction of interoception intervention to address student self-regulation and engagement, encouraging students to consciously connect to learning. Classrooms and learning spaces now reflect the need to move students flexibly and promote opportunities to address different student learning styles. Student voice actions include the development

of Student Action Teams (SATs), which empowered students to address matters related to wellbeing, learning, family engagement and sustainability. SAT activities are linked to the SIP goals and actions. Community circles have been developed and embedded in classroom practice to develop a safe supportive learning space where students develop skills to problem-solve.

The adoption of programs such as Daily 5, Jolly Phonics and Heggarty text provided consistency of planning and delivery of the Australian Curriculum. Brightpath Writing is used as an assessment tool. Implementation of teaching strategy folders and use of a central electronic data management system gives a quick reference for teachers with their planning, teaching and recording student achievement.

Elements of the previous directions are still to be addressed and are to be actioned in conjunction with the strategies identified in the school improvement plan.



## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

**Improve Practice and Monitor Impact:** How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions based on their impact on student learning?

The leadership team demonstrates a solid knowledge of interpreting achievement data and how to provide information in a succinct and calculated way to provoke discussion amongst staff. The whole school approach in literacy, with a focus on reading and oral language, has been strategic in its planning and links to SIP priorities. Regular updates are discussed with teachers at staff and year-level meetings. Staff recognise the level of accountability and acknowledge that changes in practice have been heightened due to SIP initiatives and their implementation. This has been supported through organisational structures, such as the development of coloured reference folders to address consistent implementation of SIP initiatives.

The tracking, monitoring and analysing progress and achievement data is well-documented. Comparative grades and data sheets used for individual students is valued by teachers. Data analysis of the trend data for NAPLAN (and other test results) over 2 review periods demonstrated low growth rates, although recent annual results show improvement. The next steps to consider in the SIP review cycle may include adjustments to the targets and challenges of practice to ensure improvement.

Professional learning opportunities (staff meetings, pupil free days, release time) with focus on SIP challenge of practice, coupled with whole-staff approach to building capacity in the teaching of reading and oral language, are effective. PDP processes strengthen the accountability of SIP actions and the work on LDAM practices is functioning well. There is a need for continued teacher capacity building and practices that include observation strategies to help share practice and gain greater knowledge of reception to year 7 curriculum progression. This may include the use the experts within the staff to lead the teaching and learning.

Implementation of curriculum agreements has been reached collaboratively; the literacy agreement enabled a common approach to literacy across the school. The school should consider review of the agreed actions, and make changes for consistency of practice, with the selection of contemporary programs in literacy and numeracy, and cover all elements of the curriculum to ensure continuity of learning.

**Direction 1      Strengthen the focus on improved student learning through furthering the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment within the SIP, with the expectation that each student should achieve at least one year's growth.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

Quality curriculum: How effectively are teachers using the Australian Curriculum (and SACE) to support and improve student learning?

All staff understand pedagogical approaches in literacy and numeracy. Teacher survey results indicate that 94% of teachers rated their ability to address the content of the Australian Curriculum (AC) as high. Teachers also recognised that their competency of addressing the capabilities of the AC is rated at a medium to low level, and acknowledge that further work in this area is needed.

Teachers referenced resource material such as the Literacy and Numeracy Guidebooks, TfEL companion diary and the ACARA website, as the common platforms for classroom planning and addressing curriculum requirements. Regular use of 'Bump it up walls', either from Brightpath writing or teacher-generated, enable students to see what is being taught, and their progress against the AC requirements.

Differentiation occurs at varying degrees according to year levels, with pockets of strength in some year-level teams. There is a bias towards students with specific learning needs, and several teachers indicated that more work is needed with higher-band students. Intervention practices are common across the school and linked to the SIP priorities. School services officers indicated that training in intervention practices sessions has given them a greater understanding and skills in their work, and has impacted on how they work.

Formative assessment processes varied amongst the teachers with the majority of staff referring to and using aspects of the school's 'Effective Teaching kit'. The use of learning intentions is common across the school in focusing on the implementation of the curriculum. Success criteria is less evident, with the teacher survey indicating that 84% of teachers rated their involvement of students in the creation of success criteria at a medium to low level. Future considerations include involving students in the co-design of learning intentions, success criteria, goal-setting as part of regular reviews at the beginning and end of units of work, and the connection to the AC.

**Direction 2      To meet the learning needs of all students, strengthen the development of the learning progressions of the Australian Curriculum content and capabilities through consistent differentiated teaching practices that includes student involvement in the planning processes.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

The influence of previous ESR directions is evident in the school's improvement. Effective leadership provides strategic direction planning and targeted interventions. The school's planning processes are proven and targeted. The school is using improvement planning and monitoring processes to raise student achievement and allow for effective conditions for student learning.

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

- Direction 1**     **Strengthen the focus on improved student learning through furthering the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment within the SIP, with the expectation that each student should achieve at least one year's growth.**
- Direction 2**     **To meet the learning needs of all students, strengthen the development of the learning progressions of the Australian Curriculum content and capabilities through consistent differentiated teaching practices that includes student involvement in the planning processes.**

Based on the school's current performance, Willunga Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



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GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Don Lempert



# 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 2019, 59% of year 1 and 84% 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.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 81% of year 3 students, 76% of year 5 students and 61% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement, and for year 7, a decline from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 57% to 76%, and downwards for year 7, from 77% to 61%.

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

In 2019, 39% of year 3, 32% of year 5 and 16% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents a little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 59%, or 16 out of 27 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 33%, or 4 out of 12 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 84% of year 3 students, 69% of year 5 students and 55% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement and for year 7, a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 13% of year 3, 21% of year 5 and 11% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been downwards, from 30% to 13% and upwards for year 5, from 13% to 21%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 53%, or 9 out of 17 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 37%, or 3 out of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.