

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Lobethal Primary School

Conducted in November 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 Simon Harding, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Belinda Krollig, Review Principal.

Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relating 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
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Lobethal Primary School caters for children from reception to Year 7. It is situated 35kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 182 students. Enrolment has been slowly increasing over the last 5 years. The enrolment at the time of the previous review was 155.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1020 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 10% students with disabilities, 1% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 1 child in care and 18% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 4th year of their 1st tenure. In addition, there is a student wellbeing leader and a literacy coach.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Ensure that the commitment to develop Powerful Learners is implemented authentically across the school by developing and documenting a whole-school understanding about how this approach is illustrated in everyday teaching practice for effective learning.
- Direction 2** Improve academic performance through consistent teacher-framed high expectations that support students leading learning.
- Direction 3** Improve numbers of students achieving and exceeding DECD standards in reading by refining an agreed school-wide approach to learning to read and, beyond that, reading to learn.
- Direction 4** Demonstrate the impact of teaching and learning by using student achievement data to identify and track progress for individual learners and, further, to support students to set personalised learning goals to achieve their best.
- Direction 5** Support and motivate students to improve by strengthening the use of formative assessment to include sharing expectations and involving students in constructing criteria for success that are aligned to the learning purpose.

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

The school has demonstrated significant work undertaken towards the previous directions by using them to underpin the priorities in the Site Improvement Plans (SIP) over time. The principal outlined a range of strategies they have used to support implementation of these directions.

Teachers could articulate how professional learning had impacted on their practice to support students to become powerful learners. There has been an improvement in learning achievement data supporting the work in developing high expectations for students. There is some evidence of goal setting being used to support students in their learning.

The school has provided professional learning for staff through the use of a coaching approach in both reading and maths. The coaching has specifically targeted learning for teachers as they work towards a consistent approach in these areas. Staff have continued to strengthen their data literacy and their understanding of the implications of the data for their teaching and learning programs. There is increasing evidence of staff across the school using the data for intentional teaching. There is evidence of teachers using learning intentions and success criteria with students, however consistent and effective implementation varied 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?

It is evident that there is a focus and culture of improvement to both building capacity of staff and outcomes for students. Decisions taken by leadership and staff are informed by evidence-based datasets and targets set are reflective of high expectations for achievement. Staff have the opportunity to meet with colleagues as part of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to focus on a priority area. Time in staff meetings is set aside to support PLCs to progress their work through sharing actions taken and the impact of those actions. There are expectations for PLCs to document their learning journeys through the use of floor books. Staff and leadership both stated that PLCs are more focused and targeted in their work aligned to SIP priorities.

Implementation and progress of the plan is reviewed primarily by the extended leadership group and also there are opportunities as part of staff meetings for reflection. Staff believe they have a role in the monitoring of the impact of the plans of action. Continuing to develop the extended leadership group process will enhance commitment and ensure impact is occurring across the school. Professional learning is planned for staff meetings and is closely aligned to the SIP goals. A coaching approach is being utilised to support the learning into action in both reading and more recently maths. There are expectations that staff performance and development plans (PDPs) are closely aligned to the SIP. While staff could articulate the actions they are taking as part of PLCs and as individuals, strengthening their collective understanding of the challenges of practice and clearly linking the measures of impact through the success criteria are next steps the school is well placed to undertake.

Partnership work is linked and supporting teachers to more effectively develop common expectations in relation to student achievement. The school has undertaken class walkthroughs with a focus on the SIP priority with a partnership school to provide feedback. This has been valued by both staff and leadership. Parents are aware and feel their opinions are taken into consideration throughout the process and stated that they have a high level of trust in the leadership and staff to make necessary decisions regarding improvement.

Direction 1 Strengthen processes to support collaborative planning and build common understandings and practices as outlined in the challenges of practice.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

The school has agreed processes in place to track, monitor and analyse student achievement data. This analysis of data is increasingly informing staff discussions and decisions taken at a school level in relation to improvement. Teachers are working with an agreed assessment schedule and are further using a range of strategies for both formative and summative assessments of student learning. Teachers talked about how they are using data to inform their teaching at a class level. For example, finding the collective gaps in the learning and planning to support students in that area. While it is acknowledged that there is some good practice in the school, there is not yet consistency in the use of data at an individual level to effectively inform differentiated planning and instruction across the school.

Teachers value the work they have undertaken moderating student work samples with teachers from other schools as it has increased common understandings around judgement of student work. Parents value the information they receive through the formal reporting processes, including online information. Parents also appreciate the willingness of teachers to meet with them about their child's progress at other times in the year, however they commented about how the quality of information can vary and would like further clarity in relation to grading in reports, to ensure they have a clear understanding of how their child is progressing.

Students can talk about the importance of new learning, receiving informative feedback, being a resilient learner and how these impact on their motivation for and outcomes from learning. Students understand that effective feedback is important for their learning. There is evidence of students having the opportunity to peer assess and provide feedback for each other, however this varied across the school. Rubrics are used to support student understanding of the expectations for the task. There was a common language used by these students about 'upgrading' their work through the use of a rubric. Teachers provided some strategies they use to provide feedback to students such as conferencing and the use of small group work feedback could be both written and verbally provided. Continuing to develop common understandings and practices to provide effective feedback for students, and for students to provide feedback to each other with clear structures and scaffolds, are next steps for the school to focus.

Direction 2 Strengthen teacher capacity to more effectively use data and the Australian Curriculum to authentically provide feedback and inform differentiated planning and instruction.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

The principal reported that the school is working to develop effective and consistent pedagogy across the school. The school has been working towards developing an agreement in literacy. A strategic approach to training for staff and support through coaching and mentoring over time to implement agreed approaches, has been valuable to support staff in this improvement work. Staff affirmed the coaching and time to enhance collaborative processes with colleagues, are leading to developing agreed understandings and practices across teams and the school. Teachers clearly articulated the value they place on the training opportunities and coaching offered, closely linked to the site priorities.

There is evidence of the effective use of learning intentions and success criteria across the school, both from teachers and students. Some teachers talked about working with students to co-construct success criteria and some are using the achievement standards with students to deprivatise practice. It is evident that teachers are sharing the language of learning with students, as students are able to articulate their learning and parents talked about children also doing this at home. There is some use of individual student learning goals being used to support students in their learning. However, common understandings of effective practices in relation to goal setting varied significantly across the school. Students were not able to clearly articulate how learning goals are impacting on their learning. Providing clear feedback about their performance can be powerful for students when working towards them taking more responsibility for constructing their goals in conjunction with their teacher.

Staff have undertaken training in effective task design to provide stretch and challenge for all learners. Teachers talked of a few strategies they are using to support the variety of needs in their classes. These included grouping, support from highly skilled SSOs and ensuring there are multiple entry and exit points to tasks. The depth of knowledge and practices in relation to effective task design which provide authentic learning opportunities to meet the needs of all students varied across staff. Strengthening common understandings and consistent practices, inclusive of using the existing staff expertise, is an area for further development.

Direction 3 Strengthen the capacity of teachers to more effectively engage students in challenging and authentic learning opportunities linked to consistent practices to support goal setting.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

There is a strong sense of community across the school. The school works to develop and maintain positive links with the wider community. The focus on developing the whole-child is supported by staff and parents, with parents also supportive and positive about the school and the wide range of learning opportunities it offers their children. Students are articulate when sharing their learning and talked about their teachers positively in relation to this. A high level of trust has been built between the parent community and the school through consultative processes, active listening and actioning parent opinions.

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

- Direction 1** Strengthen processes to support collaborative planning and build common understandings and practices as outlined in the challenges of practice.
- Direction 2** Strengthen teacher capacity to more effectively use data and the Australian Curriculum to authentically provide feedback and inform differentiated planning and instruction.
- Direction 3** Strengthen the capacity of teachers to more effectively engage students in challenging and authentic learning opportunities linked to consistent practices to support goal setting.

Based on the school's current performance, Lobethal Primary 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, 86% of year 1 and 76% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement for year 1, and little or no change for year 2 from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 2 has been downwards, from 87% to 76%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 86% of year 3 students, 90% of year 5 students and 84% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 50% of year 3, 40% of year 5 and 16% 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, 50%, or 5 out of 10 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 0%, or 0 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 96% of year 3 students, 70% of year 5 students and 95% 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, this represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 70% to 96% and for year 5, the trend has been downwards from 82% to 70%.

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

In 2019, 43% of year 3, 5% of year 5 and 11% 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.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 22% to 43%.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 25%, or 1 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 67%, or 2 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.