

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Naracoorte South Primary School

Conducted in September 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 Phil Garner, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Kirsty Trahar, 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
  - Leaders
  - Parent representatives
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student representatives
  - Teachers

## School context

Naracoorte South Primary School caters for students reception to 7. It is situated 330kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 273. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 188, with enrolment increasing significantly over the last few years, and looking stable for 2021. The local partnership is Tatiara – Wrattobully 2.

The school has an ICSEA score of 971, and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 4% Aboriginal students, 8% students with disabilities, 18% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 33% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The majority of students from EALD backgrounds are Hazari refugees from Pakistan and Afghanistan, or from South East Asia on 457 Visa.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 6<sup>th</sup> year of tenure, a deputy principal (student engagement) and a wellbeing leader.

Five teachers are in the early years of their career and there are 7 Step 9 teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** To further enhance learning outcomes of students, develop teachers' use of multiple assessment modalities to evaluate the impact of their teaching.
- Direction 2** Improve teacher confidence and skill in the use of an evidence-base (student achievement data) to confidently report student learning growth to parents, and to use student achievement data with students in order to raise expectations.
- Direction 3** Provide quality feedback to students, which supports and motivates them in their learning and develops self-management in their learning process.

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

**To further enhance learning outcomes of students, develop teachers' use of multiple assessment modalities to evaluate the impact of their teaching.**

The school focused on a professional collaboration process using teaching sprints to evaluate the impact of teaching on student learning. With assessment being an integral component of the sprints, teachers are investigating and using multiple assessment strategies that focus on students' prior knowledge, understanding and improvement. The four-week teaching sprints are effective in guiding reading/writing practice effectively across the school.

**Improve teacher confidence and skill in the use of an evidence-base (student achievement data) to confidently report student learning growth to parents, and to use student achievement data with students in order to raise expectations.**

With a focus on student learning outcomes and an explicit focus on reading and writing, teachers are becoming better equipped to identify where students are in their learning and where they need to be. The school reporting process includes greater reference to achievement data, student goals and the next steps in learning. Providing students with opportunities to critically analyse their personal assessment data continues to be an area for development.

**Provide quality feedback to students, which supports and motivates them in their learning and develops self-management in their learning process.**

Providing quality feedback in reading is a whole-school focus, allowing students to better understand their next steps in learning and to set challenging achievement goals. The school is currently focusing on investigating best practice in providing quality feedback on student writing. Assessment and feedback is a focus for this review, and is included under the lines of inquiry below.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

To what extent has the school drawn on evidence of best practice to determine strategies and actions for improvement?

The school completed a comprehensive analysis of student achievement data to determine the challenges of practice. Evidenced-based research, including departmental guidebooks, best advice papers and extensive discussions and consultation with the literacy guarantee coach, added authenticity to the process. The leadership team conducted an in-depth analysis of specific resources, programs and strategies to gauge their educational suitability. Teaching sprints were conducted to review and evaluate their effectiveness prior to whole-school implementation.

All teachers were positively engaged in developing the site improvement plan (SIP) with high levels of ownership and commitment. Engagement with the challenges of practice and consistency in implementing actions was clear across the school.

Students are aware of the focus on writing, and said that teaching of writing became more engaging, with a clear focus on techniques that makes their writing better. Lesson observations and feedback from leadership are a feature of the learning sprints. Mentoring, coaching and modelling opportunities are valued by teachers. Student achievement data is regularly reviewed to monitor progress and actively used to modify and design the learning.

School services officers (SSOs) are an integral part of the teaching and learning process at this school. However, while they are aware of the SIP, they are not familiar or consciously engaging with the challenges of practice or actions. A greater awareness will provide them with understanding of how they can positively contribute to the improvement cycle and add value to student achievement.

By providing opportunities for students to be actively engaged in the review and evaluation of the SIP, students will be in a position to provide their opinions and reflections on the actions and success criteria from their perspective.

**Direction 1** Provide opportunities for students to share their perspective on school improvement by including them as active participants in the review and evaluation of the site improvement plan.

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

Teachers have access to multiple measures of student data that identifies where students are in their learning and what their next steps need to be. Assessment data is guiding the teaching in reading and writing lessons. However, there are differences across the school in the design of learning that caters for the individual needs of all students. For example, 3 different level worksheets are provided to the class, becoming repetitive and lacking challenge for the higher-ability students.

Students are presented with limited opportunities to engage and analyse their assessment and achievement data. They need to understand where they are in their learning and what they need to do if the school is to engage them effectively in their own improvement journey.

The use of explicit learning intentions and success criteria are important components of assessment and feedback, but are only used in some classes. This leaves most students unsure of what is expected and what they need to do to achieve. Students would like the opportunity to improve their learning through authentic and consistent use of learning intentions and success criteria.

Across the school, there are many examples of unmarked and unassessed learning tasks. In these cases, students have little opportunity to learn from their errors, or identify their next steps in learning. Misconceptions were evident, with potential to be reinforced and hinder future learning.

Students indicated a variety of ways they receive effective feedback from teachers in reading and writing. This included 1:1 conferencing and small guided reading groups that provide them with opportunities to review, reflect and refine their understandings.

There are examples of positive practice in assessment and feedback. The next step will be to implement these high-impact strategies consistently, allowing students to monitor and self-regulate their learning and enable teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of practice.

**Direction 2** Provide students with opportunities to develop responsibility and ownership for their own learning by collaboratively investigating and implementing high-impact assessment and feedback strategies that inform the next steps in teaching and learning.

## Effective leadership

To what extent is leadership capacity developed across the school to improve student learning?

The school developed a distributed leadership approach. It presents opportunities for teachers to enhance their leadership skills, take ownership of their own learning, and raise the potential of all staff to contribute to the achievement of the school's priorities.

There is an embedded culture of professional collaboration that motivates staff towards responsibility and commitment to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Without exception, teachers are engaged in a wide variety of leadership experiences, including sharing their learning, leading the teaching sprints and coaching and mentoring, resulting in valuable learning outcomes for both participants.

Experienced teachers get opportunities to mentor other teachers, working closely to develop, review and evaluate professional development plans. Teachers have responsibility for curriculum learning areas and are active participants in development and review.

Teaching sprints are a team-based approach to observation and an embedded practice across the school. While teachers are engaging in observing and mentoring practices, they believe opportunities to further develop their skills on how to observe and give quality feedback would improve their effectiveness.

The leadership team is actively providing coaching, mentoring and observations. Teachers receive high-quality guidance and feedback and are well-supported by training and development opportunities that reinforce their professional and leadership growth.

Teachers work collaboratively with their teams and share strategies and learning on a regular basis. Some indicated less understanding of teaching and learning in other year levels, including those directly above and below their year level. Opportunities to engage with teachers and their learning programs across the school would further improve collegiality and collaboration, and assist teachers to understand the continuity of learning for students.

**Direction 3** Enhance the quality and effectiveness of leadership across the school by engaging in professional learning on how to observe and provide feedback that improves the quality of teaching and learning.

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

The school has high levels of collegiality and collaboration. Staff genuinely care for, value and respect one another. New staff are quickly assimilated into the 'Naracoorte South way' through an effective induction process and high levels of support from all staff. The instructional leadership style is valued by staff and sets the benchmark for high expectations in professional learning, coaching and modelling. The site improvement plan is the school's blueprint for improvement and is seen as a working document that guides everything they do on a daily basis. The school is in an excellent position to achieve high levels of growth in student achievement and high levels of competency in teaching and learning.

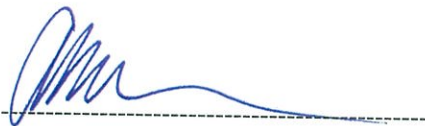
The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1** Provide opportunities for students to share their perspective on school improvement by including them as active participants in the review and evaluation of the site improvement plan.
- Direction 2** Provide students with opportunities to develop responsibility and ownership for their own learning by collaboratively investigating and implementing high-impact assessment and feedback strategies that inform the next steps in teaching and learning.
- Direction 3** Enhance the quality and effectiveness of leadership across the school by engaging in professional learning on how to observe and provide feedback that improves the quality of teaching and learning.

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



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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 2019, 35% of year 1 and 37% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result for year 1 represents a decline and for year 2, little or no change from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 77% of year 3 students, 83% of year 5 students and 68% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, and 7 this result represents little or no change and for year 5, an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 46% to 83%.

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

In 2019, 32% of year 3, 33% of year 5 and 28% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents 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, 60%, or 6 out of 10 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.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 75% of year 3 students, 86% of year 5 students and 77% 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, little or no change from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been from 68% 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, 13% of year 3, 22% of year 5 and 31% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 86%, or 6 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 100%, or 2 out of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.