

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Walkerville Primary School

Conducted in August 2021



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 Sue Mittiga, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Grant Small and Josie McBain, Review Principals.

## 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

Walkerville Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 4kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, is 615. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 688. The local partnership is Adelaide-Prospect.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 1156 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 6% Aboriginal students, 2% students with disabilities, 6% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 6% children/young people in care and 5% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 1<sup>st</sup> year of tenure,

- a newly appointed Deputy Principal
- an Assistant Principal (upper primary teaching and learning)
- an Assistant Principal (junior school teaching and learning), both in their 1<sup>st</sup> year of tenure
- a coordinator ICT and innovative technology in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of tenure.

There are 32 teachers including 3 in the early years of their career and 21 Step 9 teachers

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Develop powerful learners engaged in intellectual challenge and deep thinking through the implementation of consistent pedagogy informed by recognised frameworks and implemented across all year levels.
- Direction 2** Establish student agency within learning through shared inquiry into, and implementation of, strategies that enable students to understand the criteria for success and monitor their progress towards known learning goals.
- Direction 3** Design learning responsive to students needs through deep analysis of data to identify miscues and strengths of all learners and inform strategic planning.
- Direction 4** Build upon the school's collaborative culture and progress pedagogical development through processes strategically designed and dedicated to maximise collective learning and shared responsibility.

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

The leadership team are newly appointed in 2021, therefore limited documented evidence of the implementation of previous directions are available.

Direction 1. Formative assessment strategies are implemented across all year levels including explicit learning and assessment rubrics and students using self-assessment tools. Challenging learning tasks and assignments with clear assessment criteria are evident in classrooms

Direction 2. Student individual goals are evident in some classrooms. Students in primary classrooms track their own learning through use of rubrics with indicators for success. Consistent peer feedback processes are implemented, and some students have been explicitly taught how to give appropriate feedback.

Direction 3. Systems and resources are in place to identify student learning needs and track and monitor student achievement. Teachers have analysed progressive achievement test (PAT) data to review achievement and inform teaching and learning. An evidence-based writing program, has been implemented consistently across all classes, providing clear understanding of student achievement and progress in writing.

Direction 4. Professional learning communities (PLCs) implemented both within the school, and across the Walkerville, East Adelaide and Gilles Street primary school cluster, have enabled collaborative moderation of learning and assessment tasks. Alignment of the Felixstow 4 portfolio priorities has provided scaffolds for planning and information sharing across the school. The implementation of a digital platform to store and share information has enhanced communication and transparency.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

#### **How effectively does the school use school improvement planning processes to raise student achievement?**

Quality school improvement planning expands teaching practice and strengthens its impact on student learning. The newly appointed leadership team are working collaboratively to drive the improvement agenda, with a focus on building teacher capacity, through the implementation of PLCs, which are aligned to the site improvement plan (SIP). High impact teaching strategies are embedded within the SIP actions and drive the PLC's focus.

Leadership have established PLC structures and processes, including learning sprint cycles implemented across each term. These enable the SIP high impact teaching actions to be translated into classroom practice with embedded monitoring and review processes. One example of improved classroom practice came from a learning sprint focus on effective feedback, where the learning tasks were differentiated as a direct result of student to teacher feedback. Teachers report that PLCs are providing increased opportunity to work collaboratively with colleagues and to reflect critically on their practice.

Professional learning and resourcing are directly aligned to the SIP improvement actions and performance development plan goals reflect agreed actions for improvement. Whole-school data, including NAPLAN and PAT, has been reviewed and analysed by staff to inform the SIP targets.

Whilst teachers have a clear understanding of the SIP goals and implementing high impact strategies through PLC sprints, the line of sight from the challenge of practice and success criteria to classroom teaching and learning is not as clear. Collaboratively determining the challenge of practice and success criteria with teachers would build their understanding and commitment to improve practice.

Teachers have limited understanding of the cyclic nature of school improvement planning and the need for continuous monitoring, evaluation, and review. The new leadership team are well positioned to strengthen internal school planning and review processes, facilitating structures and protocols that will enable teachers to engage collaboratively in the process.

**Direction 1      To strengthen the line of sight from the SIP to classroom teaching and learning through collaboratively determining the challenges of practice.**



## Effective teaching and student learning

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

Pedagogy is the science and craft of teaching and the way in which teachers teach is critical to student engagement in learning and their achievement. The school has a strong culture of learning and improvement. Teachers are committed to improving their practice evidenced by their commitment to implementing cyclic learning sprints. They have a clear focus on improving pedagogy and high impact teaching strategies including differentiation, effective feedback, and questioning.

Explicit evidence-based pedagogical programs are consistently implemented across classrooms resulting in explicit teaching and learning, consistent use of language and improved student achievement in writing. There is an opportunity to continue to embed evidence-based pedagogical practices that will support explicit teaching and the implementation of school wide consistent, coherent practices.

Teachers provide effective feedback to students that supports their learning and motivation, and a culture of peer feedback is evident. Explicit learning and assessment rubrics and student self-assessment tools were evident in classroom observations. Students reported that rubrics with assessment criteria supported them to track their learning and work towards improvement and growth. There is an opportunity to strengthen the feedback from students to teachers about their learning to further inform differentiation and task design.

The panel observed many examples of challenging learning tasks and assignments with clear assessment criteria. Some teachers differentiated learning through open-ended tasks, with multiple entry points, bump it up walls, and extension tasks. Exemplars and anchor charts are displayed in classrooms to further support student learning.

Whilst some students have learning goals, it is not consistent practice. There is an opportunity to develop goals and targets with students so that they review their progress as a continual process, and they are supported to identify the steps they will need to take to accomplish their goals. It is timely for the school to develop processes with students to take ownership of their own learning data and use this to determine their learning goals.

**Direction 2      Develop whole-school processes that build student agency to analyse their achievement data and set aspirational goals.**

## Effective leadership

### **How well does the school's leadership support and sustain a culture of learning and improvement?**

The new leadership team have developed a learning culture and agreed protocols that positively impact school improvement. Establishing clear protocols for PLCs that are aligned to the SIP goals, is building collective ownership and shared accountability for improvement. PLCs report changes and provide evidence at a staff meeting each term. Formal observations of teacher practice with feedback processes are undertaken by leadership staff throughout the PLC sprint cycles. Teachers and school service officers (SSOs) commented that school leadership have provided a clear focus and direction and that there is more consistency in practice and improved communication.

Leaders have set clear expectations that staff participate in collaborative work. They facilitate PLCs providing regular, formal meeting agendas and review processes. Teachers engage in professional conversations regarding the impact of their teaching on student learning and share data and evidence of the impact. Going forward there needs to be capacity building with a gradual handover to teachers to lead their PLCs and strengthening staff efficacy to partake in critical reflection on their teaching and learning practices.

There is a significant opportunity to identify effective practice and improved pedagogies and determine ways to share, build and embed these initiatives across the school. The school has some very skilled practitioners that have the potential to provide mentoring and coaching for colleagues to support improved pedagogy and curriculum delivery. Building teacher leadership in a planned, intentional way will support the implementation of coherent whole-school practices.

Staff reported that increasing the level of consultation across the site would develop a more cohesive leadership and staff team and improve transparency in decision making. Establishing a school improvement planning group with staff and leadership representation would enable greater connection and conduit between leadership and teachers. The new leadership team are well positioned to sustain a culture of learning and improvement in collaboration with staff, students and the governing council through establishing clear and inclusive decision making and consultative processes.

**Direction 3      To continue to build a cohesive staff and leadership team through establishing clear, inclusive and consultative decision-making processes.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Walkerville Primary School is held in high regard by parents, staff and students for its educational programs and its welcoming and inclusive nature. Parents and staff commented positively about the warm community feel of the school and the care and support that is provided to students and families. The school has a strong culture of improvement. Leadership and staff are committed to improving their practice, engaging in professional development, and implementing evidence-based practices coherently across the school.

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

- Direction 1**      **To strengthen the line of sight from the SIP to classroom teaching and learning through collaboratively determining the challenges of practice.**
- Direction 2**      **Develop whole-school processes that build student agency to analyse their achievement data and set aspirational goals.**
- Direction 3**      **To continue to build a cohesive staff and leadership team through establishing clear, inclusive and consultative decision-making processes.**

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



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Review, Improvement and Accountability



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Anne Millard  
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Chris Edmonds  
Principal  
Walkerville 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 2019 91% of year 1 and 76% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the year 1 historic baseline average and for year 2 a decline from the historic baseline average.

In 2019 the reading results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 99% of year 3 students, 100% of year 5 students and 100% 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.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 5 has been upwards from 83% to 100% and the trend for year 7 has been upward from 94% to 100%.

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

Between 2017 and 2019 the school has consistently achieved higher in year 3 and 7 NAPLAN reading relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019 71% of year 3, 55% of year 5 and 51% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, 5 and 7 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 79% or 44 out of 56 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 65% or 20 out of 31 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2019 the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 95% of year 3 students, 94% of year 5 students and 93% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, 5 and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 89% to 95%.

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

Between 2017 and 2019 the school has consistently achieved higher in year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 89% to 95%.

In 2019 61% of year 3, 36% of year 5 and 51% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3 and year 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 39% to 61%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy 66% or 23 out of 35 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 73% or 14 out of 19 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.