

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Para Hills School P-7

Conducted in August 2019



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 Julie Bishop, 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 Support Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Para Hills School P-7 is located 17kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 268. The enrolment at the time of the previous review was 270 students.

The school has an ICSEA score of 980 and is classified as Category 3 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 5% Aboriginal students, 14% students with disabilities, 42% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 6 children/young people in care and 47% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 2nd year of their 2nd tenure. There are 3 senior leaders with responsibility for curriculum leader (1.0FTE), a wellbeing leader (0.6FTE) and a future learning (STEM) leader (0.4FTE).

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Improve the quality of teaching across the school by ensuring the planning, pedagogy and learning activities and tasks are intentional, responsive, effective and consistent.
- Direction 2** Strengthen the work of the year level teams with the expectation they collaboratively use achievement data and student perceptions to inform their planning, are consistently judging and grading students' work and are evaluating the effectiveness of their pedagogy.
- Direction 3** Review and develop more rigorous SMART targets and associated strategies in the site improvement plan, based on the current levels of student achievement and engagement. Further, in relation to the quality teaching priority, define targets that reflect pedagogical practices which will stretch and challenge student learning.

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?
<p>Direction 1 Whole-school agreements are reviewed and updated annually, professional learning is focused on high impact strategies, performance and development processes are targeted and include instructional rounds, leadership walkthroughs and peer observations occur, Sound Waves and Read Write Inc. have been implemented to ensure consistency.</p> <p>Direction 2 Year level teams and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) operate each term to build consistency, moderate student learning and modify teaching in response to performance data. All staff engage in cross-school PLCs in maths. In 2019, moderation in reading and cross school training in Running Records was undertaken, optional staff meetings to share practice and build staff capacity are scheduled each term.</p> <p>Direction 3 Individual targets are established for students in reading and numeracy, with staff mapping and monitoring these for individual students. Some staff are using data walls, PD in goal setting was provided, staff develop learning intentions and Success Criteria for learning tasks, staff engage in an annual review day to establish and refine the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) directions based on performance data. The 2019 SIP processes have increased staff awareness of connections between Challenge of Practice and student targets.</p>

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How well does the school critically evaluate current curricula, pedagogical and assessment practices to determine challenges of practice?

The panel was provided with clear evidence of clarity in the associated roles and responsibilities in the implementation and monitoring of the SIP. All staff work in one of the three SIP teams, which are directly aligned to one of the SIP goals.

At the staff meeting held during the review, staff reported that leadership developed tasks related to each of the SIP goals, with teams responsible for completion of tasks within set timelines.

Staff provided clear evidence of a comprehensive understanding of each Challenge of Practice, including an embedded understanding of aspects that describe a balanced reader. The school is to be commended for the depth of assessment processes used to progress reading across the site, especially for students who have achieved beyond Running Records.

The second Challenge of Practice related to writing. Detailed responses in relation to the use of the teaching and learning cycle in building prior knowledge before writing was provided by staff. Work in this area is especially relevant to EALD learners, and as such, is highly pertinent to students at Para Hills.

The school has identified the use of a writing assessment tool to track and monitor student progress in writing at identified points throughout the year. Implementation of this tool will result in students and staff being able to review progress, and establish discreet goals for improvement in writing at regular points throughout the year.

The third Challenge of Practice is focused on formative assessment and the use of mathematical proficiencies to inform teaching in numeracy. Staff demonstrated clear understanding of these proficiencies and provided a comprehensive and diverse range of examples of how they are applied.

Staff identified that embedding professional learning in the writing assessment tool and to develop consistency and congruence in the application of formative assessment processes to inform the teaching of numeracy across the site, are the next steps.

Direction 1 Strengthen assessment processes in writing and numeracy to ensure a comprehensive whole-school approach to school improvement.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Students in years 3, 5 and 7 have consistently achieved the Department for Education Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) at high levels over several years, however only students in year 3 have consistently achieved retention and higher band achievement in NAPLAN assessments. Students in years 5 and 7 by comparison underperform in higher band achievement and retention.

The development of metacognitive processes to engage in high order thinking and access the language for learning will support all students to engage in learning at higher levels. This is especially relevant for the 42% of students who have an EALD background. The provision of planned and regular opportunities for students to develop and understand the language of learning at a deep level will further strengthen student

learning dispositions and their capacity to consistently demonstrate learning at higher levels across all learning areas.

Most students during interviews with the panel indicated that the majority of their work was 'just right'. The panel noted a wide variance in staff perceptions of their capacity to differentiate learning and subsequently ensure that all students have regular, planned opportunities to display learning at higher levels. Several staff indicated that this was an area for further development. Other staff reflected that the majority of their time was spent with students who find learning challenging. The school is well positioned to develop learning tasks that provide planned opportunities for all students to display learning at higher levels.

Direction 2 Develop a whole-school approach to embed differentiation and the explicit teaching of the language for learning across all curriculum areas.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

The school provided comprehensive evidence to the panel of the development and use of agreed datasets across the site. Work in this area was further strengthened through extensive documentation in relation to the processes and protocols applied in the analysis of assessment data to inform instruction.

Assessment schedules and achievement standards are adhered to and published in the whole school agreements. The whole-school agreements are aligned against three pillars: learner engagement, literacy and numeracy. Comprehensive data schedules and benchmark assessments for each term are displayed across the school. The school is to be commended for their comprehensive commitment to ensuring clarity in expectations, processes, pedagogy and the research that underpins whole-school agreements at Para Hills School P-7.

The panel observed evidence of student data walls across the site. During walkthroughs, the panel observed some students discussing their data with peers. In one classroom, several students comprehensively articulated the processes, intent and construction of their data wall. Students informed the panel that the data wall had strengthened their perceptions of themselves as learners.

Some staff indicated that feedback to students had informed the construct of their learning goals, other staff noted that SMARTAR goals were used to inform next steps in learning. Many staff indicated that pre testing was extensively used to inform planning. The panel observed a range of examples where students undertook self and peer assessment, and provided feedback to each other.

The panel observed wide variance in the construct and use of feedback to inform next steps in learning across the site. The school is well positioned to develop whole-school processes in feedback to and from students as an integral component of informing differentiated curriculum planning and instruction. The development of a whole-school approach to feedback for learning where students regularly give and receive feedback about themselves as learners, will further strengthen the comprehensive work undertaken so far.

Direction 3 Develop and embed a whole-school approach to strengthen feedback data and its use from the perspective of the student.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

The school is to be commended for the thorough and comprehensive approach to ensuring whole school processes and agreements in learner engagement, literacy and numeracy. The agreements are underpinned by a framework for teaching and learning beliefs, assessment standards, pedagogy agreements and rational emotional behaviour education agreements. Work in this area has strongly supported the comprehensive whole-school improvement culture that exists at Para Hills School P-7.

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

- Direction 1 Strengthen assessment processes in writing and numeracy to ensure a comprehensive whole-school approach to school improvement.
- Direction 2 Develop a whole site approach to embed differentiation and the explicit teaching of the language for learning across all curriculum areas.
- Direction 3 Develop and embed a whole-school approach to strengthen feedback data and its use from the perspective of the student.

Based on the school's current performance, Para Hills School P-7 will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



Andrew Wells
A/DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS



~~Peter Reid~~ Erin Wilson
PRINCIPAL (Acting)
PARA HILLS P-7 SCHOOL



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 2018, 50% of year 1 and 53% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average at year 1, and little or no change from the historic baseline average at year 2.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 72% to 50%.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 89% of year 3 students, 71% of year 5 students and 74% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents an improvement, for year 5 this represents a decline, and for year 7 this represents little or no change, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 has been downwards, from 97% to 89%.

For 2018 year 3, 5, and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2018, 54% of year 3, 21% of year 5 and 9% 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 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 33%, or 3 out of 9 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 25%, or 1 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 96% of year 3 students, 66% of year 5 students and 79% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents an improvement, for year 5 this represents a decline, and for year 7 this represents little or no change, from the historic baseline average.

For 2018 year 3, NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving higher than, and for years 5 and 7, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 46% of year 3, 3% of year 5 and 0% 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.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 14%, or 1 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 0%, or 0 out of 1 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.