

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Willsden Primary School

Conducted in June 2021



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 Christine Bell, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Yunni Seindanis, 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
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Willsden Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 308kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 141. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 151. The local partnership is Port August and Quorn.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 737 and is classified as Category 1 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 78% Aboriginal students, 22% students with disabilities, 79% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 4% children/young people in care and 27% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 5th year of tenure, Deputy Principal in the 10th year of tenure, 2 middle leaders, including a wellbeing leader and an Aboriginal leader

There are 11 teachers of which 2 work 0.8FTE, 2 graduate teachers and 1 step 9 teacher.

The previous ESR directions were:

- Direction 1** Support students to understand how to improve through ensuring learning intentions are understood, providing effective feedback, and activating student influence as co-constructors in determining performance indicators for success.
- Direction 2** Increase levels of student achievement and expectations by developing and implementing consistent approaches to pedagogy.
- Direction 3** Build teacher capacity to use data diagnostically to design teaching and learning that is responsive and differentiated to the needs of all students.
- Direction 4** Review and refine intervention processes across the school to ensure students are developing targeted skills to increase their learning growth.

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

Direction 1: Teachers are using learning design to plan, teach and reflect. Newly appointed teachers attend a learning design workshop with the Aboriginal Education Leader on commencement of their employment to align planning to the Australian Curriculum, including learning intentions and success criteria. Joint planning is also undertaken to support individual lesson plans. Teachers are using learning intentions to explain the purpose of learning and continue to work on constructing success criteria with students. Teachers are individualising success criteria for students, creating individual goals developed through review of work and provision of feedback. Some of the established teachers at the school provide opportunities for new staff to access past learning in professional learning, and share effective resources and strategies trialled in classrooms that students are familiar with. "My classroom door is always open" mindset is beginning to be observed around the school. With the constant turnover of teaching staff this is something the school needs to continue to work on. More experienced staff are keen to continue

improving their teaching practice by accessing activities to promote new approaches or trial resources to support teaching and student learning.

Direction 2: Professional learning is aligned to the school improvement plan (SIP) actions, including supporting collegial teaching practice to address the alignment of goals and student achievement. Guidebooks are used to access resources to plan and present professional learning aligned to identified areas of need and best practice to address them. The school continues to use the knowledge gained in professional learning with peer observations and instructional leadership to provide feedback for improvement in pedagogy. Teachers are asked to share their challenges and successes with others in allocated staff meeting time to promote sharing of resources and best practice. Providing mentoring for graduate teachers is a priority to support early development of effective pedagogy.

All teachers and support staff engage in a professional development planning process aligned to professional learning and actions that support student achievement. Professional development plans reflect the SIP goals. These goals are reviewed at 6 and 12 months to evaluate the effectiveness of actions and professional learning according to the evidence collected to demonstrate student achievement.

Direction 3: To ensure consistency in teaching and learning, and to develop a more effective practice in differentiating within teaching (WAVE 1), the school is currently transitioning towards implementing Read Write Inc. Expected outcomes of this work will be the consistent explicit teaching of phonics and reading. There is a rigorous cycle of planning, teaching, and learning with students placed in groups according to levels of ability. The pedagogy is scripted and consistent across all levels. Students are assessed every 6 weeks to determine growth and movement to higher levels if their data shows the achievement expected. Thirty minutes of staff meeting time is dedicated to addressing any areas identified for further development, through observation of teaching practice, to promote consistency across the school. Teaching staff are now starting to transfer the pedagogy they are developing, with the implementation in Read Write Inc. to other areas of learning. Students are in groups where they receive more targeted pedagogy to address their learning needs. In response to low levels of achievement of Aboriginal students, there is an urgency to develop an effective approach to the teaching of phonological awareness to accelerate achievement for Aboriginal learners in Reception years. With the support of an allocated literacy coach, through the Literacy Guarantee Unit, this work has commenced.

Direction 4: All staff work collaboratively to analyse data and contribute to the development of the SIP with targeted actions for whole school direction. Teachers have access to their data, plan accordingly, and continue to work towards differentiating the learning for individual students. An example of this new initiative to implement Read Write Inc. is to improve the ability to translate data into targeted actions for individual students. The Deputy Principal is conducting observations targeting the effective use of differentiation, providing feedback to teachers and support staff, to promote teaching and support that is responsive to individual student learning and growth. In response to low levels of writing achievement, teachers are engaging in the process of working with students to create goals for improvement.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

Willsden Primary School is well-positioned, with a strong and committed leadership team and planned evaluation processes in place, to critically reflect on teaching practice and to monitor the impact on learning improvement. This will occur as the leadership team supports teachers by conducting professional conversations, through teacher performance development meetings, that are linked to their challenge of practice. To support this work, there needs to be a formal and agreed coaching and mentoring model established, which will promote a school culture of high learning expectations for all students.

The next steps to enhance conditions for learning is to further create a classroom climate of trust and respectful relationships where teachers can become excellent seekers of feedback from their students about the effect they are having on their learning. Providing regular sessions for students to give targeted information back to their teacher will allow the teacher to know who is not understanding and to modify, enhance or change their teaching strategies accordingly. The school can plan opportunities that build capacity for teachers and ancillary staff to achieve school targets and goals by ensuring quality time is made available for peer observations and for professional conversations to occur.

Feedback to students is one of the most powerful influences on student improvement. Willsden Primary School has provided professional learning for staff through the formative assessment learnings to support this. A challenge is to embed this practice across all classrooms, aligning the feedback to classroom learning intentions and success criteria, with a clear focus on giving feedback on the task and not the learner.

There are multiple measures of literacy data and evidence provided by leadership to determine the next steps in the improvement cycle. Literacy learning agreements are evident in most classrooms and appropriate tracking structures are in place. The challenge is to extend this comprehensive planning and monitoring into other curriculum areas such as numeracy across all classrooms and year levels.

Direction 1 **Ensure all teachers engage in collaborative, reflective conversations and support processes that are linked to their performance development goals.**

Effective teaching and student learning

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

There is evidence that leaders and teachers expect all students to be successful in their learning in all curriculum areas. This positive mindset can be transferred to the students by allowing them to have an authentic voice in collaborative planning and decision making about their learning. Strategically planned opportunities for students to be involved in decisions about what they learn, who they work with and how they learn, will equip them to monitor and assess their own learning and become powerful learners.

Learning intentions are what teachers intend their students to learn. Success criteria informs students of what they need to do to be successful in their learning. Co-constructing learning intentions with students and providing success criteria at the beginning of a lesson will deepen their learning experience. There are pockets of quality learning intentions that make clear to students what level of performance is required to be successful, and evidence of some effective teaching practice that ensures students have planned challenging goals. The challenge is to support all teachers to have the skills and abilities to operate at this level of pedagogical practice.

Students can be actively involved in designing success criteria derived from learning intentions that raise challenge and engagement for students. Most students have a limited understanding or input into the success criteria displayed in the classrooms. Students articulated that success criteria or learning goals were developed by the teacher. To maintain a positive and challenging learning environment for all students, there needs to be effective planning by teachers to work in partnership with their students to make decisions about their learning.

The leadership team is well-positioned to lead teachers through a process of regularly monitoring the implementation of their classroom practice through collaborative reflection conversations. As teachers build on this process and adjust their planning and teaching accordingly, there will be immediate and ongoing improvement for all students.

Direction 2 Teachers build and maintain a positive, challenging environment where students have opportunities to be partners in their learning through co construction and understanding of learning intentions, learning goals, and success criteria.

Conditions for effective student learning

How effective does the school promote high expectations for aboriginal learners and other priority groups?

There are clear expectations from leadership around what and how teachers should teach and what students are expected to learn. There needs to be a clear line of sight from these high expectations, with accountability, and their transfer to the classroom. Optimising best practice, through consistent effective teaching that actively engages and challenges all students, is a priority.

It is challenging to connect the relationship between individual learning teams: leaders, junior primary, upper primary and intervention. Through consistent and coherent whole-school practices of effective collaboration, transition points for students can be ensured to provide continuity of learning.

Having structures in place to support the Deputy Principal's commitment to undertaking lesson observations, with a focus on differentiation, is pivotal to teaching and learning improvement. Leadership could explore and address the divide between teachers' perception of their ability to differentiate in the classroom and what the panel observed.

Collection and analysis of relative datasets is the starting point in supporting teachers' planning and design of learning tasks, to meet the varied needs, skills, and interests of all students. While some teachers develop appropriate targets and goals for their students, this is not embedded in every class. It is imperative that all students and families have input into goal-setting and teachers regularly review the progress of these goals and adjust their learning plans accordingly. Capacity exists to achieve this through leadership supporting teachers to work collaboratively to build positive and challenging learning environments that stretch and challenge students in their learning, including higher bands students.

Support from the Governing Council and parent body is a strength within the school. The two-way exchange of valuable information from all staff and families will ensure there is continuous improvement.

Direction 3 Develop teacher capacity to collaboratively deliver differentiated teaching and learning to ensure all students have access to quality intervention and challenging programs.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Willsden Primary School continues to deliver quality teaching and learning for all students. The established leadership team is cohesive and committed to leading with high expectations to delivering efficient and effective teaching and learning. Teaching and support staff have a clear focus on student learning and are committed to the goals of the SIP. Parents and Governing Council members are highly valued by all staff and are actively involved in decision-making that affects student learning.

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

- Direction 1** **Ensure all teachers engage in collaborative, reflective conversations and support processes that are linked to their performance development goals.**
- Direction 2** **Teachers build and maintain a positive, challenging environment where students have opportunities to be partners in their learning through co construction and understanding of learning intentions, learning goals, and success criteria.**
- Direction 3** **Develop teacher capacity to collaboratively deliver differentiated teaching and learning to ensure all students have access to quality intervention and challenging programs.**

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



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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 2020, 28% of year 1 and 39% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2018 and 2020, the trend for year 2 has been upwards, from 18% to 39%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 35% of year 3 students, 13% of year 5 students and 43% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this represents an improvement, for years 5 and 7, this result represents a decline 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, 6% of year 3, no year 5 and no year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019, who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 18% of year 3 students, 13% of year 5 students and 36% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average in years 3 and 5, and an improvement in year 7.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been a decline, from 23% to 18%, a decline for year 5 from 26% to 13%, and upwards for year 7, from 14% to 36%.

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

In 2019, no students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been a decline, from 10% to nil.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.