Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Huntfield Heights School P-7

Conducted in March 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 Rebecca Pears, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Julie Hibell, 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

Huntfield Heights School P-7 caters for students from preschool to year 7. It is situated 30kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 98. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 111. The local partnership is Beach Road, Noarlunga 3.

The school has an ICSEA score of 885 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 24% Aboriginal students, 24% students with disabilities, 10% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 3% children/young people in care and 75% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The preschool enrolment in 2021 is 11.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 6th year of tenure and a Band B1 Wellbeing and Engagement Leader in the 2nd year of tenure.

There are 7 teachers and no Step 9 Teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

Direction 1   **Strengthen and embed cyclic self-review processes through the inclusion of staff at all stages in the collaborative development and monitoring of common agreements and targets for literacy and numeracy.**

Direction 2   **Use TfEL resources to develop a whole-site approach to intellectual stretch and challenge through the development of transforming tasks with multiple entry and exit points to support all learners.**

Direction 3   **Embed the TfEL framework and develop effective Australian Curriculum planning processes that address the specific requirements of multi-year level classes on a small site.**

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?
There has been a significant change in staff which impacted implementation of the previous directions. There is evidence of the school strengthening their cyclic review processes and using this information to inform future directions. An English agreement has been created and, where possible, staff are implementing it. Training and development will need to occur in some areas before new teachers will be able to implement this agreement.

A new unit planner is being used by 3 staff members (2 of the 4 classes) in English, allowing teachers to plan for differentiated learning and multi-year level classes.

The 2 ongoing teachers discussed the use of multiple entry and exit points for numeracy tasks and provided evidence of student achievement data analysis. |

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How well does the school review and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement planning processes and the impact on student learning to inform next steps?

Staff are implementing a wide range of assessments to monitor student learning. There are agreed procedures and timelines for collecting student achievement data to ensure a consistent approach. Staff analysed student achievement data to review SIP implementation impact. Analysis from staff who have left the school was not available. Collecting documentation as a record of the impact of strategies implemented would be beneficial. Some teachers have analysed PAT data to determine trends and inform teaching practice. Teachers could identify and articulate positive changes they made in their practice through SIP implementation. Some data related to the SIP is not currently being collected, as new staff require training in implementing whole-school programs and initiatives.

An English agreement was implemented to improve consistency in teaching practice. Teachers are committed to and, in general, adhere to the agreement. Some new staff require further training to help them implement parts of the agreement. Agreement implementation has resulted in some consistent, evidence-based literacy practices, particularly in phonics and spelling programs. Staff identified that developing a school numeracy agreement would support consistent practices across the school.

School leadership observe classrooms and challenge and support teachers to implement pedagogical practices identified in the SIP. The school accessed support to refine teacher practices in targeted areas. This included accessing the Literacy Guarantee Unit, using a mentor teacher and intention to use the new Curriculum Lead.

Direction 1   **To work collaboratively across the site to embed and monitor the impact of consistent evidence-based pedagogical practices identified in 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?

In 2021, a significant change in staff impacted the consistency of teaching practices across the site. The panel noted evidence of a diverse range of student achievement data used to monitor student achievement, inform learning design and enable differentiated learning. At the beginning of each year, embedded transition practices occur, ensuring effective transfer of student achievement data between teachers.

A consistent tool for moderating writing was introduced which teachers report has improved their ability to effectively assess student writing. It also helped teachers to collaboratively moderate student writing and develop consistent assessment practices. Some teachers are using this assessment to determine students' next steps in writing, but it is not a consistent school practice.

Staff reported, and the panel observed, teachers consistently providing instant feedback to students, particularly in relation to their behaviour and staying on-task. Some staff gave students feedback in different forms about their next steps in learning and used it to develop student learning goals. During interviews, several staff reflected they provide verbal feedback, which needs to be more explicit and in a range of forms, to ensure students can articulate their next steps for improvement.

There were examples of opportunities for students to undertake self and peer assessments to provide feedback to each other including rubrics. These practices varied and teachers identified other opportunities for self and peer assessments that would be beneficial in supporting students' own work assessment and monitoring of their own progress over time. Teachers identified that frequently using high quality exemplars would help students identify how to improve their own work particularly in writing.

Direction 2   **To strengthen and embed a whole-school approach to formative assessment to ensure students can articulate their next steps for learning.**

Effective teaching and student learning

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

The majority of staff are using a new English unit planner, which supports with differentiating learning and identifying learning intentions, success criteria and students' prior knowledge. Some teachers use the planner to design learning in other subject areas, however, unit planner use is not embedded across all classrooms.

Whilst there was evidence of differentiation in classes, practices were varied. Some teachers used ongoing formative assessments to review achievement and group students in mathematics and spelling, to provide challenge in their learning. However, this practice was not consistent across the school. School Services Officers worked effectively with individual and small groups of students to provide differentiated and targeted learning opportunities. It was also evident teachers were designing some open-ended mathematics tasks. However, some teachers acknowledged they are not yet differentiating parts of the curriculum and identified this as an area for future growth.

In previous years, teachers participated in a large range of whole-school professional development, demonstrating an understanding of a wide range of evidence-based pedagogical practices. New staff will need to be trained in these areas, to ensure consistency across the school and implement actions related to the main focus areas in the SIP. The school leadership team observes classrooms to support consistent implementation of evidence-based teaching.

It was evident some teachers were using pre-tests to plan units of work to ensure they challenge all learners, particularly, in mathematics. Staff identified student stamina inhibits student achievement in writing. Many students reported mathematics tasks are 'just right' for their learning. The majority of students across the school, however, reported that reading and writing tasks are often too easy and not challenging enough.

Direction 3   **To develop and embed a whole-school approach to differentiation to ensure students are stretched and challenged in their learning tasks.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

The school leadership and staff need to be commended for the relationships they established with the community. Parents appreciate of the demonstrated commitment, especially in supporting individual students and their families. One parent stated: "the school cares about the kids individually, if they have troubles they don't judge, just try to help". The parents interviewed all agreed with the previous comment and referred to the school as the 'small school with a big heart'.

Teachers were very reflective and demonstrated a commitment to learning and improving practice. This culture will help the school work collaboratively to refine and implement practices to ensure further improvement and a consistent approach.

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

Direction 1   **To work collaboratively across the site to embed and monitor the impact of consistent evidence-based pedagogical practices identified in the Site Improvement Plan.**

Direction 2   **To strengthen and embed a whole-school approach to formative assessment to ensure students can articulate their next steps for learning.**

Direction 3   **To develop and embed a whole-school approach to differentiation to ensure students are stretched and challenged in their learning tasks.**
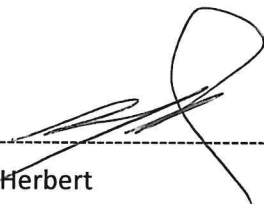
Based on the school's current performance, Huntfield Heights School P-7 will be externally reviewed again in 2024.

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Cathryn Herbert
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Huntfield Heights School P-7

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 44% of year 1 and 30% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

In 2019 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate 44% of year 3 students, 44% of year 5 students and 43% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline and for years 5 and 7 these results represent little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 7 has been downwards from 57% to 43%.

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

In 2019 0% of year 3, 11% of year 5 and 7% of 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 years 5 and 7 this is an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Numeracy

In 2019 the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate 67% of year 3 students, 44% of year 5 students and 71% 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 7 has been upwards from 50% to 71%.

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

In 2019 11% of year 3, 0% of year 5 and 14% 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.