

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Nailsworth Primary School

Conducted in June 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 Helen Tunney, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Marie-Louise Adams, 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

Nailsworth Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 6kms north of the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 602 students, up from 550 at the time of the previous ESR. The school is classified as Category 6 on the Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score is 1086, and the local partnership is Adelaide-Prospect.

The school population includes 1% Aboriginal students, 2% students with a verified disability, 14% of families eligible for School Card assistance, 39% students with English as an additional language or dialect background and 1 student in care.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 6th year of her tenure, a deputy principal, an assistant principal (STEM), 32 fulltime equivalent teachers including 4 in the early years of their career and 18 Step 9 teachers.

Previous ESR directions were:

- Direction 1** Improve reading and numeracy achievement, and retention in upper bands across Foundation to Year 7, through the consistent implementation of agreed, effective and evidence-based pedagogical approaches.
- Direction 2** Challenge and engage all learners by supporting teachers to strategically collect, analyse and use the available data (school-wide and class-based) to collaboratively plan for their needs and to regularly track student learning progress over time.
- Direction 3** Raise levels of rigor and student engagement consistently across the school through the deprivatisation of classrooms and provision of feedback on evidence-based effective teaching practice aligned to TfEL and Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL).
- Direction 4** Improve levels of learner achievement and growth over time through a positive and focused approach to changes in teaching and learning practices implemented consistently across all levels of schooling.

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

The school has demonstrated growth in most aspects of school performance when measured against the Department for Education Standards of Educational Achievement and compared with similar government schools. All teachers have developed strong data literacy and are using data and feedback to track growth, intentionally plan and differentiate for student learning. The school has moved from an ethos of individualised, privatised teacher practice with low levels of responsibility for learning improvement to a culture of strong collaboration and evidence-based accountability. Teachers work in 'like' year level teams with teaching and learning practices becoming increasingly consistent, particularly within each team.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions based on their impact on student learning?

The school culture is characterised by evidence-based student learning improvement, team work and accountability. Every teacher is a member of a Professional Learning Community (PLC). In short cycles, each PLC analyses the achievement data of its combined student cohort, targets students for improved learning and develops strategies to trial in order to bring about this growth. The school is providing strong coherence for teachers between training and development, performance and development processes, partnership and collaborative work. This is enhancing improvement and keeping the improvement agenda manageable for teachers. The school is to be commended for the coherence and strength of its R-7 literacy practices. This coherence now needs to be replicated in the teaching of numeracy. The focus of performance support to this point has been the provision of resources and advice. The next step is critical collaboration and coaching to focus teacher attention on the impact of their teaching on student learning. This should involve targeted peer/leader/coach observations and feedback that informs individual professional development.

The school has developed a strong evidence-based culture of improvement through deprivatisation of practice and collaboration. A next step for the school is to develop a more coherent approach and commitment to individualised performance and development. Through critical and constructive feedback about observed teacher practice the school is well positioned to accelerate the development of teacher capacity.

Direction 1 Improve the impact of teaching on student learning through data-informed performance and development, coaching, and peer observation.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

There is strong evidence of a classroom learning culture in which pre and post assessment takes place. Data practices have been devolved from leadership to teachers. Some students were very clear about what they needed to do to improve. Some teachers talked about the use of strategies to show students what learning looks like at a higher level eg 'bump it up walls'. However, younger students had limited knowledge about learning intentions, success criteria and had limited exposure to quality feedback from teachers about how to make learning better. Students were unable to talk about learning at a metacognitive level with teachers also showing limited collective understanding about student agency and metacognition of learning.

In all classes teachers are using formative and summative assessments to monitor student learning, to differentiate and to inform intentional teaching. The next step for the school is to support teachers to engage learners with their own achievement and progress data. This will enhance student agency as students become increasingly self-aware. It will provide scaffolding for students to set and review learning goals. Students and teachers will regularly discuss learning intentions and success criteria based on the data. Students will develop a language of learning and have regular practice in talking about their growth in different contexts, including at home.

Direction 2 Challenge and engage all students in meaningful learning through the development of student agency supporting them to become self-aware and informed learners.

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE STUDENT LEARNING

To what extent does the school promote a culture of learning with high expectations of achievement for all learners?

Student perception is that this is a school that you do well at and they value the academic rigour that exists. Parents are confident that their children do well academically at Nailsworth Primary School. Parents and students value the way that teachers get students to work hard whilst having fun at the same time. Parents said their children love coming to school, are excited about learning and see themselves as learners. The partnership mantra is 'pushing all kids higher' and that is being embraced by the school. Governing Council said high performing students are now a focus at the school. The school have strong Language other than English and First language maintenance programs which are valued in this multicultural community. A higher bands focus is evident but is embryonic. Students have some choice in learning, but these are within very contained boundaries. There were multiple examples of students telling the panel that they would like more challenging work with the review panel also observing limited critical and creative student work.

There is a culture of aspiration for student learning at Nailsworth Primary School although the panel observed limited design and application of curriculum for critical and creative inquiry. The school is well placed to take this next step by empowering students to engage in critical and creative thinking that develops their general capabilities.

Direction 3 Develop student capacity for critical and creative thinking through the regular and consistent provision of higher-order learning opportunities.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

At Nailsworth Primary School strong and effective leadership is strategically targeting learning growth, and over time, this has brought about improved student achievement. Teachers are supported to continually develop their capacity through coherent training and development processes, performance and development and team work, provided both internally and across the partnership. The school has become strongly aspirational and seeks high level outcomes for every student.

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

- Direction 1 Improve the impact of teaching on student learning through data-informed performance and development, coaching, and peer observation.
- Direction 2 Challenge and engage all students in meaningful learning through the development of student agency supporting them to become self-aware and informed learners.
- Direction 3 Develop student capacity for critical and creative thinking through the regular and consistent provision of higher-order learning opportunities.

Based on the school's current performance, Nailsworth Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



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