Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Morphett Vale Primary School

Conducted in August 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 Phil Garner, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Mike Walsh, 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

Morphett Vale Primary School caters for students from birth to year 7. It is situated 35kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 248. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 286. The local partnership is Panalatinga.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 991 and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 5% Aboriginal students, 18% students with disabilities, less than 6 students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2 children/young people in care and 36% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 2nd year of tenure, a Deputy Principal in their 2nd year of tenure, a Wellbeing Leader in their 2nd year of tenure and a Senior Leader in their 3rd year of tenure.

There are 19 Teachers, including 5 in the early years of their career and 7 Step 9 Teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

Direction 1   **Strengthen student influence on learning more broadly across the school by supporting teachers to release, through collaboration, greater responsibility to students for their learning.**

Direction 2   **Provide time to critically reflect, consolidate and strengthen teacher capacity across the school, to work with students to effectively embed intellectual stretch and challenge into daily classroom learning design, and to set clear, measurable individual learning goals.**

Direction 3   **Provide time to critically reflect, consolidate and strengthen teacher capacity across the school, to work with students to effectively embed intellectual stretch and challenge into daily classroom learning design, and to set clear, measurable individual learning goals.**

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

Direction 1 - The school has introduced learning intentions and success criteria, including popular daily reviews for most lessons. This is providing students with an understanding of expectations in learning. Engaging students with greater validity in identifying their next steps in learning and understanding their assessment achievements is an area for further development.

Direction 2 - Learning sprints are a key focus that promote teacher collaboration and improvement in identified aspects of pedagogy. Learning design is built into curriculum resources with the use of unit plans for literacy and numeracy which focus on intellectual stretch, learning intentions and success criteria. All students have clear and intentional learning goals that are linked to literacy and numeracy.

Direction 3 - The analysis of student achievement is a strong feature of tracking student progress. All staff are data literate, and the school has developed effective processes for analysing and responding to student intervention.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school use improvement planning process to raise student achievement?

Most of the current teaching staff were not involved in the initial school improvement plan (SIP) consultation process due to their recent employment at the school. However, all staff are effectively engaging with the improvement process, challenges of practice and the associated actions.

Teaching sprints are a strong feature of school improvement with the potential to significantly improve pedagogical practices across the school. This process is extremely well-structured and targeted with high levels of expectation and accountability. Opportunities to reflect, share progress and discuss student learning are enabling higher levels of consistency across the school. Teachers discussed quality outcomes and identify sprints as the reason for significant changes in their pedagogical practice.

The school has developed a highly effective student achievement tracking process to closely monitor the progress in learning. Strategic opportunities are provided for leadership and teachers to analyse achievement data and track progress to ensure students are making expected gains in learning. However, most teachers indicated that student achievement data could be used more effectively to address individual learning needs and genuinely influence the design of learning. For example, the timing of progressive achievement tests leaves little opportunities to effectively address misconceptions and gaps in learning before the end of the school year. Maintaining the focus into the new school year would ensure effective continuity of teaching and learning improvement for individual students. Providing opportunities for students to engage with their achievement data will further assist them in understanding their next steps in learning.

While the school effectively tracks student progress from one NAPLAN assessment to the next, student data is not indicating growth or improvement over time. Identifying the next steps in learning for individual students with a continuous focus on their progress between assessments and from year to year is the next step to improve student achievement.

Direction 1 **Ensure ongoing improvement in student progress by engaging with literacy and numeracy progressions and the strategic design of learning that addresses misconceptions, closes any gaps and drives the achievement of next steps in learning**.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Literacy blocks have been established throughout the school with a focus on consistency of pedagogical practice and implementation of evidence based programs of learning. This continues to be a work in progress with spelling and vocabulary identified as the next whole-school focus.

The school has introduced the 'top five' learning expectations for each learning concept. This is providing greater clarity for teachers, students and parents of the teaching and learning requirements and expected learning outcomes for students.

Effective engagement with student learning goals was evident across most classes with students clearly able to identify and discuss their goals and how they are progressing towards achieving them. Some parents could also clearly articulate their children's learning goals in literacy and numeracy.

Sharing the learning intentions with students is an embedded practice across the school. Students were able to clearly articulate what they were learning and why. Most classes are engaging with success criteria's providing students with the expected achievement; however, research indicates that the effectiveness of the learning is enhanced when students have greater influence over their design and development of the success criteria and assessment tasks.

A variety of effective formative feedback strategies was evident across the school. Most teachers actively engage in monitoring and supporting students in their learning providing formative feedback at point of need. However, there are limited opportunities for student self and peer evaluation and moderation of learning provided.

Student improvement is clearly a focus for this school. When the benchmark and expectations of achievement are clear and understood, the school works proactively to support and engage students in reaching them. All teachers need to have a collective understanding of the Curriculum Achievement expectations in each year level. There is opportunity for enable students to be active participants in their learning by sharing what they are required to understand, know and be able to do to achieve the standard of achievement (SEA) or at a higher level.

Direction 2   **Empower students to be active participants in their learning by developing and implementing a whole-school approach to student agency.**

Effective leadership

How effective are the school's professional learning and performance and development processes in building teacher capacity?

Research learning teams have been introduced to provide relevant and engaging professional learning that challenges thinking and builds the capacity of teachers. Teachers are working together to share, analyse and improve their classroom practice. The school strategically organises professional development opportunities around SIP initiatives, for example, teachers are currently attending external training in numeracy.

The school has developed whole-school agreements in literacy and numeracy that establish guidelines for teaching and learning. This provides a level of consistency across the school. However, the inclusion of supportive documents that provide teachers with greater clarity of pedagogical practices and expectations would further enhance consistency of implementation.

Teacher professional development plans have a strong connection to the SIP. Linking them with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers will maintain the focus on quality teaching and building the capacity of all teachers in particular the early career teachers.

Professional learning for specialist teachers within their subject of expertise are limited. Providing opportunities for them to engage with highly effective colleagues from other schools will ensure their professional learning needs are being met and the programs they offer students are engaging, challenging and effective.

Leadership learning walks have become an embedded practice across the school with leadership observing in classrooms each week. The process is clear with feedback provided to teachers promptly. While most teachers are feeling comfortable with the walks, there exists an opportunity to engage teachers more effectively in the process by their inclusion in them. This has the potential to further build collegiality, provide greater ownership of professional learning and encourage essential motivation to improve and develop greater consistency of practice across the school.

The leadership team are highly supportive of each other and staff across the school. Professional learning and building the capacity of teachers is clearly a major focus. Teachers are consistently challenging themselves to improve and grow and are driven to improve outcomes for students.

Direction 3   **Enhance the culture of collaborative professional learning by implementing a range of strategies that engage teachers in investigating the implementation of whole-school improvement initiatives.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Morphett Vale Primary is well resourced with high quality learning areas that provide optimum conditions for student learning. Leadership has high expectations of teachers, challenging them to improve the quality of their teaching and learning and student achievement. There are high levels of professional respect amongst staff with strategic opportunities provided to reflect, learn, and share. The school is well-positioned to engage with the directions provided and to continue to enhance the learning opportunities for students.

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

Direction 1   **Ensure ongoing improvement in student progress by engaging with literacy and numeracy progressions and the strategic design of learning that addresses misconceptions, closes any gaps and drives the achievement of next steps in learning.**

Direction 2   **Empower students to be active participants in their learning by developing and implementing a whole-school approach to student agency.**

Direction 3   **Enhance the culture of collaborative professional learning by implementing learning walks that engage teachers in investigating the implementation of whole school improvement initiatives.**

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

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Kerry Dollman   Anne Millard
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Michael Koutsoukos   Governing Council Chairperson
Principal
Morphett Vale Primary School

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 52% of year 1 and 53% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 1 this result represents a decline and for year 3 little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2018 and 2020 the trend for year 2 has been downwards from 76% to 53%.

In 2021 the reading results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 72% of year 3 students, 78% of year 5 students and 72% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 this result represents a decline and for years 5 and 7 little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For 2021 year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN reading the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2021 25% of year 3, 31% of year 5 and 0% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2021 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading 62% or 8 out of 13 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 2021 the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 69% of year 3 students, 69% of year 5 students and 64% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, 5 this result represents little or no change and 7 for year a decline from the historic baseline average.

For 2021 year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN numeracy the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2021 22% of year 3, 8% of year 5 and 7% 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.

For those students in 2021 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy 33% or 1 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 50% or 1 out of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.