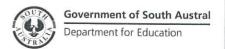# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Macclesfield 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 Debbie Grzeczkowski, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Tina Treffers, 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

Macclesfield Primary School caters for reception to year 7 students. It is situated approximately 50kms from Adelaide's CBD. The enrolment for 2021, as at the February census, is 58. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 71. The local partnership is Heysen.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 1031 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 9% Aboriginal students, 7% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 14% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The Principal is in the 1st year of a 5-year tenure. There are 4 teachers, one in the early years of their career.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

Direction 1 Improve the engagement and intellectual challenge of the full range of students by developing the collective assessment literacy of teachers so they consistently gather, collate, and analyse a range of valid and reliable data in the interests of continuous improvement in teaching effectiveness.

Direction 2 Improve student learning by enhancing the quality of feedback that teachers provide to students and enhancing the responsiveness of teachers to feedback from students about their pedagogies.

Direction 3 Develop a shared moral purpose for the school by uniting all stakeholders in developing and stating a common, agreed vision for student learning.

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?
The previous ESR directions guided school improvement planning but had reduced impact due to changes at a leadership level, with most areas still current and pertinent to the school. Appointment of a new principal helped sharpen the school's improvement work by providing clarity and narrowing the direction.
Staff have an agreed data schedule and collect a range of data which is used to create the improvement focus. While some staff competently use data to inform their practice, this is not consistent. The school is currently in the process of moving to digitally collecting data which will increase the accessibility of data for all.
The school works closely with community and have effective forms of communication. Staff and community collectively worked on an agreed vision for student learning and this is an area of ongoing focus.

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 improvement plan was created using data analysis to identify focus areas and guidebooks to support its actions. The leader aligned professional learning and performance development plans with the school improvement plan (SIP), with staff further supported through collaborative work with partnership schools.

Teachers were involved in the development of the plan and, whilst they know its overall focus, some struggle to articulate how it links with and drives their practice. Connecting the SIP, professional learning and professional development processes, will ensure staff see their role and responsibilities within the plan and provide greater ownership. Involving all staff in monitoring the SIP and sharing outcomes with community will raise the school's improvement focus.

The Principal is visible in classes, but there is currently no formal process which allows observation with explicit feedback on teacher practice. There is opportunity to lead the learning and ensure consistency across the school through regular and formalised leadership observations and walkthroughs, linked to PDP and SIP focus, which provide targeted and timely feedback to further strengthen teacher practice.

Professional development plans (PDPs) support the SIP, and teachers review the plan at least once every term during staff meetings. Although staff monitor the plan and reflect on accomplishments, some struggled to articulate how it affects student learning. Using meetings for professional learning, and building in robust self-review processes, will help staff further strengthen data literacy skills and more confidently evaluate the impact of their practice. The school currently has a data collection schedule, but this needs to be collaboratively refined and narrowed down to purposeful data only. Understanding and using purposeful data will support staff in analysing the impact of their practice on student outcomes and provide clear opportunities to refine their practice accordingly.

Direction 1   **Regularly engage in rigorous processes to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the SIP on student learning and inform the next steps.**

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers supporting students to improve their learning?

Teachers want to support students, are open to new learning and look to share and improve their practice. Students are compliant and respectful and are given a mix of independent, paired and group work. Learning is supported through data driven interventions and all identified students have current individual learning plans.

Recent staff appointments provide the chance to collaboratively review whole-school literacy and numeracy agreements. Refining and reducing current approaches will provide consistency and continuity to support students as they progress through the school. Reframing and refreshing visible learning will ensure pockets of good practice are evident in all classes and provide a common language for students. Older students voiced their confusion about the varied approaches used by teachers. Having a cycle of focused walkthroughs with explicit feedback provides leaders the opportunity to identify obvious elements of effective practice, and allow these to be shared across the school, in order to build capacity in others, refine their craft and build a consistent pedagogical approach.

Students are engaged with and able to articulate their learning, but only some know the next explicit steps needed to improve their work. Some teachers use targeted and timely formative assessment, which students felt helped them improve their work, but this was not consistent practice. Most students spoken to felt that ticks and neat handwriting were strong indicators of good work. Providing structures that build students' authentic ownership of learning will support them to look beyond the finished product as evidence of learning.

Some students talked of work being too easy and wanted to be stretched and challenged. Using data and evidence to plan quality and differentiated learning, is a focus for the school. Teachers need a collaborative understanding of differentiation as they often referred to 'stretch and challenge' in relation to students reaching the standard of educational achievement set by the Department. It is imperative for every student, in every class, to receive appropriate stretch and challenge to be successful in their learning.

Direction 2   **Strengthen teachers' capacity to use data to design and implement learning experiences that enable differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge to be an integral aspect of everyday learning for all.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

The school has a strong sense of community and staff, students and parents are proud of their school. Students can articulate their learning and report that staff care about them as individuals. The strength and potential of the new principal was acknowledged by staff, students and parents. Teachers contribute to the improvement agenda and are willing to take on new learning to deliver on the SIP outcomes. The inclusion of practical activities provides a foundation for authentic learning to occur.

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

Direction 1   **Regularly engage in rigorous processes to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the SIP on student learning and inform the next steps.**

Direction 2   **Strengthen teachers' capacity to use data to design and implement learning experiences that enable differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge to be an integral aspect of everyday learning for all.**

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

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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).

In considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making a judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school. This is done for two reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year, and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohort of students. The data below represents a summary of the aggregated data from Macclesfield primary school from 2015-2019.

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. The 41% of year 1 and 44% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

The reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 84% of year 3 students, 81% of year 5 students and 89% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA.

Fifty percent of year 3, 47% of year 5 and 42% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 100% of students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2019 and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2019.

Numeracy

The numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 79% of year 3 students, 77% of year 5 students and 84% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

Forty-five percent of year 3, 23% of year 5 and 28% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 50% of students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2019 and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2019.