

# **Department for Education**

## **External School Review**

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

**Report for Berri Primary School**

Conducted in May 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 Simon Harding, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Diane Dinedios, 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

Berri Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7, inclusive of a reception to year 7 special class. It is situated approximately 240kms from the Adelaide CBD. The school has an enrolment of 285 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 299 students.

The school has an ICSEA score of 914 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 19% Aboriginal students, 14% students with disabilities, 1% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 3 children in care and 53% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of their 1st tenure at the school, a deputy principal in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of their 2<sup>nd</sup> tenure and a student wellbeing leader in their 10<sup>th</sup> year.

## Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1**      Increase the number of students achieving SEA by refining the School Improvement Plan to include targeted actions aimed at improving student achievement.
- Direction 2**      Raise student achievement in mathematics, in the first instance, by implementing a whole school approach to problem solving and using higher order thinking skills, and monitor these using student achievement and perception data.
- Direction 3**      In relation to the Australian Curriculum, ensure a consistent approach to goal setting, assessment and moderation, and quality feedback, both to and from students.
- Direction 4**      Ensure the consistent implementation of curriculum and pedagogical agreements is monitored using the existing performance and development processes.

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?
<p>The school has undertaken substantial work in relation to the previous directions. The focused work around the effective use of data to improve achievement over time is to be commended. Data plays an important role in decisions taken in relation to priorities and teachers are more effectively using data to inform their teaching. There has been a significant review and evaluation of intervention strategies that support student learning. The school is continuing to develop whole-school approaches with clear expectations and there is targeted training in literacy and maths, along with implementing visible learning with the support of an impact coach.</p> <p>Learning goals are clearly articulated by students and are visible in classrooms. They are aligned with achievement data and teachers are regularly providing ‘feedback for learning’ to students. There are high expectations and monitoring of agreements is in place. The school has made significant progress in developing and implementing strategies which have focused students on their learning. The introduction of learner qualities and behaviour levels have provided students with clear scaffolds to support this work.</p>



## Lines of inquiry

### EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

#### *How effectively does the school use improvement planning processes to raise student achievement?*

The principal outlined the process of consultation to inform and shape the development of the new Site Improvement Plan (SIP). Time was provided as part of staff meetings for staff to be involved in analysing data sets and providing leadership with feedback based on this analysis. Leadership took responsibility for collating this information and staff had the opportunity to give feedback once the plan had been developed. Goals are established with direct correlation to relevant datasets and there are clear aspirational targets for each goal. Leadership have the expectation, and have worked with staff, to ensure that professional development plans are closely aligned to the SIP.

Governing council have an understanding of the priorities of the plan and know that the priorities have been decided based on available data. The plan has been presented to them with clear explanations of the decisions taken and they believe they are provided with opportunities to provide feedback. The wider parent community have been informed through newsletters. An example of this is the focus on reading which outlines clear expectations about home reading. Both parents and students are clear about these expectations and their engagement continues to develop regular student participation and support the school's reading goals.

Teachers have ownership, and demonstrated a connection to the improvement agenda, as outlined in the plan. It is evident that staff have participated in a significant amount of professional learning and are in the process of implementing this learning with students. Leadership have provided clear expectations and structures, including common release time in relation to team planning and collaborative work, with a focus on the initiatives linked to site priorities. Effectively monitoring and evaluating the implementation of SIP actions to ensure sufficient time and support are provided for the new learning, including its implementation and consolidation, are next steps.

The school is now well placed to strengthen the processes and structures to support the monitoring and reviewing of progress, and impact of the plan, with staff active participants who are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the process.

**Direction 1      Strengthen processes that continue to build the capacity of staff to actively participate in each stage of site improvement planning and implementation.**

### EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

It was clear from the principal presentation that the school is working to develop effective and consistent pedagogy across the school. The school has developed and reviewed agreements and other resources in literacy and numeracy. These, along with a strategic approach to implementation, have been valuable in supporting the current learning. The expectations from leadership are explicit and contain a level of accountability. These expectations are supported by resourcing extra staff to work with classes across the school to support effective implementation. There have been strategic decisions taken to provide more flexible learning spaces and linking teachers together for collaborative planning and teaching. This provides effective scaffolding to support early career and new teachers at the site. Staff value the time to work collaboratively across their sub-schools both in staff meetings and during common release time. The use of



impact cycles, to support the reading priority, with teachers identifying, working and tracking students along with regular check-ins with the principal and impact coach to discuss progress is a positive and potentially powerful initiative.

Individual student learning goals are being used by most teachers to inform students of their next learning step. Some students could articulate their goals and many are displayed in classrooms for students to reference. Success Criteria and Learning Intentions were on display and were referred to by teachers during lessons in some classes however staff and student feedback indicated that this had diminished over time as a focus. Students struggled to indicate how Learning Intentions and Success Criteria were used to support their learning. Students shared that 'struggle' in learning is important and they used common language of 'being in the learning pit'. They could also articulate a range of strategies they use 'if they get stuck in their learning'. Students' perception of how much they are challenged in their learning varied however some of this was related to the amount of work being undertaken, not necessarily the complexity of the task. Teachers shared strategies they use in task design. Continuing to focus on effective task design through developing common understandings and practices, inclusive of student feedback, will strengthen this work.

**Direction 2      Strengthen common understandings and practice of effective task design across the school to challenge and stretch all learners.**

## **EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING**

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


It is clear that the school has effective processes to track and monitor progress of student achievement which are visible and the basis for discussions and decision making. Teachers are working with an agreed assessment schedule which clearly outlines the data to be collected and when. Leadership and staff talked about professional learning that has, and continues to take place, in relation to analysing data and how that impacts on learning programs for students. The use of data with students to ensure they are aware of where they are with their learning is continuing to strengthen across the school and the principal is supporting this work with class teachers. Students shared the school wide incentives for students who make improvements in their learning. Teachers talked about how they use data, however the effectiveness and depth of how they use it to inform their planning and intentional teaching, while continuing to strengthen, is not yet consistent across the school.

There is considerable work being undertaken to continue to strengthen clear processes for Aboriginal students, while building effective working relationships with families to support their child's learning. These students are clearly tracked and monitored and have appropriate and regular interventions in place.

Teachers value the work they are undertaking to moderate student work samples across teams in building consistent teacher judgement when assigning levels of achievement. Older students in particular talked about their understanding of what constitutes a particular grade and what they need to do to get there through the use of rubrics. Parents are generally happy with the reporting of their child's progress through written reports and interviews and they highly value ongoing communication provided through the use of electronic media.

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Teachers provided a range of examples they use with students in formative assessment including formal and informal (verbal) rubrics, exit slips and conferencing. Students are clear about being a resilient learner with a growth mindset and could articulate how this applies to their learning. Students also identified the



importance of feedback they received to improve their learning sharing examples including comments about 'how to make it better' and rubrics.

Continuing to build common understandings across the site of high yield formative assessment strategies will further benefit learning outcomes for students. The credibility of assessment to inform instruction is paramount in providing quality learning to meet the needs of all students.

**Direction 3      Continue to strengthen teacher capacity to more effectively use data and formative assessment with clear links to intentional teaching and learning programs.**

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

It is evident there is a positive school culture focused on learning across students, parents and staff. The behaviour management model which has been implemented consistently across the school over the last few years is highly valued by the school community and has assisted in the change of culture. Students and parents are able to clearly articulate behavioural expectations. There is a strong pride in the school from all stakeholders and the school is perceived positively in the wider community. They value both the focus on positive behaviour and the focus the school places on improving student learning. Student achievement data underpins all work the school undertakes and this is clearly articulated by students, staff and parents. Staff have high expectations of themselves as learners and a collective responsibility for the improvement and achievement of all students.

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

- Direction 1**      Strengthen processes to continue to build capacity of staff to actively participate through each cycle of site improvement planning and implementation.
- Direction 2**      Strengthen common understandings and practice of effective task design across the school to challenge and stretch all learners.
- Direction 3**      Continue to strengthen teacher capacity to more effectively use data and formative assessment with clear links to intentional teaching and learning programs.

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



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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).

### Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2018, 61% of year 1 and 82% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average for years 1 and year 2.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for years 1 and 2 has been upwards, from 39% in 2016 to 61% in 2018 for year 1, and 42% in 2016 to 82% in 2018 for year 2.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 64% of year 3 students, 66% of year 5 students and 46% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement and for year 7, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline averages.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 46% to 66% respectively.

For 2018, years 3, 5, and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2018, 36% of year 3, 17% of year 5 and 10% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 21% to 36% respectively.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 57%, or 4 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 60%, or 3 out of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.

### Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 56% of year 3 students, 60% of year 5 students, and 46% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents little or no change, for year 5 this result represents an improvement and for year 7 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline averages.

For 2018, years 3 and 5 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within and for year 7 below the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2018, 23% of year 3, 3% of year 5, and 10% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 17%, or 1 out of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 33%, or 1 of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.