

# **Department for Education**

## **External School Review**

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

### **Report for Owen Primary School**

Conducted in July 2020



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 Ros Frost, 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
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Parent groups
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

## School context

Owen Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 84kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 53. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 60. The local partnership is Lower Mid North.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1010, and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 21% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, no children/young people in care and 32% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of tenure.

There are 4 teachers including 1 in the early years of their career and 2 Step 9 teachers.

## The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1**     **Raise student achievement by collaboratively designing learning and tasks that regularly engage students in opportunities to develop and use higher-order thinking for deeper learning and learning transfer.**
- Direction 2**     **Improve personalised learning by working as a collaborative professional learning community to explore, develop and implement school-wide pedagogies and evidence-based practices that effectively cater for a diversity of learners.**
- Direction 3**     **Develop students as evaluators by strengthening the feedback culture, so that it is formative and includes feedback from teachers to students, students to students and students to teachers.**

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

A range of actions have taken place over time addressing the previous directions.

The school has worked to strengthen collaborative practices to support the use of feedback for students. Professional learning is aligned to the site priorities and teachers willingly trial and share their learning. The school has links to the Partnership and other small schools to moderate student work, collaboratively developing effective task design and continuing to implement Visible Learning approaches. The 2019 introduction of Brightpath provided informed scaffolds for teachers to consistently assess and moderate writing samples, while also delivering next steps for students. This was valued by teachers and influenced their practice with students. There are clear expectations around literacy and numeracy through continued use of school-wide agreements.

Teachers could articulate a range of strategies they were using to cater for the various needs of students with whom they are working. There is a clear collective responsibility across the staff to improve student learning outcomes for all students.



## Lines of inquiry

### EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

*To what extent has the school drawn on evidence of best practice to determine strategies and actions for improvement?*

There is a focus on, and a culture of, improvement in both building capacity of staff and outcomes for students. Staff opinions and feedback are valued, which is seen through the analysis of data and determining actions for improvement in the development and evaluation of the Site Improvement Plan (SIP). Decisions are informed by datasets, where targets reflect the high expectations for achievement. Staff have opportunity to meet with colleagues to focus on both developing actions in relation to the goal and measuring their impact. Regular staff meeting time is allocated for teachers to reflect on progress and collaboratively plan next steps in this work. The school informs the governing council on how priorities are established and provides regular updates on the plan progress at meetings. There are updates for the wider school community through newsletters and assemblies. Parents trust the leadership and staff to make decisions necessary in relation to improvement.

Staff were confident about their commitment and role in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the plans of action. Leadership expect staff to regularly review their progress in implementing the planned actions both individually and collectively to inform next steps. Teachers discussed the effect on their practice and student achievement as part of this review. Careful consideration is taken in aligning the professional learning undertaken by staff and their professional development plans with the SIP priorities. There is a strong culture of collegiality among the staff and a willingness to learn from each other through regular sharing of practice. Staff appreciate opportunities to observe teachers in other sites focusing on the SIP priorities, and articulated how they have incorporated new approaches into their practice. Recently, greater focus has been placed on determining strategies, using guidebooks and linking in with partnership work to inform these decisions. Continuing to focus on developing evidence-based actions, which are aligned with the challenges of practice, are next steps for the school. Strengthening evaluation of progress, using clear success criteria in improvement planning and implementation, will support the school to effectively achieve their identified goals.

**Direction 1**      **Strengthen staff capacity to identify evidence-based actions which align with the challenges of practice, evaluating the impact using the success criteria which are focused on student actions.**

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Quality teaching is the single most influential factor on student achievement. Teachers and leadership are committed to strengthening practices to effectively support students in their learning. There are high expectations and support from leadership for improving achievement for both teachers and students. Professional learning is prioritised in the staff meeting program. Staff value the opportunities they have to undertake targeted training to support teaching and learning, which is closely aligned to the SIP priorities. Teachers talked about how they participated in peer observations and provided feedback to each other, and opportunities to observe effective practice in other schools. The teaching team has engaged in collaborative discussions focused on strategies they have trialled aligned with the SIP priorities, and the impact of these on student learning outcomes. There is an increasing focus on using evidence-based strategies outlined in the guidebooks. Through these processes, a collaborative culture has continued to develop during planning, collectively reflecting, providing feedback and focusing on improving practice. Strengthening the capacity of teachers to deepen the critical collaboration and evaluation of high-yield practices, which builds on the positive culture for improvement, are next steps for the school to undertake.

Teachers are working intentionally to build and maintain a positive and challenging learning environment for students. Students acknowledged that teachers work to engage them in learning and there is a good balance of challenge. There is significant school services officer support provided for each class to enhance learning opportunities in literacy and numeracy. It is important for the school to establish clear processes to measure the impact of this resource through reflection and evaluation. There have been some whole-school authentic learning opportunities offered to students linked with community members and groups. These are valued by staff, students and parents and have had a positive impact on engagement for learning. Leadership and staff have undertaken professional learning on effective task design linked to partnership priorities. The effective implementation of this learning into classroom practice is continuing to develop. There is evidence, from both teachers and students, of the use of goal-setting and learning intentions to support students in their learning. The use of success criteria to measure progress of learning was less clear in both student and teacher discussions. Some students talked about celebrating their contributions to their learning goals and success in achieving them. The consistency and depth of practice in relation to the use of effective task design and aspirational goals is continuing to develop.

**Direction 2      Foster innovation of high-yield approaches by continuing to develop teachers' capacity to critically collaborate and evaluate practices, building on the high achievement for all learners.**



## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Owen Primary School has agreed processes in place to track, monitor and analyse student achievement data. This analysis of data is informing staff discussions and decisions made at different levels – whole-school, class and individual – in relation to improvement. Teachers are working with an agreed assessment schedule and use a range of strategies for assessment of student learning, both whole-school approaches and individual. Teachers discussed their use of data to inform teaching at a class level, for example, grouping students to target the learning, and shared how these groups are fluid, based on regular tracking and monitoring of student progress. There were some examples of how data is shared with students. Strengthening the explicitness of this work will enhance students' abilities to identify next steps in their learning and continue to develop effective practices by teachers to differentiate planning and instruction.

Parents value the information they receive through the formal reporting processes. They value teachers' willingness to meet with them about their child's progress upon request and the benefits of the recent use of ongoing electronic information, as it allows for regular updates about their child's progress.

Students understand that effective feedback is important for their learning. Teachers value the work they have undertaken in moderating student work samples, particularly with the recent work in writing using Brightpath. This work is developing common understandings and consistent judgement of student work. Teachers shared examples of strategies they are using, such as rubrics, to support student understanding of expectations for the task and indicators of what an 'A' looks like. Further development of common understandings and practices to support consistent judgement in both formative and summative assessment by teachers will strengthen this work. Through the Visible Learning training, teachers have continued to develop skills and practices to provide effective feedback to students. Students and teachers talked about how there are opportunities for students to provide peer assessment and feedback. The provision of scaffolds to support students to do this effectively is developing. Continuing to strengthen effective practices for informative two-way feedback, leading to enhanced differentiated learning will support improved outcomes for students.

**Direction 3**     **Provide students with information about their next steps, by strengthening common processes and practices in formative and summative assessment and effective two-way feedback, leading to refinement of opportunities for differentiation.**

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

It is clear that value is placed on the 'sense of community' across the school and links the school is creating with the wider community. Staff are committed to professional learning and improving learning opportunities and outcomes for all students. There is a culture of high expectations along with a mutual trust, respect and inclusive practices. Students value their teachers and are positively engaged in learning.

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

- Direction 1**     **Strengthen staff capacity to identify evidence-based actions which align with the challenges of practice, evaluating the impact using the success criteria which are focused on student actions.**
- Direction 2**     **Foster innovation of high-yield approaches by continuing to develop teachers' capacity to critically collaborate and evaluate practices, building on the high achievement for all learners.**
- Direction 3**     **Provide students with information about their next steps, by strengthening common processes and practices in formative and summative assessment and effective two-way feedback, leading to refinement of opportunities for differentiation.**

**Based on the school's current performance, Owen Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.**



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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).

*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 Owen Primary School from 2016-2019.*

### Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2016 to 2019, 88% of year 1 and 89% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 89% of year 3 students, 86% of year 5 students and 91% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 57% of year 3, 34% of year 5 and 41% 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.

### Numeracy

From 2016 to 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 93% of year 3 students, 83% of year 5 students and 95% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 29% of year 3, 21% of year 5 and 27% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.