

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Upper Sturt Primary School

Conducted in August 2019



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 Julie Bishop, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Rick Bennallack, 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

Upper Sturt Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7 and is located 18kms from the Adelaide CBD. The current enrolment is 121 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 52 students.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1088 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1 Aboriginal student, 8% students with disabilities, 2 young people in care and 15 families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal, currently in an acting capacity.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Strategically monitor, self-review and report on the effectiveness and impact of the school's pedagogical and curriculum implementation on student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and wellbeing.
- Direction 2** Ensure Australian Curriculum provision and pedagogical practices are delivered in a coherent and planned way to sustain continued student achievement, engagement and challenge over time.
- Direction 3** Collect, analyse and interrogate various data and evidence to strategically plan, at both the classroom and school levels, for the learning and wellbeing needs of all students.

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

The following evidence was sourced in documentation provided by the previous principal.

Direction One: Besides regular debrief sessions we meet together at the end of each semester to consider the directions, we are working towards getting our data gathering into a cohesive format that is useful for all.

Direction Two: The Australian Curriculum and pedagogical practices are delivered in a way that is meaningful and purposeful for both students and teachers, and we believe this is also helpful for parents understanding.

Direction Three: The principal stated that the school consistently collects and analyses data in order to differentiate teaching and learning.

Further observations by the current principal indicated that considerable work by teachers had been undertaken in relation to the third direction.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How well does the school use evidence from student achievement and growth data to inform relevant and high impact goals and targets for improvement?

During the staff meeting, staff identified that the principal was best positioned to monitor the progress and impact of the Site Improvement Plan (SIP), and staff indicated their willingness to participate at all levels of SIP development and implementation.

There was considerable variance in staff perspectives of processes to ensure that regular and collaborative monitoring of the SIP was given high prominence, this is an area for further development.

The SIP has three discreet goals: to increase student achievement and growth from years 3 to 7 in writing and maths, and to increase the capacity of students from years 3 to 7 to transfer and apply knowledge across the curriculum via BIO learning (Both Inside and Outside learning).

Actions related to the writing goal were reliant on the implementation of professional learning in Functional Grammar. Some initial work was undertaken, however due to changes in personnel, this goal had been deferred at the time of this review. Exploration of the acquisition of a writing assessment tool to track and monitor writing progress could be considered.

Staff noted that number and place value were identified through analysis of 2018 PAT-M data. The site has implemented actions identified in the numeracy goal, and have prioritised number as a focus for explicit teaching from years 3 to 7. Staff indicated that pre-testing and post-testing is an integral component of tracking and monitoring student progress in numeracy, whilst also identifying a range of assessments currently used to track student growth in numeracy.

When reflecting on the third goal, staff identified a range of formative assessments that are used to inform teaching in BIO learning. The intent of the third goal was to develop an assessment rubric for journal entries to be used for students from years 3 to 7. The panel understands that this is an area for ongoing development.

The school is well positioned for all staff to be active partners in, and undertake collective responsibility for the refinement, review and implementation of the SIP.

Direction 1 Develop and embed whole-school processes to ensure that all staff are involved in the implementation, monitoring, review and enhancement of the SIP at planned intervals throughout the year.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Staff, students and community are strongly committed to the ethos of the 'bush' school. The panel observed high levels of engagement from students for BIO learning and 'Kamana' (an opportunity for students to work outdoors in small clan groups to explore a deep connection with nature). Parents and governing Council members strongly affirmed the engagement of students in schooling. The panel noted a very strong commitment from staff to support and sustain a culture of engagement through diverse learning opportunities for all students.

43% of staff, via a survey conducted during the review, identified that students had understood the learning intention to a high degree in a recent unit of work. Fifteen per cent of staff identified that they had provided clarity in success criteria and learning design to the same degree. The development and implementation of learning intentions and success criteria is significant work for the site to be undertaken. When students know and understand the 'what' and 'how' of learning, they are well placed to set, track and monitor personal goals for ongoing improvement.

85% of staff identified via the same survey that the provision of opportunities to stretch students that enabled them to think deeper about their learning was achieved at a medium to low degree. During interviews held with students, 14% indicated that learning across the curriculum was challenging. The panel was presented with examples of some students who consistently challenged themselves in their learning. Staff identified the need to strengthen and expand opportunities for all students to be challenged across a range of learning areas. This is significant work for the site to undertake.

Some staff provided deep reflection on the intent to refine processes to improve intellectual stretch and challenge by filming lessons which could then be reflected upon with peers. Other staff identified the need to demonstrate how to 'push through' challenges in learning, thereby strengthening the capacity of students to do likewise. Further work in this area is imperative to ensure that students are provided with planned and regular opportunities to display learning at higher levels.

Direction 2 Develop and embed whole-school processes to strengthen learning design, thus ensuring that all students have regular, planned opportunities to demonstrate learning at higher levels.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

How effectively are teachers using the Australian Curriculum to support and improve student learning?

Staff provided extensive evidence of thorough and detailed planning. The panel observed high levels of commitment from all staff to ensure that tracking and monitoring of content via the Australian Curriculum was undertaken, this often occurred after the learning. The school would benefit from developing a whole site approach to incorporate pre-planning and post-planning against the Australian Curriculum, thus ensuring that student learning is aligned to their respective year level.

The school operates from a site timetable that is adapted each semester. Currently, Physical Education is taught by two teachers in groups of approximately 30 students each. Music is taught in two separate groups, one teacher with 15 students and the second teacher with approximately 40 students. Groups are then rotated. Most of the Non Instructional Time (NIT) occurs on the one day, with additional NIT on Wednesday afternoons for all class teachers.

Dedicated time for the explicit teaching of literacy skills occurs in two hour blocks over three days. The panel did not observe evidence of the explicit teaching of the Big Six reading comprehension strategies, guided and/or reciprocal reading. The school would further benefit from the implementation of a reading assessment tool to track and monitor the reading progress of students who have achieved above level 30.

Explicit Maths is taught on the same three days as literacy for two hours in the afternoon. Staff identified that the selection of topics for math units of study were student initiated before each unit of BIO learning.

Staff noted that the identification of specific concepts to be taught each term would strengthen learning opportunities for students. Some staff indicated that consideration needs to be given to the teaching of mathematical concepts as a discreet entity.

The school is well placed to develop consistency in the explicit teaching of literacy and numeracy concepts across all year levels on a daily basis. Staff acknowledged that the collaborative development and embedding of evidence-based whole-school agreements in literacy and numeracy was an area for development.

The review and refinement of current tracking and monitoring processes in literacy and numeracy to ensure clarity and continuity of learning on a daily basis, and as students' progress through the school, is significant work for the school to undertake. The development of a scope and sequence for the teaching of literacy and numeracy will further strengthen congruence and consistency in teaching and learning.

Staff identified that a whole-school approach to moderation would strengthen the collective efficacy of all staff. Work in this area can be enhanced through the use of Australian Curriculum work samples and the development of collaborative planning processes in moderation with peers across other partnership sites.

The school is subsequently well positioned to undertake a comprehensive review of current planning processes, including the timetable to ensure that all students receive the year level entitlement to the Australian Curriculum.

Direction 3 Develop, review and embed processes, including scope and sequences across learning areas, to ensure that student entitlement to the Australian Curriculum of their year level is a priority.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Upper Sturt Primary School is a proud school community with a very strong commitment to the incorporation of the environment as an integral component of learning for all students. The school is well positioned to strengthen this work through the implementation of the subsequent directions.

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

- Direction 1** **Develop and embed whole-school processes to ensure that all staff are involved in the implementation, monitoring, review and enhancement of the SIP at planned intervals throughout the year.**
- Direction 2** **Develop and embed whole-school processes to strengthen learning design, thus ensuring that all students have regular, planned opportunities to demonstrate learning at higher levels.**
- Direction 3** **Develop, review and embed processes, including scope and sequences across learning areas, to ensure that student entitlement to the Australian Curriculum of their year level is a priority.**

Based on the school's current performance, Upper Sturt Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2020.



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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).

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2018, 69% of year 1 and 63% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. These result represents an improvement for years 1 and 2, from the historic baseline average.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 39% of year 3 students, 62% of year 5 students and 67% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline and for years 5 and 7, this represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 has been downwards, from 57% to 39%.

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

In 2018, 22% of year 3, 39% of year 5 and 11% 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.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 50%, or 2 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 0%, or 0 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 39% of year 3 students, 62% of year 5 students and 67% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline and for years 5 and 7, this represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 has been downwards, from 57% to 39%.

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

In 2018, 28% of year 3, 54% of year 5 and 11% 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 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 75%, or 3 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 0%, or 0 out of 1 student from year 3 remains in the upper bands at year 7.