

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

On-track evaluation report for Upper Sturt Primary School

One-year return conducted in October 2020



On-track evaluation process

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.

All government schools are externally reviewed over a 3-year cycle. After the review the principal and the governing council chairperson receive a written report with a number of directions for improvement.

A copy of the ESR report is available on the school website.

The External School Review framework is referenced throughout all stages of the ESR process.

In some cases, when the review panel identifies limited achievement and growth, together with evidence about the school's capacity for systematic improvement, a school is advised that they will be visited again in 1 rather than 3 years' time (1 year return).

Schools with a 1 year return are assisted by the education director and other department staff to receive additional coordinated and targeted support. This intervention is focused on building the school's capacity to improve teaching and learning across the school, lift expectations and achieve improved student learning results as measured against the Department for Education Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Following intervention, which occurs for 12-15 months after the ESR, a review panel conducts an on-track evaluation (OTE) to determine the extent to which the school has, with external support, developed sustainable internal capacity to improve effectiveness and raise student achievement.

The school's Site Improvement Plan (SIP) is the main document used to inform the OTE.

This OTE visit was conducted by Julie Bishop, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate, and Marie Wright, Review Principal.

The OTE report should be read in conjunction with the report of the External School Review conducted at Upper Sturt Primary School in August 2019.

Directions from the External School Review report

August 2019

- 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.**

Additional information about the school context

The principal advised a significant increase in access to and use of information technology across the site. The current principal has been at the site since July 2019. Enrolment is stable.

Development of a school improvement plan

The current principal advised that, prior to her appointment, the school improvement plan (SIP) was developed and actioned by the principal, this is no longer the case.

The 2020 priority improvement plan, specifically the steps four and five document, was used to track and monitor progress of the on-track evaluation (OTE).

The plan was sent to the executive director, Partnerships, Schools and Preschools in term 3, 2020.

Strategic support provided to the school over the past 12 months

The principal advised that regular and ongoing support from the local education team and using the reflection tool in the OTE process had been very beneficial.

Evidence and evaluation referenced to directions in the school improvement plan

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.**

On-track evidence

Staff reported the following:

- Performance and development plans (PDP) are directly related to the ESR directions.
- SIP is a regular agenda item at staff meetings; staff work through the plan to track and monitor their progress.
- The principal ensured staff understand the process and acronyms.
- Whole-school common language has significantly supported consistency across the site.
- Performance and development goals are aligned to the SIP.
- PDP goals are reviewed during planned performance and development meetings via focused conversations.
- “The SIP is more visible, it feels like we are making more progress”.

Review panel evaluation

Staff reported that alignment of ESR directions to their PDPs completely transformed the way they operate. They now have ownership of learning and the chance to drive it. Whole-school planning now includes relevant assessment tools, planned data collections and analysis of student data, used to document and monitor student learning progress. Staff reported ‘this work is everyone’s business’, with all staff providing input. Further reflections from staff indicated that, as professionals, they are now listened to, respected, valued and trusted.

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.**

On-track evidence

Staff reported the following:

- Data collection has changed/improved and staff now undertake pre- and post-testing.
- Staff strategically assess high achievers; they developed planning documents to increase levels of challenge via effective learning design.
- In reading, high-achieving students tutor their peers and are paired with students who require additional support.
- Teachers reported students now know where they are in their learning and what their next steps are.
- The school developed and implemented planning documents that have a consistent framework across areas of learning and year levels.
- Learning intentions and success criteria are now an integral part of language used to support students in understanding the why, how and what of learning.
- Professional learning for staff is now undertaken on and off-site; staff return to the school and share their professional learning.
- It was important to ensure that new learning in knowledge, curriculum and the language of learning is shared across the site.
- Teachers now structure learning across the week using the following framework: 'what do you know? what's next? Apply it to something new and identify how far you have come'.

Review panel evaluation

The school is to be commended for the comprehensive and detailed approach to developing and embedding effective learning design across the site. The school identified the need to work with other schools to broaden their exposure to curriculum implementation. Staff are now well-positioned to work collaboratively with like schools in developing effective learning design across year levels and areas of study. Teachers confidently reported that they now need to 'stay the course' and embed all new learning.

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

On-track evidence

- Teachers collaboratively developed a scope and sequence in both literacy and numeracy, they reflected that, while it was challenging, it resulted in implementation of viable working documents.
- Staff compared and aligned their literacy and numeracy scope and sequences with the available department examples.
- Extensive review and modification of school timetables, including non-instructional time (NIT), start and end-of-school times, balanced student groupings and curriculum coverage, were undertaken to ensure enterprise bargaining entitlements and systems are equitable across the school.
- All staff were involved in discussions to determine class structures for 2020, with the knowledge that the current model was unsustainable, consensus was reached, and the decision to move forward with 5 classes was implemented in January 2020.
- The principal reported parents needed to feel included in the changes, as such, 'current school parent' tours were implemented
- Thirty-six parents attended a 'school tour', which incorporated visiting classes, staffing, NIT programs, class structures and roles of support staff.
- A whole-school timetable was developed to ensure student entitlement to the curriculum of their year level is provided with specific reference to literacy, numeracy, and 'BIO' learning blocks.
- Timetables, including start and end times, now align with enterprise bargaining requirements.
- A language other than English (LOTE) was initiated in February 2020; a planned review of the effectiveness of French via a parent survey is to be undertaken.
- Literacy and numeracy scope, sequences and agreements were implemented.
- Staff reported they found the Australian Curriculum scope and sequences and curriculum links to be very supportive, and are no longer second-guessing where the students are in their learning.

Review panel evaluation

Staff, during interviews, provided extensive evidence of processes and practices developed and implemented to ensure that student entitlement to the Australian Curriculum of their year level is embedded across the site. Teachers noted that next steps could include the development of a framework in science. Staff demonstrated high levels of commitment and engagement to ongoing improvement across the site. The school is to be commended for the comprehensive approach in ensuring that every student is provided with the curriculum of their year level.

Outcomes of the on-track evaluation 2020

Based on the evidence provided, Upper Sturt Primary School is on-track to effectively implement the External School Review directions.

The review panel found that:

A comprehensive, whole-school approach to teaching and learning is embedded across the site, this is strengthened by a collective commitment to ongoing improvement. Effective leadership provided strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions. Effective teaching is consistently evidenced with multiple opportunities for students to be actively engaged and challenged. Students are provided with opportunities and scaffolds to help them authentically influence their learning.

Detailed planning, strategic support and carefully considered timelines ensured staff comprehensively addressed the directions from the 2019 ESR review. The school is to be commended for the depth and collective ownership of the improvement agenda that the school has undertaken.

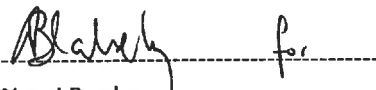
Based on current performance, Upper Sturt Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



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