

# **Department for Education**

## **External School Review**

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

### **Report for Tea Tree Gully Primary School**

Conducted in February 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 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, they all have been considered and contributed 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 Mark Vincent, 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
  - Student groups
  - Teachers



## School context

Tea Tree Gully Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 19kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment for 2019 is 136 students and enrolment has fluctuated over the past few years. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 146.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1019 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education (DfE) Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 4% Aboriginal students, 8% students with disabilities, and 24% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of her tenure and a wellbeing leader 0.2FTE. There are 10 teachers including 3 in the early years of their career and 3 step 9 teachers.

## Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Increase number of students at SEA and students achieving at the higher levels by regularly tracking and monitoring and maintaining high expectations of student outcomes.
- Direction 2** Help more students experience higher levels of success by conducting rigorous evaluation and data analysis processes that determine the impact and effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies, programs and interventions in achieving identified improvement priorities.
- Direction 3** Improve learning outcomes for all students, including students in priority groups and those new to the school, by reviewing how resources are deployed strategically and aligned to school improvement priorities.
- Direction 4** Lift student achievement across the school by evaluating the current implementation of the TfEL framework, align it with other school priorities, and identify key areas for further development, particularly in relation to creating conditions for rigorous learning.

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

The school reported that peers had trained their colleagues to develop and analyse data to plan for improvement. 2018 literacy and numeracy funding was used to initiate data focus teams to specifically monitor and track identified students in the higher bands and plan collaboratively with students for next steps. This didn't bring the expected results and the school has modified and developed a different model for improvement for 2019.

In 2016 the staff training focus was on tracking and monitoring students using the 2X2X2, (numeracy-low floor, high-ceiling tasks). In 2017-2018 professional learning in maths and solo taxonomy, assessment and moderation with local schools and partnerships, has supported staff to build the capacity to more effectively plan for higher levels of success.

Evidence of learning intentions and success criteria was observed in every classroom by the panel. It is apparent that the school is committed to continuing the learning in developing and analysing data for improvement and to focus the work of the PLCs on learning design, implementation, review and improvement. This will be important work for the school to embed.



## Lines of inquiry

### EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

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

The principal reported that the new school improvement plan (SIP) process has supported an increase in staff and community feedback, and indicated that the process will be extended to include student perceptions in 2019.

The principal noted that reflections on determining the challenge of practice has provided the opportunity to reflect on how they as a leader need to be aware of 'what's really happening in the classroom'. The principal indicated that the introduction of peer observations to support, challenge and strengthen teacher practice was a significant area for development.

The principal also noted that monitoring the progress of the SIP and sharing responsibilities for key actions were areas for further development. The development of a SIP team that includes leadership and teacher representatives is an aspect for further consideration and the principal noted that this may entice new staff to take on a role in the SIP team.

It was noted by the principal that monitoring of the plan could be included in the parent calendar and become a regular item on staff meeting and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) agendas. Leadership identified that they would work on an initial draft and then bring it to the PLCs. It was also noted that building in a review cycle throughout the year would ensure staff are monitoring the success criteria.

Consideration was given to the use of the 'traffic-light system' to generate follow-up discussions about next steps. The principal reflected that setting goals with the SIP team would provide explicit guidelines in the monitoring and development of the SIP.

Next steps for the school will be to develop common practices, processes and a team approach to school improvement. It will be important for the site to work collaboratively to develop a whole of site approach to school improvement.

**Direction 1**      Develop and embed processes where staff are actively involved in all stages of the implementation, review and refinement of the school improvement plan at regular, planned points throughout the year.

### EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Staff displayed a strong intent to support students in all aspects of schooling and demonstrated high levels of dedication to the students in their care. It was clearly apparent to the panel that there were strong attempts to establish rich learning environments and that scaffolds for learning and visual prompts were visible in all classrooms. Wellbeing data and panel observations affirmed a very strong school culture. Consistent evidence of and a commitment to continual improvement was apparent across the site.

During interviews with students very few reported that they saw their learning to be challenging, some students indicated a balance of just right and challenging and very few students indicated that they found their work too hard. Some Governing Council members indicated that they felt intellectual stretch and challenge was an area for further development. Staff rated themselves from 2 to 3.5 on a scale of 0-5 when



reflecting on their proficiency in providing sufficient opportunities for students to be challenged in their learning.

Staff identified a range of strategies to improve intellectual stretch and challenge across the site, including developing common understandings relating to differentiation and task design leading to confidence in setting tasks that enable students to achieve at 'A' and 'B' levels. The development of clarity and common understandings across the site in effective processes for differentiation and task design is significant work for the site to undertake.

Staff also identified the need to consistently reflect on the effectiveness of the task design. Several staff indicated that sharing and collaborating in the analysis and reflection of task design with regular opportunities to work with peers from other sites would be highly beneficial. Staff, during interviews, acknowledged that this was a significant area for development across the site.

The school is well placed to reflect on and review current pedagogical practice from the perspective of the learner as they progress throughout the school.

**Direction 2**      Develop and embed a consistent, whole school approach to research-based effective pedagogical practices that provide every student with the opportunity to be regularly challenged in their learning.

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

### *To what extent do teachers ensure that students have authentic influence in their learning?*

Many students demonstrated very strong and positive dispositions about themselves as learners but did not display an understanding of and were unable to apply a language for learning. Some staff indicated that they sought feedback about their own performance as a teacher from the students before and after units of work.

Staff rated their proficiency in tracking and monitoring learning with students as an area of development for the school. Staff reported that the implementation of 'data champions' using the 2+2+2 model where two high achieving, two average achieving and two low achieving students are closely tracked and monitored and informed of their personal progress had been highly successful. It was reported that the selected students were highly engaged and wanted to know more about their personal data. It was also reported that this was an area for ongoing development with the expectation that all students will have access to their personal data in a similar format.

When asked how tracking and monitoring learning with students could be improved suggestions included developing consistent structures for effective handover across the site, the provision of time and the development of a portfolio of work samples. It was also noted by staff that sharing of summative data was important to inform the site of emerging patterns and trends. The school is now well placed to develop processes where sharing of summative and formative assessments occurs in all classrooms as a regular component of everyday learning.

The school is also well placed to support students to become powerful learners through the development and implementation of common, agreed practices and a common language for learning. When staff and students share the same language for learning authentic student influence will be an integral aspect of all learning for students.

**Direction 3**      Develop and embed authentic student influence through the development of common language and pedagogical practices for learning.

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

The Tea Tree Gully Primary School community is very proud of their school and has been commended by the Governing Council and parents for the high level of care towards students and their families.

The school is now well placed to embed effective pedagogical practices across the site and to design learning that will challenge and engage all learners.

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

- Direction 1      Develop and embed processes where staff are actively involved in all stages of the development and review of the school improvement plan at regular, planned points throughout the year.
- Direction 2      Develop and embed a consistent, whole school approach to research-based effective pedagogical practices that provide every student with the opportunity to be regularly challenged in their learning.
- Direction 3      Develop and embed authentic student influence through the development of common language and pedagogical practices for learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Tea Tree Gully 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, 68% of year 1 and 92% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline and improvement respectively for year 1 and year 2 from the historic baseline average.

In 2018 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 78% of year 3 students, 78% of year 5 students and 82% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For year 3 this result represents a decline, for year 5 little or no change and for year 7, an improvement from the historic baseline average. For year 7 there is an improvement trend from 62% to 82% from 2016 to 2018 respectively.

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

In 2018, 56% of year 3, 50% of year 5 and 18% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 82%, or 9 of 11 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, 50%, or 1 of 2 student from year 3 remained in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.

### Numeracy

In 2018 the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 83% of year 3 students, 94% of year 5 students and 91% 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 result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2018, 28% of year 3, 33% of year 5 and 9% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 100%, or 6 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.