

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Flagstaff Hill Primary School

Conducted in May 2021



# 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 Tanya Oshinsky, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Grant Small and Michele Russell, Review Principals.

## 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
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parent groups
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student representatives
  - Teachers.



## School context

Flagstaff Hill Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 16kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 609. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 550. The local Partnership is South Valley.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1060 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 6 Aboriginal students, 6% students with disabilities, 1% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 13% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of tenure, a Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal, 0.6FTE literacy coordinator, and an inclusion and behaviour coordinator.

There are 41 teachers, including 2 in the early years of their career and 17 Step 9 teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Refine and improve site improvement planning through the development of action plans that are informed by data for each priority and include explicit strategies and measurable targets related to the plan.
- Direction 2** Collaboratively develop and embed common agreements and effective pedagogical practices and assessments in numeracy and writing across the site.
- Direction 3** Collaboratively develop and embed authentic student influence for learning, including the exploration of co-designing learning as a powerful means for all students to become equal partners in their own learning

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

Standardising the school improvement planning (SIP) processes in 2018, by using departmental resources in establishing the SIP, made a difference and supported the schools' response to direction one. NAPLAN and PAT are the main datasets that inform the goals and challenges of practice in the SIP. Action teams and coaching, as well as literacy and numeracy agreements, address the priorities within the plan.

Common agreements and practices are further supported through the guaranteed viable curriculum, introduction of the 7 steps program with scope and sequence, and development of a genre map. High impact strategies such as 'what am I learning today' (WALT) and 'what am I looking for' (WILF) are visible in all classrooms. Many other classrooms also use 'this is because' and 'what a good one looks like'. There is varied implementation of each of these strategies across the school.

Direction 3 is identified by all staff as the least developed. Targeted professional learning was undertaken with little progress in authentic student influence. Staff acknowledge they need to have a deeper understanding of what this looks like in practice. This will be continuing work for the school.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions based on their impact on student learning?

NAPLAN and PAT data identified writing and maths as the SIP goals for improvement, with a focus on higher band achievement. NAPLAN targets are the school's measure of success. As NAPLAN data is only for years 3, 5 and 7, the school should explore other data sets that provide more timely information about student progress for all students. This will ensure that identified strategies and actions are more targeted to students' needs as they progress. While current datasets and targets are narrow, the SIP actions provided focus for the ongoing work.

Staff have opportunity for professional learning relevant to the school's priorities and are positive about the support they receive in a coaching model. The literacy coordinator and Assistant Principal, with a focus in numeracy, now co-plan with teachers as well as model lessons. Through gradual release of responsibility, these coaches then observe teacher practice and provide feedback for further improvement. In performance development plans (PDPs), teachers select one of the goals from the SIP to improve their practice. Examples provided indicate that teachers refer to the teacher standards or select the SIP goal as written in their performance development plan. Regular check-ins and feedback between teacher and leader celebrate successful actions. This process could be further enhanced by teachers personalising the SIP goals to how they can improve their current practice. Reflection by the teacher and feedback from leader, should positively and critically reflect on the impact of change in practice on learner outcomes.

Teachers use writing samples to audit student achievement. Engagement of students and use of the writing cycle are identified as indicators of success. In maths teachers use pre and post testing. All teachers use 'Tuft' sheets which are checklists of achievement for each year level. School review processes that measure growth of student achievement over time are limited to only a few datasets. Staff indicated that their involvement in and clarity of the school's self-review processes were low. To ensure best outcomes for students, it is important the school develops rigorous and regular self-review processes, using a wide variety of quality data. These processes should continuously measure and ensure that the identified strategies and actions are having a positive impact on student learning outcomes.

**Direction 1      Implement regular self-review processes that use quality evidence of student growth to monitor the impact of the SIP strategies and actions on student learning outcomes.**



## Effective teaching and student learning

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

The guaranteed viable curriculum is embedded practice at the school. Year-level agreements determine what will be taught in literacy and numeracy. These documents are prescriptive and include a pacing guide for rigorous implementation. 'Art and Science of Teaching' is identified as the school's pedagogical framework. Initially guaranteed viable curriculum and Art and Science of Teaching were aligned with the Australian Curriculum and Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL). Some teachers see the guaranteed viable curriculum as "old", and find it difficult to maintain the pacing guide, while others are committed to it. Parents also value what has been in place for some time.

Varied implementation of the guaranteed viable curriculum and high-impact strategies are evident across the school, with pockets of good practice. The 7 steps program and writing cycle are common across classes. Teachers work collaboratively in their year-level group and are aware of teaching practice in co-located classes. Teachers are unsure about consistency across the school, as they have little opportunity for sharing practice across units. Staff are keen to have the opportunity to observe their peers across year levels and in other schools. As staff describe feeling quite insular at times, developing larger teaching teams for critical collaboration of ongoing and agreed practice would be of great benefit.

Examples of stretching students provided by teachers include problem-solving, additional questions, discussing and explaining their learning and students teaching students. Students; however, report not feeling challenged in their learning and say they often get another worksheet if their work is easy. Parents also see stretch and challenge as an area for growth. Visible scaffolds in some classrooms and the 'bring your own device' to school initiative for years 3 to 7, when used effectively, adds opportunity to stretch learning.

Co-planning with coaches for some teachers included using the Australian Curriculum scope and sequence and literacy and numeracy progressions. These are quality documents that the school could consider using more consistently, particularly for developing task design, which is in little evidence across the school. Quality task design, responsive to the learning needs of students, is determined through regular assessment of student achievement against curriculum requirements. Adding this to deep implementation of evidence based pedagogical practices that scaffold and enhance learning, is ongoing work for the school.

**Direction 2 Improve pedagogical practice by implementing informed learning design, inclusive of evidence-based high-impact strategies, that stretch and challenge all learners daily.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

There is no agreed assessment schedule for the school, and teachers use their own judgement in how often and how they will assess students. Teachers assess students in a variety of ways. Many design their own pre- and post-test, particularly in maths. Students' writing samples are analysed and marked. Embedded across the school in writing is "green is seen" and "pink is think", to support students to improve their work. Tuft sheets were in place alongside the guaranteed viable curriculum and aligned to the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards. Teachers say they may modify Tuft sheets in order to cater for their cohort of students. Occasionally, students use the Tuft sheets to assess their own work.

Tuft sheets are referred to by some students as 'mini reports' that tell them what they did well. Students, however, had little idea of their progress in their learning or how they would know how they could improve. They are surprised by their reports, as they improve by the end of the year and do not know what they did differently to achieve the higher grade. Parents report that receiving grades only gives them little information about what their child can or cannot do and would like more information. Passing information on each year between teachers is not an established process, with sometimes little information being passed between units. Parents report having to advocate each year for their child if they require specific support.

Ongoing monitoring of student achievement through assessment, including formative assessment during tasks, is essential for differentiating the learning for all students. Teachers examples of formative assessment practices include observations, conversations, whiteboards and 1 to 5 for understanding. Examples of feedback from students include entry and exit cards, thumbs up and down, and surveys. Students know they get feedback about their learning, but had difficulty providing examples. 'Bookwork' shows little to no evidence of feedback and are often full of worksheets. Some 'what a good one looks like' walls also show student worksheets, rather than quality student-produced work. In a staff survey, teachers indicate moderate confidence in formative assessment and feedback practices during learning that moves learning forward. They indicate less confidence in seeking feedback from students about their learning to improve their teaching practice. This is important work for the school to undertake, which will greatly enhance learning outcomes for students.

**Direction 3      Develop whole-school processes in the use of assessment and feedback data, that teachers analyse for evidence of student learning and progress, to inform their teaching practice.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Changes to leadership in recent years were unsettling for the school. The current leadership team are in tenured positions and working collaboratively to build their vision for further improving the school and student outcomes. Staff and parents are passionate about the school and its focus over recent years. Stakeholders also recognise that there is opportunity to explore strategies and actions that will further enhance the learning outcomes for all students. Building consistency of quality practice and deeply embedding high-impact strategies that stretch all learners is continuing work for the school.

The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1**    **Implement regular self-review processes that use quality evidence of student growth to monitor the impact of the SIP strategies and actions on student learning outcomes.**
- Direction 2**    **Improve pedagogical practice by implementing informed learning design, inclusive of evidence-based high-impact strategies, that stretch and challenge all learners daily.**
- Direction 3**    **Develop whole-school processes in the use of assessment and feedback data, that teachers analyse for evidence of student learning and progress, to inform their teaching practice.**

Based on the school's current performance, Flagstaff Hill Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



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Kerry Dollman  
Director  
Review, Improvement and Accountability



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Anne Millard  
Executive Director  
Partnerships, Schools and Preschools



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Donella Munro  
Principal  
Flagstaff Hill Primary School



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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 2020, 97% of year 1 and 79% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2018 and 2020 the trend for year 2 has been downwards from 93% to 79%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 88% of year 3 students, 91% of year 5 students and 82% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For year 5, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. For year 7, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 5 has been upwards from 83% to 91%.

For 2019 year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN reading the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2019, 51% of year 3, 38% of year 5 and 35% 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 in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 71%, or 27 out of 38 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 67%, or 16 out of 24 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 92% of year 3 students, 88% of year 5 students and 87% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. For year 7, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For 2019 year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 43% of year 3, 21% of year 5 and 39% 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 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 44%, or 14 out of 32 students, from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 81%, or 13 out of 16 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.