

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Elizabeth Vale 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 Phil Garner, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Dina Zunis, 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
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Elizabeth Vale caters for mainstream preschool to year 7, as well as 2 special classes and an Intensive English Language Centre. It is situated approx. 28 kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 470. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 440. The local partnership is Para Hills 1.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 889, and is classified as Category 1 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 16% Aboriginal students, 21% students with disabilities, 60% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 4% children/young people in care and 90% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

There are over 20 languages/dialects spoken by students, with around 100 Bhutanese and Nepali speaking children enrolled. The school hosts 3 special education classes from Adelaide North Special School.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 9th year of tenure, a Deputy Principal and 2 Assistant Principals and 4 coordinators.

There are 39 teachers including 10 in the early years of their career and 9 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Develop strategic leadership capacity to enable the school to articulate a vision for the future and develop, implement, and evaluate a strategic plan to continue the school's improvement journey.**
- Direction 2** **Provide greater opportunities for students to engage in creative and critical thinking through developing a whole school understanding and enactment of STEM pedagogy, together with professional learning, in task design in all curriculum areas.**
- Direction 3** **Build on the school's effective pedagogies and ensure coherence for students by documenting whole-school expectation, and using these documents for ongoing self and school improvement in teaching practices**

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

Direction 1

The school has engaged with the new site improvement planning process that is guiding the improvement journey of the school. Distributed, strategic leadership has been a focus with a multifaceted approach to leading improvement across the school. The leadership team provides instructional leadership, as well as responsive and operational leadership.

Direction 2

STEM was developed as a specialist curriculum across the school. Whole-school topics have a strong science focus. Staff work in learning teams, across teams and with specialist teachers to plan learning opportunities for students. A 'stretch STEM' program for identified students was introduced.

Direction 3

The trauma-informed, positive education program (Berry Street) was successfully and consistently implemented across the school. Non-negotiable literacy teaching requirements in mainstream were collaboratively developed for implementation this year. A low variance literacy curriculum for reception was developed and implemented. School improvement is seen as a whole-school process.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

The challenge of practice is an embedded whole-school focus, with staff clearly committed to improving student achievement in reading. Learning teams regularly review and monitor the impact of teaching on student learning and growth over time, identifying students requiring personalised intervention. A whole school reflection tool that highlights individual student learning progress is used each term to ensure all student progress is monitored, documented and reported.

Teachers are developing greater awareness and understanding of the need to monitor and track student progress to identify the next steps in learning. Ensuring the results of data analysis are reflected in student goals, with targets in every classroom, enabling students to understand where they are in their learning, where they need to be and what they need to do to get there.

The impact of teaching on student learning is monitored by teachers in a variety of ways including:

- student participation in learning
- analysis of student achievement
- pre- and post-assessments and exit slips
- evidence of transference of learning to other contexts
- teacher professional judgement.

Teachers, students and parents were clear about the focus on the developing 'field knowledge' and vocabulary. The whole-school learning focus is a curriculum strategy based around science and the environment, and designed to enhance student vocabulary, understanding and connectedness with the world around them.

Having completed a recent review and evaluation of the school improvement plan, it is important to ensure that the learning and identified next steps are reflected in the revised plan. Increasing staff engagement in the school improvement planning process and the inclusion of expectations and responsibilities for teachers, as well leaders, will sharpen understanding, commitment and accountability.

The school developed comprehensive processes for tracking and monitoring student progress. Access to improved analytical tools provides opportunities to conduct deeper analysis of individual and cohort achievement data. This will help teachers strategically target the teaching and learning and engage students more effectively in their own learning journey.

Direction 1 Sharpen teacher understanding and ownership of the improvement process by increasing engagement and clearly identifying expectations and responsibilities.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

This year, the school has strategically designed some classes that cater for the variance in student learning needs within each year level. This is leading to a more targeted and explicit 'first wave' teaching approach to supporting the learning needs of all students. Early evidence is showing signs of improved student engagement and achievement.

Teachers understand the need to raise their expectations and focus on stretching and challenging students with higher academic ability. Students confirmed this level of challenge and engagement in learning varied across classes and subjects. Most teachers identify this as a significant challenge of practice. They are looking for guidance on the best way to provide multiple entry and exit points that cater for the varying learning needs of students.

The recent introduction of explicit and direct instruction strategies is beginning to guide the design and delivery of lessons. Non-negotiable literacy teaching requirements were also collaboratively developed for implementation this year. These consistencies in pedagogical practice combined with explicit teaching strategies have the potential to significantly improve achievement for all learners.

There is clear intentionality in some classes around identifying and discussing next steps in learning with students. These are based on student achievement and used to identify precise and individual learning goals. Students in these classes can clearly articulate what they are working on and how they will achieve their goals.

The implementation of learning intentions and success criteria is variable across the school. They are used effectively in some early years classes with a focus on "We are learning to", "What am I looking for?" and "I am successful when".

Effective formative feedback that guides students in their next steps in learning is an area for continued focus and improved practice. Student use of Chromebooks in years 4 to 7 accounts for around 50% of the learning tasks; however, limited formative assessment was observed on uploaded student assignments. This is an area for further focus, discussion and improvement.

Direction 2 Design learning that engages and challenges all students and targets their next steps through the deep analysis of individual achievement data and effective formative feedback and assessment processes.

Conditions for effective student learning

To what extent does the school promote a culture of learning with high expectations of achievement for all learners?

High levels of collaboration between teachers is evident across the school. Learning teams were established to cater for the professional learning needs of teachers around reading and data analysis. Coaches and line managers lead the learning. The role of coaches in the teaching and learning process was strategically implemented to ensure maximum effect on teacher improvement and student learning.

Respect, kindness and genuine care, are evident across the school. High expectations are consistently modelled by leadership and staff and have the respect of the whole school community.

The Berry Street program was successfully and consistently implemented across the school. With high expectations about student behaviour, this was an effective and positive approach to emotional regulation and behaviour management across the school. Positive language and behaviours are consistently modelled by everyone.

Most students believe their teachers have high standards for their learning, especially in reading, with teachers continually encouraging them to improve. Students want to be at this school and have these standards for themselves. Students the panel met with indicated aspirational career paths, including engineers, architects, lawyers, teachers, dentist and owning a company. The school is well-placed to introduce a student leadership program that builds student leadership capacity and student voice in an authentic and strategic way.

Teachers pride themselves on their professional learning. Specialist teachers collaborate closely to ensure consistency of practice, process and routines.

Teachers acknowledge the semi formal process of coaching and modelling, and line manager observation visits that provide some feedback on their performance. However, they mentioned inconsistencies of observations and feedback from leaders. Most teachers indicated that a more formal process of teacher appraisal, targeted to the individual learning needs and linked to their professional development plans and professional standards for teachers, would enhance their professional learning journey.

Direction 3 Improve the quality of teaching and learning through the collaborative development and implementation of a formal teacher appraisal process.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

The school has effectively focussed on building student trust, respect, and social and emotional regulation. Structures, processes and procedures are geared to the achievement of high-quality outcomes for everyone. While teachers have high expectations of students, there exists an opportunity to collaboratively identify a common understanding of what high expectations of student learning looks like in the classroom. The appointment of highly experienced literacy coaches with clear and focussed responsibilities is guiding the process and building teacher capacity. This is beginning to have a positive effect on teaching and learning.

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

- Direction 1** **Sharpen teacher understanding and ownership of the improvement process by increasing engagement and clearly identifying expectations and responsibilities.**
- Direction 2** **Design learning that engages and challenges all students and targets their next steps through the deep analysis of individual achievement data and effective formative feedback and assessment processes.**
- Direction 3** **Improve the quality of teaching and learning through the collaborative development and implementation of a formal teacher appraisal process.**

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



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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 2019, 41% of year 1 and 38% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 1 this result represents an improvement and for year 2 little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2018 and 2019, the trend for year 1 has been downwards from 47% to 41% and for year 2 has been downwards from 54% to 38%.

In 2019 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 46% of year 3 students, 46% of year 5 students and 33% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents little or no change, for year 5 an improvement, and for year 7 a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

Between 2017 and 2019, the school consistently achieved lower in years 5 and 7 in NAPLAN reading relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 21% of year 3, 9% of year 5 and 2% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019, who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 50%, or 1 out of 2 students from year 3, remain in the upper bands at year 5, and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 42% of year 3 students, 44% of year 5 students and 29% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents little or no change, for year 5 an improvement, and year 7 a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 27% to 44% and for year 7 downwards from 42% to 29%.

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

Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved lower in years 3 and 5 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 6% of year 3, 5% of year 5 and 2% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy

bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards from 2% to 5%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 50%, or 1 out of 2 students, from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.