

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Evanston Gardens Primary School

Conducted in June 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 John McCade, 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

Evanston Gardens Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 40kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 206. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 144. The local partnership is Greater Gawler 1.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 951 and is classified as Category 3 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 4% Aboriginal students, 13% students with disabilities, less than 6 students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2% children/young people in care and 42% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

There are high levels of student transience; 34% of current students did not commence their schooling at this school.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 8th year of tenure, Deputy Principal in their 2nd year of tenure and a student wellbeing leader in their 2nd year of tenure.

There are 14 teachers, including 3 in the early years of their career and 3 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Raise student achievement by strengthening learning and task design situated within units of work that use dialogue and provide authentic audience.
- Direction 2** Empower students with the language of learning by developing consistency across the school in using formative assessment processes, such as shared learning intentions, transparent success criteria and feedback routines from, to and between students.
- Direction 3** Implement a systematic approach to school improvement by using data to determine a small number of key focus areas for sustainable action that builds coherence between Site and Partnership Priorities.
- Direction 4** Build teacher capacity in using evidence-based practices through whole-school targeted professional learning that trials, reviews and embeds agreed and precise school-wide pedagogy.

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

Attending to school culture has refined conditions for learning and enabled work to commence against the previous directions. Narrowing the number of key focus areas, establishing clear documentation about expectations and practices, and professional learning aligned to school and Partnership priorities, enhanced the school's approach to improvement.

While there was professional learning in task design, formative assessment practices and use of data for intentional teaching, a wide variety of practices still exist across the school. Expectations that teachers have term and yearly overviews, programs and timetables are now established. Leaders are aware that

there is ongoing work for the school in each of the directions.

Staff mostly use data to identify gaps in learning and plan their teaching forward, at a group and class level. A focus on data and building consistent practices in the early years' classes has resulted in the introduction of the Heggerty Phonological Awareness program and retraining in Jolly Phonics. Targeted support is in place from the Literacy Guarantee Unit.

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?

Staff report a greater attention to data informing the improvement agenda and their work with students. Teachers are involved in processes of analysing data which identify gaps in learning. Interrogation of whole-school datasets informed the goals and challenges of practice in the school improvement plan (SIP). The SIP is reviewed twice per term in staff meetings and teachers identify the main actions and strategies that have been achieved. Further analysis of class data to determine impact of teaching practice on the learning is important to ensure changes in practice are having the desired effect on student outcomes. The school has reviewed and established a data schedule. Students' achievement from agreed data sets are uploaded onto Scorelink (online platform). Ensuring all teachers upload this information to track student progress over time is essential. Teachers also collect students' assessments in individual files, for the purpose of analysing them for intentional teaching.

Teacher professional development plans are aligned to the SIP. Leaders carry out informal observations in classrooms and provide written feedback to staff identifying good practice and an area for refinement. A standard template is used for consistency amongst leaders' practice.

Professional learning communities (PLCs) were reviewed over time, with teacher leader positions recently introduced. All teachers had opportunity to nominate as a teacher leader and training was provided for clarity in their role. Currently, leadership formulate the agenda based on staff needs and SIP priorities, and present this agenda to teacher leaders before the PLC meeting. Action teams for literacy, numeracy and wellbeing also address SIP and school needs. Teacher leaders and PLC representatives form the action teams, which operate when specific actions are required. There is opportunity to deepen staff response to the SIP through developing clarity and alignment between the regular work of action teams and PLCs. This will build consistency of agreed effective practice across the school. Enhancing teacher leader capacity can be achieved through co-planning the agenda with leadership based on PLC and action team feedback.

Direction 1 Strengthen action team and PLC structures to build a shared culture of high expectations, develop consistency across the school and drive the improvement agenda.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Data, phonological awareness and phonics are a focus for improving student learning outcomes. In addition to programs that were embedded, the school adopted a 'science of reading' focus, purchased decodable readers and reviewed its literacy agreement. The numeracy agreement was also reviewed and teachers now regularly test for misconceptions in mathematics. '1000 hours for learning' was introduced as the school's mantra to build rigour in the teaching and learning cycle.

Teachers feel confident that they design learning that differentiates according to the needs of students, with grouping students the most common strategy. Students say their learning is easy and not challenging most of the time. Some students and parents report they would like to see more challenging work and higher expectations, while others are happy with learning as it is. Students describe 'good learning' as when they have to think.

Learning design, assessment and moderation has been a focus of professional learning. Teachers are keen to have further opportunities for moderation to build consistency in practice and in assigning A to E grades. Moderation processes also enable teachers to evaluate whether their task designs provide opportunities for students to demonstrate higher levels of learning. Leaders and teachers acknowledge that designing learning is an ongoing area for improvement.

Learning intentions and success criteria or what am I learning today (WALT) and what am I looking for (WILF) are in variable practice across classrooms. One of the school's previous directions refers to building a consistent language of learning across the school, which should be considered here. Teachers and students acknowledge that these strategies are not used regularly. Students say that, when learning intentions and success criteria are used effectively, they support them to remain focused on their learning as they understand what they need to achieve. It would be beneficial for the school to build deeper staff understanding on how these strategies can be worded and implemented, towards targeting and improving learning. These practices can then be further refined and differentiated within learning design to support students to achieve their highest potential.

Direction 2 Strengthen teachers' capacity in learning design, using learning intentions, success criteria and data for intentional teaching, for all students to receive daily stretch and challenge.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

As part of PLCs, teachers use data to select some students who are below benchmark and plan specific actions for them. At the next PLC meeting, teachers check on the achievement of those students to identify successful strategies. These collaborative discussions about practice are highly valued by staff. Using data sets that regularly inform the teaching for individual students and small cohorts, is still a developing area of expertise for most teachers. In the current data schedule, there are more ongoing assessments in the early years than in the primary years to inform targeted teaching. Sharing assessments with students so that they know what they need to learn next and become more independent in their learning is also an area for further growth. Students have little understanding of how they are going other than the work is easy, the teacher tells them, or they get a tick or stamp for their work.

Teachers encourage student self and peer assessment and see feedback to students as a purposeful part of their teaching. Teachers and students agree that feedback is mostly verbal. In most classes, very little written feedback was found in student bookwork and much student work remains unmarked. When written, feedback is often appraisal. Regular explicit feedback about their learning, that can be re-referred to by students, will improve students' understanding about their progress. A few teachers seek occasional feedback from students about their teaching to gauge if their lessons are of an appropriate level of difficulty.

Teachers describe using a wide range of formative assessment practices during lessons. While practices are variable across classrooms, there are pockets of good practice in place. Teachers are keen to share their knowledge and expertise with others. The staff survey identified that teachers acknowledge that using assessments with students for them to understand their next steps, feedback to stretch learning, and seeking feedback from students to adjust their practice are continuing areas for growth. Next steps for the school will be to further develop staff proficiency in implementing rigorous and cyclic formative assessment and feedback processes, teacher-to-student, student-to-student and student-to-teacher. This will help teachers further differentiate their teaching to meet the varying needs of learners and provide the required 'just-in-time' stretch and challenge for every student.

Direction 3 Strengthen differentiated learning by embedding quality formative assessment and feedback loop processes, to further inform and refine teaching and learning.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Evanston Gardens Primary School's leaders and staff are passionate educators, with the welfare of students at the forefront of their agenda. Organisational and professional structures are evolving, enabling a clearer improvement agenda. Building consistent effective practices across all classes is identified by stakeholders as the ongoing work of the school. This shared vision establishes a positive platform for further progress.

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

- Direction 1** **Strengthen action team and PLC structures to build a shared culture of high expectations, develop consistency across the school and drive the improvement agenda.**
- Direction 2** **Strengthen teachers' capacity in learning design, using learning intentions, success criteria and data for intentional teaching, for all students to receive daily stretch and challenge.**
- Direction 3** **Strengthen differentiated learning by embedding quality formative assessment and feedback loop processes, to further inform and refine teaching and learning.**

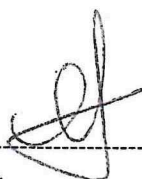
Based on the school's current performance, Evanston Gardens Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



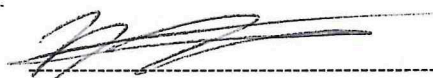
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Governing Council Chairperson

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, 59% of year 1 and 21% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement for year 1 and a decline for year 2, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2018 and 2019, the trend for year 1 has been upwards, from 52% to 59%. Between 2018 and 2019, the trend for year 2 has been downwards, from 61% to 21%.

In 2019, the reading results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 59% of year 3 students, 67% of year 5 students and 58% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline, for year 5, this result represents an improvement, and for year 7, this result represents little or no change, from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 41% of year 3, 7% of year 5 and 5% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading 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 of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and the 1 student from year 3 did not remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 71% of year 3 students, 47% of year 5 students and 63% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. For year 5, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 and 5 has been upwards, from 47% to 71%, and from 33% to 47% respectively.

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, 12% of year 3, no year 5 and 5% 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 numeracy, 50%, or 1 out of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.