

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Kapunda Primary School

Conducted in June 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 (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 Debbie Grzechowski, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Graeme Fenton, 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 (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Kapunda Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 82kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 313 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 319.

The school is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage with an ICSEA score of 982. The local partnership is Goyder and Light.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 6% students with a verified disability, 35% of families eligible for School Card assistance, no students of English as an additional language or dialect background and 7 students in care.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 4th year of his tenure at the school, a deputy principal, a student wellbeing leader, a numeracy coordinator and a literacy coordinator.

The school values are respect, honesty, cooperation and effort.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Increase the rigour in learning, and support the development of expert learning skills, by building teachers' capacity to incorporate intellectual challenge and engagement into teaching and learning practice.
- Direction 2** Challenge students to achieve high standards by authentically involving students in setting specific measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound goals for personal learning and achievement.
- Direction 3** Improve student learning outcomes by developing effective ongoing formative feedback and transparent assessment practices that provide constructive and timely feedback to students about learning progress against agreed criteria.
- Direction 4** Implement regular processes to monitor, track and adjust learning progress of ASD and Special Needs students, to ensure accountability of individual progress against the NEP/IEP/ILP.

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

The previous ESR directions have guided the school improvement agenda since the last review. Significant professional learning, in the form of the Big 6 of Reading and Big Ideas in Number, have been a feature at the school over the previous 4 years. Leadership have strategically appointed key staff to work alongside teachers and improve practice.

All staff create individual learning plans for identified students and have recently expanded this practice to include high achievers. Staff routinely track data which is used to access evidence-based intervention programs. The panel noted significant impact of the implementation of previous directions on school improvement.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

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

The panel found that all teachers are engaging with a wide range of achievement and growth data supported by the use of 'Scorelink' as a central storage facility. Leadership have aligned staff meeting structures to facilitate the opportunity for staff to meet regularly and interrogate data as part of ongoing practice.

Staff analysed data and collectively engaged in some aspects of the formation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP), with the final plan presented to them by leadership for reflection and input. The current SIP, with its narrow focus, is supported by teachers using identified students for planning, assessment and moderation purposes. Professional Development Plans (PDPs) are clearly linked to the SIP for both teachers and support staff and professional learning supports the plan's goals.

The panel felt leadership has a clear understanding of, and sets the tone, for improvement at Kapunda Primary School. This was further evidenced through conversations with community and staff. Leadership responsibilities are clearly aligned to the SIP and leadership density has been increased through the appointment of literacy and numeracy coordinators to help drive the improvement agenda.

The focus now needs to be on agreed understandings to provide clarity of terms such as differentiation, learning intentions and success criteria, as the panel evidenced inconsistency of staff understanding which is impacting on the effectiveness of practice. There is opportunity for staff to work collaboratively to unpack these terms and develop a consistent understanding which will further strengthen student learning across all classes. An example of inconsistencies observed were staff using a variety of language to support student learning in the form of 'bump it up walls', task outcomes being 'cool', 'warm', 'hot' or students being self-managers or experts. Whilst students value this pedagogy the panel felt their effect could be amplified by staff collaboratively constructing a common language for learning to support students as they progress through the school.

Direction 1 Embed pedagogical agreements by establishing consistent understandings, a common approach and common language of differentiation, learning intentions and success criteria.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

How effectively are teachers supporting students to improve their learning?

Staff display a strong intent to support students in all aspects of their learning and are constantly looking to improve their own practice. There is an obvious focus on learning within the school which is visible to both students and community. The panel evidenced that teachers had good understanding of the Australian Curriculum and teachers competently use pre and post assessment to track student growth. Staff have identified students who sit just below higher band achievement and are rigorously monitoring their performance and adapting their teaching accordingly. This cohort of students are visible on PDPs and are supported through individual learning plans. Although teachers are spotlighting identified students, the panel found varying degrees of how achievement data is being used to inform learning for all students, as differentiated lessons were not evidenced as consistent practice.

All identified students have a current individual learning plan to support and direct their learning. SSOs have dedicated class time and identified students are supported through intervention programs. Some students with whom the panel spoke, indicated that their work was 'just right' or 'too easy' and expressed a desire for more challenge.

The panel saw some evidence of excellent practice where clear learning intentions and success criteria, containing self-assessment guides, were used to motivate and stretch learners. Activities provided clear A-E alignment enabling staff to easily moderate and grade work. Where good practice was apparent, students were able to articulate their learning and have full understanding of their next steps to improve. Opportunity exists to spread this practice across all classes to enable all students to receive stretch and challenge. The panel felt there was great opportunity to strategically harness and provide a platform for these 'experts' to work collaboratively with others to develop consistency of pedagogy and provide differentiated learning with stretch and challenge for all learners.

Direction 2 Ensure all students receive differentiated learning with appropriate stretch and challenge through collaboratively strengthening teachers' capacity in learning design.

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

To what extent does the school provide conditions for effective student learning?

All students from Kapunda Primary School who spoke with the panel felt happy, safe and supported by staff who genuinely care about them. Older students talked of a change in culture where positive relationships set the tone for learning, and wellbeing, allowing for a focus on learning. It was apparent that staff attempt to create positive and enriched learning environments to support students with scaffolds and prompts visible in all classrooms. A consistency of language used will further support students.

The review panel was provided with evidence of goal-setting for students. All students had goals which were set and reviewed once they demonstrated achievement 5 times. Whilst there was consistency in the expectation of goal-setting the panel found they varied in nature: some were focused and targeted to the next steps in learning, others were generalised comments or learning behaviours. The strategic intent to develop targets with students represents staff members understanding that students having ownership of, and engagement with their learning, is key to maximising potential success. Students can articulate their learning and expressed a desire to own the what, why and how they learn.

Students have the opportunity for leadership but this is predominately of organisational nature and is external to classroom learning. Students at Kapunda Primary School are able to articulate their learning and expressed desire to be able to co-construct their learning and provide feedback to their teachers. A few teachers are moving in this direction by introducing opportunities for students to co-construct learning tasks, however this is in its infancy.

The school is well placed to support students to become owners of their learning through the development and implementation of common, agreed practices supported by a shared language for learning. When staff engage and include authentic student influence as an integral part of learning for all students, learning is maximised.

Direction 3 Develop greater student agency through the consistent implementation of teaching pedagogies which enable students to authentically own their learning.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Students at Kapunda Primary School report being connected and safe at school and feel staff really care about them as individuals. This sense of pride is further reflected in the positive relationships that are evident and this was amplified through community discussions. Students are extremely respectful and report being happy at school. Staff willingly participate in refining their practice and work collaboratively. The leadership team are highly visible within the school and are working closely with governing council to build and enhance community involvement.

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

- Direction 1** Embed pedagogical agreements by establishing consistent understandings, a common approach and common language of differentiation, learning intentions and success criteria.
- Direction 2** Ensure all students receive differentiated learning with appropriate stretch and challenge through collaboratively strengthening teachers' capacity in learning design.
- Direction 3** Develop greater student agency through the consistent implementation of teaching pedagogies which enable students to authentically own their learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Kapunda 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 70% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

In 2018 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 71% of year 3 students, 75% of year 5 students and 77% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline and for years 5 and 7, little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 has been downwards from 90% to 71% respectively.

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

In 2018, 20% of year 3, 21% of year 5 and 21% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 high band students has been downwards from 45% to 20% respectively.

For students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 43%, or 9 out of 21 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018 and 67%, or 8 out of 12 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.

Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 78% of year 3 students, 58% of year 5 students and 82% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement and for year 5, a decline from the historic baseline average. Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 5 has been downwards from 78% to 58% respectively.

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

In 2018, 29% of year 3, 15% of year 5 and 21% 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 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 47%, or 7 out of 15 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018 and 100%, or 8 out of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.