

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Rapid Bay Primary School

Conducted in November 2019



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 Julie Bishop, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Rebecca Pears, 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
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Rapid Bay Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 94kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 52. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 33. The local partnership is the Fleurieu Partnership.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1038, and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 15% students with disabilities and 12% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their first year of tenure. There are 4 teachers including 3 in the early years of their career and 1 Step 9 teacher.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Improve reading and numeracy achievement, growth and retention in upper bands across the school through the consistent implementation of agreed, effective and evidence based pedagogical practices.
- Direction 2** Challenge and engage students further by establishing learning achievement targets against the SEA, and differentiate teaching approaches for each student.
- Direction 3** Engage and motivate students in their learning by personalising learning for every student and building greater learning independence.
- Direction 4** Use all available data to plan, track, monitor and report consistently on individual student growth over time and against the DECD standards.
- Direction 5** Raise student achievement by making the learning intentions and success criteria accessible and clear for all learners in the multi aged classes, and encourage student progress through a culture of high expectation.

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

The principal reported to the panel there has been significant change at the school. The current principal was appointed at the beginning of 2019 and has previously worked at the school as a teacher.

The principal noted the following strategies have been implemented to address the previous directions:

- Improvement in reading and numeracy achievement and upper band retention growth
- Challenging and engaging students has been addressed through differentiation of teaching approaches
- Personalising student learning and building student learner independence
- Use of available data to plan, track, monitor and report consistently on growth over time
- Raise student learning by making learning intentions and success criteria clear for all learners
- Establish a culture of high expectations.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How well does the school review and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement planning processes and the impact on students' learning to inform next steps?

Staff identified that the principal, in conjunction with staff, are best positioned to monitor the progress of the Site Improvement Plan (SIP). During the staff meeting, staff identified that the school has developed a team approach in monitoring the progress of the SIP. Staff acknowledged that dedicated time to track and monitor the progress of the SIP at regular intervals throughout the year would strengthen the collective acumen of all staff.

The first SIP goal was focused on increasing the percentage of students retained in the higher bands in writing and this is highly relevant as school based datasets indicated that only 3 of 47 students have attained higher band achievement in writing from 2016 to 2019. The school has implemented a writing assessment tool which tracks and monitors writing progress at regular intervals throughout the year, and this will strengthen opportunities for students to display learning at higher levels.

Numeracy guidebooks were identified as core texts to strengthen collective understanding. Staff reported that this strategy had reinforced shared discernments in numeracy pedagogy. Staff have revised the school numeracy agreement to include tools which track and monitor mental computations and discreet aspects in number.

Increasing the number of students in junior primary classes to reach benchmark in reading was the school's third SIP goal. Analysis of running record data indicates that 60% of reception, 55% of year 1 and 100% of year 2 students achieved benchmark at the time of the review. The school is well positioned to refine and embed processes where all students track, monitor and display their reading goals and progress over time.

As a small school, consideration could be given to reducing the number of SIP goals which will provide the opportunity to undertake a deep and narrow approach to school improvement planning. The school has undertaken a comprehensive improvement agenda and is now well positioned to embed a culture of collective responsibility for school improvement.

Direction 1 Strengthen and embed planned opportunities for all staff to review and evaluate school improvement processes and progress throughout the year.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

The panel observed high levels of scaffolding for learning in every classroom and noted strong levels of commitment from staff in the provision of opportunities for students to be challenged in their learning via small group work. During classroom walkthroughs several students in the early years articulated and demonstrated how they developed algorithms to program directions for a toy. Older students informed the panel that the principal works with a group of students who are achieving at high levels in maths.

The panel noted clear evidence of high levels of engagement in learning across the site. In a survey conducted during the review, 75% of staff identified that opportunities for students to be challenged in their learning was achieved at a medium to low degree. During interviews only 2 students identified that reading was challenging. The acquisition of a reading assessment tool for students who have achieved beyond level 30 will strengthen reading pedagogy across the site.

Whilst students have consistently displayed high levels of achievement at the Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) in NAPLAN and PAT in reading and numeracy overtime, this is not currently reflected in higher band achievement. 94 percent of year 7 students achieved the SEA in NAPLAN reading but only 12%, or 2 students, have achieved in the higher bands over the same time period. Similar trends are evident in writing and numeracy.

The panel noted that these results were not congruent with A to E grade allocations, and was especially relevant in English. Developing consistency and congruence in grade allocations, via effective moderation processes, will strengthen clarity and congruence in this area.

It is important that staff develop and embed processes where students are provided with regular and planned opportunities to display higher levels of learning across all areas of learning. The school is well placed to undertake collaborative task design and moderation processes to ensure that all students have the opportunity to display learning at higher levels.

Direction 2 Strengthen opportunities for students to consistently display learning at higher levels, through effective moderation processes and task design, that provides multiple entry and exit points.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

The panel observed visible learning goals in writing and maths in all classrooms. Flexible learning spaces have been established which have provided the opportunity for students to make choices about how and where they learn.

Staff indicated that involving students in collaborative planning and decision making about their learning was an area for ongoing development. Some students reported that they were provided with opportunities to contribute to the selection of topics and the design of learning in a recent unit of work in history. Students related how they set tasks, developed their personal timetable and identified the timeline required for completion. Students reflected that while they had enjoyed the process of designing the learning, it became difficult when striving to meet the deadlines they had set for themselves.

When reflecting on the use of learning intentions and success criteria to support students to monitor and assess their learning, staff indicated that this was an area for further development. Some staff reported that exit slips were used to check for understanding at the end of the lesson.

Staff provided a range of responses when reflecting on how they support students to understand and use the language of learning and identified areas for ongoing development, including expanding the language of learning with students and to use 'high level' language. Other staff indicated that students were scaffolded to use the language of learning through the use of word walls, which identified subject specific language.

The school is well placed to develop whole-school processes to ensure all students know, understand and apply the language of learning across all year levels and areas of learning. Supporting students to develop their knowledge and use of metacognitive processes will provide them with authentic opportunities to influence their learning and become equal partners in their learning. Developing and sharing the whole-school language of learning with parents will further strengthen the collective efficacy of all stakeholders.

Direction 3 **Support students to influence their learning through shared decision making about what and how they learn within a framework of a common language for learning.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Rapid Bay Primary School works assiduously to meet the diverse needs of students in their care and is to be commended for their improvement agenda. Staff work strategically to develop and embed consistency in pedagogical practices across the site.

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

- Direction 1** Strengthen and embed planned opportunities for all staff to review and evaluate school improvement processes and progress throughout the year.
- Direction 2** Strengthen opportunities for students to consistently display learning at higher levels, through effective moderation processes and task design, that provides multiple entry and exit points.
- Direction 3** Support students to influence their learning through shared decision making about what and how they learn within a framework of a common language for learning.

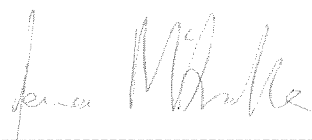
Based on the school's current performance, Rapid Bay Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



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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).

In considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making a judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school. This is done for two reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year, and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohorts of students. The data below represents a summary of aggregated data from Rapid Bay Primary School.

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2015 to 2018, 50% of year 1 and 82% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, the reading result, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 94% of year 3 students, 80% of year 5 students and 94% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 56% of year 3, 27% of year 5 and 12% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

From 2016 to 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 75% of year 3 students, 80% of year 5 students and 100% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 31% of year 3, 13% of year 5 and 35% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.