

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Burton 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 Rebecca Pears, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Katrina Sexton, 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

Burton Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 21kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 505. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 470. The local partnership is Orion.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 941 and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 7% Aboriginal students, 6% students with disabilities, 25% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2% children/young people in care and 33% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 1st year of tenure, a Deputy Principal, 2 Assistant Principals and a wellbeing leader.

There are 39 teachers, including 7 in the early years of their career and 12 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1 Embed congruence and clarity of pedagogical practices for all staff through the implementation of the seven key principles for Quality Teaching and learning, Powerful learners and the TfEL framework.**
- Direction 2 Develop and embed common understandings and practices in intellectual stretch and challenge for every student through the development of transforming tasks across all areas of learning.**
- Direction 3 Develop and embed student influence for learning across all year levels, strengthened through the regular and planned use of perception data.**

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

From 2018-2020, there was a focus on intellectual stretch in mathematics. Staff professional development was also provided during 2018/2019 in transforming tasks and powerful learners. However, the achievement data (Appendix 1) demonstrates that many students, who achieve in higher bands in year 3, are not retained in these bands as they progress through their schooling. Differentiating learning for stretch and challenge, is an area that still requires further development. Every student has a reading goal that is monitored and reviewed with students at least once a term.

There are 2 student voice groups called 'leaders of learning', with one group focusing on general topics and the other on the school improvement plan (SIP). The SIP group assisted with the development of SIP goals that relate to students' understanding of themselves as learners and becoming an integral part of goal-setting. As reported by the Principal, the 4 school captains now meet with him each month to discuss school improvement, directions, and culture. The Wellbeing and Engagement Collection survey data is being used to identify potential future wellbeing programs for implementation in 2022.

There was some impact from the previous directions, however, the 3 directions remain areas for continued attention and improvement.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

Staff were able to describe actions and changes they have implemented to their practice through enacting the SIP. Teachers participated in a range of professional development in relation to the SIP, including training on implementing guided and modelled reading during literacy blocks. Further professional learning, particularly on teaching comprehension strategies, would be beneficial.

A data collection schedule was organised, and achievement data is now recorded on an online platform that is available to staff. It is crucial that technological issues do not interfere with teachers accessing this data. Staff use consistent reading assessments and closely monitor phonics achievement to evaluate the impact of changes in practice.

Teachers reported that their pedagogy became more explicit and intentional due to the focus on the SIP priorities. There are whole-school agreements in phonics, grammar, modelled and guided reading, Running Records and literacy blocks. Staff are adhering to whole-school agreements.

Staff members did not feel involved or were unable to recall how the SIP was originally developed. Currently, staff reported a greater awareness of the SIP goals. Performance development plans are related to implementing the SIP. Student 'Leaders of Learning' meet with their classes and, together as a group, discuss SIP implementation. These leaders are working with their classes to ensure students have reading goals. Members of the Governing Council were able to articulate the focus of the plan and curriculum school services officers (SSOs) understand their role in enacting the SIP.

Whilst teachers are aware of the focus and intent of the current SIP, it would be beneficial to strengthen and embed whole-school collaborative processes to ensure staff are involved in the formation, monitoring and review of the plan. Although some datasets were interrogated, opportunities for staff to collaboratively analyse a wide range of datasets to identify trends and the SIP impact, would also be valuable.

Direction 1 Strengthen and embed whole-school processes to ensure staff are involved in the creation, monitoring, and reviewing of cyclic improvement processes.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

A whole-school consistent literacy block was implemented from reception to year 7. The block is characterised by a focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, modelled and guided reading. Teachers reported it involved more explicit instruction in phonics and grammar. Decodable readers were introduced into the junior primary. All teachers are identifying teaching points for guided reading sessions based on the analysis of assessments. Intervention staff and SSOs are effectively working in classes during the literacy block to support learning.

Every student has a reading goal, and most students discussed strategies for achieving them. Reading goals are created from data analysis or listening to individual students read. Goals are monitored and reviewed with students at least once a term. Reading process language is developing, where students across different year levels discuss their fluency, decoding, comprehension strategies and identify different text types. School services officers observed that there is a more consistent language of learning being articulated by staff because of professional learning related to the SIP priorities.

Learning intentions are consistently used throughout the school. Developing success criteria which identify how to achieve at a higher level would help students focus on the skills and knowledge required. Most students could not say what they need to do to achieve higher grades. Student responses were often related to learning behaviours, such as listening, rather than the skills and knowledge required to achieve at a higher level.

Differentiation is occurring to varying degrees of effect. Teachers acknowledged they find it difficult to stretch and challenge students. It is imperative that teachers consistently use achievement and observation data to influence learning design and identify next steps to accelerate students' learning. Opportunities for teachers to further develop skills in designing tasks that require higher-order thinking and contain various entry and exit points, will ensure the range of student abilities are catered for.

Direction 2 Strengthen the capacity of teachers to use student achievement data and to design tasks to differentiate learning to ensure all students are stretched and challenged.

Conditions for effective student learning

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

The Principal has strategically changed the composition of teaching teams to allow collaborative work between teachers in like year levels. Staff were involved in a range of professional development, including phonics, reading and literacy block training. Staff observed in other schools to help further develop their capacity to facilitate effective literacy blocks. A Partnership literacy coach and the Assistant Principals observed in classrooms to ensure effective implementation of the literacy block. All staff were observed and given feedback. The panel concluded that these processes led to consistent practices in like year levels. Some teachers identified that there are higher expectations in literacy outcomes than in previous years, and they acknowledged that student achievement needed to improve.

This year, Case Review and Management meetings were introduced. They entail teachers discussing the progress of priority students and identifying goals and strategies to target next steps in learning to improve learning outcomes. Teachers and SSOs involved reported this as a useful process. Cultural awareness training and professional learning in relation to culturally responsive pedagogy, was completed by staff. Staff believe they would benefit from more training in relation to Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum.

Teachers recognised there has been a lot of professional learning in the last year, and consolidation of practice is needed. Whilst staff collaborate in like year-level teams, there is very little collaboration for teachers between different year levels. The understanding of evidence-based pedagogical practices and programs in reception to year 7 is important in providing coherence for students. Opportunities for teachers to spend time with other teachers to observe practice, moderate work, analyse data and design tasks, would facilitate the building of teacher capacity, developing whole-school consistency and embedding new learning. Leadership is focussed on further developing a culture of high expectations. It will be imperative that this work continues, and that staff celebrate successes in relation to improved student achievement.

Direction 3 Build teacher capacity by providing opportunities for teachers to plan and work collaboratively from reception to year 7 and ensure a culture of high expectations is sustained.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Staff endeavour to improve their practice and, consequently, have participated in a range of professional learning, resulting in effective literacy practices being implemented in reception to year 7. For example, phonics instruction in the upper primary is very explicit, based on sounds derived from evidence and differentiated to cater for a large range of students' needs. School services officers also engaged in targeted professional learning to improve their skills, particularly in supporting the literacy block. An SSO was trained by a speech pathologist and provides speech support for identified students.

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

- Direction 1** **Strengthen and embed whole-school processes to ensure staff are involved in the creation, monitoring, and reviewing of cyclic improvement processes.**
- Direction 2** **Strengthen the capacity of teachers to use student achievement data and to design tasks to differentiate learning to ensure all students are stretched and challenged.**
- Direction 3** **Build teacher capacity by providing opportunities for teachers to plan and work collaboratively from reception to year 7 and ensure a culture of high expectations is sustained.**

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



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Michael Hosking
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Burton Primary School



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, 44% of year 1 and 37% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 83% of year 3 students, 60% of year 5 students and 58% 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 represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 37% of year 3, 7% of year 5 and 16% 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, 21%, or 3 out of 14 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 57%, or 4 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 63% of year 3 students, 57% of year 5 students and 69% 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 years 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 9% of year 3, 3% of year 5 and 7% 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, 9%, or 1 out of 11 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 50%, or 3 out of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.