

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Dernancourt School R-7

Conducted in April 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, they all have been considered and contributed 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 Tyson Grinham, Review Principal.

Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relating to the lines of inquiry:

- Presentation from the principal and deputy principal
- Class visits
- Attendance at staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Observation of Professional Learning Communities at staff meeting.
- Discussions with:
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Support Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Dernancourt School R-7 caters for children from Reception to year 7. It is situated 12kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 337 students. Enrolment has increased over the last 5 years. The enrolment at the time of the previous review was 290 students.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1024, and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education (DfE) Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 4% Aboriginal students, 11% students with disabilities, 24% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 1% children in care, and 29% of families eligible for School Card assistance. There are two District Special Classes on campus: Reception to year 2 and years 3-7.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the second year of her tenure at the school and a deputy principal in the first year of his tenure. There are 16 teachers including 4 in the early years of their career and 14 Step 9 teachers.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Increase the number of students demonstrating high level learning by providing consistent and challenging learning experiences for students from Reception to Year 7. Use current collaborative planning practices to ensure task design provides opportunities for intellectual stretch and allows children to demonstrate learning at a high level.
- Direction 2** Increase the number of students achieving high level outcomes in mathematics, by developing a model for numeracy improvement that does not “displace” current practice in literacy. Identify successful approaches to literacy improvement that are relevant to numeracy improvement and collaboratively develop a documented numeracy agreement and implementation strategy.
- Direction 3** Increase the number of students demonstrating high level learning in numeracy across the school, particularly in the primary years by increasing the consistency and rigor of planning and teaching using the PLC model for planning, goal setting and moderating shared tasks.

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

Clear evidence was provided to the panel of current actions at Dernancourt School R-7 (DSR-7) in response to the 2015 ESR directions.

In the varied interviews, the panel noted that attention to data and consistency in delivering programs to address the needs of students were clearly identified as areas of progress. In particular, the phonetics program in the Early Years and an intervention maths program for stretching mathematical thinking for year 5 and 7 students, whilst in their infancy, are indicating positive results. Addressing stretch and challenge for all students through rich task design and intentional planning for individual students still requires further focus. Goal setting has been identified as one strategy: currently there is a whole class goal for wave 1 students, teacher initiated term goals for wave 2 students and NEP goals for wave 3

students. A maths and numeracy agreement has been developed and staff are engaged in an annual process of analysing data and identifying areas requiring improvement.

The panel found a high degree of satisfaction amongst staff, students and parents. The staff of DSR-7 are passionate educators who participate in professional learning and genuinely care for the students and their families. Whilst data indicates staff are impacting on student achievement there is a risk of complacency in the continued improvement of student learning outcomes.

For continuous improvement, more rigorous review of curriculum design, formative assessment practices and monitoring impact on student outcomes is an area for further development.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

To what extent has the school drawn on evidence of best practice to determine strategies and actions for improvement?

All stakeholders interviewed see DSR-7 as a community-minded school that strives for improvement, is collaborative and has a staff that is dedicated and approachable. There is a 'Review Data Day' in Term 4 where annual summative data is reviewed by all staff. The day is preceded by data analysis from various committees. At the last review day, staff in year level groups identified possible challenges of practice and actions to be undertaken and documented in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP). This information was collated by leaders and taken back to staff for further reflection. Parents on Governing Council were informed of the data and SIP contents. There is a high level of trust amongst the broader community who support this process with parents reporting they felt informed through the newsletter of school directions.

Programs initiated this year at the school have been identified through partnership sharing, data review and professional development. The current phonetics program that has been successful in local partnership schools, drives the coherent and consistent approach across Early Years classes. Mathematics and numeracy have been identified through data sets for some time as an area for development, and in particular, higher band achievement. An extension group in mathematical thinking has also commenced this year, initially for year 5 and year 7 students. Broadening these opportunities is still in the review and planning stage. There is some question as to whether current professional forums provide sufficient rigor to improve practice and this is further explored in the third line of inquiry. The lack of current leadership density to drive change was also identified by the panel and discussed with the principal.

Building on the current work by utilising the expertise both within the school and externally should see the development of both teacher capacity and breadth of leadership, all essential for ongoing improvement.

Direction 1 Further develop teacher skills in the implementation of effective pedagogies and high yield strategies that are focussed on differentiation, stretch and challenge, by engaging in regular, reflective cycles of review to build, consolidate and embed a culture of continuous targeted improvement.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND EFFECTIVE STUDENT LEARNING

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

There is an intentionality by teachers to do their job well and a genuine interest in improving outcomes for students. Literacy Pro was introduced in 2018 to track students' reading achievement beyond level 30 and Early Years staff are embracing the 'Read, Write, Inc.' (RWI) program in all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. There has been professional learning in various aspects of Learning Design, Assessment and

Moderation (LDAM) and the development of a whole school agreement in maths and numeracy supporting teachers in the implementation of effective practice.

Staff feel confident in their planning against the Australian Curriculum and in assigning A to E grades. Whilst evidence of rich task design was not obvious, teachers do use the Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) task design proforma and planning was content driven. Currently, summative data is mostly used for planning. Developing rigorous LDAM practices where formative assessment for learning is a focus, is work to be undertaken. Targeted planning for stretch and challenge of all students was rarely evident and should be intentionally planned for through 'assessment for, of and about' learning leading to the development of rich tasks.

Pockets of effective practices were evidenced by the panel. For example, two intervention mathematical thinking groups for higher band achievement, two class teachers work collaboratively to regularly review and adjust their programs and practice to improve outcomes whilst another teacher utilises student assessment prior to planning lessons that feature learning intentions and success criteria. Utilising the capacity of skilled educators as peer mentors would support whole school capacity building in the design of rich tasks that support stretch and challenge for all.

There is evidence that leaders are beginning to challenge staff perceptions and attitudes about the teaching and learning by analysing data and building consistency in practice across the school. An example of this is the RWI program however this, along with the current SIP and the newly developed maths agreement are in their early phases of implementation.

Direction 2 Deepen teacher knowledge in the elements of LDAM to build their capacity in designing rich learning experiences that differentiate, challenge and stretch all students and enable them to demonstrate higher levels of learning.

Direction 3 Build staff proficiency in formative assessment practices and moderation, that enables them to track individual student progress, informs task design and provides all students with regular opportunities to be challenged and stretched in their learning.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

How effective are the school's professional learning and performance development processes in building teacher capacity?

Pupil Free Days, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), professional learning and staff meetings, are all structures that are highly valued by staff in supporting them to improve their practice. Staff know that leaders value professional development (PD) and are supported to engage in professional learning. There has also been significant PD undertaken through partnership work. Teachers are willing to do what is asked of them. However, evidence of implementation into practice after professional learning was rarely present during the review. Aligning professional learning structures with the SIP, partnership priorities and the professional development plan (PDP) process is the intention of leaders going forward.

While the PLCs are highly valued as collaborative planning forums they are not PLCs by definition. There is a need to develop these professional forums so that they critically reflect on pedagogy and its effectiveness ensuring continuous improvement in teaching. Embedding processes of cyclic review where student progress is tracked and monitored frequently and collaboratively will ensure learning is timely, purposeful and challenging.

This year, two staff have been identified to manage and run programs i.e. RWI and the mathematical thinking extension group. This method of identifying and resourcing key staff supports the spread of effective practice across the site and also builds leadership density across the school, both instrumental to the improvement journey. Building and aligning rigorous and focussed professional learning structures, PDP

expectations and systematically building teacher capacity according to SIP goals is critical for a genuine shift in learning outcomes.

Building on the current positive collaborative and collegial culture that is evident within the school, building a culture of critical reflection for continuous improvement, and harnessing the effective practices that currently exist, are solid foundations for the work ahead. Building clarity of what is expected of DSR-7 staff through documented whole-school agreements, enabling students to be more involved and engaged in their learning and building cohesion and consistency of rigorous practices for effective learning, is work recently initiated.

Direction 4 Develop rigorous and aligned performance development processes and professional learning structures that provide ongoing opportunity for staff to engage in self-review processes and critically reflect on pedagogical practice, which also strategically builds the capacity of staff and informs improved teaching and learning.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

There is a high level of collegiality amongst the staff at DSR-7. Staff are seen as, and are, dedicated professionals who are passionate about the school and their place within it. There is sincere intention to provide students with quality teaching and learning. There is also a strong sense of community and all stakeholders are happy at the school. A high level of trust exists for the leadership team and amongst staff in general. Building on the current positive culture will be a strong platform for future improvement work.

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

- Direction 1** Further develop teacher skills in the implementation of effective pedagogies and high yield strategies that are focussed on differentiation, stretch and challenge, by engaging in regular, reflective cycles of review to build, consolidate and embed a culture of continuous targeted improvement.
- Direction 2** Deepen teacher knowledge in the elements of LDAM to build their capacity in designing rich learning experiences that differentiate, challenge and stretch all students and enable them to demonstrate higher levels of learning.
- Direction 3** Build staff proficiency in formative assessment practices and moderation that enables them to track individual student progress, informs task design and provides all students with regular opportunities to be challenged and stretched in their learning.
- Direction 4** Develop rigorous and aligned performance development processes and professional learning structures that provide ongoing opportunity for staff to engage in self-review processes and critically reflect on pedagogical practice, which also strategically builds the capacity of staff and informs improved teaching and learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Dernancourt School R-7 will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



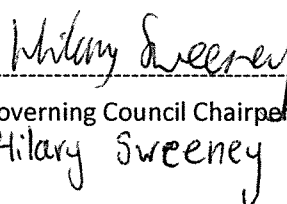
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Appendix 1

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, 63% of year 1 and 59% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change for year 1 and year 2 students from the historic baseline average.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 81% of year 3 students, 76% of year 5 students and 57% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3 and 5 students this result represents little or no change and for year 7 students this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2018, 70% of year 3, 33% of year 5 and 21% 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 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 71%, or 12 of 17 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 67%, or 4 of 6 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 74% of year 3 students, 78% of year 5 students and 57% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents little or no change, for year 5 this result represents an improvement and for year 7 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for 5 has been upwards, from 55 % in 2016 to 78% in 2018.

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

In 2018, 34% of year 3, 31% of year 5 and 11% 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 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 100%, or 6 of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 67%, or 2 of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.