

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Goolwa Primary School

Conducted in August 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 Phil Garner, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Shane Misso, 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

Goolwa Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 85kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 308. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 293. The local partnership is Fleurieu.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 955 and is classified as Category 3 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 7% Aboriginal students, 9% students with disabilities, 3% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2% children/young people in care and 47% of students eligible for School Card assistance. The school has a mobile population of approximately 13%.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 5th year of tenure, a Deputy Principal, a wellbeing leader, an inclusive education coordinator, and a curriculum and pedagogy coordinator.

There are 21 teachers including 8 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Ensure that self-review and improvement strategies become increasingly data-informed in order to intentionally improve all student learning achievement against the SEA.**
- Direction 2** **Facilitate increasingly intentional learning design by ensuring seamless links for students between classroom and intervention programs.**
- Direction 3** **Challenge all students to aspire and achieve by expanding staff understanding of engagement and intellectual challenge, and its links to student agency in learning and quality learning design that provides stretch and challenge for all students all the time.**

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

Direction 1: The school's capacity to analyse and track student achievement and identify whole-school achievement trends, has improved over time. However, the use of data to identify the individual and collective learning needs of students is still a work-in-progress. There continues to be little overall improvement in student achievement against SEA and high-band achievement. Refer to the line of inquiry 1 in this report.

Direction 2: Communication between school services officers (SSOs) responsible for intervention programs and class teachers is beginning to improve following the appointment of an intervention coordinator. However, with 30% of students engaging in out-of-class intervention, there is over-reliance on intervention by others to address students' individual learning needs. The design of learning for individual students is still an area for continued focus. Refer to the line of inquiry 2 in this report.

Direction 3: This direction has not been achieved. Refer to all lines of inquiry in this report.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

The school conducted an extensive analysis of student achievement data to identify goals and challenges of practice, with the purpose of building teacher capacity and improving student achievement in literacy and numeracy. Evidenced-based support programs were implemented with the intention of developing greater consistency of practice across the school. Whole-school agreements in literacy and numeracy are continuing to be developed. These will need to be completed as a matter of urgency and include a clear focus on explicit teaching, high-impact pedagogical practices and high expectations of consistency and implementation in every class.

Clarity and line of sight between the identified goals, challenges of practice, actions and success criteria was not apparent. This makes it increasingly difficult for teachers to understand what their responsibilities and accountabilities are in improving their practice and student achievement. Reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of changes in pedagogy and the impact on student learning was not evident through the review.

The school collects and analyses student achievement data and tracks their progress from one assessment to the next effectively. However, there is a need to use this data to identify the learning needs of students' and implement Wave 1 teaching and learning strategies that effectively addresses these needs. Ongoing monitoring of student progress between assessments is critical to ensure continued progress. Monitoring the impact of teaching and learning on student improvement is currently not a focus. As a result, opportunities to evaluate and identify pedagogical practices that are making a positive difference are being missed.

Currently, the school improvement plan is not driving improvement across the school. There is lack of evidence in classrooms and in discussions with teachers around consistent implementation of whole-school initiatives/practices. Improvement work is seen as the responsibility of leaders within the school. It is critical that teachers also have ownership, commitment, clarity and accountability for their responsibilities, in order to further understand how they will improve classroom practice and student achievement.

Direction 1 Stengthen collective collaboration and consistency of practice by developing and engaging in a culture of shared responsibility and accountability for whole-school improvement.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Most teachers are engaging in discussions with students about learning intentions and success criteria however, consistency varies considerably across the school. Success criteria, in the form of rubrics, is used in some classes, but with limited student consultation, and predominantly as a summative assessment tool.

Planning and programming was variable in catering for the learning needs of students. Some teachers discussed the difficulty of providing for the wide and varying learning needs of students in their class. Differentiation is largely provided via out-of-class intervention, with 30% of students being identified for support. It is important to ensure that Wave 1 teaching is effectively catering for student learning needs, rather than developing an over-reliance on intervention processes to fill the gaps in learning.

Higher-achieving students indicated that their learning needs are not being adequately catered for; most of the learning is too easy or has been covered previously and is less than challenging.

There was little evidence of marking or assessment of student learning tasks in most classes. Mistakes in learning and many examples of incomplete learning tasks were evident.

While the panel saw some effective teaching, learning and classroom management practices in several classes, there was enough indication to suggest that learning needs of many students are not effectively met. Proven high-impact teaching strategies are missing in most classes, with students unsure of where they are in their learning, where they need to be or how to get there.

The school is well-advised to review the focus of their improvement journey to include the following:

- Raising expectations for all students.
- Improving consistency of evidenced based practice across all classes.
- Providing for the learning needs of all students using multiple entry and exit points.
- Designing engaging and challenging learning that stretches student thinking.
- Providing effective formative assessment and feedback on learning.
- Engaging students authentically in their learning journey.

Direction 2 Improve student achievement by implementing a consistent whole-school understanding of what high expectations, formative feedback and challenge mean for effective teaching and student learning.

Effective leadership

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

Some teachers are taking responsibility for their own professional learning, researching, and integrating new pedagogies into their classroom practice. However, most teachers understand professional learning to be financed by the school and only occurring during the school day or at staff meetings. As a result, there are limited opportunities for effective, collaborative professional learning. Redesigning staff meetings and developing strategic structures to enable an explicit focus on improvement planning, monitoring impact, and professional learning would enhance professional learning opportunities that target improvement priorities.

There is wide variation and understanding of current literacy and numeracy practices across the school and between classes. This highlights a limited understanding of practice between teachers in the same year level, and across the school. Opportunity for teachers to engage collaboratively to discuss, share and promote consistency of practice needs to be formally developed and implemented.

There are limited formal observations, mentoring or coaching opportunities available for teachers. Informal leadership walkthroughs are currently in place, with limited feedback provided. The next step would be to develop an effective teacher observation and coaching process, that provides effective written feedback to support building capacity and consistency of practice.

Evidence of teachers' planning indicates a need for teachers to further develop a clear understanding of task design and differentiation against sequential skill development. Consistent learning design, captured through teaching and learning programs or planning documents, and a strategic whole-school approach that promotes high-quality teaching and learning is a priority for consideration.

Teacher efficacy and responsibility for maximising student achievement is inconsistent. While it is clear teachers want to support students in doing well and improving their achievement, there is uncertainty about what is required and how this can be achieved. Responsibility to improve professionally rests not only with the school, but also with the individual teacher. A professional, collective and collaborative culture of learning together, to improve the quality of teaching and learning and student achievement at Goolwa Primary School needs to be established as a key priority.

Direction 3 Improve the quality of teaching through a collective and collaborative teacher mentoring, coaching and observation process that focuses on developing and embedding high-impact pedagogical teaching strategies in every class.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Goolwa primary school has introduced an elective program that operates one afternoon each week. Currently 8 areas of interest are available, including gardening and robotics. This program allows students to pursue an area of interest and engage in relevant and engaging learning. Leaders of each elective include teachers and parents, with students indicating this style of learning is giving them opportunities for greater ownership, responsibility and engagement in their learning. Secondary college leaders are also involved in the program with opportunities for them to engage with prospective students, and offer interesting and challenging electives.

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

- Direction 1** **Stengthen collective collaboration and consistency of practice by developing and engaging in a culture of shared responsibility and accountability for whole-school improvement.**
- Direction 2** **Improve student achievement by implementing a consistent whole-school understanding of what high expectations, formative feedback and challenge mean for effective teaching and student learning.**
- Direction 3** **Improve the quality of teaching through a collective and collaborative teacher mentoring, coaching and observation process that focuses on developing and embedding high-impact pedagogical teaching strategies in every class.**

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



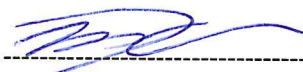
Danielle Chadwick
A/Director
Review, Improvement and Accountability



Anne Millard
Executive Director
Partnerships, Schools and Preschools



Louisa Guest
Principal
Goolwa 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, 42% of year 1 and 49% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2018 and 2019, the trend for year 1 has been downward, from 49% to 42%, and for year 2, downward from 58% to 49%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 83% of year 3 students, 76% of year 5 students and 68% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents an improvement, and for years 5 and 7, little or no change from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, 36% of year 3, 17% of year 5 and 14% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading 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 reading, 50%, or 4 out of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 27%, or 3 out of 11 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 72% of year 3 students, 59% of year 5 students and 71% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 7, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

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, 22% of year 3, 2% of year 5 and 18% 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, 25%, or 1 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 75%, or 3 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.