

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for St Leonards Primary School

Conducted in March 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 Tanya Oshinsky, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Julie James and Paul Harmer, Review Principals.

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 representatives
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers

School context

St Leonards Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 11kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 421. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 372. The local partnership is Holdfast.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1063 in 2019 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 3% students with disabilities, 5% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 25% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal, a Deputy Principal and a Wellbeing Leader.

There are 25 Teachers including 2 in the early years of their career and 11 Step 9 Teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Design, implement, review and embed effective and consistent pedagogical practices within and across all learning areas.
- Direction 2** Strengthen site improvement planning processes by embedding common understandings and practices in the implementation of the three stages of self-review to ensure ongoing improvement for all students.
- Direction 3** Strengthen student influence on their learning by engaging with feedback in a two-way process using data and evidence to improve learning.

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

Through professional learning teams (PLTs), teachers at St Leonards Primary School meet regularly, discuss data, plan together and build consistency in practice across the school. Teams are released regularly and at the end of term to plan forward for the next term. Sentral was introduced to track data and student progress, with Microsoft Teams now being used to support this further. From building greater consistency, whole-school agreements are beginning to be developed.

Introduction of the department's standard school improvement plan (SIP) has strengthened the school's improvement planning processes. The school clearly follows the 5 stages of the SIP cycle and involves teachers in self-review processes to determine next steps. Leaders are supported by the local education team and portfolio principals, to regularly reflect on and refine their strategies and actions in implementing the SIP.

As part of an education change-makers project in 2019, the school used student wellbeing and engagement data and a student voice survey to identify change needed across the school. Teachers were encouraged to 'start somewhere' and observations of practice with feedback for further improvement, were introduced as part of the journey. The work to improve student influence at the school is continuing and forms the third line of inquiry for this review.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions based on their impact on student learning?

Leaders facilitate SIP processes for teachers to engage in. Through the analysis of data, teachers monitor and evaluate progress against SIP goals. At the end of the year, staff make collective recommendations for next steps, which inform the revised SIP. Personal actions identified by teachers as part of the review process become part of their performance development planning meetings. PLTs and the resourcing of mentors support the priorities of the SIP. Mentors work alongside staff, model good practice and check in with teachers regularly. External expertise is also sought to foster the improvement journey. Staff are aware that there is continuing work to embed agreed programs and practices in all classrooms. Developing greater consistency and coherence is a focus of leaders.

Governing Council are involved in regular conversations about the SIP. An education committee, inclusive of parents, monitors the progress of the SIP based on evidence of student learning. Parents report that there are clear communication processes and feel well informed. Student ambassadors and students on a site improvement team, who meet with the principal, are also aware of the SIP and suggest possible changes for the school. These structures support the SIP to be a living document.

Depth of understanding of the important link between the SIP and the daily work of all staff is varied. There is clear alignment between SIP review processes and programs that are being trialled and implemented. Teachers predominantly use yearly summative data to identify improved outcomes for students. A next step for the school is to further develop structures and processes that support teachers to engage in regular evidence-based self-reflection to continuously improve their practice. Opportunity exists to develop PLTs to be rigorous platforms for constructive critical evaluation of the teaching and learning. Ongoing self-review processes that regularly measure the impact of teaching practice on student learning, will enable teaching to be further refined to optimise outcomes for students. This closer monitoring will enhance staff connection between the SIP and required practice in the classroom.

Direction 1 Strengthen self-review processes by regularly evaluating the impact of actions and strategies on student outcomes, to refine and consolidate effective practices across the school.

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers analysing assessment and feedback data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction?

Analysis of data to inform teaching has improved over time. Teachers refer to summative datasets in their planning for students rather than formative assessment. Pre-testing and post-testing for some programs inform teachers of distance travelled between tests. PLTs discuss data and use their knowledge of students when collaboratively planning their curriculum units. Expectations of a yearly overview and planning 2 units of work per term are viewed positively as building consistency across the school. A 'collaborative planning and learning design' guideline developed, prompts teachers to plan for assessment and differentiation.

Teachers indicate that data is commonly used for grouping students according to ability in order to differentiate the learning. Staff indicate that they cater for the different needs of students through building positive relationships and knowing students well. Students see the learning as different for the groups within the classroom. Students also identify worksheets as a method teachers utilise to differentiate learning. Ensuring coverage of the curriculum and depth in targeting the learning should be considered closely. While students and parents feel that teachers cater well for the varied needs of learners, stretch and challenge in daily learning is seen as an area for growth.

Examples of formative assessment practices include using whiteboards, conferencing, small group work and questioning students. Questioning students is also referred to by teachers as the way they receive feedback from students about their learning. Feedback to students about their work is mostly verbal. In some classes when rubrics are used as part of the learning, students describe receiving explicit feedback. These students have clarity of how they can improve their work using this scaffold. Other students have little understanding of how they are going other than through moving groups, the work getting easier, tests or their reports. Sharing and unpacking assessments regularly with students will enable them to better understand their progress. This, added to explicit feedback provided to students through formative assessment during the learning, will support students to understand how to achieve higher outcomes.

Direction 2 Strengthen staff understanding and implementation of effective formative assessment and feedback practices during the learning to stretch and challenge students daily.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Students demonstrate strong dispositions about themselves as learners and enjoy coming to school. Student voice in the classroom is most commonly described as having choice in topics. Greater opportunities for student voice of senior students is enabled through various school leadership roles.

The use of learning intentions, and in particular success criteria, are in variable practice across the school. In classrooms where these are explicit and clearly displayed, students say they provide them with a better understanding of what they need to do. This means they can be more independent in their learning. Developing these high yield strategies further, so that they provide clarity to all students of how they can improve their outcomes, is continuing work. Consideration should also be given to how learning intentions and success criteria can be differentiated to extend learning as well as building a common language of learning for students across the school.

Mentors support teachers to look at data with their students to set goals. The school's focus on growth mindset also encourages students to set goals and be positive about their learning. Most students have goals and are able to articulate them. Parents are aware that their children set goals from their data and these are evident at three-way interviews and in reports. While teachers encourage students to achieve their goals and even change them, a cyclic process for setting, monitoring and reviewing goals is not in place.

Using summative data has resulted in most student goals being too broad or to be achieved over a long time. Supporting students to understand the progression of learning and how they are going, will enable students to benchmark their learning and understand what they still need to know. Developing a whole-school approach to the implementation of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timed, agreed upon and reviewed (SMARTAR) goals will improve student agency. This cyclic process enables students to be active participants in their learning, able to identify and celebrate their progress, which encourages them to strive to improve their outcomes further.

Direction 3 Strengthen student agency through a regular cyclic process of sharing assessments and feedback with students to set SMARTAR goals and self-direct their own improvement.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

There is a welcoming atmosphere and a strong sense of school pride at St Leonards Primary School from staff, students and parents. Staff maintain positive relationships with students and their families and a high level of trust exists for leaders and teachers by the community. Through collaborative processes there has been a strong commitment to building consistent and effective practices across the school. The leadership team have clarity of the next steps for further progress and the dedication and professionalism of staff provides a strong platform for continuous improvement.

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

- Direction 1** **Strengthen self-review processes by regularly evaluating the impact of actions and strategies on student outcomes, to refine and consolidate effective practices across the school.**
- Direction 2** **Strengthen staff understanding and implementation of effective formative assessment and feedback practices during the learning to stretch and challenge students daily.**
- Direction 3** **Strengthen student agency through a regular cyclic process of sharing assessments and feedback with students to set SMARTAR goals and self-direct their own improvement.**

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



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Dave Henty-Smith
Principal
St Leonards 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 82% of year 1 and 71% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

In 2019 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 87% of year 3 students, 96% of year 5 students and 77% 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 result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 5 has been upwards from 64% to 96%.

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

In 2019 44% of year 3, 39% of year 5 and 23% 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, 70% or 16 out of 23 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 50% or 5 out of 10 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019 the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 80% of year 3 students, 89% of year 5 students and 77% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

For years 3 and 7 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For year 5 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 5 has been upwards from 72% to 89%.

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

In 2019 36% of year 3, 26% of year 5 and 35% 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, 63% or 10 out of 16 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 80% or 4 out of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.