

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Linden Park 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 Phil Garner, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Chris Brandwood and Cassie Ackland, 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 groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Linden Park Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 6km from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 961 students. The school operates under a Capacity Management Plan due to high demand. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 957. The local partnership is Greenhill South.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 1154 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 6 Aboriginal students, 5% students with disabilities, 79% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 66% have an identified EALD category, less than 6 children/young people in care and 6% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their fourth year of tenure, 2 B4 Assistant Principals, an acting B2 operations leader, a B1 middle years leader and a literacy and numeracy coach.

There are 66 part-time and full-time teachers, including 4 early career teachers, 23 Step 9 teachers and 2 Advanced Skills Teachers Level 2.

Direction 1 Realise the school’s vision and SIP, and deeply embed initiatives into daily pedagogies and practices, by strategically managing the pace of change, whilst maintaining rigorous collaboration and coherence across the school.

Direction 2 Strengthen the leadership capacity in the school by further developing the teacher leader group with an improvement and communication focus.

Direction 3 Build student voice and agency into the formative assessment and feedback loop processes between students and teachers, to impact on students’ capabilities and self-drive to improve.

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

Direction 1: The development of shared curriculum practices and delivery has been enhanced through the Primary Years Program. This required staff to collaboratively plan together, develop shared assessments and provide formative and summative feedback. There is collaboration and consistency of practice within year levels and across year levels to ensure vertical as well as horizontal alignment.

Direction 2: Team leader development was integral to the continued development and improvement at Linden Park Primary School. The school has invested heavily in developing the leadership density of team leaders and building their leadership skills and abilities. This team leader time is also where school directions and initiatives are shared, whole-school data analysis occurs, and feedback is sought by the senior leadership group.

Direction 3: A major focus has been to involve students in the teaching and learning process. Strategies included multi-level rubrics, success criteria, formative assessments and making progressions visible through strategies such as ‘Bump it up’ walls and students identifying goals and next steps in learning.

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?

The school developed effective processes for the collection, analysis and tracking of student progress. Multiple measures of data and high levels of data literacy were evident, with teachers tracking the impact of changes in pedagogy against year level and individual student progress. High level support structures and collaborative reflection are ensuring consistency and accountability of implementation.

Leadership structures across the school effectively support and engage staff in the implementation of the school improvement plan (SIP) with clear roles and responsibilities. For example, team leader meetings provide opportunities for year level leaders to collaborate with senior leaders and coaches. This helps them reflect, understand, and communicate the perspectives and practices across the school. This approach not only focuses on segmented support and connection with the SIP, but also provides a 'voice' and advocacy for the year level teaching teams and vertical sequencing of improvement initiatives.

All staff are involved in rigorous ongoing review and evaluation of the SIP. Provision of focussed release time allowed team leaders and teachers to reflect on the implementation of agreed actions and their impact on classroom practice and student improvement. The identified focus on developing consistency in moderation of writing and spelling, was a clear example of how the ongoing processes of review positively influence teaching and learning.

Teachers at this school are highly committed, informed, and supported to improve their practice. Performance development plans are effectively linked to the to SIP initiatives with identified professional learning needs. Informally, some teaching teams engaged in teachers watching teachers; however, a need to engage in a more formal process to provide specific feedback on their performance was identified.

An opportunity exists to enhance the school's professional development processes with the inclusion of a formalised approach to providing observational feedback. Strategically developing processes that engage teachers in evaluating and reflecting on whole-school initiatives, such as 'learning walks', will provide the rigour required to accurately assess their implementation.

Direction 1 Continue to build the capacity of teachers by collaboratively developing and implementing a whole-school formal observation process that includes opportunities for teachers to evaluate and review whole-school initiatives.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

The panel observed calm and productive learning environments in all classes, with evidence of independent learning and self-driven learning tasks. Student enthusiasm and passion for high achievement and improvement was clear. Students discussed that their teachers were highly focussed on supporting them, and mentioned why and what they are learning, what is expected and how they were going to get there.

The school has a clear focus on improving teacher efficacy and consistency of practice in the use of high-impact pedagogical strategies. This is a continuous journey of improvement. The Primary Years Program engages teachers in quality collaboration, planning and programming, with a focus on providing high levels of student engagement and challenge throughout the learning process.

Most teachers use pre-testing to identify existing levels of student understanding and to guide learning and post-testing to identify growth. Teachers use a variety of different assessment strategies, including rubrics and 1:1 conferencing to identify next steps in learning.

Students are provided with opportunities to continually review and improve their learning. Use of collaboratively developed rubrics and success criteria with self, peer and teacher feedback are common practice. They enable self and peer assessment, identify next steps in learning and are linked to curriculum achievement standards.

Student self, peer and teacher moderation of writing is an embedded practice across most classes. However, while writing 'bump it walls' that allow for student self-moderation were evident in most classes, student engagement with them varied.

The panel noted differences in the teaching of maths. While some teachers provide stretch through multiple entry points and A-E levels of problem-solving, this was not obvious across all classes. Some higher-achieving students discussed the need for differentiated learning tasks that provide them with greater challenge. The school should continue to focus on formative assessment and feedback processes that clearly identify next steps in learning and present opportunities to challenge and differentiate the learning tasks for all students.

Direction 2 Continue to focus on engaging and challenging students through formative assessment and feedback, identification of next steps in learning and differentiation of learning tasks for all students.

Conditions for effective student learning

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

The school has an embedded culture of high expectations in learning, encouraged by enthusiasm and passion of teachers and leaders. Teachers discussed examples of how they have re-adjusted their teaching and approach to lesson delivery as a result of student feedback or evidence of student achievement.

There are many examples where students are offered a range of flexibilities and options to 'have a say' in the directions of their learning. For example, subject specialists providing opportunities for authentic student agency and voice in developing units of inquiry in skill development.

Some early years teachers co-design the learning and investigations, with students engaging with their interests and exploring through play. Learning intentions are shared, discussed and mapped with students' individual learning goals, and exit cards provide reflection on teaching and learning.

Some students are engaged in developing and delivering social and emotional lessons to their peers in consultation with the wellbeing leader. Wellbeing for learning is the focus for the first week of the new school year, and engages all students in developing class and school essential agreements.

Student awareness and understanding of Brightpath, and the criteria for assessment and moderation, is variable across the school. Providing students with opportunities to engage with and analyse their assessment data will further empower them, allowing greater ownership of their learning.

Substantial opportunities for student leadership exist across the school, eg wellbeing, and numeracy and literacy support for younger students. Year 6/7 students are identified as education leaders and engaged in developing their leadership skills in this space. Student action groups are highly functional across the school.

The school provides many opportunities for students to be actively and authentically engaged in their learning, particularly through the Primary Years Program and within student leadership roles. Students at this school exhibit high levels of intrinsic motivation and are eager to learn and challenge each other to improve. This presents opportunities to capitalise on innovative education models and further exploration of self-directed learning.

Direction 3 Enhance student ownership and voice in their learning by providing greater opportunities to analyse and engage with their achievement data, reflect on their learning, and engage with lesson design and assessment.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Students at Linden Park Primary School are intrinsically motivated, articulate and willing to talk about their learning. Staff are highly committed to their professional learning and improving outcomes for students. Senior leaders are expert and skilled in their roles and open to discussing and sharing their improvement journey. Parents value teachers' and leaders' efforts and express their appreciation for the school's wellbeing focus and the proactive approach to addressing the social and emotional needs of students.

This school is high-performing, with many innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Opportunities exist to continue to build the capacity of teachers, develop greater consistency of practice, and fine-tune the high-impact teaching strategies, which will further enhance learning outcomes for all students at this school.

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

- Direction 1** Continue to build the capacity of teachers by collaboratively developing and implementing a whole-school formal observation process that includes opportunities for teachers to evaluate and review whole-school initiatives.
- Direction 2** Continue to focus on engaging and challenging students through formative assessment and feedback, identification of next steps in learning and differentiation of learning tasks for all students.
- Direction 3** Enhance student ownership and voice in their learning by providing greater opportunities to analyse and engage with their achievement data, reflect on their learning, and engage with lesson design and assessment.

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



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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).

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2018, 84% of year 1 and 93% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no improvement from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, the reading results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 99% of year 3 students, 99% of year 5 students and 97% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for years 3, 5 and 7 has been upwards.

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

In 2019, 85% of year 3, 64% of year 5 and 47% 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, 74%, or 63 out of 85 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 67%, or 46 out of 69 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 97% of year 3 students, 97% of year 5 students and 95% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for years 3, 5 and 7 has been upwards.

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

Between 2017 and 2019 the school has consistently achieved higher in years 3 and 5 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 73% of year 3, 64% of year 5 and 60% 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.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 44% to 64%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 90%, or 61 out of 68 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 88%, or 43 out of 49 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.