

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Port Neill Primary School

Conducted in August 2020



# 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 Tonia Noble, Review Principal.

## Review Process

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

- Presentation from the principal
- Class visit
- Attendance at staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Students
  - Teachers



## School context

Port Neill Primary School caters for students reception to year 7. It is situated 567kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 9. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 8. The local partnership is Central Eyre 2.

The school has an ICSEA score of 983, and is classified as Category 3 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes no Aboriginal students, less than 6 students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 44% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of tenure.

There is 1 teacher who is in the first year of their teaching career.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

**Direction 1** Ensure students are engaged in authentic opportunities that develop their general capabilities, in particular, personal and social capability, intercultural understanding, and critical and creative thinking, by strengthening connections with local schools and the wider community to facilitate broader student interaction and regular shared learning.

**Direction 2** Develop a coherent school approach that impacts at the classroom level by refining improvement priorities, planning and implementing collaborative professional learning in evidence-based teaching practices aligned to a small number of strategies.

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

Port Neil Primary School has a welcoming atmosphere that is also apparent in its single classroom. The classroom is colourful, with learning scaffolds around the room to support student learning. Since the previous review, several changes in teacher and principals had taken place. These changes challenge continuous improvement in pedagogical practice.

With the commencement of the current principal, an internal review indicated wellbeing as an area for attention. Through this focus, the school has most closely addressed personal and social capability, intercultural understandings and strengthening connections with the wider community, from the first direction. There has also been attention to building connections with local schools.

In developing a coherent school approach, the school has purposely sought professional learning opportunities and engages with other external sources of support. With changes to teachers occurring, the principal narrowed the focus for improvement in order to build on the gains in the area of literacy, for sustained practice. The principal, in consultation with the principal consultant, has developed literacy and numeracy agreements for the school.

The principal identifies that embedding and sustaining practice for students is a focus for the school.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

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

As a small school, determining trends in data is difficult, therefore, individual student data is interrogated to inform the improvement journey. Formal and informal conversations about student progress are ongoing amongst all staff. The current teacher keeps anecdotal records about students' progress on her daily planner for all staff to access. Data is also visible to staff through Microsoft Teams and a data wall.

The site improvement plan (SIP) was collaboratively designed, and improvement strategies identified, with staff and support from the local education team. The priority of literacy was influenced by the knowledge that there would be a further change in teacher, driving the focus to further embed effective literacy practice. Building strong foundations of effective pedagogical practice in literacy will filter through to other learning areas. Governing council parents feel well-informed, with the SIP a standing item on their agenda, and have confidence in the principal and staff.

Performance and development plans (PDP) have been closely aligned to the SIP work, and staff select their own 'challenge of practice' for individual improvement of skills. Staff provide evidence as part of PDP, through discussion, observation or filming, of working towards or achieving their personal challenge of practice. This significantly enhanced staff practice in improving student outcomes. Regular observations and walkthroughs by the principal facilitate ongoing professional discussions with the teacher about learning.

Constant changes of teacher made seamless learning for students a challenge. Having ongoing systems of data collection against evidence-based targets that track students as they progress through school and implementing the literacy and numeracy agreements, is continuing work. Further precision in improvement can be achieved by developing regular and formal self-review processes, where rigorous professional conversations evaluate the impact of agreed practice on student outcomes. This will enable the teacher to adjust their teaching for maximum impact on student learning and inform future actions.

**Direction 1    Improve student outcomes by measuring student progress against evidence-based targets and engaging staff in ongoing systems of self-review that evaluate the impact of strategies and actions, to embed effective practice for continuous improvement.**



## Effective teaching and student learning

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

Addressing curriculum requirements for all students is based on knowledge of student achievement. The teacher reports looking at the needs of all students, then selects an overarching curriculum task for differentiation to meet those needs. Differentiating learning is further facilitated by rotating students through 3 groups: independent learning, semi-independent with the assistance of school services officers (SSOs) and one-on-one with the teacher.

Using learning progressions, the teacher recently designed goals for students. Students know they have goals; however, do not have clarity or ownership of them at this stage. The teacher shows students what higher-level work looks like by using exemplars from the curriculum, asks questions about the learning and adds to a task, if required, to meet the need of a student. While the teacher, students and parents feel strongly that students needs are being met, stretch and challenge in daily learning could be further improved.

Students were found to be reliant on the adults in the classroom for their 'next steps' and did not have a sound understanding of how they were going in their learning other than the praise they received from adults. Feedback is mostly verbal. There has been attention to using learning intentions and success criteria and once embedded, this strategy will further support students to know what they are learning and what they need to achieve. Improving formative assessment strategies during tasks, where explicit feedback moves the learning forward, and differentiating learning intentions and success criteria provides momentum for individual students, will enable stretch and challenge to be part of daily learning.

The use of progressions is new to the school. When used with students, this could become a strong channel for assessing and benchmarking learning for students, to provide them and their parents with clear information about their learning growth. This, and embedding effective teaching strategies outlined in the curriculum agreements, are the next steps for the school.

**Direction 2    Strengthen the development of teacher capacity in curriculum delivery, by embedding the literacy and numeracy agreements, and using learning progressions to support clear and structured approaches to teaching, assessment and reporting.**

## Effective leadership

How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent high-quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?

As a new leader, the principal has sought support from the local education team in developing the improvement and learning journey. There is clarity in the need to embed sustainable effective practice for the students at the school, to ensure learning is continuous and outcomes are maximised. The recently finalised literacy and numeracy agreements promote a common understanding of best practice to support the school's improvement agenda. Having clear documented expectations of curriculum delivery will provide cohesion and support to student learning. There is clarity of roles and responsibilities, within the school. Microsoft Teams is used as an online platform to keep all staff informed and focused on student achievement.

The teacher demonstrates a strong commitment to improving practice in order to meet the needs of students. Professional learning, external sources of expertise and a mentor, support them in implementing a coherent curriculum for the multi-year-levelled classroom. There is a strong sense of 'team' within the school. All staff know the students well and work cohesively to implement the program. Smaller groups are facilitated with the principal and SSOs to further differentiate learning. SSOs have been trained in evidence based intervention programs.

There is clear documentation of PDP and staff meeting agendas, assessment schedule and curriculum planning. Staff meetings are focused on professional learning aligned with the improvement agenda. Strong collaborative practices also exist between the play centre leader and teacher to ensure seamless transition for children into the school, and to provide younger school students with play-based learning opportunities in the centre.

Planning for multi-year levels in the classroom and stretching the learning for all students continues to be a challenge. Previous teachers at the school have sought cross-school opportunities for observation, joint planning, moderation and sharing of ideas. Seeking similar opportunities for the current teacher to have collegial rigorous professional discussions that address the challenges of multi-year level planning, for viable curriculum delivery, and meeting the needs of all learners, would be beneficial.

**Direction 3    Strengthen teacher capacity to design and implement learning experiences that further enable differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge for all students by providing regular opportunities for the teacher to participate in planning for multi-year level classes across the curriculum with teachers from like schools.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

Port Neil Primary School has a strong positive culture, an engaging classroom and well-developed outdoor play areas. Students and parents have a strong sense of pride in their school, are positive about the school, appreciating the focused support for individual students in a small class. There is clear interest in further improving the school and building stronger connections with the broader community.

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

- Direction 1** Improve student outcomes by measuring student progress against evidence-based targets and engaging staff in ongoing systems of self-review that evaluate the impact of strategies and actions, to embed effective practice for continuous improvement.
- Direction 2** Strengthen the development of teacher capacity in curriculum delivery, by embedding the literacy and numeracy agreements, and using learning progressions to support clear and structured approaches to teaching, assessment and reporting.
- Direction 3** Strengthen teacher capacity to design and implement learning experiences that further enable differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge for all students by providing regular opportunities for the teacher to participate in planning for multi-year level classes across the curriculum with teachers from like schools.

Based on the school's current performance, Port Neill Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



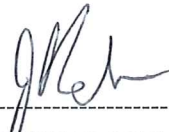
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GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON



# 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).

In considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making a judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school. This is done for two reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year, and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohorts of students. The data below represents a summary of aggregated data from Port Neill Primary School from 2016 – 2019.

### Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2016-2019, 75% of year 1 and 75% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016-2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 100% of year 3 students, 60% of year 5 students and 100% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016-2019, 50% of year 3, 20% of year 5 and no year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

### Numeracy

From 2016-2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 100% of year 3 students, 80% of year 5 students and no year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016-2019, 25% of year 3, no year 5 and no year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.