

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Stirling North 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 Maxine McSherry, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Deb O'Neill, 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
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Stirling North Primary School caters for students from R-7. It is situated 300kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 358. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 331. The local partnership is Port Augusta/Quorn.

The school has an ICSEA score of 965 and is classified as Category 3 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 16% Aboriginal students, 10% students with disabilities, 0% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 5% children/young people in care and 23% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 7th year of tenure, a Deputy Principal who oversees daily operations and the junior primary teaching team, and an Assistant Principal who oversees wellbeing and Aboriginal education. The school resources two coordinators working one day a week, one with a Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) focus and one in literacy.

There are 22 teachers including 5 in the early years of their career and 11 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Support consistency in teaching and learning across the school by collaboratively develop and embed common agreements and effective pedagogy in literacy and numeracy.
- Direction 2** Develop comprehensive and collaborative self-review processes to inform and shape future direction using a range of data including NAPLaN.
- Direction 3** Collaboratively strengthen teachers' capacity to design and implement learning experiences that further enable differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge to be an integral aspect of everyday learning for all students.

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

In response to the previous directions the school has created a teaching and learning website with whole-school agreements for literacy and numeracy.

Self-review processes now include an analysis of phonics, reading, behaviour and attendance data termly. Phonics progression indicates an increasing number of students meeting the standard of educational achievement over the past three years with a further increase predicted for 2021. Aboriginal student data is reviewed fortnightly.

All teachers implement "connected curriculum" and are developing effective pedagogy through the implementation of high impact strategies in classrooms to further engage students and link learning to the community. The connected curriculum approach has increased engagement and as a result, there has been a 50% reduction in behavior incidents and a 2% increase in attendance.

Effective school improvement planning

How well does the school review and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement planning processes and the impact on student learning to inform next steps?

School improvement planning is completed by the Principal in collaboration with the leadership team. When provided with information about improvement plan goals, teachers were able to articulate their classroom practice and how it relates to improving student learning outcomes. School support officers are not involved in the establishment or the review of the plan.

To support the implementation of the plan and build capacity in literacy teaching, internal and external expertise has been sourced. The school funds a coordinator, working one day a week to support teachers in achieving the literacy objectives. External expertise sourced through the Literacy Guarantee Unit is supporting the school to develop and trial a new phonics program in the early years. Teachers are regularly reviewing the program and using their expertise to collaboratively adjust what is being taught.

There is a whole-school commitment to the Big Write program with support and coaching from the literacy coordinator and leadership team. A wide range of resources have been created for teachers and are available online enabling effective implementation. A Big Write teaching agreement has been developed by the Literacy Coordinator, with an intent to build consistency from reception to year 7 through collaborative implementation.

The school is well positioned to further embed school improvement planning with scheduled opportunities to analyse, and review goals, actions and targets, building consistency in implementation across the whole-school.

The school has identified that linking the professional learning communities with the goals of the plan will further enable staff to engage and embed school improvement at the classroom and whole-school levels.

Opportunities to monitor the effectiveness of improvement planning processes and student learning will be further enhanced using a collaborative approach.

The foundations have been established to build a collective responsibility for the plan and increase a sense of ownership.

Direction 1 Build collective ownership and shared responsibility by collaboratively developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the school improvement plan with all staff.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Stirling North Primary School has been involved in the Social Ventures Australia program. Children identify and respond to local and global issues and apply their learning in authentic contexts as evidenced by the Children's Rights and Beanie projects. The school is to be commended on their commitment to student action, it is an obvious strength with children clearly articulating how they can influence decisions at the school and community level.

Students have a broad range of leadership opportunities at their school. A formalised process of electing student ministers to different portfolios eg recycling, media, sports, and recreation is implemented annually. This approach has been supported and enhanced with the involvement of Port Augusta councillors and local members of parliament. The development of school community radio under the media portfolio is one example of the authenticity and effectiveness of this approach.

Parents expressed they are proud of the range of opportunities that are provided for students to take the lead in community projects and highly valued this aspect of their child's education.

Student influence in learning was evident through goal setting. Teachers and students described a diverse range of approaches ranging from students setting goals independently, working in liaison with their teacher or teachers setting goals. Learning goals ranged from being specific with clearly defined targets eg 'I need to be able to read 73 words per minute', to general, 'I will write neater'. Goals were visually evident in some classrooms through wall displays, others were recorded in student books or on desks. The panel found evidence of both individual and whole-class behaviour goals.

There is a diversity across classrooms as to how and when student learning goals are reviewed, some students have weekly opportunities to review where others have their goals for a term or longer.

The school is now well placed to build consistency in collaborative goal setting based on student data to further ensure authentic influence and improve student learning outcomes.

Direction 2 Further develop authentic influence in learning by collaboratively analysing data with students and using it as the basis for setting individual goals.

Conditions for effective student learning

To what extent does the school promote a culture of learning with high expectations of achievement for all learners?

Parents reported the school displayed a high level of commitment to building on their child's strengths and interests. They gave multiple examples of how students' learning needs were met and appreciated the additional time that teachers put in before and after school. Staff were described as a closely knit team providing social, emotional, and academic support. The school is to be commended on the effort and commitment they continue to place into building a community of learners at Stirling North.

All Aboriginal learners have an individual plan based on achievement and targeted to their needs. Data is collected and analysed to inform planning and the Aboriginal Community Education Officer establishes strong connections with families and students. All students are engaged in further developing cultural understandings through their involvement in local projects.

The school is to be commended on their approach to supporting students with complex needs through the establishment of a nurture room. High expectations within a safe and supportive environment were clearly evident and student data was analysed and used to inform planning. Students have individual, targeted goals for Maths, English, zones of regulation, sight words, phonological awareness, and mainstream transition. Goals are collaboratively developed with therapists and parents where relevant and are formally reported on each semester. The outcome being that students can access mainstream classes for longer periods of time with increasing success.

The implementation of the connected curriculum has been an area of ongoing focus for the school with the pedagogical approach embedded throughout. This provides future opportunities for students to influence their learning through co-design and collaborative assessment.

School leaders are highly committed to walking alongside teachers in their learning journey and are present in classrooms daily, providing direct support and informal feedback. There is a clear line of sight between leadership and classroom practice with all educators dedicated to improving their practice.

The school is well placed to further build a continuous improvement culture by increasing opportunities for students to become powerful partners in their own learning.

Direction 3 Use the connected curriculum as a platform onto which students can strengthen their ability to use metacognitive strategies to assess, monitor and regulate their learning.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Stirling North Primary School is an inclusive, caring, and supportive learning environment with strong community connections. Parents, leaders, staff, and students are all proud of and contribute to their school.

Educators are committed to further developing their own practice and working collaboratively with their colleagues to ensure student success.

Opportunities for students to take on leadership roles and responsibilities contributing to social action is commendable with positive conditions for learning highly evident.

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

- Direction 1** **Build collective ownership and shared responsibility by collaboratively developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the school improvement plan with all staff.**
- Direction 2** **Further develop authentic influence in learning by collaboratively analysing data with students and using it as the basis for setting individual goals.**
- Direction 3** **Use the connected curriculum as a platform onto which students can strengthen their ability to use metacognitive strategies to assess, monitor and regulate their learning.**

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



Kerry Dollman
Director
Review, Improvement and Accountability



Anne Millard
Executive Director
Partnerships, Schools and Preschools

Adam Wilson
Principal
Stirling North 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 30% of year 1 and 53% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline at the year 1 level and little change at the year 2 level, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2018 and 2019 the trend for year 1 has been downwards from 48% to 30%.

Between 2018 and 2019 the trend for year 2 has been upwards from 39% to 53%.

In 2019 the reading results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 68% of year 3 students, 89% of year 5 students and 78% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

For year 3 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average and for year 5 it shows an improvement.

For year 7 this result represents little or no change.

For 2019 year 3 NAPLAN reading the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools. For year 5 and 7 the school is achieving above other similar schools.

In 2019 33% of year 3, 20% of year 5 and 14% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading 8 out of 16 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 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 67% of year 3 students, 73% of year 5 students and 72% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this represents little or no change and for years 5 and 7 it is above the historical 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 19% of year 3, 11% of year 5 and 14% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy 3 out of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 4 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.