

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Banksia Park School R-7

Conducted in October 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 Debbie Grzczkowski, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Lynette Simons, 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
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Banksia Park School R-7 caters for students reception to year 7. It is situated within the Tea Tree Gully Council and is 22kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 264. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 207. The local partnership is Tea Tree Gully.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1010 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 6% students with disabilities, 2% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 22% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 1st year of tenure at the site, a deputy principal and a student wellbeing leader.

There are 16 teachers on staff. There are 3 teachers on staff in the early years of their career and 2 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Implement agreed evidence-based teaching practices that engage and challenge all students.**
- Direction 2** **Raise levels of student achievement and growth through the design of learning tasks that make the learning intentions and success criteria explicit and accessible for all students to achieve their personal best.**
- Direction 3** **Challenge and engage all students through the teachers' consistent use of school and class-based data to intentionally plan and teach to address the identified needs of groups and individuals.**
- Direction 4** **Advance student achievement by raising teacher capacity across the school through the consistent implementation of focused observations and feedback aligned to the Teaching for Effective Learning Framework (TfEL).**

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

The previous ESR directions guided school improvement planning, but had reduced impact due to numerous changes within the staff and leadership team. Most areas within the initial directions are still current and pertinent to the school. Staff have taken on, and display, effective practice in elements of the previous directions, but differences across classes diluted their impact. Leaders have opportunity to identify expertise within the school, and strategically spread effective practice across all classes.

Previous leaders provided whole-school professional learning on learning dispositions. It is timely for the whole school community to evaluate the impact of current practice and decide whether to refocus, build consistency and ensure all new staff have access to professional learning.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

Teachers collectively engaged in the creation of the current school improvement plan (SIP) during allocated staff meeting time. Professional development plans (PDPs) are linked to the SIP and targeted professional learning supports the plan's goals.

The new principal has a clear vision for the school, but this has not been shared with staff, who are unclear of future direction. In order to build whole-school commitment and engage all staff in the improvement agenda, staff need to collectively establish a shared vision and work together to plan how they are going to reach its outcomes. There is also opportunity to collaboratively produce shared understandings of commonly used terms such as:

- differentiation
- stretch and challenge
- authentic student influence in learning
- 12 months' growth.

Having a common language of learning and shared understandings will support consistency and best support students' learning as they move throughout the school. It will also serve to bridge the historical disconnect between the learning areas within the school.

The leadership team has established professional learning communities (PLCs) to drive improvement and deepen staff collaboration. Time allocated to enable groups to meet is appreciated by staff. PLCs currently operate with 2 teachers, which limits capacity to widen shared practice and build distributed leadership. Leaders strategically facilitating PLCs, and increasing membership, will build teacher capability and help drive the improvement agenda.

PLCs are most effective when they have an unrelenting focus on student learning growth. They are a proven way to increase student learning by creating a culture focused on continuous improvement. At their optimum, they link student learning needs with professional learning and practice of teachers.

PLCs are not currently operating consistently. Strengthening a professional culture, with a clear vision, where staff share collaborative expertise will drive the improvement agenda.

Direction 1 Collectively strengthen a professional culture of collaboration, shared vision and high expectations, which enable PLCs to drive the improvement agenda.

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers supporting students to improve their learning?

Teachers engage with a range of individual student achievement and growth data, which drives intervention delivered through school support officer assistance within the classroom. It is timely to evaluate the impact of this support, given its current variability across classes. All identified students have an individual learning plan which is regularly updated. Most teachers use pre-assessment to refine planning and post-assessment to track student growth.

Staff feel supported in their learning and are open to new learning opportunities to further develop their craft. Some teachers appeared to be relying on programs, whereas the focus needs to be on pedagogy behind the programs, as this will create sustainable change. The school has effective practitioners who provide opportunities for leaders to identify high-impact practice. This allows practice to be shared across the school to build capacity in others, refine practice and build a consistent pedagogical approach.

Staff track data to monitor students, but it is used inconsistently to inform differentiated student learning. Students want to be challenged and given harder work to push and stretch their learning. Teachers question whether they offer enough opportunities for students to achieve higher grades. Providing increased opportunities to refocus on learning design and outcomes will assist accommodating stretch and challenge for all students as routine practice. Teachers highlight differentiation, stretch and challenge as areas for further support.

Leaders need to lead the learning and ensure effective practice is embedded consistently across the school. Although leaders are visible in classes, they need to give teachers explicit feedback to further improve and refine their practice. Having regular and formalised leadership observations and walkthroughs, linked to PDP and SIP focus, will deliver targeted and timely feedback on teacher performance. Clear structures and processes, to monitor and observe teacher practice will ensure rigour and further support and sustain a culture of learning and improvement.

Direction 2 **Strengthen teachers' capacity in learning design and use of data for intentional teaching, to ensure all students receive the appropriate stretch and challenge.**

Direction 3 **Provide a cycle of focused observations and feedback, to build consistency and further refine teacher practice.**

Conditions for effective student learning

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


Students feel safe and are proud of their school. They value strong relationships with staff, reporting that staff care about them and see them as individuals. The school has structured opportunities for leadership, predominately of an organisational nature, and students want more input into decision-making.

Some students have literacy and numeracy 'smarter' goals to support them with the next steps in learning and there is opportunity build this into consistent practice. Most classes display mixed learning intentions and success criteria. These vary in intent and have potential to be refined to ensure all students understand their meaning. Individual teachers engage students in the creation of assessment rubrics, which gives students deeper understanding of task and outcomes.

Students have limited opportunity to give feedback to their teachers, but report specialist teachers often seek feedback and refine their lessons accordingly. Where this happened, there was a sense of empowerment and ownership of learning. Implementing and embedding processes, which enable feedback, will support learner dispositions and enable students to authentically own and take risks in their learning. While most classes have a variety of work displayed, the inclusion of exemplar pieces of student work samples as aspirational examples will further support learning. Identifying and spreading effective practice across all classes will further support student ownership of their learning.

Majority of students felt they could have increased influence in their learning. They were presented with choices in lessons that were mostly teacher-driven. Students have opportunity to become partners in their own learning when provided with consistency and clarity in what they are to learn, purpose of their learning and how they can be successful. When teachers discuss and collaboratively develop the criteria with their students, impact on learning is heightened. Where there is choice, there is increased engagement in learning.

Direction 4 Develop greater student agency through the consistent implementation of teaching pedagogies which enable students to authentically own and influence their learning.



Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

The school has a welcoming atmosphere where staff, students and parents display a strong sense of pride in their school. Staff maintain positive relationships with students who report that staff care about them as individuals. The potential of the new principal was acknowledged by staff, students and parents. Teachers contribute to the improvement agenda and are willing to take on new learning to deliver on the SIP outcomes. Governing council and parents are supportive of the school and speak highly of the support given to identified students.

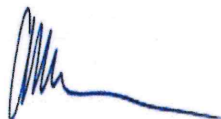
The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1** Collectively strengthen a professional culture of collaboration, shared vision and high expectations, which enable PLCs to drive the improvement agenda.
- Direction 2** Strengthen teachers' capacity in learning design and use of data for intentional teaching, to ensure all students receive the appropriate stretch and challenge.
- Direction 3** Provide a cycle of focused observations and feedback, to build consistency and further refine teacher practice.
- Direction 4** Develop greater student agency through the consistent implementation of teaching pedagogies which enable students to authentically own and influence their learning.

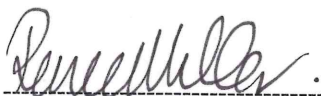
Based on the school's current performance, Banksia Park School R-7 will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



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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).

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2019, 72% of year 1 and 67% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement for year 1 and year 2, from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 65% of year 3 students, 80% of year 5 students and 72% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents a decline, for year 5 an improvement, and for year 7 little or no change, from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 30% of year 3, 18% of year 5 and 26% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 33%, or 4 out of 12 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 64%, or 9 out of 14 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 70% of year 3 students, 87% of year 5 students and 80% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents a decline, and for years 5 and 7, an improvement, 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, 20% of year 3, 4% of year 5 and 22% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline, from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, none of the 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 53%, or 8 out of 15 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.