

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Springton Primary School

Conducted in November 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 Julie Bishop, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Michele Russell, 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
 - Principal
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Springton Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 63kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 38. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 29. The local partnership is Torrens Valley.

The school has an ICSEA score of 972, and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 6 Aboriginal students, 24% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, no children/young people in care and 60% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 1st term of tenure.

There are 3 teachers including 1 in the early years of their career.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Develop coherent practice across the school by collaboratively developing shared agreements about pedagogy and evidence-based practice aligned to the school improvement priorities.**
- Direction 2** **Develop higher-order thinking in students by designing challenging learning, connected to the Australian Curriculum as a continuum that enables learners to demonstrate learning expected of their year level and beyond.**
- Direction 3** **Improve student agency in learning through developing metacognition, including sharing learning intentions and success criteria with students.**
- Direction 4** **Improve student learning outcomes by developing a culture of feedback that supports formative assessment processes.**

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

Direction 1: The previous principal reported that a reading agreement had been collaboratively drafted and was almost complete. Full-time teachers are following the gradual release of responsibility model in reading. Targeted teaching of phonological awareness and phonics was undertaken in both classes.

Direction 2: Work in mathematics has resulted in teachers designing challenging tasks and providing students the opportunity to show learning above SEA.

Direction 3: It was acknowledged that this is an area for further development.

Direction 4: The previous principal noted an expectation that students are provided with specific feedback to ensure that they understand next steps in learning.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

Improve practice and monitor strategies and actions. To what extent have changes and improvements in teacher and leader practice resulted in improvements in student learning?

When referencing the development and implementation of the school improvement plan (SIP), it should be noted that the current principal was appointed to the school at the beginning of term 4 2020.

The school initially identified 3 goals in their SIP: numeracy, reading and writing. The numeracy goal was deferred, with a focus on reading and writing goals.

The reading focus was narrowed to guided reading, and included implementing differentiated resources to meet the needs of all students. Decodable readers, including decodable apps for students in the upper years are used for students requiring additional reading support. The panel observed a diverse range of assessments being utilised to monitor progress in reading.

An audit of current assessment tools and subsequent identification of key assessments to inform next steps from a whole-school perspective is an area for consideration.

Staff undertook professional learning in moderating writing samples, and reflected that their capacity to accurately moderate work significantly improved. Work in this area resulted in some students beginning to moderate their own work.

Using writing exemplars through the 'seven steps to writing' process allowed students to identify and track their growth.

Staff monitor the progress and impact of the SIP at least once a term and provide feedback to the principal on an ongoing basis. The school's planning and monitoring processes will be strengthened via a cyclical approach to improvement that positively impacts learning.

Planned opportunities for staff to be collectively involved in all stages of development, review and monitor of the SIP goals, will strengthen the collective ownership of all staff. Planned sharing of SIP progress with students and at governing council meetings will further strengthen the collective ownership of the SIP across the school community.

Direction 1 Develop and embed processes where staff and students, in conjunction with governing council collectively review, evaluate and adapt SIP targets at identified points throughout the year.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Collaborative identification, development and embedding of effective pedagogical practices across any site is central to ongoing improvement.

Reading and phonics goals are written by staff to indicate what the class is working on and to identify next steps. Short-term goals are used in guided reading. Staff reported that a class learning intention was provided in a recent unit of work focused on an autobiography. Teachers reported that success criteria were evident in writing books and that goal sheets are used in math journals.

The school would benefit from the collective, and consistent development of effective pedagogical practices, with specific reference to working with students in setting goals and targets, and reviewing their progress as a continual process.

Staff identified that visual scaffolds would support students in the early years. Older students would benefit from ongoing opportunities across all areas of learning to track and monitor their individual progress with explicit feedback, for example, 'this is where you are and this is where you need to be'. Teachers identified that students in the upper years could articulate their next steps and successes in maths and noted that this is still a work in progress for literacy.

During interviews with staff in relation to differentiation, teachers reported that they provided 'low floor, high ceiling' tasks. Staff were more confident in differentiating phonics and reading, and acknowledged that effective differentiation was a significant challenge in maths.

School service officers work in classrooms during literacy and numeracy blocks. The principal also provides support for the first hour of the literacy block. The school provides students with comprehensive structures of additional support. However, during the ESR only 13% of students interviewed indicated that reading was challenging, with 35% of students reporting that reading was too easy. During interviews, staff said most students don't ask for challenging work.

There is significant work for the school to undertake in developing whole-school understandings in what constitutes effective pedagogical practice, including planned opportunities for all students to be challenged across all learning areas and levels of schooling. Work in this area will be further strengthened through planned opportunities to identify and share effective pedagogical practices with parents.

Direction 2 To collaboratively identify, develop and embed evidence-based pedagogical practices across all year levels and areas of learning that are shared with students and families.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Staff endeavor to involve students in collaborative planning and decision-making about their learning, and acknowledged it as an area for ongoing development. Staff strive to make collaborative planning and decision-making a focus in their teaching. Staff noted that learning intentions and success criteria is a work-in-progress, planned observations would support collective understandings in this area.

Reflections from staff included that students, when working on a unit of study focused on biographies, knew and understood the parameters when forming questions. Students can now articulate their progress in learning, and are improving their skills in providing feedback. Feedback resulting from English moderation processes showed high-achieving students were given ongoing opportunities to achieve in the higher bands in literacy.

In discussions related to the language of learning, teachers said it was important to align the language of learning, as used in the SIP, with the current work in reading. Working with students to ensure they know, use and can name strategies for learning, for example, 'this is fluency', was an area for further development.

Teachers provided the following suggestions to strengthen students' understanding and application of the language of learning, this included:

- model and use the language of learning
- establish visuals
- explicitly articulate the 'why' of learning.

Embedding common understandings and processes in the consistent application of a language for learning will significantly strengthen opportunities for students to authentically influence their learning. When asked what feedback was received from students, it was reported that most students don't ask for feedback.

'When we involve students in their learning as equal partners and develop their self-awareness regarding their strengths, preferences and areas for improvement, we develop expert learners'. Two-way feedback provides students with the opportunity to give, as well as receive, feedback about themselves as learners. The students at Springton Primary School are well-placed to undertake this significant work.

Direction 3 Develop and embed a meta-language for learning that provides clarity, consistency and congruence for students, staff and parents.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

The current principal was appointed at the beginning of term 4 2020. The school has undergone significant changes in leadership in recent years. The panel noted limited, consistent, evidence-based pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning. Scaffolds and strategies that enable students to influence their learning were not sufficient.

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

- Direction 1** **Develop and embed processes where staff and students, in conjunction with governing council collectively review, evaluate and adapt SIP targets**
- Direction 2** **To collaboratively identify, develop and embed evidence-based pedagogical practices across all year levels and areas of learning that are shared with students and families.**
- Direction 3** **Develop and embed a meta-language for learning that provides clarity, consistency and congruence for students, staff and parents.**

Based on the school's current performance, Springton Primary School will be externally reviewed again in **2021**.



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Karen Post
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Springton 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).

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 2 reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year, and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohort of students. The data below represents a summary of aggregated data from Springton Primary School 2016-2019.

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2016-2019, 28% of year 1 and 23% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016- 2019 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 76% of year 3 students, 70% of year 5 students and 100%* of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA.

From 2016-2019 24% of year 3, 35% of year 5 and 14% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

From 2016-2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 76% of year 3 students, 75% of year 5 students and 100% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016-2019, 32% of year 3, 20% of year 5 and 14% *of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

In year 3 numeracy at SEA there has been an upward trend from 50% in 2017 to 100% in 2019.

*There were no year seven students enrolled at the school in 2016 and 2018, seven year seven students in total were enrolled in 2017 and 2019.