

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Thiele Primary School

Conducted in August 2019



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 Cynthia O'Neil, Review Principal.

Review Process

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

- Presentation from the principal and deputy principal
- Class visits
- Attendance at staff meeting
- Staff survey
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - School Support Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Thiele Primary School (TPS) caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 20kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 308 students, and at the time of the previous review it was 322. Thiele Primary School is one of three primary schools making up the Primary School Campus at Aberfoyle Park. Facilities, programs and staff members are shared by the three schools.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1007 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 11% students with disabilities, 5% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 4 children/young people in care and 24% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal who has been in an acting capacity for the past 7 terms, a deputy position and a coordinator in wellbeing.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Raise the level of achievement and growth in the early years (reception to year 3) by using developmental and diagnostic assessment information to regularly inform targeted teaching programs and monitor the impact of early intervention strategies.**
- Direction 2** **Increase the proportion of students achieving at higher levels by designing assessment tasks that support and challenge all students to achieve the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) and the DECD Strategic Objectives.**
- Direction 3** **Build a focused culture of continuous improvement by developing processes to systematically use data and information to inform improvement planning, track student progress, determine programs, allocate resources and evaluate effectiveness of strategies.**
- Direction 4** **Strengthen parent partnerships and increase learning outcomes for all students by establishing processes and opportunities to systematically gather, analyse and respond to the views and perceptions of parents.**
- Direction 5** **The Principal, teacher leaders and other staff will implement teaching and assessment agreements and use a range of processes to enact the school's Performance and Development Policy.**

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

Attention to the directions from the previous ESR are evident at Thiele Primary School, despite several changes to leadership positions over that time. The school has designed its own 'Guaranteed Viable Curriculum' (GVC) which maps out what is taught from the Australian Curriculum in each term and year level. Whole school agreements in English and maths support the implementation of the GVC and teachers monitor what they have covered effectively and what needs more focus. Extensive professional learning from external providers and department officers has resulted in the implementation of some agreed pedagogical practices. There has also been a focus on the wellbeing of students, with a 'new beginnings' program in term 1 of each year and emotional regulation strategies in every classroom. It is evident that there is ongoing work regarding the effective implementation of previous directions, and in ensuring coherence and consistency of agreed practices across all year levels.

Staff provided clear evidence of the data journey that has been undertaken over the past 18 months, of the improved clarity in the focus of the school and increased accountability in addressing the needs of

students. An assessment schedule has been established and there is detailed documentation that outlines the expectations of teachers at TPS.

The unique campus setting of TPS is seen as both a challenge and a strength of the school. TPS benefits from additional shared facilities and connecting with a broader and diverse community.

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 has a Site Improvement Committee (SIC) that has a strategic role in leading the improvement journey at TPS. This committee meets regularly to review data, the Site Improvement Plan (SIP), policies, whole-school agreements, determine professional learning requirements and to set the agenda for staff meetings and pupil free days. The SIC has had a pivotal role in implementing the current SIP. Due to short time frames and a new process, leaders are aware that a more collaborative process is required going forward for a better understanding and ownership of the SIP by all stakeholders.

Staff meeting structures are inclusive of year level groups to strengthen consistency of practice across the school. Self-review processes that regularly monitor and ensure positive outcomes from the work of staff, in improving the teaching and learning at TPS, are yet to be developed. The panel saw evidence of very clear Professional Development program (PDP) processes that are focussed on developing rigor and consistency across the site. The connected work in staff meetings and professional development discussions is strongly focussed on data analysis and tracking students against benchmarks. Data walls, MARKiT and data spreadsheets are tools utilised for collecting and analysing data to inform practice. There has been significant resourcing in programs, assessment tools, curriculum resources and Student Support Officer (SSO) support, in addressing the improvement journey of the school.

At the time of the review, classroom walkthroughs and student conversations identified significant differences in practices across levels of schooling. The panel also noted pockets of exemplary practice. Attention to building consistent quality pedagogical practices in all classrooms across the school is imperative.

- Direction 1** **Ensure all staff have shared understanding, ownership and accountability of the SIP, by refining processes that actively involve staff in all stages of the SIP process.**
- Direction 2** **Ensure quality in the teaching and learning in every classroom by building and consolidating a shared commitment and responsibility in actively and consistently implementing the schools agreed practices daily, at all levels of schooling.**

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Implementation of the GVC, scaffolds for learning, consistent programs and pedagogical practices were evidenced in many classrooms, with the most coherence being observed in the early year's classes. Staff provided examples of how they cater for varied learners to ensure stretch and challenge, and the school resources an intervention (STAR) and stretch (SPARK) program. The school promotes uninterrupted literacy and numeracy times, which would benefit from an agreed structure of effective pedagogical practice during these sessions to ensure rigorous teaching practices and learning opportunities for students.

The current work of the school around data, unpacking it and assessments for their analytical value in individual student achievement will place the school well for differentiating the learning for students and enable SMARTAR goal setting. Upper primary students set their own goals for learning, but many of these goals were found to be broad and not regularly reviewed, however the students are well aware of their goals and are working towards them. SMARTAR goal setting will be improved when students have a better understanding of what they know and what they need to know in their learning.

Whilst the practices of WALT and WILF were visual in the majority of classrooms, conversations with many students provided little evidence of students being clear about the learning intentions, and success criteria. Students generally knew 'what' they were learning, more so than why, although some classrooms use rubrics for some tasks, so that students know 'how they could improve'. Building proficiency in learning intentions and success criteria practices, so that they are an integral part of most lessons will greatly support students to take more responsibility for improving their outcomes. Deepening and enriching the quality of student learning and fostering skills where students do more of the thinking will ultimately improve retention and higher grades for students.

Direction 3 Strengthen student agency by making learning visible through clear learning intentions and success criteria that enable students to benchmark their learning and set explicit learning goals that continuously stretch and challenge their learning.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

How effectively are teachers analysing assessment and feedback data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction?

Whole-school data analysis has promoted ongoing staff dialogue around mandated summative datasets. Staff report a greater understanding of student achievement against the SEA and pay particular attention to achieved growth. Staff described that they make more informed decisions and have greater clarity in reporting to parents. Examples of formative assessment practices were provided to the panel and classroom walkthroughs provided evidence of questioning, conferencing and responding to students. Teachers interviewed also spoke about checking for understanding, rubrics, and exit slips, to name a few. Some teachers provide students with scaffolds of what 'A or B' level work looks like, whereby students can make their own decisions about what they need to do to improve their work.

Through moderation, students and teachers can know what 'A-E' levels looks like. Moderation of student work and task design has previously been facilitated at a partnership level. The departments focus on the Learning Design, Assessment and Moderation (LDAM) strategy is ongoing work for the school. Rich task design where students can demonstrate evidence of higher levels of learning, formative assessment practices and moderation tasks that both inform task design and identify student achievement, will enable students to aim for and achieve higher outcomes and further build teacher capacity and understanding.

Varied skills in providing feedback to students was evident to the panel. Some examples of feedback were appraisal while others were more explicit and supported students to know how to improve their work. Senior students in particular were able to describe to the panel how feedback from the teacher supported them to achieve their goals. Leaders provide feedback to staff as part of their performance development

and have also conducted student forums where they speak with students about the teaching and learning in the classroom, and then leaders provide feedback to their teachers.

Building teacher understanding and skills in providing constructive feedback in a timely manner, formative assessment practices to inform learning and analysing data to inform and refine planning are next steps for the school.

Direction 4 **Ensure differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge for all students by strengthening teachers' capacity to track and monitor the progress of individual student learning, and the use of formative assessment and feedback to inform the next steps in learning.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

The school is focussed on, and committed to, its improvement journey. Significant attention has been placed on curriculum mapping documentation of agreed practices and a recently developed assessment schedule. There are pockets of exemplary practice evident and many committed staff who wish to further improve their skills, knowledge and understandings. Building consistency, coherence and rigor of effective practices in all classrooms is the current work of the school.

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

- Direction 1** Ensure all staff have shared understanding, ownership and accountability of the SIP, by refining processes that actively involve staff in all stages of the SIP process.
- Direction 2** Ensure quality in the teaching and learning in every classroom by building and consolidating a shared commitment and responsibility in actively and consistently implementing the schools agreed practices daily, at all levels of schooling.
- Direction 3** Strengthen student agency by making learning visible through clear learning intentions and success criteria that enable students to benchmark their learning and set explicit learning goals that continuously stretch and challenge their learning.
- Direction 4** Ensure differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge for all students by strengthening teachers' capacity to track and monitor the progress of individual student learning, and the use of formative assessment and feedback to inform the next steps in learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Thiele Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



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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, 69% of year 1 and 75% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline for year 1, and a little or no change for year 2, from the historic baseline average.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 72% of year 3 students, 58% of year 5 students and 73% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For year 3, this result represents little or no change and for years 5 and 7, this represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For 2018 year 3 and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within, and for year 5 lower than the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2018, 42% of year 3, 14% of year 5 and 11% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 38%, or 6 out of 16, students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 50%, or 4 out of 8 students, from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 58% of year 3 students, 54% of year 5 students and 84% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5 this result represents a decline, and for year 7, represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For 2018 year 3 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving lower than and for years 5 and 7, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 14% of year 3, 10% of year 5 and 8% 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 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 67%, or 4 out of 6, students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018 and 40%, or 2 out of 5 students, from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.