

# **Department for Education**

## **External School Review**

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

### **Report for Colonel Light Gardens Primary School**

Conducted in November 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 Julie Hibell and Andrew Gilsenan-Reed, Review Principals.

## Review Process

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

- Presentation from the principal
- Class visits
- Staff meeting task
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parent group
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

# School context

Colonel Light Gardens Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 7kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 701. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 650. The local partnership is Mitcham Plains.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1096, and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 4% students with disabilities, 16% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 1% children/young people in care and 8% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the fourth year of their tenure. The school has a deputy principal, two assistant principals, a numeracy coach and a literacy coach.

There are 46 teachers including 2 in the early years of their career and 17 Step 9 teachers.

## The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Challenge students to aspire and achieve across the curriculum through provision of effective feedback about their learning, regular and rigorous identification of learning success criteria and learning intentions, as well as personal goal-setting.
- Direction 2** Build individual teacher capacity through consistent, evaluated staff performance and development processes that are directly linked to the school’s intentional, continuously improving student achievement targets.
- Direction 3** Collaboratively develop, articulate and continuously re-visit a shared vision of the rationale and protocols for intervention, so that they are clear to parents and teachers.

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?
<p>Clear and strategic attention to the implementation of the previous directions is evident. Deeper attention to directions 2 and 3 has been intentional, in taking time and deliberate steps to build solid foundations for ongoing improvement work. Embedding the high yield strategies outlined in direction 1 is continuing work for the school. However, the panel found that teachers are genuinely employing these strategies to varying degrees across the school.</p> <p>The principal’s mantra of the school’s moral imperative, being to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students, is well known and valued by staff and parents. Building staff capacity through a common understanding of quality literacy and numeracy programs and pedagogy, while redeveloping literacy and numeracy agreements, has been significant work for the school. Parents and staff verify this improved focus and transparent alignment between leadership roles, performance and development processes, targeted professional learning, resourcing and the improvement agenda.</p> <p>An ‘intervention review’ steered by a panel of three partnership leaders, a special educator, the governing council chairperson and an assistant principal was initiated last year. Six recommendations were made and are being enacted. The panel evidenced clear documentation, changes to roles and the</p>



establishment of a student review team to shift the agenda from students selected to fit the intervention, to intervention being selected to meet the student's needs.

The panel noted that the existing high level of trust in leaders and positive learning culture places the school well for future improvement work.

## 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?*

Teachers have a clear understanding of the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) and their work within it. Staff stated that greater connection between their performance and development plans (PDP), professional learning and the SIP, provided them with deeper appreciation and engagement in the evaluative review of the SIP. Teachers also expressed a greater understanding of using data to identify learning needs and a significant appreciation of the literacy and numeracy coaches, in feeling supported to change practice and meet expectations.

Teachers in the same year level form Professional Learning Teams (PLTs), working collaboratively to build consistency and coherence in practice. The PLT structure is highly valued and includes SSOs fostering a joint focus in supporting students' learning needs. There is high expectation that PLTs self-drive their own learning and meet after school one day per week. Half of staff meeting time and additional release is also dedicated to PLT work. The panel noted variability in rigor of practice and attention to improvement amongst PLTs. Deeper self-review of the impact of teaching on learning, needs attention and leaders acknowledge this as the next stage in the evolution of PLTs.

Two PLTs become a sub-school group and are line managed by one leader. A Site Improvement Team (SIT), consisting of four leaders and one representative from each of the sub-school groups, one specialist teacher and one SSO, meets fortnightly. The SIT monitors the SIP and sets the agenda for PLT staff meetings. The panel sighted evidence of a traffic light system to monitor the implementation of actions within the SIP. A half day release each term enables the improvement team to more deeply monitor impact from SIP actions. SIT representatives feed information to and from sub-groups to ensure consultative processes are inclusive. The commitment from staff to attend extra meetings for SIT and PLTs is commendable.

While school data shows positive improvement, deepening these structures as rigorous evaluative processes will additionally challenge and sharpen the teaching and learning for best student outcomes and further inform SIP goals and actions.

**Direction 1**      **Ensure optimal student outcomes by strengthening staff capacity to regularly monitor and assess the impact of agreed actions and strategies, and to adjust practice as required, through SIT and PLT self-review processes that are inclusive of all staff.**

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Professional learning is generously offered with whole-school targeted professional learning as well as optional opportunities most weeks. Commitment to improving practice is evident and was highlighted during staff meeting in discussion of the literacy and numeracy agreements. Staff demonstrated their knowledge of the agreements and identified strengths and areas for improvement. Greater confidence in implementing literacy agreements overall was acknowledged. A strength in supporting staff to clearly understand what is minimally expected of them are the one page documents for each year level.

Focus on task design, stretch and challenge, learning intentions and success criteria, formative assessment practices and differentiating learning, were the main pedagogical practices explored in conversations. Most teachers identified each of these as continuing areas for growth. Learning intentions and success criteria, or variations of the strategy and language, were not visible in most classes and found to be in varied levels of implementation across the school. The panel felt that establishing a common language for learning would provide consistency as students move through the school and becomes more powerful for students in articulating their learning. Formative assessment and feedback practices described were often after the learning and it is clearly evident that teachers are using a range of strategies and tools in assessment 'of' learning. Embedding the use of these practices during the task 'for' learning needs deeper implementation, so that students regularly understand how they can further improve their work.

Task designs evidenced varied from minimal to great depth in planning. Teachers plan in pairs more so than in PLTs. Evaluative review of tasks and their impact on student outcomes was not identified as part of regular teacher practice. Differentiation through tasks is generally provided by having three levels, open-ended tasks or students working in groups. Deep and engaging task design, integrating one or more high yield strategies, was evidenced in pockets across the school. Harnessing this expertise and the connected work of coaches are significant levers for improvement. Upskilling teachers so that high yield strategies work in unison with rich learning tasks is continuing work for the school.

**Direction 2**     **Provide daily stretch and challenge for all learners by strengthening teachers' capacity in designing rich tasks that incorporate learning intentions and success criteria, and in using timely, effective formative assessment and feedback practices, that continuously move learning forward.**



## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Student voice and leadership have been strengthened through the wellbeing and engagement focus. Student Representative Council (SRC) prioritises student concerns to discuss and class meetings are encouraged for deeper consultative processes that lead to change. Initiating student 'helping heroes' and structured yard play are current examples of visible outcomes that support students during play.

Student influence in learning, as opposed to student voice, is an area for further development. The panel evidenced examples of goal setting, such as self and peer assessment and constructive feedback, to varying degrees. In most cases examples were more incidental than part of ongoing strategic teaching processes. For example, most goals across the school were set as a result of student led interviews in term 3 and were generally found to be broad, not owned by students and not monitored or reviewed.

Students told the panel that they only knew how they were going from test results, reports or because the "teacher told them". Many students stated that they want to know how they are progressing, what they can do to improve and to be further challenged. Sharing and unpacking assessments with students and deepening the implementation of feedback as a two way process, formative assessment practices 'for' learning and implementing learning intentions and success criteria are critical strategies for students to be able to benchmark and take responsibility for their learning. Once students understand what they know and what they need to know, they can then set their own explicit learning goals which they will also know how to monitor and review regularly for continuous stretch.

It was evident to the panel that teachers want to cater to the varied needs of their learners and given the majority of students are meeting or above the Department for Education Standard of Education Achievement (SEA), stretching outcomes by students being agents of their own learning is important work for the school to undertake.

**Direction 3      Develop student agency by regularly sharing assessment with students and providing them with clear information about the progression of learning, in order for them to set explicit learning goals and become self-drivers in their own improvement.**

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Student achievement at Colonel Light Gardens Primary School identifies the school as performing well. Commitment to further improving practices was evidenced through clear structures, focussed attention on SIP priorities, ample professional learning opportunities, the growth mindset and positivity evident from the majority of staff. Staff work collegially and collaboratively together and are focussed on newly implemented programs for further improving the teaching and learning. Teachers are trialling many high yield strategies that, with focussed attention, can become embedded in quality teaching and learning programs more consistently across the school. The improvement journey since the last review has been clearly articulated and strategically implemented and there is clarity from leaders about the work yet to be done. Recent stability in leadership places the well school for future improvement work.

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

- Direction 1**      Ensure optimal student outcomes by strengthening staff capacity to regularly monitor and assess the impact of agreed actions and strategies, and to adjust practice as required, through SIT and PLT self-review processes that are inclusive of all staff.
- Direction 2**      Provide daily stretch and challenge for all learners by strengthening teachers' capacity in designing rich tasks that incorporate learning intentions and success criteria, and in using timely, effective formative assessment and feedback practices, that continuously move learning forward.
- Direction 3**      Develop student agency by regularly sharing assessment with students and providing them with clear information about the progression of learning, in order for them to set explicit learning goals and become self-drivers in their own improvement.

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



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Andrew Wells  
A/DIRECTOR  
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND  
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Anne Millard  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND  
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-----  
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COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS PRIMARY SCHOOL



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GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON  
ALLISON WILKINSON



# 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, 82% of year 1 and 75% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change for years 1 and 2 from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 89% to 82%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 90% of year 3 students, 96% of year 5 students and 95% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 85% to 96%, and the trend for year 7 has been upwards, from 80% to 95%.

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

In 2019, 62% of year 3, 49% of year 5 and 41% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 68%, or 39 out of 57 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 63%, or 17 out of 27 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 94% of year 3 students, 92% of year 5 students and 90% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 7 has been upwards, from 82% to 90%.

For 2019, year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving higher than the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved higher in year 3 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 46% of year 3, 41% of year 5 and 33% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 66%, or 33 out of 50 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 79%, or 11 out of 14 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.