

# **The Department for Education**

## **External School Review**

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

**Report for Jervois Primary School**

Conducted in November 2018



## Review details

A priority for the Department for Education is to improve the educational attainment and wellbeing of South Australia's children and young people.

The purpose of the External School Review 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 underpinning the review identifies the key levers for school improvement and has been shaped and informed by research.

The overarching review question is "how well does this school improve student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and equity?"

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, they all have been considered and contributed to the development and directions of this report.

This review was conducted by Debbie Grzeczowski, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Nicole Cawley, Review Principal.

## School context

Jervois Primary School is located in the Murraylands 100kms from Adelaide. Enrolments have been stable for the past few years, and the school currently has 99 students in 4 classes.

The school has an ICSEA score of 967, and is classified as Category 5 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 7% Aboriginal students, 2% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), no children/young people in care, and 28% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a 7-year tenure. Jervois Primary School has a high percentage of part-time staff.

## Lines of inquiry

In considering the data summary in the school performance overview (Appendix 2) and the principal's presentation, the review panel explored the following lines of inquiry to evaluate the school's effectiveness towards raising student achievement and sustaining high performance.

During the external review process, the panel focused on 3 key areas from the External School Review framework:

**Effective Teaching:** How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

**Student Learning:** To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?

**Improvement Agenda:** How embedded and planned are the systems and practices for self-review?

### How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

Jervois Primary School is a small school with a strong community presence. Parents report that staff go 'above and beyond' in their support for the school and community, which promotes students' sense of belonging. An embedded focus on wellbeing ensures students feel safe and encouraged, which deepens their sense of connection. Parents are kept informed by the school through a variety of means, and report that staff are accessible and approachable. They are supportive of the use of the SeeSaw app in informing them what their child is doing at school and enabling learning conversations to take place at home.

Students are supported at school by the 'Four Foundations of Learning': happy, safe and belonging, stop and think, the learning pit and leading and learning. The foundations were known by, and referred to, by all students, and strengthened by a common language of visible learning and growth mindsets. This vocabulary of learning assists students, and is applied consistently throughout the school.

Staff work collaboratively both at school and within their partnership to constantly improve their practice. The use of 'pecha kucha' presentations guides teachers to share their practice in an open and transparent manner. Teachers are keen to build their capacity in contemporary pedagogies and work collaboratively to support and learn from each other. The strategic use of peer observations has strengthened this process. Staff addressed a range of focus areas in recent years, which had left some staff feeling

somewhat overwhelmed. There is potential to refine and narrow the school's focus to provide deep understanding and coherent site practice.

Data is used to access targeted intervention, and all identified students have a clear and comprehensive 'One Plan' document supporting their individual learning. Teachers and school services officers (SSOs) expressed concern around time constraints as a barrier to meaningful conversation and sharing of learning to further support targeted students. There is opportunity for teacher involvement in intervention planning and structures to enable SSO and teacher dialogue for transfer of learning back into the classroom.

The school has adopted a teaching schedule where teachers teach to their strength and take responsibility for a curriculum area, for example, math and STEM. Whilst teachers and students felt this was a positive aspect of the school, the panel felt it provided an opportunity to develop and implement a curriculum mapping guide to ensure appropriate coverage of the Australian Curriculum.

English is the one core subject which all teachers teach. There has been a strong focus on guided reading, and although guided reading was happening in all classes, it was not consistent across all year groups. Evidence informs us that students are best supported when there is a coherent, consistent approach across the school. Given the fact that English is taught by everyone and underpins the curriculum, it is imperative for staff to construct and implement a common agreement and approach to literacy.

#### **Direction 1**

**Support consistency in teaching and learning across the school by collaboratively developing and embedding common agreements, effective pedagogy and assessment in literacy.**

### **To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?**

The school's common language of visible learners and the 4 foundations support students by providing a common discourse to discuss their learning. Students talked about being in the 'learning pit' and the 'productive struggle' required to work their way out of the pit. Students discussed a personal sense of achievement when mastering new learning, and viewed learning as an ongoing process, which is sometimes 'uncomfortable' but worthwhile. Students who met with the panel discussed teachers 'pushing your limits' and 'stretching me'. The panel observed lessons which actively sought to engage students and hook them into their learning.

Jervois Primary School uses data to determine intervention provided in the form of levelled literacy intervention. The school is in the beginning stages of implementing an oral language program primarily as part of early intervention. Numeracy support is provided as a rotating process to all students and delivered in mixed ability groupings, with lesson content determined by the principal in conjunction with the SSO who delivers the content. Teachers expressed concern about not having a voice in planning and content, and felt they could provide ongoing support and consolidate learning in the classroom. There is potential for teachers to work collaboratively with support staff to plan, monitor and support the numeracy program, to provide optimum outcomes for students.

Staff are collecting data according to a data collection schedule, and storing information centrally in a digital format. Data is looked at regularly throughout the year in sessions led by the principal. Currently, the bulk of data is collated and presented by the principal to staff. Although there has been an increased focus on data, the panel found little evidence to indicate that it was being used rigorously to inform

practice at the classroom level. There is opportunity to enhance data literacy by having all staff investigate and analyse raw data, using it to inform practice.

The panel met with representative groups of students from different year groups. Students were articulate about their learning and discussed how their teachers use inquiry based learning to engage them in the curriculum. Some students discussed their learning goals, which were formulated in conference with their teacher. Other students did not have goals, although some set themselves personal goals. When talking to students about the nature of their goals, it was obvious that some were targeted learning goals, whilst others were more general and behavioural. The panel did not see a strong sense of individual tracking and monitoring of students to inform learning, and found an inconsistent approach to goal-setting. Some younger students knew their reading level, which was not verified in other classes. Very few goals were linked to learning improvement, which was in conflict with student desire to know their personal data and set goals accordingly. Growth targets in literacy and numeracy, evident and owned by students and used to track progress, will further support and stretch student achievement.

The panel found some evidence of learning intentions and success criteria. Students in upper primary talked about looking at the Australian Curriculum at the beginning of the year to provide clarity around expectations of learning. Some students reported that teachers provided rubrics as part of a self-assessment process, but it was not consistent across the school. There is an emerging push to increase student influence within the school, and the panel felt there would be great value in teachers working with students to investigate success criteria and jointly constructing self-assessment rubrics to support and stretch learning.

Students also reported that each year group received the same lesson with the same entry and exit points. By examining student book work and lesson observations, the panel corroborated this view, with little evidence of differentiated learning found. Students reported seeking more stretch and challenge in their learning as they wanted “to be stuck in the pit”, “I like challenge” and “they (teachers) need to be more challenging”. Students were positive about their maths lessons as they felt the lessons stretched their learning, challenged their thinking and provided an element of hand on, real life learning. There is opportunity for staff to work collaboratively with partnership personnel and others to investigate learning design and inquiry-based learning to support, stretch and challenge all learners.

#### **Direction 2**

**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.**

### **How embedded and planned are the systems and practices for self-review?**

The review panel was provided with a copy of the 2018 site improvement plan (SIP). The document reflects the development of a systematic approach to providing supportive and safe conditions for students to be successful learners, and a clear intent to establish and embed a connected curriculum. The SIP has its foundations firmly in Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL).

Governing council reported being well-informed in school business through receipt of a weekly principal’s report, which was also sent to staff. Through discussions with parents, including governing council, the panel saw that staff felt included in decisions made at the school and their opinions were valued. They supported leadership decisions and showed awareness of the site priorities. Governing council is well-

represented and active in social functions at the school. They report feeling connected to the school, and appreciate the extra hours staff give to support their children.

The school's yearly planning processes are currently led by the principal. When asked about self-review processes, staff talked about the principal presenting data trends, which teachers then looked at in groups and used to set directions. Perception data, student social and emotional wellbeing surveys, behaviour records, and a range of scheduled assessment information are available to form a valuable bank of multiple measures. SSOs reported not being involved in the current self-review process and this, therefore, provides an opportunity to look at structures to include all staff in the process. The principal reported that staff collected data, but the next step was to support interrogation and use of data to inform practice as part of an ongoing process.

General feedback from staff was that the principal drives school direction, supported by input from teachers. Teachers viewed the SIP as a guiding document and felt connected to it as it was routinely referred to. When asked how the SIP translates into classroom practice, staff indicated that, although partnership focus dictates some of their priority actions, it is still seen as relevant to their practice.

All staff are using the department's professional development plan, and all plans were aligned to the SIP and professional learning. Staff reported that self-review, SIP and professional development plans strategically aligned to improve performance in agreed focus areas. There is evidence that clear processes exist to reflect on data.

Although the panel found evidence of planned systems and practices of self-review, there was little evidence to suggest processes and practice are embedded. To embed practice and create sustained improvements in educational outcomes, it is imperative that strategic directions and annual school improvement plans are determined collaboratively. There are opportunities to reflect on this, and involve all stakeholders at a consultative level, which will provide greater ownership by all staff.

### **Direction 3**

**Collectively enable all staff to work together in a culture of continuous improvement using self-review practices which link SIP, PDPs and professional learning with classroom practice.**

## **What is the school doing particularly well and why is this effective?**

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practices that are contributing significantly to school improvement at Jervois Primary School.

Effective practice in school community partnerships and leadership were evident. All stakeholders, students, parents and staff provided a number of examples of how the school engages with the community to showcase student achievement. The principal has strategically aligned the school's professional learning and performance and development processes to provide a range of learning opportunities promoting high expectations and quality teaching.

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

Jervois Primary School has created safe conditions for learning through effective relationships with students, parents and all stakeholders.

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

1. Support consistency in teaching and learning across the school by collaboratively developing and embedding common agreements, effective pedagogy and assessment in literacy.
2. 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.
3. Collectively enable all staff to work together in a culture of continuous improvement using self-review practices which link SIP, PDPs and professional learning with classroom practice.

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



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JERVOIS PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Governing Council Chairperson

## Appendix 1

### Attendance policy compliance

Implementation of the Education Department student attendance policy was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy.

The school attendance rate for 2017 was 89.4%.

## Appendix 2

### 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 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 76% of year 3 students, 73% of year 5 students and 75% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For all year groups this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2018, 53% of year 3, 27% of year 5, and 25% 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, 60%, or 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 50%, or 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

#### Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 76% of year 3 students, 64% of year 5 students, and 67% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 7, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2018, 30% of year 3, 27% 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, 100% of students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 50% of students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.