

# **Department for Education**

## **External School Review**

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

**Report for Gladstone Primary School**

Conducted in May 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, they all have been considered and contribute to the development and directions of this report.

This review was conducted by Helen Tunney, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Lynne Noll, Review Principal.

## Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relating 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 Support Officers (SSOs)
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

## School context

Gladstone Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 217kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment R-7 in 2019 is 66 students. Enrolment was 55 at the time of the previous review. The school is classified as Category 2 on the Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score in 2017 was 937, down from 973 in 2015. The local partnership is Upper Mid North.

The school was amalgamated with Georgetown Primary School and Gladstone Preschool in 2017. There is now a preschool and childcare centre on-site at Gladstone Primary School that are managed by the principal.

The current school population includes 15% Aboriginal students, 14% students with a verified disability, 56% of families eligible for school card assistance, no students of English as an additional language or dialect background and no students in care.

The school team consists of a principal in the 3rd year of her tenure at the school, 7 teachers (5.0 FTE), none in the early years of their career, 1 Step 9 teacher, an ACEO and 0.2 AET to support Aboriginal students and their families. There has been a full turnover of staff since the last ESR.

## Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Improve reading and numeracy achievement, growth and retention in upper bands across the school through the consistent implementation of agreed, effective and evidence-based pedagogical approaches.
- Direction 2** Improve student achievement and growth in numeracy through the successful implementation of the Gladstone Primary School Numeracy Agreement, reception to year 7, in each classroom.
- Direction 3** Challenge and engage students in learning by building teacher capacity across the school through focused observations and reflective feedback in implementing agreed evidence-based teaching practices aligned to the Teaching for Effective Learning framework.
- Direction 4** Raise learning expectations across the school and community through the implementation of agreed dispositions (or mindsets) for learners that support and encourage personal growth. Embed these characteristics through the formal teaching and learning program at Gladstone Primary School.
- Direction 5** Raise student achievement by making the learning intentions and success criteria accessible and clear for all learners in the multi-age classes, and encourage student progress through a culture of high expectations.
- Direction 6** Review the role of the explicit teaching of reading across the school and develop an agreed and documented whole-school approach, inclusive of reading intervention.

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

The school has worked actively to develop student agency in learning, improve student resilience and foster personal growth, and embed consistent numeracy practices across the school. Intervention processes are now data-informed and linked to literacy programs in the classroom. The documentation of agreed literacy and numeracy practices has begun. Student achievement data shows evidence of growth in some areas. Students spoke in ways which indicate levels of metacognition about the purposes and processes of learning. Families are very satisfied with the quality and outcomes of the learning programs at the school.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

#### *How well does the school use evidence from student achievement and growth data to inform relevant and high-impact goals and targets for improvement?*

The principal maintains data sets of student growth over time. This results in seamless transmission of data over time, year by year with teachers accessing this data when they need it. This data informed the school improvement plan (SIP) goal. In all classes teachers collect and use their own data sets for planning intentional teaching and monitoring student growth over small increments of time. The work of the R-3 team is particularly noteworthy. Teachers make strong use of data to inform teaching, including longer term data, as well as monitoring data to identify the 'nudge' points for each child. Teachers have high level awareness of their impact.

The school is making good use of data at a whole-school level to track growth and achievement over time and to identify group and individual improvement targets. Teachers are developing and using their own varying data practices at a classroom/student level to intentionalise teaching and to monitor improvement. However, stated success criteria in the SIP are difficult to measure and monitor, for example: 'show increased understanding'. The next step for the school is to directly connect whole-school level data practices by standardising school data practices between teachers, using these data sets to inform SIP success criteria attainment and strengthen links between classroom practices and the school's improvement targets.

**Direction 1** Ensure that school improvement plan targets for increased student learning outcomes are achieved through links to the success criteria that facilitates monitoring of growth towards stated targets, which are measureable and used consistently by all teachers.

### Effective teaching and student learning

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

A reading program is used consistently across the school. It is well-established and valued by teachers who explicitly develop student reading and comprehension skills until the end of year 7. Through the long-term numeracy focus all teachers are using maths approaches that focus on the development of number sense through experimentation, inquiry and connections to real-life. Participation in partnership work is influencing the building of effective practices across the school. All students could describe how they receive and use feedback from teachers. This feedback shows them how they are going in their learning

and how to make their learning better. Students value the school for the quality of learning experiences and outcomes it provides them. Students in every class could talk at a metacognitive level about what they are learning, why and how to do it better.

The school has taken significant steps to ensure its decisions about pedagogical practices are evidence-based and all teachers are building capacity in the use of identified practices. The effect of dividing the school into 2 teaching teams to facilitate this work has both strengths and disadvantages. This practice impacts planning but impedes whole-school coherence. There is more work to be done in gaining greater consistency between teachers, in particular between R-3 and 4-7 teachers, in the application of agreed literacy and numeracy practices, practices to engage student agency in the learning process and the development of student metacognition.

**Direction 2** Improve student learning outcomes through the development of greater coherence, continuity and progression of learning across the years of schooling.

There is a need to significantly strengthen the monitoring and managing of student yard behaviour. Students unanimously said that consequences are applied inconsistently and are mostly ineffective. The school is well-placed to take an evidence-based approach to monitor and manage student relationships and conflicts in order to address issues raised about student behaviour by a range of stakeholder groups.

**Direction 3** Systematise the management of student behaviour to ensure social and behavioural codes are clear and implemented consistently.

### **Effective leadership**

#### ***How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?***

There has been a smooth amalgamation of sites and staff change has been beneficial. Teachers value the autonomy they have to use their initiative and accept responsibility for initiatives. Teachers are proactive and bring to the attention of the principal matters which require a whole-school approach. Performance and development meetings are held twice yearly for each teacher. Informal observations happen regularly as the principal 'pops in' to classrooms. Teachers said that staff meetings are focussed on students and improving their learning.

Teachers are making the most of opportunities they have to improve the impact of their teaching on student learning. These opportunities include professional learning, team work, partnership work, performance and development processes and classroom observations. The next step for the school is for the principal to work more closely with each individual teacher. For example, there is an opportunity to get more value from classroom observations by providing feedback to the teacher following an observation.

There is also an opportunity to better follow-up in classrooms the focus in staff and team meetings on improving student learning. Such practices will support teacher uptake of agreed whole-school practices, monitoring the impact of teaching on student learning and provide access to quality, personalised and timely feedback that facilitates ongoing capacity building. In this way the principal will be able to closely monitor the impact of improvement work as well as to individualise and personalise each professional teacher-principal relationship.

**Direction 4** Continuously ensure high expectations and quality teaching for every student and enhance performance and development through the provision of feedback to teachers about the efficacy of their teaching.

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

At Gladstone Primary School the influence of previous ESR directions is evident in the school's improvement. The school is effectively using improvement planning and monitoring processes to raise student achievement. Teachers analyse feedback and assessment data to design differentiated learning.

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

- Direction 1** Ensure that stated school improvement plan targets for increased student achievement are achieved through links to success criteria that: facilitate monitoring of growth towards stated targets, are measurable and used consistently by all teachers.
- Direction 2** Improve student learning outcomes through the development of greater coherence, continuity and progression of learning across the years of schooling.
- Direction 3** Systematise the management of student behaviour to ensure social and behavioural codes are clear and implemented consistently.
- Direction 4** Continuously ensure high expectations and quality teaching for every student and enhance performance and development through the provision of feedback to teachers about the efficacy of their teaching.

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



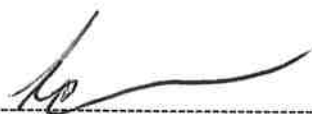
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# Appendix 1

## 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, 86% of year 1 and 57% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 1 this result represents an improvement and for year 2 little or no change from the historic baseline average.

The trend for year 1 has been upwards, from 57% to 86%, although the trend for year 2 has been downwards, from 75% to 57% from 2016 to 2018 respectively.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 56% of year 3 students, 57% of year 5 students, and 50% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents a decline and for year 7, little or no change.

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

In 2018, 33% of year 3, 14% of year 5 and 0% 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.

### Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 44% of year 3 students, 43% of year 5 students and 58% 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 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

The trend for years 3 and 7 have been downward from 67% to 44% and 82% to 58% between 2016 and 2018 respectively.

In 2018, years 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN numeracy, the school achieved within the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 33% of year 3, 0% of year 5 and 0% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.