

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Melaleuca Park Primary School

Conducted in March 2021



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 Rebecca Pears, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Jodie Kingham, 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
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Melaleuca Park Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 450kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 133. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 136. The local partnership is Blue Lake.

The school has an ICSEA score of 858 and is classified as Category 1 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 21% Aboriginal students, 21% students with disabilities, 4% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 6% children/young people in care and 90% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the second year of tenure, Deputy Principal and Lead Teacher (AST2) facilitating coaching for effective teaching and learning.

There are 10.9 Teachers including 2 in the early years of their career and 3 Step 9 Teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Identify school priorities and agreements and establish measurable targets that inform strategic planning through cycles of self-review that facilitate collective analysis of achievement data.
- Direction 2** Establish consistent pedagogical approaches across the school through exploration of recognised frameworks regarding practice that engages students of all ages in processes of inquiry and intellectual challenge.
- Direction 3** Design learning opportunities that are tailored to the needs of each student through analysis of achievement data and the identification of individualised learning goals.
- Direction 4** Build teacher capacity to use data analytically and plan strategically through processes of Performance and Development and Professional Learning that are highly focused to align with the school's priorities.

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

The leadership team have implemented cyclic self-review processes including the analysis of student achievement data to assess whether identified targets have been achieved. These processes have then been used to identify the challenge of practice and determine the improvement priorities for the following year. A range of professional learning in relation to the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities has occurred. This has included training in relation to learning sprints, formative assessment and effective pedagogy for teaching phonics. New literacy practices and pedagogy have been introduced from reception to year 2. This has resulted in a consistent and coherent differentiated literacy program being taught throughout the early years.

Teachers are involved in 3 teaching sprints throughout the year, based on SIP priorities. The sprints

involve teachers identifying new strategies to improve teaching practice and then monitoring and evaluating the impact of these strategies on student achievement. Teachers have been completing 'floor books' to record and collaboratively discuss changes made to their teaching practice. Performance Development processes identify professional development needs. The Principal completes observations in classrooms and provides explicit feedback to teachers within a 24-hour period. A data collection schedule has been created and teachers are analysing student achievement data, particularly running records to inform their practice.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school use improvement planning processes to raise student achievement?

The panel noted high levels of commitment to ongoing improvement from all staff. Leadership analyse multiple measures of data to determine the impact of the SIP priorities. Teachers are using teaching sprints to analyse and improve pedagogical practices related to the SIP focus areas. The sprints involve teachers implementing new practices and programs and then monitoring and evaluating the impact of these actions on student achievement. Teachers have continued to implement these effective evidence-based practices developed through learning sprints. 'Floor books' have been used to record and reflect on the effectiveness of teaching practices. In addition, teachers have participated in professional development on the use of formative assessment and as a result are implementing a variety of assessment practices.

Improving student perceptions of themselves as readers and writers is part of the identified SIP goal. Teachers reported that students' perceptions of themselves have improved as evidenced by them being more willing to write. A measuring tool to accurately monitor student perceptions would allow the school to evaluate the goals more authentically. Students are still experiencing some difficulty in transferring the skills they have developed in reading into their writing. Teachers are regularly using assessments to monitor and analyse student achievement in reading. However, they find it more difficult to regularly assess student writing and this is an area for further consideration.

Staff demonstrated that they know the focus of the SIP. Although leadership staff had shared information with staff in relation to achieving the SIP targets, staff could not remember the outcome. Some teachers viewed the SIP as a whole-school plan, not necessarily as relevant to classroom practice. Staff identified that having a separate reading and writing goal would be beneficial and support the implementation of the SIP. The enactment of the SIP is communicated with the Governing Council and its members were able to articulate the focus areas.

Direction 1 Strengthen staff ownership of the Site Improvement Plan through a collaborative whole-school approach to the development, implementation and review of the plan.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

A data collection schedule has been created and as a result a wide range of assessments are being used by teachers to analyse student achievement. During the implementation of learning sprints teachers closely monitor several identified students to determine the effectiveness of the strategies implemented.

Students are provided with a range of feedback and positive reinforcement in relation to their behaviour, to help them engage in learning. During lessons teachers provide instant, mainly verbal feedback related to learning. Since participating in professional learning on formative assessment, teachers have been more intentional when providing feedback to students.

Parents are receiving feedback from teachers through the use of learning folders and online platforms. The learning folders contain information about students' next steps in learning. Teachers identified that whilst they are sharing next steps for learning with parents, they are not always communicating these to students. The majority of students were not able to clearly articulate their next steps in learning.

Students are involved in 'circle time' each day, where they have the opportunity to give feedback to teachers. Student interests are incorporated in the task design of discovery learning, which occurs every morning in all classes. Most teachers, however, identified that students are not providing feedback to influence task design outside of this time. The introduction of diverse strategies that enable students to provide teachers with feedback would be beneficial.

Teachers reported that students struggle with challenges in their learning and prefer easier tasks. At times, although teachers have analysed assessment data prior to units of work, they begin new learning at a basic level to ensure all students can access the learning. Most teachers identified that on some occasions they are stretching and challenging students. However, learning is often scaffolded to support students experiencing learning difficulties. Providing planned and regular opportunities for productive struggle and challenge is an area for further development.

Direction 2 **Embed the use of assessment and feedback data to influence learning design thus ensuring all students are challenged and know their next steps in learning.**

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Staff are to be commended for the implementation of behaviour management strategies that support students to self-regulate and engage in learning. Students with inappropriate behaviour are supported and when possible, refocused back into learning. Teachers demonstrated strategies used to differentiate learning tasks to cater for individual student's needs. Literacy practice in the junior primary involved effective and planned differentiation. Students are assessed and allocated to small learning groups according to their next steps in learning. The panel observed that students were highly engaged in their learning and accessed very explicit teaching. Teachers have been using the Department for Education's guidebooks to further refine and reflect on their teaching practice.

There was some evidence of the teaching of growth mindset strategies throughout the school. Many students involved in discussions, reported that on occasions their learning tasks are too easy. Some students stated that they would like to be more challenged in their learning. Teachers acknowledged that this was an area for ongoing development.

The majority of students have an individual learning plan that contains personal learning goals, which result from the analysis of student achievement data. These goals, where possible, are discussed and shared with parents. Parents also have access to a learning folder which contains information about students' next steps in learning. However, most students were unable to articulate their individual learning goals. Teachers identified that involving students in identifying their own challenging learning goals and providing opportunities for them to regularly review their progress, was an area for further development. Displaying student goals in a visible form in the classroom would support students to monitor and achieve their identified targets and challenges. Providing opportunities for students to assess, monitor and reflect on their learning will support them to have ownership of their own learning.

Direction 3 To work collaboratively with students to develop, review and monitor challenging personal learning goals on a regular basis.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

The staff at Melaleuca Park Primary School need to be commended for their care towards students and their commitment to improving student outcomes. When required students are supported to improve their behaviour and then re-engage in learning. The wellbeing room is available to assist students experiencing difficulties, particularly in relation to self-regulation. Once students have accessed the wellbeing room they are supported to complete missed work, prior to returning to the classroom. Parents interviewed during the review all agreed that staff really care about students and do their best to support those experiencing difficulties.

The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1** **Strengthen staff ownership of the Site Improvement Plan through a collaborative whole-school approach to the development, implementation and review of the plan.**
- Direction 2** **Embed the use of assessment and feedback data to influence learning design thus ensuring all students are challenged and know their next steps in learning.**
- Direction 3** **To work collaboratively with students to enable them to develop, review and monitor challenging personal learning goals on a regular basis.**

Based on the school's current performance, Melaleuca Park Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



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Matt Crowden
A/Principal
Melaleuca Park 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).

Reading

In the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2019 50% of year 1 and 50% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 56% of year 3 students, 50% of year 5 students and 27% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5 this represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For year 7 this represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 7 has been downwards from 67% to 27%.

For 2019 year 3 and year 5 NAPLAN reading the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools. The year 7 NAPLAN reading is achieving lower than the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2019, 25% of year 3, 0% 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.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 56% of year 3 students, 42% of year 5 students and 45% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For years 5 and 7 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 19% of year 3, no year 5 and no year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 7 has been downwards from 11% to nil.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

