

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Meningie Area School

Conducted in May 2019



Government of South Australia
Department for Education

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 contributed to the development and directions of this report.

This review was conducted by Julie Bishop Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Peter McKay Review Principal.

Review Process

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

- Presentation from the principal and senior leaders
- Class visits across all classrooms and areas of learning
- Attendance at staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Aboriginal Community Education Officers (ACEOs)
 - Governing Council
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Support Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Meningie Area School caters for children and young people from reception to year 12. It is situated 148km from the Adelaide CBD. The current enrolment is 175. Enrolment has fluctuated over the last 5 years. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 198 students.

The school has an ICSEA score of 886, and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 33% Aboriginal students, 6% students with disabilities, 30% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 2 children/young people in care and 35% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 4th year of his tenure, a deputy principal, 1 senior leader (secondary) and 2 coordinators with the respective responsibilities for wellbeing and the primary years.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Further develop practices which utilise formative assessment feedback to ensure learning intentions are understood and support is appropriately scaffolded and challenging for the full range of learners.
- Direction 2** Strengthen opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively to develop their practices in assessment (formative and summative) and planning.
- Direction 3** Continue to explore ways of promoting respectful and productive partnerships with parents of Aboriginal children and strengthen Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum.

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

The school is currently developing a whole- site approach to formative assessment. There is still significant work for the site to undertake before learning intentions and success criteria are embedded across the site. Providing regular, planned opportunities for students to be challenged in their learning remains an area for ongoing development.

It was reported that teacher planning processes have been formalised with expectations agreed to and acted upon. The development of weekly plans in English and maths has supported the work of the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Fortnightly team meetings provide opportunities to collaborate across learning areas. Regular moderation of student writing has increasingly built expertise and confidence within staff and the principal reports this expertise is now translating to improved classroom practice.

Ngarrindjeri language has been introduced for Aboriginal students as 1 of 2 LOTE languages offered in the school. Cultural awareness training has been undertaken by many staff resulting in the AET strategically working with leaders and teachers to strengthen Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

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

The school identified improvement in oral language, writing and numeracy as goals in their 2019 school improvement plan (SIP). The principal reported that the SIP was monitored by the leadership team who have been allocated responsibilities for identified goals. Assessment tools to track and monitor growth in each of the goals were also identified. Staff reflections acknowledged that initially their thinking was too broad, therefore targets were subsequently amended to ensure goals were deep and narrow.

The implementation of an assessment tool to monitor writing improvement has been introduced across the site with the exception of senior secondary. Teachers compare student work to calibrated exemplars resulting in a scaled score. This moderation process is developing consistent teacher judgements within, and across, year levels.

A learning and assessment framework for multiplicative thinking, which includes assessment tasks, is used to track and monitor numeracy improvement. The framework is organised into zones, from initial explorations with concrete materials through to complex multiplicative structures and implications for teaching practice. Students from years 3 to 8 will focus on multiplicative thinking.

The third goal is focused on improving oral language in the early years. Oral language is the foundation for the development of literacy skills and is a strong indicator of later reading, writing, and overall academic success. The school is to be commended for resuming the tracking and monitoring of receptive language skills at the beginning of 2019 through the oral language assessment (OLA). The inclusion of tracking and monitoring OLA progress at regular intervals throughout the year will support and inform the next steps to improve oral language development for all students.

The leadership team acknowledged that whilst they had focused on their discreet responsibilities the work of the SIP needed to be referenced and embedded across the site. Developing collective ownership and responsibility for school improvement is imperative to continual improvement. The review panel believes the school is well positioned to undertake this significant work.

Direction 1 Strengthen and embed processes to ensure that all teachers are active participants in the ongoing development, implementation and review of the SIP.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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

The school has worked strategically to develop structures and processes to support ongoing professional dialogue, and collaboration, designed to strengthen teaching and learning at Meningie Area School. Detailed evidence relating to curriculum planning was provided by the leadership team.

Currently two PLCs operate where staff are released for two lessons on alternate weeks. The focus for the PLCs are English and maths. Staff demonstrated high levels of commitment to their PLCs with one group currently exploring opportunities to meet on a more frequent basis. Planned opportunities for the two groups to share their learning will support coherence when planning and the consistent delivery of effective pedagogical across the site.

Currently, not all teachers are provided with the opportunity to participate in PLCs. A coherent approach to curriculum planning and implementation is dependent upon equitable access for all staff to participate in valued learning opportunities. As a result, this is an area of development for the school.

Senior and junior school hub-groups meet every second week as an integral component of the staff meeting structure. The focus of hub-groups includes administrative issues, collaborative planning and a focus on SIP goals. SSOs regularly choose to attend relevant hub-group meetings.

The school is committed to ensuring that staff have regular access to targeted professional learning that is relevant and aligned to SIP priorities. Staff, via a survey conducted during the ESR, reported a wide variance in the impact that performance and development processes have on their planning, assessment and teaching, with several staff indicating minimal impact. Developing consistency in performance and development processes across the site will strengthen the collective efficacy of all teachers.

Multiple data sets are used to track and monitor student achievement. Work in this area would be further strengthened through planned opportunities for data informed conversations which become an integral component of performance and development meetings.

Direction 2 Strengthen teacher capacity through consistent performance and development processes where data informed conversations are used to inform and improve planning.

SCHOOL CULTURE

To what extent does the school promote a culture of learning with high expectations of achievement for all learners?


NAPLAN datasets indicate that achievement in the higher bands in reading, writing and numeracy are areas for ongoing development. School datasets indicate that some students are achieving at very high levels in some assessments (PAT Reading and PAT Maths), however this is not evident across the range of assessments.

During interviews held with students from years 3 to 12 the majority of students indicated that they are often given 'easy work', and stated that they wanted learning to be more challenging. Science and maths were identified by students as areas where they were consistently challenged.

When asked how teachers could assist them to become better learners, students provided a range of responses including: 'do pre-tests so the teacher knows where we are, get to know us as individual learners, give us feedback on what we've done and help us to find different ways when we are stuck'. It is apparent that students are committed to improve their learning and are aware of strategies that will support them to improve.

A diverse range of examples highlighting how staff differentiate learning was provided to the panel. During ESR interviews staff identified that high expectations for all learners could be further strengthened through planned opportunities for staff to share strategies that improve differentiation across year levels and learning areas. Task design that features multiple entry and exit points, and regular opportunities for all students to be challenged will be significant work for the school going forward.

When we share learning assessment with students we are providing them with the opportunity to become equal partners in their learning. This collaboration, between students and teachers, supports the defining of next steps in learning. This process would benefit from the development and implementation of a common 'language for learning' across all learning areas and classrooms. The school is well positioned to undertake this work.



Direction 3 Strengthen and embed a culture of learning where students have regular, planned opportunities to be challenged in their learning including providing and receiving feedback about themselves as learners.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Meningie Area School has developed strong partnerships with the wider community. Governing council members demonstrated a strong sense of commitment to the school and noted that the school was continuing an improvement journey which includes higher expectations for students. Aboriginal community members also reported a strong sense of belonging to, and support for, the school. The school has developed comprehensive processes to track and monitor student growth over time. Class teachers sharing this data with individual students at regular intervals will consolidate the comprehensive work undertaken in this area.

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

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| Direction 1 | Strengthen and embed processes to ensure that all teachers are active participants in the ongoing development, implementation and review of the School improvement plan. |
| Direction 2 | Strengthen teacher capacity through consistent performance and development processes where data informed conversations are used to inform and improve planning. |
| Direction 3 | Strengthen and embed a culture of learning where students have regular, planned opportunities to be challenged in their learning including providing and receiving feedback about themselves as learners. |

Based on the school's current performance, Meningie Area 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, 63% of year 1 and 36% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement for year 1 and a decline from the historic baseline average for year 2.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 2 has been downwards, from 67% in 2016 to 36% in 2018.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 71% of year 3 students, 62% of year 5 students, 79% of year 7 students and 50% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 9, this result represents little or no change and for year 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic average.

For 2018, year 3, 5 and 9 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools. For year 7 the school is achieving higher results than similar students across government schools.

In 2018, 19% of year 3, 8% of year 5, 21% of year 7, and 0% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading 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 reading, 33%, or 1 of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, 50%, or 3 of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, 0%, or 0 of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9, and 0%, or 0 of 0 students from year 7 remain in the upper bands at year 9 in 2018.

Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 38% of year 3 students, 62% of year 5 students, 71% of year 7 students and 64% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average, for year 5 this result represents little or no change and for years 7 and 9 this results represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for years 3 and 5 has been downwards, from 81% in 2016 to 38% in 2018 for year 3 and for year 5, from 71% in 2016 to 62% in 2018.

For 2018, year 3, NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving lower than the results of similar groups of students across government schools. For 2018, years 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 19% of year 3, 0% of year 5, 8% of year 7 and 0% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 0%, or 0 of 0 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, 25%, or 1 of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, 0% or 0 of 0 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9 and 0% or 0 of 0 students from year 7 remain in the upper bands at year 9 in 2018.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2018, 62% of students enrolled in February and 100% of those enrolled in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve SACE. This result for October SACE completion represents an improvement from the historic baseline average

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2018, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 92% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 89% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 95% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2018, 90% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 2% of grades were at an 'A' level and 54% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline averages for the 'C-' or higher, 'A' grade and 'B' grade respectively.

83% of students completed SACE using VET and there were 0 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2018.

In terms of 2018 tertiary entrance, 43%, or 3 out of 7 potential students achieved an ATAR, 71% or 5 out of 7 achieved a TAFE SA selection score.

