

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for East Torrens Primary School

Conducted in November 2020



## School context

East Torrens Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 8kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 365. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 331. The local partnership is Campbell.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1063, and is classified as Category 3 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 4% Aboriginal students, 15% students with disabilities, 30% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2% children/young people in care and 45% of students eligible for School Card assistance. There are also 2 district special classes and additional 7 Intensive English Language Classes.

The school leadership team consists of:

- principal in 5<sup>th</sup> year of her tenure (extension until Jan 2022)
- senior leader curriculum in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of their 1<sup>st</sup> tenure
- senior leader IELP in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of their 2<sup>nd</sup> tenure
- wellbeing leader appointed temporarily for 2020.

There are 31 teachers (23 in mainstream and 8 in the IELP), including 5 in the early years of their career and 14 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Monitor and moderate student progress against the Australian Curriculum achievement standards, by developing a coherent whole-school approach to the use of summative and formative assessment.
- Direction 2** Ensure all students are well-supported to achieve the DECD Standards of Educational Achievement by utilising an agreed suite of diagnostic assessments to design intervention strategies and track progress.
- Direction 3** Build strong partnerships for powerful learning by ensuring teachers, students and parents share expectations, set goals and work together to support improved learning outcomes.
- Direction 4** Transform the collaborative work of staff by ensuring professional learning teams (PLTs) are used to build the school's capacity to focus on learning improvement as a shared endeavour.

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

The school placed high importance on the effective implementation of professional learning teams (PLTs), to build capacity of staff and focus on improvement in student outcomes in literacy and numeracy since the last review. Staff have a collective responsibility for the school's improvement journey and that of individual students. Class teachers and leadership place value on the work of the PLTs, which were effective throughout the improvement cycle. Staff are now initiating and participating in shared

professional development based on their individual learning and practice.

A coherent assessment framework was established and teachers use data to best support students in their learning. The school promotes using formative assessment to inform task design and build clarity about using learning intentions. Intervention processes are effective and progress regularly reviewed. The school employed an intervention teacher with the aim of improving outcomes for younger students in reading. PLTs concentrate on the growth data for students and implications for planning and teaching. Tracking and monitoring of student achievement is central to the work of staff at East Torrens Primary School. Appointing focus teachers was a key strategy to support teachers' effective use of data for future learning.

Staff participated in professional learning and staff discussions which focused on dispositions of successful learners. This work was shared with the school community through parent meetings, newsletters and displays in classrooms. The school works with target groups for specific purposes endeavouring to inform and build trust between the school and community. Parents supported this in discussions with the panel.

## 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?

East Torrens Primary School uses clear processes to support their improvement planning and implementation cycle. Staff are dedicated to improvement, both in student achievement and in building their capacity to best support their students. Leadership and staff stated that improvement decisions are made using evidence-based datasets. Tracking and monitoring of agreed data is formalised across the school. The analysis of student outcomes and effective practice across the school by leadership and focus teachers is a strength. The school appointed focus teachers, linked to the school priorities, meet weekly with leadership to share and monitor the progress of the actions in the school improvement plan (SIP). PLTs are a key strategy for supporting consistent implementation of the plan. Focus teachers use this structure to work with teachers collectively, particularly aligned to the maths priority. There are clear expectations from leadership in the use of additional release time provided for class teachers to work in PLTs and common non-instruction time. The emphasis is on collaborative planning informed by student achievement data. Staff are clear about their responsibility for improving student outcomes being at the centre of regular data conversations with colleagues and leadership. The school has a mantra – ‘How well we teach = how well they learn’, which is evident across the staff.

Leadership ensure there is alignment between professional learning and the SIP. Staff value the opportunity for a narrow and ongoing emphasis towards their learning, with time to implement, work with colleagues and share their learning. They could articulate how specific professional learning and resultant actions influenced their practice, particularly in mathematics. There are expectations of linking professional development plans to SIP priorities. Parents are provided with regular updates through governing council. Governing council believe their views are valued when discussing the progress of the plan.

Teachers concentrate on improvement in student achievement data and understand they have a key role in the implementation of actions in the plan. Measuring effectiveness of actions taken across the school is mostly work of leadership and the focus teachers. Teachers recognise taking an increasing role in monitoring the impact of the plan with clear links to challenges of practice will develop collective ownership throughout the stages of improvement. Strengthening processes to support staff to more effectively monitor and evaluate the impact against the success criteria, both individually and collectively, will continue to enhance the school improvement strategies.

**Direction 1**     **Strategically strengthen processes to build staff capacity to monitor progress of the plan linking the challenges of practice, plans of action and the process of evaluating impact based on clearly articulated success criteria.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

Student achievement is at the centre of the work of staff. There are defined roles and responsibilities to support the structures and processes to best meet the needs of students. The school processes to track, monitor and act on the achievement growth of Aboriginal students and other priority groups is a strength. PLTs meet regularly, and the emphasis was consistent and ongoing with the development of effective practices in maths. A focus teacher supports the building capacity of teachers, through the PLT structure. Teachers are involved in the analysis of data and implications for planning, both for individual students, and collectively, to target the learning. Teachers talked about a range of strategies they use to support students' understanding and expectations of their learning, including the use of learning intentions and success criteria. Staff were involved in professional learning on effective task design, and sustained this learning through discussions in PLTs. Continued emphasis on strengthening task design and moderation processes linked to achievement standards will support students to achieve at higher levels.

Parents are happy with the reporting quality they receive about their child's progress, through both formal and informal processes. They have a clear understanding of where their child is at with their learning. There are regular, formal structures in place to support all staff to communicate information about individual students and how best to support their learning needs. Agreed timelines are in place for staff to regularly measure the impact of the effectiveness of intervention processes.

Teachers use a range of formative assessment strategies to inform their planning. There were examples from students of opportunities to self-assess and provide feedback for their peers. Students are aware that effective feedback is important for their learning. Students stated they participate in feedback discussions about their work with their teacher that is inclusive of how to improve their work. Student ability to clearly articulate their next steps in learning was not consistent. The development of effectiveness and depth of how teachers use formative assessment and feedback to and from students to inform differentiated learning is ongoing. The school is well-placed to strengthen effective task design and assessment practices which challenge students in learning.

**Direction 2    Strengthen and embed differentiated planning and instruction through effective task and assessment design which ensures students have planned opportunities to demonstrate learning at higher levels.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

There is a clear culture of learning across the school, as well as collective responsibility to provide quality learning for all students. Teachers place importance on valuing every student and how best to engage them in the learning. Wellbeing of both staff and students underpins the learning. Student work is valued, evident through class and school displays. Opportunities exist through the student representative council to demonstrate leadership. The school places significance on student opinions through listening and actions taken. Students are given opportunities to choose the way they learn (groups, pairs or individual) and what they learn within the topic, through following up on an area of interest. Teachers provide verbal feedback through 1:1 check-in processes with students that includes improvement strategies. This feedback is given 'in the moment', and teachers talked about observing improvements occurring based on this feedback in future work. Processes to support students to articulate their next steps in learning varied in effectiveness across the school. There was evidence of teachers using rubrics to support students' understanding of learning expectations. However, there was limited evidence of opportunities for students to co-construct these rubrics or contribute to how the learning is designed.

Students at all levels benefit from having opportunities to be active participants in their own learning. Both leadership and teachers acknowledge that, while there is good practice in the school, strengthening collective teacher and student capacity and practice is an area of growth. Fostering willingness of staff through planned opportunities to work collaboratively and build common understandings and strategies, which strengthen authentic student influence, is a step the school is well-placed to undertake.

**Direction 3     Develop effective practices in student agency by building capacity of staff to empower students to be active participants in the design of learning and taking increasing responsibility for their progression of learning.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

Staff at East Torrens Primary School place high priority on delivering quality learning for their students. There is a staff commitment to build their collective capacity to best meet the needs of the students with whom they work. Leadership and staff have high expectations of themselves and aim to celebrate their successes throughout their improvement journey.

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

- Direction 1**    **Strategically strengthen processes to build staff capacity to monitor progress of the plan linking the challenges of practice, plans of action and the process of evaluating impact based on clearly articulated success criteria.**
- Direction 2**    **Strengthen and embed differentiated planning and instruction through effective task and assessment design which ensures students have planned opportunities to demonstrate learning at higher levels.**
- Direction 3**    **Develop effective practices in student agency by building capacity of staff to empower students to be active participants in the design of learning and taking increasing responsibility for their progression of learning.**

Based on the school's current performance, East Torrens Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



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Gael Little  
Principal  
East Torrens Primary School



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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, 35% of year 1 and 42% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 80% of year 3 students, 75% of year 5 students and 74% 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 3 has been upwards, from 54% to 80%.

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

In 2019, 35% of year 3, 15% of year 5 and 13% 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, 67%, or 2 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 50%, or 2 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 70% of year 3 students, 65% of year 5 students and 78% 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.

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

In 2019, 30% of year 3, 15% of year 5 and 22% 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.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 33%, or 1 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 67%, or 2 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.