

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Monash Primary School

Conducted in February 2020



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 Tanya Oshinsky, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Ros Frost, 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 and survey at staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent group
 - School Support Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Monash Primary School caters for students from preschool to year 7. It is 230kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 171 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 211. The local partnership is Berri and Barmera.

The school has an ICSEA score of 997, and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 6% Aboriginal students, 11% students with disabilities, 4% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 1% children/young people in care and 40% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 2nd year of their tenure, a Band 1 leader in student wellbeing and intervention and a Band 1 leader as a teaching and learning impact coach.

There are 11 teachers including 1 Step 9 teacher.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Encourage students to achieve their personal best by developing consistent school-wide practices for involving students authentically in the design of assessment tasks, determining the associated benchmark measures, and establishing success criteria.
- Direction 2** Challenge students to achieve high standards with appropriate support by developing a continuum from emerging skills to skill consolidation across Reception to Year 7 of what personalised learning goals and intellectual challenge look like at each year level.
- Direction 3** Promote transparency for the benchmarking of Australian Curriculum Standards across the school community by developing the capacity of staff to challenge each other's practice and lift professional performance to the next level with respect to making consistent and comparable judgements of student learning progress and achievement.

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

The improvement journey at Monash Primary School has been strategically focused on developing a common language and practices by establishing the 'Successful Learners Framework' and 'Social and Emotional Framework'. This deliberate course has been purposeful in building a positive sense of belonging and connectedness to the school. The consultative processes undertaken with all stakeholders has enabled the language of both frameworks to become embedded in daily practice. The panel found staff, students and most parents, to be proud of the journey that has been undertaken. Addressing wellbeing has been at the forefront of the school's priorities for some time and continues to be so. Visible Learning, introduced as part of a partnership agreement over the past three years, aligns well with the frameworks and the panel found that all teachers have trialled various high impact strategies over time. It will be important for the school to identify which of these strategies will become embedded as part of whole-school expectations, and to ensure that targeted collegial support enables this to occur.

Continuing to address the previous directions will be ongoing work for the school. Greater attention to building consistency of effective teacher pedagogical practice across the curriculum to further improve student outcomes is paramount.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How well does the school review and evaluate the effectiveness of its improvement planning processes and impact on student learning to inform next steps?

The panel found that clear processes are in place for addressing the improvement agenda. Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) introduced last year will be leader-led for this year and focused on tracking and monitoring students, particularly identified students. Focused and intentional 'learning sprints' will enable short cycles where teachers action agreed improvement strategies aligned to the priorities in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) within their classroom practice. The Teaching and Learning Impact Coach has developed a structured and well documented process that focuses work and teacher conversations.

Review processes over time have included staff considering data during a yearly review in term 4. Although not part of a regular self-review cycle, check-ins on actions and outcomes occur across the year, as deemed timely by leadership. Governing Council felt consulted in the end of year process and in the directions for the school. The SIP drafted from these consultative processes was provided to staff both at the end of the previous year and at the beginning of the next year. Although SSOs are invited to be part of these meetings and have access to the SIP on the school system, they do not connect the support they provide to students with SIP priorities.

In interviews with teachers, it was evident to the panel that while broader goals within the SIP were familiar, the challenges of practice were not. As the identified work, it is essential that building coherence, consistency and deeper understandings of these practices is essential. Regularly monitoring and evaluation against the identified success criteria will also ensure impact of those actions.

Direction 1 Ensure collective staff understanding and consistent implementation of the identified challenges of practice, by strengthening processes which strategically and continuously connect, drive, monitor, evaluate and review the improvement agenda.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Parents and staff stated that reports have improved with more individualised descriptive comments using language from the frameworks. Most parents expressed feeling that their children are catered for academically, however they would like to see their child provided with more opportunity for daily stretch and challenge in their learning. Staff and parents reported that they have seen more structure to classroom programs and tracking of students with the InitialLit program introduced recently. The panel observed mostly explicit teaching lessons during classroom visits, and in interviews, students expressed wanting more hands on activities, stretch in their learning and less teacher talk.

Learning goals and success criteria are in varied implementation across the school. Students identified that when the learning is 'visible' this supports them to remain focused and achieve what is expected of them. The panel noted pockets of strong practice across the school. For example, in the junior primary classes, the writing continuum visually supports students to know where they are, what the next stage looks like and to self-assess whether they have achieved that step. Other teachers talked about rubrics, showing students what good work looks like and checklists. Amplifying exemplary practices and building consistency across all classes is important work for the school to focus on.

In interviews with teachers, the panel detected varied responses to formative assessment, feedback, visible learning strategies, differentiation, stretch and challenge. Teachers and students reported to the panel that unpacking assessments with students, for them to understand what they know and what they need to know is not consistent practice. Most students confirmed that teachers are providing feedback, while teachers acknowledged that receiving feedback from students that enables them to adjust their teaching for best outcomes, is an area for further development. Leaders have identified tracking and monitoring of student achievement and feedback as areas of focus for this year. Tracking and monitoring achievement and sharing this with students is crucial for teachers to provide differentiated learning opportunities and for students to take an active role in their learning.

Direction 2 **Ensure daily intellectual stretch and challenge for all students by strengthening teachers' capacity to implement consistent and effective pedagogical practice, including tracking and monitoring individual student progress, to design and deliver differentiated learning.**

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

There are many leadership opportunities at Monash Primary School, in particular for older students. Students in all year levels take a lead role in facilitating daily assemblies. In addition, student-led interviews introduced last year is a further example of the school's focus on building students as leaders.

All stakeholders expressed their understanding that students at Monash Primary School have learning goals. While no goals were visible at the time of the review, students were able to tell the panel of previous goals they have had and of goals they are thinking of for themselves this year. Students believe that they come up with their own goals, as well as teachers supporting them to set some. Examples provided were mostly from perception of achievement, rather than knowledge from assessment tasks. The majority of reading goals were based on reading levels with some students indicating that their teacher encourages them to set an expected stretch goal, as well as a higher goal to further aim for. Students said they knew they had improved if they received better results in a post-test, found the work easier or got positive feedback from their teacher.

One of the priorities of the school this year is for teachers to become more familiar with learning progressions. Two teachers stated they were already using learning progressions with students. Sharing and unpacking assessments, including learning progressions, with students and deepening the implementation of feedback as a two way process as well as modelling and implementing learning goals and success criteria, are critical strategies for students to be able to benchmark, and take responsibility for, their learning. Once students understand what they know and what they need to know, they can then set their own explicit learning goals, and know how to monitor and review them regularly for continuous stretch.

Direction 3 Strengthen student agency, by building teachers' skills in regularly sharing learning progressions, assessments and feedback with students, in order for them to benchmark their learning and set SMARTAR learning goals, as self-drivers in their own improvement.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

Teachers and leaders at Monash Primary School have worked diligently to build a safe, supportive and positive culture over the past few years. Students display a strong sense of pride in their school and parents report that their children like school. The language from the frameworks that underpin this culture is now well embedded and will provide a strong platform for future improvement work. The preschool's improvement agenda aligns with the school enabling seamless transition for children into the school setting. Building on these successes and leaders' clarity of the improvement journey ahead, well positions the school to begin developing consistent effective pedagogical practice across the site.

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

- Direction 1 Ensure collective staff understanding and consistent implementation of the identified challenges of practice, by strengthening processes which strategically and continuously connect, drive, monitor, evaluate and review the improvement agenda.
- Direction 2 Ensure daily intellectual stretch and challenge for all students by strengthening teachers' capacity to implement consistent and effective pedagogical practice, including tracking and monitoring individual student progress, to design and deliver differentiated learning.
- Direction 3 Strengthen student agency, by building teachers' skills in regularly sharing learning progressions, assessments and feedback with students, in order for them to benchmark their learning and set SMARTAR learning goals, as self-drivers in their own improvement.

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



Andrew Wells
A/DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS



Alana Kitson
PRINCIPAL
MONASH PRIMARY SCHOOL



GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
Amy Goodman

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, 55% of year 1 and 60% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change for year 1 and an improvement for year 2 from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 83% of year 3 students, 88% of year 5 students and 77% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents little or no change, for year 5 an improvement, and for year 7 a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 61% of year 3, 21% of year 5 and 39% 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, 60%, or 6 out of 10 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 67%, or 6 out of 9 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 83% of year 3 students, 76% of year 5 students and 65% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement, and for year 7 a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 30% of year 3, 12% of year 5 and 15% 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.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 7 to achieve in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands has been upwards, from 0% to 15%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 50%, or 4 out of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 67%, or 4 out of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.