

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for One Tree Hill Primary School

Conducted in October 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 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 Rebecca Read, 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
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

One Tree Hill Primary School caters for children from preschool to year 7. It is situated 30kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment has increased over the last 5 years and there are 269 students in 2019. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 203 students.

The school has an ICSEA score of 992 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 14% students with disabilities, 8% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 5 children/young people in care and 26% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the first year of tenure, an assistant principal, a wellbeing leader and literacy coach.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Raise student achievement standards by developing and articulating a whole-school set of coherent beliefs about learning that guide curriculum planning and pedagogy.**
- Direction 2** **Target improvement in learning for all students, including higher levels of achievement for the most able students, by using data to inform planning and instruction for aspirational outcomes.**
- Direction 3** **Support students to set and meet personal learning goals by improving the use of formative assessment processes to facilitate ongoing monitoring of student progress and utilising reciprocal feedback.**
- Direction 4** **Enhance student involvement in collaborative planning and decision-making about learning by building and connecting the model of students as 'learning leaders' to the work of teachers improving practice.**

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

The improvement agenda at One Tree Hill Primary School has built staff capacity in analysing and using data to inform planning at a whole-school and classroom level. The tracking and monitoring of student achievement has been facilitated through the introduction of a central database. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which have been in place for some time, have been appreciated by staff as opportunities for collaboration and sharing of practice. Staff continue to seek consistency in their practice through professional learning, staff meetings and PLC discussions. There has also been a focus on improving student wellbeing since the previous review.

Current leaders are aware that there has been little traction against the previous directions and therefore significant work ahead. The new leadership team have made changes this year to structures and expectations, in laying the foundations for future improvement work. At the time of this review, the panel found staff embracing the changes and implementing new expectations into their practice.

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?

Clear and strategic alignment between the Site Improvement Plan (SIP), professional learning, performance development and classroom practice, was evidenced through conversations with staff during the review. Leaders constantly refer and make links to SIP priorities, making it a 'live document' for staff. While teachers and SSOs have a clear understanding of the SIP, it was less evident by parents and students. However, they expressed confidence that staff are striving for improvement. A visual display near the staffroom highlights the schools current focus. Preschool programs also scaffold daily learning opportunities that directly link with SIP and school expectations, providing a strong foundation for students as they transition into school.

Reviewing progress against the 3 SIP goals was observed at a staff meeting by the panel. Staff engaged in the discussion and willingly committed to further developing this work. In reviewing their 'impact', teachers talked more about actions than evidence of student improvement. While it is acknowledged that these were early conversations, evaluating how student outcomes are being impacted by practice is the key to school improvement. Teachers continue to talk about improving consistency in their practices which the panel noted they had spoken about in the last review. Building consistency can be achieved by sharpening PLC structures to ensure rigorous conversations challenge and review actions for refining effective teaching practice that achieves best outcomes.

SIP teams linked to each goal have been established as the drivers for improvement work. These teams are yet to work in a capacity that regularly monitor and review the progress of actions to ensure that the desired impact on student outcomes is being achieved. Explicitly unpacking and understanding how each action can most effectively enhance teaching and learning will expand teachers' skills and knowledge for effective implementation. Given the positive commitment demonstrated by all staff around the SIP and the collegial culture that was evident, the panel felt that there is a strong foundation for this work to occur.

Direction 1 Strengthen self-review processes that regularly monitor impact, through PLCs and SIP teams, to ensure rigorous implementation of the challenges of practice and whole-school agreements in quality teaching and learning programs.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Reading and writing are the focus for improvement work in 2019. Actions have included purchasing decodable readers, implementing a phonemic awareness program, speech pathology buy-in, upskilling teachers in phonological awareness and introducing Mini-Lit as an intervention program. Every class has a literacy block each morning, providing 600 minutes of literacy per week and 8 hours of SSO support. Staff see this priority as well-resourced, and inclusive of SSOs who now access relevant professional learning. Whole-school agreements in literacy and numeracy previously developed are intended by leaders to be reviewed, to ensure future 'agreements' are rigorously applied in practice.

Implementing explicit and visible learning intentions and success criteria as well as goal setting into classroom practice is a renewed expectation this year. Most teachers were found to be using learning intentions and success criteria in daily learning in some capacity. While the language around learning intentions and success criteria is still developing, students verified that teachers do talk more about what they are learning and why. Older students described that learning intentions and success criteria support them to understand what is expected of them. Students setting individual learning goals, mentioned at the last review, continue to be in variable practices across the school. Many goals were found to be broad rather than explicitly linked to next steps in learning and not regularly monitored or reviewed. Leaders and teachers acknowledge that there is further work needed to ensure these strategies are well embedded and consistent across all classes. Speech pathology buy-in, the teaching and learning coordinator and PLCs, have been supportive resources in developing this work.

While it was evident that teachers are implementing agreed literacy practices, designing rich learning tasks that stretch and engage all learners was less apparent. The panel was informed of partnership work in Learning Design, Assessment and Moderation, however little evidence was gained of this in practice. It is critical that in the improvement work at the school is focussed on providing quality teaching and learning experiences that provide students with ample opportunity to demonstrate higher levels of learning.

Direction 2 Increase the number of students achieving SEA and HB by strengthening teachers' capacity to design rich learning tasks that integrate learning intentions and success criteria to ensure differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge is part of daily learning.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

While collecting, analysing and using data to inform practice has improved over time, using data to differentiate learning, is still an area for growth. Teachers continue to explore assessments that will support them in their work and are beginning to use multiple datasets for a deeper understanding of students' needs. This supports newly introduced work by leaders, in exploring 'waves of intervention' for all learners.

Some of the formative assessments described to the panel were being used after the learning. In order to provide daily stretch and challenge in learning, formative assessment practices that move learning forward during the learning need further focus. Examples of formative assessment practices that inform teachers about student progress include: conferencing, annotating work samples, observations, questions and tools such as 'traffic lights', and 'thumbs up'. Fostering reciprocal feedback will ensure students receive feedback that motivates them to continuously improve and that teachers receive feedback which enables them to adjust their teaching.

Some teachers said they share data with students, such as pre and post-testing, PAT and NAPLAN results. Many students told the panel that they found their work easy, that they did not know how to improve their work and that they did not know how well they were achieving unless the teacher tells them. Sharing assessments with students is a vital part of their understanding of what they know and what they need to learn. Some students and parents reported to the panel that they had been surprised when written reports had come home. More regular sharing of assessments with students and their families will build further confidence of families in staff and the school. Sharing the progression of learning with students and building their skills in self-assessing their work, enabling them to benchmark their learning and set explicit learning goals that are meaningful to them, which is regularly reviewed and monitored, is a significant body of work for the school to integrate into the improvement agenda.

Direction 3 Develop student agency by regularly sharing assessment with students and embedding timely formative assessment and feedback practices that enable students to benchmark their learning and become self-drivers in their own improvement.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Staff at One Tree Hill Primary School are a cohesive team of committed professionals who genuinely incorporate agreed strategies into classroom programs to improve teaching and learning across the school. The preschool aligns with school priorities and significant support hours are resourced for every classroom. Current leaders have a clear long term vision and the introduction of an assistant principal for teaching and learning next year will further support this improvement work.

Parents are supportive of the school and highly value its 'country feel'. One Tree Hill Primary School has a welcoming atmosphere and is surrounded by a peaceful environment.

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

- Direction 1** Strengthen self-review processes that regularly monitor impact, through PLCs and SIP teams, to ensure rigorous implementation of the challenges of practice and whole-school agreements in quality teaching and learning programs.
- Direction 2** Increase the number of students achieving SEA and HB by strengthening teachers' capacity to design rich learning tasks that integrate learning intentions and success criteria to ensure differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge is part of daily learning.
- Direction 3** Develop student agency by regularly sharing assessment with students and embedding timely formative assessment and feedback practices that enable students to benchmark their learning and become self-drivers in their own improvement.

Based on the school's current performance, One Tree Hill 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, 63% of year 1 and 46% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average for year 1, and little or no change for year 2.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 1 has been upwards, from 45% to 63%, and the trend for year 2 has been downwards, from 64% to 46%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 84% of year 3 students, 87% of year 5 students and 77% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average, and for year 7, this result represents little or no change.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 7 has been upwards, from 64% to 77%.

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

In 2019, 28% of year 3, 20% of year 5 and 0% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement, for year 5 this represents little or no change, and for year 7, this represents a decline, from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 40%, or 2 out of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 0%, or 0 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 77% of year 3 students, 80% of year 5 students and 77% 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.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 7 has been upwards, from 64% to 77%.

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, 21% of year 3, 7% of year 5 and 8% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement, and for years 5 and 7, 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 numeracy, 0%, or 0 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 50%, or 1 out of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.