

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Craighburn 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 Tony Sullivan, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Graeme Elliott, 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 Support Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Craigburn Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 20kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 545 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 535. The local partnership is South Valley Precinct.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1073 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1% Aboriginal students, 5% students with disabilities, 5% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 3 children/young people in care and 6% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their fourth year of tenure, a deputy principal and a senior leader.

There are 25 teachers including 2 in the early years of their career and 11 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Strengthen the work of PLTs through existing structures and processes by including opportunities for vertical alignment and connections.
- Direction 2** Support students to know how to improve by creating opportunities to engage in goal-setting, develop strategies to achieve the goals, and receive timely and detailed feedback in an ongoing cycle of review and improvement.
- Direction 3** Increase intellectual stretch for all students by supporting teachers to collaboratively design rigorous learning tasks and assessment rubrics, which require students to apply their understanding and skills to new contexts, and are aligned with the Australian Curriculum and assessed via the Achievement Standards.
- Direction 4** Increase teacher capacity to improve student learning outcomes through the alignment and strategic linking of the Site Improvement Plan with Professional Learning, validated by Performance Development processes.

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

Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) continue to operate effectively to drive identified school improvement initiatives. The team structure has changed since the review in 2016. The focus of these teams is to collaboratively plan, analyse student data, implement effective teaching strategies, and observe each other teach and build connections.

There was evidence presented that students engage in various goal setting processes within classrooms and receive various levels of feedback related to the achievement of these goals.

Teachers work together to plan learning including ways to expand and stretch student thinking and understanding. This planning directly emerges from the Australian Curriculum and is assessed via the Department for Education Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) and reported to parents via student reports. School enrichment programs and activities evident during the review provided opportunities for students to link their learning in new and varied contexts eg the environmental program.

There existed a clear link between the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) and the work being undertaken to implement strategies and approaches within the school.

The review panel acknowledged that significant progress has been made on these directions. The panel verified this work and the use of vertical alignment across reception to year 7 to create student clarity about their learning through task design, formative assessment and understanding how to strive for an 'A' grade.

Staff are committed to professional learning and engage in various forms of performance and development processes to effectively implement the SIP.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How well does the school critically evaluate current curricula, pedagogical and assessment practice to determine challenges of practice?

The school has a well-established improvement cycle that serves to monitor various sets of learning data to ensure that curriculum and challenges of practice in teaching are focused on key aspects requiring improvement. Various school teams and individual teachers use learning data for a variety of purposes to inform their work. Time is allocated throughout the year for staff to engage in this improvement work through a variety of staff forums.

The leadership team has a strong professional network within and beyond the school that serves to guide decisions about best practice approaches to impact their identified challenge of practice. The review panel verified a strong commitment by this team of teachers to implement with precision the agreed pedagogical practices that set students up for learning success.

The implementation of a phonics approach in reception to year 1 in 2019 was a precursor to building a whole-school approach to teaching reading. This foundational work is currently extending to year 2 to ensure students in the early years develop a strong base for reading. A refocus on the Big Six in reading will be required by primary teachers to ensure the high end goal of students attaining fluency and comprehension in reading.

Members of the governing council verified that they were provided with datasets, written and verbal reports and current information about the improvement work being undertaken to address the schools challenges of practice. Students interviewed during the review were articulate, respectful and engaging. As partners in the learning process, it is critical that they understand, articulate and actively engage in the learning practice being implemented across the school. The review panel concluded that greater opportunities exist for students at Craighburn Primary School to actively participate in the change processes in authentic and age appropriate ways linked to the schools challenges of practice.

Direction 1 Ensure greater authentic student influence in aspects of school improvement, particularly in relation to agreed whole-school practices that impact learning.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

How effectively are teachers using evidence-based pedagogical practices that engage and challenge students through authentic influence in their learning?

Craigburn Primary School has implemented many evidence-based pedagogical practices, such as learning design, formative assessment, inquiry learning, differentiated teaching, intentional learning and goal setting. These are all highly effective strategies of teaching and learning when implemented with precision and connectedness across the school. A majority of staff indicated during the review that these are still a 'work in progress' for the school.

There was evidence presented throughout the review that staff engage with professional learning to support their knowledge, understanding and delivery of such high impact practices. Staff professional learning is supported by research, time, professional dialogue and peer observations. It was verified that staff work in an environment of collaboration, trust and support. This environment is valued by teachers, parents and support staff. Students confirmed they feel safe and supported within a highly positive learning environment.

When considering evidence of the quality and depth of implementation of teaching practices the panel established a need for the school to enact them so that students connect with the what, how and how-well of their learning. Clarity about what these practices look like in all classes, as it relates to any of the above initiatives, will assist the school and its students as they move between year levels.

Examples of student goal setting, formative assessment and assessment rubrics provided to the panel did not necessarily connect students metacognitively with their learning. Clarifying and embedding smaller blocks of agreed and highly effective teaching practices to a 'deep and consistent' level across all classes will serve the students well as they navigate the learning pathway from reception to year 7.

As the school plans, implements and monitors evidence-based practices, all staff must be clear about what is expected as key components of this work. Creating explicit norms and expectations about such practices will support teacher and student understanding. Breaking the learning into smaller steps and watching each other work to deliver key aspects of these practices will support both staff and students. Staff at the school have the professional capacity, internal leadership and competency to work together to implement agreed practices to a high level of consistency in support of student engagement in and for learning.

Direction 2 Improve student engagement and learning through the successful implementation of the agreed high impact teaching strategies across the school to a high level of consistency.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Learning data is collected and analysed throughout the year for a variety of purposes. At the school level, the leadership team analyse national and state based datasets to determine patterns and trends. Year level teams analyse data aligned to their cohort of students. Analysis of data by teachers is also passed on to receiving teachers as a key resource for their planning and programming. Parents commented on the value of this information handover from one year to the next.

Student assessment data is used by teachers to identify those who require access to intervention support in literacy and numeracy, and to establish baseline data mainly in maths before and after new concepts are taught.

There were many exemplars of planning and designing of learning provided to the review panel. They serve as evidence of positive intent by staff to differentiate curriculum planning and instruction across year levels and subjects but also highlight the disparity of approach used at the school.

The review panel acknowledges that staff are working hard in a variety of ways across the school to deliver broad-based 'collective commitments' across each of the 7 PLTs. The variance in design and delivery of evidence-based approaches such as differentiation, formative assessment and goal setting may be enhanced through achieving greater clarity and taking smaller steps through the implementation phase. This will be particularly relevant when implementing an evidence-based practice in reading across the school with a relatively low level of variance.

The school uses a defined operational structure to ensure that curriculum and teaching initiatives are implemented following staff professional development. Many staff commented on the need to refine aspects of the current operational structure to deliver the improved learning outcomes as a whole-school team.

The review panel verified that teachers value the visibility and active presence of leadership team members in classes. This involves talking to teachers and/or students about their work or through observations as it relates to the identified challenge of practice. Performance meetings are scheduled and occur for most of the staff with individual teacher professional development program (PDP) plans central to the process. The panel verified that most staff valued the opportunity to observe others work. This strategy, used in a variety of ways by teachers and leaders alike, offers great capacity to implement school initiatives to a deeper and more consistent level across the school.

Direction 3 Maximise school operational structures that build teacher capacity to co-design, co-construct and deliver improved outcomes for students.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

Craigburn Primary School presents as an effective learning organisation. The school learning data indicates that students achieve solid academic achievement and growth in learning over time. The school leadership is professional, and dedicated towards making a difference to student outcomes and learning experiences. Strategic planning and initiatives are data driven and evidence based. The learning environment is highly valued by teachers, parents and students alike.

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

- Direction 1** Ensure greater authentic student influence in aspects of school improvement, particularly in relation to agreed whole-school practices that impact learning.
- Direction 2** Improve student engagement and learning through the successful implementation of the agreed high impact teaching strategies across the school to a high level of consistency.
- Direction 3** Maximise school operational structures that build teacher capacity to co-design, co-construct and deliver improved outcomes for students.

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



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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 2019, 71% of year 1 and 86% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change for years 1 and 2, from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 87% of year 3 students, 92% of year 5 students and 91% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents little or no change and for year 5, this represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

In 2019, year 3 and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school achieved within and for year 5, achieved higher than the results of similar students across government schools.

Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved higher in year 5 NAPLAN reading relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 53% of year 3, 44% of year 5 and 45% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For years 3, 5 and 7 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, 79%, or 26 out of 33 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 60%, or 21 out of 35 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 88% of year 3 students, 90% of year 5 students and 91% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement and for year 7, this represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

In 2019 year 3 NAPLAN numeracy, the school achieved within and for years 5 and 7, achieved higher than the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 29% of year 3, 21% of year 5 and 45% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 7 this result represents an improvement, for year 3 this represents little or no change, and for year 5 this represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been downwards, from 32% to 21%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 45%, or 9 out of 20 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 and 77%, or 17 out of 22 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.