

# **The Department for Education**

## **External School Review**

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

**Report for Fulham Gardens Primary School**

Conducted in November 2018



Government of South Australia  
Department for Education

## Review details

A priority for the Department for Education is to improve the educational attainment and wellbeing of South Australia's children and young people.

The purpose of the External School Review 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 underpinning the review identifies the key levers for school improvement and has been shaped and informed by research.

The overarching review question is "how well does this school improve student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and equity?"

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, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Ronnie Alderman, Review Principal.

## School context

Fulham Gardens Primary School is located 11kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment is 137, and has shown consistent growth over the past 5 years.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1009 and is classified as Category 4 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 7% Aboriginal students, 14% students with disabilities, 24% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), and 50% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in his second tenure.

## Lines of inquiry

In considering the data summary in the school performance overview (Appendix 2) and the principal's presentation, the review panel explored the following lines of inquiry to evaluate the school's effectiveness towards raising student achievement and sustaining high performance.

During the external review process, the panel focused on 3 key areas from the External School Review framework:

<b>Improvement Agenda:</b>	<b>How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?</b>
<b>Effective Teaching:</b>	<b>How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?</b>
<b>School Community Partnerships:</b>	<b>How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?</b>

### **How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?**

The school provided comprehensive evidence of a culture of self-review that is embedded across the site. Systems, structures, and policies are integral components of school governance at Fulham Gardens Primary School. Self-review processes are documented in a planning document, which includes processes, strategies and timelines for each aspect to be reviewed.

The school has developed a comprehensive site self-review planner identifying a broad range of aspects that are regularly reviewed, including:

- performance and development
- governing council
- implementation of the child protection policy, and
- perception surveys and standardised tests (that is NAPLAN and the progressive assessment tests in maths and reading – PAT M and PAT R).

The principal provided an example of self-review processes, which involved reviewing perception data as a whole school and undertaking a 'traffic light' system. Aspects that have been allocated a red 'light' are unpacked as a whole staff, and areas to be actioned are then collaboratively determined.

The principal has carefully planned and paced self-review processes at a rate commensurate with staff capacity to undertake next steps. Self-review processes are regularly used to inform improvement across the school including school governance.

The panel observed variance in practices and processes across the site relating to the analysis, review and use of data to inform instruction.

At the staff meeting held during the ESR, staff were asked to identify assessments in literacy and numeracy that they found most useful to inform next steps for learning. Seventeen literacy and 14 numeracy assessments were identified. There were considerable variances in relation to practices and processes in the selection, analysis and use of multiple data sets to inform teaching.

The school is well-placed to undertake a comprehensive review of the current use of datasets from the perspective of the learner.

Developing and implementing consistent approaches in the identification, collection and use of valid datasets across the school is significant work for the school to undertake. The school is well-placed to review the effectiveness of datasets within and across classes. This will provide consistency and congruence across the site in the collaborative identification of data to inform instruction. Work in this area can be further strengthened by the establishment of regular and planned opportunities to review the valid data sets at year and whole-school levels.

Current work across the department in school improvement provides a clear starting point for the school. Consideration should also be given to the specific needs at individual and cohort levels.

Development and implementation of processes to track and monitor student learning progress, from a range of perspectives, will strengthen collective understandings of the needs of groups and individuals across the site, including: individual, year, whole-school and cohort, English and another Language or Dialect (EALD), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI), special class and students with verified disabilities.

The school uses an electronic platform to store school data and staff are responsible for entering and updating information in accordance with the school's data collection analysis timelines and processes. Several staff indicated that they would appreciate the opportunity to develop their skills in the use of the electronic data platform. Staff indicated that regular use of the data platform would assist them to comprehensively track and monitor learning over time.

The school is well-positioned to undertake the next steps in school improvement. Introduction of the school improvement model provides a timely opportunity for the school to review their current use of multiple datasets. It will be important to ensure that valid assessments are congruent with current departmental evidence-based best practice.

The Literacy and Numeracy First papers, School Improvement Guidebooks and the Literacy, and Numeracy Best Practice Series are a strong foundation from which the school can establish and embed consistent practices and understandings regarding valid assessments to inform teaching.

#### **Direction 1**

**Develop systems to track and monitor student and cohort learning at regular intervals, strengthened by the implementation of assessments that are congruent with departmental research-based resources for school improvement.**

## How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

A strong commitment from staff to provide high-quality education for students was evident. High levels of collaboration in planning, designing and implementing comprehensive and engaging curriculum were evident in several classrooms. The early years team is inclusive, with students from the special class working with their mainstream counterparts across a range of learning areas.

All classrooms displayed a strong sense of engagement, pride and care, and included a range of settings for group and individual work. High levels of scaffolding for learning, as well as a range of problem-solving approaches, were observed in many classrooms.

Staff identified via interviews and a survey undertaken, that supporting students to understand learning intentions and success criteria were areas for further development. Learning intentions describe what students should know, understand and be able to do, as a result of teaching and learning. Clarity of success criteria needs to focus on what students are to learn, not what they are to do. The explicit development of success criteria that is clearly linked to the learning intention within identified areas of study will support students to be able to act powerfully in their own learning.

The majority of students said that most of their work was 'just right' or 'too easy'. Several students stated that they did not tell the teacher when the work was too easy, with some students indicating that they did not want challenges. The school provided some evidence of undertaking initial work in this area, with staff saying they placed a strong emphasis on strengthening understanding in growth mindsets. Students would benefit from further work in this area.

Developing a whole-school pedagogical approach to differentiation through collaborative learning design, assessment and moderation (LDAM) processes will provide opportunities for all students to be challenged in their learning. It was apparent that differentiation from the perspective of higher-band and high-achieving students is an area for ongoing development. Designing learning tasks that provide multiple opportunities for students to be stretched in their learning is a significant body of work for the school to undertake.

Staff identified that differentiation of learning could be strengthened through the development of common understandings, practices and processes in the use of rubrics. Staff acknowledged that the development of rubrics to monitor student learning across a range of learning areas was in the initial stages of development.

Moderation processes align curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and reporting. Staff indicated that moderation was an area for ongoing development with staff rating themselves between 2.5 and 3.5 on a continuum from 0 to 5. They also indicated that the opportunity to moderate with peers from other sites would further strengthen their skills and understandings in this area. Staff commented that the recent professional learning in LDAM had been very beneficial in strengthening their common understandings in this area.

Developing and embedding consistency and continuity of effective pedagogical practices across the site is the next significant area for development. Guided reading is currently taught across 4 year levels 1 day each week. **Guided reading is based on the belief that the optimal learning for a reader occurs when they are assisted by an educator, or expert 'other', to read and understand a text with clear but limited guidance.** The school is well-positioned to build the capacity of all teachers through the implementation of guided reading across the site on a daily basis.

The implementation of a comprehensive tool to assess and monitor the fluency and comprehension for all students who have progressed beyond reading level 30 will provide a consistent framework for feedback to improve reading. Analysis of these assessments will provide diagnostic evidence of next steps for individuals, inform group structures for guided reading and strengthen the capacity for students to sustain and increase higher-band achievement across the school.

#### **Direction 2**

**Embed a whole-school approach to ensure consistent understandings and practices in effective pedagogical practices with a specific focus on differentiation, moderation and reading.**

### **How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?**

The school provided evidence of a group of students working in collaboration with the partnership where they presented their perceptions of what their 'dream school' would be. Students provided a range of responses that were inclusive of learning, wellbeing and intended actions, which shows the school's commitment to supporting authentic student influence throughout the school.

Interviews with teachers indicated that a range of strategies regarding feedback for learning are currently in place. Staff reported they were able to determine that feedback for learning was successful when students could articulate what they had achieved, when they observed students taking on the feedback, during one-on-one conferences, and when students were given opportunities to 'get it right'.

When asked how they could improve feedback for learning, teachers recommended displaying individual goals on tables, reviewing and resetting goals in an ongoing manner, and developing rubrics that are standardised against the Australian Curriculum. Some staff reported that including feedback as an integral part of social, emotional, academic and group learning were aspects that could be further explored. It was also stated that developing and sustaining high levels of engagement in learning would provide further opportunities to extend student feedback for learning.

Interviews were held with more than 30% of students. Each student interviewed indicated they wanted to improve their learning, but were unable to articulate a range of strategies that would support them.

Many students were able to articulate learning dispositions relating to effort in learning, that is, "if I persist, if I try harder, I will get better". The panel also noted evidence of some students articulating a range of strategies that were not reliant on the teacher, these included: "look at what I'm stuck on, try and figure it out" and "focus on one part of the question at a time".

When discussing their learning in a broader context, students indicated a clear desire to improve as learners, and identified a range of areas they wanted to improve in. However, many students were not able to articulate what they needed to do to improve.

There is evidence that feedback is used in a variety of ways and across many areas of learning to provide students with ongoing advice to improve.

Staff provided a range of examples of feedback they received from students about themselves as learners, which comprised students showing pride, being excited to share in front of the class, and students' personal reflections in school reports. Some staff reported that a unit from the Child Protection Curriculum had provided students with the opportunity to voice their perspectives about themselves as

learners. Teacher reflections indicated that students were quick to find the negative aspects but slow to acknowledge their strengths.

Students at all year levels benefit from opportunities to be active participants in their own learning. Sharing data, discussing reports, accessing opportunities to know the *what* and *why* of grade allocations, gives students real and explicit evidence about themselves as learners. Feedback for learning provides students with the strategies to know how to improve.

Developing processes where teachers regularly share learning progress in mandated assessments with students will also support students to reflect on and set their own current and future learning goals.

The school is now well-positioned to further enhance this important work by ensuring that feedback is a two-way process and is implemented across all aspects of student learning. Two-way feedback provides students with the opportunity to give as well as receive feedback about themselves as learners.

### **Direction 3**

**Strengthen and embed authentic student influence for learning across all year levels and learning areas, by embedding the language of learning with students and their families.**

## **What is the school doing particularly well and why is this effective?**

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practices that are contributing significantly to school improvement at Fulham Gardens Primary School.

Effective practice in the school community partnerships focus area of the external school review framework was evident at the school. Parents, governing council members and staff all spoke about the inclusive, positive learning environment that now exists across the site.

Parents and governing council members see the school as a pivotal component within the community and were highly appreciative of the level of care and support options that are available to their children and to themselves as parents. There was widespread support for the leadership, level of care and accessibility of the principal.

Fulham Gardens Primary School provided clear evidence of a strong commitment to continued school improvement. The school has established inclusive, supportive learning environments that are well resourced and provide students with diverse learning opportunities across the curriculum. The school has also established flexible outdoor learning spaces that are highly valued by students.

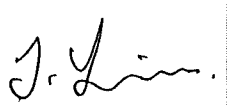
## Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

Fulham Gardens Primary School has demonstrated extensive self-review processes that are regularly used to determine the impact school strategies and practices are having on student learning. The school works in partnership with parents and stakeholders.

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

1. Develop systems to track and monitor student and cohort learning at regular intervals, strengthened by the implementation of assessments that are congruent with departmental research-based resources for school improvement.
2. Embed a whole-school approach to ensure consistent understandings and practices in effective pedagogical practices with a specific focus on differentiation, moderation and reading.
3. Strengthen and embed authentic student influence for learning across all year levels and learning areas, including embedding the language of learning with students and their families.

Based on the school's current performance, Fulham Gardens Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



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FULHAM GARDENS PRIMARY  
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Governing Council Chairperson



# Appendix 1

## Attendance policy compliance

Implementation of the Education Department student attendance policy was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2017 was 89.2%.

# Appendix 2

## 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 2017, 54% of year 1 and 65% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2015 and 2017, the trend for year 1 has been upwards, from 43% in 2015 to 54% in 2017.

Between 2015 and 2017, the trend for year 2 has been upwards, from 6% in 2015 to 65% in 2017.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 78% of year 3 students, 50% of year 5 students and 67% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents little or no change, and for year 5, a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2018, 44% of year 3, 19% of year 5 and 7% 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 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 100%, or the 1 student from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2017, and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.


### Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 83% of year 3 students, 50% of year 5 students, and 80% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

For years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement, and for year 5, a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 64% to 83%, and for year 5, downwards from 100% to 50%, from 2016 to 2018, respectively.

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



In 2018, 22% of year 3, 6% of year 5, and 7% 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 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018 and 50%, or 1 of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.