

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Fulham Gardens Primary School

Conducted in October 2021



Government of South Australia  
Department for Education

# 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 Katherine Holman, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Narelle Kusabs, 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
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parent groups
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student representatives
  - Teachers.

## School context

Fulham Gardens Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 8kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 145. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 137. The local partnership is Western Adelaide Shores.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 1023 and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 5% Aboriginal students, 18% students with disabilities, 32% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 5% children/young people in care and 45% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a second 5-year tenure. In 2021 the school appointed 2 Band B Literacy Leaders to oversee the literacy improvement strategy.

There are 9 Teachers including 2 in the early years of their career and 3 Step 9 Teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- 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.**
- 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.**
- Direction 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.**

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

**Direction 1** The school has implemented several programs that are research based and systems to regularly track and monitor student achievement progress. The school has identified that the work in this area is having an impact and is building current practice.

**Direction 2** The staff have worked collaboratively to identify what they need to do to develop a world class school. They are developing a shared understanding around a pedagogical toolbox for students with varied learning needs. They are analysing data to inform next steps. They have engaged in curriculum mapping so there is continuity and consistency across the school. Professional learning has been targeted to deepen their understanding of research and evidence-based pedagogy.

**Direction 3** Documented evidence of how the school has engaged with this direction was presented during the ESR. There has been significant emphasis on understanding student learning dispositions and assisting students to develop growth mindsets. The use of learning intentions and success criteria has been used consistently across the school to increase student understanding of what they are learning and how they will know when they have been successful. Processes have been put into place to increase student voice in classrooms and in the yard. Students have had some opportunities to be involved in co-designing learning in some classes.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school use improvement planning processes to raise student achievement?

Effective improvement planning and rigorous review and evaluation is critical to improving student achievement data. The school has very sound improvement planning processes. The Principal has strategically made the connections with each part of the improvement planning cycle clear and explicit. Staff are involved in each step of the cycle and have shared ownership of the school improvement plan (SIP) and accountability for its implementation. It was reported by staff that the SIP was developed from previous External School Review (ESR) directions, data analysis and site self-review. Staff are able to articulate the alignment with the challenge of practice in the SIP and what this means for their classroom practice. The school provided the panel with extensive documented evidence of staff engaging in the school improvement and review process.

Opportunities are intentionally provided for collaborative analysis of a range of data sets, and this has supported staff to develop their data literacy. Parent, staff, and student opinion surveys are analysed and acted on as part of the review and evaluation to improve conditions for learning. The 2021 NAPLAN data shows improvement in the percentage of students achieving the standard for educational achievement (SEA) and higher bands in reading, writing and numeracy. Processes include data collection and analysis; regular staff meetings to review progress and monitor impact of teaching on student learning outcomes; alignment of performance development plans (PDP) with the SIP, and pupil free days that focus on the implementation and review of the SIP.

Staff reported they are appreciative of the release time provided to collaborate during school time. They see it as a valuable strategy enabling them to improve their teaching practice and increase student achievement. The school is well placed to continue to make connections between the SIP and their classroom practice, identify high impact strategies, and embed the current processes. There are opportunities to maintain momentum and build on effective practice.

**Direction 1     Embed the processes and structures for effective improvement planning and maintain the momentum of ensuring a clear line of sight from the SIP to the classroom.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers supporting students to improve their learning?

How and what teachers teach is critical to learning achievement. There has been an increasing and intentional focus on the implementation of evidence-based programs and practices in classrooms. The school has accessed support from the local education team (LET) and the literacy guarantee unit (LGU) to improve teaching practice. Partnership work has also supported improvement at the school.

The LGU audited the early years literacy blocks and provided advice to teachers on how to improve explicit teaching, structure, and consistency across the block. This process has resulted in powerful changes to pedagogy that have improved phonics screening and running record results. The appointment of a literacy leader within the school to build staff capacity and provide support and guidance has resulted in greater consistency and continuity of literacy practices across the school.

Teachers talked about how they differentiate their programs using student achievement data to inform their planning and task design. Students were able to explain how learning is differentiated through tasks with multiple entry points. The year 6/7 students reported using rubrics to assess their work against the criteria and in one class the rubric included a feedback box where the teacher writes a comment to show what could be improved next time. Data walls were displayed in classrooms and students were able to articulate how they used these to monitor their learning and that they found them motivational. One student who achieved a low score on the pre-test indicated they went to the teacher to ask how they could improve.

Staff and students can confidently talk about the purpose of learning intentions and how they use success criteria to improve their work, and this is an embedded practice across the school. Students from most classrooms were able to talk about learning goals. Some students were able to identify the steps to achieve their goals and had a time frame in which to achieve them. Students reported how they get feedback about their learning and how it helps them improve. Staff reported they are confident about using data to set student learning goals. Formative assessment strategies, such as thumbs up, were used to indicate student understanding.

Overall, staff and students have a good understanding of formative assessment strategies. Differentiation is evident in planning and classroom practice. It is a challenge in a small school to ensure students receive a comprehensive curriculum involving all the elements that contribute to students learning. Through the review, the implementation of the Department's curriculum units were identified as a strategy to strengthen this work.

**Direction 2      Use the Department's curriculum units to build on current practice to ensure all the elements of high impact teaching are incorporated in planning and assessment.**

## Effective leadership

How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?

While on the school tour with the panel the Principal was able to talk in depth about each teachers' practice. The Principal also knows the story of each child and their data. Staff reported that the culture of the school had changed significantly in recent times, and a strength of the school is the level of collaboration between teachers in sharing, planning, and critiquing. This is strengthened by time being allocated to continue the work related to the SIP. Staff commented that aligning the actions with current research to achieve the reading goal in the SIP has been effective in providing greater clarity and confidence of what they need to do in the classroom.

The use of a common language for wellbeing was evident and several programs support this. The emphasis on growth mindsets and learning dispositions was evident across the school in classrooms and through interview conversations with staff and students. Classroom environments are engaging and supportive for students. It is evident that there are high expectations for learning and that student achievement growth is the focus.

There has been an emphasis on building staff capacity which has involved school services officers (SSOs) being included in professional development with teachers to develop a shared understanding of student learning. Staff are able to articulate how they plan from the Australian Curriculum. Staff demonstrated their understanding of the scope and sequence of learning in the Australian Curriculum. Staff work together to develop a 40-week plan, a term overview, and unit plans that are collaboratively implemented, and monitor the impact on student learning. The Principal has introduced timelines, specified data sets to be collected and a data template that has improved consistency of information and assists with transition.

In small schools, opportunities for staff to collaborate in like year levels to moderate work and share practice can be limited. The school is in the process of building year level networks with a neighbouring school within the partnership to build staff capacity and support sharing of effective pedagogy that improves teaching practice.

**Direction 3     Enable teachers to further develop evidence-based pedagogies that improve student achievement by building the PLC year level networks within the school and Partnership.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

At Fulham Gardens Primary School there is a genuine desire to improve and engage with experts to develop knowledge and skills that improve pedagogy and student learning outcomes. There is a culture of inclusivity with parents, staff and students commenting everyone is accepted and supported academically and emotionally. There is respectful language used across the school by students, staff and the parents that were interviewed by the panel. Parents reported that their children are engaged and enjoy being at the school. Parents of students who had not been successful in previous settings were able to talk about the learning progress and success their children had experienced at the school. Staff and students are feeling motivated by seeing growth in achievement data.

The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1**    **Embed the processes and structures for effective improvement planning and maintain the momentum of ensuring a clear line of sight from the SIP to the classroom.**
- Direction 2**    **Use the Department's curriculum units to build on current practice to ensure all the elements of high impact teaching are incorporated in planning and assessment.**
- Direction 3**    **Enable teachers to further develop evidence-based pedagogies that improve student achievement by building the PLC year level networks within the school and Partnership.**

Based on the school's current performance, Fulham Gardens Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



Kerry Dollman

Director

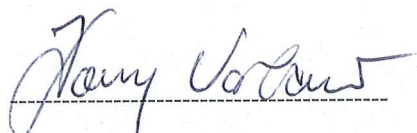
Review, Improvement and Accountability



Anne Millard

Executive Director

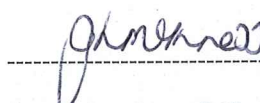
Partnerships, Schools and Preschools



Tony Varbaro

Principal

Fulham Gardens Primary School



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 2020 19% of year 1 and 23% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

In 2021 the reading results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 86% of year 3 students, 93% of year 5 students and 92% 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.

For 2021 year 3 and year 7 NAPLAN reading the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools and in year 5 above.

In 2021 57% of year 3, 53% of year 5 and 25% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3 and 5 this result represents an improvement and for year 7 little to no difference from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2021 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading 100% or 7 out of 7 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 2021 the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 76% of year 3 students, 80% of year 5 students and 92% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 and 5 this result represents little or no change and for year 7 an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For 2021 year 3 and 5 NAPLAN numeracy the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools and for year 7 above the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2021 the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 33% of year 3, 33% of year 5 and 17% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3 and year 5 this result represents an improvement and for year 7 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2021 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy 100% or 5 out of 5 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.