

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## On-track evaluation report for Warooka Primary School

One-year return conducted in March 2021



# On-track evaluation process

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.

All government schools are externally reviewed over a 3 year cycle. After the review the principal and the governing council chairperson receive a written report with a number of directions for improvement.

A copy of the ESR report is available on the school website.

The External School Review framework is referenced throughout all stages of the ESR process.

In some cases, when the review panel identifies limited achievement and growth, together with evidence about the school's capacity for systematic improvement, a school is advised that they will be visited again in 1 rather than 3 years' time (1 year return).

Schools with a 1 year return are assisted by the education director and other department staff to receive additional coordinated and targeted support. This intervention is focused on building the school's capacity to improve teaching and learning across the school, lift expectations and achieve improved student learning results as measured against the Department for Education Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Following intervention, which occurs for 12-15 months after the ESR, a review panel conducts an on-track evaluation (OTE) to determine the extent to which the school has, with external support, developed sustainable internal capacity to improve effectiveness and raise student achievement.

The school's Site Improvement Plan (SIP) is the main document used to inform the OTE.

This OTE visit was conducted by Simon Harding, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate, and Chris Brandwood, Review Principal.

The OTE report should be read in conjunction with the report of the External School Review conducted at Warooka Primary School in October 2019.

# Directions from the External School Review report

October 2019

**Key focus area 1** To ensure teachers have shared understanding, ownership and accountability to the SIP, introduce clear structures and processes which drive, connect and support the improvement agenda and provides continuous opportunities to improve practice and monitor impact.

**Key focus area 2** To provide stretch and challenge for all students, develop, implement and monitor whole-school approaches which provide consistency and common understanding in effective pedagogical practices and use of formative assessment.

**Key focus area 3** Improve student learning achievements through the development of teacher use of evidence-based pedagogical practices that ensure students have authentic influence in their learning.

## Additional information about the school context

The principal has advised that since the external school review in late 2019 there has been a number of changes of leadership. The current principal won the position for a 5-year tenure starting term 4 2020. Since the review in late 2019, a number of teaching staff changed, with a new Junior Primary, Middle Primary and Upper Primary teacher, and another 3 teaching staff continuing. Changes in leadership and COVID-19 have had an impact on the implementation of strategies staff are working towards to address the ESR directions.

## Development of a school improvement plan

The principal advised that the school improvement plan was created in partnership with all staff during week 0 in term 1 2021. This was completed at the beginning of the year due to a cancellation of a data reflection pupil free day in Term 4 2020 because of COVID-19. In week 0, staff reflected on data collated from PAT in 2020 to inform the site goals for 2021. The goals continue to focus on literacy and numeracy but have been refined to achieve targets and align with the ESR directions more effectively. Staff had input in the week 0 discussions around the agreed actions moving forward. The SIP then went to the school AGM for Governing Council input before it was approved and sent to the Education Director. The SIP goals for 2021 are:

Goal 1 Increase student understanding in number sense reception to year 7.

Goal 2 Increase student ability to interpret inferred and explicitly stated information from a range of texts.

The plan was sent to the executive director, Partnerships, Schools and Preschools in term 1, 2021.

## Strategic support provided to the school over the past 12 months

The principal advised about the substantial support provided since the external school review to strengthen teacher understanding and build capacity. COVID-19 and changes in leadership had an impact on some of the support. The small primary school cluster, led by the Literacy Guarantee Unit, provided professional learning for teachers to strengthen their understanding of evidence-based practices for literacy and the importance of whole-school strategic approaches. Teachers were supported in providing learning opportunities to stretch and challenge students, and effectively use formative assessment practices to inform teaching and learning. The Principal Consultant and Education Director provided support to the current Principal to understand the school challenges and how best to move towards implementing strategies to address the ESR directions.

## Evidence and evaluation referenced to directions in the school improvement plan

**Direction 1 To ensure teachers have shared understanding, ownership and accountability to the SIP, introduce clear structures and processes which drive, connect and support the improvement agenda and provides continuous opportunities to improve practice and monitor impact.**

### On-track evidence

- Staff were involved in a collective analysis of data to inform decisions in relation to 2021 SIP goals.
- Data was collated by leadership. Staff worked through processes to analyse the data to inform collective next steps for the site and develop common understandings.
- There are clear expectations by leadership about ongoing tracking and monitoring of agreed data to measure impact of actions.
- A common assessment schedule was established for all levels of schooling including agreed datasets.
- Staff were encouraged to and initiated their involvement in professional development, aligned with SIP priorities and identified actions.
- Staff are developing a collective commitment to the plan's actions and understand their responsibility of reflecting on the impact of their actions.
- As a result of SIP actions, teachers informally discuss approaches they implement to effectively meet the needs of students with whom they are working.
- Governing Council were consulted and informed about the plan and reasons behind the decisions taken. They stated that newsletters are used to share this with the broader community.
- There are plans in place for peer and leadership observations on an agreed focus from the actions in the plan.

### Review panel evaluation

Leadership ensured consultation with staff on the improvement work they undertook in developing the current plan. The principal led staff through processes which resulted in increasing connection to the SIP priorities. Staff identified how they have begun implementing evidence-based actions with their students. Teachers are developing their collective understanding in using student achievement data to inform decisions aligned to SIP priorities. Leadership have clear expectations and support teachers' focus on the improvement agenda. While the school is in initial stages of this work, teachers are developing their collective responsibility in both implementing actions outlined in the SIP and measuring the impact on student achievement based on data.

**Direction 2 To provide stretch and challenge for all students, develop, implement and monitor whole-school approaches which provide consistency and common understanding in effective pedagogical practices and use of formative assessment.**

**On-track evidence**

- Staff participated in discussions, decisions and the initial implementation of agreed, common evidence-based approaches for literacy and numeracy. Expert advice was sought to support staff in these decisions.
- Staff were given relevant professional development to support their understanding in effectively implementing above approaches.
- Leadership ensured teachers have tools and resources to support effective implementation of expected practices as outlined in the SIP.
- Through data analysis, staff recognised the need for more formalised and whole-school approach to be implemented.
- Teachers talked about grouping students in response to data in order to target learning more effectively. Students recognised that teachers are using this approach.
- Students understand the importance of challenge in their learning, and most state that the challenge was 'just right', while some were looking for further challenge. Some parents also stated they would like to see more challenge for their children.
- Students are involved in and clear about goal-setting, which supports their achievement. They understood their responsibility in monitoring their progress toward their goals. This work is now shared with parents through the 3-way discussions.
- Schools services officers stated that support is in-class and directed by the teacher.
- Students stated that feedback includes ways to improve and next steps in learning.
- Parents value the use of online media, Seesaw, and how it is used to provide ongoing information about their child's progress.

**Review panel evaluation**

Consultation processes used by leadership with staff in relation to the improvement work are leading to the development of collective ownership and commitment to action by staff. A positive change to the learning culture at the school was recognised across the school community, with a clear focus on curriculum and developing increased rigor in student learning. Teacher professional learning was invested in to support the improvement directions. Through the collective analysis of data led by the principal, staff are increasingly aware of the need for commonly agreed strategies to be implemented across the school and developing skills to use agreed datasets to inform future planning. Teachers implemented a new whole-school approach to 3-way interviews using a common template and sharing goals with parents.

### **Direction 3 Improve student learning achievements through the development of teacher use of evidence-based pedagogical practices that ensure students have authentic influence in their learning.**

#### **On-track evidence**

- Teachers analysed and used data to inform the establishment of individual student learning goals as part of 3-way interviews.
- Through the goal-setting, teachers are beginning to share the language of learning with students. Leadership assisted with the development of a common template to document this work across the school.
- Through in-class opportunities and student voice, students believe their opinions are valued and there are opportunities to build their leadership.
- Teachers are verbally checking-in with students about the learning.
- Teachers are regularly using 1:1 conferences with students to develop next steps in learning.
- Students stated they are really happy to come to school and they are more challenged in their learning.

#### **Review panel evaluation**

The school is working towards developing common practices to working with students more effectively in the use of data, with an established commonly-agreed new data schedule. Teachers increasingly hold conversations with individual students to reflect on their progress and use this information to set their goals for learning using a common template. This information is now shared with parents. Students understand that effective feedback is important for their learning progress and could articulate how goals support them in their learning. They value the opportunity to input into their learning goals. The school has developed some positive foundations on which to build through continued collective research and trialling of effective practices, which support students to have authentic student influence on their learning.

# Outcomes of the on-track evaluation 2021

Based on the evidence provided, Warooka Primary School is **on-track** to effectively implement the External School Review directions.

Effective leadership is providing strategic direction and planning, supporting the implementation of the plans of action with initial improvement on both teacher practice and student learning outcomes.

The school is establishing structures and processes, which support staff to more effectively analyse data to inform decisions about the priorities in the site improvement plan. Staff implement agreed approaches to learning, working towards collectively monitoring the impact of their actions. These approaches are evidence-based, and staff had training to support implementation. All stakeholders talked about the positive change in learning culture, led by the principal, providing increasing rigor in student learning. There are foundational changes in place supporting students with increased influence in their learning. Teachers increasingly share the language of learning with students through individual student conferences. Students are involved in learning goal-setting that is shared with parents.

## **The principal will continue to work with the education director to implement the OTE key actions**

The principal will continue to work with the education director to implement the findings of the External School Review report October 2019 and in particular the findings of the on-track evaluation process and a revised school improvement plan. The education director will continue to ensure coordinated, targeted and systematic support is provided to the school for the next 12 months.

**Direction 1 To ensure teachers have shared understanding, ownership and accountability to the SIP, introduce clear structures and processes which drive, connect and support the improvement agenda and provides continuous opportunities to improve practice and monitor impact.**

**Direction 2 To provide stretch and challenge for all students, develop, implement and monitor whole-school approaches which provide consistency and common understanding in effective pedagogical practices and use of formative assessment.**

**Direction 3 Improve student learning achievements through the development of teacher use of evidence-based pedagogical practices that ensure students have authentic influence in their learning.**

Based on current performance, Warooka Primary School will be externally reviewed again in **2023**.



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