

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Burra Community School

Conducted in August 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 Debbie Grzeczowski, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Andrew Gilsenan-Reed, 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

Burra Community School caters for students R-12. It is situated 159kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 235. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 225. The local partnership is Mid North Clare.

The school had an ICSEA score of 983 at last assessment and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 5% Aboriginal students, 9% students with disabilities, 1% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 1 percent children/young people in care, and 16% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their first year of tenure, a deputy in his first year of tenure, a curriculum coordinator and a wellbeing coordinator.

There are 20 teachers including 4 in the early years of their career and 7 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Develop the use of data at all levels of schooling to inform cycles of teaching, learning and assessment to support improvement and progress in students' learning achievements.**
- Direction 2** **Create sustainable improvement in student learning through collective commitment and focused effort towards the achievement of agreed, evidence-based aspirational targets.**
- Direction 3** **Increase the engagement and motivation of students through high expectations, the explicit development of positive mindsets for challenging learning, and the development of student metacognition about learning.**

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

The previous ESR directions guided school improvement planning, but had reduced impact due to numerous changes within the leadership team, with most areas still current and pertinent to the school.

Staff have an agreed data schedule, and collect a range of data used to create the improvement focus. Whilst some staff competently use data to inform their practice, this is not consistent across the school. Staff collaborated to develop behaviour management agreements; while most staff have adopted these, they are not common practice across all classes. Changes in leadership have diluted consistency across the school, and although staff have attended professional learning linked to the previous directions, these have not become embedded practice.

The new leadership team is well-placed to build coherence across all classes, which will support teacher pedagogy and positively impact on learner outcomes.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How well does the school review and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement planning processes and the impact on student learning to inform the next steps?

The improvement plan at Burra Community School was created using data analysis to identify focus areas and the guidebooks to support its actions. Leaders have aligned professional learning and performance development plans with the site improvement plan (SIP). Staff meeting time is regularly allocated to professional learning to further support staff to deliver the SIP outcomes.

Teachers were involved in an evaluation process that tracked progress and further refined and narrowed the SIP. Whilst teachers know the plan's overall focus, some struggle to articulate how the plan links with, and drives their practice. Recording teacher actions within each area of the SIP will develop connections for all staff and further promote collective ownership of the whole-school focus.

Staff discussed collecting a range of data, but when presented with the previous year's phonics screening and Running Records data, some staff expressed surprise at the low levels of achievement. Not 'knowing' the data could contribute to the relaxed sense of urgency and moral imperative to act now to improve student outcomes.

Although performance and development plans (PDPs) are linked to the SIP, line managers have yet to conduct formal observations of teacher practice. Using focused observations to improve teacher pedagogy is a critical driver for the school improvement plan. Leaders have opportunity to lead the learning and ensure consistency across the school by being visible in classes, and providing explicit feedback to teachers to further improve their practice. Having regular and formalised leadership observations and walkthroughs, linked to PDP and SIP focus, will provide targeted and timely feedback to further strengthen teacher practice.

Staff would appreciate time to collaborate, share practice and further build their capability, providing opportunity to strategically develop improvement teams to drive the improvement agenda. Clear structures and processes, which strategically align professional learning, include focused observations and explicit feedback on teacher practice, alongside opportunity for collaboration, will provide rigour and support the improvement agenda.

Direction 1 **Develop clear structures and processes, which strategically and explicitly connect, drive and support the improvement agenda, and provide opportunities for continuous monitoring, evaluation and review.**

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers supporting students to improve their learning?

Most students at Burra Community School are able to articulate their learning and report engagement and enjoyment of lessons. All identified students have a current individual learning plan to support and direct their learning. School services officers (SSOs) deliver a mix of class and group support, as well as provide quality, evidence-based intervention. There is opportunity to strengthen intervention through evaluating outcomes and providing increased opportunity to transfer skills back into the classroom.

All staff track data to identify students, but there is variance in how this was being used to inform student learning, as differentiated lessons were not a consistent practice. Providing clarity on purpose of the data will increase the relevance for staff to use it to impact on their practice. Half of students interviewed indicated that their work was 'too easy' and felt they needed to be challenged and given harder work to push and stretch their learning. Tasks, viewed in bookwork and through discussions and observations, provided limited opportunity in some year groups for students to achieve higher grades.

There are pockets of effective teacher pedagogical practice, with an inconsistency across classes and within different school sectors. The several high-impact teaching strategies deployed by teachers are currently not being dispersed across all classes. Building opportunities for staff to collaborate and share practice will assist to build consistency.

Variation in teacher pedagogy and practice is acknowledged by leadership and staff who highlighted this as an area for development. Although the school has adopted programs to support learners, these are not being consistently delivered, with some choosing to opt out. Developing consistent and effective pedagogy in the early years needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency, as this will establish a solid foundation for ongoing learner achievement. The opportunity to bring clarity of direction with staff collaboratively developing a transparent vision of teaching and learning through published whole-school expectations, will support coherence, positively impact on planning and pedagogy, and amplify the focus on improving student outcomes.

Direction 2 Provide shared understanding in effective pedagogical practice through the development, implementation and monitoring of whole-school expectations.

Direction 3 Ensure all students receive differentiated learning with appropriate stretch and challenge through collaboratively strengthening teachers' capacity to incorporate individual student data in learning design.

Conditions for effective student learning

To what extent does the school promote a culture of learning with high expectations of achievement for all learners?

Students report a sense of safety and pride in their school. They value their relationships with staff, reporting that staff care about them and see them as individuals. SSOs and teachers clearly see themselves as 'one team'. Leaders are beginning to engage with the Aboriginal Learner Achievement matrix, but now need to involve all staff in this process to fully support Aboriginal learners.

The school has structured opportunities for student leadership, predominately of an organisational nature. Several senior students reported providing feedback on current behaviour consequences as they felt the current practice of detention by some teachers was ineffective. Although they have provided feedback, they felt the matter has not been addressed and saw their opinions as having little impact.

Implementing processes that provide all students with regular opportunities to contribute to their learning, will deepen their ownership of, and promote their sense of self as learners. Students want more ownership of their learning and mentioned the need for success criteria to help them monitor their progress and inform them of their next steps. Some students report valuing teacher feedback, which occurs while they are engaged in a task; however, this was not seen as a consistent practice, and was identified by some staff as an area for improvement.

Although staff want successful outcomes for students, a culture of high expectations was not obvious. Consistent displays of student work, which include exemplar pieces, will provide aspirational targets and let students see what they are aiming for.

Students have opportunity to become partners in their own learning if provided with clarity in what they are to learn, the purpose of their learning and how they can be successful. When teachers discuss and collaboratively develop the criteria with their students, impact on learning is increased. Where students have a choice in where, what and who they work with, they report increased engagement in their learning.

Direction 4 Strengthen and embed student agency within learning by creating opportunities for all students to provide feedback, set individual learning goals, establish clear learning intentions and self-monitor their progress against success criteria.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

Burra Community School has a welcoming atmosphere where staff, students and parents display a strong sense of pride in their school. Staff care about students as individuals and maintain positive relationships with them. The new leadership team operates as a cohesive unit and is supported by staff and community who appreciate the stability they bring. Teachers contribute to the improvement agenda and are willing to take on new learning to deliver on the SIP outcomes. The school is responding and adapting to students' needs by introducing VET pathways and school-based apprenticeships.

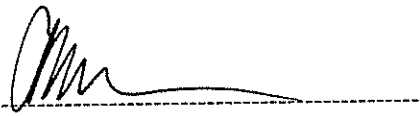
The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1** Develop clear structures and processes, which strategically and explicitly connect, drive and support the improvement agenda, and provide opportunities for continuous monitoring, evaluation and review.
- Direction 2** Provide shared understanding in effective pedagogical practice through the development, implementation and monitoring of whole-school expectations.
- Direction 3** Ensure all students receive differentiated learning with appropriate stretch and challenge through collaboratively strengthening teachers' capacity to incorporate individual student data in learning design.
- Direction 4** Strengthen and embed student agency within learning by creating opportunities for all students to provide feedback, set individual learning goals, establish clear learning intentions and self-monitor their progress against success criteria.

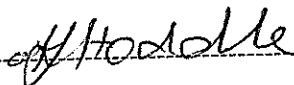
Based on the school's current performance, Burra Community School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



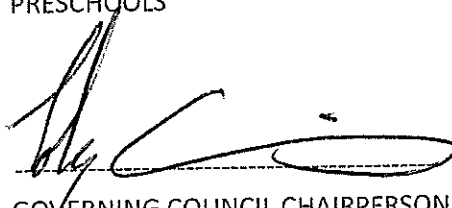
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Appendix 1

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, 30% of year 1 and 27% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline for years 1 and 2, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 47% to 30%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 77% of year 3 students, 67% of year 5 students, 89% of year 7 students and 59% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, and 7, this result represents an improvement, for year 5 little or no change, and for year 9, a decline, from the historic baseline average.

For 2019, year 3 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving higher than, for year 5 lower than and for years 7 and 9, within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2019, 18% of year 3, 11% of year 5 and 11% of year 7, and 3% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, 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 reading, 29%, or 2 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 50%, or 1 out of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, 14%, or 1 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 64% of year 3 students, 67% of year 5 students, 78% of year 7 students and 66% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 and 7, this result represents little or no change, for year 5 an improvement, and for year 9, a decline, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 9 has been downwards, from 88% to 66%.

For 2019, year 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within than the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 14% of year 3, no year 5, 11% of year 7 and 3% of year 9 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 in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 50%, or 1 out of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, and the 1 student from year 3 did not remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2019, 100% of students enrolled in February and 100% of those enrolled in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve SACE.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2019, 96% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 90% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2019, 100% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 48% of grades were at an 'A' level and 41% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents an improvement for the 'A' level grade and decline for the 'B' level grade, from the historic baseline averages.

No students completed SACE using VET and there were no students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2019.

In terms of 2019 tertiary entrance, 100%, or 6 out of 6 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score.

In 2019, the school had a moderation adjustment of 1.