

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Risdon Park Primary School

Conducted in March 2019



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 Grzechowski, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and John McCade and Marg Erwin, Review Principals.

Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence during the site visit:

- 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

Risdon Park Primary School is situated in Port Pirie, 225kms from the Adelaide CBD. Current enrolment is 384 and the enrolment at the time of the previous review was 420.

The school has an ICSEA score of 934, and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 11% Aboriginal students, 7% students with disabilities, 1% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 43% of families eligible for School Card assistance and 8 children in care.

The school leadership team consists of a principal on a one year contract, a deputy principal, student wellbeing leader, literacy coordinator and a numeracy coordinator.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Increase the impact of improvement planning on student outcomes by streamlining processes to ensure planning is completed promptly, with a focus on implementation at classroom level. Implement improvement strategies that have clear effect on outcomes for students that can be measured regularly to ensure progress is being made.
- Direction 2** Ensure consistent levels of growth in literacy and numeracy achievement, particularly through the middle primary years, by restructuring the data collection and analysis processes to make data available for teachers to use at classroom level, in regular collaborative discussions, about the impact of teaching approaches on student progress.
- Direction 3** Increase the number of students demonstrating the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA), especially at year 5, by increasing the consistency of practice across the school by providing structured opportunities for teaching teams to plan to meet the needs of all learners in each cohort and assess the progress of students.

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

Collecting and analysing data has been an increasing feature at Risdon Park Primary School since the previous ESR. Staff routinely collect a variety of data sets and are beginning to use and interpret data to identify areas for improvement. Scorelink is utilised to centrally store data. Students are becoming increasingly aware of their data through reading levels in the early years and NAPLAN and PAT data in the upper years.

The previous ESR directions have encouraged increasing collaboration between staff within individual units which has positively impacted on some aspects of pedagogy.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

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

The panel found that all teachers are engaging with achievement and growth data, supported by a collection schedule and the use of 'Scorelink' as central storage. Members of the leadership team have assisted staff to interrogate PAT data to identify future teaching.

Teachers analysed data and collectively engaged in the formation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) during a student free day. However, the panel found that whilst teachers know the plan's overall focus, only some teachers know the goals and targets for improvement. SSOs who engage with students to assist their learning were not involved in the creation of the SIP and were unaware of its focus. The panel felt that leadership have an understanding of what they want to achieve to improve outcomes at Risdon Park Primary School, however the focus needs to be on ensuring whole-school ownership of the improvement plan.

The school improvement model provides clarity regarding the improvement agenda. However, there needs to be clear structures and processes in place to help drive the plan. The panel found that key structures and processes such as Performance Development Plans (PDP), regular Personnel Advisory Committee meetings, clear statements of roles and responsibilities and a shared vision are in their infancy. Ensuring key documentation is in place, coupled with intentional planning of regular leadership meetings, learning focused staff meetings, professional development plans, network team meetings and planned 'checking in' with the SIP will bring to the forefront the moral imperative for improvement and support a cycle of continuous improvement where everyone owns, and uses, the plan to improve student outcomes.

The new school improvement model with its narrow and deep focus will support the school to build consistency of pedagogy. There is opportunity to build understanding and consistency using the expertise of department personnel, the Local Education Team and staff from within the school. Using the capacity of key staff to mentor and coach others will promote ownership and share effective practice.

Direction 1 Develop processes to ensure all staff have shared understanding, ownership and accountability of the SIP and introduce clear structures and processes which drive and support the improvement agenda and provide continuous monitoring, evaluation and review.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING:

How effectively are teachers supporting students to improve their learning?

Staff are currently using learning journals to collect evidence against three identified students in their class. These journals have enriched professional understanding around the use of data and evidence to inform learning. Network teams participate in professional dialogue, share practice and build capacity, supported by a member of the leadership team. Intervention is data-driven with several evidence-based programs supporting student learning.

Whilst network teams, which are unit based, report a collaborative approach in supporting student learning, the panel found inconsistency of practice both within and across units. This was evidenced through

discussions with students and teachers and was apparent during class observations. Most students did not have learning goals which provide ownership of, and next steps, for their learning. There were some examples of formative assessment supporting student learning but this was not consistently evidenced.

Having clear and documented whole school approaches, which include a common language for learning and student influence, will provide common understanding, produce cohesion and support student learning. Key documentation outlining the 'Risdon Park way of doing things' will further support staff and provide clarity of the learning focus to the community. Having explicit guidelines and shared understanding will promote a common understanding of best practice to support student learning.

Direction 2 Develop, implement and monitor whole school approaches which provide consistency and common understanding of effective pedagogical practices and support students as they progress through school.

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE STUDENT LEARNING

To what extent does the school provide conditions for effective student learning?

Students report a sense of being safe and having pride in their school. They report that staff care about them and see them as individuals. Some students would like behaviour to be improved; this was further evidenced through discussions with staff and parents who spoke of inconsistencies of behaviour consequences and the impact of behaviour on learning. Whilst the school does have a behaviour code, it is not visible in all classes. Recent leadership changes provide a timely opportunity to review the behaviour policy with all stakeholders so that processes are owned by all, consistently delivered and presented in a child friendly format.

Most students the panel spoke with struggled to articulate how Risdon Park Primary School wanted students to learn and were unaware of the school's current learning focus. There is opportunity to develop a coherent and common dialogue for learning to support students as they progress through the school.

The majority of identified students had an individual learning plan, which was known by staff and supports their learning. However, the panel found that this could be strengthened for Aboriginal learners with some not having a current plan.

Risdon Park Primary School has some evidence of student leadership but this is of an organisational nature. Implementing and embedding processes which provide all students with regular opportunities to have input into their learning will deepen ownership and promote a sense of themselves as learners. Teachers report the partnership focus of visible learning has enabled them to support students through clear learning intentions and providing success criteria, however, the panel found this was not embedded practice with most students unaware of success criteria. The panel evidenced pockets of good practice where some teachers routinely shared learning intentions and success criteria but this was not evidenced consistently across all classes.

Direction 3 Strengthen student agency in learning and provide opportunities for all students to receive stretch and challenge through co-constructing the curriculum, setting individual learning goals, and establishing clear learning intentions and success criteria which enable students to monitor and assess their learning.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Students at Risdon Park Primary School display an obvious sense of pride in their school which is supported by strong relationships with adults within the school. Parents are happy with the school and commend the school for its proactive approach to communication if any issues arise.

Staff collaborate well within their network teams and acknowledge a need for change is required. The current practice of teachers completing learning journals has provided a tangible tool for professional discussions around learning.

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

- Direction 1** Develop processes to ensure all staff have shared understanding, ownership and accountability of the SIP and introduce clear structures and processes which drive and support the improvement agenda and provides continuous monitoring, evaluation and review.
- Direction 2** Develop, implement and monitor whole school approaches which provide consistency and common understanding in effective pedagogical practices and support students as they progress through school.
- Direction 3** Strengthen student agency in learning and provide opportunities for all students to receive stretch and challenge through co-constructing the curriculum, setting individual learning goals, establishing clear learning intentions and success criteria which enable students to monitor and assess their learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Risdon Park Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS



Jason Saxby
PRINCIPAL
RISDON PARK 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 2018, 23% of year 1 and 52% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 67% to 23%.

In 2018 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 78% of year 3 students, 55% of year 5 students, and 70% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement, and for year 5, little or no change, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 7 is an improvement from 55% to 70% respectively.

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

In 2018, 26% of year 3, 10% of year 5 and 15% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN literacy 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, 36%, or 4 of 11 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 22%, or 2 of 9 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.

Numeracy

In 2018 the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 74% of year 3 students, 61% of year 5 students, and 64% 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 2018, years 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, 4% of year 5 and 9% 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, 25%, or 1 of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 38%, or 3 of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.