

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Morgan Primary School

Conducted in November 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 Tanya Oshinsky, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Natasha Hefford and Debbie Grzczkowski, Review Principals.

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

Morgan Primary School and school-based preschool caters for students from preschool to year seven. It is situated 159kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 6 preschool students and 37 primary students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 35. Student population is somewhat transient, with students moving in and out of the school for varying reasons. The local partnership is Waikerie.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 974 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 6 Aboriginal students, less than 6 students with disabilities, less than 6 students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, no children/young people in care and 59% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their first year of tenure.

There is 1 FTE teacher and 4 part-time teachers including 1 Step 9 teacher.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Improve intellectual challenge for all students by building on the design of learning so that students are engaged in critical and creative thinking to develop their general capabilities.
- Direction 2** Continue to build a positive and challenging class and school learning culture by using assessment for learning strategies, including feedback from students to teachers about pedagogy.
- Direction 3** Strengthen student influence and decision-making in authentic learning to further personalise student engagement and raise performance.
- Direction 4** Improve the school partnership with families by collaboratively designing a strategic approach to communication to support productive relationships and understanding about learning.

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

Visible learning work, maintained through partnership agreement, has influenced Morgan Primary School's improvement journey since the previous review. Developing dispositions for learning, learning intentions, success criteria and feedback, have been a strong focus. Collaborative opportunities with partnership colleagues support teachers in learning design, assessment and moderation. Staff capability is further built through targeted professional learning and sourcing of external expertise.

Areas of growth have been analysing learning needs of students from data and establishing student learning goals. A whole-school literacy block enables some students to move between classrooms for more targeted work matched to student need. There has also been a significant focus on wellbeing.

Partnerships with parents are encouraged through open mornings, assemblies, community events and

various forms of communication. Staff identified they would like to involve families more in children's learning. While changes in principal and amalgamation of the preschool have had an impact in the last few years, staff and parents are very positive about the current work and directions for the school.

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 next steps?

All staff are involved in school improvement planning (SIP) processes and are clear about their work within it. Triangulation of data identifies gaps in student learning, and strengths and growth areas in teacher practice. Analysis of data and research of high quality practice, informs the SIP and develops a shared understanding of required actions. Implementation of planned actions and regular self-review of the SIP, ensure collective responsibility of teachers to continuously reflect and improve on practice. This shared ownership of the SIP and regular monitoring, ensures the cycle of improvement becomes embedded. Developing and aligning the preschool's Quality Improvement Plan has been a feature of the process.

Teachers are released to look more deeply at data and the implications for teaching and learning. Effective tracking and monitoring of individual student achievement, identifies impact of planned actions on student outcomes, and informs future planning. Professional learning, performance development and staff meetings are aligned to the SIP. Parents have clear understanding of the improvement agenda.

Extensive documentation has been developed this year to build teacher capability and ensure consistency of practice, promoting a culture of high expectations. Audits and quality resources are used to identify best practice, and potential barriers, which are then addressed. Whole-school agreements have been reviewed and developed to align with the improvement agenda, ensuring a rigorous approach to achieving those goals. The principal mentors staff, models effective practice, and uses a gradual release of responsibility model to further develop teachers' skills and understandings.

School services officers work closely with teachers and report they need to be flexible in their support of students with wellbeing needs. Shifting the emphasis from wellbeing before learning to wellbeing for learning, is underway. The focus on specific high-impact strategies is yet to be embedded. Building deeper understanding of high-quality practices for consistent implementation across all classes, is the continuing work of the school.

Direction 1 Further refine teacher pedagogy by developing and consistently embedding high-quality teaching practices.

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers using evidence-based pedagogical practices that engage and challenge all learners?

An outdoor learning program is seen as an opportunity for students to learn in an authentic context, develop their social skills and build oral language. While students reflect on their learning with their peers, they view the program as an opportunity to enjoy themselves. A stronger teaching and learning focus is now being promoted to provide rigour.

Oral language in the preschool and Jolly Phonics and the Heggerty Curriculum in the early years, provides an increased focus on phonics instruction, supported by additional evidence-based programs. A literacy block and guided reading occur four times per week and students are streamed according to ability. 'Big Ideas in Number' is the base of numeracy learning and intervention. A whole school timetable and consistent programs, enable smooth transitions for students in the change between the three, and then two, classrooms during the week.

Learning intentions, success criteria and feedback, introduced as part of the 'visible learning project' are variable across classrooms. While different terminology is used, students are aware of the terms used in their classroom and can articulate how it supports their learning. This practice could be further strengthened by developing a common language, to provide consistent scaffolding for students as they move between classrooms.

All students across the school have learning goals. 'Steps to success' and success criteria support students to choose their own learning goals in primary classes. While students and parents can articulate specific goals, students are less able to articulate how they are going in their learning or how they could improve. Common responses include; the teacher telling them or by trying harder. Literacy and numeracy progressions have been introduced to assess student learning and identify next steps. Sharing assessments and progressions of learning with students will help them to understand what they know and what they need to know. This, and providing explicit feedback to students about their learning, will enable them to set SMARTAR goals. They can then take ownership for monitoring and reviewing these, to keep moving their learning forward.

Direction 2 Strengthen student agency through teachers regularly sharing learning progressions, assessments and feedback with students, to set SMARTAR goals and self-direct their own improvement.

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers analysing assessment and feedback data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction?

Tracking and monitoring a variety of data informs teaching and identifies required intervention. All students have individual assessment folders for teachers to track progress. Students have begun to measure their own growth in writing using the Brightpath tool. The Brightpath ladder, displayed in all classrooms, enables students to see their next steps in learning. Primary students measure their growth in Progressive Achievement Tests; however, they are unable to identify areas where they could improve.

Students and parents believe that individual learning needs are catered for and there is challenge in learning. Teachers identify differentiated learning as having the same task with different expectations, different levels of questioning, inquiry projects and streaming literacy or numeracy according to ability. Planning for multiyear levels in the classroom and stretching the learning for all students is a challenge. Targeted planning for stretch and challenge for individual students was not evident in conversations and walkthroughs. Developing a common understanding of differentiating task design which ensures students have opportunity to demonstrate and achieve higher levels of learning, will further improve outcomes. Stretch and challenge needs to be purposefully planned for through 'assessment for, of and about' learning.

Formative assessment and feedback often occurs after the learning. Formative assessment practices that provide timely feedback during learning is an area that could be further strengthened. Teachers are aware that giving students' feedback about their learning is helpful, and students report that receiving feedback supports them to improve their work. Most feedback is verbal, with written feedback as mainly providing praise or identifying what the student has done well. Teachers acknowledge that they are still working on improving feedback, particularly peer-to-peer feedback, and feedback from students about the learning. Formative assessment practices that regularly inform teachers of individual student achievement identifies the required teaching and learning. Formative assessment and feedback from students about their learning, enables teachers to adjust their practice to better meet the needs of students and provide learning opportunities that continuously stretch and challenge learners.

Direction 3 Strengthen teacher capability to provide differentiated learning for multi-year level classes, through learning design, student progress data, formative assessment and feedback about learning.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

Parents and staff have a high level of trust for the principal and the school's clear agenda to build quality teaching practices across all classrooms to improve student learning outcomes. Staff are a cohesive team who work collegially to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of all students. Strong relationships across the school are fostered through the genuine care staff have for the students and their families. With the principal as a strong instructional leader, and dedicated staff who are willing to embrace new learning, the school is well-placed for future improvement work.

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

- Direction 1** Further refine teacher pedagogy by developing and consistently embedding high-quality teaching practices.
- Direction 2** Strengthen student agency through teachers regularly sharing learning progressions, assessments and feedback with students, to set SMARTAR goals and self-direct their own improvement.
- Direction 3** Strengthen teacher capability to provide differentiated learning for multi-year level classes, through learning design, student progress data, formative assessment and feedback about learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Morgan Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



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Morgan 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).

In considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making a judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school. This is done for two reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year, and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohorts of students. The data below represents a summary of aggregated data from Morgan Primary School from 2015 – 2019.

All data references in Appendix 1 are aggregates and % of aggregates:

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2015-2019, 63% of year 1 and 47% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2015-2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 68% of year 3 students, 75% of year 5 students and 81% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2015-2019, 41% of year 3, 25% of year 5 and 30% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

From 2015-2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 95% of year 3 students, 65% of year 5 students and 78% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2015-2019, 36% of year 3, 5% of year 5 and 11% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

