

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Mundulla Primary School

Conducted in November 2021



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 Greg Graham, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Annie Matthews, 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

Mundulla Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 273kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 71. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 66. The local partnership is Tatiara.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 971 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 5% Aboriginal students, less than 5% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background or children/young people in care, and 21% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 4th year of tenure.

There are 5.1 Teachers including 2 in the early years of their career and 1 Step 9 Teacher.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Build teacher capacity to design and implement learning experiences with multiple entry and exit points to stretch and challenge all students, supported through further professional learning and the implementation of the Learning Design and Moderation strategy.
- Direction 2** Increase student influence in their learning through individual goal setting, effective two-way feedback and the collaborative development and sharing of lesson intentions and success criteria, as described through the TfEL framework.
- Direction 3** Collaboratively develop, implement and embed an agreed, regular and rigorous self-review cycle to determine the impact of programs and strategies on individual student learning

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

The school has implemented the learning design and moderation (LDAM) process to allow for multiple entry points to learning and cater for various abilities for all students. Staff regularly use the curriculum documents for English and Maths.

A change of practice has been the development of learning intention and success criteria, and the sharing of these with students. Staff verified that some significant changes in practice are due to the use of an evidence-based writing assessment tool along with revisiting the LDAM strategies. The impact has streamlined teaching across the school, including the use of common language, agreements, lesson structures and professional learning support.

Students set goals for their work and are beginning to look at success criteria. Teachers are working on individual goal setting and students know what their next steps to improve their work are. Specific feedback is given by peers and teachers which has resulted in more goal setting in other curriculum areas. Visual signage of learning intentions is discussed and displayed in the classroom. Staff reported that these strategies have assisted in personalising learning for each student.

Regular self-review actions are conducted by staff to review whole-school programs, how best to use them, and who would benefit from them the most. Data is analysed, and staff plan for the students' needs for the following year at a term 4 review day.

Performance development processes include reflection on practice in line with the school improvement plan (SIP) and teachers are asked to talk about interventions and successes with students. Teachers reflect on their practice and are able to articulate and share classroom pedagogy with their peers.

Elements of the previous directions are still to be addressed and are to be addressed in conjunction with the strategies identified in the school improvement plan.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

The review panel acknowledged the work of the Principal and actions taken in addressing the previous review directions and their impact on the teaching and learning. The Principal has been instrumental in leading and developing a culture of learning using the school improvement plan as the vehicle for change, along with its review processes as a more effective tool for reflecting on what has been achieved.

A whole-school approach in writing and mathematics is the main focus of the SIP, which has been informed by long term achievement data. The review of mathematics data, with a particular focus on place value, and the referencing of specific Department for Education mathematics resources and strategies, has supported the planning and teaching of mathematics. The implementation of a mathematics intervention program has proven valuable and will continue in 2022.

A whole-school approach to the teaching of writing, supported by the implementation of an effective writing assessment tool, coupled with a targeted approach to teaching the English skills of grammar and punctuation, has proven successful. This, coupled with a bookmaking approach, has improved the interest and writing levels of students. Teachers are now more confident in the teaching of writing.

Review of the improvement plan is conducted regularly, and staff recognised the connection between SIP targets and actions in class. The teachers regularly reference the LDAM strategies and have actively used the support from the literacy guarantee unit (LGU) and the local education team (LET) to refine their planning and lesson delivery. Staff have a stronger understanding of a connected curriculum through the mapping the Australian Curriculum (AC) in HASS/Geography and the use the curriculum scope and sequence to plan units of work.

The Principal and staff have indicated that there is a need to continue the current literacy and numeracy practices to ensure that they are embedded and demonstrate sustainability. Next steps to consider involves strengthening the focus of SIP review with a focus on stretching all students to further improve Department for Education standard of educational achievement (SEA) and higher band achievement.

Direction 1 **To improve student achievement, strengthen high impact pedagogical practice, assessment strategies, and monitoring of the school improvement plan to achieve targets and goals.**

Effective teaching and student learning

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

All staff are united in doing their best for all students and the enthusiasm regarding the positive change in direction in terms of whole-school pedagogy is shared amongst all staff. The sharing of good practice and resources, along with supporting individual teachers to improve teaching practice and outcomes for students, is apparent.

The staff recognised the diversity of learners within their class and across the school. The teachers are able to identify the specific learning programs used and the connection they have with the learning progressions across the school. Enthusiasm from the staff in undertaking the writing approach that enables children to internalise the language structures (vocabulary, spelling and punctuation) needed in writing is evident. The consistent teaching of grammar has shown improvements in student writing.

Differentiated teaching processes varied amongst the teachers who use a range of strategies appropriate to the year levels and their abilities. Stronger work in differentiated planning for all students, with a focus on stretch and building the numbers of students achieving SEA and high band levels, are the next steps to undertake.

Formative assessment practices varied amongst teachers. The use of learning intentions and success criteria is evident, with pockets of strength in some classes. It is timely for the staff to consider how they can continue to build on the inclusion of learning intentions and success criteria by moving the focus to how these will reflect what students can do, say, make or write. Strengthen the link between the learning intention, success criteria and student goal setting to consolidate the new learning for each student.

The next steps for the school are to revisit the learning design process to ensure task design is differentiated and caters for all students. Use the current evidence-based writing and mathematics approaches offered to embed the consistency of practice for this design, along with formative assessment processes, which can then be retained and transferred within teaching of other curriculum foci.

Direction 2 To ensure meaningful student engagement in learning, embed consistent high-level differentiated teaching approaches that include formative assessment processes.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

At Mundulla Primary School the influence of previous ESR directions is evident in the school's improvement. The school is effectively using improvement planning and monitoring processes to raise student achievement. Leadership provides strategic direction, planning, and targeted interventions. Teacher and leader practice are positively impacted by effective systems that build capacity. The school is providing effective conditions for student learning

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

- Direction 1** To improve student achievement, strengthen high impact pedagogical practice, assessment strategies, and monitoring of the school improvement plan to achieve targets and goals.
- Direction 2** To ensure meaningful student engagement in learning, embed consistent high-level differentiated teaching approaches that include formative assessment processes.

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



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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 cohort of students. The data below represents a summary of the aggregated data from Mundulla Primary School from 2016-2021.

Reading

In the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2020 14% of year 1 and 79% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 1 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. For year 2 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2021, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 80% of year 3 students, 78% of year 5 students and 85% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

Between 2016 and 2021, 42% of year 3, 28% of year 5 and 15% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

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

Numeracy

Between 2016 and 2021, the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 86% of year 3, 69% of year 5 and 89% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

Between 2016 and 2021, 36% of year 3, 42% of year 5 and 19% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

For those students in 2021 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy 20% of students, or 1 out of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

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