

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Surrey Downs R-7 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 Julie Bishop, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Linda Ritchie, 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
- Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parent groups
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

## School context

Surrey Downs R-7 School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 21kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 281. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 227. The local partnership is Tea Tree Gully.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1006, and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 4% Aboriginal students, 19% students with disabilities, 12% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 18% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of tenure, and a deputy principal.

The school also hosts 2 regional special classes, a junior primary and an upper primary class.

There are 17 teachers including 4 in the early years of their career and 6 Step 9 teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Build a cohesive and challenging learning environment by developing a reception to year 7 approach to fostering the skills and dispositions to be powerful learners.
- Direction 2** Develop critical and creative thinking by collaboratively designing learning and common assessment tasks that enable students to use skills and processes in new contexts.
- Direction 3** Develop an agreed assessment framework and processes to analyse data to inform practice at individual, cohort and whole school levels, as part of regular collective review processes that evaluate the impact of programs and strategies.
- Direction 4** Improve student agency in learning by developing formative feedback aligned to transparent success criteria.

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

Previous ESR directions drove the development of common agreements for the teaching of literacy and numeracy and common assessments across year levels.

There has been a whole-school approach to develop consistency in data collection of Running Records and explicit teaching of reading through a focus on the Big 6. This was achieved through a coaching model and accessing support from the Literacy Guarantee Unit. Teachers have begun similar work in maths through the lens of Big Ideas in Number (BiIN).

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are established for year levels and site improvement plan (SIP) teams. This provided structures for collaborative planning and review including learning and assessment tasks. An agreed approach to formative assessment strategies informed teacher planning for individual students.

Year level PLCs engaged with the Learning Design Assessment and Moderation strategy at school and partnership levels, to develop common assessment tasks with multiple entry and exit points.

The 2020 focus is on formative assessment strategies to inform teacher planning. The principal noted beginning stages of developing transparent success criteria in maths.

## 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?

The school identified 2 goals for the 2020 SIP: to increase the number of students achieving SEA in reading, and increase the number of students in NAPLAN numeracy higher bands.

Leadership and staff are well-positioned to monitor SIP progress. Two SIP professional learning communities were established, one focused on numeracy and the other on reading. SIP PLCs meet on a three-weekly cycle. Literacy and numeracy agreements are in the early stages of development.

Teachers reported that a partnership focus on BliN supported initial development of consistent practices and processes in numeracy. Tool kits in 'misconceptions' and 'trust the count' were developed and distributed. Designing effective assessment tasks in numeracy to ensure all students are regularly challenged in their learning was identified as an area for further development by staff.

The literacy agreement encompasses key ideas from the Big 6 of reading and best advice papers. Guided reading and fluency are key components of the SIP implementation. Only 2 students recognised reading as challenging at the review. Developing a whole-school approach in the implementation of an assessment tool that includes fluency and comprehension for readers beyond level 30 is significant work for the school to undertake.

Ensuring consistent processes in reviewing student data and teacher feedback to determine next steps is seen by staff as a significant area for development. Planned opportunities for SIP PLCs to cross-reference progress implementing and monitoring of the SIP would strengthen teacher collective efficacy. Teachers also acknowledged that collective accountability in ensuring that SIP priorities are embedded across all classrooms and all areas of learning areas is significant.

Next steps for the school will be to ensure that the reading and numeracy PLCs establish processes with planned opportunities for all staff to contribute to ongoing review and evaluation of both SIP priorities.

**Direction 1      Develop and embed processes where all staff collaboratively engage in the review and monitoring of all SIP goals at planned, regular points throughout the year.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

Teachers identified a range of summative and formative assessments used to track and monitor student progress and reported that opportunities to collaboratively analyse data in more depth would result in the collective determination of next steps in learning.

A diverse range of processes used in the provision of feedback for learning was provided by staff, these included but were not limited to: exit slips, thumbs up and think, pair, share. Staff acknowledged that self and peer feedback from the perspective of the student was an area for further development.

Some staff reported students are now speaking about fluency, decoding and setting their personal goals to strengthen their work in guided reading. Others identified implementation of the 2+2+2 process where data of 2 students above SEA, 2 students at SEA and 2 students below SEA would provide opportunities to strengthen differentiation for all students.

Teachers acknowledged that moderation processes need to be an accurate reflection of learning at each specific year level. Some staff noted that effective moderation processes occur when task design provides multiple entry and exit points, a 'sting in the tail' and supports application of new learning in a range of different contexts. Several parents reported their children needed to be further challenged in their learning.

Common understandings of what constitutes A-E grade allocations at each year level and across areas of learning is significant work for the school to undertake. It was acknowledged that moderation was an area for ongoing development. Several staff noted that professional learning time to strengthen and embed effective moderation processes across the site would be beneficial.

Evidence of literacy and numeracy SMARTAR goals were noted in a limited capacity. Planned opportunities for staff to work collaboratively in task design so that all students have regular opportunities to be challenged and consistently display learning at higher levels is significant work for the school to undertake. The school is well-positioned to progress this work across the site.

**Direction 2     Strengthen and embed effective task design and moderation processes to ensure that all students have the opportunity to consistently display learning at a higher level.**

## Effective leadership

How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent high quality curriculum planning?

Leadership established a strategic approach for coherent curriculum planning development. Teachers recognised and acknowledged the work of the deputy and numeracy coordinator in undertaking responsibility for tracking and monitoring the effective implementation of SIP priorities. Reportedly, focus on the numeracy agreement had not occurred to the same extent as literacy, hence the need to clarify expectations in embedding the numeracy agreement across the site.

Literacy and numeracy PLCs need planned time for review and feedback on the work of their peers. In this way all staff will be equally aware of both SIP goals. Teachers value PLCs, and indicated that they would appreciate opportunities to undertake PLCs on a weekly basis.

Performance development plans (PDPs) are aligned to the SIP. Parents and teachers recognise that students need high expectations across all areas of learning, and acknowledged that this was currently a work-in-progress. Others noted that provision of stretch and challenge could be reflected via individual teacher PDPs.

It was identified that developing a coherent approach to literacy and numeracy across the site included the need to ensure that all teachers know in detail the context and content of the work undertaken in both reading and numeracy.

Several teachers reported that planning goals for learning gave them significant direction in determining next steps for learning. Others reflected on summative assessments, identified common misconceptions and determined next steps for learning.

During the ESR, some teachers noted that developing whole-school processes in peer planning and subsequent peer classroom observations would provide a strong framework to develop and embed a coherent approach to curriculum planning and effective pedagogical practices across the site. Surrey Downs R-7 School is well-positioned to undertake this work.

**Direction 3     Develop and embed whole-school processes in high-quality curriculum planning and effective pedagogical practices across year levels and areas of learning.**

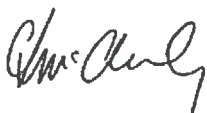
# Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

Leadership and staff are to be commended for their comprehensive improvement agenda. The school worked persistently to develop and implement consistent and coherent processes in reading from reception to year 2. PAT-M and PAT-R results indicate that some students are achieving at extremely high levels. The school is well-positioned to implement and embed coherent high-quality curriculum planning that consistently provides opportunities for all students to be challenged across all areas of learning.

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

- Direction 1**    **Develop and embed processes where all staff collaboratively engage in the review and monitoring of all SIP goals at planned, regular points throughout the year.**
- Direction 2**    **Strengthen and embed effective task design and moderation processes to ensure that all students have the opportunity to consistently display learning at a higher level.**
- Direction 3**    **Develop and embed whole-school processes in high-quality curriculum planning and effective pedagogical practices across year levels and areas of learning.**

Based on the school's current performance, Surrey Downs R-7 School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



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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).

### Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2019, 40% of year 1 and 44% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline for both year 1 and year 2, from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 69% to 40%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 84% of year 3 students, 84% of year 5 students and 83% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement and for year 7, little or no change, from the historic baseline average.

For 2019, years 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2019, 55% of year 3, 36% of year 5 and 17% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards from 20% to 36%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 69%, or 11 out of 16 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 67%, or 4 out of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 81% of year 3 students, 84% of year 5 students and 96% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement and for year 5, little to no change from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 7 has been upwards, from 83% to 96%.

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

In 2019, 52% of year 3, 16% of year 5 and 26% 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 in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 42%, or 5 out of 12 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 100%, or 3 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.