

Department for Education

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

On-track evaluation report for Scott Creek Primary School

One-year return conducted in November 2019



On-track evaluation process

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.

All government schools are externally reviewed over a 3-year cycle. After the review the principal and the governing council chairperson receive a written report with a number of directions for improvement.

A copy of the ESR report is available on the school website.

The External School Review framework is referenced throughout all stages of the ESR process.

In some cases, when the review panel identifies limited achievement and growth, together with evidence about the school's capacity for systematic improvement, a school is advised that they will be visited again in 1 rather than 3 years' time (1-year return).

Schools with a 1-year return are assisted by the education director and other department staff to receive additional coordinated and targeted support. This intervention is focused on building the school's capacity to improve teaching and learning across the school, lift expectations and achieve improved student learning results as measured against the Department for Education Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Following intervention, which occurs for 12-15 months after the ESR, a review panel conducts an on-track evaluation (OTE) to determine the extent to which the school has, with external support, developed sustainable internal capacity to improve effectiveness and raise student achievement.

The school's Site Improvement Plan (SIP) is the main document used to inform the OTE.

This OTE visit was conducted by Simon Harding, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate, and Ngaire Benfell, Review Principal.

The OTE report should be read in conjunction with the report of the External School Review conducted at Scott Creek Primary School in August 2018.

Directions from the External School Review report August 2018

- Direction 1** **Effective Teaching: Collaboratively strengthen teachers' capacity to design and implement learning experiences that further enable differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge to be an integral aspect of everyday learning for all students.**
- Direction 2** **Improvement Agenda: Develop processes to ensure all students have access to their personal data to set individual learning goals in literacy and numeracy.**
- Direction 3** **Student Learning: Support consistency in teaching and learning across the school by collaboratively developing and embedding common agreements, effective pedagogy and assessment in literacy and numeracy.**

Additional information about the school context

The principal advised the review panel that they have been appointed to the school on a 5 year tenure at the beginning of 2019. There has been a small decline in enrolments down to 38 students in 2019. Staffing has been stable since the ESR.

Development of a school improvement plan

The principal has advised that, in consultation with the education director, the directions from the ESR and the actions to be undertaken would be clearly outlined in the 2019 SIP. The directions became challenges of practice with clear timelines for plans of actions against each direction. Staff were involved in high levels of consultation through staff meetings and surveys. Staff have been involved in the monitoring of progress through mid-term reviews where they identified achievement towards the directions. At the end of each term, staff have also worked towards clarifying the focus of the work, based on the progress they have made. It is clear staff have a high level of ownership of the plan. Governing Council representatives also participated in the development of the plan and have been updated throughout the year regarding progress.

The plan was sent to the Executive Director, Partnerships, Schools and Preschools in term 1, 2019.

Strategic support provided to the school over the past 12 months

The principal advised that the education director and principal consultant have provided significant support, with regular monitoring at professional meetings and site visits. Regular dialogue with the principal consultant has been supportive to clarify the strategies, measure impact and gather evidence of the work the school has been undertaking. Professional learning for staff has been supported by leadership and external staff from the Literacy Guarantee Unit, other external experts and also from the partnership Senior Leader, Learning Improvement Primary (SLLIP).

Evidence and evaluation referenced to directions in the school improvement plan

Direction 1 Collaboratively strengthen teachers' capacity to design and implement learning experiences that further enable differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge to be an integral aspect of everyday learning for all students.

On-track evidence

- Clear structures have been set up for teachers to meet and collaboratively plan in staff meetings and release time provided enabling common approaches and developing differentiation for challenge and stretch in the learning
- The use of a school wide planning template has enhanced this process through the development of a common language to describe learning and the opportunities staff are providing students to support challenge and stretch
- Effective ongoing reflection and review processes have been established, along with expectations for teachers to document the journey. This work has been a regular focus of the staff meeting agenda
- Clear expectations are in place to support accountability such as handing in the planning document each week for review by leadership with feedback provided to teaching staff
- The principal began work with regular observations and modelling of expectations and continued to support using a coaching model. Both the work internally and through external providers has been highly valued by staff and has had an impact on practice
- Students talked about how they are challenged in the learning opportunities they undertake and they could recognise a positive change this year
- Students can articulate their next steps in learning as a result of changes to teacher practice in the feedback provided
- Parents felt that the curriculum is now the focus and is part of all learning occurring
- Children are talking to their parents about struggle and its importance in learning
- Parents provided evidence of the school's ability to differentiate the learning, especially supporting growth for students with learning disabilities
- Parents have a high level of trust in the teachers setting and reviewing appropriate goals with the students.

Review panel evaluation

Leadership has ensured there has been high levels of consultation with staff in relation to the improvement work they have been undertaking over the last year, which has led to high levels of joint ownership and commitment to action by staff. Teachers have valued the opportunities to collaboratively work and plan together in staff meetings and through the provision of extra release time. Structured reflection by staff has been planned as a result of this. The staff recognise the progress they continue to make to more effectively meet the needs and work towards providing the stretch for all their students. Common understandings and language have been developed, along with increased clarity, in relation to the rigour in the task design, a result of the collaborative work by staff. Parents believe there is a strong supportive culture of learning across the school. They believe student confidence in 'having a go' has been developed, and that teachers see all children as learners who more willingly engage in challenging learning.

Direction 2 Develop processes to ensure all students have access to their personal data to set individual learning goals in literacy and numeracy.

On-track evidence

- Personal learner folders have been set up for each student which are available for teachers and students to reflect and discuss their progress
- A common tracking and monitoring schedule is now in place
- Individual student learning goals have been established and are on display in all classrooms
- Each teacher uses the *focus student activity* (1:1 conference) to discuss a student's data with them as part of the setting and reflection of their individual learning goals, focused on literacy and numeracy
- Students are engaged in goal setting and they could articulate their goals and the next steps and strategies they could use towards achieving them. They also understand that the goals are reflected upon and changed as they are achieved
- The conversation between teacher and student is moving from just goal setting to including deeper thinking about the learning throughout the discussion
- Students also stated that knowing other students' goals allows them to both assist that student to achieve their goals, and provide ideas for goals which they may want to achieve themselves
- SSOs have recognised that there is an increased ownership of learning by students
- SSOs have access to the One Plans and the goals of identified students with whom they work
- Senior students stated that having access to data allows them to be much clearer about their goals/next steps and what they have done well and what to improve on
- Parents are aware their children are setting learning goals and are sometimes shared in parent teacher interviews
- Parents believe that children knowing their data provides a good basis from which to improve.

Review panel evaluation

The school has established common approaches and practices in relation to working with students more effectively in the use of data. Teachers have reviewed the data schedule and now have common and agreed data to collect. They have a better understanding of the data that can be used to inform teaching and learning. Teachers are now regularly holding progress conversations with individual students to reflect on their data and use this information to set their goals for learning in literacy and numeracy. It has been observed by staff and parents that students are becoming more invested and taking increased ownership for their learning, as they have become more familiar with the processes. Continuing to refine and enhance these processes are the next steps for the school to undertake.

Direction 3 Support consistency in teaching and learning across the school by collaboratively developing and embedding common agreements, effective pedagogy and assessment in literacy and numeracy.

On-track evidence

- Common agreements are being reached and there is evidence of effective pedagogies being enacted in classrooms, including in some aspects of literacy, the introduction of the Walker Learning approach across the school to support challenge and stretch in learning
- Common assessment schedule has been reviewed in relation to what data to collect and when
- Coaching and mentoring models through external experts has allowed for significant professional learning and coaching alongside teachers
- Collaborative planning is having significant impact on teacher practice and building common practices across the school
- To support continuity of learning there is regular allocation of time at staff meetings, release time and pupil free days to support improvement work
- There is a gradual release of responsibility being achieved through the high level of belief in the shared vision for improvement and the strong sense of trust across the staff group as they are moving from sharing to deeper collaboration
- Students could acknowledge changed practice by teachers. For example, students talked about the learning being more structured and the importance of setting their goals and the impact of these on learning
- Although all classes have more than one teacher, teachers are ensuring consistency of practice through shared understandings and using agreed common approaches, providing students with continuity of learning
- School communication has provided parents with an understanding and knowledge that the school is working towards consistent pedagogical approaches
- Parents appreciate the communication app used by the school which provides families the opportunity to discuss the learning with their children.

Review panel evaluation

It was recognised across the school community that there has been a positive change to the learning culture at the school, where there is a clear focus on curriculum and developing rigour in the learning. There has been an investment in teacher professional learning to support the improvement directions which has been valued by staff and the wider school community. Whole-school agreements are being established, including an up-to-date assessment schedule. Teachers have valued the coaching and training in effective evidence-based pedagogies and have begun to implement these into their classroom practice with planned times to share and reflect on their work during staff meetings to discuss next steps. The next step for the school is to continue to develop and document this work, in both literacy and numeracy, to ensure there are clear statements of practice which are clearly evident in classroom practice across the school.

Outcomes of the on-track evaluation

Based on the evidence provided, Scott Creek Primary School is on-track to effectively implement the External School Review directions.

The influence of the previous ESR directions is clearly evident in the school's improvement processes. The school is now using improvement planning, monitoring processes and strategically deploying resources to provide evidence-based professional learning for teachers and to focus on raising student achievement across the school.

Teachers have an increased focus on providing rigour in the learning and are regularly working collaboratively to reflect on, evaluate and refine their work based on the impact of their strategy. Students have an increased awareness of their data and the implications for learning through the conferencing work with teachers and using this information to set learning goals in literacy and numeracy. Common agreements and practices are now being established to more effectively provide consistency across the school.

Based on the school's current performance, Scott Creek Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



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