

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Scott Creek Primary School

Conducted in October 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 Michael Washington, 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

Scott Creek Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 31kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 48. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 44. The local partnership is Mount Lofty

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 1093 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 9% Aboriginal students, 21% students with disabilities, 5% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, no children/young people in care and 28% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their third year of tenure.

There are 6 teachers including no early career teachers and 2 Step 9 teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- 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.**
- Direction 2 Develop processes to ensure all students have access to their personal data to set individual learning goals in literacy and numeracy.**
- Direction 3 Support consistency in teaching and learning across the school by collaboratively develop and embed common agreements, effective pedagogy and assessment in literacy and numeracy.**

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

Considerable professional learning in the area of literacy has been undertaken and is continuing to strengthen teachers understanding of phonics, reading, and writing progressions.

Outside support from the literacy guarantee unit (LGU) and the local partnership in areas such as phonics, writing and the Be Brave & Lead portfolio initiative has been valued. As a result, differentiated learning is evident across classes. A 'focus student' conference time to touch base with each student to discuss their learning has impacted on their progress, confidence, and engagement, and they are able to articulate their learning and accept challenge.

Staff are familiar with learning progressions in phonics, literacy and mathematics and use these during individual focus student conferences to review achievement with students informed by their end of unit results. Other data and learner information such as progressive achievement test (PAT) data, reading fluency, writing tasks, assessments and feedback, and summative tests enable students to set their own individual literacy and numeracy goals. As a result, students, especially year 3-7 students, have more ownership of their learning and know what they can do to improve it. Parents are more involved in their child's learning through the regular electronic sharing of learning actions and achievements.

Whole-school agreements are in place including a schedule for assessment and tracking and monitoring. Statements of practice are used to ensure that agreements are interpreted and embedded in practice. Regular whole-school release afternoons are scheduled to review data and student progress at a site level and identify next steps for staff professional learning and interventions for students. As a result, students are receiving timely feedback and intervention when needed and staff are confident in tracking progress and using this information to plan for differentiation.

Elements of the previous directions are still to be addressed and are addressed in conjunction with the actions identified in the school improvement plan (SIP).

## 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 leadership team and teachers have a clear understanding of how the SIP drives the improvement focus for the school. Whole-school commitment led by the Principal is evident regarding the implementation of improvement processes. All staff have been involved in the development of the SIP and recognise the importance of the focus to improve their teacher practice and student learning outcomes.

The SIP focus on literacy with a particular focus on writing and phonics is well understood and a whole-school commitment is evident regarding the implementation of improvement processes. The school's approach to teaching synthetic phonics and implementation of a writing assessment tool have been the catalyst for change in literacy and are well understood and implemented by all staff.

The school is to be commended for the processes used to ensure that all staff have collective ownership of and responsibility for school improvement planning. A balanced timetable to regularly review and update the SIP throughout the school year that culminates in two pupil free days for the review of data to enable future planning is evident. The teachers stated that the SIP review process instils accountability, rigour in planning, upskilling of individuals and enables consistency of delivery with shared teaching arrangements.

The use of the traffic light process by teachers in tracking practice against the SIP goals and targets is commendable and is strongly linked to professional development discussions. Planning opportunities through team meetings to analyse achievement data and share expertise is evident. All teachers understand the need to refine and improve their practice and to build on their use of data to inform teaching practices.

The next step to consider involves reflecting on the focus of the SIP review, with the intent to further develop high impact teaching strategies, identifying new or enhancing current SIP teaching actions. This will enable all teachers to achieve the SIP targets and define student success criteria with a focus on increasing the number of students achieving in the higher bands.

**Direction 1      Strengthen the commitment to the improvement cycle with specific reference to increasing and sustaining high achievement in literacy and numeracy.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers using evidenced-based pedagogical practices that engaged and challenge all learners?

All staff are united in doing their best for all students and show enthusiasm regarding the change in direction for the whole school in improved teacher practice. Teachers referenced the bringing together of the writing assessment tool with support and coaching from the Department's literacy guarantee unit as strengthening their collective approach to the delivery of literacy across the school. The partnership initiatives, Visible Learning and Be Brave and Lead teaching approaches, has successfully impacted on teaching and learning across the school.

The whole school approach to personalising learning based on the children's interests, has been adopted by the school. All Staff indicated that this has had a significant impact on their thinking and the way they plan their teaching. The 'Focus Student' actions, the early years learning stations and the Education Research Project work offered to the students has enabled students to explore and learn at their own pace. The students were very clear in understanding that learning goals help them achieve or consolidate new learning.

Differentiated teaching approaches varied across the school with pockets of strength in some year level groups. What differentiated learning practices looks like across the school should be considered to ensure consistency. Endorse a collective understanding of what differentiated learning is and how differentiated planning caters for the diversity of students, in particular the current and potential higher band cohorts.

The teachers indicated that they are keen to share the Australian Curriculum (AC) with students to enable them to understand why and what they are learning. The students indicated that hands-on activities are well liked. Consideration of how the AC can be integrated with the out-door classroom work, to connect the environmental and indigenous learning that the school prides itself on, would be beneficial, would be beneficial.

Continue to improve teaching practices and the provision of challenging learning experiences through the use of high impact teaching strategies. Continue to build capacity of all staff to embed high impact teaching strategies to provide quality differentiated instruction that embeds the formative assessment cycle.

**Direction 2     Embed high impact teaching and learning strategies that are aligned to the school's pedagogical framework and provide stretch and challenge for all students.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Scott Creek Primary School demonstrates a whole-school culture of continuous improvement, strong sustained leadership, clear school wide processes and structures, whole-school accountability and strategic and aligned professional learning.

The strengths of the school as captured by the parents and teachers is the commitment to learning through a focus on the environment and the indigenous connection to learning.

Expectations of students are holistic and aspirational which characterises the culture of the school.

The school is well-positioned to refine the already established highly effective practices, whilst exploring new possibilities for the future.

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

- Direction 1     Strengthen the commitment to the improvement cycle with specific reference to increasing and sustaining high achievement in literacy and numeracy.**
- Direction 2     Embed high impact teaching and learning strategies that are aligned to the school's pedagogical framework and provide stretch and challenge for all students.**

Based on the school's current performance, Scott Creek 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 Scott Creek Primary School from 2016-2021.

### Reading

In the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2020, 60% of year 1 and 50% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 1 and 2 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2021, the reading results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 67% of year 3, 82% of year 5 and 96% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

Between 2016 and 2021, 48% of year 3, 41% year 5 and 52% year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

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

### Numeracy

Between 2016 and 2021, the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 78% of year 3, 79% of year 5 and 83% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

Between 2016 and 2021, 34% of year 3, 26% of year 5 and 48% year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

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