

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Kingston-on-Murray 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 Debbie Grzeczkowski, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Ken Randall, 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

Kingston-on-Murray Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 217kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 22. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 24. The local partnership is Renmark/Loxton.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 997 and is classified as Category 4 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, less than 5% children/young people in care and 30% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 1st year of tenure.

There are 3 Teachers including 0 in the early years of their career and 0 Step 9 Teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Explore and implement approaches that integrate and effectively embed intellectual stretch, challenge and rigour into daily classroom teaching and learning.
- Direction 2** Strengthen the student influence in developing clear understandings of learning intentions and engagement with feedback, data and evidence that enables individual goal setting.
- Direction 3** Deepen the application of data by teachers and students to develop explicit target-setting and intentional teaching, using student achievement data to inform decisions and actions at the individual student, cohort and class levels.

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

The Principal reports that historically staff had limited connection to the school improvement plan (SIP) and the previous external school review directions. The new Principal has undertaken to engage all staff with school improvement and ensured that work is guided by the external school review directions.

Strategic development in this area is:

- Refined data schedule focused on purposeful data
- Increased opportunities to build teachers capability to analyse data to inform practice
- Creative timetabling to maximise learning opportunities
- Intervention aligned to class learning focus
- Streamlined performance development conversations
- Professional learning aligned to SIP focus areas
- Individual learning plans
- Teacher observations to refine practice.

The change in staff has diluted the potential impact of the previous directions with all areas still relevant to the school's improvement focus.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions based on their impact on student learning?

The school improvement plan (SIP) has a narrow focus and is supported by targeted professional learning aligned to its core areas. Professional development plans (PDPs) and performance discussions support the SIP and staff review the plan at least once every term. The SIP is a regular agenda item at governing council meetings and members acknowledge the Principal's strong focus on learning.

To support the improvement process, the Principal regularly visits classes and recently began formal observations. There is opportunity to enhance this process through the provision of explicit feedback to further support teacher practice. Using focused observations and walkthroughs to improve teacher pedagogy is a critical driver for school improvement. Leaders have the opportunity to lead the learning and ensure consistency across the school through a strategic coaching model, providing explicit feedback to teachers to further improve their practice. Having regular and formalised observations and walkthroughs, linked to PDP and SIP priorities, will provide targeted and timely feedback to further strengthen teacher pedagogy, embed consistent practice and provide accountability.

Staff collect data but struggled to evaluate the impact of their strategies and practice. Providing professional learning opportunities to further develop staff data literacy skills will support them to go deeper with data and have clarity around their impact. A published data schedule guides collection and focuses on purposeful data.

Historically staff have had little engagement with the SIP and the Principal has strategically worked to build skills and understanding which has enabled all staff to connect with, and own, the improvement plan. As the school is currently looking at the construction of its next 3-year plan there is opportunity to refine structures and processes which will enable staff to evaluate the impact of their actions to inform future decisions. Working collaboratively with staff on the SIP 5-step improvement cycle will deepen collective ownership and engagement. Providing clear structures and processes to explicitly drive, connect and support improvement will further support staff to authentically contribute to the improvement work. The Department for Education's improvement planning handbook will be a valuable resource in progressing this work.

Direction 1 Provide structures and processes that enable teachers to make decisions about their practice based on their impact on student learning.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

The obvious student and teacher relationships at Kingston-on-Murray Primary School support student engagement. Staff, students, and families all report an increased focus on learning and student achievement this year. Parents and governing council are highly supportive and appreciate the opportunities outside of the curriculum that are provided. The school's entrepreneurial Riverlinx camp offers students an ongoing opportunity to provide leadership.

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

- Direction 1** Provide structures and processes that enable teachers to make decisions about their practice based on their impact on student learning.
- Direction 2** Identify and consistently embed high impact teaching strategies that provide stretch and challenge for every student.

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



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Governing Council Chairperson

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers supporting students to improve their learning?

Students are exposed to a variety of individual, paired and group work. Both teachers use aspects of evidence-based pedagogy to support student learning and all students have individual learning goals. Classes display learning intentions which are used by students to support their learning. The majority of students reported engagement and enjoyment of lessons.

Teachers use pre-testing to track and monitor growth. They described tasks with multiple entry and exit points, open-ended inquiry questions and the mode of presentation to give all students access and opportunity for success. Regular teacher questioning as a check in to ensure student understanding was a common feature in both classes. Whilst there is an obvious intent to differentiate tasks, some students report they are not stretched and challenged in some aspects of their learning. Using data to inform future teaching will support teachers to design differentiated tasks to challenge all students. Teachers highlighted intellectual stretch as an area for further support.

Teachers find creative ways to hook students into learning which is appreciated by students and connects them to the task. Strong teacher and student relationships further support engagement in the explicit focus on learning. Students were highly complementary of their teachers but reflected that they would like more ownership of their learning. Students felt knowing their grades and owning their data would increase their effort to push for a higher grade. Increasing opportunities for formative feedback will support students to know how to further improve their work. Providing students with tangible and aspirational, displayed examples of how to improve their work would further strengthen student agency in learning, increasing student interaction and allowing them to track, improve and stretch their learning.

Whilst teachers use elements of high impact teaching strategies there is variance across classes. Identifying elements of effective teacher practice and its impact on student learning, and providing opportunities to share this practice, will further strengthen a consistent whole-school approach.

Direction 2 Identify and consistently embed high impact teaching strategies that provide stretch and challenge for every student.

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 Kingston-on-Murray Primary School from 2016-2021.

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. The running records result show that 50% of year 1 and 73% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

The reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 96% of year 3 students, 83% of year 5 students and 89% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

36% of year 3, 20% of year 5 and 17% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 25% of students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2019 and 33% of students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2021.

Numeracy

The numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 96% of year 3 students, 83% of year 5 students and 81% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

29% of year 3, 31% of year 5 and 17% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 50% of students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2019 and 68% students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2021.

