

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Balaklava Primary School

Conducted in March 2019



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, they all have been considered and contributed to the development and directions of this report.

This review was conducted by Tanya Oshinsky, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Jodie Kingham, Review Principal.

Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relating to the lines of inquiry:

- Presentation from the principal, deputy principal and coordinators
- Class visits
- Staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - School Support Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Balaklava Primary School is located 92 kilometres north of the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 267 students. The enrolment at the time of the previous review was 266 students. The school has an ICSEA score of 947, and is classified as Category 4 on the DfE Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 4% Aboriginal students, 11% students with a verified disability, 3% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) and 34% of families eligible for School Card assistance. Approximately 52% of students travel to school via bus. There are 11 buses that service the school.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 3rd year of her tenure at the school, a deputy principal in the 2nd year of his tenure and two coordinators, one in literacy and numeracy and the other in student wellbeing. There are 16 teachers including one in the early years of their career and four Step 9 teachers.

Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Raise and sustain higher levels of achievement by using formative and summative assessment processes to inform curriculum planning and instruction and to monitor progress, track growth and improve the rate of learning for all students from Reception to Year 7.
- Direction 2** Implement the school's Performance and Development Policy (2015) to ensure that appraisal and feedback supports all teachers to improve learning outcomes for all students.
- Direction 3** Increase learner engagement and improve student learning outcomes by strengthening the collective responsibility and capacity of staff to lead, shape and implement whole-school agreements.

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

Clear evidence was provided to the panel about the work that has been undertaken at Balaklava Primary School (BPS) in response to the 2015 ESR directions. Evidence sourced indicated improved tracking and monitoring of student achievement over time and greater clarity, refinement and documented agreement, of the data to be collected annually. Robust analysis of summative data occurs annually in term 4 at 'Data Day'. Student achievement remains at the forefront of professional discussions and in improvement planning.

Performance development processes have evolved over time. There has been recent attention to aligning staff meetings, professional learning communities (PLCs) and performance development structures to ensure professional conversations are focussed on the teaching and learning and the priorities of the school. Staff performance plans must align with the school priorities and address student improvement. Student information meetings and staff meetings, are forums in which whole school expectations and good practice are shared, reinforced and celebrated.

Visible learning has been an expectation at BPS for some time. The panel observed different levels of rigor and varied strategies being implemented across classrooms. Staff have collaboratively established literacy block and numeracy agreements and the school's improvement plan (SIP). The school is well positioned to sharpen the collective responsibility of staff, by identifying specific high impact strategies that will be consistently embedded across the school, as the next stage in deepening effective pedagogical practices R - 7.

A high level of commitment to the school, leaders and students was identified by staff and parents.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

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 current SIP has been established through a highly collaborative process. Staff report feeling clearer than in any other year as to how the actions and strategies outlined in the SIP align with their work. School data analysed at the end of the year continues to identify numeracy as a priority. Ongoing monitoring processes have enabled the refinement of what data is collected for purposeful use and the realignment of SSOs for best impact. Teachers and SSOs work (as para-professionals) within the classroom to meet the needs of identified students.

Leaders monitor the needs of staff and target professional development. SSOs acknowledged how recent professional learning about poverty has had significant impact on how they work with disengaged students, their heightened understanding enabling them to connect more effectively with students in order to motivate and re-engage them with their learning task.

Teachers collaboratively planning, regularly discussing and analysing the effectiveness of the teaching and learning and developing consistency in practice and language, is identified in the SIP. Discussions with staff indicate that they are still in the early stages of working as a team, where rigor of planning and assessing ensures a coherent curriculum and greater impact on student outcomes. Identified platforms for collegial work include staff meetings and PLCs. There has also been alignment of some non-instructional time (NIT) for teachers of the same year level. Teachers report their appreciation of these structures and the collegiality that lies within the staff. Building on this cooperative platform for critical reflection on improving practice will further enhance the teaching and learning at BPS.

Administrative tasks are communicated through One Note and the 'Balaklava Bits' to enable meeting structures to be more focussed on professional learning and deeper discussions about teaching practice. Leaders report that providing prior notice about the intent of the learning at meetings means that staff come better prepared and more focussed on the agenda.

Direction 1 Strengthen the culture of continuous improvement by regularly monitoring evidence of SIP actions having impact, and building on current structures of staff meeting and PLCs, to ensure robust discussions that deepen the effectiveness of the teaching and learning, and build consistency and coherence.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

How effectively are teachers using the Australian Curriculum and evidence-based pedagogical practices to engage and challenge all learners?

Building consistency of teacher practice is occurring through Jolly Phonics, Jolly Grammar and Big Ideas in Number. The greatest cohesion noted at the time of the review was in the two Reception and Year 1 classes in Jolly Phonics. The next step, already identified by leaders, is to further consolidate these practices across the school.

Teachers expressed a confidence in planning and assessing against the Australian Curriculum (AC), in a written pedagogical survey, that the panel felt was not evident in discussions. Teachers spoke confidently about the school's programs and more hesitantly about the AC, with little discussion around content descriptors, achievement standards and general capabilities.

When asked about being challenged, students generally referred to more work or another sheet. Teachers spoke about differentiation in terms of streaming, open-ended tasks or group work with an SSO. Developing rigor in joint planning for consistent delivery, moderation processes to ensure congruence in A-E grading, embedding differentiation and integrating pedagogical practices within the AC, is essential work to ensure students have access to viable, rich curriculum delivery.

Furthermore, building expertise in collaborative rich task learning, design, assessment and moderation (LDAM) where students have the opportunity to demonstrate higher levels of learning and that enable all students to be stretched and challenged, will engage and improve outcomes for all learners. The school's current structures of aligned NIT, PLCs and staff meetings provide opportunity for teachers to work collaboratively to plan deeply in the school's priority of numeracy and to jointly assess and monitor the teaching and learning. Deepening teacher skills through numeracy, will facilitate the transferability of this knowledge across all areas of the curriculum. The school has been proactive in engaging identified experts to support this improvement this year.

Direction 2 Implement the elements of LDAM to strengthen teacher capacity to design rich learning experiences that challenge, stretch and target individual student learning capacity, as an integral part of everyday learning for all students.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

To what extent do teachers ensure that students have authentic influence in their learning?

It was clearly evident to the panel that there is positive intent by all teaching staff to implement strategies that enable students to be reflective when learning. The panel heard about or observed the Learning Pit, WILF, WALT, Two Stars and a Wish, WOW work and Levels of Understanding, amongst others. As students move between classes, it was evident that they learn new language each year.

Goal setting with students also takes place in varied ways across the school. Many students were able to describe their goals; some broad and others more specific to current learning. Two teachers and three students reported using the AC to set goals. Learning intentions (LI) and success criteria (SC) have been introduced this year and are in their infancy of development. Students also described feedback that provided them with strategies on how to improve their work, whereas others described praise and reaffirmation of their effort.

While many pockets of good practice are evident, building the language of learning where students can build on their understandings as they travel between year levels and classes, is not yet in place. Some teachers spoke about students having choice of topic as their influence on learning. Developing a deeper understanding of student influence and the BPS language and scaffolds, that enable teachers and students to collaboratively plan and assess the learning, is instrumental to success. With the attention to visible learning practices and the implementation of LI and SC, as well as goals and feedback, the school is well placed to identify and embed key levers that will enable students to take greater responsibility for influence in their learning.

Direction 3 Strengthen and embed authentic student influence for learning across all year levels, by identifying the high yield strategies that genuinely stretch students and challenge them to improve their own learning and that identify the language of learning at BPS for staff, students and their families.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Staff and parents express a strong feeling of trust and confidence in the leadership team and directions of Balaklava Primary School. There is a strong commitment to student wellbeing and learning. While it was reported by all stakeholders that the school had previously experienced challenging student behaviours, the panel found at the time of the review, that students were very settled and demonstrated mostly on-task behaviour. Learning around growth mindset and mindfulness was evident in most classrooms and students reported that they liked coming to school, liked all of the staff and that they felt safe. Parents reported being very happy with the school, that communication was of a high level and that leadership and staff genuinely cared and were committed to achieving the best for their children. Staff reported that they felt well supported and that messages from leadership were consistent. Consistency of language, practices and response is seen as continuing work. The panel felt the school should be commended for the hard work that has enabled them to establish a positive learning culture.

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

- Direction 1** Strengthen the culture of continuous improvement by regularly monitoring evidence of SIP actions having impact, and building on current structures of staff meeting and PLCs, to ensure robust discussions that deepen the effectiveness of the teaching and learning, and build consistency and coherence.
- Direction 2** Implement the elements of LDAM to strengthen teacher capacity to design rich learning experiences that challenge, stretch and target individual student learning capacity, as an integral part of everyday learning for all students.
- Direction 3** Strengthen and embed authentic student influence for learning across all year levels, by identifying the high yield strategies that genuinely stretch students and challenge them to improve their own learning and that identify the language of learning at BPS for staff, students and their families.

Based on the school's current performance, Balaklava Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS

Dianna Jarman
PRINCIPAL
BALAKLAVA PRIMARY SCHOOL

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 2018, 68% of year 1 and 63% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018 the trend for years 1 and 2 has been upwards, from 59% to 64% for year 1, and from 39% to 59% for year 2, respectively.

In 2018 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 76% of year 3 students, 68% of year 5 students and 81% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement above the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents little or no change and for year 7, an improvement, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018 the trend for years 3, 5 and 7 has been upwards, from 68% to 76% for year 3, 63% to 68% for year 5, and 56% to 81% for year 7, respectively.

For 2018 years 3, 5, and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2018, 32% of year 3, 18% of year 5 and 13% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 33% of students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 44% of students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.

Numeracy

In 2018 the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 56% of year 3 students, 50% of year 5 students, 72% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents a decline and for year 7, an improvement, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018 the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 46% to 56% respectively. The trend for year 5 has been downwards, from 78% to 50%.

For 2018 NAPLAN numeracy, in year 3, the school is achieving lower than, and in years 5 and 7, within, the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 12% of year 3, 7% of year 5 and 13% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018 and 57% of students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.