

# Department for Education

## External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

### Report for Grange Primary School

Conducted in August 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 Debbie Grzczkowski, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Paul Luke, Review Principal.

## Review Process

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

- Presentation from the principal
- Class visits
- Attendance at staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parent groups
  - School Support Officers (SSOs)
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

## School context

Grange Primary School caters for children from foundation to year 7. It is situated 10kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 757 students. Enrolment has increased over the last 5 years with the school now zoned. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 712.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1061, and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage. The local partnership is Western Adelaide Shores.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 4% students with a verified disability, 12% families eligible for School Card assistance, 19% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background and no students in care.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of their tenure at the school. The school has three senior leaders who oversee early, primary and middle years. The school has both a literacy and a numeracy coach. There are 41 teachers and 70 staff overall.

## Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Provide targeted teaching that meets the needs of every learner, by building teacher capacity to use data diagnostically to design differentiated learning opportunities.
- Direction 2** Broaden educational leadership across the school through a coherent and unified approach to leading effective curriculum and pedagogical development.
- Direction 3** Enable student ownership of learning and intellectual challenge through collective inquiry into authentic engagement to inform pedagogical practice.

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

The previous directions have guided the school improvement agenda since the last review with a narrow focus on literacy and numeracy. Leaders identified strategic human resourcing as one of the enablers of change. Focused attention to data analysis, building staff and leadership capacity with a focus on differentiation have been at the forefront of intentional practice. The extension of a wider leadership group to include appointed coaches has further supported school improvement.

Work on the previous directions has enabled the school to collect and interrogate data as part of whole-school practice. The use of a data collection schedule and data wall has refined and produced cohesion around data. The increased interrogation of data has enabled students to be identified and supported through evidence-based interventions.

## Lines of inquiry

### EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

#### *How well does the school use improvement planning processes to raise student achievement?*

The panel found that all teachers are engaging with a wide range of achievement and growth data, which is strengthened by a published data collection schedule. Leadership have aligned staff meeting structures to facilitate the opportunity for staff to meet regularly in sectional groups and interrogate data as part of ongoing practice. Staff are allocated time to meet regularly in professional learning communities (PLCs) and targeted professional learning is aligned to the Site Improvement Plan (SIP).

The leadership team has a clear understanding of how to achieve improvement outcomes at Grange Primary School, and this was further evidenced through conversations with curriculum coaches, community and staff. Professional Development program (PDP) plans are linked to the SIP for both teachers and support staff with professional learning supporting the plans goals. Some staff felt that the SIP was presented to them and despite having an opportunity to comment on it, they have limited connectedness to the plan, with the view that it is 'leader's work'. Teaching staff have monitored the improvement plan but the panel felt there is further opportunity to strengthen teacher connectedness to the plan through self-assessing and reviewing their practice against the SIP, as part of a comprehensive cycle of monitoring and review.

A few teachers are pro-actively observing each other's practice to improve their pedagogy. Other staff indicated they would like opportunity to observe others, which the panel felt provided opportunity to widen this practice across the school. Most staff indicated they would like feedback on their performance and welcomed ways of improving current practice. Using focused observations to improve teacher pedagogy is a critical driver for the SIP. Although PDPs are linked to the SIP, not all staff have had a classroom observation or have been provided with feedback from observations, which the panel felt would provide opportunity to link teacher practice directly to the improvement plan.

**Direction 1**      **Enact PDP processes to provide a cycle of focused observations and feedback, building consistency and further improve teacher practice to deliver improvement goals.**

### EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

#### *How effectively are teachers supporting students to improve their learning?*

The panel evidenced that teachers had good understanding of the Australian Curriculum with most teachers using pre-assessment to refine planning and post-assessment to track student growth. All staff track data to identify students and some teachers are using this to inform student learning. All identified students have a current individual learning plan to support and direct their learning. SSOs provide a mix of individual and group support as well as providing quality, evidenced-based intervention.

The panel found that students at Grange Primary School are supported by a comprehensive STEM program and specialist subjects. Students can also access a range of extracurricular activities which further support their learning. The introduction of extension maths has supported high achieving students by providing them with a productive 'struggle through problem solving' activities.

Most students are aware of learning intentions and success criteria which are evidenced in the majority of classes. Older year groups were provided with rubrics to identify success criteria but this was not evidenced

as consistent practice. The panel evidenced pockets of effective formative assessment, where targeted and timely feedback was provided to students. Students reported that this feedback has improved their work. Some classes used goals well, but in other classes where goals were evidenced they were of a general nature of 'improve my reading' or 'write neater' and did not provide next steps in learning. A third of students indicated that their work was 'too easy' and felt they needed to be challenged and given harder work to push and stretch their learning.

Coaches report that differentiated lessons are not evidenced as consistent practice and teachers highlighted this as an area for improvement. The panel felt that increased opportunities to use data and to refocus on learning design and outcomes would enable stretch and challenge for all students to become routine practice. Continued support through the school's strategic coaching model will further strengthen teacher capacity.

**Direction 2 For all students to receive differentiated learning with appropriate stretch and challenge, strengthen teachers' capacity in learning design and use of data for intentional teaching.**

## **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

***How well does the school's strategic leadership support and sustain a culture of learning and improvement?***

The leadership team at Grange Primary School is clearly aligned to the SIP focus and the recent change of structure and appointment of coaches supports the school to further enhance teacher pedagogy and deliver on the improvement agenda. Leadership have strategically chosen to use 'early adopters' to create change in practice. This 'ground up' format has worked well with most teachers taking on new learning in the area of writing. This is supported by the provision of time for teachers to share practice in PLCs and providing staff with significant professional development opportunities.

This model of 'opting in' has created increased consistency of practice in writing across the school with most teachers using a common program and pedagogical model. Leadership acknowledge the good practice in this area but are aware that there is less consistency in other curriculum areas or pedagogy as a whole. This view was echoed by staff, students and parents. Leaders are highly visible in classes and staff report feeling supported by them.

The new school improvement model with its narrow and deep focus will support the school to build consistency of pedagogy. There is opportunity to build understanding and consistency using the expertise of staff already within the school. Given pockets of effective practice evidenced by the panel, there is a great opportunity to use this capacity of staff to mentor and coach others. Staff clearly identify the support of the coaches in refining their practice but sharing and connecting practice with each other within their PLCs and sectional groups will promote greater whole-school consistency.

Having clear documented whole-school expectations, which include a common language for learning and pedagogical practice, will provide cohesion and support to student learning. Documents outlining the 'Grange way of doing things' will further support staff and provide clear accountability. Having explicit and published guidelines will promote a common understanding of best practice to support the schools improvement agenda.

**Direction 3 Provide consistency and accountability in effective pedagogical practice through the development, implementation and monitoring of whole school expectations.**

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Grange Primary School has a strong, positive culture and an embedded focus on wellbeing, which is supported by a clear set of values and is apparent throughout the school. Leaders are respected and trusted by staff, students and parents and provide a strong focus on learning. Students display great pride in their school and are provided with rich learning opportunities and extracurricular activities. Grange Primary School has a strong sense of community and the support of a pro-active Governing Council.

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

- Direction 1** Enact PDP processes to provide a cycle of focused observations and feedback, building consistency and further improve teacher practice to deliver improvement goals.
- Direction 2** For all students to receive differentiated learning with appropriate stretch and challenge, strengthen teachers' capacity in learning design and use of data for intentional teaching.
- Direction 3** Provide consistency and accountability in effective pedagogical practice through the development, implementation and monitoring of whole school expectations.

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



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# 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, 90% of year 1 and 96% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

In 2018 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 90% of year 3 students, 80% of year 5 students and 94% 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, this represents a decline, from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2018, 55% of year 3, 33% of year 5 and 28% 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 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 7 has been downwards from 43% to 28%.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 60%, or 27 out of 45 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 48%, or 19 out of 40 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.

### Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 89% of year 3 students, 85% of year 5 students and 91% 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, this represents a decline, from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2018, 41% of year 3, 28% of year 5 and 43% 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. Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 25% to 41%.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 65%, or 15 out of 23 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, and 82%, or 23 out of 28 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7.