

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

On-track evaluation report for Bute Primary School

One-year return conducted in October 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.

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 Nicole Cawley, Review Principal.

The OTE report should be read in conjunction with the report of the External School Review conducted at Bute Primary School in August 2017 and the on track evaluation in September 2018.

Directions from the External School Review report

August 2017

1. **Develop a greater depth of understanding of the Achievement Standards in the Australian Curriculum and utilise regular moderation processes to regularly inform conversations with students and families on how to improve. This was further refined in 2018 to -**

OTE 2018: Further develop the understanding of Achievement Standards in the planning of teaching programs, and ensure moderation processes are fully integrated into classroom programming and practice.

2. **Document and implement consistent planning and programming expectations with a focus on ensuring more rigour and targeted and differentiated learning support based on students' learning needs. This was further refined in 2018 to -**

OTE 2018: Further develop the professional learning of all staff in curriculum planning that demonstrates rigour and challenge for all learners.

3. **Establish a rigorous cycle of self-review and improvement planning and make evidence-based changes to classroom and whole-school practices to ensure there is a positive impact on student learning and achievement outcomes.**

Additional information about the school context

The principal has now been appointed for a period of 5 years and there has been some change in staff over the last year. The school has amalgamated with the local preschool and rural care which are now onsite.

Development of a school improvement plan

The principal has advised that after the first on-track evaluation and in conjunction with the new school improvement model, the school incorporated their improvement work into their new Site Improvement Plan (SIP). This plan was developed late in 2018, in conjunction with the education director and then forwarded to the executive director, partnerships, schools and preschools division in term 1, 2019.

Strategic support provided to the school over the past 12 months

The principal has advised that the Leaders Education team (LET) provided support through a consultative model. The Senior Leader, Learning Improvement Primary (SLLIP) and Early Years Consultant have worked closely with teachers in an ongoing capacity.

Evidence and evaluation referenced to directions in the school improvement plan

Direction 1 Further develop the understanding of the Achievement Standards in the planning of teaching programs, and ensure moderation processes are fully integrated into programming and practice.

On-track evidence

- Common templates have been provided for staff to plan and program, closely aligned to the Australian Curriculum in English and maths
- Teachers are benefitting from the collaborative work undertaken to plan and program, leading to the provision to a more balanced program with clear links to the Australian Curriculum, whilst incorporating approaches using Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) resources
- Regular time in staff meetings is dedicated to discussing and reviewing teaching plans
- The communication of learning progress and goals is now being articulated with students and parents more clearly
- There is increased use of electronic forms of communication to inform parents of their child's progress on a regular basis by staff
- Whole-school growth is communicated to the school community through the newsletter - eg reinforcing the site priorities – reading focus
- Teachers are more conversant with the data of individual students which enables teachers to communicate their students' progress with parents in a targeted way
- Students are more aware of their progress and next steps in learning through regular conversations with teachers about their tests and the setting of individual learning goals
- Parent/teacher interviews have a clear structure to better inform parents about the progress of their children
- Parents verified that all children have learning goals and they are clearly informed about these, and this assists them to better discuss their child's learning with their child.

Review panel evaluation:

There has been significant collaborative work by teachers to reflect on the student achievement data, along with a closer alignment with the Australian Curriculum when planning, in particular with maths and English. The school has reviewed and established clear structures and expectations to share with students where they are at and what their next steps are in their learning, through the use of conferencing and goal setting. Students could articulate their learning and the processes they undertake to set individual learning goals. Parents are aware of their child's goals and are supportive of the communication from the school, both for their child individually and sharing of approaches and achievements of the site priorities through the newsletter.

Direction 2 Further develop the professional learning of all staff in curriculum planning that demonstrates rigour and challenge for all learners.

On-track evidence

- Data is being used more effectively by teachers to inform planning and programming
- Teachers are more accountable for tracking individual student growth through a range of structures established by the principal
- All students have individual learning goals updated at least on a termly basis and shared with families
- Many students can articulate these goals when asked and the goals are clearly accessible on each student's table (expectation from leadership)
- Learning intentions and success criteria clearly support students in their learning
- Older students could clearly articulate how these assisted their learning and they also stated that they are involved in the development of success criteria
- Teachers shared a variety of strategies of how they worked towards differentiating the learning for students in English and maths. This was supported through documentation in their planning and programming
- Observations by all staff at another site has had a significant influence on changes in practice, providing rigour and challenge with clear reference to the reading focus
- Teachers value the opportunity to use the Big Ideas in Number learning tool (ie diagnostic assessment) to inform their teaching and learning in maths
- Parents are supportive of the professional learning by visiting another school (reading focus) and can see the benefits in classroom practice.

Review panel evaluation

The school has developed some positive foundations from which to build, through their collaborative work across the school and the use of common planning templates. English and maths planning is increasingly more reflective of the individual needs of students while closely aligned with the Australian Curriculum. The school is continuing to review current pedagogies and programs to embed quality teaching practices which best meet the needs of individual students.

Direction 3 Establish a rigorous cycle of self-review and improvement planning and make evidence-based changes to classroom and whole-school practices to ensure there is a positive impact on student learning and achievement outcomes.

On-track evidence

- Professional learning has been followed up with ‘professional personal reflection’ and a commitment to action – teachers have valued this process in making them more accountable and celebrating their success
- Teachers have been involved in development and monitoring of the SIP – they can discuss how they are engaging with the plan and the impact of the work on their classroom practice
- Teachers’ focus on student achievement data and the subsequent planning strategies to support student learning is having a positive impact on student learning growth
- The SIP is written to be accessible for all and staff are engaged with the plans of action and impact on classroom practice
- There are a number of structures and expectations by leadership to support self-reflection and work towards whole-school priorities
- Staff meetings prioritise professional learning and are closely aligned to the SIP priorities
- Structures are in place to support and encourage reflection by teachers to improve student learning outcomes
- There is a common language and message from leadership, staff and students about the improvement journey
- Range of resources have been used, including guidebooks, to inform strategies for the school’s improvement journey
- Parents have an awareness of the improvement priorities of the school and feel consulted as part of the development and monitoring cycles
- The principal actively seeks opportunities to communicate priorities with families and the community, including at assemblies, newsletters, through the home reading program and the school’s Facebook page
- Parents feel that the school is heading in a good direction and support the work of the principal and staff
- The principal is very consultative and is clearly leading the school. The principal follows through on actions in relation to the priorities for the best outcomes for students
- The reading priority from the SIP is embedded in all conversations with all stakeholders. The school community value the actions taken.

Review panel evaluation

The school has clear site priorities and the plans of action are specific and regularly monitored for impact by staff and leadership. The whole-school reading focus is one example of how the school is working collectively using common, evidence-based approaches and undertaking professional learning to lift student achievement in reading. Actions taken are regularly shared and reviewed for progress using student achievement data at staff meetings. The school is continuing to build a culture of learning which focuses on individual growth and achievement.

Outcomes of the on-track evaluation

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

Effective leadership is providing strategic direction and planning, supporting the implementation of the plans of action with improvements in both teacher practice and student learning outcomes.

The review panel found that:

The school has structures and processes in place to support teachers to more effectively use the Australian Curriculum for planning and instruction while continuing to strengthen the students' understanding of their learning journey. Planning documents are in place which clearly outline the learning to be undertaken and the modifications provided to support learning for every student. Communication with families continues to strengthen through the implementation of common practices and clear expectations. Agreements continue to be developed along with regular cycles of review to ensure decisions taken are informed by data and supported by evidence based practices which are common to all.

The principal will continue to work with the education director to implement the OTE key actions:

- 1) Further develop the understanding of Achievement Standards in the planning of teaching programs, and ensure moderation processes are fully integrated into classroom programming and practice.
- 2) Further develop the professional learning of all staff in curriculum planning that demonstrates rigour and challenge for all learners.
- 3) Establish a rigorous cycle of self-review and improvement planning and make evidence-based changes to classroom and whole-school practices to ensure there is a positive impact on student learning and achievement outcomes.

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



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