

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Frances Primary School

Conducted in May 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 Sue Mittiga, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Graham Slarks, 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

Frances Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 322kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 26. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 28. The local Partnership is Wrattontully.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1018 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes no Aboriginal students, 10% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) funded background, 4% children/young people in care and 4% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 3rd year of tenure. There are 4 teachers, including 1 in the early years of their career, 1 music teacher, 1 PE teacher and 1 Secondary, Step 9 teacher.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Work collaboratively to develop and implement whole-school approaches to literacy and numeracy.
- Direction 2** Provide growth targets which are data-based, evident and owned by every student and used to track progress.
- Direction 3** Increase the level of rigour and challenge to students through quality task design which engages all students through inquiry and problem-solving.

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

Direction 1:

Structures and processes were developed and implemented to enable whole-school approaches, such as literacy and numeracy blocks, a literacy agreement, assessment audit and schedules, and student learning portfolios. There is evidence of success criteria and learning intentions being used in classrooms to support literacy and numeracy lessons. Phonics and guided reading are being explicitly taught across the school.

Direction 2:

Data-informed practice is embedded within SIP processes. Student achievement data is individually tracked and informs the next steps in teaching practice. Extensive documentation of student achievement data and work samples supports staff to track and monitor individual student growth. Staff develop individual student profiles for the next year classes at a data day held in term 4.

Direction 3:

The range of curriculum experience has increased through the introduction of instrumental music lessons, the Space Seeds program, debating, philosophy and Spanish. Staff are beginning to design inquiry based integrated units of work that are structured and allow for stretch and challenge. Students have individual learning goals in literacy and numeracy.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

Quality school improvement planning requires schools to continuously monitor the impact of their teaching practice on student learning outcomes. Frances Primary School has significant strengths in implementing processes that enable regular monitoring of the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) actions and their impact. There is effective data collection and analysis to track student achievement that is collectively owned. The documented evidence is extensive and thorough.

Staff are engaged and committed to improvement. They participate in ongoing cyclic review processes that encompass all stages of school improvement and demonstrate a clear understanding of SIP connectedness to the classroom. Learning Sprints are an embedded school process that focus on improving classroom practice and teacher pedagogy. They are developed from the analysis of student data and the challenge of practice and are implemented on a termly cycle.

A culture of learning exists at the school, with staff participating in training and development related to the SIP goals and challenges of practice. Performance development processes are aligned to the SIP. Staff work collaboratively, learning from each other through mentoring and observations to reflect on their teaching practices.

Staff are data-literate, and through the sprint processes, review and analyse student learning data to determine the impact on student learning and plan for the next steps. Individual data profiles are developed each year and reviewed and monitored throughout the year.

Most staff are in the early years of their career or new to the school and are working towards consolidating and embedding new learning into classroom practice. The school is well positioned to embed structures and processes that will provide consistency and consolidation across the site.

The SIP actions are focused on practices that positively affect student achievement across lower bands. There is an opportunity to further refine data analysis and improvement strategies to maximise the impact on all students, including high-band students.

Direction 1 **Continue to strengthen and embed site improvement planning processes that will ensure consistency of practice across the site and focus on improving high-band student achievement.**

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers using evidence-based pedagogical practices that engage and challenge all learners?

Pedagogy is the science and craft of teaching. How teachers teach is critical to student engagement in learning and their achievement. The school has a strong culture of improvement and learning. Professional development builds staff capacity to improve classroom practice and is connected to the challenge of practice. Staff work collaboratively to implement site improvement strategies in their classroom practice, enacted through an ongoing cycle of: plan actions for improvement, implement, review, and evaluate.

Whole-school consistent teaching and learning practices were embedded, including literacy and numeracy blocks, explicit phonics teaching, guided reading and assessment audits and schedules. Learning intentions and success criteria in literacy and numeracy displayed in classrooms make learning visible to students. Students can describe learning intentions and success criteria and their purpose.

Classes are multi-year level and staff differentiate the curriculum through planning and programming for fluid groups driven by student learning needs. Learning is scaffolded for students, particularly in the lower bands, and 'bump it up walls' are used to move students into learning groups based on their next steps in learning.

Staff give verbal and written feedback to students. Students in the primary class said the written feedback they received in their books supported their improvement. Staff provide weekly progress reports on student learning and their next improvement steps. These reports are valued by parents.

Student learning goals were displayed in classrooms; however, students could not identify the steps to take to accomplish their goals or how their goals would be reviewed. The goals are not fully integrated into the learning process. The school is well-positioned to strengthen students' ability to determine the steps needed to achieve their goals and to review their goals in an ongoing cycle.

Students did not demonstrate having a language of learning and were unable to describe their thinking about their learning, their learning pathways or what would support them to improve their learning.

There is an opportunity to address this gap and support all students to be stretched and challenged in their learning.

Direction 2 Strengthen and build staff capacity to develop a language of learning that will enable stretch and challenge in learning for all students.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Frances Primary School is highly regarded by students, parents, and staff. Parents commented with enthusiasm about the welcoming, friendly, and caring aspects of a small community school. Parents are very appreciative of the extra responsibilities staff take on by working in a small school.


Staff are committed to school improvement and learning. There is a positive school culture where staff work collaboratively to improve their practice and the outcomes for students.

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

- Direction 1** **Continue to strengthen and embed site improvement planning processes that will ensure consistency of practice across the site and focus on improving high-band student achievement.**

- Direction 2** **Strengthen and build staff capacity to develop a language of learning that will enable stretch and challenge in learning for all students.**

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



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Joyce Dinan
Principal
Frances 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).

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 Frances Primary.

Further information concerning school performance is available in the school's annual report.

Reading

In the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2016 to 2019, 43% of year 1 and 44% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 89% of year 3 students, 65% of year 5 students and 100% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 26% of year 3, 12% of year 5 and 33% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

From 2016 to 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 68% of year 3 students, 70% of year 5 students and 100% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 11% of year 3, 18% of year 5 and 17% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

