

# Department for Education

## External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

### Report for Tailem Bend Primary School

Conducted in April 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 Grzeczowski, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Toni Burford, 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

Tailem Bend Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7 and is situated southeast of Adelaide, 100kms from the CBD. Enrolments have fluctuated over the last 5 years with current enrolment at 137 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 140.

The school has an ICSEA score of 925 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school forms part of the Murraylands partnership of schools.

The school population includes 15% Aboriginal students, 9 students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 2 children in care and 64% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year of tenure and a student wellbeing leader.

## Previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Develop a coherent agenda for the teaching of numeracy across the school, by drawing on the knowledge and practices that underpinned the successful development of the behaviour management model.
- Direction 2** Improve learner achievement outcomes for all students by identifying and coordinating intervention and differentiated practices across the school.

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

The previous ESR directions have guided the school improvement agenda since the last review.

A comprehensive and consistent approach to behaviour management has been fully embedded. Students have the opportunity to 'rethink' their behaviour under a restorative framework.

Tailem Bend Primary School (TBPS) has introduced a strong focus on natural maths and open-ended questioning. Lessons have a clear structure and end with reflection time. Staff have utilised maths games within lessons as a learning tool which has increased engagement and positively impacted on learner dispositions.

Work on the previous directions has enabled the school to collect and interrogate data as part of whole school practice. The use of 'MarkIt' as a central data collection program has refined and produced cohesion around data. Data is used to inform evidence-based interventions and the school has funded support staff in all classes to assist with differentiation.

## Lines of inquiry

### EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

#### *How effectively 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 supported by the use of a 'MarkIt' database as a central storage location. Leadership have aligned staff meeting structures to facilitate the opportunity for staff to meet regularly and interrogate data as part of ongoing practice.

Staff analysed data and collectively engaged in the formation of the school improvement plan over the course of several staff meetings. Staff worked together to produce goals and targets and valued the opportunity to triangulate data and analyse how this would impact on their practice. The current Site Improvement Plan (SIP) target supports students to reach the department's Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). The panel felt that this was in conflict with staff and community desire to stretch students into the higher achievement bands, and felt there is opportunity to reflect on their plan and include high impact and ambitious targets for improvement.

The panel felt the principal has a clear understanding of what they want to achieve to improve outcomes at TBPS and this was further evidenced through conversations with community and staff. Professional development plans are linked to the SIP for both teachers and support staff and professional learning supports SIP goals. The development of increasingly clear structures and processes to strategically drive the improvement agenda is recommended. Monitoring and observing teacher practice, linked to the narrow focus of the SIP, would provide rigour and support a cycle of continuous improvement, impacting positively on classroom practice.

**Direction 1** Develop clear structures and processes which strategically connect, drive and support the improvement agenda by providing opportunities for staff to continuously monitor, evaluate and review the impact of their pedagogy on student learning outcomes.

### EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

It was clear to the panel that teachers have a sound 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 but the panel found little evidence of how this was being used to inform student learning as differentiated lessons were not evidenced as consistent practice.

As part of observations and discussions with staff, students and community it was evident that the development of behaviour skills is embedded in practice and consistently delivered ensuring a strong focus on learning.

Most students are aware of their reading level but the panel found little evidence of explicit individual learning goals. Where goals were evidenced they were of a general nature e.g. 'try harder' or 'finish work', and did not provide the next steps in learning. Most students, with whom the panel spoke, indicated that their work was 'just right' or 'too easy' and felt they needed to be challenged and given harder work to

push and stretch their learning. Students articulated that they rarely get to go into the 'learning pit' and wished their teachers designed tasks which provided productive struggle. Tasks evidenced in bookwork and through discussions and observations, provided limited opportunity to achieve higher grades. The panel felt that increased opportunities to refocus on learning design and outcomes, both as a school and with partnership colleagues, would enable this to become routine practice.

The panel evidenced a guided reading block where students from several classes worked in ability groups, supported by teachers and SSOs. The lessons were focused and students responded well to the structured routines. The number of groups and their fluid nature allowed students to be stretched and challenged in their learning. The panel felt there is opportunity to investigate this effective practice and transfer elements into other learning areas leading to consistency across the school.

**Direction 2** Collaboratively strengthen teachers' capacity to design and implement learning experiences that are differentiated, ensuring challenge is an integral part of everyday learning for all students.

## CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

### *To what extent does the school promote a culture of learning with high expectations of achievement for all learners?*

Students reported feeling safe, having pride in their school and valuing strong relationships with staff who see them as individuals. The panel evidenced a strong culture of learning which was verified and supported by the community.


Most students with whom the panel spoke struggled to articulate how TBPS wanted students to learn and were unaware of the school's current learning focus. Some staff and community members also struggled to articulate how the school wanted students to learn. This represents an opportunity to develop a coherent and common dialogue for learning that will support students as they progress through the school.

Identified students had an individual learning plan which was known by staff and supported their learning. Some students are supported by SSOs who are aware of their current needs and use effective strategies to assist students in accessing the curriculum. Staff are beginning to engage with the Aboriginal Education Strategy and increasing the visibility of Aboriginality within classrooms will support Aboriginal learners and welcome families into the school.

TBPS has structured opportunities for student leadership but this is predominantly of an organisational nature. Implementing and embedding processes which provide all students with regular opportunities to have input into their learning will deepen their ownership of learning, and promote a sense of self-efficacy. The panel evidenced pockets of quality practice where some teachers share learning intentions and success criteria but this was not consistent across the school.

Students reported wanting more ownership of their learning and articulated the need for success criteria to help them monitor their progress and inform them of their next steps in learning. Some students report valuing teacher feedback which occurs whilst they are engaged in a task, however, this was not evidenced as consistent practice and was identified by some staff as an area for improvement.

Students at TBPS have the opportunity to become partners in their own learning by being provided with consistency and clarity in what they are to learn, the purpose of their learning and how they can be



successful. When teachers discuss and collaboratively develop the criteria with their students, impact on learning is heightened.

**Direction 3** Strengthen student agency in learning by providing opportunities for all students to co-construct curriculum, set individual learning goals, and establish clear learning intentions and success criteria which enable students to monitor and assess their learning.

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Students at Tailem Bend Primary School report being connected and feeling safe at school and believe staff really care about them as individuals. This sense of pride is further reflected and amplified by the broader community with the school being described as a hub within the local community. The school hosts a community library and swimming pool which are supported by a large number of volunteers.

Students are articulate and confident in discussing their learning with most aware of their reading levels. Staff genuinely want to support students to do their best and are willing to embrace new learning. The principal provides educational leadership and has sought to engage parents and caregivers in students' learning through maths questions being sent home and the effective use of communication books.

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

- Direction 1** Develop clear structures and processes which strategically connect, drive and support the improvement agenda by providing opportunities for staff to continuously monitor, evaluate and review the impact of their pedagogy on student learning outcomes.
- Direction 2** Collaboratively strengthen teachers' capacity to design and implement learning experiences that are differentiated, ensuring challenge is an integral part of everyday learning for all students.
- Direction 3** Strengthen student agency in learning by providing opportunities for all students to co-construct curriculum, set individual learning goals, and establish clear learning intentions and success criteria which enable students to monitor and assess their learning.

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



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TAILEM BEND PRIMARY SCHOOL



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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, 53% of year 1 and 67% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 92% of year 3 students, 47% of year 5 students, and 88% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For year 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement, and for year 5 this represents a decline from the historic baseline averages.

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

In 2018, 31% of year 3, 13% of year 5 and 25% 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, 25%, or 1 of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 75%, or 3 of 4 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 92% of year 3 students, 67% of year 5 students, and 75% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 and 5 this result represents an improvement, and for year 7 little or no change from the historic baseline averages.

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

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 69% to 92%.

In 2018, 23% of year 3, 7% of year 5 and 17% 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, 50%, or 1 of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2018, and 100%, or 4 of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2018.