

External School Review

Munno Para Primary School

Final School Summary Report

February 2024



External School Review details

Public education is for every child and young person in every community across our state. Educators and staff work in partnership with families and communities to nurture, develop and empower all South Australian children and young people with the knowledge, skills and capabilities they need to become fulfilled individuals, active, compassionate citizens and lifelong learners.

External School Review teams work in schools with school leaders and staff to enable in-depth evidence-based reflection on their recent improvement journey and their current strengths and challenges, in the areas of expert teaching, school leadership, and conditions for optimal learning.

Round table participants

Andrew Castenetto	Principal
Sarah Mellors	Deputy Principal
Sonya McRostie	Co-ordinator
Ilia Tsoutouras	Education Director
Cathy McAuley	Principal Consultant
Sue Mittiga	Review Officer
Angela Van Enkhuyzen	Review Principal

Review team

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Post review meeting participants

Andrew Castenetto	Principal
Sarah Mellors	Deputy Principal
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Expert teaching line of inquiry: How effectively are teachers analysing assessment and feedback data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction to improve outcomes?

Strengths and challenges

- Leadership and staff have a strong commitment to literacy improvement planning. Individual student phonics, junior primary reading and 3 to 6 spelling data, is regularly tracked and monitored by teaching teams. Phonics screening data trended upwards from 2018 to 2022, with a decline in 2023. 48% of students reached standard in 2023. Targeted intervention programs are in place for students identified as requiring additional support.
- Focused explicit direct instruction in phonics and spelling occurs four mornings per week. Evidence informed programs including InitialLit (R to 2) and Spelling Mastery (3 to 6) are implemented with support from trained SSO staff. This ensures explicit teaching occurs in small groups with personalised support.
- Specialist staff are teaching the literacy and numeracy demands in their subject areas, including vocabulary development, technical language and capabilities.
- The literacy coach has developed decodable reading assessments that are used to determine class reading and intervention groups. Individual reading data is tracked through an assessment folder that includes term 1 screening data and term 4 assessments. The folder is passed onto the next year teacher to support transition. There is an opportunity to build on from term 4 data to match students to texts and inform student intervention groups to begin earlier in term 1.
- Individual student reading goals are a school expectation and are being developed during term 1. Student assessments in InitialLit and decodable reading are being finalised and the data will be used to inform student goals.
- The use of goal setting is variable. Some teachers set the same goal for every student and some set goals for the term. Most students are not able to describe what their learning goals are or how they support them in their learning. Co-constructing student determined learning goals will empower students to know their learner profile and next steps in learning.
- All teachers are using the Department maths curriculum units of work, including the summative assessment tasks. Teachers have identified the need for maths pre-assessments to determine starting points for students. Teachers have reported that the year level units can be difficult for their students to engage with and require adaptation. The numeracy progressions could be used to determine the knowledge gaps and starting points for students to inform planning prior to engaging with the units.
- Teachers gave some examples of formative assessment and feedback practices including thumbs up, pre-topic writing assessments, flip cards and the use of mini white boards. Formative assessment has been a previous focus however with new staff, there is an opportunity to refresh and strengthen teacher knowledge of formative assessment and feedback.
- Teachers have worked in year level teams to moderate common tasks and summative assessments from the Departments maths units of work. They have reported that this process has assisted them in assigning A to E grades. A next step could be to triangulate PAT M, NAPLAN and A to E data to ensure consistency of judgements in applying the standards.
- A writing component has been added to the school's decodable reader diagnostic assessment used across the junior primary. From 2024, Brightpath assessments are no longer being used by staff. Exploring how writing will be assessed by teachers and students is a next step.
- Learning intentions are visible in some rooms and sometimes shared with students. Most students did not understand the use and intent of learning intentions and success criteria. There is an opportunity to make learning intentions and success criteria accessible through co-construction with students. This will support students to provide self, peer and teacher feedback.
- Students reported that much of the feedback provided by teachers was verbal. Some students described giving peer feedback to each other during fluency pairs. Teachers described using 'just in time' verbal feedback with students. In the staff survey, providing opportunities for student peer and self-assessment was rated lowest at 2.6 out of 5. There is the potential to develop formative peer and self-assessment practices that inform learning and next steps.
- Parents reported that they receive regular feedback about their children and their progress.

Potential next steps

- Co-construct student learning goals to empower students to understand their next steps in learning.
- Make learning intentions and success criteria visible and accessible to students.
- Provide opportunities for students to give and receive feedback using the language of learning.
- Build teacher conceptual understanding of formative assessment and feedback strategies.

Opportunity for improvement 1

Co-construct student learning goals to empower students to understand their next steps in learning.

Quality leadership line of inquiry: How effective are the school's professional learning and performance development processes in building teacher capability to accelerate student learning?

Strengths and challenges

- The Principal and Deputy Principal are new to their positions in 2024, however, not new to the school. They have a clear understanding of improvement planning and the school's self-review and evaluation processes to build teacher capability and accelerate student learning. The evidence, impact of actions and adjustments made to school planning in literacy are thoroughly documented and reflected upon.
- School self-review processes are an embedded practice. Staff collaboratively analyse whole school data termly having shared ownership of student learning outcomes. Staff co-construct student success criteria aligned with improvement planning priorities and actions.
- During the leadership walkthrough, it was evident that leaders have ensured cohesion across the school in delivering explicit direct instruction as part of a whole school literacy block. They have a clear line of sight from the school priorities to classroom practice. The team observed direct instruction R to 6 in InitialLit and Spelling Mastery. Students know the lesson structure and routines, are organised and engaged.
- Learning statements and agreed practices in literacy are documented and enacted in classrooms. Numeracy has been identified by leaders and staff as an area for improvement. Current common practice in mathematics teaching and learning includes utilising the Departments units of work, daily 'maths chats' and 'quick maths'. Teachers express that they would like to engage with new learning in effective mathematics pedagogy. There is an opportunity to increase staff understanding of numeracy teaching and learning, leading to the development of agreed practices.
- A professional development schedule is linked to school priorities. Curriculum and wellbeing needs of staff are balanced. All teachers and SSOs are trained in evidence-informed literacy programs that are being delivered with fidelity. The school has partnered with the Literacy Guarantee Unit (LGU) and a portfolio literacy coach to support professional learning and to coach and mentor staff in delivering literacy programs. Mentor teachers induct and train new staff and early career teachers.
- The Deputy Principal observes all literacy intervention SSO staff, providing feedback to ensure consistency in program delivery. SSOs reported that they value the observation process and feedback as it supports them to develop their practice. SSO performance and development plan (PDP) goals are aligned to student achievement.
- Teachers complete professional development plans, aligning their goals to school priorities. The goals focus on improving student outcomes and are based on classroom learning data. In 2024 teachers will reflect on the expert teaching indicators of quality to self-evaluate their pedagogy.
- In 2023, formal observations by line managers were conducted followed by oral and written feedback. Some teachers expressed that they felt anxious about formal observations. In 2024, the performance development process is reframed with PDP goal check-ins, three times per year. This will be supported with regular walkthroughs using PDP goals as the anchor for discussions and feedback. This process will replace formal teacher observations. There is an opportunity to focus the leadership walkthroughs on students, to engage in purposeful learning talk. This information could be provided to teachers as part of their feedback process. Walkthroughs will require a monitoring process to ensure equity.
- Staff describe leaders as approachable and caring. They commented that leaders are visible in classrooms providing just in time feedback during regular walkthroughs. Classrooms are deprivatised.
- All teaching staff belong to a year level or specialist Professional Learning Community (PLC). They are released to meet twice per term. Staff participate in analysing data and planning Department units of work and literacy programs. Some PLC meetings have an agenda or task directed by leadership. Staff reported that they also meet in their PLCs to collaboratively plan and discuss organisational matters such as excursions. There is potential to develop more structured PLC processes with clearly defined purpose and outcomes. This will facilitate a continuous cycle of data informed teaching, reflection and action.
- A nomination process resulted in three teachers becoming curriculum champions. They attend leadership meetings twice per term representing staff in improvement planning and decision making. There is the potential for the curriculum champions to lead the PLCs building teacher and leader capabilities.

Potential next steps

- Engage in purposeful learning talk with students during leadership walkthroughs.
- Develop more structured PLC processes with clearly defined purpose and outcomes.
- Focus professional learning on evidence based best practice in teaching numeracy.

Opportunity for improvement 2

Engage in purposeful learning talk with students during leadership walkthroughs.

Conditions for optimal learning line of inquiry: To what extent does the school promote, maintain and monitor a culture of learning and high expectations of achievement for all learners?

Strengths and challenges

- The school has a supportive and nurturing culture. It is highly complex with many students having diverse learning needs. 42% of students have a One Plan, 26% are Aboriginal and 7% are students in care. In 2024 there are seven new teaching staff and two new special options classes, in addition to an existing alternative learning space for students with complex needs.
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) is being implemented this year, following intensive staff training in 2023. The school values of respect, responsibility and success are displayed in classrooms and are reinforced through PBL lessons and a school wide reward system. Students respond positively to the school PBL mascot Ecko Gecko and assembly awards that recognise values in action. Teachers are reporting successful initial implementation of the program. A future opportunity is to strengthen student voice in enacting the school values to ensure student ownership.
- Staff understand wellbeing for learning and teach self-regulation strategies to students including co-regulation. Students spoke positively about their teachers and feeling safe at school. The 2023 school attendance data is slightly higher than similar schools.
- There are some opportunities for students to lead whole school initiatives including school and sports captain positions. Student voice was considered prior to the purchase of texts for class libraries. Student's spoke positively about class libraries. The purpose of the class library is to create ownership as well as a love of reading. Developing student leadership with a focus on student voice within classrooms is a possible next step.
- Teachers and leaders identify high expectations for all learners as an area for growth. Students have some understanding of high expectations. There is potential for staff and students to develop and action a collective understanding of what high expectations look and sound like.
- Teachers reported that differentiation is provided for students who are below standard. They discussed using multiple entry points for some tasks but provided less opportunities for stretch and challenge of students at or above standard. In the 2023 WEC data, 44% of students had high cognitive engagement. An opportunity exists for teachers to intentionally develop tasks that allow for an appropriate level of challenge for all students.
- Explicit direct instruction supports teachers to effectively deliver a focused literacy block. The direct teaching model provides the literacy foundations in phonics, phonemic awareness and reading. Through using a wider variety of pedagogical approaches there is an opportunity to further challenge students.
- Some teachers reported that students have difficulty talking about their learning as they lack the discipline specific language to describe what they are learning and why. Enabling students to participate in collaborative conversations with peers will empower them to be agents in their learning. Understanding their learning data will further develop their ability to be partners in their own learning.
- Aboriginal Community Education Officer (ACEO) staff support Aboriginal students in class and through cultural activity groups. ACEO staff connect to community through home visits, play group, cultural assemblies and school events. They reported that the school's connection with Aboriginal families and community is high.
- Parents commented positively about the safe and supportive school culture. They stated teachers go 'above and beyond,' communicating regularly about their child's learning and behaviour progress through Class Dojo, private messages or face-to-face conversations.
- Parents stated that there is a culture of learning and improvement at the school. They are familiar with the improvement priorities of the school and areas of growth. School improvement data is shared at governing council meetings.
- Parents have opportunities to contribute to One Plan development. They describe the process as highly collaborative. Parents understand the intervention approach and appreciate communication about their child's progress. They reported that the school is supportive of outside providers, who collaborate with staff to connect individual programs to One Plan goals.
- Every term the school holds a community breakfast including fun activities for students. Following the breakfast classrooms are open for parents to visit. This is well attended.

Potential next steps

- Strengthen student voice within classrooms and in enacting the school values.
- Develop and action a collective staff and student understanding of high expectations.
- Challenge students through using a wider variety of pedagogical approaches.
- Empower students to engage in collaborative learning conversations with peers.

Opportunity for improvement 3

Empower students to engage in collaborative learning conversations with peers.

Review Summary

The school is welcoming and nurturing with a positive, inclusive learning environment underpinned by wellbeing for learning. Parents feel they are partners in their child's learning. They commented positively about the school, the learning programs and individual support for students. The regular communication from the school about their child's progress and learning is highly valued.

Students are excited about the Positive Behaviour for Learning school mascot that supports the school values of respect, responsibility and success. Students have noticed that respectful behaviour is more evident in the school. They feel safe at school. Leaders have developed a culture of improvement at the school, building teacher capability through professional development and performance programs. There is shared responsibility for improvement planning and review. Staff collectively analyse data and the impact on practice. They are committed to improving their practice and work collaboratively to improve learning outcomes for students.

There has been a focus on implementing evidenced informed literacy and explicit direct instruction across all classes and this is making a positive impact on literacy achievement. The school has identified that numeracy will be a focus moving forward.

The Opportunities for improvement provided by the ESR Report process are intended to provide practical next steps for expert teaching, school leadership, and conditions for optimal learning.

Opportunity for improvement 1 Co-construct student learning goals to empower students to understand their next steps in learning.

Opportunity for improvement 2 Engage in purposeful learning talk with students during leadership walkthroughs.

Opportunity for improvement 3 Empower students to engage in collaborative learning conversations with peers.

Sue Mittiga

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Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate

2024

