

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Ungarra Primary School

Conducted in November 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 Maxine McSherry, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Mark Hansen, Review Principal.

Review Process

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

- Presentation from the Principal
- Class visits
- Document analysis
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.
 - Pastoral Care Worker.

School context

Ungarra Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 570 kms north-west of Adelaide on the Eyre Peninsula. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 31. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 36. The local partnership is Central Eyre 2.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 1020 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 3rd year of tenure.

There are 3 Teachers including 1 in the early years of their career and no Step 9 Teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Allow students to track and understand their growth through the identification of personal learning goals and the provision of formative feedback regarding their progress.
- Direction 2** Deliver learning opportunities that meet the diverse range of students' needs through contemporary planning that ensures multiple points of access and promotes inquiry, and assessment that allows each student to fully demonstrate their understanding.
- Direction 3** Develop student agency within the learning agenda through collective inquiry into criteria that makes clear the intent of the learning and the provision of scaffolds that all students to monitor and measure their improvements.
- Direction 4** Ensure planning at the student and whole-school level is strategic and well informed by building each teacher's capacity to access, collate, analyse and respond to varying data to plan accordingly.

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?
<p>Over the past three years the school has developed a strong commitment towards embedding a cycle of school improvement with a focus on deep data analysis, tracking and monitoring achievement and growth, and building teacher efficacy. Staff are to be commended on their strategic and transparent approach to school improvement. There has been an intentional focus on developing the literacy and numeracy skills of every child with resourcing, professional development and leadership all aligned to their goals. Staff articulate a collective responsibility for ensuring growth for all learners. Self-audits, peer observations, local education team (LET) support and internal and external expertise have all contributed towards building teacher capacity and the achievement of their goals.</p> <p>The impact of the implementation of previous directions can be evidenced by strong levels of student growth reflected in multiple data sets.</p>

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school use improvement planning processes to raise student achievement?

School improvement planning processes are effective in raising student achievement as evidenced by multiple data sets including NAPLAN, progressive achievement tests and phonics tests.

The school has embedded a cyclic approach to improvement and developed a culture of collective responsibility to ensure that each child moves forward in their learning. Intentional professional development has ensured that the Principal and teachers are skilled in deep analysis of data at the individual, classroom, cohort, and whole-school level. An assessment schedule has been developed and can be articulated by all staff with multiple data sets used to inform whole-school and classroom planning. Strengths, challenges, trends, and gaps are identified collaboratively, discussed and used to inform future goals for improvement. Professional development is strategically linked to the school improvement plan's (SIP) goals and challenge of practice. The Principal and staff, with the support of the local education team, research evidence-based practice and engage in professional learning to build their capacity in quality curriculum delivery and strengthening effective learning for every student.

A synthetic phonics approach is being implemented consistently by staff in the early years (teachers and SSOs) and has been acknowledged by the Principal, teachers and parents as improving student outcomes.

There has been significant improvement in individual case management for any child needing additional support to engage and achieve. A child's needs are clearly identified using data, and intervention is planned and delivered with growth celebrated. Wellbeing data is gathered to further improve student engagement with immediate, responsive measures put in place. Teachers use a check in process each morning to gather feedback on the emotional state of each child and respond accordingly.

Parents spoke highly of the support provided to their child and identified the school's size as a strength contributing to all staff having in-depth knowledge of the students and their individual needs.

The school is now placing a greater emphasis on celebrating student growth as well as student achievement, this was valued by parents, students, and teachers. Teachers are developing their skills in providing feedback to students about their learning to help motivate them to improve. The school is now well positioned for teachers to seek reciprocal feedback from students and use this data to adjust their teaching and task design.

Direction 1 Gather and use student feedback about teaching and learning to adjust and refine pedagogy and tasks to support further growth for every child.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

The Principal and teachers have high expectations for their students and continually reflect on the effectiveness of their leadership and teaching to keep moving student achievement forward.

Teachers are articulate when describing learning intentions and success criteria and the upper primary students can clearly discuss what they are learning and why. Students understand the focus on writing and spelling and can discuss the strategies they have developed with their teachers to build their skills in these areas.

The school has recently progressed from teachers setting individual learning goals for students to students now co-constructing goals with their teacher using their personal assessment data and work samples. The school is well positioned to now embed this strategy as an integral, ongoing component of the teaching and learning cycle.

Peer feedback and support is a strength at the school. Positive conditions for learning, based on mutual respect, are evident in classrooms and students help and support their classmates in a collaborative, constructive manner.

Authentic learning, student voice and leadership opportunities exist through the enterprise learning program (Stephanie Alexander Kitchen) and the recently introduced farm plots. These well-structured, targeted programs are engaging, challenging and meaningful. They embrace the whole curriculum and enable students to become powerful partners in their own learning. The programs utilise local community expertise and have created a culture of collaboration beyond the school gate.

Staff are reflective practitioners, engaging collaboratively with their colleagues. They plan strategically to meet the diverse learning needs within their class. Teachers are committed to furthering their own professional development in implementing the Australian Curriculum within a multi-year level class. It is a challenge to ensure each child receives their year level entitlement and there is progression and continuity of learning from year to year. The school is well positioned to further their work in this area.

Additional intervention support and targeted programs are provided in collaboration with school services officers for any child needing additional help with their learning.

Direction 2 Further build in-depth knowledge of the Australian Curriculum to deliver continuity of learning with students receiving their year level entitlements in a multi-age classroom.


Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Ungarra is a vibrant learning community with all staff clear about their roles and responsibilities in contributing to school improvement and student growth. The physical environment of the school is well cared for and student-centred contributing to school pride. Classroom programs build on students' passions and interests and children are highly engaged with their learning and proud of their school. Whole-school and individual data reflect the ongoing commitment to moving learning forward for every child. The school values of integrity, respect, resilience, and achievement are highly visible and permeate through all levels of the school.

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

- Direction 1** Gather and use student feedback about teaching and learning to adjust and refine pedagogy and tasks to support further growth for every child.
- Direction 2** Further build in-depth knowledge of the Australian Curriculum to deliver continuity of learning with students receiving their year level entitlements in a multi-age classroom.

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



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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).

Due to the low numbers of students in the year level cohorts this data has not been included to ensure individual children are not identified. The school's annual report published on the school website provides additional information in relation to data at Ungarra Primary School.