

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Kersbrook 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 Katherine Holman, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Sue Mittiga, 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

Kersbrook Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 43kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 52. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 81. The local Partnership is Torrens Valley.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1002 and is classified as Category 7 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes no Aboriginal students, 8% students with disabilities, less than 6 students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 15% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the final year of tenure, and no other leadership positions. There are 3.4FTE teachers including 1 in the early years of their career and 2 experienced teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1**     **Develop and enact school agreements to ensure common understandings and expectations of assessment, pedagogy and the curriculum in numeracy and literacy.**
- Direction 2**     **Strengthen the analysis and use of data to intentionally design more targeted learning experiences and interventions.**
- Direction 3**     **Develop self-review and improvement planning, utilising students' voices as a key component of evaluation processes, to ensure effective strategies are developed and actioned to achieve strategic priorities.**

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

##### **Direction 1**

An agreement in numeracy was developed and is now due for review. Staff were involved in implementing several programs to develop a common understanding and greater consistency. There is evidence of moderation and a greater understanding of consistent assessment practices and judgement. There is a commitment to continue this work, evident through Site Improvement Plan (SIP) actions, however, consistent practices were not consolidated at this stage.

##### **Direction 2**

Staff became very data literate and have an in-depth knowledge of individual student achievement in their own classes and across the school. They used data to inform task design. Learning intentions and success criteria are evident across reception to year 7.

##### **Direction 3**

The school is at the beginning of this journey, and started sharing some data with students and setting learning goals. The 'book looks' and learning walkthroughs continue to be an important strategy to evaluate teaching and learning, and an effective platform to give and receive feedback.

## 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 planning improves teaching practice and strengthens the impact on student learning. It requires schools to continuously monitor the impact of what and how they are teaching on student learning outcomes. Since the last External School Review, the school had a more intentional and focused approach to analysing student achievement data. This focus helped staff identify what they need to teach to improve learning outcomes for all students. Through the review process, the panel identified many strengths and were able to provide some challenges to strengthen the impact on student learning.

Staff have become highly collaborative and committed to improving learning outcomes for all students. All staff were involved in development, monitoring and evaluation of the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) and its impact on student achievement. At the end of 2020 the school analysed their data and identified mathematics as a priority area. There was a decision to focus on 1 goal instead of 3 and go narrow and deep. Processes are in place to build the capacity of teachers' knowledge to teach and assess mathematics effectively. It is commendable that all staff knew the achievement data for all students across the school. As a small school, staff work together to share practice, capitalise on the expertise of others, and give feedback to each other, in an open manner with the purpose of improving practice.

There is an opportunity to strengthen the strategic leadership to prioritise what to pay attention to, articulate 'the what next' and ensure the focus to stay on course is maintained. With multi-year levels differentiation is essential and makes programming and planning challenging. The school is open and responsive to feedback and advice from the Local Education Team (LET). It is well-placed to strengthen processes to ensure there is rigour in learning, and regular monitoring of learning task quality and the impact of teaching practice on student learning outcomes. The school is working towards greater consistency of practices and coherence reception to 7, and will need to continue to prioritise, embed and consolidate effective whole-school practices.

**Direction 1** Further develop consistent and cohesive planning and approaches across the school and ensure they are embedded in classroom practice.

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

Pedagogy is the craft of teaching and requires practice and reflection to develop mastery. How teachers teach is critical to student engagement in learning and achievement. The panel observed there is a willingness and commitment to improvement. Staff reported that walkthroughs and 'book looks' are highly effective as a strategy to improve how they teach. The openness of staff to share practice and support one another was outstanding. Using learning intentions and success criteria as a high impact strategy was evident across the school.

The panel saw pockets of excellence across the school in goal-setting, use of formative assessment strategies, task design and differentiation. Some teachers were using annotated comments well to document if a student worked independently or with support, and identify the next learning steps. Teachers were mentoring each other through feedback and sharing ideas to improve their documentation and make student books a valuable resource for reporting student progress. Staff were working in collaboration to critically analyse tasks and monitor the quality of the tasks against set criteria.

Students in the primary school did not have the language of learning, and were not able to identify what supported them to learn. Some students could talk about the 'learning pit' and how it helped them with their learning, and reception/year 1 students were able to talk about how the 'bump it up wall' helped them. Although all students documented learning goals, many were not able to remember them, know how or when they would be reviewed, how they supported them in their learning and where to next. Many of the learning goals were very broad and did not show clear strategies for students to achieve them. The setting and review of learning goals should be ongoing, as students demonstrate skill proficiency and understanding. It should be an organic process linked to formative assessment and observation.

**Direction 2** Build staff and student capacity to strengthen goal-setting by developing explicit learning goals based on student achievement data and embed a regular cycle of review.

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Staff, students and the parent community of Kersbrook Primary School are very proud of their school. There is a culture of support and commitment at the school. Parents particularly like the small community school environment, which is a factor in choosing the school. They valued that the staff knew all the children and their learning. They also appreciated the fact that the school was willing to go the extra mile to support all families and students, including those with special requirements. Staff work collaboratively and are committed to improving their work and the student learning outcomes. As a small school, staff are required to take on many additional tasks, including yard duties, that can be shared more widely in larger schools. School Services Officers are a vital part of the school, and work as a team with teachers to support students and the community.

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

- Direction 1 Further develop consistent and cohesive planning and approaches across the school and ensure they are embedded in classroom practice.**
- Direction 2 Build staff and student capacity to strengthen goal setting by developing aspirational goals based on student achievement data and embed a cycle of regular review.**

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



-----  
Kerry Dollman  
Director  
Review, Improvement and Accountability



-----  
Anne Millard  
Executive Director  
Partnerships, Schools and Preschools



-----  
Jill Gurner  
Principal  
Kersbrook Primary School



-----  
Governing Council Chairperson

Emma Foster

# 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 Kersbrook Primary School from 2016 to 2019.

### Reading

In the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. From 2016 to 2019, 82% of year 1 and 86% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, the reading results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 62% of year 3 students, 78% of year 5 students and 87% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 23% of year 3, 19% of year 5 and 23% of year 7 achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

### Numeracy

From 2016 to 2019, the reading results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 63% of year 3 students, 68% of year 5 students, and 80% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

From 2016 to 2019, 26% of year 3, 5% of year 5 and 31% of year 7 achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

