

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Felixstow Community School

Conducted in March 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 Simon Harding, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Carolyn Mildrum, 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
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers

School context

Felixstow Community School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 7kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 93 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 95. The local partnership is Campbell.

The school has a 2019 ICSEA score of 1071 and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 16% students with disabilities, 26% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2% children/young people in care and 42% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

Formerly the Rose Park Family Unit located on the Rose Park Primary School site transitioned to the Felixstow Community School with a focus on 'progressive' or 'innovative' teaching and learning, in its own right in 2012, with some previously well-documented difficulties.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 5th year of a 1st tenure. There are no other senior leaders in the school.

There are 7 teachers including 3 in the early years of their career and 3 Step 9 teachers. The teaching team consists of 4 full-time classroom teachers, two 0.4FTE NIT specialist teachers, one 0.4FTE additional school funded teacher who has a focus on student engagement and wellbeing and administrative support.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Develop whole-school definitions of intellectual stretch and challenge, and agreements about the application of engaging teaching practices.**
- Direction 2** **Activate student agency in learning through the provision of quality feedback to students and through seeking regular feedback from them about teaching efficacy.**
- Direction 3** **Develop data literacy across the school in all groups of stakeholders.**
- Direction 4** **Collaboratively develop a declaration about learning at Felixstow Community School that will provide guidelines for the interface between community involvement and learning, be useful in promoting the school and defining its points of difference, and inform the induction of new staff.**

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?
The school has placed a high level of importance on building common core goals and values across the school community. Statements of alignment in literacy and numeracy support common approaches. There have been a number of whole-school training opportunities including Berry Street education model and more recently New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) focusing on global competencies which are evident in teacher practice.

The Site Improvement Plan (SIP) includes a goal focused on learning dispositions. Actions taken included the whole-school implementation of learning intentions and success criteria, use of formative assessment practices and 'bump it up' walls. These strategies are supporting the development of student agency across the school. Teachers shared a variety of strategies they use to provide feedback for students to inform next steps. This has included the recent change to the way learning progress is reported to parents.

Teachers worked to improve data literacy across all aspects of learning. This was supported through a central database, regular whole-school reflection and planning opportunities and the establishment of student learning portfolios to share with families.

It is evident that students are at the centre of all decisions taken across the school. Parents are supportive of the improvement directions and believe their opinions are valued as part of consultation processes undertaken. There is a consistent focus on the school values and a strong creative arts program has been developed.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

Leadership fostered a culture of a focus on learning, leading to developing an environment where improvement in building capacity of staff and outcomes for students is at the centre of decisions. Staff engage in collaborative conversations and planning, aligned to the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities. They undertake action research linked to the maths and learning disposition priorities. The focus on the learning dispositions has been inclusive of all teaching staff to have increased connection to the improvement work. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are supporting the sharing of practice and developing collective understanding. Staff opinions and feedback are valued. This is seen through the analysis of data and sharing and monitoring the impact of actions taken by teachers with their students, as outlined in the SIP. Decisions are informed by datasets, where targets reflect the high expectations for achievement. Regular staff meeting time is allocated for teachers to reflect on progress and collaboratively plan next steps. The school informs the Governing Council on how priorities are established and provides regular updates on the plan's progress at meetings. There are updates for the wider school community through newsletters and assemblies. Parents are supportive of leadership and staff making decisions necessary to the improvement agenda.

A culture of trust has been established where staff opinions are valued. They willingly take risks with their learning, focusing on improving outcomes for students. Staff expressed their commitment to and responsibility for, monitoring and evaluating the impact of the plan. Leadership expect staff to regularly review their progress in implementing the planned actions both individually and collectively to inform next steps. Careful consideration is taken in aligning the professional learning undertaken by staff and their professional development plans with the SIP priorities. The school has accessed ongoing expertise to support the learning being put into practice. Strengthening processes to monitor the impact of the actions taken, using clear success criteria in improvement planning and implementation, will support the school to effectively achieve their identified goals.

Direction 1 Strengthen ongoing processes to monitor progress of the SIP by measuring the collective impact of the actions taken on the challenges of practice and the success criteria.

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers analysing assessment and feedback data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction?

Felixstow Community School has agreed processes in place to track, monitor and analyse student achievement data. This analysis of data is informing staff discussions and decisions made at whole-school, class and individual levels, in relation to improvement. Teachers are working with an agreed assessment schedule and use a range of strategies for assessment of student learning, both whole-school approaches and individual. Teachers discussed their use of data to inform teaching at a class level, for example, grouping students to target the learning, and shared how these groups are fluid, based on regular tracking and monitoring of student progress. There were some examples of how data is shared with students. Strengthening the explicitness of this work will enhance students' abilities to identify next steps in their learning and continue to develop effective practices by teachers to differentiate planning and instruction.

Parents value the quality of information they receive through the new formal reporting processes which partners the written report with a follow up interview. They value teachers' willingness to meet with them about their children's progress upon request, or at other times providing them with a good understanding of where their children are at with their learning.

Students understand that effective feedback is important for their learning growth. Teachers talked about how students' attitude to feedback has changed. They are now actively seeking feedback to support their further development. Teachers shared examples of strategies they are using, such as rubrics, to support student understanding of expectations for the task and indicators of what an 'A' looks like. Further development of common understandings and practices to support consistent judgement in both formative and summative assessment by teachers will strengthen this work. Students and teachers talked about how there are opportunities for students to provide peer assessment and feedback. The provision of scaffolds to support students to do this effectively is developing across the school. Continuing to strengthen effective practices for informative two-way feedback, leading to enhanced differentiated learning, will support improved outcomes for students.

Direction 2 Strengthen high-yield practices in the use of formative assessment and effective two-way feedback providing students with increased differentiated learning and clarity of their next steps.

Conditions for effective student learning

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

The school has a clearly articulated vision focused on learning and improvement. Teachers and leadership are committed to strengthening their practice and implementing whole-school initiatives to support students effectively. A culture of learning is evident across the staff with increasing evidence of a willingness to share practice and learn from each other in a supportive environment. The PLC structure is a key process used to support this work. Trust in leadership as they work through this improvement journey was observed in discussions. Leadership has clear expectations and measures of accountability in relation to the expected practices as outlined in the SIP. Staff value the opportunity to undertake professional learning and understand it is aligned to the school priorities. They are willing to take on new challenges and innovation in their teaching practice. Teachers are engaging in action research and understand their responsibility to share new learning with other staff. They are clearly integral to decisions taken and are keen to learn from each other. All stakeholders value productive working relationships between school and home. Parents stated their children now have the language of learning and that this is developed with students across the school.

When asked about challenge in their learning, students believe this is mostly at an appropriate level. They understand that 'struggle' in learning is important for their growth. Learning intentions and success criteria are used widely across the school. Students could explain how these provided clarity of learning and supported their understanding of success. Teachers talked about the use of task design to support differentiation, yet there was variance in the depth of understanding and practice with students. Staff are now regularly sharing strategies and new learning, building an increasing understanding of each other's work. There is a consistency of practice supported through the PLC structure, with informal conversations and through their 'deep learning' with teachers across the world. Deepening these collegiate discussions and developing critical collaboration across staff, will continue to strengthen this work. Continuing to build on existing practices with a focus on strengthening effective task design and optimising learning, are next steps which the school is well-placed to take.

Direction 3 Foster innovation in effective task design through continuing to develop teachers' capacity to critically collaborate, enhancing challenge for all learners

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

The school is committed to collectively strengthening the culture of learning and improvement through the development of dispositions of learning across staff and students. Staff are willingly taking on new challenges with students at the centre of their decisions. There are high levels of support from and for the leadership throughout the improvement process.

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

- Direction 1** **Strengthen ongoing processes to monitor progress of the SIP by measuring the collective impact of the actions taken on the challenges of practice and the success criteria.**
- Direction 2** **Strengthen high-yield practices in the use of formative assessment and effective two-way feedback providing students with increased differentiated learning and clarity of their next steps.**
- Direction 3** **Foster innovation in effective task design through continuing to develop teachers' capacity to critically collaborate, enhancing challenge for all learners**

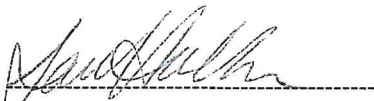
Based on the school's current performance, Felixstow Community School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



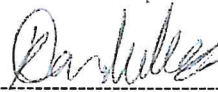
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Governing Council Chairperson

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).

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 Felixstow Community School from 2015-2019.

Reading

In the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2019 67% of year 1 and 60% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

Between 2015 and 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 70% of year 3, 77% of year 5 and 92% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA

Between 2015 and 2019, 51% of year 3, 45% of year 5 and 40% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

Between 2015 and 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 72% of year 3, 73% of year 5 and 81% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

Between 2015 and 2019, 37% of year 3, 21% of year 5 and 22% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

