Department for Education
External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Pinnaroo Primary School
Conducted in November 2020
School context

Pinnaroo Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is located 237kms east of Adelaide. The enrolment in 2020 is 84 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 76. The local partnership is the Coorong Mallee.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1009, and was changed during 2019 from a Category 5 to a Category 6 school on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 6 Aboriginal students, less than 6 students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect, no young people in care and 23% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal at the beginning of their 3rd tenure. There are 7 teachers, including 1 in the early years of their career and 2 Step 9 teachers

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

Direction 1  Enrich intellectual stretch and challenge for students through embracing digital technologies and extending inquiry-based learning across the school.

Direction 2  Enhance the delivery of inquiry-based learning to improve student engagement with content and meta-cognition.

Direction 3  Review communication strategies to increase and enhance parent influence within school improvement processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direction 1</strong>: Digital technologies are effective in supporting students in inquiry-based projects. The integrated community approach to design the redevelopment of the town centre of Pinnaroo is a good example. Opportunities to incorporate digital technologies that enhance the everyday teaching and learning process should be further explored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direction 2</strong>: The school is continuing to develop critical and creative thinking. Older students are presented with opportunities to enhance their problem-solving and reflective thinking skills through inquiry-based assignments. Students could clearly articulate their learning and thinking. An opportunity exists to share this practice across other classes and further develop a consistent whole-school approach to inquiry-based learning and metacognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direction 3</strong>: The school focused on increasing parental involvement in student learning through introduction of communication technology and student goal-setting. This was met with mixed responses with 34% of parents who participated in the 2020 parent survey indicating a need for greater involvement in the school improvement process. There is clearly more work to be done in this area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effective teaching and student learning

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

The school identified a need to stretch and challenge students in their learning with the goal to increase the number of students in the higher NAPLAN bands. Stretch and challenge are not only related to ‘project’ type learning, but also a part of direct instruction, and relate equally to encouraging risk-taking with explicit tasks to develop resilient learners. With each teacher’s own ideas and approaches, the school would be advised to develop a collective understanding and approach to stretch and challenge.

Formative feedback and assessment for learning varies across the school. There is a mixture of affirmation, with ticks, stickers, praise and some formative feedback. Where written feedback was given, students are not engaging with, or reflecting on it. Students had mixed understandings of how they could improve or what their next steps in learning were likely to be.

Differentiation that caters for the learning needs of students is evident across the school. The newly introduced vocabulary, comprehension, and phonics program, are all examples where students are working within their ability level. In the upper years, engaging and challenging learning tasks in mathematics are provided with support in the form of 1-1 conferencing being provided.

Using student learning goals was identified as a high-impact strategy to improve learning, and its introduction was met with mixed success. The possible reason for this is the premise on which goal-setting is based. Some staff see goal-setting as a strategy to enhance parental involvement in their child’s learning. Students the panel met with could not offer a clear understanding of how they will be supported in achieving their goals, or how they were going to attain them, apart from improving focus and practicing more at home.

Literacy and numeracy progressions are comprehensive resources that are designed to support the progressions of learning. Collective implementation will assist teachers and students in understanding where students are and identify their next steps in learning.

Direction 2   Increase student achievement in the higher bands through whole-school implementation of the literacy and numeracy progressions, and a collective understanding of how to provide formative feedback and assessment that drives the next steps in learning.
Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

Pinnaroo Primary School is highly respected in the local community, with parents valuing the education their children receive. Leadership stability allowed the school to maintain continuity of learning, a strong sense of community and a safe and nurturing environment. Teaching staff are committed to providing engaging learning tasks and improving student outcomes. Students are well-mannered, responsible, articulate and keen to learn. The principal spoke to the panel about “finding the right balance”. With committed leadership and teaching staff and highly capable students, the school is in a position to review processes and procedures and develop a strong and robust school improvement plan, which will guide the school to further improve student learning.

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

**Direction 1** Collectively and collaboratively develop and implement a congruent school improvement plan by using the recommended process outlined in the department’s School Improvement Handbook.

**Direction 2** Increase student achievement in the higher bands through whole-school implementation of the literacy and numeracy progressions, and a collective understanding of how to provide formative feedback and assessment that drives the next steps in learning.

**Direction 3** Build the capacity of teachers through the development of a whole school collaborative approach to professional learning that includes mentoring and coaching, formal observation and sharing of pedagogical practices.

Based on the school’s current performance, Pinnaroo Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.

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

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

.......................................................... 
Sunyl Vogt  
Principal  
Pinnaroo Primary School

.......................................................... 
Governing Council Chairperson