

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Miltaburra Area School

Conducted in September 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 Christine Bell, 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

Miltaburra Area School caters for students from preschool to year 12. It is situated 722kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at February census, is 56. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 50. The local partnership is Far West.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 993 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school population includes less than 5% Aboriginal students, 13% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background and no children/young people in care.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 7th year of tenure, a Teaching and Learning Coordinator and a secondary school leader.

There are 10 teachers including 3 in the early years of their career and 4 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Engage and challenge students in their learning through the strategic implementation of coherent teaching strategies across the school that achieves and sustains high level learning outcomes.
- Direction 2** Support teachers to design the learning program with specific targeted teaching practices that are implemented and evaluated for their impact on school-identified areas for learning improvement.
- Direction 3** Use available data and information to strengthen the partnerships between teachers, students and parents in planning and delivering a differentiated approach to student learning, inclusive of general capabilities.

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

Direction 1: The school has invested in external professional learning in effective writing tool programs to build teacher capacity. Engagement with partnership and portfolio in moderation of assessment tasks, as well as work around task design for mathematics and assessment of maths learning has been carried out. There is a whole-school numeracy agreement, which includes resources, tasks and whole-school scope and sequences. Implementing and assessing formative assessment strategies, designing, and moderating tasks and engaging with partnership and portfolio peers in a moderation process, occurs on a regular basis. Adjusting task design based on feedback has also been a focus across all year levels.

Direction 2: Learning progressions to plan and share the next steps for improvement, were introduced by the school. Explicit teaching of Big 6 is used to support teachers to design learning programs with targeted teaching practices. These ongoing explicit teaching strategies and programs are used to support all students to increase their literacy capabilities.

Direction 3: Established structures and processes to collect and collaboratively analyse data as a whole-school are used. A data calendar is accessible by teachers and provides a level of accountability. Data is formally analysed annually using a traffic light system to review site improvement progress and growth of

individual students, as well as inform site improvement goals for future planning. Growth data is analysed using Hattie's visible learning formula. Work is continuing around the use of assessment information and tracking of students' progress, being available for parents. Termly curriculum overviews are sent home to parents. A survey in response to some communication concerns, was provided to parents for feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school use improvement planning process to raise students achievement?

Miltaburra Area School is focused on providing professional learning for teachers that is aligned to the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) and Performance Development Plans (PDPs). All teachers are aware of the goal of writing. Teachers understanding of the SIP, indicates some confusion of required documentation and process around the school improvement planning cycle. Some teachers informed the panel, that they had misconceptions around understanding and ownership of the identified challenge of practice and this step of the cycle was not evident in teachers' individual planning. There is an opportunity for teachers and leaders to engage in rigorous conversations supporting teachers to identify how their pedagogical practice impacts on students' learning. Teachers demonstrate a willingness to work collaboratively together and there is an opportunity to collectively develop a deep understanding of the development, implementation, and review of the new SIP and how this work impacts on classroom practice.

The school has an internal system to collect and store data and all staff have access to the department's data platform. Teachers are committed to tracking and monitoring growth of two students, one in higher bands and one under Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA), each year. The school operates with a data collection calendar and data is analysed in term four.

While there are multiple forms of data collected for analysis, there is a challenge to connect this to the SIP documentation and inform targets, goals, and challenge of practice. Some teachers were unable to explain to the panel how they use regular individual data to inform next steps and most students said they didn't have access to their data.

Teachers have a solid understanding of the Australian Curriculum and the South Australian Certificate of Education requirements. The school can build on this work by developing curriculum mapping and scope and sequencing in all curriculum areas across the school, to ensure there is coherence, continuity and progression of learning across the years of schooling.

Direction 1 Collaboratively develop, implement, and review the Site Improvement Plan and statements of expectations of high impact teaching strategies, to enhance staff understanding and improve the consistency of practice across the school.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Teachers at the school have been provided with a wide range of opportunities to build their capacity as educators through quality professional learning. The school has invested in using Simon Breakspear's evidence-based strategy, with a focus on writing improvement which has translated into a few teachers using the learning progressions in writing and numeracy. An opportunity exists to build on this work, to ensure all students are stretched and challenged in their learning.

While the panel found evidence of differentiation in some teachers planning, most students were not able to articulate how teachers catered for their diverse learning needs in the classroom. The next steps for the school are to develop a collective understanding and commitment for teachers to design and differentiate learning to meet students' learning needs.

Students informed the panel that some teachers often gave basic feedback on their work, but felt to improve, they needed quality feedback to support and motivate them in their learning. There is an opportunity for leaders to build teacher understanding of the importance of providing opportunities for students to regularly feedback to their teachers around their pedagogical practice and to ensure teachers respond to this.

The panel found some evidence of learning intentions and success criteria in classrooms; however, students were not able to articulate how these are used. Further conversations with teachers uncovered that an inconsistent language around these strategies exists. Collectively developing statements of expectations around what quality learning intentions, success criteria, differentiation and feedback are will ensure that consistency of practice exists across all classrooms.

The school is now well positioned to embed high impact teaching strategies to create classroom environments that are challenging and supportive. This will occur with collaboratively developed documentation of what high quality pedagogical strategies look like in each classroom for every student.

Direction 2 To meet the learning needs of all students, embed high quality differentiated and high impact teaching strategies to enable students to engage and be stretched and challenged in their learning.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Miltaburra Area School provides a place for students to undertake relevant and purposeful learning. Families appreciate the dedication each staff member demonstrates in providing quality teaching and learning opportunities for their children. Staff model positive relationships with students, families and each other. The school has a committed and experienced leadership team that understands their role in student learning and building teacher capacity.

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

- Direction 1 Collaboratively develop, implement, and review the Site Improvement Plan and statements of expectations of high impact teaching strategies, to enhance staff understanding and improve the consistency of practice across the school.**
- Direction 2 To meet the learning needs of all students, embed high quality differentiated and high impact teaching strategies to enable students to engage and be stretched and challenged in their learning.**

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



Kerry Dollman
Director
Review, Improvement and Accountability



Anne Millard
Executive Director
Partnerships, Schools and Preschools

Karen Stokes
Principal
Miltaburra Area School

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 Miltaburra Area School from 2017-2019.

Reading

In the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. Between 2018 and 2020, 93 % of year 1 students and 70% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

Between 2018 and 2020 the trend for year 1 has remained at 93% and year 2 has been upwards from 50% to 80%.

Between 2017 and 2019, the reading results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 63% of year 3 students, 86% of year 5 students, 83% of year 7 students and 55% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 3 has been downwards from 89% to 33%, year 5 has been downwards from 86% to 73%, year 7 has been downwards from 100 % to 71% and year 9 has been downwards from 100% to 0%.

For 2019 year 3 NAPLAN reading the school is achieving lower, for year 5 similar, for year 7 lower and year 9 lower than the results of similar students across government schools.

Between 2017 and 2019 the school has consistently achieved lower in year 3, similar in year 5, similar in year 7 and 9 NAPLAN reading relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

Between 2017 and 2019, 7% of year 3, 41% of year 5, 0% of year 7 and 0% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

Between 2017 and 2019, the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 55% of year 3 students, 89% of year 5 students, 74% of year 7 students and 61% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, 5, 7 and 9 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the school has consistently achieved lower in years 3 and 7 in NAPLAN numeracy and similar in years 5 and 9 relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

Between 2017 and 2019, 49% of year 3, 12% of year 5, 23% of year 7 and 39% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 3, 5, 7 and 9 has been downwards.

SACE

Miltaburra Area School is designated P-10. The school occasionally have students who remain at the school while completing their SACE predominantly via Open Access College or local delivery. These students are supported by staff on site, and occasionally complete subjects in-house.

In 2020, the school had 3 Stage 1 students.