

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Ramco Primary School

Conducted in June 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 Julie Bishop , Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Greg Platt, 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

Ramco Primary School caters for students from reception to year 7. It is situated 174kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 76. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 63. The local partnership is Waikerie.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 941 and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school population includes 13% Aboriginal students, 11% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 8% children/young people in care and 34% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

At the end of 2020, Cadell Primary School closed and successfully amalgamated with Ramco Primary School. From the beginning of 2021, 7 students, 1 teacher and 1 school services officer (SSO) joined the Ramco school community.

In 2021, the school is partly funding a special options class, 3 days a week with a teacher, and SSO support for up to 5 students with significant needs of support.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 6<sup>th</sup> year of tenure. There are no other senior leadership positions in the school. There are 6 teachers, including 1 in the early years of their career and 2 Step 9 teachers.

## The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Collaboratively strengthen teachers' capacity to effectively use formative assessments and to design and implement learning experiences with multiple entry and exit points to stretch and challenge all learners.
- Direction 2** Maintain the identified improvement directions within the school's operational plan, ensuring regular self-review, data analysis and input from all stakeholders, including students.
- Direction 3** Increase authentic student influence in their learning through negotiating the learning, enabling effective two-way feedback, and the collaborative development and sharing of learning intentions and success criteria.

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

**Direction 1:** Teachers use achievement data and formative assessment results to better differentiate learning for their students. They effectively design learning experiences with a variety of entry points and focus on 'intervention at all levels', specifically in literacy and numeracy groups, which challenges and provides opportunities for intellectual stretch for students.

**Direction 2:** The School Improvement Model has become a significant driver that replaced/enhanced previous 'operational plan' work. This new model is now embedded within the school as the fundamental process of school improvement, which encompasses the 5 steps of continuous improvement. This improvement work and the school improvement plan (SIP) are shared with and open for feedback from the Governing Council and wider parent/caregiver community.

**Direction 3:** Staff are generally providing more opportunities for students to be 'partners in their learning'. This significantly changed from a student representative council focused on fundraising, to a 'student voice team', led by student leaders, who meet fortnightly to discuss aspects, including 'powerful learners' at school, and how individual students/staff demonstrate these dispositions.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

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

A cohesive and collaborative approach to school improvement planning was evident. In week 0 all staff provide input to the development of the SIP and, subsequently, share responsibility for key actions in the SIP. Staff demonstrated cohesive, whole-school understandings of the intent and content of the SIP priorities.

Two SIP goals were identified: to increase student achievement in the number strand across all year levels, and to improve student achievement in writing. All staff review the SIP at weekly staff meetings. Regular check-ins ensure that progress is collaboratively tracked and monitored.

The panel noted a whole-school approach to tracking and monitoring progress through Big ideas in Number. Staff reflected that a whole-school approach to implementing the Big ideas in Number resulted in a positive impact on student learning outcomes. Strategies to achieve this included: professional learning, analysis of data, diagnostic testing, and planned intervention strategies.

A consistent, whole-school approach to writing improvement was implemented. Strategies to improve student achievement in writing include Seven Steps and Brightpath processes. Staff reflected that effecting the stated goals had significant impact when tracking learning and determining next steps in writing.

Teachers identified the need to strengthen and sustain teachers' and SSOs' capacities to implement the new learning from professional learning for Brightpath, whole-school writing, Seven Steps to writing and vocabulary development.

Self-review processes supported staff to identify barriers and determine next steps in learning. They noted that addressing barriers to learning from the perspective of the student was an area for further consideration.

The school is well-placed to identify and develop processes that will provide ongoing opportunities for students to be consistently challenged in their learning. Embedding effective task design that ensures students have ongoing opportunities to display learning at higher levels is an area for further development. The school is well-placed to progress this work with specific reference to higher-band achievement in writing and numeracy.

**Direction 1    Develop and embed a whole-school approach to task design that provides regular, planned opportunities for all students to consistently demonstrate learning at higher levels.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

The panel noted a strong commitment to using effective assessment procedures, particularly formative assessments, to refine teaching at individual, group, and class levels. Staff demonstrated clarity in the application and value of formative assessment to inform next steps in learning.

Staff use a diverse range of formative assessment processes, including but not limited to:

- thumbs up/down
- exit slips
- seeking feedback from students
- the SeeSaw app
- iPads to visually record progress.

Students confidently use SeeSaw to provide feedback to peers. Exemplars of what learning looks like above/at/below/within units of work, provided clarity and consistency of next steps in learning for students. Rubrics were developed to support students with providing informed feedback.

The value of Brightpath and Big Ideas in Number assessments in grade allocation, was acknowledged by staff. The school is well-placed to embed ABLES for identified One Plan students.

In a survey conducted during the external review, 33% of staff identified that feedback provided to students to help them know how to improve was achieved at a high degree. The school is well-placed to strengthen planned opportunities for students to undertake peer and self-assessments and provide feedback to each other. Creating whole-school processes, where teachers regularly receive feedback from students, is an area for further consideration.

Several staff noted that it was challenging to effectively sustain differentiation. Learning design and moderation with other teachers would help strengthen consistency of judgement when moderating student work to allocate grades. The school is well-placed to develop uniform processes and understandings in effective moderation. Planned work with peers from neighbouring schools and within the Partnership will strengthen the collective perspectives.

**Direction 2     Develop and embed effective moderation processes where teachers have regular, planned opportunities to work with peers from school and partnership perspectives.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

The school provided extensive evidence of assessment and feedback processes that inform and strengthen teaching and learning, with an embedded strong, cohesive culture of continual improvement. Staff work collaboratively and are strongly committed to the provision of high levels of support for learning and care for every student.

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

- Direction 1**     **Develop and embed a whole school approach in task design** that provides opportunities for all students to consistently demonstrate learning at higher levels.
- Direction 2**     **Develop and embed effective moderation processes where teachers have regular, planned opportunities to work with peers from school and partnership perspectives.**

Based on the school’s current performance, Ramco 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).

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 Ramco Primary School from 2016-2019.

### Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2019, 90% of year 1 and 60% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average for year 1, and a decline from the historic baseline average for year 2.

Between 2018 and 2019, the trend for year 1 has been upwards, from 80% to 90%. The trend for year 2 has been downwards, from 71% to 60%.

Between 2016 and 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 94% of year 3 students, 64% of year 5 students and 81% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 7 has been downwards, from 88% to 81%.

For 2019 year 3 and 5 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

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

In 2019, 38% of year 3, 25% of year 5 and 17% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

### Numeracy

Between 2016 and 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 88% of year 3 students, 63% of year 5 students and 85% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents little or no change, for year 5, this result represents an improvement, and for year 7, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 50% to 75%. The trend for year 7 downwards, from 100% to 67%.

In 2019, 50% of year 3, no year 5 and 17% of year 7 students, achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 50% to 75%, the trend for year 7 has been downwards, from 100% to 67%.