

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Errington Special Education Centre

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 Simon Harding, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Byron Stuut, 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

Errington Special Education Centre is a reception to year 12 school catering for students with an intellectual and associated disabilities. It is located 7.2kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 108. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 121. The local partnership is West Torrens. The school has capacity for up to 120 students.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 1033 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

Errington Special Education Centre was established in 2014 when it moved to a purpose-built facility from Ashford Special School located on Anzac Highway. The school has 4 sub-schools (junior, primary, middle, and senior) housing their own individual play spaces, individual kitchen, bathrooms and sensory rooms. The school has a gymnasium with treadmill and stationary bikes, a hall, a mezzanine for training and development and an undercover pick-up and drop-off facility for families and taxis.

The school population includes 6% Aboriginal students, 100% students with disabilities, 34% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care, and 28% of students eligible for School Card with the number expected to rise as more applications are submitted.

Seventy-four percent of students have complex communication needs; all students have an intellectual or global development delay with additional disabilities, mainly Autism Spectrum Disorder, and 25 students (23%) receive Resource Allocation Adjustment Panel funding.

The school leadership team consists of a 5th year Principal (currently in the 3rd year of a five-year tenure), a Deputy Principal (daily management, teaching and learning PBS) in a 1-year tenure, and a coordinator for post-school options and SACE, in their final year of a 3-year tenure.

There are 24 teachers (19.2 FTE), including 2 beginning teachers and 4 in the early years of their career, and 12 Step 9 teachers. There are 51 school services officers totaling 405 hours per week.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Continue to build a solid foundation of 'predictability' in support of student engagement, learning and wellbeing as they transition between classes from reception to year 12.
- Direction 2** Continue to expand whole-school, sub-school, and class-based datasets with teachers to inform planning and report on success in student engagement, growth, and achievement in learning.
- Direction 3** Embed all aspects of the multi-tiered systems of support in every class in a highly coherent and seamless manner to ensure continuity of learning for all students.

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

The staff developed a three-year scope and sequence cycle aligned to the Australian Curriculum, reception to year 9, to support continuity of curriculum delivery across the school. Establishing agreed school-wide datasets and planned opportunities for moderation of student work continues to develop common understandings to inform teaching and learning. Consistency of information provided to teachers, as students move classes, is continuing to evolve to best support student learning needs.

The school implemented school-wide common assessment tools. An assessment map was recently established with agreed timelines for assessment collection. Teachers participated in ongoing training in literacy with a consultant. Teachers value moderation of tasks and creation of data walls where student achievement progress was mapped. Individual learning plans include student goals, which are informed by student achievement data.

Staff collectively worked to develop the Errington Identity, which supports coherence of what the school values. There is ongoing training for staff in positive behaviour support (PBS) and accommodating needs of students with Autism. A key teacher was appointed to work with staff on developing PBS strategies across the school. This person provided training and mentoring in classrooms in the development of consistent practices and targeted interventions.

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?

The school has processes and structures in place to support their improvement work throughout the implementation cycle. These structures are continuing to evolve over time, they now include professional learning teams made up of representatives across sub-schools and are aligned to goals in the school improvement plan (SIP). Professional learning teams are provided with time in staff meetings to analyse agreed data to monitor the impact on the progress of the plan. Staff are focused on improvement of student achievement and building their capacity to best support the students with whom they work. Leadership and staff stated that decisions are taken using evidence-based datasets and considering growth students have made. Intentional decisions were made to narrow the priorities to work towards embedding expected practices. Staff seek opportunities to continue to focus on embedding expected practices by keeping the priorities narrow. Members of the Governing Council are aware of the priorities in the plan; however, strengthening ongoing sharing of the progress and actions from the plan at meetings and with the wider parent community are next steps.

Staff stated that the monitoring of the SIP includes consultation. Through professional learning teams, staff opinions and feedback are sought and valued. All teachers are members of a professional learning team, which supports building of collective understandings. The collective ownership and commitment to the SIP by staff is developing. Staff were involved in decisions to establish the priorities of communication and literacy. Sub-school team meeting time is provided for staff to reflect and evaluate actions taken by members of the team. There are expectations from leadership for teams to document these discussions and share the impact of professional learning on teacher practice. Teachers said there is a positive level of collegiality within these teams. Performance development plans (PDPs) are aligned to SIP priorities and school service officers (SSOs) are supported by leadership in this process. Continuing to strengthen processes that allow staff to have robust conversations, closely aligned to the improvement journey, are next steps. Strengthening processes to support staff in monitoring impact more effectively against the progress in student achievement and changes in teacher practice, both individually and collectively, will continue to enhance the school improvement strategies.

Direction 1 Strengthen the ongoing collective self-review processes where staff effectively monitor and evaluate the progress of the SIP, with clear line of sight on the impact on data, teacher 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?

The school has agreed processes in place to track, monitor and analyse student achievement data. This analysis of data is increasingly informing staff discussions and decisions taken, at a school level, in relation to improvement. The school has recently gone through a process to update an agreed assessment schedule, including which assessments and when they are to be collected. When staff understand the rationale behind identified assessments and operate from a common framework, student learning can be reliably tracked, monitored and reviewed. Teachers are using a range of strategies for assessment of student learning, including both formative and summative. They have valued opportunities to work collaboratively across the school to moderate student work samples and establish a data wall. Student goal-setting is based on agreed evidence-based assessment data. During class walkthroughs, there was evidence of differentiated learning being accessed by students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Teachers discussed how they use data to inform their teaching and planning to best meet the needs of each student. While there is good practice, the effectiveness and depth of how data is used to inform planning or intentional teaching is developing across the school.

Teachers are reflecting on their practice in relation to providing feedback for students working towards being more targeted and regular. This is supported through work in sub-schools, where teachers are sharing practice, with some finding common gaps in learning, and working collectively with students across the sub-school to address learning needs. Sharing expertise across sub-schools, based on agreed assessment sets, are next steps for the school to undertake. Providing students with clear feedback about their performance, can be powerful for students when working with their teacher. Parents stated that the school's reporting processes gave them a good understanding of where their child is at in their learning. Strengthening common effective practices in the provision of feedback and high-yield formative assessment strategies will support students to work towards their next steps in learning. Leadership and staff discussed the planned actions set to continue building staff capacity to more effectively analyse data and the implications of this on learning programs for students. The credibility of assessment to inform instruction is paramount in providing quality learning to meet the needs of all students.

Direction 2 Embed differentiated curriculum planning and instruction through the strengthening of collective practices in the effective use of achievement and feedback data to inform teaching optimising outcomes for all students.

Conditions for effective student learning

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

Quality teaching is the single most influential factor on student achievement. Teachers and leaders are committed to strengthening practices to support students effectively in their learning. There are expectations from leaders to improve teacher capacity and student achievement.

Professional learning is prioritised in the staff meeting program. All staff value the opportunities to undertake targeted training to support teaching and learning, which is closely aligned to the SIP priorities. Ongoing training and mentoring through a consultant had impact on classroom practice. Staff seek opportunity to embed new learning into their practice. Teachers talked about their discussions in sub-schools and willingness to collaboratively plan, which is building their capacity towards the priorities. While there were some opportunities for staff to work across sub-schools, strengthening clear processes and structures for collaborative discussions across the school to reflect on, discuss the impact of their work, and give constructive feedback leading to critical collaboration, are next steps.

There is a focus on identifying and implementing strategies to support growth in student outcomes. Staff are focused on creating positive learning environments where learning is valued. Parents stated their children are presented with an appropriate level of challenge in their learning. They recognise the dedication and commitment of staff to provide quality learning across the school. All stakeholders value productive working relationships between school and home. Teachers and SSOs value the skills and knowledge each bring to the education of the students with whom they work. Performance management processes are in place for all staff. Clearly articulating the purpose of each stage and offering effective feedback would continue to strengthen these processes. Using the existing expertise and willingness of staff to collaborate, strengthening common approaches to quality approaches to learning, are next steps the school is well-placed to take.

Direction 3 Strategically strengthen collective processes which builds capacity of staff to provide high-quality learning and develop critical collaboration across the school.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

There is demonstrated commitment by staff to the students with whom they work. Staff have a willingness to embrace new challenges and build their capacity through supporting and sharing with colleagues to enhance learning for students. Parents acknowledge how the school strives to meet the needs of individual students and that teachers provide clear information about their child's learning.

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

- Direction 1** **Strengthen the ongoing collective self-review processes where staff effectively monitor and evaluate the progress of the SIP, with clear line of sight on the impact on data, teacher practice and the success criteria.**
- Direction 2** **Embed differentiated curriculum planning and instruction through the strengthening of collective practices in the effective use of achievement and feedback data to inform teaching optimising outcomes for all students.**
- Direction 3** **Strategically strengthen collective processes which builds capacity of staff to provide high-quality learning and develop critical collaboration across the school.**

Based on the school's current performance, Errington Special Education Centre will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



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Appendix 1

School performance overview

The External School Review process includes an analysis of school performance.

The school uses a range of formative and summative assessment and data collection strategies to inform progress and growth against student learning goals. ABLES curriculum assessment and reporting suite has been implemented across the school to provide additional data to evaluate students' academic skills and understandings. Students' progress is monitored each day and across the term to assess achievement. Goals are regularly adjusted in response to this.

Senior students engage with modified individualised patterns of SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects agreed to in discussions with teachers, parents, and students. Teachers reflect on the criteria within the modified performance standards to conduct ongoing evaluations.

