

# Port Sorell Primary School

## External School Review Executive Summary 2023

# INTRODUCTION

The Department for Education, Children and Young People is committed to supporting and improving the educational outcomes and achievements of Tasmanian Government School students. The purpose of External School Review (the Review) is to support schools to raise student achievement and sustain high performance.

The External School Review Framework underpinning the Review identifies the key levers for school improvement and has been shaped and informed by the National School Improvement Tool.

The National School Improvement Tool brings together the findings from international research into the practices of highly effective schools and school leaders. The Framework focuses on the practices proven to impact positively on achievement outcomes for all students at the classroom level. It is not intended to document every aspect of the school's processes, programs and outcomes.

**The overarching review question is “how well does the school ensure students are known, safe, well and learning?”**

This External School Review Report outlines aspects of the school's performance verified through the review process and provides recommendations for key improvement strategies.

In line with [Our Approach to School Improvement](#), recommendations from the External School Review must be integrated into the School Improvement Plan.

This Review was conducted in October 2023 by:

- Jenny Cowling, External School Review Leader
- Matthew Kenny, Principal Peer Reviewer
- Sharon Symes, Principal Peer Reviewer.

# DISCLAIMER

The Department for Education, Children and Young People does not endorse any commercial organisation, product or service mentioned in this Report.

## SCHOOL CONTEXT

Location	Pitcairn Street, Port Sorell
Year levels	Kindergarten to Year 6
Enrolment	288 FTE
Year opened	2013
Principal	Paula McGlade (Acting)
Year principal appointed	2023
Indigenous enrolment percentage	11.91%
Students with a disability enrolment percentage	11.11%
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value	982
Full-time equivalent staff members	30.43 FTE

## CONTRIBUTING STAKEHOLDERS

The Review took place over two days – Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 October 2023 – with one External School Review Leader and two Principal Peer Reviewers.

Most teachers who were present on the days of the Review were interviewed, along with non-teaching staff, families, and members of the School Association.

The leadership team presented to the panel on day one.

It should be noted that the current acting principal, Paula McGlade, only commenced at the school the day before the Review and the acting Advanced Skills Teacher/Quality Teaching Coach was on leave, so the presentation was conducted by the substantive AST.

The panel visited most classrooms and learning spaces, and met with student groups from across the school, both formally during interviews and informally in the classroom setting.

The following table will guide percentages for statements made in this report:

None	Few	Some	Many	Most	All
0%	1–20%	20–50%	50–75%	75–99%	100%

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

School Improvement Plan	Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT)
School Annual Review	Attendance data
Student, staff and parent satisfaction and wellbeing surveys	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)
ASPIRE/Measuring School Progress	Student achievement data
Australian Curriculum Framework ratings	Kindergarten Development Check

## EFFECTIVE SCHOOL PRACTICES

During the Review process, the panel verified the following effective practices that are contributing significantly to school improvement at Port Sorell Primary School:

- There is a highly caring school culture that meets the ‘Great Children in a Great School in a Great Community’ aspiration.
- Interactions between staff, students, parents, and families are caring, polite and inclusive.
- Positive relationships exist between all members of the school community, and there are supportive partnerships with families and community organisations. There is a strong sense of pride.
- Explicit targets for improvement in student achievement levels have been set, and progress towards targets is monitored.
- The school uses data to identify starting points for improvement.
- Students are well known and have strong connections with staff and each other.
- There is a clear beginning focus on the ‘right work’ with classroom instruction supported by learning intentions and success criteria and the developing use of a Common Instructional Model.
- There are strong community connections with clearly defined traditional events that ensure community is drawn to, and welcomed, in the school.
- Classrooms are calm and orderly, and students are able to work independently and in small groups, allowing teachers to teach focus groups without interruption.
- Learning plans are in place for students with disability, and a range of strategies and adjustments are utilised to support engagement and achievement.
- Building the capacity of non-teaching staff is encouraged through opportunities for quality professional learning.

# RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2023

At Port Sorell Primary School, the current leadership team are driving a strong improvement agenda focussing on Wellbeing, Number and Literacy.

The school effectively uses its physical and local environment to maximise student learning, and school leaders lead and model professional learning in the school. Teachers work together at understanding where students are in their learning, including their current knowledge, skills, learning difficulties and misunderstandings, to identify starting points for teaching.

The school is developing a strong sense of 'place' for students and ensuring connection for them to their school and their community. There is a focus on student wellbeing through the Resilience Project and using this to create positive, caring, community minded citizens.

Teachers have begun work on collaborative inquiry and are ready to embrace the next stage of tightening this process to focus more rigorously on improving pedagogy and student learning outcomes. As this focus is in its early stages, further work is needed to deepen staff understanding in analysing classroom data, with the purpose of better differentiating teaching to maximise student growth. Co-constructing a Port Sorell Primary School plan for curriculum delivery, supported by current DECYP resources, will complement this approach, and deepen teachers' understanding of what to teach and when, so that students reach their full potential.

In line with *Our Approach to School Improvement*, recommendations from the External School Review must be integrated into the School Improvement Plan.

The External School Review makes the following recommendations to further improve student learning outcomes:

- 1. Deepen the current collaborative inquiry structure to support teachers to continually implement evidence-informed teaching strategies to ensure maximum growth for all learners, with a focus on building staff skills in the analysis, interpretation, and use of classroom data.**
- 2. Co-construct an explicit coherent sequenced plan for curriculum delivery across the years of school which makes clear what (and when) teachers should teach, and students learn. This should align to the relevant curriculum frameworks: Early Years Learning Framework and Australian Curriculum Framework.**
- 3. Develop and implement a consistent whole-school approach to evidence-informed teaching practices, particularly Reading, to maximise student learning outcomes.**
- 4. Further develop the school-wide data plan and assessment schedule and use this to differentiate teaching and learning tasks to match student levels of readiness and need. This data should be used for the development of learning plans, systematic intervention, and rich task design to extend and challenge all students.**