

External School Review – South Downs Primary School

Across our education system, we seek growth for every student, in every class, and in every school. The external school review value-adds and supports schools to raise student achievement and sustain high performance by providing an expert external perspective on school performance by verifying or challenging:

- a school's improvement planning and processes and its impact on student learning
- the impact of previous external school directions
- the rigour of a school's improvement practices
- the school's capacity to achieve or sustain learning improvement over time.

The external school review lines of inquiry focus on:

- quality school improvement planning
- expert teaching
- quality leadership
- conditions for optimal learning.

The overarching question in every external school review is: How well does the school improve achievement, growth, challenge, engagement, and equity?

Reported impact of directions from the previous External School Review in March 2020.

In regard to the direction of raising student achievement through high expectations, collective staff accountability for site improvement plan actions and regular evaluation of student achievement data, the school has put a number of actions in place. The staff collaboratively review the site improvement plan through a traffic lighting process, where the different colours represent current progress against agreed actions. The school is going narrower and deeper with their reading goal and the school using the Accelerated Reader programme to support teachers in differentiating their reading programmes including setting personalised reading targets for students. These targets are set with the students each term and are displayed on their desks. A data improvement team has also been established with teachers, SSO's and leaders meeting twice a term to track and monitor student progress.

Differentiating the learning for all students through a collaborative whole school approach to data analysis is being addressed through the introduction of professional learning communities. Staff collaboratively look at and analyse school, cohort and class data and share pedagogy. A staff meeting mid-term has a focus on data which includes applying contextual knowledge to support next steps in student learning. A trial of peer observations between the disability unit and mainstream teachers has begun with the intention to deprivatise practice and build capacity in each other.

The school is focusing on developing an R-6 approach to curriculum planning and the consequent sequencing of learning by using a consistent, site wide curriculum planning document that aligns to daily lesson planning. Line managers are providing feedback back to teachers on their planning. The Initial Lit programme is running daily in junior primary classes and providing continuity and consistency of practice. The school is being supported by the Curriculum Lead who is modelling daily Maths Chats with teachers, who are in turn implementing these consistently across the school. The school is trialling the department's curriculum units of work which is helping build consistency in planning, assessment and the delivery of student's curriculum entitlement.

Outcomes from the External School Review held in May 2023.

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

- Direction 1** **Strengthen and build staff capability in planning and open-ended task design, ensuring differentiated teaching and learning, including opportunities for challenge and stretch for all learners.**
- Direction 2** **Deepen and sharpen pedagogical practice in use of formative assessment practices, creating frequent opportunities for just in time and targeted student feedback, informing next steps in teaching and learning.**
- Direction 3** **Foster and strengthen a culture of high expectations and continual improvement, through facilitating opportunities to collaborate and share evidence-based practice, promoting purposeful dialogue and optimal learning.**

These directions are published on the school improvement plan and will support the school's ongoing improvement work. **Based on the school's current performance, South Downs Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2026.**



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Review Improvement and Accountability



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System Performance

