



EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

Report for Sheidow Park Primary School

Conducted in September 2017



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and
Child Development

Review details

A priority for the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) is to improve the educational attainment and wellbeing of South Australia's children and young people.

The purpose of the External School Review is to support schools to raise achievement, sustain high performance and to provide quality assurance to build and sustain public confidence in DECD schools.

The framework underpinning the External School Review identifies the key levers for school improvement and has been shaped and informed by research.

The overarching review question is "How well does this school improve student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and equity?"

This Report of the External School Review 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.

The support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community is acknowledged. While, not all review processes, artefacts and comments are documented, they all have been considered and contributed to the development and directions of this Report.

The External School Review Process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented. This information is provided in Appendix One of the report.

This External School Review was conducted by June Goode, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and David Pitt, Review Principal.

School context

Sheidow Park Primary School is located 19kms south-west of the Adelaide CBD. Student enrolments have increased from 198 in 2014 to the current enrolment of 318. The school has an ICSEA score of 1014, and is classified as Category 6 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1% Aboriginal students, 9% students with disabilities, 5% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 2 children in care, and 29 families eligible for School Card assistance.

Sheidow Park Primary School is the second school in South Australia that is dual-streamed: mainstream and Steiner.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal and Deputy Principal, both originally contracted for two terms in 2017, and then extended for the remainder of the year.

Lines of Inquiry

In considering the data summary in the School Performance Overview (Appendix 2) and the Principal's presentation, the Review Panel explored the following Lines of Inquiry to evaluate the school's effectiveness towards raising student achievement and sustaining high performance. During the external review process, the panel focused on three key areas from the External School Review Framework:

Effective Teaching: How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

Student Learning: How effectively does the feedback students are given motivate them to improve?

School Community Partnerships: To what extent does parent engagement impact on student learning?

How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

Throughout the External School Review (ESR), the Review Panel members spoke to 63 students from Years 3 to 7, including specified groups (such as the 'Building a sustainable future through food' group, student voice, and students from the Steiner stream), along with informal conversations with Reception and Year 1/2 students in their classrooms.

In conversations, students were asked what their favourite subject was and what they believed were the reasons for this preference. Many students reflected on the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject, and the high interest and relevant learning experiences in the lessons. Some commented that whilst it may be a favourite area of study now, it's not always the area of study where they receive the highest grade. Some also commented on the fact that it hasn't always been their favourite. Maths learning is an example of where there appears to be a deeper level of interest and enthusiasm, which is a change from past years.

The Principal spoke of the school's involvement in the Marion Coast Partnership's Numeracy Project. Two staff members, together with the Principal, attend partnership meetings and then bring back evidence-based strategies to the whole staff. Staff provided evidence of both the challenges involved and the positive changes they are starting to see in their confidence, as well as a change of mindset about maths teaching and learning.

Students articulated there is a greater emphasis on problem-solving, reasoning and reflection of their learning: "I really enjoy how my brain works in maths" and "I never really liked maths, it was boring, but now it's not the answer that matters, it's how you think and work through the problem". More able students were often asked to reinforce their learning through supporting their classmates. There is a need for caution, as some students explained they felt their improvement was being inhibited as they were always supporting classmates rather than enriching or extending their own learning.

Comments on the school's performance in the 2016 Annual Report and the 2016 NAPLAN Numeracy results points to a challenge for the school. This relates to the minimal percentages of students achieving the top two proficiency bands. Throughout the walkthroughs, the Review Panel members noticed an apparent reliance on worksheets. Students also spoke to the Review Panel about the use of worksheets; if they are too easy, they receive a harder worksheet. On reporting this, however, the Review Panel acknowledges improvement takes time. There appear to be areas of very effective practice and, clearly, there has been some change to pedagogy for students to have transformed their views of mathematics learning.

The Principal in her presentation spoke of the need to refocus attention on literacy, in particular, writing, to ensure there is a balance and transference of skills across curriculum areas. There is evidence based on conversations, documentation and walkthroughs, indicating the sharing and collaborative culture, including the notion of de-privatisation, which is happening at the school.

There is a strong opportunity to lift student learning to higher levels of achievement, by building on the existing model that is being actioned through the numeracy project and designing learning in ways that challenge all students across all learning areas.

Parents were very positive about the opportunities provided to both extend students and the intervention programs that support students. Increasing the number of opportunities for students to problem-solve, reason, and engage with the big ideas underpinning the different curriculum areas would further assist in intellectually stretching students.

The school collects various achievement and growth datasets, and uses them to track and monitor student progress. Further use of this data for programming and planning would be helpful.

There is evidence of effective and exciting teacher practice which provides opportunities for stretch and challenge for all students. The challenge for leadership is to ensure good practice is shared and supported and then broadened. The renewed Literacy and Numeracy Agreements will be an effective way to ensure both individual and collective accountability to whole-school consistency, coherence and improvement in teacher capacity and student learning outcomes.

Direction 1

Increase student learning outcomes by using achievement data effectively to design learning experiences and tasks that provide differentiation and greater intellectual stretch.

How effectively does the feedback students are given motivate them to improve?

The Review Panel was interested in exploring the effectiveness of feedback to support students to know how to improve and to provide motivation. When asked if they could explain what is meant by feedback, the majority of students were able to articulate that "it lets us know how we are going", as opposed to feedback which informs students how to improve. Research is finding that powerful determinants of student growth are the mindsets and learning strategies that students themselves bring to their learning. This encompasses how capable they are at building and enhancing strategies to focus, organise, remember, transfer and navigate the challenges as they arise, with persistence and resilience.

The Review Panel acknowledges the work being done by staff and the collegial support evident throughout the ESR. The next opportunity to lift and extend the impact of effective feedback for learning could be to conduct an audit, by observing and recording the frequency, type and specificity of the levels of feedback.

Student goal-setting, continuous review and feedback on how to improve are tools to motivate students. Goal-setting, however, may have little impact if it is at a surface level, mainly behaviourally orientated, and not regularly reviewed. When teacher feedback is linked to goal-setting, students are drawn to think about the effectiveness of the strategies they use to achieve their learning tasks. A greater use of student goal-setting across the school would be helpful.

The Review Panel spoke with students involved in the Student Voice in Learning, which is a DECD local Partnership initiative. Students were able to confidently articulate what intellectual stretch is and what it looks and sounds like in classes. Students have been involved in going into classes and observing the levels

of student engagement and questioning. When asked about the influence that this level of understanding has had on their individual learning, students spoke of being more responsible and taking charge of their learning. Whilst the team currently involves four students, the opportunity to extend the level of student influence is worth considering.

The 'Building a sustainable future through food' group is another opportunity the school offers students with personal interest, or by targeting students with potential. The team is short-term, and the current focus is 'seed to plate'. Students are active participants, and the learning is both creative and challenging. Students spoke of the skills they are learning through their involvement, including self-responsibility, time management, teamwork, problem-solving, and interpersonal skill development. Students also shared that the feedback to and from each other motivates them when the level of enthusiasm wanes throughout the duration of the program.

Direction 2

Develop teachers' capacities to motivate and engage students in classroom learning and assessment processes, through the provision of effective feedback and opportunities for student voice and reflections.

To what extent does parent engagement impact on student learning?

Sheidow Park Primary School is the second school in South Australia to be dual-streamed, with mainstream and Steiner. This initiative commenced in 2015 and, this year, there are three Steiner classes, with a new class due to commence in 2018. In her presentation, the Principal shared the importance of community and the desire to present the school as one school with the unique offering of a Steiner stream. This is seen as an opportunity to add to the depth and culture of the school, without compromising the school values and identity of either stream.

The Review Panel met with Governing Council representatives, as well as with parent representatives from both streams. Parents were open and honest. They shared that although the aim is to create and maintain the sense of 'one school', a greater understanding of the differences in philosophy and pedagogical practice between the streams would be helpful.

The Review Panel heard from staff from both Steiner and mainstream classes about the collective work being done, with the common focus to support student learning and wellbeing. This work has been complemented by open days, assemblies and staff information sessions. All parents acknowledged the approachability of staff and appreciated the visibility of the Leadership Team. Comments verified that concerns were openly discussed, followed-up and then followed through. Students from both streams were complementary and respectful: "We are all the same"; "We are all kids, and sometimes we play together, it's just that we learn things differently".

With an additional class being added each year, it is essential that communication and shared understandings continue to be comprehensive and transparent to enable collective purpose of 'one school' to be at the forefront of discussion and decisions, without compromising the unique qualities of the diverse learning experiences for students. This needs to be done in the context of rigorous teaching and learning, informed by a culture of continuous improvement.

Direction 3

Enhance parental partnership in their child's learning through the coordinated whole-school approach in communicating the benefits, intentions, understandings and outcomes of student learning, wellbeing and engagement, and to ensure these are at the forefront of future decision-making.

What is the school doing particularly well and why is this effective?

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practice that is contributing significantly to school improvement at Sheidow Park Primary School.

Strategies are in place to provide reflective practices for staff in building teacher capacity. Staff commented on the improved performance management procedures. There are expectations that all teachers will provide the Principal with a copy of their term programs. Whilst comments also reflected the additional time and effort required, the outcomes and sharing practice in line management meetings was positive. Some reflected on how they meet with the Principal in pairs and share class happenings, positives and challenges. The opportunity to provide professional and informative feedback to their peers was reflected positively in the comments made to the Review Panel.

Staff clearly indicated the positive involvement of the Marion Coast Partnership work and how this professional development is supporting them in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding.

All staff commented on the positive and collaborative approaches that are in place to enhance teacher capacity and their appreciation of the lead teachers who are supporting them with new strategies to implement in mathematics through the numeracy project. Staff reflected on improved self-confidence in seeking advice and/or support. The level of commitment to improving teacher capacity across the school was evident throughout the review process.


OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

Sheidow Park Primary School has a culture of improvement characterised by high expectations for all.


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

1. Increase student learning outcomes by using achievement data effectively to design learning experiences and tasks that provide differentiation and greater intellectual stretch.
2. Develop teachers' capacities to motivate and engage students in classroom learning and assessment processes, through the provision of effective feedback and opportunities for student voice and reflections.
3. Enhance parental partnership in their child's learning through the coordinated whole-school approach in communicating the benefits, intentions, understandings and outcomes of student learning, wellbeing and engagement, and to ensure these are at the forefront of future decision-making.

Based on the school's current performance, Sheidow Park Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS

The school will provide an implementation plan to the Education Director and community within three months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's Annual Report.



Wendy Westgate
PRINCIPAL
SHEIDOW PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson

Appendix One

Policy compliance

The External School Review process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented.

The Principal of Sheidow Park Primary School has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

Implementation of the *DECD Student Attendance Policy* was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2016 was 91.1%.

Appendix Two

School Performance Overview

The External School Review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2016, 57% of Year 1 and 70% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). For Year 1, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. For Year 2, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2014 and 2016, the trend for Year 1 has been downwards, from 85% in 2014 to 57% in 2016.

In 2016, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 71% of Year 3 students, 62% of Year 5 students, and 64% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For Years 5 and 7, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For 2016 Years 3 and 5 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving just within the results of similar students across DECD schools. For Year 7, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across DECD schools.

In 2016, 45% of Year 3, 10% of Year 5 and no Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands. For Year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 18%, or 2 of 11 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016, and none of the 2 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2016.

Numeracy

In 2016, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 74% of Year 3 students, 55% of Year 5 students, and 64% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD SEA. For Year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For Years 5 and 7, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For 2016 Year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2016, 24% of Year 3, 7% of Year 5, and 21% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands. For Year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 20%, or 1 of 5 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016, and 67%, or 2 of 3 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2016.