

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR SEATON PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Conducted in November 2015



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

This External School Review has evaluated:

- *the school's self-review processes and findings,*
- *the school's achievement data and progress over time,*
- *the outcomes of the meetings and interviews with representatives from the school, and*
- *parent and student views about the school.*

The External School Review included an analysis of the school's key policies and procedures.

The support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community is acknowledged.

This External School Review was conducted by Linda Olifent, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and Kathryn Entwistle, Review Principal.

Policy compliance

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

The Principal of Seaton Park Primary has verified that the school is working towards being compliant in all applicable DECD policies. The Principal advised action is being taken to comply with the following DECD policies:

- Performance and Development; the development of staff performance plans
- Governance; collaborative engagement of Governing Council in self-review processes
- Safety; the use of WHS Risk Management Matrix in completing risk assessments

Implementation of the *DECD Student Attendance Policy* was checked specifically against a documented set of criteria. The school has implemented comprehensive tracking and intervention processes, and was found to be compliant with this policy. In 2014, the school reported attendance of 88%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Seaton Park Primary is a metropolitan school in the western suburbs, approximately 9km from the Adelaide GPO. The school has experienced declining enrolments and currently 135 students attend the school. The school has an ICSEA score of 959, and is classified as Category 3 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 12% Aboriginal students, 11% Students with Disabilities, 26% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 4% students under the Guardianship of the Minister (GoM), and 65% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in her second year at the school, and a Counsellor.

Lines of inquiry

During the review process, the panel focused on four key areas from the External School Review Framework:

Student Learning:	How well are students achieving over time? To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?
Effective Teaching:	How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?
Improvement Agenda:	How well are the results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions?
Effective Leadership:	How does the school know that its professional learning and performance and development processes are effective in building teacher capacity?
School Community Partnerships:	How well does the school engage the Governing Council and parents in helping to set the directions of the school?

How well are students achieving over time?

In the early years, reading achievement is monitored against Running Records. An analysis of achievement (based on Running Records) through Years 1 and 2, from 2011 to 2013, indicates that an average of 50% of Year 1 students achieved the expected DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA), and at Year 2, 48% achieved the SEA. In 2015, 42% of Year 1 and 70% of Year 2 achieved the SEA or above. Significant improvements have been achieved at Year 2 level.

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 82% of Year 3, 53% of Year 5, and 76% of Year 7 students achieved the SEA. The school is to be commended for the significant improvements achieved at Year 3 and 7. In Numeracy, 65% of Year 3, 63% of Year 5, and 71% of Year 7 achieved the SEA. An improvement was achieved at each year level.

The 2015 NAPLAN student progress in reading, from Year 3 to 5, between 2013 and 2015, shows that 21% made lower, 43% middle and 36% upper progress. From Year 5 to 7, 7% made lower, 86% middle and 7% upper progress.

The 2015 NAPLAN student progress in numeracy, from Year 3 to 5, between 2013 and 2015, showed 0% made lower, 64% middle and 36% upper progress. No Year 5 students were in the lower progress band; this is a major achievement for the school. From Year 5 to 7, 21% made lower, 50% middle and 29% upper progress.

Higher order skills are assessed in the upper proficiency bands of NAPLAN. At Seaton Park Primary, the percentage of students achieving in the upper proficiency bands in Reading is highest at Year 3 and declines at Year 5 and 7. For example, in 2015, the percentage of students in higher bands in Reading at Year 3, 5 and 7 was 29%, 16% and 12% respectively. Percentages have increased on historical average in Year 3 and 5. In Numeracy, the percentage of students achieving in the higher bands is again highest at Year 3 and lower at Year 5 and 7; being 12%, 5% and 0% respectively. Improvements at Year 3 were achieved; however, a decline was noted at Year 7.

Retention of students in the higher bands is positive. For example, in Reading, 2 out of 2 Year 5 students remained in the higher bands from Year 3, and 2 out of 2 Year 7 students remained in the higher bands from Year 3. In Numeracy, 1 out of 1 Year 7 student remained in the higher bands from Year 3.

The challenge for the school is to lift the proportion of students achieving in the higher proficiency bands, and retain them at these levels as they progress through the school.

How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

Under the leadership of the Principal in the past two years, the school has worked to establish a safe and supportive learning environment that is orderly and friendly, and conducive to quality teaching and learning. Staff and parents describe a distinct shift from a focus on behaviour to one of teaching and learning. Teachers reported that although there are some behaviour complexities, many students had made positive gains in modifying their behaviour. Teachers also described that Leadership support in this area has resulted in students being more engaged in classroom learning programs.

The physical environment has been improved, and purposeful spaces have been creatively designed to cater for a range of programs and learning styles.

The school is focusing on creating consistent approaches to literacy teaching from Reception to Year 7. Significant improvement in relation to student achievement and learning growth rates in Reading have resulted. Parents described how this focus has led to their children developing a love of reading and enjoying reading in their leisure time.

Teachers meet as a whole staff and in Learning Teams. It is evident that the structures of these meetings have been strategically designed to develop a culture of collaborative planning and reflection. Teachers talked about the influence of the Literacy Coach in developing their practice to be strategic and targeted. Each Learning Team has an inquiry focus, and this was described by many teachers as having a positive impact on improving pedagogy and increasing student learning outcomes. Students showed samples of rubrics that were used, particularly in writing activities, and described them as useful in helping them to improve their final product.

To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?

Differentiating instruction involves the provision of multiple learning pathways so students can have access to the most appropriate learning opportunities that best match their capacity to learn. The Review Panel noted that classes consisted of composite and multi-year levels, which were diverse in terms of the learning and wellbeing needs of students. It was evident that all staff work sensitively to support students who need additional support in their learning and social/emotional aspects.

A variety of intervention programs and strategies is used throughout the school and the current focus is on streamlining these. Students were aware of intervention programs accessed by some students and described working in a variety of groups for learning activities; this was more evident in the early year levels.

The panel was interested in the extent to which the school provides opportunities for students to be engaged in challenging learning and developing high level skills. Teachers across the school reported a range of techniques that are used to provide challenge in learning tasks.

At a meeting of all staff, the panel asked the teachers to describe what differentiation would look like in their classrooms. Classroom visits confirmed that differentiation is evident in most classes; however, there is a constant need to strengthen this work across the whole school and all staff. Some students described their learning programs as lacking in challenge and the expected standards as being low. In particular, the increasing achievement in Literacy in the early years is highlighting the need for a coherent culture of high expectations to be furthered developed and sustained.

The Australian Curriculum guides the programming and planning of learning. There is confidence amongst the staff in regards to the content of the curriculum. Assisting teachers to better understand strategies to cater for individual differences and aligning support mechanisms in a coherent fashion are pivotal improvement strategies to meet the explicit needs of students. Incorporating the elements of the Teaching for Effective

Learning framework with the Australian Curriculum to develop pedagogy would assist in building a school-wide understanding of how children learn best.

Direction 1

Use collaborative planning practices to ensure that task design provides opportunities for consistent and intellectually challenging experiences for students Reception to Year 7, that allow them to demonstrate high level learning.

How well are the results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions?

The panel saw extensive evidence of data sets being collected to track learning achievement and wellbeing. Comprehensive data is collected by class teachers according to the school timeframe document. A specific room has been established to display the data and teachers report that this assists in developing a shared responsibility for all students. Teachers report that their engagement with data has driven a shift in focus from behaviour/wellbeing to learning.

Teachers have a clear understanding of the achievement data and mostly use this to identify students who require intervention and support. Further development in the use of data to investigate the commonalities in strengths and areas for improvement for students will inform future classroom teaching practices.

The panel heard that students were encouraged to self-reflect in their assessments and reports but, generally, were not conversant with their achievement or growth data and had not transferred this into determining individual learning goals.

How does the school know that its professional learning and performance and development processes are effective in building teacher capacity?

Release time has been organised for teachers to meet with the Literacy Coach for a half a day per term to plan their Literacy program based on data. Teachers described this as valuable and leadership confirmed that this would continue in the foreseeable future.

Performance and development processes need to be constructed to balance the priorities of the school and the needs of the individual teacher. The combination of teacher self-reflection, professional learning, and constructive feedback from leadership based on classroom observations and professional discussions will further assist the capacity of teachers and ensure curriculum agreements are implemented.

Direction 2

Through professional learning, and performance development processes, enhance the capacity of staff to use student data to plan, implement and monitor differentiated approaches that cater for the range of student needs.

How well does the school engage the Governing Council and parents in helping to set the directions of the school?

Through meetings with the Governing Council and a parent group, the panel heard that the diversity of the school is viewed as positive, particularly in relation to the number of different cultures represented. They also appreciate the school's and individual teachers' support for inclusiveness.

There was clear appreciation of the personal contact with staff and the caring nature of all staff in supporting the students and their families, which may include the grandparents as primary carers. Positive initiatives talked about by the parents included: breakfast club, gardening, physical education and camps.

Parents described a range of intervention and wellbeing programs to assist individual students, and the school's focus on Reading was clearly understood. The MARBLES (Manners, Attitude, Respect, Body Language, Language, Effort, Smiles and Safety) program was also well known by students and parents.

A variety of methods has been trialled to increase the engagement of parents in the school, including open mornings, family days, parent workshops, options for volunteering, and the involvement of the Governing Council Chairperson, who works for a bank, conducting a workshop for students in financial matters. Parents valued the pamphlets and 'show bags' they were given at school events.

The panel heard that communication methods have been improved. Newsletters are tailored to the needs of the community and are reported to be more easily understood, and the introduction of the School App has been positively received.

The Governing Council is keen to work with school leadership to increase the enrolments of the school. The future relocation of the kindergarten is seen as a positive step for the school in terms of the possibility of increasing enrolments and enabling smoother transition for children.

Members of the Governing Council talked about considering various options presented to them at their meetings (e.g. school uniform) and described their readiness and desire to be more involved in authentic decision-making processes in regards to school operations and future directions.

Direction 3

Further develop collaborative processes for the Governing Council to understand and be involved in authentic decision-making in setting the directions of the school.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Seaton Park Primary School is tracking well. Good performance is evident through growth in students' achievement and a renewed focus on teaching and learning practices.

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

1. Use collaborative planning practices to ensure that task design provides opportunities for consistent and intellectually challenging experiences for students Reception to Year 7, that allow them to demonstrate high level learning.
2. Through professional learning, and performance development processes, enhance the capacity of staff to use student data to plan, implement and monitor differentiated approaches that cater for the range of student needs.
3. Further develop collaborative processes for the Governing Council to understand and be involved in authentic decision-making in setting the directions of the school.

Based on the school's current performance, Seaton Park Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2019.



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SCHOOL AND PRESCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT

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.

Pina Fitzharris
PRINCIPAL
SEATON PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson