

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

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR OLD NOARLUNGA 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 Ann O'Callaghan, Review Officer, Review Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Lee Sansom, 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 Old Noarlunga 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 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

Old Noarlunga Primary School is located 34 kilometres south of Adelaide, in the small semi-rural township bounded by the Onkaparinga River and surrounding foothills.

The school has an ICSEA score of 945 and is classified as Category 3 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

Enrolments have doubled since 2012 to the current 117 students. There are now five classes in the school. An enrolment zone of proximity applies for future students. The current population includes 6 Aboriginal students and 9 Students with Disabilities. 32% percent of families are eligible for School Card assistance.

The Principal is in the third year of her first tenure. Teaching staff are all new to the school since 2013, including four early career teachers appointed in 2015.

As a member of the River Hub Partnership, the school is involved in the Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) Pilot Project. The local teacher coach for the project is based at Old Noarlunga Primary School.

There is no local kindergarten in the town. A community playgroup for parents and young children operates weekly at the school site.

Lines of inquiry

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

Student Learning:	How well are students achieving over time?
Effective Teaching:	How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?
School Community Partnership:	To what extent does parent engagement with the school impact on student learning?

How well are students achieving over time?

In the early years reading is monitored against Running Records. In 2015, 43.5% of Year 1 and 83.3% of Year 2 students demonstrated the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 69% of Year 3 students, 60% of Year 5 students and 33% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

The numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 75% of Year 3 students, 40% of Year 5 students and 50% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement (SEA).

In 2015, the cohort numbers are relatively small at all year levels tested, so comparative percentage data provides limited impact. However, the number of students not achieving at SEA should be noted. In reading this is: 5 of 16 students at Year 3, 4 of 10 students at Year 5 and 4 of 6 students at Year 7. In numeracy, the percentages reflect: 4 of 16 students at Year 3, 6 of 10 students at Year 5 and 3 of 6 students at Year 7 not demonstrating achievement at the SEA.

In relation to students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN reading bands, 4 of 16 (25%) students were in Year 3, 1 of 10 (10%) students was in Year 5 and 1 of 6 (17%) students was in Year 7. For Year 3, this result represents about the same as the historic baseline average. At Years 5 and 7, the recent result is lower than the historic average of approximately 20%.

In numeracy, in relation to students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN bands, there were 7 of 16 (44%) students in Year 3, 1 of 10 (10%) in Year 5, and 0 of 6 (0%) in Year 7. For Year 3, this result represents a significant improvement from the historic baseline average of 12%. At Year 5, the recent result is about the same as the historic average, and the same as the 0% result at Year 7. A specific challenge for the school is to now work with the 2015 Year 3 cohort, in particular, to sustain their performance levels, especially in numeracy. A proposition, for the longer term and over time, is to focus on maintaining and extending the higher levels of learning from one test to the next from Year 3 to 5 to 7.

The school's own analysis of results and of test questions indicated that students generally struggle when tackling questions that require higher-order or more complex proficiencies, e.g. higher levels of thinking and problem-solving. This knowledge, along with feedback from student surveys, led the school to make an evidence-informed decision to ensure all students not only develop their literacy and numeracy skills, but also develop the attitudes and skills required to build 'learning power'.

With the introduction of a new data management system in 2016, the school will be able to efficiently collect and store data and knowledge about student learning, and design how it can best be organised, retrieved, and interrogated.

The data most valuable will be that, which helps teachers and parents know where each student and groups of targeted students are up to in their learning, and what response is required to support each child's learning over time.

Direction 1

Ensure all students improve as expected by systematically monitoring their learning growth (dispositions and achievement) against agreed targets and standards, and by using the information to track progress, inform planning and evaluate interventions.

How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

Two aspects of the school's current SIP improvement agenda are related to 'building every student's learner resilience through a growth mindset', and to ensure 'student voices are incorporated into learning processes'.

The school is part of the DECD Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) Pilot project. The project aims to develop learning experiences that both engage and intellectually stretch students in their learning.

Early Years students were most able to articulate and demonstrate that they are "open to learning". They said they use a range of strategies to help them do their work. These students said they know about the 'learning pit' and that when the teacher gives a challenge "it's OK to struggle, because that's how you learn something new". "Making mistakes is a good thing not a bad thing – we learn more". These quotations are examples of the way the five to eight year olds are learning some of the resilience and other dispositions that help them 'not to give up when you are stuck'.

Older students said that their experiences of learning at school were changing. They knew that they would improve with 'tenacity'. "Tenacity is like resilience – not giving up; keep going; partner up and help each other". For them, there are new ways and 'old ways' of doing things. They like hands-on activities, especially in science and mathematics. However, unlike the younger students who are easily embracing the 'growth mindset', the Review Panel found that some resilience and 'unlearning' may be required for older students as they are supported to engage in intellectual stretch and develop their executive functions, to achieve and retain higher levels of learning .

Teachers said they were committed to the research-based focus of this work. They valued the professional learning they were engaged in with university-based consultants and through the frequent opportunities they have to share ideas and learn from each other. The Review Panel heard that teachers were using a 2x2x2 approach to trialling and developing practices to support students in their learning. Through this tracking and monitoring of strategies, such as 'impulse control' to allow time to think and answer, they were, for example, observing students challenge themselves and build on the ideas of others.

Classroom walkthroughs provided the Review Panel members with the opportunity to observe in practice the work the school is doing to develop a 'community of inquiry' in every classroom and across the curriculum. Specifically, teachers have received coaching support to plan, practice and further develop their questioning and response techniques in mathematics.

The teaching and learning skills are now being transferred into other areas of the Australian Curriculum.

During the observations the Review Panel noted evidence of students clearly knowing the routine of the lesson sequence; they knew how to take turns, how to explain their thinking, and how to listen to the answers that others contributed. Students were provided with multiple entry points; they were engaged, patient and open to various levels of questioning (high floor-low ceiling).

The Review Panel heard that as the common language of learning has been introduced and deliberately used, it is becoming more embedded into the vocabulary and thinking of teachers and students.

Teachers said that by developing these teaching and learning strategies together, in a consistent way, they had started to implement a whole-school approach to effective teaching and assessment.

The Review Panel endorses the school's plans to continue to build learner dispositions, while also ensuring that students are able to demonstrate achievement at higher levels against the Australian Curriculum standards.

Direction 2

Support the development of higher levels of attainment for all students by building teacher capacity to align and transform learning tasks against the Australian Curriculum Achievement standards and the general capabilities.

To what extent does parent engagement with the school impact on student learning?

The Review Panel heard that the Governing Council and other parents are very supportive of the school's directions. Parents new to the school said they chose to send their children to Old Noarlunga Primary School

because the school has a good reputation. They are happy with the current staff team, adding that they are all 'passionate' about Old Noarlunga Primary School: "My kids have had a great year"; "We have good teachers and good relationships".

Parents felt the focus on developing growth mindsets is positive. They said their children talk about it at home and use the 'self-talk language' in everyday situations. "We are sold on the whole thing" reported one parent, who also added that the understanding and skills the children were learning that go with the school's new values of 'courage and tenacity' were also helpful to them in their parenting.

One parent said the support for emotional development and the focus on the values had helped their child to develop more independence. Others reported that they have noticed that their children are more confident, have higher self-esteem, and are able to have a go: "The school is helping them to learn".

The Governing Council was pleased with the work they had done this year with the Principal to revise and extend the school's values. They would now like to promote the values more across the school community to encourage parents to get involved with learning about what happens at school and how they can help their children at home.

A few parents commented that they had recently attended a parent information forum run by the River Hub Partnership and had valued the input of staff and the expertise of the international presenters. More parents had attended parent information meetings and Assemblies at the school, run by student members of the Student Learning Team. These parents were keen for opportunities like this to be extended so they could support their children in their learning: "More parents need to hear this".

Direction 3

Increase opportunities for families to learn more about the school's vision and values, and to be involved as partners in supporting their children throughout their learning journey at the school.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Old Noarlunga Primary School has a positive and focused culture of improvement. There is effective leadership providing strategic direction, and planned and targeted intervention. Improving student achievement is at the centre of the school's collaborative work to develop effective pedagogy in a community of learning, across Reception to Year 7. Parents are very supportive of the school.

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

1. Ensure all students improve as expected by systematically monitoring their learning growth (dispositions and achievement) against agreed targets and standards, and by using the information to track progress, inform planning and evaluate interventions.
2. Support the development of higher levels of attainment for all students by building teacher capacity to align and transform learning tasks against the Australian Curriculum Achievement standards and the general capabilities.
3. Increase opportunities for families to learn more about the school's vision and values, and to be involved as partners in supporting their children throughout their learning journey at the school.

Based on the school's current performance Old Noarlunga 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.



Rebecca Moore
PRINCIPAL
OLD NOARLUNGA PRIMARY SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson
Sarah Goldsmith