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.

This External School Review was conducted by Helen Tunney, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Bryan Rotherham, Review Principal.
Policy compliance

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

The Principal of Warradale 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 2015 was 92.1%, which is just below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Warradale Primary School caters for children from Reception to Year 7. It is situated 12 kilometres southwest from the Adelaide CBD, and is part of the Holdfast Local Partnership. The enrolment in 2015 was 369 students, an increase from 265 students in 2012.

The school is classified as Category 5 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score is 1050. The school population includes 3% of Aboriginal students, 5.8% of Students with Disabilities, 22% of students eligible for School Card assistance, 5.2% of students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) background, and 1 student under the Guardianship of the Minister (GoM). Twelve percent of Reception students were identified as developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains in the 2015 Australian Early Development Census. This has decreased from 24% in 2009.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in the 6th year of his tenure at the school, a newly-appointed Deputy Principal, and a School Counsellor (0.6 FTE) who is also new to the position in 2016. A Coordinator, whose focus will be literacy assessment, is to be appointed in Term 2 2016. There are 20 teachers, including 3 in the early years of their career.

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 2015, 45% of Year 1 and 43% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). In both Year 1 and 2 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 84% of Year 3 students, 81% of Year 5 students and 63% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. For Year 7, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

In 2015 Years 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN Reading, the school achieved within the results of similar students across DECD schools.

In 2015, 60% of Year 3, 45% of Year 5 and 26% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands. For Year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Of those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 67%, or 16 of 24 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015, and 43%, or 3 of 7 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015. For Years 3 to 7, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.
Numeracy

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 86% of Year 3 students, 83% of Year 5 students and 70% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2013 and 2015, the trend for Year 5 has been upwards, from 58% in 2013 to 83% in 2015.

In 2015, Year 3 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school achieved higher than the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools. In 2015, Years 5 and 7 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school achieved within the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2015, 39% of Year 3, 24% of Year 5 and 7% 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.

Of those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 64%, or 9 of 14 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015, and 50%, or 2 of 4 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015. For Years 3 to 5, and 3 to 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Lines of Inquiry

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

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

Effective Teaching: How well is formative assessment used to inform and refine planning? How well does the feedback given to students motivate them to improve?

Effective Leadership: To what extent is collective responsibility and collective action evident?

School Community Partnerships: To what extent does the school address issues raised by students about their wellbeing?

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

All teachers are aware of the need to provide higher-level learners with opportunities for challenge, and intervention strategies for gifted/high-achieving students are known about and widely valued.

There is a good coverage of the Australian Curriculum from Reception to Year 7. Content is strongly influenced by student interests. ICT is effectively used to engage students. There is evidence of a few teachers using Dylan Wiliam Assessment for Learning strategies for engagement.

Play-based learning is used to great effect across the school, driven by the early years. There is an openness to and understanding of the need to vary the learning environments for students. Students understand the relevance of activity-based opportunities for learning across the curriculum. There is evidence that students transfer literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills across the curriculum.

Families value that the Principal keeps the focus on academic learning along with wellbeing. They have confidence that all student needs are addressed – from intervention to acceleration. Student Reports to parents are informative on student progress and reflect effort as well as academic achievement.

Learning experiences that have embedded intellectual stretch and challenge for all learners, regardless of the skills they bring to the learning, ensure high levels of student interest and motivation in all groups of
students. Explicitly deepening the quality of learning dialogue between and with all students, involving all students in individual goal-setting based on the Achievement Standards, and ensuring that all students always know and can explain what they are learning and why, stretches all students and fosters achievement growth and higher-band achievement and retention.

**Direction 1**
Develop higher-band student achievement and retention in all learning areas of the *Australian Curriculum* by building teacher capacity to design learning that conceptualises and facilitates intellectual challenge and stretch for all groups of learners.

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**How well is formative assessment used to inform and refine planning?**

There are foundational whole-school literacy and numeracy agreements at Warradale Primary School. Diagnostic testing is happening at a functional level. There is an accepted data culture at the school, with a central system to record and track student learning data (*Scorelink*). Teachers are confident to experiment with data and all teachers have a degree of data literacy in class and team contexts. Some teachers use pre- and post-assessment cycles in learning design. Evidence-based differentiation happens in every classroom. Data is also used to identify students for intervention. A variety of intervention strategies are used that are tailored to individual needs.

Regular analytic attention to their own class formative assessment data enables a teacher to know more explicitly the impact of their teaching on students’ learning. Knowing this impact enables the teacher to continually adjust the teaching so that it is accurately targeted at challenging and progressing students to their next point of learning growth. When teachers are supported to regularly and collaboratively analyse their class assessment data, to problem-solve, and to plan their next teaching actions accordingly, the effectiveness of teaching is grown and continuously improved across the school.

**Direction 2**
Improve student literacy and numeracy levels by strengthening the data literacy of teachers through regular scaffolded collaborative opportunities to analyse class achievement data in order to evaluate the impact of teaching practice on learning.

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**How well does the feedback given to students motivate them to improve?**

Students have a say in and influence the content of learning design at Warradale Primary School. There is quality provision of feedback to students that enables them to be clear about how to improve their learning. Students are proactive in seeking support from teachers for their learning. Students understand the value of practice and drafting.

The use of assessment rubrics is strong in Year 6/7 classes, and it is valued by all stakeholders. There is some use of self and peer assessment. Students have an understanding of learning standards and A-E grades. There is some structured personal student goal-setting, and students are aspirational in the achievement of standards.

When students are actively involved in the design of assessment tasks, they are given increased agency in their own learning. Through reference to the Achievement Standards, teachers can empower students with the skills and knowledge to stretch themselves and each other to higher levels of achievement. The transparency afforded to students through involving them in assessment design fosters aspiration, learner self-efficacy and learning optimism.

**Direction 3**
Develop higher-band student achievement and retention in all learning areas of the *Australian Curriculum* by building teacher capacity to collaborate with students to design and actively participate in assessment tasks.
To what extent is collective responsibility and collective action evident?

The staff are strong and committed at Warradale Primary School. Teacher teaming is a great strength, with teams working in genuinely collaborative and deep ways, and team members are very supportive of each other. The focus on critical literacy over the past 3 years has influenced pedagogical consistency in Reception to Year 7. Inquiry-based numeracy and mathematics training and development is having a positive impact on numeracy practices in Reception to Year 5. The newly-formatted SIP offers good opportunities for collaborative, inquiry-based improvement. There is authentic involvement of the Governing Council in shaping the priorities for the school and there are clear processes for the involvement of Governing Council in the school improvement cycle. The Governing Council can see how teaching and learning are evolving and being transformed over time.

An area for improvement at Warradale Primary School is the development and embedding of whole-school agreements and practices based on a shared sense of quality teaching and learning. Connected with this, performance and development processes could also be more consistently applied, and induction processes could be strengthened.

When a school has agreed and embedded whole-school cultures and practices, the learning landscape remains familiar and accessible for every student and their family, as the student moves through levels of schooling. Student learning outcomes are optimised when there is consistency and stability between teachers in all aspects of the teaching and learning process. Teachers become accountable through performance and development for the implementation of negotiated pedagogical improvements. Agreed teacher practice is developed through collaboration, mentoring and observations. New teachers are inducted into the agreed school teaching cultures and practices through statements about quality teaching and whole-school agreements about pedagogy, assessment and wellbeing for learning. The whole-school agreements are continuously reviewed and collaboratively modified as the school moves along its improvement journey.

Direction 4
Optimise student learning growth through teacher development of, and accountability for, whole-school agreements about teaching practice.

To what extent does the school address issues raised by students about their wellbeing?

Positive student-staff and student-student relationships are strong at the school. All students are included in the school community. No child is left out or left behind. Senior students have a strongly developed, altruistic sense of community responsibility. The leadership opportunities offered to senior students are valued by students and families, and programs are in place to support links between younger and older students.

The social and emotional learning programs, *Play is the Way* and *Kimochis – Toys with Feelings Inside*, are embedded across the school and proactively supported for developing emotional self-regulation of students. The school intervenes early for students with challenging behaviours. A variety of tailored, highly individualised behaviour management strategies are used, including incentives and disincentives. Alternative yard play options are available for students with challenging behaviours, which are known about and considered by all stakeholders as effective. Students can articulate the different systems and approaches teachers use to manage student behaviour.

Families value the school, and it is their school of choice. Parents like its “smallness” and that all staff know all students. Parents value the quality of the relationships between students. Families have trust in the school and believe their school is safe. They find the school is responsive to needs identified by families (e.g. improving home-school communication). Families find all staff very approachable. The new Deputy Principal’s efforts to get to know the community are noticed and valued.

An area for improvement relates to there being no whole-school agreement for the management of student behaviour at Warradale Primary School, and this was commented on by staff, students and parents.
OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

Warradale Primary School uses the Australian Curriculum to provide a coherent and engaging curriculum for students who demonstrate growth in achievement at or above what would be reasonably expected of a school in a similar context. The school works effectively in partnership with parents and stakeholders.

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

1. Develop higher-band student achievement and retention in all learning areas of the Australian Curriculum by building teacher capacity to design learning that conceptualises and facilitates intellectual challenge and stretch for all groups of learners.

2. Improve student literacy and numeracy levels by strengthening the data literacy of teachers through regular scaffolded collaborative opportunities to analyse class achievement data in order to evaluate the impact of teaching practice on learning.

3. Develop higher-band student achievement and retention in all learning areas of the Australian Curriculum by building teacher capacity to collaborate with students to design and actively participate in assessment tasks.

4. Optimise student learning growth through teacher development of, and accountability for, whole-school agreements about teaching practice.

5. Strengthen the wellbeing of students through the development of a whole-school, negotiated student behaviour management system.

Based on the school’s current performance, Warradale Primary School will be externally reviewed again in April 2020.

Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY

Anne Millard
A/CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

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.

Greg Graham
PRINCIPAL
WARRADALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson
Stakeholder confidence in a school is high when processes and structures for the management of student behaviour for learning and play are known and consistently applied. When student behaviour is managed through an agreed whole-school approach that is regularly examined for evidence-based effectiveness, academic, social and emotional student learning are optimised.

**Direction 5**
Strengthen the wellbeing of students through the development of a whole-school, negotiated student behaviour management system.