



EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

Report for Paralowie 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 Liz Schneyder, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Sue Toone, Gael Little, Marion Coady, Kristen Masters, Review Principals.

School context

Paralowie School is situated in Paralowie in the District of Salisbury Plains. It is 24kms north of the Adelaide CBD. It has an enrolment of 1369 in 2017 with enrolments increasing from 1209 in 2013. The school has an ICSEA score of 910 and is classified as Category 2 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 9% Aboriginal students, 11% students with disabilities, 24% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 6 children/young people in care, and 36% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The Leadership Team consists of an experienced Principal in his first tenure at the school, a Deputy Principal, a Head of Junior School and 5 Senior Leaders. There are 97FTE teaching staff.

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: To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?

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

Improvement Agenda: How effectively are data and evidence used to inform and build a culture of continuous improvement?

To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?

Students at Paralowie School come from widely diverse family environments, with 24% either new arrivals, or from families where English is their second language. The school offers computing and citizenship training programs for parents through the school's Community Centre. Parents interviewed indicated high expectations of their young people and appreciated similar expectations of the school. Their role in promoting school programs and expectations has been helpful in increasing the expectations of all students to achieve. The school leadership has also worked hard to embed this culture, and the school's reputation in the broader community has improved. Students appear to be more settled in classes, the school is now seen as a 'school of choice' for many in the community, and enrolments in the primary school are at capacity.

Most teachers interviewed during the external review stated that relationships between teachers and students have improved, in part, as a result of the Positive Education Program currently being implemented. There has also been a significant decline in critical incidents at the school that, in the past, have distracted staff from their core business of teaching and learning. However, most agreed that meeting the diverse needs of students in their classes is an area for improvement.

The pedagogy used by many of the primary teachers includes team collaboration, and opportunities for the use of higher order thinking and risk taking by students. Teachers are passionate, generally work in teams, and are keen to improve student achievement. Examples of multiple entry and exit points, scaffolding of work, learning intentions, rubrics and Common Assessment Tasks were evident. A number of new initiatives, however, including the introduction of more intervention programs for students struggling with their literacy and numeracy, as well as innovative pedagogies that challenge students and develop their Creative and Critical Thinking skills, could be developed.

Students in the middle school talked about their challenging and enjoyable maths lessons, particularly at Years 6 and 7. The middle school facilities foster collaborative teaching and integrated learning, and this could be further enhanced. Teachers indicated that changes to the timetable will help to ensure better use of

the facilities and establishment of more cohesive teaching teams.

There has been growth in SACE achievement in the senior school, with the senior school Leadership Team proactive in improving their tracking of individual students, moderation shifts, and improving achievement of students in exams. Students believe their teachers care about them and want them to achieve. While deadlines remain inconsistently administered, drafting continues to be encouraged and valued, and teacher feedback is generally useful and of a high quality. Some peer feedback is also facilitated and enjoyed. The students enrolled in STEM subjects taught at the University of South Australia appreciate the opportunities provided, but are eager for the delivery of these subjects to be at their school in the future. A number of students appreciate the increasing access to vocational courses that can contribute to their SACE achievement. Attendance of students in the senior classes continues to be an area of concern, and most staff talked about a need to focus on offering relevant curriculum options and quality career advice, as well as further developing the relationships between students and teachers.

Support for specific student groups is impressive. Facilitated by teams of committed leaders, teachers and support staff, a range of intervention programs are in place, including QuickSmart and Multilit, supported by trained School Services Officers (SSOs) in the 'Rocket Room', MiniLit, CAFÉ, Daily 5, Jolly Grammar and Jolly Phonics, and Education Perfect. Students' attendance and achievement are monitored, while relationships with families and community support programs are strong. The South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy (SAASTA) program for eligible Aboriginal students continues to be effective in engaging and retaining students in viable pathways through school, and preparing them for post-school opportunities. There are 106 students in the FLO program, which provides a range of off-campus programs, including significant VET, with SACE accreditation encouraged. There have been some significant recent successes, with FLO students enrolling in tertiary law and nursing courses.

The involvement of all teachers across the campus in STEM activities in the future is being viewed with some optimism, as a driver for the use of pedagogical practices that are contemporary, challenge students, and develop their capabilities, including critical and creative thinking. There has also been a recent focus across Reception to Year 12 on improving the design of assessment tasks so that all students are challenged. Collaborative moderation has occurred internally, and is about to become part of the ECD Partnership Professional Learning program. Many teachers and leaders indicated that Task Design should be a whole-school focus for the school's current and future Professional Learning program.

Many staff talked about the need for increased time for the sharing of good practice across the teams in the whole school, and recognition of the exemplary skills and capacity of many teachers in the school, including the EALD teachers and those working intensively with students with special needs. The need for further development of a whole-school continuum of learning was also raised, as well as a focus on task design, and embedding of the capabilities. Almost all staff indicated a need for the whole school to agree to a small number of priorities for the future, document these in a new Site Improvement Plan and provide leadership, resources and opportunity for consolidation.

Direction 1

Embed a culture that maximises learning opportunities for all students and promotes the sharing of quality teaching practice across the school.

To what extent is collective responsibility and collective action of leaders evident?

The current review of leadership tenures and Job and Person Specifications (J&Ps), has provided the Principal with the opportunity to evaluate the school's leadership structure and ensure it is well-aligned to current and future school priorities, as articulated in the school's Site Improvement Plan and Strategic Planning documentation. It was evident to the Review Panel that this alignment was needed as many current positions appear to have overlapping responsibilities.

The Review Panel was impressed with school leadership on their focus in working with teachers to gain consistency in documentation of curriculum and assessment practices, oversight of the implementation of the school's drafting and deadline policies and support for quality teaching, including the use of ICT as teaching and learning tools. However, it was also evident in interviews that some greater alignment of focus by leaders would be helpful. There was no indication that they share targets, although there is a clear line

management and Performance and Development Planning (PDP) process in the school. Some of these leaders indicated to the panel a desire for increased sharing, particularly to discuss the implementation of the STEM agenda.

With the appointment of a number of short-term positions, greater clarity between roles would be helpful to support the implementation of a number of school systems, such as DayMap and student Learner Management Systems.

The school has strongly supported all staff, and especially leaders, to pursue additional qualifications as part of their PDP.

Direction 2

Establish a leadership structure that is aligned to agreed R-12 school priorities and systems, and provide mentoring for all leaders in the achievement of targets and consistent implementation of systems, as well as opportunities for the sharing of targets and strategies between leaders.

How effectively are data and evidence used to inform and build a culture of continuous improvement?

There are many datasets now available from DECD and generated within schools. At Paralowie School, multiple datasets and graphs are on display to celebrate growth in student achievement in many areas. An Assistant Principal has been appointed to ensure this data is shared with all staff, is readily available and that it is understood. There is an expectation that team leaders will work with their staff to ensure the data is used to inform teaching practice.

In addition to NAPLAN and PAT testing, Lexile reading data is collected every term and complements the collection of Running Records data twice a term. The Term 3 Lexile data is shared with parents. Most staff indicated a high regard for the Lexile data, and see it as particularly effective in tracking and monitoring progress, as well as informing planning.

A range of quality spreadsheets were provided to the Review Panel that indicated a high level of monitoring of student attendance, achievement, and post-school pathway planning. A number of teachers in the primary school are using the data to determine strategies to challenge the highly aspiring students, while the senior school team produce Traffic Light data every 5 weeks, which is shared with parents.

The school has DayMap as its Learner Management System, which is expected to be used by all staff to record attendance. However, at this stage, its use to store curriculum materials, assessment information and communication with parents is inconsistent. The panel recommended that the school review its use of DayMap in order to improve whole-of-community access to all the relevant data that is available.

Greater understanding of SACE data, including moderation shifts, would be helpful. It was also evident that the current PDP process does not include discussion and analysis about individual teacher A-E data, and this data is not readily discussed at team meetings.

Direction 3

Review the use of the current Learner Management System, and establish a culture of regular self-review amongst all teachers and leaders, to ensure effective use of the data available to inform their work so that all students are engaged and challenged.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

Paralowie School has a culture of improvement characterised by high expectations of students.

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

1. Embed a culture that maximises learning opportunities for all students and promotes the sharing of quality teaching practice across the school.
2. Establish a leadership structure that is aligned to agreed R-12 school priorities and systems and provide mentoring for all leaders in the achievement of targets and consistent implementation of systems, as well as opportunities for the sharing of targets and strategies between leaders.
3. Review the use of the current Learner Management System, and establish a culture of regular self-review amongst all teachers and leaders, to ensure effective use of the data available to inform their work so that all students are engaged and challenged.

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

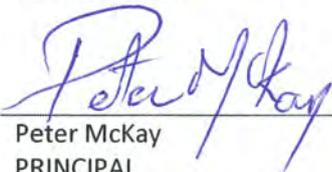


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The school will provide an implementation plan to the Education Director and community within three months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's Annual Report.



Peter McKay
PRINCIPAL
PARALOWIE 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 Paralowie 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 working towards being compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2016 was 92.5%.

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, 42% of Year 1 and 42% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average at both Years 1 and 2.

In 2016, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 50% of Year 3 students, 33% of Year 5 students, 42% of Year 7 students and 38% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3 and 9, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For Years 5 and 7, this results a decline from the historic baseline average.

The trend for Years 5 and 7 is downwards, from 42% in 2014 to 33% for 2016 for Year 5 students, and from 54% in 2014 to 42% in 2016 for Year 7 students.

For 2016 Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving lower than the results of similar students across DECD schools. Between 2014 and 2016, the school has consistently achieved lower in Years 3 and 5 Reading, relative to the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2016, 12.5% of Year 3, 6% of Year 5, 9% of Year 7, and 4% of Year 9 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands. For Year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 27% of students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5, 38% of students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7, 24% of students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9, and 30% of students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016.

Numeracy

In 2016, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 58% of Year 3 students, 38% of Year 5 students, 44% of Year 7 students, and 36% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average, while for Years 5 and 7, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. For Year 9, this result represents an improvement from the baseline average.

For 2016 Year 3 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools. For 2016 Year 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving below the results of similar students across DECD schools.

Between 2014 and 2016, the school has consistently achieved lower in Year 7 NAPLAN Numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2016, 5% of Year 3, 2% of Year 5, 6% of Year 7 and 2% of Year 9 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN

Numeracy bands. For Year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 17% of students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5, 50% of students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7, 14% of students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9, and 27% of students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2016, 67% of students in February and 94% in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve their SACE. This result for October SACE completion represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

In terms of successful completion of compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2016, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 89% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Literacy units, 79% successfully completed their Stage 1 Numeracy units, and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

Eighty-nine percent of grades achieved in the 2016 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Forty-two percent of students completed SACE using VET, and there were 106 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2016.

In terms of the number of Grades for attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2016, 7% of students achieved an 'A' Grade and 33% achieved a 'B' Grade. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline averages for the 'A' Grade and 'B' Grade respectively.

In terms of 2016 tertiary entrance, 82%, or 74 out of 90 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. In 2016, the school had a moderation adjustment downwards in Visual Arts, Material Products, ESL, HPE, Mathematics and Biology. There was an adjustment up in HPE, English Communications, Information Processing and Creative Arts.