

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

Report for Beachport Primary School

Conducted in November 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 Helen Tunney, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Shelley Cameron, Review Principal.

School context

Beachport Primary School caters for children from Reception to Year 7. It is situated 383kms from the Adelaide CBD, and is part of the South East Coast and Vines Partnership. The enrolment is 51 students and steady. The school is classified as Category 6 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score is 1000.

The school population includes no Aboriginal students, one student with a verified disability, 6% of families eligible for School Card assistance, no students of EALD background, and no students in care.

The 2017 school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in the first year of her tenure at the school. There have been 4 leaders in the past 4 years at the school. There are 5 teachers (3.6FTE), including 2 in the early years of their career and 1 Step 9 teacher.

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:

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

School Community Partnerships: How well does the school develop partnerships with students, parents and the wider community to improve student learning?

Improvement Agenda: How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?

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

Through this line of inquiry the panel explored the degree to which all students are being stretched to higher levels of academic achievement. The panel sought to know how teachers understand intellectual stretch and challenge, how they enact these understandings through their teaching practices, and how consistently across the school students are given opportunities to engage in and demonstrate higher levels of learning.

The potential for intellectual stretch and challenge is great in the school. Such stretch is enabled by small class sizes, multi-aged classes and high academic parental aspirations for their children's learning. Students value being stretched and challenged, and spoke enthusiastically to the panel about 'hard' learning. A student said: "Instead of going easy we go hard. If we make a mistake the teacher doesn't give us the answer. If she does, then students are not doing the thinking".

The panel was provided with evidence of challenge and intellectual stretch in teacher practice through: questioning and discussions, which develop student metacognition about learning; inquiry-based learning in environmental and science-based areas of the curriculum; connecting maths learning to real life; and activating student agency in learning through self and peer assessment. Some parents said that they have noticed more investigative learning, more learning through play, and more outdoor learning in the school. Goal-setting with students has been developed to varying degrees in classes across the school. Students could talk to the panel about the value of this to them. However, teachers said that student goal-setting is not happening consistently across the school. A point of development for the school is to agree on common understandings about what intellectual stretch and challenge is, and to ensure challenge and intellectual stretch is provided consistently across the school. Common agreed elements of practice would address this.

Teachers identified the development of student meta-cognition and social and emotional self-management for learning as priorities for the school, indicating the school is well-placed to deepen common

understandings of stretching students in their learning. Many parents said that they would like their children to be achieving at higher standards.

The panel concluded that the school is well-placed to increase students' higher band achievements as measured by grades, Running Records levels, PAT and NAPLAN testing. Students and their families are motivated to high levels of academic achievement and students value learning that stretches and challenges them and engages their thinking and problem-solving abilities. There is a collective, strong teacher capacity in the use of pedagogies for engagement across the school. However, greater coherence and consistency of teacher practice across the school is needed.

Direction 1

Maintain high levels of student interest and motivation in all groups of learners by developing, embedding and regularly reviewing a whole-school agreement about teacher application of pedagogies for engagement.

How well does the school develop partnerships with students, parents and the wider community to improve student learning?

This line of inquiry emerged during the site visit. Through this line of inquiry the panel was made aware of the benefits, strengths and the current issues that result from relationships between the school, its current stakeholders, and the wider community. Community involvement in the school is strong and historical. This is a strength of the school; however, the panel concluded that, sometimes, community involvement can impact on student learning. It is critical that teachers' learning design articulates the curriculum value and links to activities that involve the community. It is recommended that community projects be reviewed to ensure that they are connected to students' learning and future employment opportunities.

Students said that they know how well they are learning because of the grades they get. They are familiar with being at or above standard. Providing and seeking feedback has been a whole-school priority, and all teachers have attempted to provide feedback to students in some ways. Giving students quality feedback about learning has been a developmental focus in the school. A next step for the school is to ensure there is consistent quality in this aspect of teacher work. All teachers need to regularly support students with explicit teaching in how to give and respond to quality feedback.

Several students could identify the learning intention of and success criteria for a task they were doing. Students could give examples of how they are given a voice in their own and each other's learning. These include choice of activities and topics, choice of presentation modalities, and peer and self-assessment. A next step for the school is to ensure teachers have common understandings about the value of providing success criteria and learning intentions to students and to embed this work into their teaching practices. Another point of development for the school is to deepen student agency in learning and in the life and governance of the school through student voice.

A few parents said they value the 3-way interviews and the agency it gives students in their own learning. However, some parents said that there is a lack of congruence between the impressions they are given about their child's achievements through the 3-way interview and their actual achievements, as represented in the school report. Parents like the 'home books' that are sent home at the end of Terms 1 and 3, as 'mementos of childhood'. It is important that the school reviews the 'home book' practice to determine if it can be modified to provide information to parents about how their child is progressing against learning standards.

A few parents said that they found teachers very approachable and diligent about home-school communication. However, some parents raised communication as an issue for them, particularly when teachers change. Additionally, parents said they would have liked more information about the growth and development workshop that was provided for Year 5 to 7 students by teachers from the local high school. Parents would also appreciate greater consistency in the application of the school's practices in relation to student bullying and other disruptive behaviours.

The panel concluded that there is much support for and valuing of the school by its current stakeholders and amongst the broader Beachport community. Stakeholders described the school as a secure, supportive, kind environment that is like 'a big family'. Stakeholders value the multi-age classes and the cross-age social

and emotional supportive relationships between students that it engenders. Students described their teachers as friendly. Some parents spoke of the approachability of staff, whilst others expressed concerns about school operational matters.

It is critical that the school addresses the health of the relationships with its stakeholders, and ensures that the learning needs of current and future students inform all decision-making and prioritisation. This includes all decisions about staff deployment.

Direction 2

Develop quality regular consultation and communication processes with parents, students, staff and community stakeholders, to ensure all community and stakeholder engagement with the school is directly linked to educational outcomes through quality learning design, and outcomes-based allocation of resources.

How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?

This line of inquiry emerged during the site visit. The panel was made aware of the degree to which the school is using an evidence-base to monitor the impact and efficacy of its practices on student learning outcomes. Such internal self-review is critical to the development and delivery of continuous growth in student learning.

Some data practices were described and evident. The whole-school assessment schedule for the collection of student achievement data was updated in 2017. Each classroom teacher collects a range of data for their students, which can be used to track individual student learning growth. Data is passed to next year's class teacher, and some data is discussed at staff meetings each term. Teachers use these discussions to informally gain support and advice about how to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of students. Across the classes, various aspects of Jolly Phonics, Speech-Sound-Pic, Daily 5 and Words their Way are used to inform spelling programs. Class teachers have collaboratively moderated student writing samples. This work is linked to the provision of feedback to students. The moderation work will lead to the development of a site-based Reception to Year 7 writing skills continuum against which students' writing can be assessed, by self, peers and teachers.

However, in relation to these data practices, the panel suggests the assessment schedule be reviewed to ensure it aligns with contemporary educational practice. Next steps for the school include: using performance and development processes and training and development to coach teachers in the use of data to intentionalize teaching; ensuring the literacy agreement is being implemented consistently in every classroom; and ensuring that the literacy and numeracy agreements are congruent with the assessment schedule.

Each teacher has a performance and development plan which is linked to the SIP priorities. The plans are reflected upon by teachers, and a meeting is held twice a year with the Principal to discuss the teacher's goals and progress towards the goals. All teachers have implemented changes to their maths practices this year by linking real-life maths to the Maths Australian Curriculum (AC) strands, and by utilizing Natural Maths strategies. This was verified to the panel by teachers and students. Teachers said that they are supported to improve their practice through access to professional learning and the openness of the Principal to them following their interests. A next step for the school is to use performance and development processes to support teachers to understand the need for them to more closely align their performance goals with the stated priorities of the school.

The panel determined that at Beachport Primary School staff are collegiate and supportive. Teachers told the panel that they see a priority for the school is to gain greater consistency of practice and programs between them. The next step for the school is to deepen its strategic efficacy by ensuring that future decisions and actions are based on evidence of the efficacy of past actions.

Direction 3

Develop an evidence-based whole-school improvement agenda and procedures for regular and comprehensive self-review.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

At Beachport Primary School teaching practice reflects the Australian Curriculum and DECD pedagogical frameworks. Teachers have access to professional learning and collaborate to successfully engage students.

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

1. Maintain high levels of student interest and motivation in all groups of learners by developing, embedding and regularly reviewing a whole-school agreement about teacher application of pedagogies for engagement.
2. Develop quality regular consultation and communication processes with parents, students, staff and community stakeholders, to ensure all community and stakeholder engagement with the school is directly linked to educational outcomes through quality learning design, and outcomes-based allocation of resources.
3. Develop an evidence-based whole-school improvement agenda and procedures for regular and comprehensive self-review.

Based on the school's current performance, Beachport Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2018.

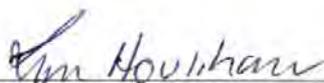


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The school will provide an implementation plan to the Education Director and community within three months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's Annual Report.



Lyn Houlihan
PRINCIPAL
BEACHPORT 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 Beachport Primary School 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:

- Site bullying data trends/initiatives: The school will establish data collection and provide appropriate updates to Governing Council.
- Assessment and reporting: 'home books' review with staff in 2017.
- Child Protection Curriculum: Staff training needed to be organised/sourced as soon as possible.
- Attendance Procedures: An improvement plan is to be developed.

When the school's actions achieve compliancy with DECD policy and procedures, the Principal must resubmit the Policy Compliance Checklist to the Education Director.

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 90.8%.

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). In considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making a judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school. The data below represents a summary of aggregated data for Beachport Primary School over the years 2013 to 2017. This is done for two reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year, and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohort of students.

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. Between 2013 and 2017, 47% (18 of 38) of Year 1 and 36% (14 of 39) of Year 2 students, demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Between 2013 and 2017, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 78% (32 of 41) of Year 3 students, 69% (20 of 29) of Year 5 students, and 88% (21 of 24) of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA

Between 2013 and 2017, 34% of Year 3, 28% of Year 5, and 29% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands.

Numeracy

Between 2013 and 2017, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 80% (33 of 41) of Year 3 students, 62% (18 of 29) of Year 5 students, and 88% (21 of 24) of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD SEA.

Between 2013 and 2017, 32% of Year 3, 3% of Year 5 and 13% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands.