

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW
REPORT FOR HEATHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Conducted in June 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 Steve Portlock, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and Linda Olifent, 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 Heathfield 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 93.2% which is above the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Heathfield Primary School is a Reception to Year 7 School in the Adelaide Hills, approximately 19kms from Adelaide. The school has a current enrolment of 63 students. The school had a number of students leave with the closing of the Inverbracki Centre. The school has an ICSEA score of 1083, and is classified as Category 7 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1% Students with Disabilities and has 10% School Card recipients.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal.

Lines of inquiry

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

Student Learning:	How effectively is student learning growth monitored and evaluated?
	To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning and how do you know?
Improvement Agenda:	Are resources strategically deployed and aligned to support the achievement of the site improvement plan outcomes?

How effectively is student learning growth monitored and evaluated?

The Principal of Heathfield Primary School provided the panel with extensive evidence to show how student achievement is tracked and monitored at the individual student level. Data is kept on an Excel spreadsheet for Running Records, PAT-M, PAT Spelling, NAPLAN results, Wave 1, 2 and 3 intervention, staff and student perception and parent satisfaction. The school uses staff meetings on a regular basis to discuss the behaviour, social interactions and academic achievement of individual students. The panel experienced this sharing as part of the review and acknowledged how inclusive the process is for all staff in understanding the needs of individual students. This process ensures the ownership of supporting students to develop is 'everyone's business'.

Running Records data indicates that an average of 80% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement (SEA) over the last 4 years. In NAPLAN Reading, an average of 91% of Year 3 students, 95% of Year 5 students and 88% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement. The results are similar in Numeracy. The average across the Years 3 to 7 is 83%.

Heathfield Primary School has a detailed School Improvement Plan (SIP) which identifies priority areas, strategies and targets. The priority areas are English, Maths, ICT, Child Safety and Wellbeing, developing the 'PLUS' and developing the 'Fellowship PLC'. Targets for improvement are recorded as percentages. The use of percentages with such small groups of students can be misleading as one or two students can make a significant difference to the percentage. It was determined in the pre-review meeting that trends using percentages identified in NAPLAN are not helpful in determining growth and retention. As a consequence, the panel and the Principal agree that the monitoring of growth would be enhanced if the targets in the SIP are written as scores directly related to the SEA. This change would result in growth being reported on an individual basis against the SEA. The Governing Council asked the panel how they could judge whether the students in the school were achieving in comparison to other students at the same age. The suggested refinement to target-setting would ensure transparent and more meaningful reporting to staff and the Governing Council.

Student progress and achievement using PAT-M and PAT Spelling is currently recorded and reported against the stanines. It was determined during the review that the recording of PAT-M data against the Maths scale score identified in the SEA would ensure that individual growth can be effectively monitored and the Maths program evaluated.

Direction 1

Effectively monitor the growth of student achievement against the DECD SEA by translating the targets and stanines in the School Improvement Plan from percentages to scores.

The Panel determined that the professional learning of staff is being actively and effectively led. The panel found evidence of contemporary research being used to challenge staff and support their professional learning. A collaborative culture exists where staff willingly share and support each other. The review established that there are documented whole-school agreements in Numeracy and these are being developed in an agreed approach to applying Maths knowledge to solving real life problems. There is a

consistent tactic to the implementation of this approach with all teachers describing the key elements of the program and the pedagogies required to have a positive impact on student learning. The organisation of the PLCs to include staff at Mylor and Scott Creek is reducing the potential isolation of being in a small school. The PLCs moderate student work, plan tasks, identify common assessments, observe each other and provide feedback, and jointly plan curricula. The PLCs use the TfEL Observation Tool to record and provide feedback to teachers about their pedagogies. The panel met with a teacher after her return from an observation at another Primary School and noted the level of professionalism and commitment to improvement.

Parents, students and teachers were positive about the reporting processes used in the school. The student-led parent interviews were viewed as a successful way for students to inform their parents about their learning and their achievement. Students are using iPads to record work and assessment. These are emailed home to keep parents informed about student progress. The school reports to parents using the word equivalents rather than A-E. The exploration of A-E grading of student tasks and in the written report would enable teachers to redesign tasks with clear expectations of the requirements needed to achieve at a high level. The introduction of A-E grading would support the further development of agreed expectations and the monitoring of student achievement and growth.

Direction 2

Support higher levels of achievement by implementing procedures to collect, collate and analyse A to E grades to help monitor individual student growth, inform future planning and support moderation at the classroom and school level.

To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning and how do you know?

The panel found evidence that teachers differentiate the curriculum and effectively teach students with a wide range of abilities and year levels. Teachers spoke positively about teaching three year levels and this received support from parents who commented that the “mixed year groups are excellent” and the “buddy network works well”. The panel found evidence of teachers’ ability to group students in a range of subjects. Students interviewed were very clear about the expectations of different year levels. Teachers provided evidence of tasks which were common to the three year levels, but provided opportunities for students in the lower levels to be extended and provided high expectations for students in the upper year levels. ICT was used to reinforce concepts and extend students. The iPads are used in the Upper Primary to inform parents about student work.

Whilst teachers were clear about the importance of challenging students in their learning, the panel found that students found it difficult to talk about extension (academic stretch). Asked what they do when they finish work they made comments like “we read quietly” and “we work over it again to make sure we know it”. The panel established that students were satisfied with just completing tasks and didn’t have high expectations about extending their learning. The panel recommends that staff develop a language for students to discuss and think about their learning dispositions and use goal setting to challenge them.

Direction 3

Support students to achieve at the highest levels of SEA. Ensure that teachers work with students to develop a deeper understanding of their learning dispositions so they can articulate their next learning steps and develop higher expectations of their learning.

Are resources strategically deployed and aligned to support the achievement of the site improvement plan outcomes?

The panel found evidence that the Governing Council is actively involved in making decisions about resourcing. They had a clear understanding of the reason Maths is a priority and the resources required to support the introduction of an approach to applying Maths knowledge to problem-solving situations (Natural Maths). The school has allocated \$20,000 per year to support intervention, including the implementation of the Quick Smart Maths program. Support to students in Upper Primary with special

needs (4 students with dyslexia and 1 student with autism) is provided by the Principal. The school views the LAP program using parent volunteers to withdraw students in both Literacy and Numeracy as successful. Some concerns were raised regarding the complexity of the learning needs of students in the middle primary classroom. It was considered by the Review Panel that a review of the support be undertaken to determine whether alternative forms of support may be more effective.

The parents and Principal were in agreement that this was not a reflection on the teacher who is highly skilled and experienced, but more an acknowledgement of the variety of special needs of a small but significant group of students. The panel recommends that the school and the Governing Council explore alternatives to provide additional professional support for these students.

Direction 4

Support improved learning outcomes for students with complex learning needs by reviewing the current support and determining whether alternative learning support programs may be more effective.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Heathfield Primary School is tracking well. Heathfield Primary School is committed to using a range of student achievement data to track students' achievement and their growth. The school is viewed positively by students and parents.

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

1. Effectively monitor the growth of student achievement against the DECD SEA by translating the targets and stanines in the School Improvement Plan from percentages to scores.
2. Implement procedures to collect, collate and analyse A to E grades to help monitor individual student growth, inform future planning and support moderation at the classroom and school level.
3. Ensure that teachers work with students to develop a deeper understanding of their learning dispositions so they can articulate their next learning steps and develop higher expectations of their learning.
4. Support improved learning outcomes for students with complex learning needs by reviewing the current support and determining whether alternative learning support programs may be more effective.

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



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY

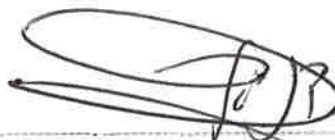


Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT

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.



Travis Bartlett
PRINCIPAL
HEATHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson