

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

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR PORT NOARLUNGA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Conducted in May 2016



**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.

This External School Review was conducted by Helen Tunney, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Brenton Chapman, 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 Port 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 documented evidence. The school was found to be with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2015 was 93.4%, which is above the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Port Noarlunga Primary School caters for children from Reception to Year 7. It is situated 31kms south-west of the Adelaide CBD in the suburb of Port Noarlunga and is part of the River Hub Local Partnership. The enrolment in 2016 is 434 students. The school is classified as Category 5 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score is 1019.

The school population includes 3% (13) Aboriginal students, 5% (26) Students with Disabilities, 21% of students whose families are eligible for School Card assistance, 2% (10) students of EALD background, and 2% (8) students under the Guardianship of the Minister. Nineteen percent of Reception students were identified as developmentally vulnerable in the 2015 *Australian Early Development Census*. This is up from 10% in 2012, but down from 31% in 2009. Enrolment is steady over the last 5 years, but has increased significantly from a low of 239 in 2009. Transience is not noticeably high in the school.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in the 11th year of her tenure at the school, a Deputy Principal in the 11th year of her tenure, and a Primary School Counsellor. There are 22 teachers including one in the first year of her career, one in the third year of her career, and nine Step 9 teachers.

The school values are respect, responsibility, independence, caring and honesty.

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, 62% of Year 1 and 32% 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 for Year 1 and a decline from the historic baseline average for Year 2.

Between 2013 and 2015, the trend for Year 2 has been downwards, from 63% in 2013 to 32% in 2015.

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 81% of Year 3 students, 81% 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.

For 2015 Year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across DECD schools.

In 2015, 39% of Year 3, 35% of Year 5 and 10% 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.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 65%, or 13 of 20 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015, and 36%, or 4 of 11 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015. For Year 5, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. For Year 7, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For the last 3 years the trend of Year 3 to 7 upper band retention is downwards, from 55% to 36%.

Numeracy

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 70% of Year 3 students, 81% of Year 5 students and 72% 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.

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

In 2015, 25% of Year 3, 15% of Year 5 and 14% 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.

Between 2013 and 2015, the trend for Years 3, 5 and 7 has been upwards.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 56%, or 5 of 9 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015, and 33%, or 1 of 3 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015. For Years 3 to 5 and Years 3 to 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For the last 3 years, the trend for Year 3 to 5 upper band retention is upwards, from 0% to 56%.

Lines of Inquiry

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

Student Learning: How well do teachers work with students to set goals and targets and review their progress as a continual process?

Effective Teaching: To what extent is assessment used to inform curriculum planning and instruction?

School Community Partnerships: How well does the school consult with families and respond to their views and aspirations?

How well do teachers work with students to set goals and targets and review their progress as a continual process?

At Port Noarlunga Primary School the Review Panel was told by the Leadership Team that a strategy for improvement in student learning has been the development of 'Growth Mindsets' in students. This approach to improvement is common to the River Hub Partnership. During the Review, the panel heard evidence from students, parents and staff that this growth mindset work is unifying the school with a language for positively approaching learning. It was evident to the panel in discussions with parents that families value the impact of the growth mindset work and can see it having an impact with their children. Children use the language at home and they teach their parents the value of this way of thinking. A parent stated: "I like the growth mindset work. It helps them (students) to approach their learning in a strong way".

At Port Noarlunga Primary School the panel heard evidence from teachers about their use of explicit strategies to orient students emotionally and socially for learning. The panel was given examples by each Teaching Team of how teachers regularly use such strategies as *Community Circles*, *Circle Time*, and *Circle of Trust* to debrief about play time issues so that students are able to move into a learning headspace. Parents spoke positively to the panel about the school, and its warm inclusivity. They are appreciative of the support provided to students. Students also expressed to the panel their recognition of the strong positive connections they have with teachers. A Year 3 student said: "I like how the teachers care for you. We have nice teachers and you learn a lot."

Parents are recognising the value to their child's learning of teacher collaboration. One parent stated: "I like the way the teachers in the early years work together. They do the same programs and activities."

Students value the rigour of learning at Port Noarlunga Primary School. A Year 1 student made a link between what she was learning now and previously, saying: "She (the teacher) wants to teach us what the right order is. We have been doing a few orders".

It was evident to the panel, through discussions with staff, that teachers recognise giving feedback to students about learning which scaffolds learning improvement is a point of development for them. One or two teachers talked to the panel about identifying learning criteria with students. One teacher said: "Intentional teaching is where I'm at, what I'm trying to get better at. Making explicit what I do every time is a work in progress". By involving students in learning design and planning of assessment teachers will be able to stretch students further in their learning. By discussing with students the learning criteria prior to a lesson and then scaffolding the task to enable differentiated entry points for students, teachers can empower students with knowledge, skills and understanding about the learning process itself.

During the Review, it became evident to the panel through conversations with teachers that teachers are strongly positioned to develop more critically reflective approaches to their practice, and approaches that seek to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching as it impacts student learning improvement. Teachers stated that they have high aspirations for their practice. There is evidence in the emerging numeracy agreement of a move to go deeper into the 'how' (pedagogy) away from the 'what' (structure and content) of teaching.

The panel found that it is appropriate for the school to become more inclusive of student voice in learning design, assessment design, and assessment of learning. If the identification of learning intentions by teachers with students became more consistent and widespread across the school, teachers would become regularly engaged in processes that enable them to collaboratively and individually reflect upon the impact of their teaching on student learning. This would foster an evidence-base from which teachers could continuously and collaboratively judge and improve the effectiveness of pedagogy.

Direction 1

Improve student achievement through evidence-based teacher accountability for the implementation of common agreed and explicit high-impact pedagogies.

To what extent is assessment used to inform curriculum planning and instruction?

At Port Noarlunga Primary School the Review Panel found evidence through its discussions with teachers that there is a planned approach to the assessment of reading and spelling in the school. Assessment is organised and students are effectively tracked in reading and spelling development. One teacher stated: "In this school, there is a sense of direction of where we need to go with things, for example, the assessment map is a timeline that guides you. Also the agreements about practice are good, for example, use *Jolly Phonics* in Reception, *Jolly Grammar* in Year 1". From the parent groups interviewed, the panel heard agreement that parents value the consistency between Early Years teachers in the ways they "do" literacy in the various classes. This is connected to the literacy agreement that sets out specific agreements about programs that are to be used. Teachers made it clear in discussions with the panel that the school has identified a need to develop an evidence-based approach to tracking the numeracy development of students. The panel heard from students, parents and teachers that a part of the upper primary team uses data to ability-group students and to 'stream' them for maths and spelling. This is having a positive impact on the PAT stanine scores with some students increasing in stanine levels.

Each teacher group told the panel that they have worked collaboratively with data. A teacher said: "We do PAT testing in maths then we sit together and go through the data to see the gaps and help identify teaching practice". Some teachers told the panel about how they use data to set goals and report to students and parents. This year, the school has taken an evidence-based approach to track students' reading development beyond fluency level 30+ through the primary years. Parents talked to the panel about how the school now monitors reading development right through to the end of Year 7. Some students referred to a reading goal that was set based on an identified target. A student used his own learning data to judge how well he was doing in his learning. He said: "I'm doing well because I'm past level 30 in the readers". The Governing Council told the panel about the school's use of data with Governing Council as the rationale for the priorities and directions it sets.

Teachers talked to the panel about their regular and collaborative analysis of data to identify students for intervention support. Assessment is used to drive intervention needs and priorities. Decisions now are strongly evidence-based. There has been very systematic review of intervention, and reflection on the efficacy of interventions. An effective system for Early Years intervention has been resourced. The Leadership Team explained that: "Early Years teachers are released to do the interventions for their own students. This results in good generalisation of the intervention work back into the mainstream classroom program as teachers are able to support students to generalise the explicit literacy skills". Parents told the panel about how they know of and value the intervention, and the strong systematic way the school delivers it.

During the review, it was evident to the panel that it is appropriate for Port Noarlunga Primary School to further expand its explicit use of data in reading and spelling to the tracking and monitoring of students' writing development. Beyond the area of maths learning, that has been identified by leaders and teachers in the school as an area to be tracked and developed, the application of this explicitness to students' writing development will enhance student learning outcomes. In addition, student learning growth at Port Noarlunga Primary School will be positively influenced by the school effectively monitoring the use of data in learning design (including A-E grades across the curriculum) by individual teachers. The school and teachers are at a beginning level in the triangulation of data to diagnose next teaching points for groups of students, and by supporting teams and individual teachers to develop their data literacy, student learning will be strengthened against standards.

Direction 2

Involve teachers collaboratively in the regular, systematic analysis of student achievement data to identify explicit actions needed to move students to the next level of learning.

How well does the school consult with families and respond to their views and aspirations?

During the review at Port Noarlunga Primary School, the panel found, in discussions with teachers and parents, evidence of much good practice by teachers in communicating with parents. One teacher said: "Emailing parents is proving good for communication. It's very efficient and timely and also provides a record of the communication". Teachers told the panel that they find leadership supportive around parent issues and that they feel safe and comfortable in their communications with parents. Teachers said that they feel confident in their conversations with parents, and do lots of background work to investigate the situation and to develop strategies to make the conversations with parents successful. A teacher said: "Leadership helps you to focus on the issue, not the emotion". The panel found evidence that there is acceptance by all staff of the need to be proactive in communication with families. Specialist teachers told the panel that they build and have strong connections with families. Specialist teachers recognise and seize the value of connecting with parents through the wider community, and through school community extra-curricular events. A parent told the panel: "The school does things to bring the school community together, such as the sleep-overs".

Parents told the panel that they identify and value the strong connections between staff, school and home. Parents notice there is a culture of willingness by staff to recognise, engage with and work on issues. Parents gave the panel examples of positive support they have received from the school to make schooling successful for Students with Disabilities. Parents told the panel that they were confident that if there was a problem with the learning of their child at school, the school would let them know. Students in Years 1-3 agreed that their family was happy with their learning at school and could give reasons why. The Governing Council told the panel that the school goes out of its way to engage with parents in multiple ways. Governing Council recognise that, at times, the school has to manage conflicting information from families. Families value the workshops that the school runs for parents about how to help children with schooling. Parents value the 'Starting School Programme', which greatly strengthens preschool to school transition.

During the review, the panel concluded that all teachers have a clear intent to work and have positive relationships with parents, and that the school is engaging with parents and families to communicate information, solve problems, address grievances, and set and communicate direction for the school. These strong relationships between school and families will be enhanced by the collaborative development of an agreed whole-school description of a positive and supportive class learning culture for Port Noarlunga Primary School. By focusing this agreement on the empowerment of students as active participants in the learning process, and by keeping quality student learning as its objective, the school will deepen its connection with families and strengthen the support from parents for higher levels of learning for all.

Direction 3

In order to sustain high expectations and a culture of improvement, activate parent views and aspirations for growth in student learning outcomes.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

At Port Noarlunga Primary School consistent effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions. Teachers are provided with and use structured time for ongoing professional learning, and the school works in partnership with parents and stakeholders.

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

1. Improve student achievement through evidence-based teacher accountability for the implementation of common agreed and explicit high-impact pedagogies.
2. Involve teachers collaboratively in the regular, systematic analysis of student achievement data to identify explicit actions needed to move students to the next level of learning.
3. In order to sustain high expectations and a culture of improvement, activate parent views and aspirations for growth in student learning outcomes.

Based on the school's current performance, Port Noarlunga Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2020.



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Jayne Johnston
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.

Heather Walker
PRINCIPAL
PORT NOARLUNGA PRIMARY
SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson