

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW
REPORT FOR SALISBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Conducted in AUGUST 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 Liz Matheson, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and Deb O'Neill, 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 Salisbury 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 89.0%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Salisbury Primary School is located in the heart of the Salisbury Business District. The previous Junior Primary and Primary Schools formed one Reception to Year 7 school in 2010.

The current enrolment is 378 students, comprising of 7 Junior Primary and 8 Primary classes, and a Primary Special Class. The school has an ICSEA score of 940, and is classified as Category 3 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 14% Aboriginal students, 9% Students with Disabilities, 35% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 10 students under the Guardianship of the Minister (GoM), and 50% of families eligible for School Card assistance. There has been an increase in the number of EALD students over the past 5 years. In 2015, 50% of new reception children met the criteria as EALD requiring support with English Language. The transience rate represents the mobility of students in and out of the school during their primary schooling. The transience rate at Salisbury Primary School has been calculated at 28%, with an average of 30% over the past 3 years. The average DECD rate is 17%.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in her fifth year of tenure, Deputy Principal, Senior Leader and Counsellor.

Lines of inquiry

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

Student Learning:	How well are students achieving over time?
Effective leadership	How well does the leadership facilitate the development of high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching? How does the school know its professional learning and performance and development processes are effective in building teacher capacity?
Effective Teaching	To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?

How well are students achieving over time?

In the early years, reading is monitored against Running Records (RR). In 2014, 58% of Year 1 and 43% of Year 2 students achieved the Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) or above. Between 2012 and 2014 there appears to be a trend upwards in terms of improvement in Year 2. The proportion of students achieving the SEA in RR increased from 25% in 2012, and 42% in 2013, to 43% in 2014.

In 2014, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 70% of Year 3 students, 52% of Year 5 students and 67% of Year 7 students achieved the SEA.

From 2012 to 2014, there has been an upwards trend in Year 3 achievement from 52% in 2012 to 70% in 2014.

In 2015, the growth in reading achievement from Years 3 to 5 showed that 35% of students made low progress compared with 16% making high progress. From Years 5 to 7, the percentage of students making low progress was 36% compared with 13% making high progress. The expected low and high growth across South Australia is 25%. In relation to students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN bands, 22% were in Year 3, 4% were in Year 5 and 9% were in Year 7. This compares to an average of 19%, 14% and 11% for Years 3, 5 and 7 respectively, between 2008 and 2013.

During the review, the panel heard some staff members explaining the low number of students achieving in the upper bands related to the school's high level of transience. It is noted that 7 students who arrived at Salisbury Primary School had achieved in the higher proficiency bands in Year 3 in 2010. By the time those students were in Year 7 in 2014, 2 were retained in the higher proficiency bands. This pattern was similar to the periods of 2008 to 2012, and 2009 to 2013. The pattern is also similar from Years 3 to 5. This data challenges the explanation regarding the impact of transience. It is a reminder that staff need to be aware of making assumptions and must base their views on evidence and data.

At the same time, students who are highly mobile and who attend several schools can slip under the radar. Additionally, they can find it hard to fit in and to make friends. Research shows that students who are mobile and transient are one of the most educationally disadvantaged groups. Since Salisbury Primary has a transience rate higher than the DECD average, the school needs to ensure that its induction processes within classrooms, as well as the broader school environment, support new students to adapt and settle as quickly as possible.

In 2014, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 48% of Year 3 students, 29% of Year 5 students and 58% of Year 7 students achieved the SEA.

From 2012 to 2014, there has been an upwards trend in Year 3 from 36% in 2012, and 39% in 2013 to 48% in 2014. The results in Year 5 and 7 over time do not present a clear trend, either upward or downward.

Growth in numeracy achievement from Years 3 to 5 showed that 39% of students made low progress compared with 16% making high progress. From Years 5 to 7, the percentage of students making low progress was 18% compared with 2% making high progress. The expected low and high growth across South Australia is 25%.

In relation to students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN bands, 12% were in Year 3, 0% in Year 5, and 2% were in Year 7. This compares to an average of 8%, 4% and 7% for Years 3, 5 and 7 respectively, between 2008 and 2013. For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 0 out of 1 students in Year 3 in 2012 remained in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2014, and 1 out of 3 students from Year 3 in 2010 remained in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2014.

Direction 1

Review and implement school and classroom systems to ensure students who are deemed to be mobile and transient are supported in their wellbeing and learning.

Direction 2

Ensure all teachers maintain high expectations of all students' ability to improve.

How well does the leadership facilitate the development of high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?

Based on the results in numeracy across all year levels, and the proportion of students achieving in higher proficiency bands, the Review Panel investigated the extent the school intellectually stretches students, and the school's approach to teaching and learning in numeracy.

Seventeen teachers identified the development of the school's literacy agreement as a significant change over the past 3 years. Teachers were provided with research and professional learning to develop their understanding of how children learn to read. Workshops were provided for parents. Several parents commented that the school's approach to teaching decoding skills had a positive impact on their younger children. An expert was consulted on how to improve school systems, processes and resources in classrooms.

Primary teachers learnt how to assess reading using the Running Record methodology and have adopted key pedagogical elements of guided reading instruction. The school developed an agreement which specified the assessment instruments and cycles. Guided reading has been established as the school's approach to Wave 2 interventions, whereby each student is allocated to a small group and receives targeted intervention by a teacher, depending on their reading level. Teachers have discussed and agreed on the kinds of activities that add value to students learning to read, and those that don't. Review Panel members observed the guided reading groups in action.

The 'wrap-around team' get together every fifth week of the school term to discuss each student's progress. Teachers reported they find these meetings very useful. The time involved in communication and preparation for the meetings is seen as worthwhile. Additional intervention support is provided through oral language practice for small groups of students with little English, and Aboriginal students work with the AET and ACEO. Progress and attendance are closely tracked.

Through the school's data analysis, specific skills were recognised as common gaps. Professional development was provided by the two EALD teachers within the school with expertise in the English language. The 2015 achievement in writing in every year level measured by NAPLAN, suggests that this targeted PD has been transferred into classrooms with a positive impact for students. Parents and teachers reported that the whole-school expectations in teaching reading are clear and consistent. There is an understanding that the skill of reading is on the literacy continuum from oral to written, and many teachers are incorporating targeted skill-based writing into their literacy planning and practices.

The school has a successful model for change and improvement in literacy. This model needs to be systematically applied to develop a consistent and evidence-based approach to teaching and learning in numeracy.

Direction 3

Increase the number of students meeting the SEA in mathematics and numeracy by developing and implementing a whole-school planned approach to building teachers' knowledge and pedagogies.

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

In light of the proportion of students showing low growth, and the small numbers demonstrating higher proficiencies, the Review Panel investigated the extent to which students are engaged and intellectually stretched.

The Upper Primary students talked about their reflective journals, guided reading group discussion of texts, and problem-solving in mathematics, as examples of being engaged and challenged. They brought their work to the discussions with the Review Panel, which illustrated how they plan for writing activities and how they reflect on what they have learnt. Students talked about the modelling their teachers do and the 'workshops' for students struggling to understand. Upper Primary teachers reflected that older students are generally more positive about their learning than in years past and are more able to articulate what they are learning. Many students said they found mathematics more challenging than reading. One teacher explained that this may be due to the focus on students' ability to explain their reasoning and processes, rather than simply getting the right or wrong answer.

Young children talked excitedly about their learning, their reading and number patterns. Some teachers use goal setting to increase motivation and persistence. Examples include: "I can count by 2s and write to 100" and "I will try to write an interesting sentence." One teacher gives the student a star each time they achieve the goal and when the skill is embedded (i.e. the student does it automatically 3 times), a new goal is set.

The level of engagement was less evident in some of the Middle Primary classes and the use of worksheets was more common as evidenced in discussions with students and in their books.

The panel sighted examples of open-ended tasks, assessment rubrics and checklists to give students a good understanding of what is expected of their work. Some teachers are more mindful of using strategies to intellectually stretch students and the need to moderate work samples with other teachers to develop greater consistency of judgement. An examination of the A to E grading shows most students are allocated a C or a D equivalent. For students to achieve a Good or Excellent grade (B or A equivalent), they need to be able to demonstrate they can transfer the skills and concepts they are learning into new contexts. It requires students to use rich Tier 2 vocabulary or technical vocabulary applicable to the subject area. This shows a deep understanding and proficiency. Teachers need to model the transference of skills, provide exemplars, intentionally extend students' vocabulary, set and review goals with students and provide explicit assessment criteria.

Direction 4

Increase the proportion of students achieving higher proficiency bands in NAPLAN and Achievement Standards in the Australian Curriculum by setting learning tasks which are rigorous and have greater intellectual challenge.

How does the school know that its professional learning and performance and development processes are effective in building teacher capacity?

The Principal of the school has changed the way in which she works so that she is able to spend more time in classrooms, interacting with teachers and students. Teachers gave examples of conversations they have had with the Principal and changes to their practice as a result. They talked about the quality professional learning they had engaged in to develop their understanding of the Australian Curriculum and literacy learning. This has

been provided by experts as well as knowledgeable teachers within the school. Extensive written performance development feedback, aligned with the National Professional Standards for Teachers, has been provided to all teachers. This feedback has detailed the positive and effective practices observed.

There has been a conscious strategy to build coherence and consistency across Reception to Year 7 since the two schools amalgamated in 2010, and this is acknowledged as an achievement. When asked, via a questionnaire, what key processes would support improved outcomes at Salisbury Primary School, many teachers talked about strengthening the year level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). While there are other PLCs that operate across the Reception to Year 7 year levels, it was the year level arrangements which appeared to have the most influence on classroom practice.

Representatives of the Junior Primary PLC talked about their recent work in developing consistent expectations for writing with exemplars and the documentation of an agreement on assessment and reporting of the 5 strands of the Arts Curriculum. The Review Panel was informed the Middle Primary PLC met twice in Term 2 and once in Term 3 due to the absence of some members of the team. More recently, the agenda was focused on the budget. The Upper Primary PLC has worked at using the Learning Design Process to plan units of work, as well as their curriculum overviews and daily programming. The Review Panel sighted examples of science and history unit plans.

As many teachers recognise students' need to be intellectually stretched, the year level PLCs could provide a vehicle for rigorous and collaborative work in planning, in task design and in moderating student work. Research on the link between PLCs and student outcomes shows they have greater impact when there is structure and guidance, when the discussions are data and results-focused and when they are intent on targeting gaps in students' skills and knowledge. It requires allocated time (e.g. in staff meetings) and a learner-focused culture. This is a fundamentally different approach to organisationally-focused PLCs.

It is also important that the Reception to Year 7 coherence and consistency that the school has worked towards is not lost through year level groupings. The school has a structure to enable PLC representatives to meet and to contribute to the school's strategic planning. Other opportunities across the school to share their successes, as evidenced by formative assessment and summative data, should continue.

Direction 5

Strengthen the effectiveness of the PLCs to ensure greater rigour and consistency of judgement in assessment.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Salisbury Primary School is tracking satisfactorily, evidenced by strong tracking systems and use of achievement data to target gaps in students' skills, particularly in reading. The school has developed a coherent approach to teaching English and is showing positive trends in achievement in the early years.

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

1. Review and implement school and classroom systems to ensure students who are deemed to be mobile and transient are supported in their wellbeing and learning.
2. Ensure all teachers maintain high expectations of all students' ability to improve.
3. Increase the number of students meeting the SEA in mathematics and numeracy by developing and implementing a whole-school planned approach to building teachers' knowledge and pedagogies.
4. Increase the proportion of students achieving higher proficiency bands in NAPLAN and Achievement Standards in the Australian Curriculum by developing learning tasks which are rigorous and have greater intellectual challenge.
5. Strengthen the effectiveness of the PLCs to ensure greater rigour and consistency of judgement in assessment.

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



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SCHOOL AND PRESCHOOL
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.

Carol Scerri
PRINCIPAL
SALISBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson