EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR KAPUNDA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Conducted in September 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 Lyn Arnold, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and Judith Howie, 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 Kapunda 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 implements comprehensive tracking and intervention processes, and is compliant with this policy. In 2014, the school reported attendance of 92.4%, which is slightly below the DECD target of 93%.

School context
Kapunda Primary School is a Reception to Year 7 school located 82 kilometres northeast of the Adelaide GPO in the town of Kapunda, Australia's oldest mining town, which lies between the Barossa and Clare Valleys. In 2014, 327 students were enrolled at the school, and numbers have been growing steadily over the past five years from 284 in 2010 to 335 in 2015. The school is classified as Category 5 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage, and has an ICSEA score of 992.

The school population includes ≤1% Aboriginal students, 7% Students with Disabilities, ≤1% students under the Guardianship of the Minister (GoM) and 35% of families eligible for School Card assistance. The school population is predominantly mono-cultural and no students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) are enrolled at the school in 2015.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in her tenth year at the school, a Deputy Principal and a Counsellor, who have also both been at the school for ten years.

How well are students achieving over time?

In 2014, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 77% of Year 3 students, 73% of Year 5 students and 74% of Year 7 students achieved the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

In relation to students who achieved in the NAPLAN higher proficiency bands, 36% were in Year 3, 32% were in Year 5 and 21% were in Year 7. This compares to an average of 28%, 21% and 24% for Years 3, 5 and 7 respectively over the previous five years, 2009 to 2013, indicating an upward trend for Years 3 and 5, and a small downward trend for Year 7 results over time.

Of those students who achieved in the NAPLAN higher proficiency bands in reading, 4 of 7 students from Year 3 remained in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2014, and 6 of 8 students from Year 3 remained in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2014. This compares to an average of five students retained in the upper bands at Years 3 to 5, and four students retained from Years 3 to 7 between 2008 and 2013.

In 2014, numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 67% of Year 3 students, 86% of Year 5 students and 70% of Year 7 students achieved the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). Between 2012 and 2014, there has been an upward trend for Year 5 results from 71% in 2012 to 86% in 2014.

Of the students who achieved in the NAPLAN higher bands for numeracy, 18% were in Year 3, 9% were in Year 5 and 14% were in Year 7. This compares to an average of 16%, 12% and 16% for Years 3, 5 and 7 respectively, over the previous five years, 2009 to 2013.

Examination of results for the retention of students who achieved in the NAPLAN higher proficiency bands in numeracy shows that 1 of 2 students remained in the upper bands from Year 3 in 2012 to Year 5 in 2014, and 4 of 6 students remained in the upper bands from Year 3 to Year 7 in 2014. This compares to an average of three and two students being retained in the upper bands for Years 3 to 5 and Years 3 to 7 respectively between 2008 and 2013.

On the basis of discussions relating to the student achievement data, the school's context and improvement priorities, the Review Panel explored a major line of inquiry relating to the extent to which students are engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning and how the school knows. In support of this inquiry, an emphasis was placed on goal-setting and feedback that promotes learning, and how students understand the relevance and purpose of their learning.

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

The school's vision is 'to provide a safe and diverse learning environment in which to educate and empower children to be successful in the community and in the future.' In the school's 2015 Management Plan, differentiation is identified with a broad goal of improving outcomes for all students. A specific focus for improvement is increasing students in the middle and higher bands of proficiency.

The Review Panel found that teachers demonstrate a commitment to engaging in ongoing professional learning, together with a willingness to explore ways for improving their personal practice, in order to influence student learning outcomes that support the school's vision and improvement priorities.

As the staff had engaged in a wide range of professional learning opportunities over the past two to three years, the Review Panel asked them to identify which sessions had influenced their practice most. The staff were also asked to describe what aspects of their practice promotes intellectual challenge and encourages students to aspire to achieve a higher standard of achievement, and what evidence they use to know their approaches are effective.

In response, teachers outlined a range of strategies that reflect their engagement with the various professional learning activities they listed as having an influence on their practice. Most teachers provided multiple examples of 'what they do' now because of their professional learning, which suggests practices are changing across the school. Some teachers provided examples of the evidence they rely on to know students are engaged and challenged effectively. Follow-up discussions with teachers during the staff meeting revealed that there is considerable diversity in thinking relating to pedagogical practices, and scope for consistency to be developed.

In talking with students, it was evident that they generally have a positive attitude to their learning. Most students engaged positively with their learning, and there were several instances where students were able to describe the intention and purpose of learning. This was seen primarily in classrooms where teachers used the WALT (We Are Learning To…) approach. Conversely, a large number of students the panel spoke with were unable to articulate why they were learning a particular skill. The exception was some older students, who made the connections themselves when asked, but told the Panel this was not discussed explicitly with them in classrooms.

Students also spoke of doing considerable amounts of work they had done the previous year, and struggled to think of new learning they had acquired during the current term, particularly in mathematics. Students hypothesised it was because of the split year level classes; that is, Year 6 students do Year 5 work, or vice versa in the classes. The Review process neither confirmed nor disconfirmed the students' hypothesis. However, while teachers may plan and design effective curriculum programs, the perception that students have regarding the nature of the learning programs must be addressed to ensure they see the relevance and purpose of their learning, and are motivated to engage positively.

While the school has many good pedagogical practices in place, and effectively creates safe conditions for learning, it will be valuable for the staff to explore the links between intellectual challenge and differentiated learning, and effective ways to develop expert learners, as defined in the Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) framework. In particular, an effective strategy would be to explore and reach agreement on how 'engagement' and 'challenge' are defined, what engagement and challenge looks like in classrooms at Kapunda Primary School, and which approaches have the potential to make a significant difference in promoting rigorous learning approaches. The aim of this is to empower students to take increasingly measured and realistic learning risks, that move them beyond simply getting the right answer and to see the purpose and relevance of their learning and engagement.

Direction 1
Increase the rigour in learning, and support the development of expert learning skills, by building teachers' capacity to incorporate intellectual challenge and engagement into teaching and learning practice.

With respect to the setting of goals and targets to review progress as a continual process, the school's Site Improvement Plan (SIP) outlines growth targets in spelling, maths and student engagement, which relate primarily to attendance and reduced reports of bullying. These targets are developed by teacher teams.

The school has a range of valid and reliable data about student achievement and growth across the curriculum, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Information drawn from the data is used to set the SIP targets, identify students requiring intervention support, and to allocate resources. Processes are established for groups of teachers to meet regularly to consider student achievement and growth, and the school regularly monitors progress towards the achievement of the SIP outcomes. The Review Panel also saw evidence of learning goals and targets being set in staff Performance and Development Plans (PDPs) that align with the SIP.

During classroom visits and discussions with students, there was evidence of term and student goals being set in some classroom contexts but, in general, these goals were teacher-determined and monitored, with students rarely involved in negotiating personal learning with teachers, or engaging in authentic decision-

making about their learning progress. Similarly, the identification of success criteria, and the review and monitoring of progress, is defined primarily by the teacher and shared with students in a range of ways.

Students talked articulately about the concept of schooling and their responsibilities as members of their school community. Their discussions provided less clarity about what it means to be a good learner, and ways they can contribute to, and influence, this aspect of their school experience. They are unsure or unaware of how they can contribute to or influence the processes.

Students benefit from knowing what they are learning and why, and from setting personal learning goals and working towards the accomplishment of their targets and challenges.

The school should develop strategies and processes that involve students in setting personal learning goals that support increased student influence, by promoting a common language for discussing learning, negotiating achievement targets and sharing success criteria, to empower students in the personal monitoring of learning progress and achievement towards higher standards.

Direction 2
Challenge students to achieve high standards by authentically involving students in setting specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound goals for personal learning and achievement.

Within the context of intellectual challenge and engagement, the Review Panel also explored the way teachers provide feedback to students that support and motivate their learning. Evidence showed that most teachers report providing some form of regular verbal or written feedback to students at the individual, small group or whole-class level. One teacher referred to engaging in one-to-one conferencing as part of the learning reflection process. This may be a wider practice than shared with the Panel, however, students benefit from 'just in time' feedback that provides quality formative information about their emerging skills, understandings and knowledge, and how to improve learning outcomes. Increasing teachers' capacity for providing ongoing feedback evaluation and assessment in their daily practice will help motivate students and lift achievement.

With respect to summative assessment and reporting, teachers implement a range of strategies for monitoring and tracking student progress against recognised standards and benchmarks. In particular, teachers are developing the capacity to effectively moderate against the standards, and the nature of A-E grades has been widely communicated with parents. Discussions with students, however, revealed that they generally are unsure how they can improve their grade, especially from a 'D' to a 'C', or 'C' to a 'B', and expressed the view that an 'A' is considered an exceptional, rarely awarded, grade.

The involvement of students in authentic ways in the design of assessments and rubrics that explicitly outline success criteria will support students in making informed decisions about where to put their time and energy for optimal achievement and progress outcomes.

Direction 3
Improve student learning outcomes by developing effective ongoing formative feedback and transparent assessment practices that provide constructive and timely feedback to students about learning progress against agreed criteria.

To what extent are students in priority groups making appropriate learning and developmental progress, and how do you know?

The school has been involved in a National Partnership program for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and there has been a subsequent increase in enrolments of students with special needs. In discussions with parents and the Governing Council representatives, this is seen as a positive direction for the school, which is viewed as providing a degree of diversity in the student population that promotes tolerance.

Students with special needs work in mainstream classrooms. There is a 0.2FTE Coordinator with responsibility for Special Needs/Learning Support, who works with classroom teachers, parents, a member of leadership, and the student to develop NEPs, IEPs, or ILPs. These plans are developed annually and revisited every six months. SSOs provide allocated support to each student under the direction of the classroom teacher. Currently, the role of the Coordinator does not include reviewing teachers' plans or

learning design, assessment strategies to determine how the Plan is implemented, or how student progress towards the goals is monitored and tracked. There needs to be a process for evaluating teacher accountability for meeting the ongoing learning needs of students with special needs, and making accountability for targets in PDPs equal to the targets and goals for mainstream students.

Direction 4
Implement regular processes to monitor, track and adjust the learning progress of ASD and Special Needs students, to ensure accountability of individual progress against the NEP/IEP/ILP.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Kapunda Primary School is tracking well. The school has a culture of improvement and teachers are provided with, and use, structured time for ongoing professional learning.

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

1. Increase the rigour in learning, and support the development of expert learning skills, by building teachers' capacity to incorporate intellectual challenge and engagement into teaching and learning practice.

2. Challenge students to achieve high standards by authentically involving students in setting specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound goals for personal learning and achievement.

3. Improve student learning outcomes by developing effective ongoing formative feedback and transparent assessment practices that provide constructive and timely feedback to students about learning progress against agreed criteria.

4. Implement regular processes to monitor, track and adjust the learning progress of ASD and Special Needs students, to ensure accountability of individual progress against the NEP/IEP/ILP.

Based on the school's current performance, Kapunda 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.

Di Jamieson
PRINCIPAL
KAPUNDA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson