

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

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR SALISBURY DOWNS 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 Julie Hardy, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and Judy Anderson, 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 Downs 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 tracking and intervention processes, and was found to be compliant with this policy. In 2014, the school reported attendance of 90.2%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Salisbury Downs Primary School is a Reception to Year 7 school, situated in the northern metropolitan area. A Better Behaviour Centre is co-located on the site and aims to re-engage small groups of students with general school operations and curriculum. The Centre draws students from other schools in the northern area.

The school is classified as DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage Category 3 and has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score of 935.

Enrolments have been stabilized at approximately 325 students. The school population includes 9% of Students with Disabilities, 6% Aboriginal students, 14% of students for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EALD), and 2% of students under the Guardianship of the Minister. In addition, 46% of families are eligible for School Card assistance.

The Leadership Team consists of a Principal, Deputy Principal, and a Coordinator: Wellbeing.

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 Teaching:	To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?
Effective Teaching:	To what extent is assessment used to inform curriculum planning and instruction?

How well are students achieving over time?

In the early years, reading is monitored against Running Records. In 2014, 11% of Year 1 and 28% of Year 2 students achieved the Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) or above. Between 2012 and 2014, results were variable and no clear trend in terms of improvement was apparent at Years 1 and 2. The panel noted the opportunity for the school to investigate the consistency of collection methods for Running Records, as results in NAPLAN Reading at Year 3 are consistently higher than Running Records over time.

In 2014, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 72% of Year 3 students, 41% of Year 5 students and 59% of Year 7 students achieved the SEA. Between 2012 and 2014, the trend for Year 7 has been upwards from 35% to 59%, and the results at Year 3 represent an increase on historical average.

In reading, the percentage of students achieving in the top two NAPLAN bands was 21% in Year 3, 10% in Year 5 and 19% in Year 7.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 2 students from Year 5 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2014, and 1 student from Year 3 remained in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2014.

Results in numeracy, as measured by NAPLAN, showed similar patterns to reading, with the highest percentage of students achieving the SEA at Year 3. NAPLAN numeracy results indicate 65% of Year 3, 52% of Year 5 and 49% of Year 7 students achieved the SEA. Between 2012 and 2014, the trend for Year 3 has been upwards, with less consistent results at Years 5 and 7. The percentage of students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands was 16% in Year 3, 7% in Year 5, and 5% in Year 7.

Of those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 1 of the 2 students from Year 3 remained in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2014, and 1 student from Year 3 remained in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2014.

The challenges for the school are to increase and sustain the proportion of students achieving and exceeding the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement as they progress through the school, and to ensure all students make expected or accelerated growth in their learning.

To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of students?

In 2015, Salisbury Downs Primary School has been focusing on improving outcomes for students in Literacy, Numeracy and Wellbeing. The Site Improvement Plan describes strategies designed to improve learning outcomes for students in these areas. The panel heard about a range of processes through which the school reviews progress and plans for the future, as a whole staff and in teaching teams. The Curriculum Development Group, which is made up of representatives from units across the school, provides a forum for discussing strategies for teaching and learning. The panel noted the opportunity for this group to have a

stronger role in supporting the implementation of improvement strategies and monitoring progress towards outcomes.

The panel noted that the influence of site improvement planning on student learning would be strengthened by ensuring that strategies have a direct impact on student learning.

Direction 1

Increase the proportion of students achieving the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement and accelerate progress by strengthening the focus on measurable learning growth and monitoring of learning, from Reception to Year 7.

Parents who spoke to the panel were very positive about the commitment of teachers and leaders at the school. The Governing Council is supportive of school directions, discusses improvement priorities and contributes to improving facilities. Students have a say in the school through the Students Working Actively Together (SWAT) group. Student leaders outlined the role and achievements of the group for the panel. Leaders work together to support the development of quality curriculum across the school and Focus Teachers support colleagues to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy. The panel heard about how Performance and Development conversations are also aligned to the school's improvement priorities.

In exploring the extent to which the school caters for the varied needs of learners, the Review Panel was interested in the way teachers differentiate planning and teaching to accelerate the learning of students achieving highly and to support those students not making expected progress. Differentiating instruction involves providing different learning pathways so learners can access the most appropriate learning opportunities for their learning needs and is a particular focus at Salisbury Downs, in order to cater for the complex needs of the school community.

The panel saw teaching programs that are planned, structured and sequenced. The Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) design model is used to plan and document learning tasks and programs that are based on the Australian Curriculum. Teachers, who talked to the panel, spoke about the ways that they differentiate their teaching to cater for the range of needs of learners at a classroom level.

These strategies include designing open-ended tasks that allow students to learn at different levels, programming lessons that include tasks for learners with different skills, creating flexible learning groups to address common learning needs, and using School Services Officers' (SSO) time to support the specific needs of individuals. The panel noted the importance of making sure that flexible groupings were based on common needs of the students and are reviewed frequently so that they don't become a form of streaming, as research shows that streaming has a negative effect on learning.

The panel noted that while teaching teams work together to design learning for students in their unit, the learning experience from the perspective of the students is quite varied from unit to unit, meaning children have to adapt to different approaches as they move through the school. One way of making sure that students are supported to learn foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, is for teachers to use common approaches so that students can build their skills from year to year.

Direction 2:

Increase the proportion of students achieving the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement by collaboratively developing and consistently implementing whole-school agreements in literacy and numeracy that include expected levels of achievement, evidence-based strategies and data to monitor student achievement.

At Salisbury Downs Primary School, intervention programs are designed to cater for students with specific needs and are conducted in a dedicated learning area known as "The Hive". Learning growth for each child is monitored and recorded. Negotiated Education Plans (NEPs) for students with identified disabilities are

documented and include learning goals. The panel noted that consistently including clear, measurable, short-term student learning goals, that are monitored regularly, would strengthen the effectiveness of NEPs and accelerate growth. Across the school, the panel saw some evidence of extension for students achieving highly, though this was not as widespread as provisions for students requiring additional support.

Individual Learning Plans for Aboriginal students are negotiated and documented. Learning achievement of Aboriginal students is specifically monitored and the school is working with other schools in the DECD Local Partnership to increase support for Aboriginal families.

The panel heard about several approaches that staff members feel are important in supporting children to make growth in their learning. Teachers and leaders identified the positive and consistent approach to social learning as being very influential in creating a safe and positive learning environment at the school. In addition, staff valued the opportunity to work collaboratively in team groups, reporting that they felt they had responsibility for the learning of all the children in their unit as they discussed their progress frequently and taught them in different contexts. Students were clear about what they were learning and why, and the panel observed strategies for making learning intentions clear prior to explicit instruction and independent learning activities.

In the early years, the school has adopted a systematic approach to personalise learning in which teachers work collaboratively to provide opportunities for self-directed learning in a structured and engaging learning environment. In observing learning during Investigations for Reception and Year 1 children, the panel noted high levels of engagement and planned strategies for assessing learning.

In an innovative approach to delivering specialist subjects, the panel heard how specialist teachers plan integrated topics across specialist learning areas and team teach to provide meaningful and connected learning experiences for students. The pedagogy described was interactive, 'hands on' and engaging. Students spoke positively about the approach and reported that they found tasks challenging and interesting.

The panel noted the opportunity for the school to use data to measure how successful these approaches are being in accelerating learning and then growing successful practice across the school.

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

Teachers who spoke to the panel shared their teaching programs and the tasks they use to assess learning. Assessment tasks are designed to allow students to demonstrate learning against the Australian Curriculum achievement standards.

Research shows that formative assessment has a positive impact on learning. The panel found that formative assessment strategies are widely used by teachers to gain evidence about where students are in their learning and make adjustments to instruction to ensure they keep learning. Teachers and students talked about how helpful these strategies were and the panel observed formative assessment strategies being used in several classrooms.

Teachers talked about the data that they collect to monitor the learning of students in their classes and how this information was collected across the school, and shared with teaching teams and the whole staff. Focus Teachers and leaders all play a role in overseeing the collection and analysis of various forms of data. The panel noted that a more 'joined-up' approach to gathering data and collating it into a form that is easily accessible for teachers would allow the school to form a fuller picture of how students are progressing over time. The school collects a range of useful data and teachers reported keeping other evidence and data about student learning. Given the range of data being used, it would be timely to review the range of data sets that are currently being used at classroom and whole-school level, and to determine which sets provide the most useful information for monitoring learning and informing teaching practice, to include them on an agreed schedule for data collection.

The impact of assessment on learning is dependent on the degree to which teachers use evidence and data to modify their teaching programs. At Salisbury Downs Primary School, the panel heard that teachers use achievement data to form groups to cater for common needs, revisit learning for individuals and assess student work against Achievement Standards in the Australian Curriculum. There is an opportunity to strengthen the use of data by providing regular times where staff can work together to identify teaching points and develop effective classroom strategies to address them.

Direction 3:

Provide regular opportunities and leadership for teachers to work collaboratively to track student progress through reliable and easily accessible data collection and analysis processes, and design relevant strategies to meet student needs.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Salisbury Downs Primary School is tracking well. There is evidence of a renewed focus on processes to raise student engagement and achievement.

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

1. Increase the proportion of students achieving the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement and accelerate progress by strengthening the focus on measurable learning growth and monitoring of learning, from Reception to Year 7.
2. Increase the proportion of students achieving the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement by collaboratively developing and consistently implementing whole-school agreements in literacy and numeracy that include expected levels of achievement, evidence-based strategies and data to monitor student achievement.
3. Provide regular opportunities and leadership for teachers to work collaboratively to track student progress through reliable and easily accessible data collection and analysis processes, and design relevant strategies to meet student needs.

Based on the school's current performance, Salisbury Downs 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.

Ian Marlow
PRINCIPAL
SALISBURY DOWNS PRIMARY
SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson