

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

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR PINNAROO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Conducted in November 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 June Goode, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Susan Hart-Lamont, 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 Pinnaroo 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 compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2015 was 92.1%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Pinnaroo Primary School is located 237kms east of Adelaide. Student enrolment has shown a steady increase from 60 enrolments in 2011 to 76 in 2015. The school has an ICSEA score of 1008, and is classified as Category 5 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3 Aboriginal students, 4 students with disabilities, 2 students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), and 14% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in his 2nd tenure.

School Performance Overview

The External School Review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

In considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making a judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school. The data below represents a summary of aggregated data for Pinnaroo Primary School over the years 2011 to 2015. This is done for two reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year, and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohort of students.

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. Between 2011 and 2015, 32 of 54, or 59% of Year 1, and 46 of 52, or 88% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

For 2011 to 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 80% (28 of 35) of Year 3 students, 80% (28 of 35) of Year 5 students, and 60% (9 of 15) of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA.

For 2011 to 2015 in NAPLAN Reading, the school is generally achieving within the results of similar students across DECD schools.

Between 2011 and 2015, 39% (20 of 51) of Year 3, 37% (13 of 35) of Year 5, and 40% (6 of 15) of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 91%, or 10 of 11 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5, and 100%, or 3 of 3 students from Year 3 remained in the upper bands at Year 7.

Numeracy

Between 2011 and 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 88% (45 of 51) of Year 3 students, 71% (25 of 35) of Year 5 students, and 60% (9 of 15) of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA.

For 2011 to 2015 Year 3 and 5 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools. For 2015 Year 7 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is generally achieving below the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

Between 2011 and 2015, 27% (14 of 51) of Year 3, 9% (3 of 35) of Year 5, and 7% (1 of 15) of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, from 2011 to 2015, 33%, or 2 of 6 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5. One of 2 remain in the upper bands from Year 3 to 7.

Lines of Inquiry

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

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

Effective Teaching: To what extent is there a culture of improvement that provides for the varied needs of all students?

Improvement Agenda: How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?

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

During the review at Pinnaroo Primary School, the Review Panel was provided with strong evidence that student learning is at the centre of the school's improvement agenda. Staff shared their high expectations to provide learning opportunities that engage and challenge student learning. Parent comments reflected appreciation of staff and acknowledged their effective communication and approachability to inform them of their child's learning. Staff described Pinnaroo Primary School as one where initiatives can lead to common approaches.

Students described how teachers encourage risk-taking and welcome student voice in their teaching. They understood intellectual challenge as learning that requires "deep" thinking and persistence. An example of learning in a composite class was provided by one student: "yes we have higher expectations if we are in a higher grade, but we are provided challenges, no matter what year we are in". Another student explained how her teacher encourages students to write down wondering questions: "we put them on the wondering wall" and "it's a good way to get us thinking and learning".

The Review Panel was provided with consistent evidence across the school of teachers' use of multiple strategies to activate student voice in learning. The panel sighted and heard evidence of student voice in the learning process, including involvement in success criteria and learning intentions.

Through the class walkthrough, evidence of differentiation was witnessed in student work, particularly in the Early Years. Student voice in the Early Years class is enabled through written form, with the teacher writing every child a letter. In the letter, she invites them to write back and tell her what they wish to learn. The class letter box is extremely effective. Feedback to the student and from the student is a proactive and effective way to enhance written communication skills. The teacher also uses the information as an

opportunity to work with students to develop personal goals.

There was a high level of student engagement and time on-task witnessed in all classes, which ranged from whole-class learning, group learning, peer-to-peer and individual learning.

In the primary and middle years, student voice in learning also included self and peer assessments, use of rubrics, negotiation of assessment tasks to demonstrate learning, and feedback that provides the next steps to improve learning.

Implementation of inquiry-based learning was witnessed to varying degrees by the Review Panel across the school. Students articulated their understanding of higher-order thinking and how the varying tasks and activities challenge a deeper level of thinking: “we are encouraged to stop and think, ask lots of questions and explore and share our learning” and “when we first started this new way of learning, it was hard, I didn’t understand, but now I like it, it’s more fun than worksheets”.

Student comments also reflected their understanding of where they were at: “my grade wasn’t a surprise, I knew what I was going to get” and “I’m going pretty well and my grades reflect this”. When asked if they knew what they could do to improve, comments included: “listen to the teacher”, “do more work”, and “I would ask my teacher to challenge me more”. It was evident that student perception for improvement still remains teacher-driven.

The application of digital technologies as a tool for learning was witnessed to a degree by the Review Panel. Students shared their high level of engagement and interest in using technology. To extend the level of challenge and enhance engagement and learning across the school, the next step would be to expand the use of digital technologies and inquiry-based learning.

Direction 1

Enrich intellectual stretch and challenge for students through embracing digital technologies and extending inquiry-based learning across the school.

To what extent is there a culture of improvement that provides for the varied needs of all students?

The core focus to accelerate the percentage of students achieving growth in their learning is a priority at Pinnaroo Primary School, evidenced in the Principal’s presentation and verified by staff and students in both documentation and conversations. The Review Panel acknowledges the professionalism displayed by staff. All teachers have high expectations for themselves and their students. The whole-school agreements and expectations are aligned and monitored by the Principal. Accountability and collegial respect between staff was evidenced throughout the review process.

New initiatives are trialled, refined and modified to suit the varied needs of students. An example of this was inquiry-based learning, where one teacher initially practised the skills and engaged students using this methodology. With the support of the Principal, and through observations and conversations, she deepened her knowledge and skills to become a lead teacher. From this point, she shared her planning, programming, and good practice, including videotaping a lesson, and provided staff with an insight into how they could facilitate the learning in their own class. Staff appreciated this approach, which has led to developing their confidence, skills and knowledge. The Review Panel saw evidence of the varying uptake across the school. Students commented on how they are learning how to learn: “it can be tricky, when you just can’t seem to get the answer, but the teacher supports us in providing strategies”, “she doesn’t tell us the answers, that’s up to us” and “what’s made us realise is that we all learn differently, what works for me may not work for another student”.

One teacher explained how she uses the *knows, (K) wants to learn (W), and has learned (L)* approach, empowering students to come up with the questions prior to commencing a unit of work: “it can become very interesting especially with some of the questions that they come up with” and “at the end we write up what we have learned”. One student, in an informal conversation, stated: “we learn some really interesting things in our class, my teacher says we are really clever”.

The Principal shared how he and other staff have participated in the Change-Maker’s course. This professional learning has led to further in-depth conversations and participation with staff. He provided the

example of the inquiry into levels of questioning and explained the process. Staff designed a template and used it to document the levels of questioning being used in classes over a period of time. The analysis came back with the majority using closed questioning. Sharing the data as a whole staff led to a determined action to turn the data around and, over time, the levels of questioning changed to the majority being high level. Staff identified that collegial support was what made the difference in terms of practising, challenge and reflection.

Staff have engaged in the use of Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) to determine students' engagement levels and to determine next steps. The Principal shared some of the comments written by students, which included "give me more time to think", "give me more challenging stuff", and "stop talking and let me work with my friends".

Intervention support is provided in a timely manner and programs are in place to ensure the needs of students are being met. Careful monitoring of progress and communication between support staff and teachers ensures appropriate modifications are being made.

Direction 2

Enhance the delivery of inquiry-based learning to improve student engagement with content and meta-cognition.

How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?

Evident throughout the review was the use of data to drive improvement decisions and support curriculum planning, including targeting professional development to provide effective teaching across the school.

The Principal's presentation positioned the school as one that has a strategic and reflective approach to self-review. Purposeful data is collected and analysed to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. Analysis of data is done through the lens of multiple measures. Process and perception data is then triangulated with achievement and demographic data. The strategic plan is designed with all staff to ensure ownership and common understanding.

Whole-school approaches had been agreed to by all staff, following careful analysis of data. Professional learning has been strategic and aligned to the Site Improvement Plan, thus building teacher capacity. Staff meet with the Principal to discuss their Professional Development plans, and class and individual data, to reflect on what's working and to identify what's not, and then to reflect on future possibilities.

Student voice in the self-review process is provided through the student engagement survey. Site improvement and action plans are well-documented, reflected upon and updated. School priorities are based on evidence and purposeful to the needs of both staff and students. The Review Panel was provided with copies of the numeracy and literacy handbooks, which are reviewed and adapted to meet expectations.

Parents shared their understanding and knowledge of school priorities. The communication to them by the Principal and staff is timely and provides continuous information on how the school is tracking. Eighty-two percent of parents in the opinion surveys agreed that the school is always looking for ways to improve.

Direction 3

Review communication strategies to increase and enhance parent influence within school improvement processes.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

Pinnaroo Primary School is tracking well. There is a strong sense of belonging within the school setting and the school has developed whole-school approaches to provide consistency for students. The effective use of data informs planning and future directions.

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

1. Enrich intellectual stretch and challenge for students through embracing digital technologies and extending inquiry-based learning across the school.
2. Enhance the delivery of inquiry-based learning to improve student engagement with content and meta-cognition.
3. Review communication strategies to increase and enhance parent influence within school improvement processes.

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



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS

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.

Sunyl Vogt
PRINCIPAL
PINNAROO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson