

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR REIDY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Conducted in March 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 Antoinette Jones, 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 Reidy Park Primary School has verified that the school is compliant with all applicable DECD policies.

Implementation of the DECD Student Attendance policy was specifically checked against a documented set of criteria. The school was found to be compliant with this policy.

Attendance is monitored closely and consecutive days of absence are routinely followed up using a range of documented strategies. There is a strong focus on ensuring all students attend school and measures are in place to improve the attendance rate of 94.6% which is above the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Reidy Park Primary is a Reception to Year 7 school with an enrolment of approximately 600 students situated in Mount Gambier in the south east of South Australia. The school has an ACARA ICSEA score of 1009 and is classified as Category 6 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 2% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background and approximately 17% of students are receiving school card assistance.

The leadership team consists of a Principal in her first tenure at this school, a Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal and a Coordinator.

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?
Improvement Agenda:	How effective are the school's self review processes in informing and shaping improvement?
Effective Teaching:	To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?
	To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning and how do you know?

How well are students achieving over time?

The Review Panel's pre-review discussion of student achievement data found that results in Reading are consistent with similar schools. Results for Numeracy are lower. The percentage of students achieving the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) at Year 3, Year 5 and Year 7 has been consistently above 70% since 2008. For example in 2014, the percentage of students achieving the SEA in Year 3, Year 5 and Year 7 was 81%, 78%, and 81% respectively. In Numeracy, the percentage of students achieving the SEA is highest at Year 7 a figure which has remained consistently above 80% since 2008. Results have been similar at Year 3 but lower at Year 5.

Higher order skills are assessed in the Higher Proficiency Bands of NAPLAN. At Reidy Park the percentage of students achieving in the upper proficiency bands is highest at Year 3, lowest at Year 5 and rises again at Year 7. For example in 2014, the percentage of students in the Higher Proficiency Bands in Reading at Year 3, Year 5 and Year 7 was 47%, 21% and 33% respectively. This pattern has emerged in Numeracy as well.

The leadership team and teachers identified literacy as a successful improvement focus and identified numeracy as an area for future focus. In 2015, the school improvement priorities are: Literacy, Numeracy and Wellbeing.

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

A culture of continuous improvement is evident at Reidy Park. The school's self review processes are ongoing, collaborative, inclusive and effective in evaluating school performance as well as identifying areas for improvement. The Review Panel heard how staff members are involved in sequential processes throughout the year that are structured and learning focused. Site Improvement Plan (SIP) reference groups comprised of leaders and teachers, lead the implementation of improvement priorities. Through one of these groups, work is underway to update and revitalise the school values as part of the wellbeing improvement focus. It is now important for the school to revisit its vision and for the community to endorse a vision for Reidy Park Primary School that will guide future direction and planning.

Direction 1

Work with Governing Council and the school community to revitalise the school vision to ensure that it is collaboratively developed, future focused, student-centred and captures the school's aspirations for student achievement and wellbeing and ensure alignment of vision, values and planning as part of this process

A range of reliable data is used to monitor and track student achievement. Data is analysed and learning is tracked at student and cohort level. Priority groups are identified and their achievement is monitored to

ensure progress is being made. Teachers engage in collaborative interrogation of the data and students achieving below, at and above expected level are identified and tracked for all data sets.

The results of data analysis are used to inform classroom practice as well as monitor the effectiveness of whole school approaches and intervention strategies. Based on gaps in learning identified through data analysis, a “relentless focus” is identified for each year level annually and extra attention is paid to addressing these issues for particular cohorts. Planning is systematic, detailed and evidence-based. Site Improvement Planning includes three strategic priorities outlined in general terms. Each strategic priority is supported by a one year plan for each of the priorities with specific expectations and outcomes, expected changes in learner skills, expected changes in staff learnings, pedagogy and practices as well as student learning targets.

Performance development practices are aligned to improvement priorities. The leadership team undertake classroom observations focused on improvement strategies and provide feedback to teachers to support consistent approaches across the school.

As a result of evaluating the impact of approaches undertaken in relation to reading, an improvement prototype has been documented to guide improvement in other areas. This improvement model describes the successful steps that have led to improvement in reading outcomes.

Direction 2

Increase the number of students achieving the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement by using the established improvement model to guide improvement processes in relation to numeracy and mathematics teaching and to lift achievement in middle primary literacy

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

The leadership team have worked strategically to develop and support a collaborative culture focused on learning. Whole school agreements have been developed and implemented in literacy. Parents, teachers and students have a positive view of teaching and learning across the school. In discussions with students, high levels of interest and motivation were evident. All students who talked to the Review Panel, talked confidently about their learning and reported that they enjoyed school.

An inquiry approach to teaching is widespread across the school. The Review Panel saw evidence of scaffolds to support inquiry in classrooms and teachers’ programs. Students reported that they enjoy the opportunity to pose their own inquiry questions. Teachers identified inquiry as being a useful approach that enables students to bring prior learning to new topics.

The use of feedback to students about their learning and their next steps was reported by students as being helpful. Teachers showed how rubrics were used to describe learning at different levels. The Review Panel saw evidence that criteria are provided for written work to support student learning. Setting learning goals was another widely used strategy.

The Australian Curriculum is consistently implemented and expectations of what is to be taught across year levels are understood. Learning is planned, structured and sequenced. Programming and planning is based on the Teaching for Effective Learning Framework learning design model. Teachers plan collaboratively in ‘planning partnerships’ creating consistency with collegiate support. The Review Panel noted that some partnerships had been established longer than others which facilitated a greater rapport and consistency in understandings and approaches.

Differentiation is evident in programs and the Review Panel saw an example of an individualised approach to catering for the learning needs of students with learning difficulties. Intervention programs are targeted and documented. In particular, the Review Panel noted the proactive approach to catering for the learning needs of students who are anxious or experiencing difficulty in self-regulating, through the establishment of a dedicated space designed to support learning and emotional wellbeing.

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

The Review Panel heard from students across the school that they were engaged in their learning and found it interesting. Teachers reported that the use of ICT including the recent Bring Your Own Device model in the upper primary classes was an emerging priority that was engaging students and that they were investigating ways of further transforming their teaching assisted by the ICT Coordinator. Staff members reported that the strong focus on the Performing Arts gave students opportunities to be challenged.

Students who achieve well above the expected level are identified through data analysis and teachers are aware of those students in their classes. Teachers talked to the Review Panel about a range of strategies that provide opportunities for challenge and intellectual stretch including grouping students with similar ability and providing more challenging work on the same topic, inferential questioning in reading activities and “problematized” maths tasks.

Teachers reported that they were not sure how widespread these approaches were across the school and the Review Panel noted that a consistent approach to provide challenge was not evident. Teachers identified the need for further professional development in order to develop a repertoire of strategies to provide more challenging opportunities for students to be challenged and extended in their learning.

Direction 3

Accelerate the learning of those students achieving well above the Standard of Educational Achievement using current data systems to identify and explicitly monitor their learning.

Refine current inquiry approach to provide challenge and intellectual stretch in learning opportunities so that students engage in complex thinking and develop high order skills.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Reidy Park Primary School is tracking well. Good performance was evident through a culture of improvement and the use of student achievement data and other evidence to inform decisions and actions at the individual student, class and whole-school levels.

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

1. Work with Governing Council and the school community to revitalise the school vision to ensure that it is collaboratively developed, future focused, student-centred and captures the school's aspirations for student achievement and wellbeing and ensure alignment of vision, values and planning as part of this process
2. Increase the number of students achieving the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement by using the established improvement model to guide improvement processes in relation to numeracy and mathematics teaching and to lift achievement in middle primary literacy
3. Accelerate the learning of those students achieving well above the Standard of Educational Achievement using current data systems to identify and explicitly monitor their learning.
4. Refine current inquiry approach to provide challenge and intellectual stretch in learning opportunities so that students engage in complex thinking and develop high order skills.

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

Susan Cameron
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY

Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL
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.

Chris Sheldon
PRINCIPAL
REIDY PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson