

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

**EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW**  
**REPORT FOR FLINDERS PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Conducted in May 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 Angela Faulkenberg, 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 Flinders Park Primary School has verified that the school is working towards being compliant in all applicable DECD policies. The Principal advised action is being taken to comply with the following DECD policies:

- Governance – Reporting Bullying twice a year – in 2014, bullying data was reported once during the year, in 2015 this data will be reported twice a year.
- Safety – all volunteers will be trained in Reporting Abuse and Neglect by the end of Term 3, 2015.

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 92.3%, which is marginally below the DECD target of 93%.

### **School context**

Flinders Park Primary School is a Reception to Year 7 school in the western suburbs of Adelaide. Enrolments are increasing with approximately 325 students enrolled in 2015. The school is classified as DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage Category 5 and has an ACARA Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score of 1016.

Approximately 45% of students have English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 4.8% of students are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, 8.3% of students have identified Learning Disabilities and 36% of students are supported by School Card.

The leadership team consists of a Principal in her first tenure at the school and a Deputy Principal in his first tenure at the school.

### **Lines of inquiry**

*During the review process, the panel focused on four 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?**

**How effectively are evidence and data translated into actions?**

**Effective Teaching:**        **To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of students?**

### **How well are students achieving over time?**

Running Records provide a measure of reading progress. At Flinders Park Primary School, there has been an upward trend in the percentage of students achieving the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) in Running Records at Year 1 from 29% in 2012 to 72% in 2014, and at Year 2 from 37% in 2012 to 79% in 2014. There is also a consistent pattern of cohort improvement from Year 1 to Year 2. For example, 68% of students were at or above the SEA at Year 1 in 2013 and 79% were at or above the standard in Year 2 in 2014.

The percentage of students achieving the SEA in NAPLAN Reading at Years 3, 5 and 7 has been variable over time. In 2014, at Year 3, there was an improvement in the percentage of students achieving the SEA compared to the historical average in both Reading and Numeracy. In 2014, the percentage of students achieving the SEA in reading, at Years 3, 5 and 7, was 81%, 55%, and 69% respectively and for Numeracy, there was a similar pattern with the percentage achieving SEA, at Years 3, 5 and 7, 76%, 52% and 69% respectively.

The panel found that the learning needs of priority groups are catered for and their progress is monitored and reported. Negotiated Education Plans and Individual Learning Plans are collaboratively developed and reviewed, including specific learning goals and input from relevant agencies where appropriate.

The challenge for Flinders Park Primary School is to ensure that all students continue to make expected or greater than expected growth in their achievement as they progress through the school. The school has identified the pattern of low growth from Years 3 to 5 as an area of focus. Over three testing periods, the low growth has been between approximately 70% and 45%. The pattern of high growth varied from 0% to 21% over the same period. The expected low and high growth across South Australia is 25%. The school has introduced ACER Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading and Mathematics to monitor student achievement more closely and early data suggests that there is beginning to be improvement in this area.

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

Sustained improvements in educational outcomes come about by engaging in collaborative self-review involving both analysis of performance, and the evaluation of practices, programs and improvement strategies that inform future improvement priorities. At Flinders Park Primary School, there has been an ambitious improvement agenda since 2013.

The vision of providing "quality learning and a friendly community atmosphere" is supported by values, guiding principles and a statement of core business. At the time of review, the values were being updated. In 2015, the site improvement priorities are Mathematics, Wellbeing/Engagement and Literacy, in particular, Reading. Each priority is supported by an improvement plan that outlines actions to be undertaken by teachers and leaders and targets for student achievement.



Staff identified whole-site agreements in mathematics and reading, reading intervention, Kids Matter and Natural Maths, as the most significant changes impacting on student learning in the last two or three years and these are consistent with the improvement strategies over that time. The site improvement priorities are determined through thorough analysis of student achievement data as well as perception data from parents, teachers and students.

The panel saw evidence of collaborative and ongoing self-review processes. Data is collaboratively interrogated at staff meetings and at a review day in Term 4 each year, at which the effectiveness of strategies is reviewed and progress towards targets evaluated.

Priority Committees, consisting of teachers and leaders, oversee implementation of strategies and monitor progress in each of the improvement plans. As evidence was collected about the processes used to inform and shape improvement, the panel noted that the school is currently challenged in systematically coordinating and balancing the approaches to reading and maths, expected practices in relation to Australian Curriculum and the range of pedagogical approaches that are being undertaken in classrooms.

Priority Committee members reported that they were unsure of the work of other committees. The panel noted that a coherent overview that aligned the work of committees and staged the implementation of improvement strategies would reduce the diverse demands on teachers and leaders, increase consistency from the point of view of students and hasten improvement.

#### **Direction 1**

**Accelerate improvement and sharpen the current focus on improving student learning outcomes by collaboratively designing a strategic plan that provides an overview of improvement strategies and targets for student achievement, and aligns the work of Priority Committees in driving improvement.**

#### **How effectively are evidence and data translated into actions?**

The panel was particularly interested in how effectively the data and evidence of student learning that is collected in the school, is translated into classroom actions.

In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on collecting and analysing data about student achievement. Data in relation to Oral Language, Reading, Writing, Spelling, Numeracy, Science and Australian Curriculum is gathered. The school provides a schedule to guide the collection of data and an electronic system was introduced in 2013 to analyse and store data.

Analysis against the Standard of Educational Achievement, the calculation of effect size and growth in learning are features of the system, and this information is available to all staff via their iPads. Teachers administer a range of standardised tests and enter results into the online data system. This allows teachers to access analysed data easily and determine the progress of students to inform their practice.

In addition to online assessments, teachers identified a number of other standardised assessments that they found useful in monitoring learning. In particular, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) was a consistent assessment commonly used to inform reading programs. At the time of the review this test was paper-based and results were passed on from teacher to teacher rather than entered centrally.

Some teachers also talked about formative assessments, as well as questioning during tasks to gauge understanding, as ways that they collected evidence to determine next steps in teaching and planning to meet the varied needs of students in their classes. Teachers identified grouping students, differentiated teaching and identifying students for intervention programs as ways that they use data, but were unsure how widespread these practices were across the school. Time was provided in some staff meetings to work with others but the panel heard that arrangements for joint work outside this time were informal.

At the time of the review, all teachers did not have shared release time dedicated to jointly considering assessment results and planning to meet the needs of all students in a cohort.

## **Direction 2**

**Accelerate the learning of students by providing opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively to monitor student outcomes and plan strategies to cater for the needs of all learners in the cohort.**

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

Student achievement is grounded in numerous complex and interrelated factors, so it is important to take into consideration key elements that influence learners' successes and achievements.

The students who talked to the panel were very positive about their learning and the influence they had in decision-making at the school. Parents also talked about the willingness of teachers to support their children's learning and gave examples of how well the learning needs of their children had been met.

The panel heard about and observed a range of pedagogical approaches that support engagement in learning. These included: teaching skills that develop a growth mindset, experimenting with classroom environments that provide opportunities to learn in a variety of spaces, using the Reggio Emilia approach to early years learning and Resource Based Learning centred on design to increase engagement.

The panel heard about how whole-school agreements in Maths and Literacy outlined explicit and engaging pedagogies to support learning and were supported by a coaching model in which teachers attended professional learning and coached selected staff in these approaches back in the school.

Each of the approaches that the panel observed has a credible research base. However, the panel considered what learning looks like from the perspective of the learner as they progress through the school and the degree to which classroom approaches are sufficiently similar to provide consistency from one year to the next.

## **Direction 3**

**Increase the number of students achieving the Standard of Educational Achievement in the middle primary years by evaluating the impact of current pedagogical work to determine the most effective strategies to improve student learning and implement these consistently by strengthening the current coaching model.**

Fundamental to accelerating progress is to support the learning of all students through high quality, consistent approaches to differentiated instruction, as well as the provision of targeted intervention programs to address the specific deficits in learning. Intervention processes are highly valued at the school and the panel heard about a strong focus on supporting students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

The panel saw evidence of a reading intervention program - the Special Education teacher, working with teachers and SSOs to design customised intervention programs, and the introduction of the Quicksmart program for numeracy intervention in 2015. Evidence was presented of an evaluation model being trialled to test the effectiveness of Quicksmart in improving learning outcomes of targeted students and the panel noted that a similar approach to evaluating the effectiveness of other intervention programs would be useful for the school.

Teachers talked about how they programmed and planned the learning. The panel heard how some teachers worked with others and sought the advice of coaches in designing learning. Teachers described a variety of ways that they differentiated teaching to cater for the needs of all students. Classroom observations were conducted by coaches to support pedagogical change and teachers reported that feedback was useful in guiding their work.

Staff felt catering for students who are experiencing difficulty was a strength of the school and identified providing intellectual stretch in a planned and rigorous way as an area for improvement.

**Direction 4**

**Increase growth in student learning by implementing and documenting consistent programming and planning practices that include a systematic approach to differentiated teaching with a particular focus on providing intellectual stretch.**

## OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Flinders Park Primary School is tracking well. Good performance is evident through the development of an inclusive improvement culture and commitment of teachers to provide quality learning for all students.

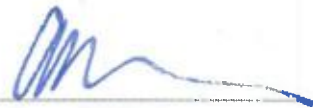
The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following Directions:

1. Accelerate improvement and sharpen the current focus on improving student learning outcomes by collaboratively designing an overview of improvement strategies and targets for student achievement that aligns and connects the work of Priority Committees in driving improvement.
2. Accelerate the learning of students by providing opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively to monitor student outcomes and plan strategies to cater for the needs of all learners in the cohort.
3. Increase the number of students achieving the Standard of Educational Achievement in the middle primary years by evaluating the impact of current pedagogical work to determine the most effective strategies to improve student learning and implement these consistently by strengthening the current coaching model.
4. Increase growth in student learning by implementing and documenting consistent programming and planning practices that include a systematic approach to differentiated teaching with a particular focus on providing intellectual stretch.

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



Tony Lunniss  
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.

Judy Anderson  
PRINCIPAL  
FLINDERS PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson