

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

Report for Karrendi Primary School

Conducted in February 2018



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 government 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.

We acknowledge the support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community. 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.

The external school review process includes verification by the principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented. This information is provided in Appendix 1 of the report.

This external school review was conducted by Kathryn Entwistle, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Carolyn Clinton, Review Principal.

School context

Karrendi Primary School was established in 1969 in the suburb of Parafield Gardens. In 2018 enrolments are 209.

The school has an ICSEA score of 951 and is Category 3 on the Index of Disadvantage. The student population includes 12% Aboriginal students, 33% English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) students, 7% of students with disabilities, and 30% of families who are eligible for School Card.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 5th year of her tenure at the school, a senior leader wellbeing, two coordinators with responsibility for literacy and numeracy, 8 teachers who work full-time and 4 part-time teachers, as well as 7 school services officers (SSOs).

Lines of Inquiry

In considering the data summary in the School Performance Overview (Appendix 2) and the principal's presentation, the review panel explored the following lines of inquiry to evaluate the school's effectiveness towards raising student achievement and sustaining high performance. During the external review process, the panel focused on 3 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?

School Community Partnerships: How well does the school develop partnerships with students, parents and the wider community to improve student learning?

How well are students achieving over time?

Data sourced prior to and during the external school review (ESR) at Karrendi Primary School made highly evident the recent improvement in the percentage of students achieving the Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) in both literacy and numeracy. NAPLAN testing showed that year 3, 5 and 7 students' reading levels are the highest in 3 years, and that a recent decline in numeracy achievement was arrested in 2017. PAT-M, R and Running Records data also clearly show an increase in students meeting standard.

The presentation from the leader on day 1 made clear the strategic process she has undertaken to bring about this improvement. The school's previous expectations of student potential and cultural pessimism were challenged by the leader; acceptance of low-level student achievement questioned, and the opportunity for improvement made clear. This reflective and challenging cultural shift now sees the school focused on excellence, characterised by the statement 'Excellence is never an accident, it is the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, skilful execution and the vision to see obstacles as opportunities'. The leader, and now staff, students and parents, consistently represent this aspirational approach to learning and learner potential at the school. The ESR team acknowledges this work and the subsequent successes achieved.

Conversations with the school's leadership team and teachers made clear that programs to support aspirational outcomes have been undertaken at the school. A review of long-term approaches to the teaching of reading resulted in the establishment of Reading Centres in 2016, that see a more rigorous and structured approach to the teaching of reading practiced across the school. Additionally, staff commitment to implementing the Big Ideas in Number program has seen a more consistent approach to developing students' numerical thinking and reasoning. The ESR panel commends the school's strategic intent to introduce consistency regarding classroom implementations.

An opportunity to further deepen coherence in practice across the school was evident throughout the ESR. The successful implementation of programs, such as Jolly Phonics and Grammar, the Seven Steps to

Writing Success, and Big Ideas in Number represent the positive influence of consistency in contributing to improvement. The ESR panel identified the opportunity to now extend this notion from the 'what we do' in the classroom to the 'how we do it'. Pedagogical practices apparent during the ESR were vast and varied across the school. In some classes, students were observed participating in collaborative learning that saw them discussing the learning process and planning approaches to solve problems. In a number of classes visited, the ESR panel saw students responding to teacher-designed questions or algorithms that they were required to answer correctly. The use of worksheets and spelling contracts that provided minimal cognitive challenge were apparent in some classrooms. Many students with whom the ESR panel spoke, described successful learning as finishing work early or presenting neat and correct products.

The excellent achievements of the school in introducing influential programs to the class can now be further enhanced through the concept of contemporary pedagogical practice, which engages students in processes of true inquiry and sees them working not to finish a task, or solve a problem, but to research, investigate, analyse and question. The panel sees this exciting opportunity as the natural next stage of the improvement agenda at the school.

Many aspects of the ESR made clear the value the leaders and, now teachers, give to the place of data in planning for student growth and improvement. Documents analysed showed that numerous datasets have informed plans, groupings and interventions. Staff and many parents expressed the benefit students had experienced through participation in Multi and MiniLit interventions, inclusion in which is determined by achievement data. Some staff discussed using PAT data to form not just ability groups, but also groups that were informed by students' miscues and then designed to address these areas for improvement. Staff uniformly reported the value of data in identifying students requiring additional support, rather than those poised for extension.

Access to the school's NAPLAN data made clear that a large percentage of students achieving in the higher bands in year 3, do not sustain this success in years 5 and 7. In her presentation, the leader made reference to this as a concerning trend that she intends to bring to staff. One slide showed the initial work coordinators have undertaken to represent the regression of high-performing students' achievement over the years. At the time of the ESR, this was yet to be utilised with the staff. However, the ESR process confirmed the leaders' intent to bring the concept of differentiated planning, based on diagnostic use of data for *all* students, as an important next step at the school. Conversation with the student group who had achieved in the high bands in year 3 made evident the potential these students bring to the learning agenda. Designing learning that attends to their needs and grows their success is an exciting prospect.

Direction 1

Engage students in learning that stimulates deep thinking through collective investigation into, and consistent implementation of, pedagogies that promote inquiry and collaborative learning.

Direction 2

Ensure continued growth, and maximise the potential of all students, through differentiated plans and approaches that are informed by analysis of each student's achievement data.

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

The previous line of inquiry made evident the emphasis the leader has upon reflecting on historical beliefs and perceptions and her commitment to challenging deficit thinking regarding student potential. High expectations of behaviour, interactions and achievement now characterise the school's culture, and staff, students and parents discuss this with pride. When staff and parents were asked how they perceive this has been achieved, they were clear that the leader's uncompromising position, coupled with genuine collective planning, has been key in moving the school forward. The ESR process made evident that this significant change in the culture of the school has been instrumental in bringing about learning improvement.

Alongside the cultural shift, a strategic approach to school improvement planning has also been implemented. The leader has based her work on the ACER School Improvement Tool and, in 2016, the school convened a School Improvement Team (SIT). This group leads staff in developing a school vision and School Improvement Plan (SIP), and in reviewing numerous policies. Inclusion in the group was at teachers'

discretion, and the ESR panel heard that in 2017 there was a high level of participation. Staff who were on the SIT were able to describe the processes undertaken to bring about the improvement planning process. They discussed regular reference to achievement data in setting school targets and described processes of consultation with the wider staff in establishing agreement regarding the SIP. Staff not on the SIT were less conversant with the improvement planning process, and the ESR panel heard more reference to policy review than SIP development.

The ESR panel certainly sourced evidence of an influential SIP, responsive to analysis of student achievement data, and a more collective approach to planning for school improvement. Given this, an opportunity now exists to build on this work and to develop an increasingly sophisticated approach to systematic self-review. The cycle of rigorous self-evaluation is one that will add further value to the work at Karrendi Primary School, as it is characterised by strategic, regular and emergent processes. The approach allows the school to review existing processes and practices, to evaluate systems operating across the school, to respond to change as it arises and to potentially do so in a forum that involves all staff.

Direction 3

Conduct strategic processes of self-evaluation by building on review processes already operating, to collectively assess school-wide systems and practices, and regularly respond to emerging change.

How well does the school develop partnerships with students, parents and the wider community to improve student learning?

Community perceptions of Karrendi Primary School are reported by parents as the highest and most favourable in many years. Student behaviour, intervention programs and staff commitment featured highly during their discussion regarding the school's successes. Governing council members represent a wide range of parents, grandparents and parents of students no longer at the school. The respect and appreciation they have for the work of the teachers, leaders and administration team was highly evident. Parents not on governing council spoke with a united voice regarding the effective programs the school offers, as well as the generosity and enthusiasm of the staff. When asked what they believed were the school's priorities, developing students as resilient learners and the use of restorative practices were common. Members of council described their roles as overseeing school policies, attending to finances and organising special events; the importance of fundraising was also discussed.

During her presentation, the leader reported that she aspires to develop a more authentic partnership with families regarding the learning agenda. The ESR panel presented this to parents with whom they spoke and responses were positive regarding the potential this offers. Council members discussed the possibility of offering sessions to families that promote appropriate ways to support students' reading, and the potential to include families with English as a second language was discussed. Councillors were excited by the potential to take this proposition to their meeting. Whilst some parents expressed hesitancy regarding the potential to engage *all* families in a partnership of learning due to accessibility, the ESR panel agrees that the intent is laudable, and encourages leaders and staff to continue their work in this area.

When considering how well the school is developing a learning partnership with students, or their place as agents within the learning agenda, the ESR panel acknowledges the significant work that has been undertaken to enable students to set goals. All staff and students with whom the panel spoke were familiar with this concept, with varying levels of complexity. The panel could establish that time is dedicated in term 1 for each student to meet with their teacher and to discuss and agree upon a learning goal. Some reports indicated that student achievement data informs the goal; others indicated that the teacher decides upon it; and some students explained that they came up with it themselves. The panel heard from some sources that the goals are regularly assessed and new ones established as required, as well as reports that limited reference to the goal was made once it had been documented. However, the team agrees that the intent is one designed to bring about student ownership within their learning, and is confident that staff will continue to evaluate efficacy and consistency in working towards excellence regarding this process.

During the ESR, evidence was sourced that confirmed some structures and systems operate to bring about student agency within learning. Documented evidence of a survey conducted with Aboriginal students to

determine their learning dispositions was provided to the panel; an initiative to focus on resilience and mindset was introduced to respond to the students' feedback. A student representative council (SRC) has been established, and students report that regular class meetings allow them to pose suggestions for special events or make recommendations regarding play areas. The ESR panel also heard that, in some classes, students have a journal in which they document thoughts on their progress in numeracy, and this is subsequently responded to by the teacher, who will accommodate their needs when planning.

The panel held forums with a wide range of students: all year levels, Aboriginal learners, high-band achievers and student representatives, as well as having random conversations with students in class. The panel agreed that the students at Karrendi Primary School are interested, enthusiastic learners all of whom have potential to grow and succeed.

At the time of the ESR, many of these students were not aware of their progress or the learning outcomes to which they were working; many discussed the grades in their report as a surprise. Most reported that they know how they are going through stickers and teachers' positive comments, finishing early or earning reward time. The findings of the ESR provide the school with an inspiring opportunity to maximise the potential of an interested and keen student community through the initiation of teaching strategies that progress learner ownership and agency. Concepts such as learning intentions, success criteria, two-way feedback and the co-construction of learning are clearly implementations to which the students at Karrendi Primary School will positively respond. When students understand the learning outcomes they are working towards, how to monitor their progress against known criteria, and can assess and modify their approach, the school will further progress its drive for excellence for all.

Direction 4

Build strong partnerships with informed learners through the consistent implementation of teaching strategies that allow students reception to year 7 to understand the intent of, and to monitor, their learning.

What is the school doing particularly well and why is this effective?

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practice that is contributing significantly to school improvement at Karrendi Primary School.

Effective practice regarding the effective teaching aspect of the external school review framework was evident at the school. The learning environment has been positively influenced by the introduction of a focus on mindfulness. This is actualised through a session of Yoga after first lunch every day and one of meditation before the last bell. All students, staff and families who discussed this, did so positively. Reports of a calmer start to lessons and students focusing more deliberately on learning were evident. The ESR panel observed a Yoga session, and agreed that after its completion students did indeed present as ready for learning. In particular, the panel noted that students lead the Yoga sessions, having been trained accordingly. In addition, some students who readily reported that they struggle with distractions and self-regulation were abundantly clear that they did better once they had participated in Yoga; one student reporting that he also uses meditation at home to maintain his calm. Governing council members and parents spoke very highly of the introduction of mindfulness, and believe it has been a strong contributor to the school's improved culture. Evidence of this practice was sourced through conversations with staff, students and families and through class visits.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2018

At Karrendi Primary School a culture of improvement is characterised by high expectations for students, and effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions.

The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

1. Engage students in learning that stimulates deep thinking through collective investigation into, and consistent implementation of, pedagogies that promote inquiry and collaborative learning.
2. Ensure continued growth, and maximise the potential of all students, through differentiated plans and approaches that are informed by analysis of each student's achievement data.
3. Conduct strategic processes of self-evaluation by building on review processes already operating, to collectively assess school-wide systems and practices, and regularly respond to emerging change.
4. Build strong partnerships with informed learners through the consistent implementation of teaching strategies that allow students reception to year 7 to understand the intent of, and to monitor, their learning.

Based on the school's current performance Karrendi Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



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.



Mandy Alcorn
PRINCIPAL
KARRENDI PRIMARY SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson

Appendix 1

Attendance Policy compliance

Implementation of the *DECD Student Attendance Policy* was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy. The attendance rate for 2016 was 89.5%.

Appendix 2

School Performance Overview

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

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2017, 71% of year 1 and 67% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average at year 2 and little or no change for year 1.

Between 2015 and 2017, the trend for years 1 and 2 has been upwards, from 54% to 71% and 50% to 67%, respectively.

In 2017, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 64% of year 3 students, 56% of year 5 students and 71% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average, and for year 7, an improvement.

For 2017 year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across public schools.

In 2017, 28% of year 3, 7% of year 5 and 5% of year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 33%, or 1 of 3 students from year 3 remains in the upper bands at year 5 in 2017, and 17%, or 1 of 6 students from year 3 remains in the upper bands at year 7 in 2017.

Numeracy

In 2017, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 60% of year 3 students, 52% of year 5 students and 62% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average, and for year 5 and 7, little or no change and an improvement, respectively.

Between 2015 and 2017, the trend for year 5 has been upwards, from 35% to 52%.

For 2017 years 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across public schools.

In 2017, 20% of year 3, no year 5 and 5% of year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2016, and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2017.