

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

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR MANOORA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Conducted in October 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 Helen Tunney, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Margot McDougall, 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 Manoora 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:

Part 1 Governance: Item 8

Implementing a survey in Term 4 2016 for trends and feedback.

Part 2 Learning Improvement: Item 9

The school is seeking advice about implementing the Aboriginal Education strategy as an identifying student has been enrolled.

Part 5 Safety: Item 5

Looking at other small school policies with the ultimate outcome of developing own school policy.

When the school's actions achieve compliancy with DECD policy and procedures, the Principal must resubmit the Policy Compliance Checklist to the Education Director.

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 89.6%, which is below the DECD target of 95%.

School context

Manoora Primary School caters for children from Reception to Year 7. It is situated 121kms north of the Adelaide CBD on the Barrier Highway. The current enrolment is 28 students, while in 2010 it was 33 students. Enrolment has fluctuated since 2010 with a high of 35 in 2011 and a low of 24 in 2013. This enrolment fluctuation has an impact on the stability of staffing for the school. The school is classified as Category 5 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score is 994. The local ECD Partnership is Lower Mid North.

The school population includes 1 Aboriginal student, 1 student with a disability, 14% of families eligible for School Card assistance, no students of English as an Additional Language or Dialect background and no students under the Guardianship of the Minister. Student numbers are too low for the purpose of the 2015 findings of the Middle Years Development Index.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal (with a 0.2FTE teaching load) who is currently in an acting position at the school. He has been in the role for most of 2016, but will return to his substantive position from 2017. There are 2 teachers, both of whom are at Step 9. One of these teachers will not be at the school from 2017.

The school values are: *learning, caring and sharing.*

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. 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.

The data below represents a summary of aggregated data from Manoora Primary School over the years 2011 to 2015.

Reading

In the early years, reading is monitored against Running Records. From 2011 to 2015, 11 of 16 (69%) Year 1 and 17 of 22 (77%) Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

From 2012 to 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 10 of 15 (67%) Year 3, 9 of 13 (69%) Year 5, and 7 of 10 (70%) Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement of the DECD SEA.

In NAPLAN Reading, from 2012 to 2015, 3 of 15 (20%) Year 3, 2 of 13 (15%) Year 5, and 4 of 10 (40%) Year 7 students achieved in the top two bands.

Numeracy

From 2012 to 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 12 of 15 (80%) Year 3 students, 8 of 13 (62%) Year 5 students, and 6 of 10 (60%) Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA.

In NAPLAN Numeracy, from 2012 to 2015, 3 of 15 (20%) Year 3 students, 3 of 13 (23%) Year 5 students, and 1 of 10 (10%) Year 7 students were in the top two bands.

During the Principal's presentation the panel was informed that, at the start of 2016, there was a 100% teaching and leadership staff turnover. In this school year, all school staff members have worked collaboratively to move students from compliance to stretching themselves in learning, to present, analyse, use and report against student achievement data and to closely monitor student learning growth. They have also taught explicitly for intellectual stretch and challenge and continuous growth in student literacy and numeracy, and to provide timely, targeted, effective interventions as required for improved student literacy and numeracy.

Lines of Inquiry

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

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| Student Learning: | To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning? |
| Student Learning: | How effectively are teachers using the Australian Curriculum to support and improve student learning? |
| Effective Teaching: | To what extent is assessment used to inform curriculum planning and instruction? |

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

During the review at Manoora Primary School, students and families commented to the panel that this year learning has become more engaging and interesting. It was evident to the panel during the class walkthrough that teachers are designing learning that is achievement standard-focused, is deeply scaffolded, and integrates learning areas. The panel concluded that this quality learning design is both fostering, and is a result of, intentional planning for intellectual stretch and challenge.

It was clear to the panel that aspirational academic learning standards have been established at the school this year. These have been welcomed and embraced by students, staff and families.

The shared values between school, home and community provide a strong platform of advocacy for continuous improvement in student achievement.

School Services Officers (SSOs) commented that this year the focus of the school has shifted towards academic rigour and students have responded positively to this: "They are lively and bouncy as learners now".

Parents commented on the significant positive changes in levels and quality of home-school communication. This strengthens the shared work of raising individual student achievement. Parents recognise that staff members have become more accessible to them, more willing to listen to them and more responsive in acting upon matters they raise, and stated that the school has become much more about student learning, through accountability for the learning growth of students.

Teachers are using multiple ways to intellectually stretch and challenge students, setting individual student learning goals at the beginning of each term. Students are supported to review their own work in order to identify learning goals; they value this practice, and could articulate its positive impact on student learning outcomes. The panel concluded that regular individual student goal-setting is fostering high expectations of student achievement. A next step for the school is to ensure the setting of individual learning goals becomes evidence-based. The goals students are currently setting are strategies and descriptions of learning behaviours, rather than achievements. By setting achievement targets students will understand the purpose of learning more deeply.

There is explicit teaching of skills on reading for meaning and inference and note-taking. Students recognise and value the high levels of scaffolding teachers are providing to enable them to continuously improve their learning and standard of work. The application of such strategies as the *7 Steps of Writing* has significantly deepened students' power, confidence in and enthusiasm for writing.

Student risk-taking, engagement and enthusiasm for maths learning have increased significantly in 2016, where students' fear of, and boredom, with maths has gone and been replaced with an excitement about maths learning and a sense of wanting to do more. Students would also like more homework. The provision of quality homework that is logically linked to student learning targets would facilitate continuous improvement in parent understanding of learning, as well as facilitate the development of student self-management in learning and higher levels of achievement.

The school is a member of a partnership that is exploring the value of growth mindsets/powerful learning narratives to improved student achievement. The panel found that at Manoora Primary School such narratives are being used effectively by teachers and support staff in combination with student goal-setting and planning for intellectual stretch, to normalise risk-taking and challenge in learning, and to strengthen the emotional self-management of students in challenging learning.

The panel found evidence of teacher application of strategies to give students agency in their own and each other's learning (*Assessment for Learning (AFL)* and *Visible learning*), for example, the regular statement of intended learning, which depicts how deliberately teachers are seeking to strengthen the power of students within learning experiences in the classroom. The school is well-placed to empower students even more deeply by focusing on their capacity to talk about their learning. There is more work to do around raising the confidence of students in their potential to academically achieve. Student agency in learning at Manoora Primary School is ready to be more deeply understood by teachers. By strengthening the scaffolding of student learning about learning even more, student achievement across the curriculum will continue to be enhanced.

Direction 1

Deepen and embed student agency in learning to ensure that all groups of students take high levels of interest and motivation for and about learning into secondary school and beyond.

How effectively are teachers using the Australian Curriculum to support and improve student learning?

The panel was told by teachers that the provision of *Australian Curriculum* continuity of learning rubrics enables students to be informed about what they need to do to improve, and where they need to go next in their learning. Students confirmed that teachers use such rubrics with them.

Teachers use backwards design from the *Australian Curriculum Achievement Standard* to facilitate learning and assessment opportunities for students.

The panel found that there is good coverage of all *Australian Curriculum* learning areas through integrated units of work that are hands-on, experiential and enriched through quality incursions and excursions.

Students commented that this year their work has become more interesting and more challenging: "We are learning the same things but more and in different ways".

Students are activated in learning through topics of interest (for example, the local catchment area). This stimulates their engagement and enthusiasm, and then students are deeply scaffolded for success in open-ended, inquiry-based tasks around these topics.

Types of writing are explicitly taught and integrated into learning areas across the curriculum. A next step for the school is to embed these quality design practices into agreements and statements about quality teaching at Manoora Primary School.

Task design has been focused on enabling students to demonstrate A and B levels of achievement, as well as enabling continuous student literacy and numeracy development within all learning areas. The collaboration between teachers, in addition to moderation work within teams of teachers in the Partnership, is continuously developing teacher skills in quality learning and design. A next step for the school is to extend this quality explicit planning into the design of assessment tasks. Through the more widespread development and application of assessment rubrics, teachers, students and families will develop clear understandings of what students need to do to improve, in order to achieve an A or a B.

Direction 2

Strengthen and embed consistent practice in the school through agreements about quality learning and pedagogy, and curriculum and assessment design, in order to sustain high expectations and a culture of improvement.

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

In the small school environment at Manoora Primary School, the culture of multi-age classes normalises and strengthens differentiated instruction. This culture and structure is valued by students and families for the harmonious, 'conducive to achievement' teaching and learning environment that it nurtures.

The school has responded to the need to develop student fluency in reading and maths through the introduction of a range of targeted interventions such as *Quicksmart*, *Mathletics*, daily drill in *Oxford* sight words, and home reading logs. The school recognises the need to continually evaluate the efficacy of these interventions. The panel found that the school does not yet monitor the development of student reading until the end of Year 7. A next step is to track student reading development beyond fluency at level 30+ to ensure that students are supported from learning to read to reading to learn.

High levels of parent engagement in and commitment to the school, and the intellectual capital they provide, adds value to the timely provision of intervention and additional targeted support.

The Principal has skilfully developed processes and practices so that individual student learning growth is appropriately tracked and monitored. Multiple datasets are triangulated and analysed, 2 per term, by teachers to inform differentiation and intentional teaching. This performance development in the analysis, use and reporting of data in the interests of differentiation, and identification of students for intervention, has rapidly developed the data literacy of teachers and student support staff.

Students commented about using their test results and grades to judge their levels of achievement and to set learning goals.

Reporting to parents has become more student-focused and evidence-based. The written report and the 3-way interview are coherently linked, which is valued by both parents and students. Parents said they would like to be clearer about how their child's learning relates to standards (A-E grades). A next step for the school is to be continuously consultative with families and students about target-setting against the SEA.

Direction 3

Strengthen and embed the analysis, use and reporting of student achievement data in ways that are also inclusive and developmental for students and parents, to inform the consistent application of high-yield pedagogies in the school.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

At Manoorra Primary School effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions. Student achievement data and other evidence (for example, multiple measures) is used to inform decisions and actions at the individual student, class and whole-school levels. There is a coherent and engaging curriculum for students using the Australian Curriculum and the school works in partnership with parents, students, and stakeholders beyond the school.

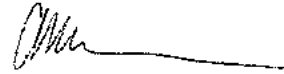
The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following Directions:

1. Deepen and embed student agency in learning to ensure that all groups of students take high levels of interest and motivation for and about learning into secondary school and beyond.
2. Strengthen and embed consistent practice in the school through agreements about quality learning and pedagogy, and curriculum and assessment design, in order to sustain high expectations and a culture of improvement.
3. Strengthen and embed the analysis, use and reporting of student achievement data in ways that are also inclusive and developmental for students and parents, to inform the consistent application of high-yield pedagogies in the school.

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



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY

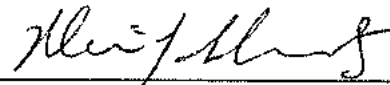


Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS

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.



Liam Whitwell
PRINCIPAL
MANOORA PRIMARY SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson