DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR LONG STREET 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 Fiona Voigt, 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 Long Street 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:

- At the time of the review the school advised that the draft bushfire policy would be ratified by the Governing Council at its next meeting.

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 88.8%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Long Street Primary School is a Reception to Year 7 school with approximately 380 students situated in Whyalla in the north of South Australia. The school is classified as DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage Category 2 and has an Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA) score of 909.

Approximately 12% of students are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, 7% are students with disabilities and 47% are supported by School Card.

The leadership team consists of a Principal in the third year of his first tenure, a Senior Leader: Early Years, Senior Leader: Primary Years, 1.0 Counsellor and SSO Manager.

How well are students achieving over time?

Literacy has been an improvement focus at Long Street Primary School in recent years. In 2014 there was an improvement on the historical average in Reading at Years 3, 5 and 7, and in Numeracy at Years 3 and 5. The percentage of students achieving the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) in reading is highest at Years 3 and 7 and lower at Year 5. For example, in 2014 the percentage of students achieving the SEA in reading was 63%, 51% and 73% respectively and, in numeracy, results were lower at 60%, 44% and 43%. Achievement in numeracy is lower than in reading. The school is aware of this and has made improvement in maths and numeracy a priority.

Higher order skills are assessed in the higher proficiency bands of NAPLAN. At the school, the percentage of students achieving in the upper proficiency bands is highest at Year 3 in both reading and numeracy. For example in 2014, the percentage of students in the higher proficiency bands in reading at Year 3, 5 and 7 was 15%, 6% and 7% respectively and in numeracy, few students achieved in the higher proficiency bands.

The challenge for the school is to increase the number of students demonstrating high level skills as assessed in the higher proficiency bands of NAPLAN and ensure that they continue to achieve at this level as they progress through the school.

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

Schools are most effective, both in the short and longer term, when their key improvement strategies are clearly focused, grounded in evidence from self-review and strategically aligned to wider DECD priorities. Long Street Primary School has developed a culture of improvement and learning through ongoing review processes.

The parents and members of Governing Council who spoke to the Review Panel talked about the strong partnership between the school, the parents and the broader community, evidenced by an active and committed group of volunteers and Governing Council members who represent a diverse cross-section of the school community. Governing Council members who spoke to the Review Panel, talked about the role of Governing Council in supporting improvement at the school and plans for a longer term vision and strategic directions to guide school development into the future.

The Review Panel was particularly interested in determining how thorough and reliable the evidence that informs school improvement is and how it is translated into strategic decisions and actions. The Review Panel saw evidence of a focus on using data to track and monitor student progress being put in place. Leaders talked about how data is analysed and used to inform discussions with teachers.

The school has identified reliable assessments that are used to track and monitor student achievement in literacy and numeracy. A schedule for data collection has been developed and the data wall displays results of analysis of whole-school Running Records, Probe Reading Comprehension Test and Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading and Maths (PAT-R and PAT-M). At the time of the review, consistent whole-school data collection and analysis was in its early stages and so trend data was not yet available.

Attendance data is analysed and monitored regularly. The Review Panel heard about proactive strategies to support attendance that are in place and saw documented processes to address non-attendance. The school counsellor outlined strategies to address a low number of cases of prolonged non-attendance.

An Excel-based system for storing data is accessible by all staff on the common drive. There is capacity in this system to identify and track priority groups. At the time of the review, the progress of Aboriginal students was being specifically tracked in PAT-M data only. The Review Panel noted that this system has the scope to identify specific populations as well as combine data from consecutive years to provide a quick view of student growth over time and this would facilitate improvement processes.

As there is a relatively high rate of staff turnover and teachers regularly begin their careers at Long Street Primary School, the Review Panel explored the measures in place to ensure that review and improvement processes were rigorous, continuous and well documented. The Review Panel heard that the leadership team designs and drives improvement processes at Long Street Primary School. In 2015 the Principal is leading and mentoring a new leadership team. While self-review processes and data analysis to inform improvement and collaborative site planning processes were evident, the Review Panel noted that the school would benefit from the documentation and scheduling of the current review and improvement processes to ensure consistent implementation over time.

Direction 1
Ensure continuity of improvement practices over time by documenting site review and planning processes at annual and longer term levels that are collaborative, evidence-based, focused on improving student learning and are consistently and rigorously implemented.

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

In exploring the extent to which the school caters for the varied needs of learners, the Review Panel was interested in the way teachers differentiate planning and teaching to accelerate the learning of students achieving highly and to support those students not making expected progress.

The school understands that excellence in teaching is the most powerful influence on student achievement. Building effective classroom practice across the school to provide continuity for students is a high priority at the school as staff changes are common. Leadership identified attracting and retaining teachers as an ongoing focus for the school. To address this issue, a robust coaching and mentoring approach has been implemented to build the capacity of teaching staff, deprivatise practice and support teachers to improve teaching and learning in their classrooms, as well as provide consistent approaches for students over time.

The coaching and mentoring model is a driver for a culture of continuous improvement. Teachers are observed by their line manager once a fortnight and released to debrief, receive and discuss feedback, as well set short-term goals for improvement. In addition, teachers new to the school are released to meet with their line manager and discuss whole school practices and approaches. The Review Panel found that these practices were widespread and highly valued but not succinctly documented to ensure they continue beyond the tenure of current leadership members.

There is a strong focus on intentional teaching and students who spoke to the Review Panel were clear about learning intentions and talked confidently about what they were learning and why. Teachers consistently use an explicit teaching model based on the Gradual Release of Responsibility approach to design and deliver lessons through a series of steps: I Do, We Do, You Do. In the 'I do' stage, teachers explain, model and demonstrate what is to be learned. During the 'We do' stage, students work with the teacher as more examples are practised. This gives the students further opportunity to be supported until they demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary to move to the final, independent step, the "You do" stage.

Teachers reported that each lesson followed this structure and that the coaching and mentoring program focused on consistent implementation. The Review Panel heard how teachers had identified the "you do" part of the lesson structure as an opportunity for differentiation to support the varied needs of learners.

Direction 2

Increase the proportion of students achieving and exceeding the SEA by documenting induction processes that outline expectations for classroom practice, in particular, differentiated teaching to strengthen intervention and acceleration of student learning.

Learning programs are based on the Australian Curriculum and are planned, structured, sequenced, include clear expectations of what is to be taught and are available for all staff on a common drive. The Review Panel saw evidence of documented and implemented scope and sequences. The coaching model supports consistent implementation.

The Review Panel saw evidence of consistent classroom practices and scaffolds for learning. Teachers identified emerging tensions associated with the current common lesson structure and approaches to teaching problem-solving and collaborative work that are yet to be resolved. In particular, teachers identified integration of topics across the learning areas of the Australian Curriculum, allowing opportunities for students to demonstrate skills in other contexts and opportunities for students to demonstrate high level understanding, as being limited by the current structure.

Direction 3

Increase the proportion of students in the high proficiency bands by reviewing the effectiveness of current classroom pedagogy and documenting successful practices that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate learning in different contexts, engage in collaborative problem solving and demonstrate high level learning outcomes.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Long Street Primary School is tracking well. Good performance was evident through strong parent and community relationships, collaborative review processes and improvement in student achievement data.
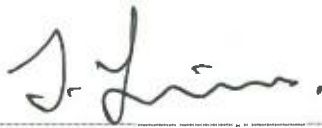
The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the key directions for improvement:

Direction 1: Ensure continuity of improvement practices over time by documenting site review and planning processes at annual and longer term levels that are collaborative, evidence based, focused on improving student learning and are consistently and rigorously implemented.
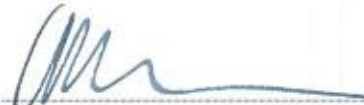
Direction 2: Increase the proportion of students achieving and exceeding the SEA by documenting induction processes that outline expectations for classroom practice, in particular, differentiated teaching to strengthen intervention and acceleration of student learning.

Direction 3: Increase the proportion of students in the high proficiency bands by reviewing the effectiveness of current classroom pedagogy and documenting successful practices that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate learning in different contexts, engage in collaborative problem solving and demonstrate high level learning outcomes.

Based on the school's current performance, Long Street 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.

Bryan Rotherham
PRINCIPAL
LONG STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson