

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

for

Peterborough Primary School

was conducted in June 2015

The External School Review process supports schools to raise student achievement and sustain high performance. It provides quality assurance to build and sustain public confidence in DECD schools.

The public report with directions for the future is available on the school website.

The Review Panel acknowledges the co-operation provided by the school during the review process.



Anne Millard
Executive Director
Preschool and School Improvement



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and
Child Development

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EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW
REPORT FOR PETERBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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**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 Robin Harkin, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and Wendy Moore, 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 Peterborough Primary School has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

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 90.0%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Peterborough Primary School has a current enrolment of 87 students. There has been a slow decline in enrolment numbers against the five year average of 117. The school has an ICSEA score of 932 and is classified as Category 2 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 18% Aboriginal students, 19% Students with Disabilities, 4 students under the Guardianship of the Minister (GoM), and approximately 65% of families are eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal, School Counsellor, and Curriculum Leader, who is also attached to the Flinders Partnership as a Coordinator, Primary Australian Curriculum and Numeracy Results Plus Coach.

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?
Effective Leadership:	How well is leadership building a culture of improvement with a focus on improving learning outcomes?
Effective Teaching:	How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning, and how are teachers being supported by leadership?

How well are students achieving over time?

The Peterborough Primary School achievement data needs to be analysed in the context of the school's demography. The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) provides a snapshot of how five-year-old children are developing across five key domains of early childhood development. This Australia-wide census is conducted every three years. The 2009 and 2012 data for students enrolled in Reception at Peterborough Primary School in those years, indicates that all children were vulnerable in nearly all five domains. This signals considerable concerns about the readiness of these students to engage in formal learning.

It is widely acknowledged that the AEDI data is also a strong predictor of how well students will achieve at school, particularly when measured by achievement tests such as NAPLAN.

Similarly, the Australian Middle Years Development Index (MDI) for children aged 8-14 years, measures key aspects of student emotional development that are closely linked to wellbeing, emotional health and academic achievement. A significant number of Peterborough students were found to be vulnerable in one or more of the five key developmental areas in the MDI.

The school's achievement data is challenging. However, there is also evidence of areas of positive achievement growth over time, and that this growth is occurring as those cohorts of early years students begin to progress through the school. For example, in 2014, 75% of Year 3 students (6 of the 8 students tested) achieved the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) in both NAPLAN reading and numeracy. Similar achievement was recorded in the other domains of the Year 3 NAPLAN literacy tests.

In contrast, 20% (2 of the 10 students tested) achieved the SEA in Year 5 numeracy, and generally the trend data across both Years 5 and 7 cohorts indicates that, historically, less than 50% of students would achieve the SEA.

The 2014 and 2015 Performance Achievement Test attainment data for reading and mathematics (PAT-R and PAT-M), provides a more reliable snapshot of recent student achievement outcomes. Most students tested in 2015 (from Year 1 to 7) are at or near the Australian National Mean Score levels, and a number of year level cohorts demonstrated higher than expected growth from 2014 to 2015.

The current leadership team, and particularly the Principal, has brought a strong focus on the use of data to monitor and support student learning. Every child is tracked and specific individual improvement targets are set for them. The student data is very visible and readily accessible, whether in student files, teacher programs or the comprehensive data wall displayed in the staffroom.

The leadership mantra, which is in evidence in many aspects of the school's learning culture, is "the relentless pursuit of incremental improvement over time". The more recent achievement data, particularly that of the early years but also in aspects of the middle and upper primary years, indicates that this mantra, and the very strong leadership focus on incremental improvement that is being supported by teachers, is having a positive impact on the school's achievement trend data.

The next challenge for the school is to lift the number of students who achieve in the higher bands of learning, whether measured by NAPLAN, standardised achievement tests such as PAT-R and PAT-M, or by Australian Curriculum achievement measures (A–E data).

Direction 1

Strategically analyse students' achievement data, particularly those in the middle and upper years, to identify specific learning needs and align teaching strategies and interventions to lift students into higher bands.

How well is leadership building a culture of improvement with a focus on improving learning outcomes?

The Review Panel heard from teachers, support staff and Governing Council members that the current leadership team and, in particular, the Principal, have been relentless in bringing a persistent and consistent focus on alignment of school practices and school improvement.

The Review Panel observed and saw evidence of many examples of how leadership is driving the improvement agenda.

The recent history of the school has been high turnover of staff at all levels, including leadership. The Governing Council reported that the current Principal has very publicly stated her intent to complete her tenure. This commitment appears to have had a significant impact on building staff and community confidence.

The School Improvement Plan's priorities of 'Powerful Learning', 'Powerful Partnerships' and 'Powerful Self' frame the improvement agenda. The Review Panel found evidence of a consistent and persistent focus on re-constructing the school culture that encapsulates these three key principles. The evidence from teachers, Governing Council, support staff and co-members of the leadership team is that there is a strong determination not to deviate from this agenda.

The school's literacy and numeracy agreements are comprehensive and explicit. It was clear to the Review Panel that the documents are widely used and consistently adhered to. The school is data rich and student achievement data (as well as perception, behaviour and attendance data) is referred to regularly to inform practice and monitor student progress against the incremental improvement targets. The school's improvement practices – planning, tracking, evaluating, re-setting targets and so on – are continually fine-tuned, and the school culture is characterised by constant and consistent self-review and analysis.

The 'powerful self' priority aims for "well-balanced learners who are considerate of themselves, others and their world". This is being developed by changing student dispositions about being at school and engaged in learning. The growth mindset focus is framed by two key change agendas – developing the capacity of students to self-regulate and improving their skills in self-motivation. This positive language of success for all is evident, and quite marked across all areas of the school, in terms of the leadership mantras, displays in classrooms, and in the language of students, teachers and support staff.

The improvement in attendance outcomes - from 87.4% in 2010 to 90% in 2014 – is driven by the mantra that students need to be 'on site, in sight and present' for learning improvement to occur. The Review Panel observed that the quite intense and relentless focus on following through on attendance, of tracking and monitoring the data, of engaging with the community, of individual case management and target-setting, and the active encouragement and support for students to be present for learning, characterised the rigour and effectiveness of the school's overall improvement processes and agenda.

Direction 2

Maintain the intensity and focus of the school improvement processes that are currently in place, particularly the focus on growth mindset and improved student attendance. Review the breadth of data that is collected so as to maintain the already well-articulated and relentless focus on lifting student achievement.

How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning, and how are teachers being supported by leadership?

The key intent of the strategic use of data has been to inform teacher practice. The Review Panel heard from teachers and the leadership team that there is a determined focus to support teachers to review and improve their practice. The implementation of a growth mindset agenda has been as applicable to teacher practice as to student dispositions.

Teachers spoke openly about how explicit leadership expectations are about how they engage positively with students, and how they are constantly encouraged to lift their expectations of what students can achieve.

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum has been underpinned by a continuing focus on teachers being challenged to reflect on and refine their practice. A number of leadership strategies have been put in place, including specific coaching, encouragement of peer observations and self-reflection through the TfEL (Teaching for Effective Learning) framework lens.

A standing item on every staff meeting agenda is where teachers report on aspects of their practice in terms of "TfEL Diary Talk". At the staff meeting led by the Review Panel, teachers were asked to talk about the pre-conditions for effective learning that they put in place in their classrooms. The Review Panel heard numerous examples of well-considered and student-focused practices, which were readily observable in the classroom walk-throughs that were conducted, and confirmed by students during discussions with them.

Teachers were able to talk confidently about their knowledge of each of their students – not only their achievement data, but also other key aspects of their personal and relational contexts. Teachers share performance data with students and support them to develop improvement goals, for example, in reading, mathematics, personal behaviour and attendance. There is a consistent message that attendance is everybody's business, and that unless students are 'present' – both physically and engaged in their learning – then improvement will not occur.

The Review Panel observed that there is considerable alignment between intent and practice across the school. While it is acknowledged that there is still more to be done, particularly in continuing to lift student achievement outcomes, it was clear that the essential elements of effective school improvement are in place.

The next and continuing challenge for the school is how the leadership team can effectively support teachers to provide more differential learning and interventions for every student. The foundations are there in terms of teacher knowledge of individual student data, and the setting of individual incremental improvement targets for students, but the ongoing challenge is how teachers can effectively support students, and particularly lift the number of those who are represented in the higher achievement bands, whether measured by NAPLAN, standardised tests or Australian Curriculum achievement data.

The 2014 early years data suggests that, despite the potential learner achievement difficulties identified by the AEDI data, by Year 3, students are generally potentially well-positioned in terms of their literacy and numeracy achievement. The challenge is how to build on the improvement now occurring in the early years and project that improvement into the middle and upper years of the school.

Direction 3

Continue the focus on building the capacity of teachers and, in particular, their ability to provide greater differentiation in their teaching for all learners, but specifically to support more able students to be more successful.

It was reported that there has been a positive focus on promoting student voice. A strategy developed by the school to build connections with parents and the wider community, is to support students to be the “invitees” for school events, such as parent-teacher interviews, assemblies and special celebrations.

The SRC is active, as is the level of student engagement observed in the middle and upper primary classes. The research by Hattie is clear that relevant and effective feedback is a powerful improvement tool. The Review Panel noted that the strengthening of “student voice” at Peterborough Primary School, provides an opportunity for the school to engage students in providing feedback to teachers about how they might refine their practice even further, to suit the needs of learners.

Direction 4

Explore how the continuing focus on student voice can be utilised to further support teachers in refining their practice.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Peterborough Primary School is tracking well. The leadership team has implemented an explicit improvement agenda that is evidence-driven and has a strong focus on building teacher capacity.

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

1. Strategically analyse students' achievement data, particularly those in the middle and upper years, to identify specific learning needs and align teaching strategies and interventions to lift students into higher bands.
2. Maintain the intensity and focus of the school improvement processes that are currently in place, particularly the focus on growth mindset and improved student attendance. Review the breadth of data that is collected so as to maintain the already well-articulated and relentless focus on lifting student achievement.
3. Continue the focus on building the capacity of teachers, and in particular their ability to provide greater differentiation in their teaching for all learners, but specifically to support more able students to be more successful.
4. Explore how the continuing focus on student voice can be utilised to further support teachers in refining their practice.

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

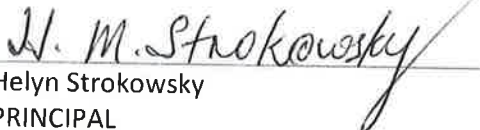


Tony Lunniss
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REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
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Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT

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.



Helyn Strokowsky
PRINCIPAL
PETERBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson