

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

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW
REPORT FOR PORT BROUGHTON AREA SCHOOL
Conducted in May 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 Liz Matheson, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Sue Toone, 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 Port Broughton Area School has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

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 90.9%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Port Broughton Area School caters for children from Reception to Stage 2 SACE. It is situated in a coastal rural community 174km from the Adelaide CBD, and is part of the Northern Yorke Local Partnership. The enrolment is 149 with an increasing number of students moving into the community and enrolling during the school year. The school is classified as Category 5 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score is 970.

The school population includes 8 Aboriginal students, 9% of Students with Disabilities, 16% of families eligible for School Card assistance, 1 student with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) background, and 1 student under the Guardianship of the Minister (GoM). A significant proportion of students (40%) are bussed to school. Over recent years, the student demographic has changed from mainly farming background to a minimum of students coming from farming families.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in the 2nd year of her 1st tenure at the school. The school has a Deputy Principal and 2 Coordinators with responsibilities in Wellbeing, Teaching and Learning.

There are 10 full-time and 6 part-time teachers. There is very little turnover of staff.

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 is monitored against Running Records. In 2015, 92%, or 11 of 12 Year 1 students, and 100%, or all Year 2 students, demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). The result for Years 1 and 2 is higher than the school's historic baseline average.

From 2013 to 2015, the trend for Year 1 has been upwards, from 69% in 2013 to 92% in 2015.

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 92%, or 11 of 12 Year 3 students, 92%, or 11 of 12 Year 5 students, 70%, or 7 of 10 Year 7 students, and 71%, or 10 of 14 Year 9 students, demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3, 5 and 7, these results are higher than the school's historic baseline average.

From 2013 to 2015 the NAPLAN trend for Years 3 and 5 has been upwards. Year 3 has improved from 58% in 2013 to 92% in 2015, and Year 5 has improved from 56% to 92% at SEA.

For 2015 Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving within the average results of similar students across the DECD system. The Year 5 result is at the higher end of these comparisons.

In relation to students who achieved in the top two 2015 NAPLAN reading bands, 3 of 12 Year 3 students, 3 of 12 Year 5 students, 1 of 10 Year 7 students, and 0 of 14 Year 9 students achieved in the top two bands.

For Year 3, this result is lower than the school's historic baseline average.

Of the 4 students who achieved in the top two 2013 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading at Year 3, taking into account arrivals and departures, 2 remained in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015. 1 of 1 and 0 of 4 students remained in the upper bands from Year 3 to 7 and Years 3 to 9.

Numeracy

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 92%, or 11 of 12 Year 3 students, 75%, or 9 of 12 Year 5 students, 50%, or 5 of 10 Year 7 students, and 71%, or 10 of 14 Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Year 3 this result is higher, for Years 5 and 9 there is no improvement, and at Year 7, there is a decline against the school's historic baseline average.

From 2013 to 2015, the trend for Year 3 has been upwards, from 75% in 2013 to 92% in 2015. Over the same period, the trend for Year 7 has been downwards, from 86% to 50%.

From 2013 to 2015, the school has improved its performance in NAPLAN Numeracy at Year 3 relative to the average results of similar students across the DECD system.

For Years 5, 7 and 9, the school is performing within the average, compared to similar students across the DECD system.

In relation to students who achieved in the top two 2015 NAPLAN Numeracy bands, 42%, or 5 of 12 Year 3 students, 33%, or 4 of 12 Year 5 students, 0 of 10 Year 7 students, and 14%, or 2 of 14 Year 9 students achieved in the top two bands. For Year 3, this result is higher than the school's historic baseline average.

Of the 3 students who achieved in the top two 2013 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy at Year 3, 100% remained in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015. This result is above the school's historic baseline average.

No students remained in the top two 2013 NAPLAN Numeracy bands from Years 3 to 7, and for Years 3 to 9, 1 of 2 students remained in the upper bands.

SACE

In 2015, all 8 students who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve their SACE. In 2015, 85% of grades at SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represented a decline against the historic average. In 2015, 5 students achieved their SACE using VET studies.

In terms of Stage 1, 86% of students achieved a C grade or higher, with all Learning Areas having 75% or more students achieving a C grade or higher.

Lines of Inquiry

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

Improvement Agenda:	How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?
Student Learning:	How well are students engaged and challenged in their learning?
Effective Leadership:	To what extent are the school's professional learning and performance development processes effective in building teacher capacity?
School Community Partnerships:	How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?

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

Port Broughton Area School aims to “prepare young people for success”. The school’s Site Improvement Plan (SIP) 2014–2016 was developed under the leadership of the previous Principal. There are three priorities: Numeracy, Wellbeing and the Australian Curriculum. The SIP also identified three maintenance areas: Literacy, ICT and Teaching and Learning. Although the current Principal was not involved in the development of this 3-year improvement cycle, she decided to continue with the existing SIP and build greater ownership for the achievement of the plan amongst the staff.

The school established action teams in 2015 to support the implementation of each priority. Every teacher participates in an action team twice a term. The action teams enact the planned strategies and, to various degrees, review and evaluate the impact of their actions. The action teams use student achievement and attendance data to identify trends and implications for the school and individual students. Teachers spoke positively about these structures and the greater degree of ownership.

The school has engaged in self-review processes to evaluate a range of practices and has made changes. Examples of the actions taken include the provision of more choice for students in the Year 9/10 curriculum; numeracy intervention designed to stretch students and provide alternative strategies; and a different approach to developing the Negotiated Education Plans (NEPs) led by class teachers. The Governing Council spoke positively about the introduction of the ‘traffic light’ system. Parents are notified by letter if their children in Years 7 to 12 are deemed to be at risk of not completing assignments or not meeting the requirements of the subject area. This is planned to occur twice a term.

The Review Panel commended the school on the willingness of staff to self-review, indicating a culture of improvement. These processes seemed, however, to lack an overall strategic, connected and planned approach. Furthermore, through interviews with students, the Review Panel found that there are a number of pedagogical and organisational initiatives developed, which have not gained traction in many classrooms.

School Improvement Plans are intended to provide clear priorities and strategies for improvement, and the effectiveness is measured or evaluated after a period of time. The plans do not represent everything the school cares about, or does well. There is also a risk that schools ‘move on’ too quickly without evaluating the impact from the perspectives of the learner. Professional and performance development should be aligned to the school’s improvement agenda. This work goes hand-in-hand with the school’s program of policy review and renewal.

To support the school in this work, the Review Panel concluded that they would achieve greater clarity of direction and ownership by documenting and enacting an improvement cycle, which in many ways represents the micro-work of ‘review, plan, act and assess’ within classrooms. As the school has a 3-year SIP articulating the broad overview of the improvement priorities, there needs to be an operational plan with timelines and evidence measures that supports the school to implement its plan in a cohesive way. There is also scope at Port Broughton Area School to develop a greater connection between student voice and the school’s improvement agenda.

Direction 1

Develop and enact a cycle of improvement with a documented plan and timelines for regular and systematic development, enactment, review and evaluation.

How well are students engaged and challenged in their learning?

Teachers at Port Broughton Area School are aware of the importance of engaging students in their learning. The Review Panel sighted teachers’ curriculum plans and assessment tasks from Term 1 in a range of curriculum areas. Many teachers had designed their assessment tasks to allow students to demonstrate their learning in various and interesting ways. Examples included making a board game, taking videos to show improvement in their locomotor skills, designing and making models, and making a movie poster of an Emperor in Ancient Rome. The Review Panel observed students in the Early Years highly engaged in problem-solving in a mathematics lesson.

The Review Panel heard from school staff that motivating students to stretch themselves was considered a challenge. There is a perception that students prefer comfort and complacency. The results of students achieving in the higher bands, as outlined in the School Performance Overview of this report, indicated by NAPLAN and PAT testing, suggests there is room for improvement. In 2015, students in Years 6 and 7 responded to a wellbeing survey conducted through DECD, in which 70% of students reported a high level of optimism, whereas 40% responded with the characteristics of high perseverance, with 15% reporting low perseverance. The students responded positively to the questions related to their academic self-concept, indicating most believe they can learn even when the work is hard. Students also stated that learning new things was more important to them than making friends or getting good grades.

When asked what sorts of new things they were learning, students talked about new strategies in mathematics; designing games in various curriculum areas; videoing and critiquing themselves; and applying their learning in practical ways. Most students were aware that learning requires thinking. When asked how often this occurs, most students stated it 'depends on the teacher'. Some also said that when the purpose or the learning intentions of the unit of work was not clear to them, it was more difficult to sustain interest.

These results suggest students want to be challenged, want to learn new things, but do not have the disposition or strategies to complete tasks or to stick to tasks when they get hard. Some teachers are aware of this and have started working with students to develop a 'growth mindset.' It was not yet evident how this work is integrated into teaching and learning across the curriculum.

The Review Panel inquired into what pedagogies and practices are known to support students to take greater responsibility, manage and thrive with challenges. The school has initiated goal-setting with students in an attempt to develop greater ownership and responsibility. When asked about their goals, most students had difficulty recollecting their goal. Others described their goals as behaviours, such as to "continue to get an A in maths" and "not to procrastinate so much". When asked how they were going to achieve these goals, they were less clear and could not articulate any specific strategies except for "work harder". It did not appear to the Review Panel that this initiative was used consistently by teachers or students, nor was it having the desired effect.

Students were also asked about the level of rigour in their learning. They spoke positively about recent developments in the teaching of mathematics, in which problem-solving and reasoning are being explained and modelled in some year levels. When teachers use meta-cognition to explain their thinking, there is a greater level of understanding by students. This was seen by students as a more effective way of teaching compared to textbooks.

Teachers were asked to reflect on a unit of work in Term 1 and to rate the extent they used various pedagogies to support students' learning. There was a range amongst the ten responses. Some teachers indicated they did not make their success criteria clear or create opportunities for students to stretch themselves. Many said they knew the students' starting point well, although the activation of prior learning to hook students into the topic did not appear to be widely used. Several teachers stated their tasks did not effectively enable students to apply their skills and understanding in different contexts, and it was an aspect of their planning and teaching that they would like to do better. A couple of teachers indicated they did not adapt their teaching in response to feedback, which is the art of using formative assessment effectively.

It was clear to the Review Panel that teachers are committed to their students and willing to be flexible to provide greater choice within curriculum areas. They indicated they feel confident to a medium or high extent that their assessment and grading would be the same as colleagues at another school. Most of the teachers at Port Broughton Area School are the sole person in the faculty and many are teaching out of their area of training or expertise. The Partnership and leadership of the school need to create opportunities for teachers to moderate students' work with others. Besides ensuring standards are consistently interpreted, this collaborative work enables teachers to reflect on the design of tasks. They are able to discuss and work to transform their task design to ensure it allows for multiple entry points and deeper investigation into the big idea or concepts underpinning the topic.

Direction 2

Explore and enact pedagogies that support students to develop perseverance and to deepen and stretch their learning in all curriculum areas.

To what extent are the school's professional learning and performance development processes effective in building teacher capacity?

Teachers were positive about the opportunities for Professional Development (PD) afforded them, and it was obvious that teachers want to 'keep up' and maintain their currency, particularly in regard to the curriculum and SACE. Professional development in formative assessment was recognised at every section of the school as being useful. It was clear that many teachers are using formative assessment to find out what students are learning and are responding to the feedback with varying degrees of effectiveness.

A few years ago the school worked with a Literacy Coach and developed a Literacy Agreement (2013), which outlines the pedagogical expectations of modelling, guided instruction and independent application. The focus for this work had been on reading. Many teachers talked positively about this in-school PD, and how they had changed the way they approach a text, no matter what learning area. Although not implemented to the letter, the Agreement had supported staff to develop the mindset that the teaching of literacy is everyone's responsibility. The current focus is mathematics and numeracy improvement. The Governing Council spoke positively about the numeracy intervention. Students had also noted there was a change in the way mathematics was being taught, particularly in Years 9 and 10, as they had greater understanding of the concepts.

In an attempt to deprivatise teaching and support teachers to continue to fine-tune their pedagogical practices, the school has initiated a system of classroom observations. The observations are conducted by a peer or line manager, and the school has developed observational proformas outlining prompt questions for the observer. There are different observational proformas, such as communication and engagement, assessment, and classroom organisation and management. The expectation is that a conversation follows the observation in which the observer gives feedback and the observed undertakes to concentrate on one pedagogical practice as an area for improvement. These follow-up processes work to varying degrees.

The Review Panel acknowledged this system was designed to focus on pedagogical improvement. It was difficult to see how this approach was a school improvement strategy, although it was supporting some teachers' individual professional goals. It was not evident how it linked to any broader professional development framework, such as the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, or to the SIP. The Review Panel also wondered about the extent that the purpose of observations was understood and agreed to. It appeared to the Review Panel that the observations, as a process, had become the focus, rather than the vehicle for student and school improvement.

The Review Panel concluded that while this initiative worked for some people, a more holistic approach to pedagogical development needs to be thought through, strengthening the connection to established frameworks and the school improvement priorities. For example, if the school priority is to enact pedagogical practices to support students' perseverance in order to provide greater stretch and challenge, then there may be various professional and performance development strategies enacted to achieve this.

Effective professional and performance development processes energise and engage teachers to make changes, try new things and deepen their existing practices. Research also shows there can be a considerable difference between what teachers think students are learning and what they are actually doing and learning. Hence, student reflections and voice are an important source of evidence of teachers' effectiveness.

Direction 3

Strengthen and advance teachers' key pedagogical practices by using a range of performance development processes, aligned to Professional Development Plans and SIP priorities.

How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?

Throughout this report there has been reference to the potential to strengthen students' influence in their learning, and in the school as a whole. The Review Panel interviewed senior members of the SRC and found they were highly involved in activities such as the bike track, casual days and fundraising. Schools cannot just 'produce' successful students. They need to be seen and treated as partners and the partnership needs to be constructed to engage, guide, and motivate students to produce their own successes. The Review Panel was of the view that there is scope for the senior members of the SRC to be more connected to the school's improvement priorities and agenda, and to provide an insight into how and what the school can do to be most effective.

In regard to student voice within the learning process, the school was endeavouring to provide greater choice of subject or topic of study. Students with whom the Review Panel spoke were appreciative of these efforts by the school, recognising that it required teachers to be willing and flexible. Students also have opportunities to present their learning in many different ways.

The Review Panel found many students were not able to articulate or explain what they were learning in the classroom, nor how to improve. There were few examples of co-construction of the curriculum or assessment. Many teachers indicated they enable students to co-construct questions and use an inquiry-based approach to a low extent. Supporting students to have a greater influence in their learning is an effective strategy in building responsibility as well as understanding and motivation.

Direction 4

Explore ways of enabling greater student influence in the learning process, and greater connection of the SRC with the school's improvement agenda.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

Port Broughton Area School has demonstrated growth in student achievement at or above what would be reasonably expected of a school in a similar context. The school is using the Australian Curriculum and SACE to provide a coherent and engaging curriculum.

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

1. Develop and enact a cycle of improvement with a documented plan and timelines for regular and systematic development, enactment, review and evaluation.
2. Explore and enact pedagogies that support students to develop perseverance and to deepen and stretch their learning in all curriculum areas.
3. Strengthen and advance teachers' key pedagogical practices by using a range of performance development processes, aligned to Professional Development Plans and SIP priorities.
4. Explore ways of enabling greater student influence in the learning process, and greater connection of the SRC with the school's improvement agenda.

Based on the school's current performance, Port Broughton Area School will be externally reviewed again in 2020.

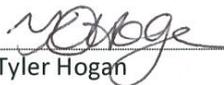


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The school will provide an implementation plan to the Education Director and community within three months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's Annual Report.



Tyler Hogan
PRINCIPAL
PORT BROUGHTON AREA SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson