

# EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

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Report for Seacliff Primary School

Conducted in October 2017



**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.*

*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 One of the report.*

*This External School Review was conducted by Kathryn Entwistle, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Susan Copeland and Vicky Ireland, Review Principals.*

## School context

Seacliff Primary School was first established in 1961, with the primary and junior primary schools amalgamated in 1991. The school is 20kms from the Adelaide CBD, in the suburb of Seacliff Park. In 2017, the enrolment is 419 students, and enrolments have been steady in the low four-hundreds for over five years. The school has an ICSEA value of 1077 and is classified as Category 6 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal who has held an acting position since Term 2 2017, and a Deputy Principal in similar tenure. The newly appointed Principal will begin his tenure in Term 1 2018.

In 2017, the school population includes 2.8% of students who identify as Aboriginal learners, 4 children in care, 10.7% of families eligible for School Card support, and 1.6% of students identified as students with a disability. There are 15 classes operating in 2017; 6 Early Years and 9 in Years 3 to 7.

The school invests funds to employ an FTE teaching equivalent to 9 days per week and, approximately, 70 School Services Officers (SSO) hours each week to implement the school's literacy and numeracy intervention programs.

## 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 four key areas from the External School Review Framework:

<b>Improvement Agenda:</b>	<b>How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?</b>
<b>Student Learning:</b>	<b>To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?</b> <b>How effectively is student learning growth monitored and evaluated?</b>
<b>School Community Partnerships:</b>	<b>How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?</b>
<b>Effective Leadership:</b>	<b>To what extent are the school's Performance and Development and Professional Learning processes effective in building teacher capacity?</b>

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

Through document analysis and the leaders' presentation, the External School Review (ESR) panel members were made aware of the work that has been undertaken to review and assess a number of aspects of school operations at Seacliff Primary School. A comprehensive document titled 'Seacliff Self-review Timetable 2017' details areas of focus across the four terms, and includes review of intervention plans, attendance procedures, achievement data, opinion surveys and pedagogical frameworks. The processes that enable the schedule to be actualised and self-review or evaluation to operate rigorously throughout the school year, were not highly apparent. Whilst broad documentation of policy review was provided to the ESR team, there is opportunity to develop systems of collective and ongoing self-evaluation regarding the school's progress towards agreed, student-centric targets.

The ESR panel members accessed two whole-school planning documents; one titled 'Three Year Strategic Plan 2017-2019' and another 'Learning Improvement Plan 2017'. The former document is vast and includes up to twelve areas of focus, ranging from implementation of the Australian Curriculum to grounds development. Codes of conduct for varying cohorts of the school community are also included in this document. The Learning Improvement Plan (LIP) focuses more closely on student learning and teacher

practice, and includes a number of high-yield strategies. Documented in the plan are strategies and actions that include contemporary pedagogical approaches, dispositions to learning, analytical use of data and the monitoring of students' progress. Reference to professional learning to enable teachers to respond to the expectations within the plan is representative of the understanding that building capacity is key to achieving desired outcomes. This is commended by the ESR panel.

At the time of the ESR, the impact of the Strategic Plan (SP) and the LIP was not highly evident. The panel agrees that the intent behind the SP is laudable in that the document makes transparent the school's vision, priorities, intentions and expectations regarding a range of school operations and cultural norms. As a long-term plan, the document is more likely to support leadership and Governing Council in their visionary work, than classroom or teacher practice. The LIP, on the other hand, provides a much more strategic scaffold for teachers to understand expectations of practice, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. In discussing the development of this document, leaders and some teachers reported that it was generated through a consultative process and based heavily on the perceptions of the contributors. To further develop this plan as a strongly influential support for teachers, and a measurable guide for improvement, the ESR panel agrees that a collective review and renewal of the structure and specificity of the document is necessary. Leaders and staff have the opportunity to refer to the range of data available at the school to develop agreed targets that state expectations of student growth in learning, and also provide a clear measure against which the school can determine progress. An evidentiary approach to strategic planning, coupled with regular, informed and collectively actioned processes of self-evaluation will contribute strongly to the school's improvement agenda.

#### **Direction 1**

**Develop intentional and quantifiable improvement processes through the development of a strategic plan that includes targets based on evidence and data, which is then regularly monitored through collective systems of self-evaluation.**

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

#### **How effectively is student learning growth monitored and evaluated?**

Through many processes of the ESR, the school's priority to implement teaching that challenges students' thinking and prompts 'productive struggle' was evident. Displays in the staffroom and conversation with many teaching staff made clear the focus on teaching that elicits inquiry and involves students in what the school terms 'stretch'. Evidence of the impact of this intent was varied across classes. Conversations with students and visits in classrooms made apparent that some students are afforded opportunities to develop deeper cognition through teaching that identifies prior knowledge, poses provocations, and is focused on the process of learning rather than an end product. When asked what Inquiry means in their classroom, one student responded that it was about being "inquisitive" and "discovering things for yourself". Discussion with students and teaching staff also made apparent that, whilst an understanding of the terminology and theory of contemporary approaches to pedagogy is evident, the actual implementation of this remains an area for further development. Practice that is characterised by the completion of worksheets or activities that require minimal cognitive processing was apparent in some classrooms. Many students spoke about learning as tasks to quickly complete, rather than opportunities to explore. The ESR panel made comment that throughout the process, every student with whom they spoke engaged with the conversation willingly, enthusiastically and respectfully. The student community is clearly interested in learning and extremely happy to come to school; maximising student potential through the consistent provision of challenging pedagogy is an exciting prospect.

The school's involvement in the Marion Coast Partnership professional learning days has seen a focus on planning for deep thinking in numeracy. This work has had an impact in many classes across the school. The ESR panel was provided with a number of examples of plans that detail tasks students have undertaken to respond to problems and to challenge their thinking. This work provides a platform from which to further design opportunities for intellectual stretch. Moving from the concept of problem-solving to actual *inquiry*, based on responses to provocations and progressed through Socratic questioning, is an inspiring concept to consider, as is the potential to develop inquiry processes across the broader curriculum.

A highlight of the school's work is the strategic approach to processes of intervention. Data that identifies students who have not reached SEA is responded to by inclusion in one of four Intervention programs: QuickSmart; Years 3 to 7 Literacy and Numeracy, and TwoSmart and BeeSmart for students in the Early Years. Once in the program, students' progress is monitored weekly by trained SSO and teaching staff. Length of time and accuracy in responding to numerical computations is assessed and recorded and students' literacy progress is determined through regular assessments of reading fluency and comprehension. Conversations with staff made apparent that, whilst a significant investment of funds supports this program, the impact on improving learning for those students at risk is substantial, as individual attainment data attests. The ESR panel commends this deliberate and committed approach to raising the achievement of vulnerable learners.

Prior to the ESR, analysis of NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy data showed that students achieving in the higher bands in Year 3 are not necessarily retained at these levels when assessed in Years 5 and 7. Recently, the Leadership Team has disaggregated the school's NAPLAN data and identified which students have not sustained early gains. The ESR panel commends this action as, during the review, it was apparent that, whilst students not achieving SEA are afforded deliberate and rigorous intervention, students performing at higher levels are not provided an individualised approach. Document analysis made clear that data harvested has been used to uniformly determine students at risk. The opportunity to introduce processes whereby classroom teachers regularly access and analyse the achievement data generated for *all* students, and plan strategies to build each learners' potential, is apparent. When teachers regularly interrogate students' achievement and track progress systematically, the design and delivery of tailored teaching for *each* student, including those exceeding standards, can be achieved.

#### **Direction 2**

**Engage students in learning that promotes intellectual processing through the school-wide, consistent implementation of pedagogy that involves learners in processes of inquiry and deepens cognition.**

#### **Direction 3**

**Build upon and monitor the achievement of students performing at or above standard through the design and delivery of teaching tailored to their needs, and informed by regular analysis of achievement data.**

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

The school is part of the Marion Coast Partnership's Student Voice in Learning (SVIL) initiative and, as such, has four senior students sitting on the SVIL team. Along with representatives from other Partnership schools, this group has worked to identify and then promulgate effective teaching practice. They have reviewed and considered what practice best inspires student thinking and, consequently, achievement, and then designed processes to promote these approaches at the school. The ESR panel spoke with the SVIL students who described the work they have undertaken at both staff meetings and in classes. Summarised, the team has worked with teachers and students to model teaching practice that does *not* promote intellectual stretch and then provided a model that *does*, in order for the participants to compare the two approaches. Ultimately, by the end of 2017, the team will have worked with all classes across the school and, importantly, all teachers will have had an opportunity to hear and learn from these students. The potential for students to influence classroom practice and build pedagogical consistency and effectiveness is truly quite exceptional.

During the ESR process, the panel heard students speak about their learning with varying levels of agency. Some students discussed and provided examples of the criteria inherent within aspects of their learning, citing how rubrics support them to aim for a particular grade. In one instance, a student had made annotated notes against his rubric that he described as reminders to include certain elements in his work in order to achieve an 'A'. In another instance, a student reported that she has had an opportunity to contribute to the development of a rubric, referring to this as a 'privilege'. The ESR process made apparent that rubrics are used quite widely across the school. The level of sophistication of the criteria varies; a few included a continuum of learning outcomes that aligned directly with the Australian Curriculum (AC), meaning grades could be accurately identified. Others focused more on the amount of work undertaken or the inclusion of additional text as representative of achievement, and allocated grades according to these

elements. The ESR panel fully acknowledges the use of scaffolds that enable students to understand the criteria of, and progress towards, successful learning outcomes. At the same time, an awareness of the allocation of grades not aligned with AC outcomes is an area staff need to consider in future planning.

The provision of feedback to students can have a significant impact on achievement, and is key to ensuring a student understands and can influence their progress to known goals. At the time of the ESR, students at the school accessed a variety of forms of feedback from teachers. In some instances, students and teachers reported that feedback regarding their progress towards the learning intention was provided regularly. Other reports and class visits made evident that some feedback provided was, again, more about the product being developed by the student than the intended learning outcome. In some classes visited, and conversations with students, feedback was characterised as stickers and affirmations. Whilst most students believed they are going well with their learning, when asked how they know, they reported that the teacher told them, or they had received a good report card. Interestingly, a member of the ESR panel met with a group of Years 4 to 7 students who had achieved in the higher bands in NAPLAN at Year 3, most of whom reported that they did not know they had achieved at this level. Raising the potential of the interested and enthusiastic learners and enabling greater student agency through the provision of deliberate and informative feedback, aligned with AC learning outcomes, is an exciting prospect.

#### **Direction 4**

**Build further on the school's intent to authenticate student voice in learning through a collective inquiry into, and implementation of, teaching strategies designed to develop students as independent and informed stakeholders within the learning agenda.**

#### **To what extent are the school's Performance and Development and Professional Learning processes effective in building teacher capacity?**

In 2017, leaders have worked strategically to develop an aligned and influential process of Performance and Development. The initiative is in the early stages of implementation, however, all teaching staff who discussed the process agreed that they have met with their line manager and documented areas for professional growth, activities that may achieve these, and responsibility for action. Areas identified for improvement align closely with the school's LIP priorities, and actions in some plans reference the potential for peer observations, although this is not yet a dedicated system that operates across the school. In the main, responsibility for action is documented as that of the teacher. The ESR panel commends the introduction of an approach to capacity building that is also designed to progress school improvement imperatives. The opportunity to build and strengthen this model is apparent, as leaders and staff can consider the development of a shared approach to achieve agreed goals, and the potential for a more structured and resourced approach to collegiate observations.

Opportunities for staff to engage in regular systems of Professional Learning (PL) were reported by the leaders as an area for further development. It was acknowledged that, whilst time for year level cohorts to meet is scheduled, accountability regarding the use of this time is limited. It was reported that, generally, team meetings are used by participants to organise special events and, at times, share existing good practice. The professional learning accessed through the Marion Coast Partnership initiative has brought about a change in planning and practice in numeracy across many classes at the school. The panel heard discussion that pedagogical practice delivered straight after these sessions is inspired and representative of the approach promoted through the PL. It was also agreed that this soon decreased, as systems to sustain implementation of more contemporary practice were not operating. The meeting structure in place at the time of the ESR lends itself ideally to the initiation of regular and ongoing processes of professional learning that build teachers' capacity to implement the agreed pedagogical approaches of the school. Scaffolded and supported systems of PL will contribute to the consistency of excellent practice to which the school aspires.

The ESR process made evident the absence of a leadership model dedicated to improving pedagogical practice. The panel fully acknowledges that the Leadership Team in place, at the time of the review, is an acting one, and that a Principal new to the school will begin his tenure in Term 1 2018. The panel sees this as a timely opportunity to consider and develop the concept of the leadership of pedagogy across the school. It has been acknowledged that teaching practice is implemented with variance, and that

professional learning for teachers is not regularly operating to influence improvement. The opportunity to develop a dedicated approach to lead pedagogical implementation, and to design processes that build teacher capacity, is a clear and important direction for the school.

**Direction 5**

**Maximise teachers' capacity to implement consistent and contemporary teaching practice through the introduction of a leadership model dedicated to pedagogical reform, and the development of a strategic approach to professional 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 Seacliff Primary School

Effective practice in the Student Learning aspect of the External School Review Framework was evident at the school. Strategically informed, designed and implemented processes of intervention support students who are at risk of not achieving standard. Leaders use achievement data generated through NAPLAN and PAT assessments to identify students who are not on-track to achieve expected standards. Students then take part in intensive intervention through either the QuickSmart Literacy and Numeracy programs, or the school-designed TwoSmart or BeeSmart interventions. All programs operate to bring about more confidence in automaticity and consequent comprehension in numerical or literate thinking. Student achievement is tracked weekly, and response time and accuracy are both monitored to assess improvement. The ESR panel heard that staff responsible for conducting the programs have accessed relevant professional learning, and that an induction process operates for staff new to the school. In addition, parents have the opportunity to observe their child engaging in the intervention at times throughout the year. It was reported to the panel that the 2016 post-intervention data showed all students in the programs had experienced expected or above expected growth. Evidence of this effective and rigorous approach to intervention was sourced through conversations with teachers, SSOs and leaders, and through data and document analysis.

## OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

At Seacliff Primary School, student achievement is at or above what would be reasonably expected of a school in a similar context, and student achievement data is used to inform an intensive intervention program for students at risk.

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

1. Develop intentional and quantifiable improvement processes through the development of a strategic plan that includes targets based on evidence and data, which is then regularly monitored through collective systems of self-evaluation.
2. Engage students in learning that promotes intellectual processing through the school-wide, consistent implementation of pedagogy that involves learners in processes of inquiry and deepens cognition.
3. Build upon and monitor the achievement of students performing at or above standard through the design and delivery of teaching tailored to their needs, and informed by regular analysis of achievement data.
4. Build further on the school's intent to authenticate student voice in learning through a collective inquiry into, and implementation of, teaching strategies designed to develop students as independent and informed stakeholders within the learning agenda.
5. Maximise teachers' capacity to implement consistent and contemporary teaching practice through the introduction of a leadership model dedicated to pedagogical reform, and the development of a strategic approach to professional learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Seacliff Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



Tony Lunniss  
DIRECTOR  
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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.

Scott Francis  
PRINCIPAL  
SEACLIFF PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson

## Appendix One

### Policy compliance

*The External School Review process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented.*

The Principal of Seacliff 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:

<b>Parent Complaint Procedure</b>	<b>Added to the policy review timeline for 2018.</b>
<b>Early Years Learning Framework</b>	<b>Added to professional development (R-2) agenda. Term 1 – 2018.</b>
<b>Camps and Excursion procedure</b>	<b>A procedure that includes priority areas to be developed.</b>
<b>Volunteer Policy</b>	<b>A community volunteer induction is planned for Term 4 2017 and Term 1 2018. All current staff are up-to-date and aware of their obligations.</b>

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's attendance rate for 2016 was 92.1%.

## Appendix Two

### 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 2016, 57% of Year 1 and 57% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2014 and 2016, the trend for Year 2 has been upwards, from 43% to 57%.

In 2017, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 92% of Year 3 students, 87% of Year 5 students and 89% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average and, from Year 7, little or no change.

For 2017 Year 3 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving higher than the results of similar students across DECD schools, and for Year 5 and Year 7, within range.

Between 2015 and 2017, the school has consistently achieved higher in Year 3 NAPLAN Reading relative to the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2017, 47.5% of Year 3, 43% of Year 5, and 39% 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, 61%, or 17 of 28 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2017, and 63%, or 12 of 19 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2017.

## **Numeracy**

In 2017, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 90% of Year 3 students, 83% of Year 5 students, and 93% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD 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 and 7 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving higher than the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools and for Year 5, within.

Between 2015 and 2017, the school has consistently achieved higher in Year 3 NAPLAN Numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2017, 39% of Year 3, 22% of Year 5, and 43% 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.

Between 2015 and 2017, the trend for Year 7 has been upwards, from 25% to 43%

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 73%, or 8 of 11 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2017, and 79%, or 11 of 14 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2017.