

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

Report for Hallett Cove East Primary School

Conducted in February 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 June Goode, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Grant Small, Review Principal.

School context

Hallett Cove East Primary School is a Reception to Year 7 school located 21kms south-west of the Adelaide CBD and is part of the Marion Coast Partnership. Student enrolment for 2017 is 380. Enrolments have improved since 339 in 2014. The school has an ICSEA score of 1044, and is classified as Category 7 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 2.5% students with disabilities, 9% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), and 10% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in her 8th year at the school (2nd tenure), Deputy Principal, School Counsellor (0.2FTE), and a Coordinator.

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 three key areas from the External School Review Framework:

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

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

School Community Partnerships: How authentic is the influence of students on their learning?

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

The Principal in the presentation shared the reflective analysis and journey since the commencement of her tenure to refocus the culture at Hallett Cove East Primary School. A renewed vision and values provided the catalyst to bring all stakeholders together to enhance shared collaboration and commitment to student learning and growth, whilst building a collective responsibility to strengthen teacher capacity, Reception to Year 7.

Whilst improvement took time, the vision and strategic process was aimed at improving student achievement and building teacher capacity. The Review Panel sighted evidence of clear and extremely thorough and authentic documentation over time; this was also verified by staff and parents.

The Review Panel was interested to explore the impact on student learning of the unique layout of the school and to determine if isolation was a concern. Evidence of determined collaboration and consultative processes was witnessed throughout the review process. Comments reflected the 'Reception to Year 7 culture' throughout the review, and the purposeful approach to ensure an 'open door' philosophy was actioned by all staff.

Staff at Hallett Cove East Primary School have a strategic process in place, which has been constructed, reviewed and modified according to the needs of the school, students, partnership and the community. The Review Panel sighted the depth of documented data analysis and the reflective processes that have resulted in targeted professional development and actions.

Purposeful processes are addressing school improvement over time and are well-documented; there is evidence of individual and collective responsibility to ensure student learning growth, teacher capacity and whole-school agreements are the core focus.

The Site Improvement Plan is one that has been developed and is owned by all stakeholders. Parents confidently shared their knowledge of the school's priorities and the reasons behind the need for them.

Communication and fostering positive relationships with the community were shared throughout conversations with all involved.

Performance Development is an important aspect of the review process. Staff shared their appreciation of the process, some commented that the process is intensive, but the outcome is very worthwhile due to the personal reflective process and opportunities to share the reality of both student growth and building their teaching capacity. Feedback provided to staff is authentic and genuinely offered insights, reflections and possibilities to increase capacity. The Principal shared the purpose of developing opportunities for staff to build their leadership skills. The Review Panel was clearly able to verify the high level of capacity amongst staff and the sharing of good practice was witnessed. Enthusiasm and pride were evident throughout the review, which also included a survey conducted in a staff meeting that involved all staff on duty. Staff, on average, rated the self-review and improvement processes at Hallett Cove East Primary School an 8.5 out of 10. Comments reflected their appreciation of their involvement, trust and respect from and to the Leadership Team, ownership and responsibility to whole-school improvement.

Some staff commented that there has been a move away from a wider range of professional development opportunities to a current targeted approach. Staff in conversations also shared a preference to go narrow and deep, enabling them to practice and develop their skills, to share their frustrations and also their celebrations before moving to “yet another thing”. All staff shared the collaborative approach towards building capacity with time being allocated for team building and sharing.

Direction 1

Enrich the current and future priorities through increasing the density of staff leadership opportunities to become mentors/coaches in identified areas.

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

Data in the school report shows high percentages of students reaching the Standard of Education Achievement (SEA). The Principal shared the school’s priority in focusing on increasing the percentage of students, not only reaching, but also retaining higher proficiency bands. Staff in conversations shared their increased involvement in and ownership of data collection, including understanding the purpose for data collection, involvement in identifying purposeful data and management of the collection, as well as the Reception to Year 7 authenticity in evaluating the data against agreed criteria and over time. All commented on the positive change in perception about the value of data to inform, reflect and review school priorities.

It was evident through conversations with staff and students, and the walkthrough process, that students at Hallett Cove East Primary School have access to teaching that is designed to elicit intellectual challenge. The increased uptake of initiatives, such as Reimagining Childhood, is having a positive impact on student wellbeing, resulting in increased levels of engagement with students, feeling safe to take risks and owning their learning. Throughout the review, the panel heard and sighted evidence of a holistic approach to developing the child. There were common threads between academic, social and emotional wellbeing. Students reflected on the purpose and the pride felt towards being at the school, and opportunities to extend and stretch their learning. The panel was able to verify this impact through conversations with students who clearly articulated the strategies in relation to their own wellbeing and the shared wellbeing of others in class and the yard.

As mathematics is a relatively new school and partnership priority, the Review Panel was curious to investigate the impact that professional development was having in this area. Many students in Years 3 to 7 reflected on mathematics as being a favourite lesson. Comments reflected the strategies teachers are implementing, including mental routines, problem-solving, hands-on activities, time for discovery and reflection, and ‘sting in the tail’. Parents also verified mathematics as a school priority, including the changes they have seen in teaching and how they believed teachers were making lessons authentic and relevant to lifelong learning. Student comments reflected the depth in learning that teachers are providing: “our teachers get us thinking, through the questions they ask, and it’s not just in maths, but it’s in other areas as well”; “it’s not about the question, but how we think through the question to reach the answer that makes the learning powerful”.

When the Review Panel asked students how they felt about their learning, the responses between groups had a common element: “we are responsible for our learning and growth”, “learning is more than getting high results, anyone can get 10/10, so it’s more about how well-understood the learning is and how we can use it in other areas of life as well”, and “as a result, my confidence has grown and my grades have improved”.

The Review Panel heard some staff speaking of involving students in co-constructing learning with students, and this was reinforced by comments from students. Students spoke of how their teachers listen to them and are aware of how they are travelling. The majority of students verified that feedback received from their teachers provides them with the next steps to enhance their learning: “whilst it’s important to know how our learning is going, it’s more important to know what we can do to improve”. One student reflected on how his teacher involved the class in task design: “our teacher explained the purpose for the learning, and allowed us time to question her, and I felt a sense of responsibility, but also a feeling that she trusts us to involve us like that”. Other comments within the group verified the accuracy of the statement.

Students also shared their responsibility for their learning: “our teachers are here to help us, but it is our own and the whole class responsibility for our learning”. Most students commented and knew what to do if they didn’t know what to do: “it’s about tackling it in a different way, and it’s okay if you don’t get it, but we have learnt about having courage and confidence to keep trying”. This comment was reflected in other statements throughout the conversations with student groups. It became apparent throughout the review process that student-involved learning was a priority. Students commented on their learning growth and how their teachers foster the development of new skills to develop and deepen understanding.

The Review Panel was curious to investigate the high percentage of students achieving at ‘C’ grade level. All staff comments reflected high expectations and that all students can achieve. Some staff, when questioned on moderating units of work, shared a reluctance to assign a higher grade in case they got it wrong. There was a common element throughout conversations, which reflected a concern about their perception of what the criteria was for assigning a grade; therefore, to be safe, a “C” grade was assigned. Some parents also questioned the grading and the criteria for the assigning of grades.

The Review Panel concluded the need to continue to enrich teacher capacity in the areas of task design and success criteria, Reception to Year 7. Consistency in moderation is also an area of focus. An opportunity exists to lift and build on the collaborative approach already witnessed at Hallett Cove East Primary School in relation to having staff design assessment tasks with specific criteria, and then work together through a systematic moderation process, which opens up professional and critical dialogue as to which grade to assign and why.

Direction 2

Increase the percentage of students in high proficiency levels by embracing the continued development of task design, success criteria and collaboration in moderation, Reception to Year 7.

How authentic is the influence of students on their learning?

The Review Panel felt and heard the pride and passion of students for Hallett Cove East Primary School in both formal conversations and chats in the walkthrough process. Whilst students felt they were being challenged, they all commented that they believed not only that their teachers are approachable, but that their teachers believed in them. There was a sense of equity and shared responsibility for learning between all stakeholders. One student commented: “you know I even got support from the Principal and that helped me understand something I didn’t know before, everyone here helps you learn”. Throughout the review, the Review Panel constantly heard and witnessed an authentic student voice in learning. Year 7 students shared their responsibility in teaching the values to the Early Years students. Early Years students commented on how they enjoyed the Year 7 students coming into the class and helping them: “they even help us if we are hurt or if we have no one to play with in the yard”.

Students have varying opportunities to enrich their leadership capacity as role models and as ambassadors for their school. When asked what is good about their school, the majority of comments reflected their involvement in learning: “we definitely get challenged, but here we focus on learning, it’s what we do” and “learning is important, our teacher involves us and shares why we are learning something”. The Review

Panel heard that student voice is much more than organising fundraising, and goes to a much deeper involvement in learning.

Students reflected on the importance of wellbeing and how learning is better achieved when students feel safe and happy. Throughout the walkthroughs the Review Panel sighted and heard evidence of Growth Mindsets, 'bucket fillers' and building positive relationships. When asked how they themselves can be involved in their learning, comments reflected that students felt they were ready and responsible to be more involved in planning and assessing their own and classmates' work. Some student groups reflected how their teacher develops assessment rubrics with them. They believed this opportunity assists them in raising the achievement level as they then know what is expected of them.

Comments made in some student groups reflected their involvement in data analysis, both class and individual. The Review Panel asked students how they felt about this; comments ranged from: "it's okay, and I think I'm going okay anyway" to "it helps me to really focus on my learning, it's a bit of a competition I have with myself to improve my results". When asked about goal-setting, some students commented that they felt these were simply an activity at the start of the year, that they were not reviewed and some couldn't remember what theirs were. When asked for an example of goal-setting, students said: "a lot of students set goals about reading, more books, up a level or two, or times tables" and "our teacher explained why we need to set goals, you know short-term ones to get to a big goal, but then we don't always look at them to see how we go".

Direction 3

Increase the level of student influence in learning through the development of class goals based on the Site Improvement Plan, and drilling down to the development of student personal goals.

What is the school doing particularly well and why is this effective?

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practices that are contributing significantly to school improvement at Hallett Cove East Primary School.

Effective practice in relation to the school improvement agenda was evident at the school. The collective ownership of the Site Improvement Plan has been strongly influenced by clear and strategic processes and targeted professional development. This has led to determined and collective accountability to increasing student achievement by both teachers and through student influence in learning. In particular, the panel noted the in-depth approach to performance development, both formal and informal, and how this has led to developing both teacher capacity and leadership density within the school. Evidence of these practices was verified through conversations and documentation.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

Hallett Cove East Primary School has a strong culture of improvement. Purposeful strategic directions are owned, reviewed and refined by all stakeholders.

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

1. Enrich the current and future priorities through increasing the density of staff leadership opportunities to become mentors/coaches in identified areas.
2. Increase the percentage of students in high proficiency levels by embracing the continued development of task design, success criteria and collaboration in moderation, Reception to Year 7.
3. Increase the level of student influence in learning through the development of class goals based on the Site Improvement Plan, and drilling down to the development of student personal goals.

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



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.



Anne Rathjen
PRINCIPAL
HALLETT COVE EAST 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 Hallett Cove East 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 documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2016 was 93%.

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, 73% of Year 1 students and 77% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). This result indicates an improvement from the historic baseline average for Year 1 and little to no change for Year 2.

In 2016, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 86% of Year 3 students, 82% of Year 5 students and 83% 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. For Year 7, the result represents little to no change from the historic baseline average.

For 2016 Year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across DECD schools.

In 2016, 41%, or 24 of 59 of Year 3, 42%, or 14 of 33 Year 5, and 29%, or 10 of 35 Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands. There is an upward trend at Year 5, from 27% in 2014 to 42% in 2016. In Year 3, there is an improvement in 2016 from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 80%, or 12 of 15 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016, and 78%, or 7 of 9 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2016. For Years 3, 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Numeracy

In 2016, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 73% of Year 3 students, 85% of Year 5 students, and 94% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Year 3, this result represents little to no change from the historic baseline average. For Years 5 and 7, the results represent an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2014 and 2016, the trend for Year 5 has been upwards, from 65% in 2014, to 85% in 2016.

For 2016 Year 3 and 5 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools. For Year 7 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving above the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2016, 24% of Year 3, 24% of Year 5, and 29% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 8 of 10, or 80% of Year 3 students remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016, and 80%, or 4 of 5 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2016. Both these results represent an improvement from the historic baseline average.