EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW
REPORT FOR SALISBURY HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL
Conducted in August 2016
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 June Goode, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Greg Graham, 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 Salisbury Heights 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 2015 was 91.3%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Salisbury Heights Primary School is located 20kms from the Adelaide CBD. The school has approximately 373 students. Since 2010 there has been a trend with enrolment numbers declining. The school has an ICSEA score of 1005, and is classified as Category 5 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 4% Aboriginal students, 16% students with disabilities, 11% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 1% children in care, and 13% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in her first tenure, a Deputy Principal, a School Counsellor and a Coordinator.

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, 34 of 43 (79%) Year 1 students, and 39 of 55 (71%) Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). The Year 1 result is above the school’s historic baseline average and the Year 2 result shows little to no change from the school’s historic baseline average.

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 50 of 51 (98%) Year 3 students, 31 of 41 (76%) Year 5 students, and 37 of 45 (82%) Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3, 5 and 7, the results are above the school’s historic baseline average. There is a trend upwards in Year 3, from 86% in 2013 to 98% in 2015. There is a downward trend in Year 5, from 84% in 2013 to 76% in 2015.

For 2015 Year 3 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving above the results of similar students across the DECD system. For Years 5 and 7, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2015, 25 of 51 (49%) Year 3, 14 of 41 (34%) Year 5 and 10 of 45 (22%) Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands. For Year 3, this result is above the school’s historic baseline average.

Of the 15 students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading at Year 3 (2013), taking into account arrivals and departures, 10 students remained in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015. This result shows an improvement compared to the school’s historic baseline average. Of the 20 students who achieved in the top two bands at Year 3 in 2011, taking into account arrivals and departures, 5 remained in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015. This result is a decline from the school’s historic baseline average.
Numeracy

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 42 of 51 (82%) Year 3 students, 30 of 41 (73%) Year 5 students, and 31 of 45 (69%) Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA.

For Year 3 students, this result shows little to no improvement. The Year 5 and 7 results show a decline compared to the school’s historic baseline average.

From 2013 to 2015, there is a downward trend evident for Year 3 Numeracy – from 91% to 82%.

For 2015 Year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2015, 15 of 51 (29%) Year 3, 9 of 41 (22%) Year 5 and 8 of 45 (18%) Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands. For Year 3, this result shows a decline compared to the school’s historic baseline average. In Year 5, there is a trend upwards from 12% in 2013 to 22% in 2015 numeracy. In 2015 Year 7 Numeracy, there is a trend upwards from 4% in 2013 to 18% in 2015.

Of the 12 students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy at Year 3 (2013), taking into account arrivals and departures, 7 remained in the top two bands at Year 5 in 2015. Of the 14 students who achieved in the top two bands at Year 3 (2011), taking into account arrivals and departures, 3 remained in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015.

The Year 3 to 5 higher band retention rate shows an improvement from the school’s historic baseline average, whilst the Year 3 to 7 higher band retention shows little to no change from the school’s historic baseline average.

Lines of Inquiry

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

Student Learning: To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?
Effective Teaching: How effectively does the design of assessment tasks enable students to demonstrate higher order thinking?

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

The core focus to accelerate the percentage of students in higher bands is a priority at Salisbury Heights Primary School and was evidenced in the Principal’s presentation, and verified by staff and students in both documentation and conversations. The Review Panel acknowledges the professionalism displayed by staff which was evidenced throughout the review. All teachers have high expectations for themselves and their students, and the data clearly indicates the potential of students. The whole-school agreements and expectations are aligned and monitored by the Site Improvement Team (SIT), comprising teachers and the School Counsellor. The level of trust between the SIT, staff and leadership was evidenced by the common language heard during the Principal's presentation and staff conversations.

The Review Panel sought clarification as to how students were engaging in learning. Documentation and conversations with staff, including support staff and leadership, provided evidence of the support and challenge provided to all students. The Student Review Team, together with the Counsellor, shared how strategic approaches for identifying and tracking individual students were purposeful and targeted to their needs. The targeted programs and achievements are continually being reviewed in professional conversations with School Services Officers, teachers, Line Managers and other personnel.
The Review Panel acknowledges the current work being done across the site on Growth Mindsets. A question was asked of a group of Year 3 students in an informal conversation with the Review Officer: “What do you do if you do not know what to do?” Responses were clear on how the teacher doesn’t give them the answer, but keeps asking more questions. The Review Officer asked how that makes them feel, and they responded: “Well, once you understand that the teacher isn’t going to give you the answer, that you have to work it out, then it’s okay and it becomes fun, because that’s when you know you’re learning” and “it also means you have a growth mindset”.

Evidence through documentation and conversations with staff, students and parents demonstrates students setting personal goals. Provision for practising the skills of resilience and responsibility was verified through individual reflections in work sample folders and workbooks. There was clear evidence based on student conversations and through observations that the school is aiming to involve students in their learning through increasing the level of “ownership”.

Throughout the walkthroughs, the Review Panel observed high levels of engagement in learning and the extremely limited amounts of “wasted learning time”. The Review Panel acknowledges the depth of learning happening across the school and the pride in all classes. Evidence through observations suggests routines are clearly established, and the students know what to do if they complete their tasks. It was observed that “early finishers” were provided with tasks that strengthened previous learning and provided not only practise, but opportunities to stretch through higher-order questioning.

The Review Panel acknowledges the commitment that staff are applying to the whole-school agreements. This was consistently verified at all levels, including staff and student discussions on the impact Professional Development is having on improving consistency across the site. Parents also commented on the impact that whole-school agreements were having on their child’s learning. The Review Panel commends the professionalism of staff to embrace new learning opportunities to further improve teacher capacity and student learning.

The use of Digital Technologies was evidenced through conversations and observations of staff and students. Technology is available, and is being used to extend and stretch student learning. Students clearly articulated to the Review Panel the high levels of engagement in the arts, Heights in Lights, music, science and STEM lessons, and how they are connected to other areas of the curriculum. The Review Panel commends the staff leading the development of STEM, both at site level and through the Partnership, and acknowledges the enthusiasm and willingness of staff to embrace this initiative to engage students in powerful and purposeful learning. The provision of time for key staff to share new learning in the development, purpose and knowledge of STEM is possibly the next lift. It was clearly evident through conversations with students, both formally and informally, that the level of engagement for all students was high, as was their articulation in making connections with other curriculum areas.

The connectedness that is occurring and links to their world is a credit to a school determined to raise the levels of achievement and engagement inclusive of all students.

**Direction 1**
Continue to embrace technology and the application of STEM as the catalyst for engaging students in powerful learning.

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**How effectively does the design of assessment tasks enable students to demonstrate higher order thinking?**

The Review Panel can verify through conversations with staff and students, both formally and informally, the high levels of energy, enthusiasm and engagement students are displaying in all areas of their learning at Salisbury Heights Primary School. Students’ comments reflected that they are being challenged, and the teachers, over the years, have made learning fun and engaging. As one student stated: “Challenge! We do it every day, that’s what we do and that’s learning”. The Review Panel sought evidence as to how student learning is being monitored and extended. Student comments to the Review Panel provided evidence that presentation of learning is done through posters, PowerPoint presentations or workbooks. In walkthroughs, the Review Panel sighted a balance between worksheets, class learning and individual
student tasks.

Verbal feedback from students provided evidence on the level of feedback and the challenge to extend them. "The teacher lets us have a go, and sometimes it takes time, but we get there"; "they help us but they don't do it". The Review Panel, through the “snap” visits, sighted evidence and heard the levels of constructive feedback being provided to support growth. In some classes, the Review Panel sighted rubrics being used as forms for students themselves to track their own learning.

The use of success criteria is occurring, and students were able to verify their involvement. An opportunity exists to provide time for collegial conversations to share assessment tasks as an opportunity to reflect, challenge and provide each other with feedback on the levels of intellectual stretch provided for students. This should also include the moderation of student work to ensure the consistency in tracking and reporting students’ achievement. Doing this as a whole site, and then sharing across all year levels, should ensure increased consistency and knowledge of mapping the curriculum and assessment, with all staff being responsible for all students.

Direction 2
Extend the collegial conversations across the site to develop assessment tasks and success criteria that promote higher-order thinking and increased levels of student achievement and intellectual stretch.

Direction 3
Improve the effectiveness of moderation processes across Reception to Year 7 using the A-E standards.
OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

Salisbury Heights Primary School is tracking extremely well. Self-review processes and whole-school expectations ensure the focus on improvement is clear and consistent. The staff, students and community have high expectations and work collectively with the aim of improvement.

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

1. Continue to embrace technology and the application of STEM as the catalyst for engaging students in powerful learning.
2. Extend the collegial conversations across the site to develop assessment tasks and success criteria that promote higher-order thinking and increased levels of student achievement and intellectual stretch.
3. Improve the effectiveness of moderation processes across Reception to Year 7 using the A-E standards.

Based on the school’s current performance, Salisbury Heights Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2020.

Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Jayne Johnston
CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

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.

Katherine Holman
PRINCIPAL
SALISBURY HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson

Sarah Dolman.