Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Ceduna Area School

Conducted in July 2019

Review details

Our education system aspires to become the best in Australia by seeking growth for every student, in every class and in every school.

The purpose of the External School Review (ESR) is to support schools to raise achievement, sustain high performance and to provide quality assurance to build and sustain public confidence in government schools.

The External School Review framework is referenced throughout all stages of the ESR process.

This report 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.

We acknowledge the support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community. While, not all review processes, artefacts and comments are documented, they have all been considered and contribute to the development and directions of this report.

This review was conducted by Rob McLaren, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Ngaire Benfell and Rosie Hienicke, Review Principals.

Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relevant to the lines of inquiry:

- Presentation from the principal
- Class visits
- Attendance at staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with: Governing Council representatives
                         Leaders
                         Parent groups
                         School Support Officers (SSOs)
                         Student groups
                         Teachers

School context

Ceduna Area School caters for children from reception to year 12. It is situated 792 kilometres north west from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 442 students. The enrolment at the time of the previous review was 560.

The school has an ICSEA score of 921 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 30% Aboriginal students, 13% students with disabilities, 2% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 7% students in care and 25% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 4th year of their tenure at the school. The school has a deputy principal and 2 assistant principals. There are 46 teachers including 6 in the early years of their career, a further 11 in their first 5 years of teaching and 11 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

Direction 1   Utilise data management systems to disaggregate the achievement data of ATSI students, as assessed by the various measurement tools, to analyse their progress.

Direction 2   Use current research and resources to develop and enact a performance development system, which builds teachers' pedagogies to positively support, engage and stretch students' learning.

Direction 3   Review current teaching pedagogies and document successful practices that provide opportunities for students to be actively involved, to participate in collaborative inquiry and problem-solving and demonstrate and maintain greater levels of engagement in their learning.

Direction 4   Ensure structured time is regularly provided to enable teachers to collaboratively moderate student work samples and to discuss and reflect on the design of tasks. Refine formative and summative assessment criteria and rubrics to ensure they support students to achieve higher levels.

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?

In 2016 a review of the effectiveness of using data to inform planning and improvement of practice took place. The findings confirmed that the tracking and monitoring of priority groups including aboriginal students needed to occur. This was incorporated into existing structures and processes but not as an extra priority. Wellbeing support would be provided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) team while learning progress would be monitored by learning area coordinators and their teams. Learning area teams were initially set up to provide staff with time to engage in performance development activities linked to the schools priorities. These teams were further refined into Curriculum Development Teams (CDT) R-2, 3-6, 7-9 and 10-12 led by curriculum coordinators. Leaders took part in the Agile leadership training program building their capacity to drive learning sprints in reading improvement. Curriculum leaders, supported by the Learning and Engagement Team (LET) provide group

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performance development in CDT's supporting the review of current pedagogical practice and monitoring the improvement progress.

The school has a STEM focus with identified STEM champions (2 primary and 2 secondary staff) to drive pedagogical improvement through the development of nature play in reception, STEM 500 activities, student ambassadors and the development of learning units with a community focus.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How well does the school use evidence from student achievement and growth data to inform relevant and high-impact goals and targets for improvement?

Interviews with leaders and teachers made clear that at the end of 2018 staff spent time collaboratively constructing the priorities for improvement as described in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP). Teachers described their understanding of the agreed goals and actions. Less clear was their understanding of the agreed challenges of practice (COP) and indicators of success.

Leaders and teachers described the establishment of CDT's with the purpose of developing effective pedagogy and sharing of practice. They explained that teachers used learning sprints, reviewing data and reflecting on student performance in response to their pedagogical practices. A school leader commented that the CDT's are in the early stages of development and that many staff were still exploring their possibilities. A number of teachers commented that there needs to be further clarification of the purpose of CDT's, the role and expectations of work and how this influences the improvement and development of agreements in practice.

Direction 1	**Ensure the effectiveness of school improvement processes by making explicit the role of teachers work in Curriculum Development Teams (CDT's) and reach agreements of practice.**

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

How effectively are teachers analysing assessment and feedback data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction?

The panel observed a number of teachers using assessment and feedback data to plan learning and guide improvements in teaching practice. Teachers were aware of the datasets available to them and CDT's in the R-6 years described how they used data to track student improvements in reading to inform improvement of practice. When observing R-2 literacy and numeracy lessons, students were grouped according to the analysis of running records and Program Assessment Test (PAT) data. Teachers were observed providing students specific feedback relevant to their level of understanding. English teachers described how their planning was guided by accessing and analysing NAPLAN and PAT data identifying strengths and gaps.

A site developed intervention program called Literacy Engagement Numeracy Support (LENS) provides literacy and numeracy support to 60 targeted students. Students were grouped using data from PAT, Torch and Probe assessments. A teacher and SSO provided targeted support while tracking and monitoring their progress.

In the middle and senior secondary years, students commented that they were supported by teachers who expected them to achieve their best. However they believed that the feedback they received to inform them of their progress was inconsistent and not clear at times. Senior secondary teachers develop every 5 weeks, interim traffic light reports on student progress. Students commented this information was good feedback but was not consistently available with some students having to ask to see their reports. Students at risk were contacted by teachers and were supported with the development of a learning plan.

Class visits and conversations with students highlighted that in many classes teaching is pitched at the whole class level with adjustments made to the wording of tasks or expected output of assignments for some students. Differentiated teaching to enable multiple entry points, challenge and stretch students and scaffold for those students at risk was inconsistent but more visible in the R-2 years, year 5 and some senior secondary classes.

CDT meetings provide opportunities for teachers to meet with leaders discussing the reading progress of targeted students to inform improvements in practice. Presently, teacher performance development is approached as a group discussion within these meetings. It is an opportune time to refocus performance development processes that have student achievement and data at the centre to guide discussions with line managers around planning teaching to meet all learners' needs.

Direction 2   **Ensure growth for all students by building teacher capacity to understand and analyse achievement data to plan teaching differentiated to learner needs.**

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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

At the principals presentation leaders outlined the many initiatives that have been implemented to support improvement of teacher practice and student achievement while acknowledging the challenges which exist. In the past, teacher and leadership turnover have provided challenges for ongoing continuity of practice and improvement. In 2019 this turnover was minimal in terms of teaching staff, but leadership remained a challenge. Further, processes at the end of 2018 supported by school leadership, engaged staff in the development of school priorities which has cemented a greater sense of ownership by school staff of the priorities. Leadership's establishment of CDT's with LET and Learning Improvement Directorate (LID) support has provided opportunities for teachers to trial and further strengthen their practice.

A number of staff commented that existing performance development processes in CDT meetings have supported them to build their capacity to achieve school priorities but was less effective than past structures due to the group nature and focus. Opportunities exist to continue to strengthen effective feedback for teachers from colleagues and leadership to reflect on, and to further develop their craft through the evaluation and review of performance development processes.

Direction 3   **Strengthen the clarity and rigour of performance development processes to continue to build capacity of staff to best meet the needs of students.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

The influence of previous ESR directions is evident in the school's improvement. The school's planning processes as cited in the development of the site priorities are evidence based and targeted. The established CDT's are an example of how the school is effectively using improvement planning and monitoring processes to raise student achievement. Students feel their teachers genuinely care about them and these strong relationships are evident throughout the school.

The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

Direction 1   Ensure the effectiveness of school improvement processes by making explicit the role of teachers work in Curriculum Development Teams (CDT's) and reach agreements of practice.

Direction 2   Ensure growth for all students by building teacher capacity to understand and analyse achievement data to plan teaching differentiated to learner needs.

Direction 3   Strengthen the clarity and rigour of performance development processes to continue to build capacity of staff to best meet the needs of students.

Based on the school's current performance, Ceduna Area School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.

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GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

Appendix 1

School performance overview

The External School Review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the Department for Education Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2018, 80% of year 1 and 66% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement for year 1, and little or no change for year 2 from the historic baseline average.

In 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 49% of year 3 students, 62% of year 5 students, 57% of year 7 students and 55% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline, year 5 an improvement, and for years 7 and 9 little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 3 has been downwards from 69% to 49%.

For 2018, year 3 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving lower results, while in years 5, 7 and 9 within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2018, 34% of year 3, 15% of year 5, 14% of year 7, and 7% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 9 has been downwards from 23% to 7%.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 50%, or 5 out of 10, students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 33% or 3 out of 9, students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, 29% or 2 out of 7, students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9, and 60% or 3 out of 5, students from year 7 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 69% of year 3 students, 65% of year 5 students, 69% of year 7 students and 43% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement and for year 9, this represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend for year 9 has been downwards from 63% to 43%.

For 2018, year 3, 5, and 7 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within and for year 9 below the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2018, 20% of year 3, 18% of year 5, 17% of year 7 and 2% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 50%, or 3 out of 6 students, from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 75%, or 6 out of 8 students, from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, 50% or 1 out of 2, students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9, and 33% or 1 out of 3, students from year 7 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2018, 55% of students enrolled in February and 96% of those enrolled in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE, successfully achieved SACE. The October SACE completion result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2018, 83% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 78% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 70% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 92% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2018, 95% of grades achieved were at 'C-'level or higher, 20% of grades were at an 'A' level and 43% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline averages for the 'C-' or higher, 'A' grade and 'B' grade respectively.

Twenty one percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 25 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2018.

In terms of 2018 tertiary entrance, 96%, or 23 out of 24 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score.

13 of the 14 students who sought tertiary placements in 2018 successfully gained entrance into their chosen course.