



EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

Report for Kingston-on-Murray Primary
School

Conducted in August 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 Greg Graham, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Phil Garner, Review Principal.

School context

Kingston-on-Murray Primary School is a Reception to Year 7 school located 203kms north-east of Adelaide in the township of Kingston on Murray. The school has a current enrolment of 24 students showing a steady enrolment growth. The school has an ICSEA score of 1019, and is classified as Category 4 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1 Aboriginal student, 8.3% students with disabilities, no students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 4.2% children/young people in care, and 30% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in her first year of tenure. There are no other school leaders. There are 3 teachers (2.1 FTE), including 2 in the early years of their career.

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:

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

Effective Teaching: To what extent is assessment used to inform curriculum planning and instruction?

Improvement Agenda: To what extent does the school make data-informed judgements about teaching and student learning?

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

Kingston-on-Murray Primary School has a strong sense of community. In conversation with both parents and staff, the Review Panel heard about the collaboration and mutual respect between the school and families. Kingston-on-Murray Primary School supports 24 students from 15 families. The Review Panel met with parents representing 4 families. All were supportive and reported that the school is communicative and works with them to support the social, emotional and learning needs of all children. Parents shared a number of examples of ways that they work in partnership with the school staff to support their child. Governing Councillors reported that they feel included in all matters related to the school. The parents' understanding of the use of student achievement data to support and direct the learning programs was very evident. The consensus was that all staff are accessible, listen and respond when issues arise.

Purposeful engagement was observed in play and in class. Recent upgrades to the school environment addressed the safety conditions for learning that exist at the school.

The students valued and respected all of the staff. The students are happy to be at school and enjoy being with their friends. A change in the class structures and access to other learning areas within the school was identified by the students as a positive thing. They thought that the learning was now more "interesting". 'Student voice' was improving, and the students recognised that they are being involved in decisions by adults. Students who spoke with the Review Panel were very articulate about their learning and clear about where their strengths and areas for improvement are. They talked of teachers making it clear that there are different expectations attached to particular year levels, which is helpful to students, as all classes in the school are composite, catering for three or more year levels. A few students talked about the goals in their individual learning plan and were able to understand its purpose. Parents thought the three-way conversations in Term 1 had given them a good picture of 'where their child was up to'.

In her presentation to the Review Panel, the Principal identified the challenge of 'raising the bar' in relation to building resilience of the students. This is to be achieved through work already started in the area of Growth Mindsets. Complementing this is the recent focus on *Visible Learning* theory as part of a small schools network focus. Some of the students were able to explain what Growth Mindset strategies are and the teachers are referencing the vocabulary of this strategy in class. The school has used the *Kids Matter* framework as a focus tool to support the wellbeing of the school community. Evidence from the 2017 Visible Learning survey identified that two thirds of the students were generally positive about the relationships amongst the staff and students.

Teacher and School Services Officer (SSO) professional learning around *Visible Learning* could enhance teaching and learning at Kingston-on-Murray Primary School. It has the potential to raise the intellectual challenge of students and stretch teaching for student learning across the curriculum.

Next steps include developing common understanding for all students, parents and staff that intellectual stretch does not equate to just the provision of work at a higher year level, and that intellectual stretch is applicable to all students and across all areas of learning.

Opportunities for students to be intellectually stretched in their learning results from the development of tasks that provide different perspectives and levels of understanding which are designed for students to be doing the thinking. Planned work within year levels and learning areas in the development of transforming tasks is important work for the school to undertake.

Direction 1

Explore and implement approaches that integrate and effectively embed intellectual stretch, challenge and rigour into daily classroom teaching and learning.

To what extent is assessment used to inform curriculum planning and instruction?

At Kingston-on-Murray Primary School reading and numeracy levels are strong at all year levels. The explicit teaching of writing is evident across Reception to Year 7 and is being taught consistently. Students are assessed regularly by teachers, in line with an agreed schedule. Data is mapped to track student achievement growth. Data is regularly analysed by teachers to identify next teaching points and to differentiate instruction.

Student achievement is compared from year to year to identify trends and monitor growth. The school has a documented and active assessment schedule that focuses on literacy and numeracy. Formal assessments such as PAT-M and PAT-R are analysed to look for gaps in the students' knowledge and skills. This information is used to plan intervention support for targeted students. There is a school-wide focus on writing due to an inconsistent approach identified in 2016. Writing was identified by the students interviewed as their learning strength.

Students value the well-targeted nature of teaching. Practices of *Learning Intentions* and *Success Criteria* processes in the classroom are evident, and students are able to articulate what this means for their learning. Students appreciate consistency of teaching and learning, and value the increasing level of feedback they are getting from teachers about their school work and teacher expectations that they will persist.

Teachers spoke honestly and openly when assigning A-E grades for student achievement against the Australian Curriculum standards. This was being addressed through the school's involvement in the Partnership's professional learning program on moderation and task design. The student groups also spoke of their grades, but were unable to clearly articulate how to move from a 'C' to a 'B' or an 'A'. All members of the school community, but particularly students, will benefit from seeing and knowing what the 'A', 'B' and 'C' standard looks like in a specific learning task or activity, and how to achieve the desired grade.

Involving students through learner voice and co-design, in their own and each other's learning, including pedagogical and assessment design and decision-making, would deepen and enrich the quality of student learning and strengthen higher-band achievement and retention.

Given the number of new staff appointed to the school, it would be beneficial to further develop and embed effective and consistent pedagogical agreements of practice for curriculum planning.

Direction 2

Strengthen the student influence in developing clear understandings of learning intentions and engagement with feedback, data and evidence that enables individual goal-setting.

To what extent does the school make data-informed judgements about teaching and student learning?

The Site Improvement Plan focuses on literacy and numeracy improvements with specific emphasis on understanding textual information in reading and foundational knowledge in numeracy. The SIP specifies that teachers will develop a consistent plan to share data with individual students and a whole-school approach to provide student feedback in these two subjects.

The Principal and staff are open to learning and are beginning to use data in a strategic manner. They recognise the connection between the school's strategic goals and the use of data to provide a focus for planning. Teachers regularly analyse data including NAPLAN, Running Records and PAT tests. PAT-M data is focusing on fluency in number and is linked with the 2016 SIP objectives.

Student progress is recorded on 'Data Walls' which are referred to and updated by staff regularly. This information is used to reflect on student progress, and staff use it to modify teaching tasks and guide the directions of the students' Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).

Intervention programs are strong throughout the school and specifically target students at risk. Student assessment data in numeracy and literacy is the driving force behind the intervention program, which is managed by the Principal in consultation with SSOs and teachers. Some teachers indicated that the information-sharing about intervention activities could be improved to enable them to complement these activities with their own classroom practices. Classroom data charts are evident in all classes and the students and teachers refer to them when talking about the learning and "where to go to next".

The school uses two forms of perception data to identify student engagement and dispositions. The data used from the Client Opinion Survey and Visible Learning surveys recognises that the students are reflective on their learning and know that the "teachers expect me to do my best".

Professional Learning uses a variety of data-informed processes and feedback to assess the teaching and learning across the school. This includes targeted planning for graduate staff and peer observations from the line manager and Senior Leader Learning Improvement Primary (SLLIP) consultant. Staff cited that there is a start of notable change in collaborative practice in teaching and learning across the school.

It has been recognised that the school does use information from a variety of datasets to support and plan for student learning, particularly those students with identified learning difficulties. The next phase of the school's future planning would be to develop learning agreements and processes to cater for the abilities of all students, Reception to Year 7.

Direction 3

Deepen the application of data by teachers to develop explicit target-setting and intentional teaching, using student achievement data to inform decisions and actions at the individual student, cohort and class levels.

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 Kingston-on-Murray Primary School.

Kingston-on-Murray Primary School values environmental education and active natural play as an integral part of educating children attending the school. The 'Riverlink' program enables the students of the school to be involved in an integrated cross-curricular learning program that focuses on the Murray River and immediate environment. The school has a number of outdoor learning spaces (nature play gardens, bird forest, Turtle pond, and others) that enables the students to study flora and fauna native to the area. The students conduct weekly excursions to the river to measure water quality, and record data on flora and fauna changes. This information is passed on to regional authorities and advertised through the local media. The school offers camping opportunities for visiting schools as part of the Riverlink program. The students then 'teach' what they learnt through their own studies with the students of the visiting schools. The Riverlink program complements the general learning program of the school and is seen as a valuable tool in engaging and empowering students with their learning.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

Kingston-on-Murray Primary School provides effective leadership in strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions for a diverse and complex student population. Teachers are provided with and use structured time for ongoing collaborative planning.

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

1. Explore and implement approaches that integrate and effectively embed intellectual stretch, challenge and rigour into daily classroom teaching and learning.
2. Strengthen the student influence in developing clear understandings of learning intentions and engagement with feedback, data and evidence that enables individual goal-setting.
3. Deepen the application of data by teachers and students to develop explicit target-setting and intentional teaching, using student achievement data to inform decisions and actions at the individual student, cohort and class levels.

Based on the school's current performance, Kingston-on-Murray 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.



Natalie Coote
PRINCIPAL
KINGSTON-ON-MURRAY 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 Kingston-on-Murray 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 91.9%.

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).

In considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making a judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school. The data below represents a summary of aggregated data for Kingston-on-Murray Primary School over the years 2012 to 2016. This is done for two reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year, and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohort of students.

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. Between 2012 and 2016, 10 of 16 (63%) Year 1, and 9 of 16 (56%) Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Between 2012 and 2016, the reading progress, as measured by NAPLAN, indicates that 11 of 15 (73%) Year 3 students, 8 of 10 (80%) Year 5 students, and 5 of 5 (100%) Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA.

Between 2012 and 2016, 6 of 15 (40%) Year 3 students, 4 of 10 (40%) Year 5 students, and none of the 5 Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 3 of 4 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016.

Numeracy

Between 2012 and 2016, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 10 of 15 (67%) Year 3 students, 9 of 10 (90%) Year 5 students, and 5 of 5 (100%) Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD SEA.

Between 2012 and 2016, 4 of 15 (27%) Year 3, 4 of 10 (40%) Year 5, and 1 of 5 (20%) 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, 2 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016.