

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW
REPORT FOR CLEVE AREA SCHOOL

Conducted in May 2015



**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 overarching review question is "How well does this school improve student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and equity?"

This External School Review has evaluated:

- *the school's self-review processes and findings,*
- *the school's achievement data and progress over time,*
- *the outcomes of the meetings and interviews with representatives from the school, and*
- *parent and student views about the school.*

The External School Review included an analysis of the school's key policies and procedures.

The support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community is acknowledged.

This External School Review was conducted by Julie Hardy, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and Cezanne Green, Review Principal.

Policy compliance

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

The Principal of Cleve Area School has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

Implementation of the *DECD Student Attendance Policy* was checked specifically against a documented set of criteria. The school has implemented tracking and intervention processes, and was found to be compliant with this policy. In 2014, the school reported an average attendance rate of 89.8% in 2014, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Cleve Area School is a Reception to Year 12 school with approximately 290 students situated on the Eyre Peninsula in the west of South Australia. The school is classified as DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage Category 6 and has an Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA) score of 1009.

The school population includes 8% students with Disabilities, and 12% of families eligible for school card assistance.

The school operates Sims Farm, a 400ha working farm and a boarding house to cater for out of town students while they attend the Cleve Area School Agricultural Course.

Leadership configuration: Principal, Deputy Principal and 5 Coordinators: Junior School, Middle School, Senior School, Learning Technologies and Agriculture & Vocational Education and Training.

Lines of inquiry

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

Student Learning:	How well are students achieving over time?
Improvement Agenda:	How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement? How effectively are evidence and data translated into actions?
Effective Teaching:	To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of students?

How well are students achieving over time?

Literacy and Numeracy have been an improvement focus at the school in recent years. In Reading, the percentage of students at or above the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) is highest at Year 3, e.g. from 2012 to 2014: 88%, 100% and 80% of students exceeded the standard. At Year 5, the percentage was lower but demonstrated an upward trend over the same period, and there was an improvement on historical average at Years 7 and 9. In Numeracy, there has been a similar pattern at a higher level with the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the SEA at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in 2014 being 100%, 74%, 80% and 83% respectively.

Higher order skills are assessed in the higher proficiency bands of NAPLAN. At Cleve Area School, the percentage of students achieving in the upper proficiency bands in Reading is highest at Year 3 and declines at Years 5, 7 and 9. For example, in 2014, the percentage of students in the higher proficiency bands in Reading at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 was 27%, 26%, 16% and 12% respectively. In Numeracy, the percentage of students achieving in the higher proficiency bands is lower at Years 3 and 5, and higher at Years 7 and 9 being 13%, 4%, 20% and 17% respectively in 2014. The challenge for the school is to lift the proportion of students achieving in the higher proficiency bands, and the lines of inquiry focus on lifting achievement in this area.

The South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) is a qualification designed to provide a pathway to further education and training, or the workforce. At Cleve Area School, the SACE completion rate was 96% in 2014; that is, 20 of the 21 potential completers, completed SACE. When compared to the state, in 2014, students achieved more A, B and C grades and less D and E grades at Year 12 than the state average.

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

Sustained improvements in educational outcomes come about by engaging in collaborative self-review involving both analysis of performance, and the evaluation of practices, programs and improvement strategies that inform future improvement priorities. The Review Panel was particularly interested in how the school reviews its progress and plans for the future.

In 2015, the site improvement priorities at the school are Literacy and Numeracy, Curriculum and Pedagogy. Staff identified the introduction of a common pedagogical approach, a focus on Positive Behaviours for Learning, leadership and team building, and the influence of a shared Literacy Coach as being influential in creating improved outcomes for students. In addition, the provision of flexible pathways and learning, including the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificates in Agriculture, was also identified as positively impacting on student learning in the past three years. These strategies align with the identified improvement priorities over that time.

The school has identified reliable assessments to track and monitor student achievement in literacy and numeracy, and measure progress against targets in the Site Improvement Plan. A schedule for data collection is in place and currently under review. The panel heard that state-wide data, such as NAPLAN and SACE, are collated, analysed and discussed as they become available, by all staff at staff meetings. In addition, secondary staff monitor student progress in VET and SACE data and Reception to Year 5 staff use release time to collect, collate and interpret diagnostic data.

Teachers and leaders talked about the time required to collate data in a form that supports the tracking of students across year levels as being an obstacle to routine use of the identified data sets to monitor growth in student learning. Teachers reported that data was not easily accessible to inform planning and classroom practice.

The Site Improvement Plan outlines strategies, evaluation measures and broad targets in relation to the improvement priorities. The panel saw evidence of ongoing self-review processes and reports validating these processes and their outcomes. Leaders spoke about how review processes draw on multiple measures of data including the routine use of student feedback to teachers to inform practice. The panel noted that the broad nature of the plan impeded the translation of planned strategies into specific classroom level action.

Direction 1

Increase the proportion of students in the higher proficiency bands by ensuring school improvement plans have a clear focus on classroom implementation, with specific and agreed strategies and explicit targets for student learning outcomes that are regularly evaluated.

How effectively are evidence and data translated into actions?

The panel saw evidence of a suite of data sets being collected to track learning and engagement. Teachers spoke about informal opportunities for discussing student learning and the process for documenting student progress and passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year. Teachers also talked about additional data sets that they collected to inform their teaching.

The leadership team talked about how attendance data is tracked and analysed. The Review Panel saw evidence of documented processes being enacted to address non-attendance. Members of the Governing Council talked to the Review Panel about their efforts to raise attendance of senior students during annual harvest to address attendance rates at Years 11 and 12. Senior school staff talked about processes put in place to support senior students to plan and work around scheduled absences. Examples include provision of semester overviews and deadlines for every subject, and co-planning between staff to ensure summative assessments were spaced to avoid clashes.

In the Junior School, release time is provided for teachers to collect and collate data to inform their teaching, however a systematic approach to teaching teams planning together was not evident. Teachers reported a range of ways they used the data to inform their classroom practice. For example, identifying common needs and forming student groups accordingly. The panel heard how attempts had been made to track the learning of individual students using a data wall but that the collation of data into a form that made it useful for this purpose was time consuming and difficult. The panel noted the need for data collection and analysis processes that allow teachers easy access to collated data to inform shared discussions about student learning and facilitate smooth transition between year levels and sub-schools.

Direction 2

Provide regular opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively to track student progress through reliable and easily accessible data collection and analysis processes. Adjust teaching programs and intervention strategies accordingly.

How effectively are teachers supporting student learning?

The panel saw evidence of strong community partnerships at the school. Parents who spoke to the Review Panel, talked about how welcome they felt at the school, and cited the attitude of staff in “going the extra mile” in supporting students and being available, both in person and via email, as being important in building strong partnerships. Parents spoke about being able to talk directly with teachers and being well informed about how their children were going at school. The Review Panel heard how Sims Farm has the support of a range of community businesses and this, in turn, supports learning opportunities for students. Students spoke positively about their input into school decision-making and felt that their voice was heard and acted upon. Teachers talked about a range of ways that they use feedback from students to reflect upon their practice.

The Australian Curriculum and the SACE guide the programming and planning of learning. The Review Panel saw evidence of programs that are structured and sequenced. Teachers identified the whole-school literacy approach as being influential in their planning, assessing and teaching.

A whole-school literacy block agreement, currently under review, was provided to the panel. It included expectations in relation to daily literacy activities and levels of expected achievement, as well as expectations in relation to pedagogy and the Australian Curriculum. This agreement was supported by draft literacy improvement plans at Junior, Middle and Senior school levels. The panel heard that this agreement was currently guiding work in the Junior School and is being moved into the Middle School with a view to creating consistent approaches to literacy teaching from Reception to Year 10. The Review Panel noted that the school would benefit from a more explicit plan that includes specific targets for student achievement at each year level, to ensure the progress of every student is evaluated.

Teachers talked about the influence of a Literacy Coach, shared by three schools, in developing and documenting the whole-school approach to literacy. This funded position ended in 2014. The challenge for the school is to implement and evaluate this agreement, continue the pedagogical approaches outlined in it and achieve the documented expectations for student learning through the current leadership structure. The Review Panel noted the opportunity for support for leadership development in this area through networking at the DECD local partnership level.

Direction 3

Implement and document consistent programming and planning practices that include a systematic approach to differentiated teaching. Support consistency of classroom practice by aligning professional learning, classroom observations, and performance and development processes.

In exploring this line of inquiry, the Review Panel was particularly interested in the extent to which the school provides opportunities for children to be engaged in challenging learning and develop high level skills. Differentiating instruction involves the provision of multiple learning pathways so learners can have access to the most appropriate learning opportunities that best match their capacity to learn.

Senior students talked about the range of learning opportunities available to them as a positive aspect of the school. They felt that they were not restricted in their choice as courses were available through Open Access and local delivery, though they reported that the reliability of the internet impacted on courses offered by Open Access. The panel heard that the school Moodle was used by some teachers to provide online access to course materials and noted a potential for the use of the Moodle to be expanded to provide a much broader range of materials and resources for students to access online.

Teachers across the school reported a range of techniques that are used to provide challenge in learning tasks. However, they also identified that an increased focus on rigor and high expectations, as well as more targeted professional learning, would further strengthen their efforts to ensure students are challenged in their learning and developing high level skills.

Direction 4

Increase the number of students demonstrating high level learning by providing consistent and challenging learning experience for students from Reception to Year 12. Use collaborative planning practices to ensure that task design provides opportunities for intellectual stretch and allows children to demonstrate high level learning.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Cleve Area School is tracking well. Good performance is evident through growth in student achievement and ongoing, collaborative review processes.


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

1. Increase the proportion of students in the higher proficiency bands by ensuring school improvement plans have a clear focus on classroom implementation, with specific and agreed strategies and explicit targets for student learning outcomes that are regularly evaluated.
2. Provide regular opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively to track student progress through reliable and easily accessible data collection and analysis processes. Adjust teaching programs and intervention strategies accordingly.
3. Implement and document consistent programming and planning practices that include a systematic approach to differentiated teaching. Support consistency of classroom practice by aligning professional learning, classroom observations and performance and development processes.
4. Increase the number of students demonstrating high level learning by providing consistent and challenging learning experience for students from Reception to Year 12. Use collaborative planning practices to ensure that task design provides opportunities for intellectual stretch and allows children to demonstrate high level learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Cleve Area School will be externally reviewed again in 2019.



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT

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.



Ray Marino
PRINCIPAL
CLEVE AREA SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson