



EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

ON-TRACK EVALUATION REPORT

Hackham West R-7 School

One-Year Return Visit Conducted in October 2017



Government of South Australia

Department for Education and
Child Development

This On-Track Evaluation Report should be read in conjunction with the report of the External School Review conducted at Hackham West R-7 School in May 2016.

ON-TRACK EVALUATION PROCESS

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 (ESR) is to support schools to raise achievement, sustain high performance and to provide quality assurance to build and sustain public confidence in DECD schools. All DECD schools are externally reviewed over a four-year cycle. After the review the Principal and the Governing Council Chairperson receive a written report with a number of Directions for improvement.

A copy of the External School Review Report is available on the school website.

In some cases, when the Review Panel finds cause for concern about the levels of achievement and growth, together with evidence about the school's capacity for systematic improvement, a school will be advised that they will be visited again in one year.

Schools with a 'one-year return' are assisted during the intervening period by the Education Director and other DECD officers to ensure coordinated, targeted and systematic support is provided. Intervention is concentrated on building the school's capacity to improve teaching and learning across the school, lift expectations and achieve results as measured against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement.

During the On-Track Evaluation process, which occurs 12-15 months after the initial visit, a Review Panel determines the extent to which the school has, with external support, developed sustainable internal capacity to improve effectiveness and raise student achievement.

The school's Priority Improvement Plan (PIP) was the main document used as the basis for the On-Track Evaluation visit.

The On-Track Evaluation visit was conducted by Helen Tunney, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Lyn Bretag, Review Principal.

POLICY COMPLIANCE (as per ESR Report)

The External School Review process included verification by the Principal that key Policies are implemented and adhered to.

There were no outstanding matters to be addressed.

DIRECTIONS FROM THE EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW REPORT, May 2016

1. Design and deliver learning opportunities that connect with the range of learner needs through strategic analysis and triangulation of data that identifies students' miscues, strengths and learning styles.
2. Maximise student engagement and potential achievement through collective inquiry into, and implementation of, teaching strategies that enthuse students and inspire active participation in purposeful learning.
3. Set aspirational and relevant growth targets for students and determine intentional whole-school priorities through collective analysis of valid data to inform direction.
4. Build teacher capacity to use data diagnostically to inform teaching through the implementation of strategically designed processes of Professional Learning and Performance Development.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATED TO SCHOOL CONTEXT

The Principal has advised that the complexity of the school has deepened since the May 2016 External School Review.

- Enrolment has increased from 109 to 128.
- 2017 DECD Category of Disadvantage has changed from 2 to 1.
- The percentage of Aboriginal students has increased to 35% (from 22%).
- The percentage of students with a verified disability has increased to 35% (from 27%).

DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

The Principal has advised that the school focused on the following to address the ESR Directions:

1. Pedagogy appropriate to learning needs informed by data.
2. Engagement and differentiated teaching approaches.
3. Growth targets for whole school and individual students.
4. Data-informed performance development and alignment of professional learning.

The PIP was sent to the Executive Director, Preschool and School Improvement in Term 3 2016.

In 2017, the school transitioned from the PIP to a Site Improvement Plan (SIP).

STRATEGIC SUPPORT PROVIDED TO THE SCHOOL OVER THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS:

The Principal has advised that the school has been supported by the following DECD personnel:

- The Education Director.
- The Principal Consultant.
- The Senior Leader: Learning Improvement Primary (SLIP).
- Support Services staff, in particular, the Speech Pathologist, Behaviour Support Coach and the Student Wellbeing Leader.

- Officers of the Learning Improvement Division.
- An officer of the School Operations Directorate.

As well, a Specific Learning Difficulties Association of South Australia (SPELD) officer works in a voluntary capacity in the school.

This strategic support has been coordinated and effective.

EVIDENCE AND EVALUATION REFERENCED TO THE DIRECTIONS IN THE PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Direction 1

Design and deliver learning opportunities which connect with the range of learner needs through strategic analysis and triangulation of data that identifies students' miscues, strengths and learning styles.

Pedagogy appropriate to learning needs informed by data.

ON-TRACK EVIDENCE

Evidence found of the actions the school has taken to address the Direction

- The school uses data to identify students for interventions.
- Teachers regularly engage with specialists to build capacity for improvement.
- Staff have become more focused on data, all could speak about ways they use it now.
- The school has a schedule to regularly collect data.
- Staff meet regularly to analyse data and apply it to learning design.
- The school has developed curriculum pacing documents for English and maths, which scope and sequence identified essential learning across year levels.
- The school has developed curriculum guides, which are used to track and record individual student growth through the essential learnings that are listed in the pacing documents. This has provided a classroom-based student file system, which makes individual student data easily accessible to all staff.
- A next step the school has identified for itself is to incorporate a data element into the whole-school planner, which is now used by all teachers for programming.
- Whole-school literacy and numeracy agreements, which specify common elements of content and teaching approaches, have been developed and implemented.

REVIEW PANEL EVALUATION

Extent to which actions have been / are being implemented effectively and capacity for on-going improvement has been developed

The panel concluded that data literacy in the school has increased considerably. Teachers value and rely on the information that triangulated student learning data provides in order to target intentional teaching. The school has developed a whole-school approach to the collection, analysis and use of data. Whole-school awareness about the value of using an evidence-based approach to planning and decision-making has evolved since the 2016 ESR.

The school is on-track with the design and delivery of learning opportunities, which connect with the range of learner needs, through strategic analysis and triangulation of data that identifies students' miscues, strengths and learning styles. It is well-placed to increase the levels of differentiation that teachers are enabling.

The revised Direction for the school is:

Increase the academic learning growth of students by using data to accurately differentiate for and stretch each student to their next point of learning.

Direction 2

Maximise student engagement and potential achievement through collective inquiry into, and implementation of, teaching strategies that enthuse students and inspire active participation in purposeful learning.

Engagement and differentiated teaching approaches.

ON-TRACK EVIDENCE

Evidence found of the actions the school has taken to address the Direction

- The school has individually profiled each student's language level, and social and emotional self-management in the school environment. This profiling has reframed the ways in which staff understand the individual communication and social and emotional needs of each student at school. These deeper understandings enable staff to understand student behaviour as communication, and to respond proactively, in order to de-escalate behaviour and to maintain a learning focus in the classroom.
- The school has increased student resilience for learning by developing the social and emotional self-management of students in the learning environment. The school is effectively developing positive student mindsets for learning, and using quantitative measures of growth in student mindsets.
- The school has become a much more positive place for students. Students told the panel that students are being kinder to each other, students are staying on-task better, and teachers are 'nicer' to students. One student said "teachers have learned to trust students". Another said "teachers are good at knowing when people are having trouble, they stay calm and kind".
- A student told the panel that teachers have a positive mindset now, they are inclusive, patient, and make the learning environment a positive place.
- Language is now understood as central to the learning development of each student, and this has led to whole-school practices, such as the provision of visual supports for all students, and a vocabulary focus in all learning.
- Sensory adjustments and environmental adaptations have been made across the school in all learning spaces. Physical classroom spaces are relaxed with options for students to spread, without interrupting teaching and learning.
- A panel member observed every classroom. All classes were observed to be settled and engaged.
- Interventions to support the development of social and emotional self-management are varied and strongly resourced. These interventions are highly valued by staff and students, and are seen to be effective.
- Student behaviour data and critical incident data has significantly reduced.

REVIEW PANEL EVALUATION

Extent to which actions have been / are being implemented effectively and capacity for on-going improvement has been developed

The panel concluded that the careful and considered approaches that the school has taken to improve student social and emotional self-management for learning have been highly effective. These approaches have been embedded in, not isolated from, classroom practice and academic learning tasks. The school has reframed the ways in which staff interpret and respond to the negative behaviors of students. This changed staff behaviour has enabled a significant increase in student engagement and active participation in purposeful learning.

The panel was told by teachers and students that, whilst it is much-improved, the behavior of a few high-needs students can still have a regularly disruptive impact on teaching and learning. It is important that the school develop ways to frequently and continuously monitor the impact of seriously disruptive behaviors on staff and students by seeking direct feedback from them about this. In this way, the school can continue to increase its pro-activity in the arena of student social and emotional self-management for learning.

The revised Direction for the school is:

Use an evidence-base to continuously and closely monitor the impact of student behaviour on the quality of the teaching and learning environment.

Direction 3

Set aspirational and relevant growth targets for students and determine intentional whole-school priorities through collective analysis of valid data to inform direction.

Growth targets for whole school and individual students.

ON-TRACK EVIDENCE

Evidence found of the actions the school has taken to address the Direction

- The school seeks to achieve 12 months' learning growth for each student over the same period. The school has developed nuanced demographic-specific ways to target and quantify such growth. These targets are whole-school and common for all students.
- The school uses language and literacy levels to set targets for writing growth and to monitor student progress.
- The school has developed its own target for student reading growth: 5 levels of growth or more in one school year.
- The school seeks to achieve 10% or better growth in a maths screening tool.
- Student language growth is monitored using a language screening tool.
- Targets for growth in social and emotional self-management for learning are based on a screening tool that is used for all students.
- The focus for teachers has shifted from age-appropriate expectations of students to providing for their actual developmental needs.
- Students told the panel that they have class and individual targets for learning and social and emotional development. Students said that goals help to improve grades. Setting goals becomes a habit that then drives one's own learning. This is an indicator of the development of a positive learning mindset.
- Staff set, use, and make public personal goals and targets for their professional learning. They told the panel that they value this.

REVIEW PANEL EVALUATION

Extent to which actions have been / are being implemented effectively and capacity for on-going improvement has been developed

The panel concluded that the school is now making strong use of data to inform direction and to determine whole-school priorities. As data literacy across the school is increasing, the value of setting evidence-based targets and goals for growth in learning is being understood. The panel found evidence that this increased understanding is now embedded in the school, and it is contributing to increasing levels of student academic learning growth. Students told the panel that they would like their learning to be harder and more challenging. The school is well-placed to continue to empower students as learners through goal-setting and quality feedback, and a careful, scaffolded increase in the academic stretch and challenge of all students.

The revised Direction for the school is:

Increase the level of rigor and challenge for students through quality task design that regularly engages all students through inquiry and problem-solving.

Direction 4

Build teacher capacity to use data diagnostically to inform teaching through the implementation of strategically designed processes of Professional Learning and Performance Development.

Data-informed performance development and alignment of professional learning.

ON-TRACK EVALUATION

Evidence found of the actions the school has taken to address the Direction

- Teachers told the panel that they value highly the access they are given to professional learning. They find it very motivating.

- Teachers appreciate having regular access to experts and support service staff who assist them in improving learning for students.
- Teachers talked positively about the value of peer observations.
- Teachers said that their learning is aligned with school priorities, which assists them with achieving goals.
- Teachers said that they feel a strong sense of trust towards them from the Leadership Team.
- Teachers said that the quality of leadership in the school has improved significantly under the current Leadership Team.
- Changes in the school identified by teachers include: the development of a strong, collaborative culture; transparent and open leadership that unites the school in common goals and moves things forward collectively; a shift in the community opinion about the school becoming more valued and recognised; and recruiting staff to the school who are a good 'fit' for its demographics and characteristics.
- The development of the common planning tool is very successful and valued. It has created a consistent method of planning across the school. This supports teachers in transferring their learning and the SIP priorities into their classroom practice. The common planner also facilitates staff collaboration and team work.
- Teachers value that they have time each term to plan collaboratively with the School Services Officers (SSOs) who work in their classrooms.
- All school staff have been developed through the same professional learning. This has been an important strategy in improving the quality of the school environment for students, as well as the effectiveness of teaching practice.
- All teachers talked to the panel about improvements in the ways they understand and use data now to intentionalize teaching.

REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS

Extent to which actions have been / are being implemented effectively and capacity for on-going improvement has been developed

The panel concluded that strategic leadership in the school has become very strong. Staff have been unified as a collaborative team around a lucid improvement agenda, that is evidence-based and skillfully targeted to the needs and demographics of the school. The professional learning and performance development of staff is being strongly and coherently tailored around this improvement agenda. Staff are empowered and energized by this quality improvement culture, and are inspired to work relentlessly for student learning improvements in their complex classes. Staff are able to see small increments of growth both in their students' academic learning and in their self-concepts as learners. This motivates staff even more in a continuous improvement cycle.

The school and, in particular, its leaders, are to be congratulated on the significant improvements they have facilitated in the health of the learning environment as a whole.

OUTCOMES OF THE ON-TRACK EVALUATION

Based on the evidence provided, Hackham West R-7 School is On-Track to ensure effective implementation of the ESR Directions.

The Review Panel found that self-review processes are regularly and strategically used to determine the impact school strategies and practices are having on student achievement. Student achievement data and other evidence are used to inform decisions and actions at the individual, student and whole-school levels. Effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions. Teachers are provided with and use structured time for ongoing collaborative professional learning.

The Principal will continue to work with the Education Director to implement the following External School Review Directions:

1. Increase the academic learning growth of students by using data to accurately differentiate for and stretch each student to their next point of learning.
2. Use an evidence-base to continuously and closely monitor the impact of student behaviour on the quality of the teaching and learning environment.
3. Increase the level of rigor and challenge for students through quality task design that regularly engages all students through inquiry and problem-solving.
4. Build teacher capacity to use data diagnostically to inform teaching through the implementation of strategically designed processes of Professional Learning and Performance Development.

Based on current performance, Hackham West R-7 School will be externally reviewed again in 2020.



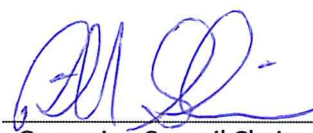
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