

# EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

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Report for Seaview Downs Primary School

Conducted in June 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 Kathryn Entwistle, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Phil Garner, Review Principal.*

## School context

Seaview Downs Primary School is a Reception to Year 7 school located 16kms south-west of Adelaide. The school was established in 1968 and has a current enrolment of 241 students, the highest in five years. The school has an ICSEA score of 1013 and is classified as Category 6 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1.4% Aboriginal students, 7.7% students with disabilities, 16.7% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 1.4% children in care, and 16% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in the third year of his tenure, a Deputy Principal in the first year of her tenure, and a Coordinator in Literacy in a twelve-month, internal position.

## 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 four key areas from the External School Review Framework:

<b>Effective Teaching:</b>	<b>How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?</b>
<b>Improvement Agenda:</b>	<b>How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?</b>
<b>School Community Partnerships:</b>	<b>How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?</b>
<b>Effective Leadership:</b>	<b>To what extent are the school's professional learning and performance and development processes effective in building teacher capacity?</b>

## How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

At Seaview Downs Primary School an inquiry approach to learning has been practised for a number of years. This was made evident to the External School Review (ESR) panel members through a number of forums conducted during the process, and within the HASS and science aspects of the Australian Curriculum (AC).

Through the classroom visits and conversations with teaching staff, the ESR panel saw examples of learning that has been designed to engage students in processes that require creative thinking, experimentation, research and presentation of findings. Teachers plan units of inquiry with reference to the school's agreed eight concepts, conducting two units each term. Teachers with whom the panel spoke described the more disparate approach to inquiry-based learning that operates in 2017, citing historic approaches as more consistent and structured. Evidence sourced throughout the ESR confirmed this perception. Planning documents provided to the ESR panel made evident the diverse approaches that operate across the school. In some instances, a strategic and intentional approach is apparent and alignment to the Australian Curriculum achievement standards is clear. Other examples represented a more emergent approach to planning inquiry; responsive to student interest, 'wonderings' or inspiration, where intentionality or targeted teaching was less obvious. In one instance, the ESR panel member was provided documents downloaded from an interstate education system website as examples of a teacher's planning. Additionally, the design of assessment tasks that allow students to demonstrate their learning also varies across classes; some providing students multiple opportunities to demonstrate and apply learning, whilst others access a more restrictive form of assessment characterised by a presentation. ESR panel members acknowledge the school-wide focus that encourages student inquiry and investigation and agrees that this

long-practised approach is intended to develop learner expertise and deepen cognition. An opportunity to review the planning and assessment processes and their alignment with the AC outcomes is apparent and will ascertain the ongoing efficacy of this approach.

Under recent leadership, an intent to introduce contemporary practice across all aspects of the curriculum, with a focus on developing consistent and coherent pedagogical approaches in literacy and numeracy, is evident. The ESR panel members were provided with the recently developed literacy agreement during the leaders' presentation. This comprehensive document includes a list of expectations regarding approaches to aspects of the English curriculum, as well as organisational approaches to implementation of literacy learning. Closer examination and conversation with teachers showed that, at the time of the ESR, the impact and influence of this document was limited. Whilst the document references some specific approaches, such as the teaching of comprehension strategies or 'incorporating the Big Six of Literacy', a certain lack of specificity exists. Teachers of Years 1 to 7 classes are expected to 'implement a spelling program' and to 'differentiate student learning'. Potentially, as a result of the unformulated expectations, class visits and a review of students' exercise books demonstrated that a traditional approach to teaching spelling remains. The opportunity to clarify and make specific actual non-negotiable aspects of the literacy agreement and, thus, broaden a more contemporary and engaging approach to literacy learning across Seaview Downs Primary School is noticeable.

During day two of the ESR, the panel was provided with a copy of the school's numeracy agreement. The document includes reference to pedagogical, curriculum and assessment implementations, and represents a contemporary approach to the teaching of numeracy. Class visits, student work samples and teacher plans provided to the ESR panel made clear the opportunities many students have to engage in numerical learning that requires them to solve problems and think creatively and deeply. Many examples were apparent of students required to respond to worded problems and some examples of students responding to provocations and involved in investigations. Teachers reported that collaborative learning opportunities designed by the Marion Coast Partnership had supported their planning and learning in this area. The panel saw first-hand the impact that the work of this Partnership is having on student learning in classes.

During many processes of the ESR, the panel heard that the needs of students who do not meet SEA are responded to intentionally through intervention that involves withdrawal from class to participate in targeted literacy or numeracy programs. Inclusion in these programs is based on results sourced from achievement data. The strategic use of data to design learning for students meeting or exceeding benchmarks and within class was not widely apparent across the school. In one instance, the panel heard that a teacher had intentionally accessed PAT Maths and Reading data, and used this to identify areas for improvement in the application of comprehension strategies and mathematical concepts. In most other examples, both students and teachers refer to data used to identify a student's level of understanding and to either form groups based on ability or to identify the next level for achievement. The new leader's intent to use data as a means to address the learning needs of *all* students was very clear during the ESR, one teacher commenting 'the use of data is making us more accountable'. The ESR panel members concur that this priority is timely and appropriate.

**Direction 1**

**Deliver challenging and engaging learning opportunities across all aspects of the curriculum through collaborative planning and assessment design that is both contemporary and aligned with the achievement standards.**

**Direction 2**

**Meet the needs of all learners and ensure each student's potential is maximised through intentional teaching that is informed by analysis of the range of achievement data generated across the school.**

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

In 2017, a review of Intervention and Support (I&S) processes has seen a more strategic approach implemented. Students are identified for inclusion in I&S programs through recognised intervention points informed by achievement data. Intentional and high-yield programs, such as QuickSmart, Literacy Level Intervention and Two Smart, provide students opportunities to develop skills and strategies that support their learning on return to class. School Services Officers (SSOs) who implement the programs have accessed professional learning to support their work and are instrumental in contributing to the development of learning plans that include monitoring of student progress. The intentional review of this important aspect of improvement in student learning is commended by the ESR panel members.

Document analysis and the leaders' presentation allowed the ESR panel to examine two planning documents designed to bring about consistency and improvement. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) has been generated, and includes reference to high-yield practices, such as pedagogical consistency, tracking student growth and student engagement. The detailed format includes *priorities, strategies, outcomes, measures* and *targets*. The ESR panel appreciates the intent behind this document and acknowledges the resolve to bring about coherence and rigour in practice across the school. However, the opportunity to review the influence that SIP strategies genuinely have on classroom practice and to consider the measurability of targets is apparent. Few staff with whom the panel spoke referred to the plan or its impact on their practice.

The second document discussed with the panel was the school's *Narrative*. This was written in 2016 by members of the Leadership Team during a professional learning conference attended off-site. It was tabled to staff on their return to the school and leaders described the resulting discussion with staff as rigorous. The document includes reference to the collective belief that all students can learn, that thinking processes are more valuable than answers, and that students are capable of high achievement. Some staff with whom the panel spoke fully appreciated and concurred with the sentiments represented in the document, while others' comments made evident that the belief all students can learn is not yet representative of their philosophy.

Teachers report that both the SIP and the Narrative were developed with minimal staff input and, at the time of the ESR, the impact either document is having on practice across the school is variable. The ESR panel sees this as an excellent opportunity to establish a more collective approach to improvement planning and to develop strategic processes of self-review across the school. The collaborative identification of data-driven improvement targets and clear strategies to achieve these will contribute strongly to shared responsibility and ownership of improvement imperatives. The development of systems that ensure all staff are able to participate in processes that monitor progress towards agreed targets will enable a regular and emergent approach to self-evaluation and promote the concept of shared accountability across the school.

#### **Direction 3**

**Establish collective responsibility and action through collaborative planning processes that develop measurable and strategic improvement plans that are then monitored by regular systems of self-review.**

### How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?

Students with whom the panel spoke presented as perceptive, informed and insightful learners. During class visits and discussion groups, the students were able to talk about learning in quite sophisticated ways, displaying a level of maturity and awareness that was clearly astute. In one discussion with Early Years students, the panel member heard 6 out of 7 students explain that their work could be 'harder' and that they would appreciate this, citing that "if it's more challenging, you get better at doing it" and "if work is trickier, you go more slowly and make more mistakes and that means you're learning". Older students' responses represented an equally sound understanding of quality learning experiences. One student stated that teachers help the students who are struggling, but the 'kids in the middle' always miss out. Another student referred to the importance of students having opportunities to speak about and experiment with their learning rather than listening to a disproportionate amount of teacher talk. NAPLAN Reading and

Numeracy data also represents the potential students bring to the school, especially those in the early years of school. The ESR panel members encourage staff to consider how they might capture the voice and opinions of the informed student community when planning teaching and learning at Seaview Downs Primary School.

The concept of Growth Mindsets has been introduced throughout 2016 and exceptionally strong evidence that this has contributed to students' perceptions of learning was apparent. Students, teachers and Governing Council (GC) members all discussed this concept with confidence and clarity, and GC members spoke about their children employing the approach in situations at home. The deliberate and focused introduction of this initiative provides a model from which further teaching strategies that inspire students as active and informed learners can be developed.

In some classrooms students are able to make decisions about their progress and monitor their growth to known outcomes. These students have access to feedback that informs them of their existing achievement and how they will continue their improvement. One teacher discussed using 'feed forward' as her strategy to enable this. Other students are provided with rubrics against which they can assess the characteristics of A-E grades. In one classroom, students had been provided the criteria that a 'B' level of achievement would comprise and then co-constructed those that they believed would represent 'C' or 'A' level achievement. The panel agrees these teaching strategies represent those that will ensure students are informed, responsible and active owners of the learning process. In other discussions and class visits, students informed the panel that they do not know how they are progressing until they get their report, the teacher says 'well done', they receive a sticker or tick, or they finish early. Despite the sophisticated awareness of learning students display, teaching strategies that make clear the purpose of learning and the criteria for success, that enable students to set learning goals and knowledgeably monitor their progress, were not widely evident.

#### **Direction 4**

**Deliver learning experiences that enable students to understand, monitor and assess their learning.**

### **To what extent are the school's professional learning and performance and development processes effective in building teacher capacity?**

The leaders' presentation on day one made evident to the panel that in 2017 there are nine improvement strategies identified as priorities at SDPS. Five of these require teachers to implement rigorous and effective approaches to curriculum planning, data analysis, differentiation, tracking achievement and pedagogical consistency. The panel members, in consultation with the leaders, agreed that the concept of teacher capacity to undertake these requirements would be pivotal in achieving the identified priorities. Consequently, inquiry into the systems of Performance and Development (PD) and Professional Learning (PL) and their place in ensuring staff capacity to respond to improvement priorities was incorporated into the ESR.

Evidence that staff have access to targeted PD was apparent through many forums of the ESR. Teachers and SSOs meet with line managers in Term 1. Prior to this meeting, teaching staff reflect on their performance against the National Professional Standards for Teachers and the SIP priorities. One teacher commented that it was this process that allowed her to become more familiar with some of the aspects of the SIP. Conversations between line managers and staff determine goals towards which staff will work and in Term 3, written feedback is provided to the staff member. Documents provided to the ESR panel showed this feedback to be detailed and including reference to actions the staff member will undertake to reach the intended goals. Staff uniformly expressed their appreciation for this feedback. The leader commented to the ESR panel that he intends to further authenticate this process through the initiation of peer and line manager observations and co-planning and teaching. The panel agrees that this intent will further develop the impact that PD has on building teachers' practice and meeting school expectations.

Through many processes of the ESR, the panel heard of the impact that Partnership initiatives have had on developing planning and practice. Specialist teachers, in particular, welcome the opportunity to collaborate with peers who teach within the same curriculum area. Other teachers spoke of the opportunity to develop their confidence regarding grading, through moderation across sites. Staff also discussed attending

conferences delivered by experts in certain fields as having impacted on practice. The concept of PL as something that is undertaken off-campus and delivered by external agencies was common across the staff. Whilst some staff reported that an hour of staff meeting time is dedicated to PL each week, they referred to the time as being used to discuss facilities, the upcoming ESR or special events. Staff informed the ESR panel that they would welcome opportunities to engage in regular and rigorous PL opportunities on-site, and the panel agrees that this implementation would represent a more strategic approach to building and sustaining teacher capacity. Research endorses effective PL as ongoing, providing opportunities for group inquiry, and as school-based and collaborative. The opportunity to design a PL model representative of this is an exciting proposition to consider and will be fundamental in supporting staff to respond to school expectations, as well as the directions provided within this report.

**Direction 5**

**Build teacher capacity and efficacy through dedicated, regular and strategically designed processes of professional learning that align with the school's improvement imperatives.**

**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 Seaview Downs Primary School.

**Effective practice regarding students with different learning needs was evident at the school.** The processes of Intervention and Support have been influenced by the rigorous review leading to improvement in students' developmental progress appropriate to goals in their learning plans. The panel noted that the introduction of targeted intervention programs that allow students to develop automaticity in numerical thinking and computations, as well as intentionally designed literacy interventions, has improved fluency in numeracy and literacy. Ancillary staff responsible for the implementation of the programs are active in developing learning plans and contribute to identifying targets and strategies for each student. Teachers provide regular targeted documents for SSOs to follow. In particular, the panel was informed by students in the Intervention Programs that the learning they experience allows them to participate in work in the classroom with more confidence and success. Evidence of this approach to Intervention and Support was sourced through the leaders' presentation and conversations with staff and students.

## OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

At Seaview Downs Primary School a culture of improvement is characterised by high expectations for students as the school moves towards a whole-school approach that meets the needs of all learners.

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

1. Deliver challenging and engaging learning opportunities across all aspects of the curriculum through collaborative planning and assessment design that is both contemporary and aligned with the achievement standards.
2. Meet the needs of all learners and ensure each student's potential is maximised through intentional teaching that is informed by analysis of the range of achievement data generated across the school.
3. Establish collective responsibility and action through collaborative planning processes that develop measurable and strategic improvement plans that are then monitored by regular systems of self-review.
4. Deliver learning experiences that enable students to understand, monitor and assess their learning.
5. Build teacher capacity and efficacy through dedicated, regular and strategically designed processes of professional learning that align with the school's improvement imperatives.

Based on the school's current performance, Seaview Downs Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



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Tony Lunniss  
DIRECTOR  
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY



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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.

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Des Hurst  
PRINCIPAL  
SEAVIEW DOWNS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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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 Seaview Downs Primary School has verified that the school is working towards being compliant in all applicable DECD policies. The Principal advised action is being taken to comply with the following DECD policy:

Aspect of Governance: Item 8

- Site bullying data/trends/initiatives for the purpose of updating the school Governing Council twice a year.

*Data collection has lapsed and a new Anti-Bullying Policy and teaching program developed and to be implemented in Term 2 2017.*

*Data and trends will then be shared with Governing Council twice per year.*

When the school's actions achieve compliancy with DECD policy and procedures, the Principal must resubmit the Policy Compliance Checklist to the Education Director.

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 92.1%.

## 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).*

#### Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2016, 74% of Year 1 and 73% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). This result represents an improvement on historic baseline average for Year 1 and little or no change for Year 2.

Between 2014 and 2016, the trend for Year 1 has been upwards, from 45% to 74%.

In 2016, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 73% of Year 3 students, 66% of Year 5 students, and 82% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3 and 5, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average and for Year 7, little or no change.

Between 2014 and 2016, the trend for Year 7 has been downwards, from 91% to 82%.

For 2016 Year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across DECD schools.

In 2016, 43% of Year 3, 26% of Year 5, and 36% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands. For Year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 43%, or 6 of 14 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016, and 86%, or 6 of 7 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2016.

#### Numeracy

In 2016, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 90% of Year 3 students, 74% of Year 5 students and 77% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For

Year 3, this represents an improvement from the historic baseline average and for Years 5 and 7, little or no change and a decline, respectively.

Between 2014 and 2016, the trend for Year 3 has been upwards, from 76% to 90%.

For 2016 Year 3 Numeracy, the school is achieving higher than the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools, and for Years 5 and 7, within.

In 2016, 27% of Year 3, 9% of Year 5, and 18% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands. For Year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 11%, or 1 of 9 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016, and 50%, or 2 of 4 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2016.