EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR STRADBROKE SCHOOL

Conducted in August 2016
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.

This External School Review was conducted by Vonnie Dolling and Liz Schnyder, Review Officers, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Phil Garner, Review Principal.
Policy compliance

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

The Principal of Stradbroke 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 2015 was 94.1%, which is at the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Stradbroke School is a Reception to Year 7 school located 10 kilometres north-east of Adelaide in the suburb of Rostrevor. The school has a current enrolment of 762 and has been growing over time, from an enrolment of 646 in 2010. Stradbroke School is classified as Category 6 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage and has an ICSEA score of 1079.

The school population includes 5 Aboriginal students, 5.5% students with disabilities, 47.5% students from a Non-English Speaking Background, 1 child in care, and approximately 17% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school Leadership Team is led by a Principal in her first tenure of the amalgamated Junior Primary and Primary School. The Principal was formerly the Principal of Stradbroke Junior Primary School (2008-2012). There are two Deputy Principals with responsibility across the school, one for R-7 Intervention and the other for leading Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Additionally, there is a Senior Leader with responsibility for International Baccalaureate (IB) Programs, both Primary Years Program (PYP) and Middle Years Program (MYP), and a School Counsellor.

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 2015, 84% of Year 1 and 84% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). This result represents little or no change for Year 1, and an improvement for Year 2, from the historic baseline average.

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 91% of Year 3 students, 78% of Year 5 students and 95% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3 and 7, this result represents an improvement, and for Year 5, a decline, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2013 and 2015, the trend for Years 3 and 7 has been upwards, from 80% to 91% and 82% to 95% respectively.

For 2015 Year 3 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across DECD schools, and for Years 5 and 7 NAPLAN Reading, above the results of similar students across the system.

In 2015, 57% of Year 3, 26% of Year 5 and 31% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands. For Year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average and an upward trend over the last three years, from 39% in 2013 to 57% in 2015.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 62%, or 18 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015, and 61%, or 11 students from Year 3, remain in
the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015. For Year 5, this result represents little or no improvement from the historic baseline average. For Years 3 to 7, there is a decline from the historic baseline average.

Numeracy

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 80% of Year 3 students, 82% of Year 5 students and 84% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement, and for Year 7, little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2013 and 2015, the trend for Year 5 has been upwards, from 72% in 2013 to 82% in 2015.

For 2015 Year 3 and 5 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools, and for Year 7, above the results of similar students across the system.

Between 2013 and 2015, the school has consistently achieved higher in Year 7 NAPLAN Numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2015, 38% of Year 3, 21% of Year 5 and 22% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands. For Year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2013 and 2015, the trend for Year 7 has been downwards, from 33% in 2013 to 22% in 2015.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 48%, or 11 of 23 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015, and 60%, or 9 of 15 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015. For Years 3 to 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average, and for Years 3 to 5, a decline from the historic baseline average.

For the last 3 years, the trend for Years 3 to 5 upper band retention is upwards from 40% to 47.8%.

Lines of Inquiry

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

Stradbroke School is a highly respectful environment that values diversity within a climate of a strong learning focus. The school has had a long commitment to fostering an inquiry mindset in students through participation in the International Baccalaureate Program (IB) in both Primary and Middle Years.

Parents interviewed by the Review Panel were unanimous in expressing their high regard for staff “from the Principal to the gardener”. They were impressed with the personal approach, particularly considering the size of the school, accessibility and the passion and commitment of staff to their role as educators. Students interviewed by the Review Panel were articulate and polite, and enjoyed talking about their learning. They spoke positively about specialist learning areas and spaces, such as science, physical education, drama and the library, and opportunities to engage their passions through lunchtime clubs, such as the STEM Club. Teachers and students talked of engagement by building on students’ personal interests and clear communication supporting a strong relationship between home and school. Students talked of getting support at home through older siblings and parents, and parents reported that they liked to share
learning at home with their children, often ‘springboarding’ from the IB Unit of Inquiry.

Prior to the onsite visit, the Review Panel surveyed teachers in their Professional Learning Communities to further this Line of Inquiry. There was recognition that high levels of student interest and motivation result in some students seeking to extend themselves. The school provides a range of opportunities that support students in challenge and extension. These include the STEM/MES program, when selected students in Years 5 to 7 go to Norwood-Morialta High School – to work with older students for a period of 5 weeks, the Maths Olympiad, the Da Vinci Decathlon and the promotion of the ICAS competitions through the school newsletter. These opportunities accord with the view expressed by parents interviewed that the school works really hard to meet the needs of individuals. A few students are identified as being gifted and talented, and have a school-designed One Plan that supports differentiated learning experiences for them based on their goals. In some cases, this includes acceleration into more advanced year levels for specific lessons, and some students are provided additional support from volunteers and SSOs.

The work done by the school in using the natural maths approach had led to some teachers providing problematized situations for their students. More able students are encouraged to demonstrate their learning in a range of ways, and to use multiple ways to achieve the answer. Students who solve the initial problem are able to engage with additional layers of challenge in the same problem. The Review Panel saw examples of students engaging with tasks that were linked to authentic contexts and real-life problems. Students worked generally independently, or sometimes, in a pair or group. Observations by the Review Panel indicate that students engaging in tasks for which there are multiple possibilities is less prevalent.

Improving practice through ongoing quality professional learning in a range of ways, including support from external facilitators, has been a key strategy of Stradbroke School’s improvement agenda. The school has undertaken initial professional learning in task design and developing an approach to guided inquiry using a range of thinking processes. Some teachers have applied aspects of this learning to their work with students to encourage them to organise their thinking and develop as independent thinkers. Teachers responded that time to develop their understanding in creating tasks that enable intellectual stretch will be helpful. The next step for the school is to consolidate and apply teachers’ professional learning to implement learning opportunities for students that continue to develop their skills, and also furthers their ability to apply a critical lens and use creative thinking to generate new ideas.

**Direction 1**

**Design learning and assessment that challenges all students to further build critical and creative thinking.**

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

Collaboration of teachers is a critical characteristic of Stradbroke School. Professional Learning Communities of educators in like year levels are supported by the school in terms of focused resource time and additional human resources. Teams of teachers support each other by collaboratively planning for the IB Units of Inquiry and the Review Panel observed shared responsibility for the facilitation of these units in some cohorts. In others, sharing specialist expertise and interests across classes has resulted in a rotation model of curriculum implementation. Both Reception and Year 1 classes are each housed in a shared open space that facilitates deprivatisation, sharing of good practice and collegiate support. The Review Panel observed consistent approaches and communications with parents across these classes.

Teachers are involved in Action Teams aligned to the school improvement priorities that drive the school improvement agenda – STEM, Independent Reading and social and emotional learning. The STEM priority is supporting building partnerships in a range of ways. There is commitment to processes that value the input of staff to develop agreements that are commonly owned, as demonstrated through the development of the Independent Reading Agreement. This high level of involvement has resulted in a common and consistent language across the school to describe teaching and learning. The Review Panel surveyed all teaching staff to further the Lines of Inquiry in the Effective Teaching focus area, with teacher responses demonstrating teacher commitment and evidencing the whole-school language. There are multiple ways that teaching teams are supported and encouraged to reflect on practice, both individually and as a school. Teachers are involved in the practice of Instructional Rounds, leaders undertake focused
classroom observations and social media is used to collect feedback that drives improvement.

The school priority of Independent Reading has led to a clear focus on supporting students in reading for enjoyment. A range of strategies is being used to connect individual students with books that will sustain their interest. Teachers and students talked about links with the library to promote and source relevant and engaging reading material, and teachers are ensuring that they read aloud regularly to their classes to share a love of reading. As students became independent readers, there was less evidence of them being actively supported to evolve their thinking to develop deep and rich understanding of the themes, issues and layers of meaning in a text, and of being explicitly taught how language works to create that meaning. Some teachers and students referred to guided reading in their classes, but this was mainly in the Early Years, and was limited and inconsistent across Years 3 to 7.

The Review Panel saw and heard evidence of a wide range of practices in the implementation of the mathematics curriculum. Ability grouping was prevalent with groups mostly flexible and related to the current topic. Many students spoke of the teacher explaining a task or concept at the beginning of a lesson sequence and students then practising it together. As they demonstrated competency, students moved to working more independently. Several students reported that they frequently used worksheets and this was reinforced during classroom walkthroughs. The Review Panel observed Early Years students using scrap books to record their thinking, but there did not appear to be consistent expectations of making thinking visible in later years. When asked by the Review Panel about how they knew how well they were going in their learning, students reported waiting for the teacher to give a grade, knowing how well they are going being related to the group they were asked to work in, or being allocated an award or tangible reward. The Review Panel observed high levels of interest and motivation across all groups of students that will be enhanced through a greater understanding of the learning intentions.

**Direction 2**

Develop and implement an agreed whole-school approach to the teaching of reading for understanding that embeds consistent practices in a coherent learning continuum.

**Direction 3**

Articulate and share learning intentions, aligned to the Australian Curriculum, and use transparent success criteria as feedback to students to raise achievement.

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**To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?**

At Stradbroke School, participation in the IB program underpins a pedagogy that sees students involved in learning experiences that are authentic and connected with real life and action. Classrooms were observed to be bright, welcoming, well-organised and productive learning environments. Students provide support for each other in a range of ways. Peer tutoring was observed to be a supportive practice and reported by students as being enjoyable and helpful.

The Review Panel verified that the school engages with data at whole-school, individual and cohort level, to determine student learning growth and inform targeted actions. Teachers reported using the PAT-R and PAT-M data to analyse and address common misconceptions and plan for individual student learning. The Review Panel heard of a targeted program at Years 3, 4 and 5, where teams of teachers are working with a member of the Leadership Team, specifically focused on students maintaining high achievement in mathematics. Teachers are using a range of datasets to identify students for interventions, track progress and inform teaching. These include the Screen of Phonological Awareness (SPA), Running Records and Numicon Signposts. There is a range of successful interventions that are implemented at strategic points in students’ schooling, and teachers reported that these were carefully monitored to ensure that they were ‘hitting the mark’. Current intervention programs include Magic Maths, conducted before school, Quicksmart Maths, Mini-Lit, MacQuit, and Rainbow Reading running during class time.

Documentation of the school’s learning inclusion plans and policy is clear. SMART goals are recorded for about 60 to 70 of the student cohort who are verified students with disabilities, or have other particular needs, using the One Plan process. These goals are reviewed by teachers with the support of parents each term. Parents were positive about the use of these plans.
The Review Panel focused attention on daily classroom practice. Student work samples provided evidence of teacher-to-student feedback that was affirming and encouraging, for example: "Brilliant! Well done!" The Review Panel saw limited evidence of written feedback that was task-specific and supported students in knowing how to improve. In some classes, students talked of teachers moving around and providing support to students during their learning verbally, in the way of additional explanation. One student talked with the Review Panel about pairs of students filming each other reading a text before determining a personal reading goal that was recorded in her literacy book. Identifying and sharing good practice such as this will act as a foundation for building student agency in improved performance.

**Direction 4**
Strengthen the use of data and quality task-specific feedback to students to support the development and monitoring of aspirational personal learning goals.
OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

Stradbroke School is progressing and improving student performance. Demonstrated student achievement is at or above what would reasonably be expected of a school in a similar context.

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

1. Design learning and assessment that challenges all students to further build critical and creative thinking.
2. Develop and implement an agreed whole-school approach to the teaching of reading for understanding that embeds consistent practices in a coherent learning continuum.
3. Articulate and share learning intentions, aligned to the Australian Curriculum, and use transparent success criteria as feedback to students to raise achievement.
4. Strengthen the use of data and quality task-specific feedback to students to support the development and monitoring of aspirational personal learning goals.

Based on the school’s current performance, Stradbroke School will be externally reviewed again in 2020.

Tony Lunniss  
DIRECTOR  
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Jayne Johnston  
CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

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.

Anne Lamont  
PRINCIPAL  
STRADBROKE SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson