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 Helen Tunney, Review Officer, 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 Port Wakefield 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 policies:

Part 1 Governance: Item 7

The school does not have a site Parent Complaints policy. The school has a whole-school grievance and relationships guidelines policy, which needs to be reviewed before the end of 2016.

Part 3 School Organisation: Items 1 and 5

DECD guidelines are followed, but there is not a specific school policy for either of these items. This will be addressed in 2016.

When the school’s actions achieve compliance 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 2015 was 93.2%, which is slightly above the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Port Wakefield Primary School caters for children from Reception to Year 7. It is situated 98kms north-west of the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2015 was 52 students and is currently 76 students. The school is classified as Category 3 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school’s ICSEA score is 935. The local Partnership is Lower Mid-North.

The school population includes no Aboriginal students, 6 Students with Disabilities, 35% of families eligible for School Card assistance, 9 students of English as an Additional Language or Dialect background, and 1 student under the Guardianship of the Minister. Enrolment has fluctuated over the last 5 years. High transience is an issue for students.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in the 4th year of her tenure at the school. There are 4.4FTE teachers, including 2 in the early years of their career and 1 Step 9 teacher.

The School Values are: Learning, Respect, Honesty, and Teamwork.

School Performance Overview

The External School Review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making any judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school.
Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2015, 11 of 14 Year 1 and 3 of 4 Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 3 of 3 Year 3 students, 6 of 7 Year 5 students, and 1 of 6 Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA.

For 2015 Year 3 and 5 NAPLAN Reading, the school achieved higher than the results of similar students across DECD schools. For 2015 Year 7 NAPLAN Reading, the school achieved lower than the results of similar students across DECD schools.

In 2015, 1 of 3 Year 3, no Year 5, and no Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands.

Reading higher bands retention is not applicable due to low numbers of students.

Numeracy

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 2 of 3 Year 3 students, 2 of 7 Year 5 students and no Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA.

For 2015 Year 3 and 5 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school achieved within the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools. For 2015 Year 7 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school achieved lower than the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2015, 2 of 3 Year 3, 1 of 7 of Year 5 and no Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands.

Numeracy higher bands retention is not applicable due to low numbers of students.

Lines of Inquiry

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

Student Learning: To what extent do the actions and behaviours of teachers and leaders demonstrate that they believe that all students can learn?

Effective Leadership: How successfully does the school leadership promote high expectations and quality teaching?

Effective Teaching: How well do teachers plan and design learning tasks to meet the varied needs, skills and interests of learners?

To what extent do the actions and behaviours of teachers and leaders demonstrate that they believe that all students can learn?

During the review at Port Wakefield Primary School, the panel was given strong evidence that relationships at the school are strong and deep. Parents told the panel that they have considerable trust in the school and a belief that their children's academic growth is in safe hands. Parents said they value the consistent availability and pro-activeness of teachers in addressing student learning matters.

Parents acknowledge that their children sometimes struggle with transition to high school; they attribute this to social demands of school and/or personal characteristics of their child.

The school is well-placed to utilise the culture of stakeholder confidence, and build on the work it has done so far, to focus its core business on continuous and sustained improvement in learning for all students,
including those students whose socio-cultural and geographic circumstances impact significantly on their schooling.

The panel heard from all staff that strong fluency in literacy and numeracy is important for every student. The school has initiated the provision of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for every student. This ILP accommodates what the student brings to the learning environment. By identifying the next steps in learning for each student in their ILP, this strategy will contribute even more to the continuous learning achievement of each student.

Students told the panel that they value the information and evidence from weekly testing that they are progressing in their learning. Teachers said they are setting learning goals for and with students. Parents verified teacher efforts to set targets for and with students. The school is capable of strengthening the quality of this work with students by strongly scaffolding the identification of learning goals that are explicit and paced.

The panel found evidence that some teachers use tools to make success criteria visible to students in certain learning tasks; for example, rubrics in HASS, Top 5 in Natural Maths. Nonetheless, through talking to students, the panel concluded that feedback given to students is more about accuracy, neatness and compliance, rather than success criteria. Students and teachers value doing more work and doing it quicker. By making success criteria consistently and regularly clear to students, and it being about specific strategies to improve the quality of student efforts, teachers are in a position to communicate high expectations of student learning and to effect continuous learning improvement in the full range of students.

Teachers told the panel that they are sometimes using explicit strategies to collect feedback on their teaching from students. Teachers are in a position to apply this feedback deeply to pedagogical improvement. In addition, extending the use of such assessment for learning strategies across all learning areas, will offer the empowerment of students as agents in their own learning, and relay an ongoing belief in the capacity of each student to continuously improve.

Teachers, parents and students told the panel of their belief that doing school work at a higher grade-level indicates intellectual quality and evidence of high-level learning. Parents and students told the panel that sometimes teachers give challenging homework to more capable students, as a strategy for intellectual stretch. Parents and students told the panel that they value the regular and wide-spread provision of challenging homework. The panel heard that the goal of many students is to do activities quicker, as this would mean that they are learning ‘better’. Some teachers described to the panel the design of transformative pedagogy that provides intellectual stretch for all learners (Wave 1 teaching). A next step for the school is to broaden its narrative about intellectual stretch and high expectations, and to ensure all learning design continuously sets challenging learning tasks and frames higher-order questioning for the full range of students.

**Direction 1**
Engage learners and provide challenging tasks by consistently deepening the intellectual quality of all teaching in all classes.

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**How successfully does the school leadership promote high expectations and quality teaching?**

During the review, the panel was told by parents that in recent years the reputation of Port Wakefield Primary School has been enhanced after a period of decline. In 2012, a Support School Improvement (SSI) review was held at the school. The External Review Panel was provided with strong evidence that one SSI recommendation: that the school reviews its programs of intervention and support, has been strongly and deeply enacted in the school. The panel found evidence that other recommendations of the SSI have begun to be enacted. These include: provision of effective feedback for learning to students, the use of student achievement data to inform planning and programming, and the development of whole-school literacy and numeracy agreements. The school can deepen and broaden these recommendations further in the interests of improved learning for the full range of students.

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Evidence from teachers indicates that there are strong, regular performance and development practices at the school, including regular observations of teachers by the Principal. Teachers informed the panel that they regularly access quality Training and Development (T&D). The Principal and teachers told the panel that there is individual discretion in the priorities for T&D and observations, and that they feel strongly valued and supported by these practices. There is opportunity to strongly align T&D and observations explicitly, non-negotiably and strategically to the achievement of SIP targets.

Teachers are resource to meet with colleagues across the Partnership. This was verified to the panel by teachers and the Principal. The Partnership is focusing on Visible Learning T&D, and the panel found evidence that all teachers have applied some of this new learning to their practice, particularly, the collection of feedback from students about their teaching. A next step for the school is to structure observations to deepen and extend the application of Visible Learning T&D by individual teachers to their practice and learning design.

A teacher self-audit held during the review indicated that teachers believe they are fully implementing site literacy and numeracy agreements. However, the panel found inconsistencies between what teachers perceived and the actual implementation of literacy and numeracy agreements. While the teachers believe they are using key strategies of the school’s literacy and numeracy agreements, this was not verified from discussions with students and staff or from class walk-throughs. A next step for the school is to ensure whole-school compliance with all aspects of literacy and numeracy agreements and to deepen these agreements with clear, consistent pedagogical approaches.

**Direction 2**

Improve and sustain student achievement at the school by building teacher capacity through a coherent school-wide approach that is planned, implemented and evaluated.

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**How well do teachers plan and design learning tasks to meet the varied needs, skills and interests of learners?**

During the review, the panel concluded that wellbeing initiatives are strong, effective and individualised at the school. Teachers, students and parents talked to the panel about the wide variety of strategies that are deployed to optimise student wellbeing for learning. These include immediate 1:1 support for social and emotional self-regulation, community mentoring with the provision of craft and gardening activities, strong coordination of pastoral support work by the Principal, and the implementation of the Kimochis program to provide a common language for student social and emotional self-regulation for learning. Each student is known well by the Principal, teachers and support staff, and strong and immediate intervention is provided as needed, both proactively and reactively.

Evidence was provided to the panel that a wide variety of assessments are conducted, including a whole-school assessment map and displays of assessment data, as well as the ILPs, which are a record of evidence-based student achievement. The school tracks student transience as well as attendance and behaviour. A next step for the school is to triangulate these datasets in a whole-school data wall that creates and maintains a picture of individual student growth over time, and can be used to analyse patterns of growth and identify appropriate strategies.

The Principal provided the panel with a detailed and accurate picture of student transience, which is high. However, the panel was given strong evidence that this transience is conceptualised in the school as a fixed barrier to student learning growth with teachers, SSOs and the Principal discussing it with the panel in terms of it preventing them from being able to address learning growth in both the transient student, as well as the students enrolled long-term. The school is well-placed to create a more enabling narrative about transience through inquiry.

The review verified that there is a sound culture of data collection at the school. Teachers, SSOs and students all talked to the panel about the regularity and value of the data to them. Parents reported that teachers use data in reporting about student learning, and that students at home discuss their own data when talking to their family about their learning and achievements. A next step for the school is to audit its assessment protocols in the interests of eliminating repetition of testing, as well as to ensure that all
agreed datasets are complete for all students.

Teachers use the agreed datasets to formulate individual students’ ILPs, which are reviewed each term. Parents told the panel that they value the clear, deep, individualised working knowledge that teachers have about their students that is provided by the ILP. The school has the opportunity to modify the proforma for the ILP to triangulate student achievement data with individual demographic data. This will deepen the working knowledge teachers have about each student and facilitate more explicit teaching in all Waves.

The panel concluded that teachers regularly and collaboratively review student learning in student review meetings, and use data to identify students for interventions. Intervention for students with NEPs (Wave 3) and learning needs (Wave 2) is well-coordinated and implemented. Teachers provide clear directions for student support through the ILP. Parents told the panel that they recognise and value the strong levels of Wave 2 and 3 support that the school provides for identified students. The school is in a place to monitor the efficacy of its prioritised provision of Wave 2 and 3 support through the development of an evidence-base. In addition, it is a next step for the school to support teachers to use student achievement and demographic data to design Wave 1 teaching.

**Direction 3**

Record and use student achievement data, and other measures, to continuously track individual student learning growth over time and to design differentiated teaching for all students.
OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

Port Wakefield Primary School regularly and strategically uses self-review processes to determine the impact school strategies and practices are having on student achievement. 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 work with the Education Director to implement the following Directions:

1. Engage learners and provide challenging tasks by consistently deepening the intellectual quality of all teaching in all classes.

2. Improve and sustain student achievement at the school by building teacher capacity through a coherent school-wide approach that is planned, implemented and evaluated.

3. Record and use student achievement data, and other measures, to continuously track individual student learning growth over time and to design differentiated teaching for all students.

Based on the school’s current performance, Port Wakefield Primary 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.

Jenny Gordon
PRINCIPAL
PORT WAKEFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson