

The Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Kalangadoo Primary School

Conducted in July 2018



Review details

A priority for the Department for Education 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 government schools.

The external school review framework underpinning the 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 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.

We acknowledge the support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community. 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 review was conducted by Debbie Grzeczowski, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Tracey Davies, Review Principal.

School context

Kalangadoo Primary School is a reception to year 7 school located 40kms northwest of the regional centre of Mount Gambier. The enrolment in 2018 is 20 students. The school has an ICSEA score of 897 and is classified as Category 4 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes no Aboriginal students, no students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), no children/young people in care, and 75% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 1st year of their tenure. The principal also has a 0.5FTE teaching commitment.

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 2 key areas from the External School Review framework:

Effective Teaching: How effectively are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?

Effective Leadership: How effectively does the school leadership foster a culture of learning?

How effectively are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?

The review panel was provided with evidence that staff set goals for every student. The goals varied in aspect: some were generalised comments and some were about learner achievement. The strategic intent to develop targets with students represents staff members' understanding that students having ownership of, and engagement with, their learning is the key to maximising potential success.

Conversations with students made it clear that older students knew what their goal is. Of these older students, most reflected that the goal was made early in the year and had not been changed. Students reflected that goal-setting was an individual process which occurred without teacher conferencing. Examples of goals were: "to get better at spelling", "learn the 4 (maths) operations", "neater handwriting" and "finger spaces". Many students whom the panel conversed with were not aware of how they could achieve their goal or how adults could assist them. Teaching staff were aware of the need to update goals, but felt that some behaviour issues had interfered with teaching and learning within the classroom. This was a recurring theme reported regularly throughout the external review process.

The panel saw some evidence of differentiation in student maths books and observed a lesson where 2 differentiated activities were offered. It was noted, however, that the differentiation was by year group and not ability, with the younger cohort of students not being able to access the task provided. Students were not aware of the lesson objective and how it related to earlier learning. Some students accessed 1:1 TooSmart intervention run by a school services officer (SSO), which provided differentiated learning

opportunities. Working with the partnership Senior Leader Learning Improvement Primary would provide support and opportunities for staff to design tasks that provide multiple entry and exit points that accommodate the diverse learning needs reception to year 7, providing opportunities for students to display achievement at a higher level.

Teachers reported they needed to be more aware of disengaged students and accommodate their needs through an engaging curriculum. Designing and delivering learning opportunities that connect with the range of learner needs would assist with this.

Staff reflected that they wanted to provide more stretch and challenge, but did not feel they had the ability or time to achieve this, given they were teaching a reception to year 7 cohort. They use SSOs to extend student learning, but thought life skills were more appropriate for students over curriculum content.

Students stated that they wanted more stretch in their learning and believed their teacher could assist this by providing more strategies, setting more challenges and letting them work through those and problem-solve. The school is in the beginning stages of a growth mindset focus, which will provide opportunities for students to engage in co-designing learning through the development of transforming tasks. Student influence and the ongoing development of a language for learning for all students will further strengthen student learning dispositions.

Older students report they assist the younger students when they finish their work, which is reflected in staff perception that students were sometimes held back by the younger students. It was evident from conversations with staff that feedback is an area for development and would impact positively on learning and engagement. Student influence, particularly the use of perception data about how students best learn, and regular, planned opportunities for students to provide feedback about the learning and themselves as learners is an area for development.

The overriding sense from staff was teaching a reception to year 7 class was challenging. It was commented that the creation of 2 classes would enable appropriate differentiation and provide stretch and challenge. The principal had creatively timetabled her teaching component to support this.

The potential for staff to develop and deliver consistent, engaging pedagogical approaches is evident.

Direction 1

Maximise student engagement and potential achievement through a differentiated curriculum and implementation of teaching strategies that enthuse students and inspire active participation in purposeful learning.

How effectively does the school leadership foster a culture of learning?

Staff have created a warm and welcoming environment that helps students develop a responsible attitude to caring for others. Staff, students and parents expressed a strong sense of belonging in their school providing a solid foundation on which to build a focus on teaching and learning.

The principal led a student free day in early term 1, looking at systems-based data, primarily NAPLAN, PAT and Running Records data. Analysis of this data informed the SIP, which was then shared with the governing council. There were issues accessing previous data, and the principal had worked to overcome this by beginning processes to collect site-based data; examples of this are learning disposition data and A-E grades.

The panel found little evidence to suggest data was used consistently to inform teaching and learning, and felt there was an opportunity to create some whole-school documents to provide cohesion. Keeping track of student progress will assist teachers to refine and modify their teaching and planning. Staff did not appear to 'own' the SIP, and staff meetings were not timetabled against an improvement agenda. The panel was informed that staff meetings could become 'ad hoc' due to issues arising during the week.

The SIP provided growth targets for the year 4 cohort, as this was identified as a high-priority group through data analysis. Given the small number of enrolments, the panel encourages staff and leaders to consider the development of student growth targets for all students that allow staff to set and measure progress for students at varying levels from existing baselines. The panel thought there is great opportunity for the school to create systems for students to develop their own learning goals and targets informed by their own personal data.

Given the principal is in her 1st year at the school, supported by a teacher recently returning from maternity leave, and a new graduate teacher, there is great opportunity for leadership to provide a consistent focus, which will enhance the continuity and cohesion of curriculum design and delivery. Plans to advertise a permanent teacher for 2019 will further provide the school with stability to move forward.

Teachers stated that data was used for grouping students, but this was not substantiated by the panel's observations. Staff were in the infancy of a moderation process in writing, but felt the small size of the school restricted opportunity. The panel recommended accessing the newly appointed partnership SLLIP and collaborating with other sites, providing more opportunities to learn collectively.

Students wanted teachers to provide them with strategies to assist them when 'stuck'. The panel was told of a maths tool box that students accessed for support in maths. Students reported that they found this a successful strategy and wondered whether similar toolkits could be created for other curriculum areas.

Teaching staff could have higher expectations for students, at odds with the aspirational statements of some students who expressed a desire to study at university level. Staff reported that they can feel isolated, and would welcome stronger connections with Partnership sites. A strong historical focus on wellbeing was apparent, providing opportunity to shift culture firmly onto teaching and learning.

Direction 2

Develop and implement whole-school approaches to literacy and numeracy, and connect and collaborate with other sites to provide ongoing learning opportunities.

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 Kalangadoo Primary School.

Effective practice in school community partnerships was evident at the school. All stakeholders, students, parents and staff provided a number of examples of how the school engages and uses community resources, agencies and other educational services. Some examples included how students are involved in the local market, the school's involvement with the football club, hosting a community library and the strengthening of ties with the adjoining kindy.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

Kalangadoo Primary School staff work actively to support the wellbeing of students at the school. The principal of the school is aware of the existing opportunities for improvement.

The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

1. 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.
2. Develop and implement whole-school approaches to literacy and numeracy, and connect and collaborate with other sites to provide ongoing learning opportunities.

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



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Appendix 1

Attendance policy compliance

Implementation of the Education Department student attendance policy was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy.

The school attendance rate for 2017 was 92.9%.

Appendix 2

School performance overview

The external school review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the Department for Education Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

In considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making a judgement due to the low numbers represented in the student cohorts at the school. The data below represents a summary of aggregated data for Kalangadoo Primary School over the years 2014 to 2017. This is done for two reasons: to overcome the anomalies that may occur in any one year, and to minimise the possibility of identifying individuals in any small cohort of students.

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2017, 10% (1 of 10) of year 1 and 25% (4 of 16) of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

Reading, as measured by NAPLAN, indicates that 63% (7 of 11) of year 3 students, 63% (7 of 11) of year 5 students, and 57% (8 of 14) of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

In 2017, 36% (4 of 11) of year 3, 45% (5 of 11) of year 5, and no year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

Numeracy

Numeracy, as measured by NAPLAN, indicates that 55% (6 of 11) of year 3 students, 36% (4 of 11) of year 5 students, and 64% (9 of 14) of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

In 2017, 9% (1 of 11) of year 3, no year 5, and 7% (1 of 14) of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.