

The Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Glenburnie Primary School

Conducted in February 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 Greg Graham, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Simon Harding, Review Principal.

School context

Glenburnie Primary School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is situated 439kms south-east of Adelaide near the city of Mount Gambier. The enrolment in 2018 is 96 students. Enrolment has been steady over the last 5 years. The school has an ICSEA score of 1020, and is classified as Category 7 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes no Aboriginal students, 7% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), no children/young people in care, and 10% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in his 10th year of tenure. The teaching staff consists of 5.8FTE, and have been stable with an average tenure of 8 years. There are 5 school services officers (SSOs) staff working 110 hours per week.

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 3 key areas from the External School Review framework:

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

Effective Teaching: How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

School Community Partnerships: How authentic is the influence of students on their learning?

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

The students value and respect all of the staff; they are happy to be at school, and see it as a place for learning 'new stuff' and forming friendships. Students see the school as interesting, with opportunities to do different things through a 'hands-on' approach, such as the Environmental Education program, Lego League, the new nature play area and the natural terrain of the school.

The students were able to provide strategies that they use to help themselves when the work is 'hard' and understood the term 'persistence'. These strategies include re-reading the question, leaving it and then going back later, asking a friend or asking the teacher. In most cases where a child asked a teacher for help, the teacher did not give a direct answer but posed further clarifying questions. There were mixed responses from the students when talking about the 'challenge' of the work provided in class. Some students thought that the work was not hard. The years 4 to 7 students indicated that their literacy lessons were delivered in a number of different ways, including worksheets, group work, computer activities and contracts. All reception to year 3 students were involved in the Daily Reading program, where all children read to an adult or senior student daily.

The senior students recognised science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) as part of the learning at school, but tended to see STEM as predominantly related to the Lego League. They were unable to make clear links with the STEM processes in other subjects.

The early years classes generally worked through a series of activities to engage and consolidate their learning as an integrated approach to learning.

The parents recognised that the engagement of students with their work and what was taught is dependent on the individual teacher. The parents commented on how their children talked about their learning activities with enthusiasm and interest. This was exemplified from anecdotal examples ranging from specific subject matter in maths, environmental studies experiences and interpreting what a growth mindset looks like to a learner. The parents believed that the children were challenged or extended, citing examples such as the Lego League activities, involvement in speech and drama eisteddfod and 'above year level' work in maths offered to some senior students. The parents identified that the outdoor environment program and access to a variety of extra-curricular events also increased the opportunities of engagement of their children across the school. The staff spoke of a culture of high expectation across the school and within the classes.

The teachers were able to articulate their own personal understanding of what stretch and engagement means and what strategies they employ within their classrooms. The examples were dependent on the experience of each teacher. These include Wonder Walls and Conversations in Discovery strategies, Teaching Moments and Reflection Time to allow students to verbalise their learning. There was a general consensus from the teachers about moving from giving their students 'extra work' to extend them, to making the children think more deeply about their learning. Extension maths is offered to a limited number of students in the senior years, and STEM activities, such as the Lego League, were seen as examples of stretching the students.

Next steps include developing common understandings for all students that intellectual stretch does not equate to just the provision of work at a higher year level, and that intellectual stretch is applicable to all students and across all areas of learning.

Opportunities for students to be intellectually stretched in their learning results from the development of tasks that provide different perspectives and levels of understanding, which are designed for students to be doing the thinking. Planned work within year levels and learning areas in the development of transforming tasks is important work for the school to undertake.

Direction 1

Explore and implement approaches that integrate and effectively embed intellectual stretch, challenge and rigour into daily classroom teaching and learning.

How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

There is a strong understanding by the staff that the child is the focus of learning. Staff regularly confer with each other on curriculum matters, with teachers drawing on the curriculum strengths of colleagues to support them with their planning. This was exemplified by teachers who wanted support with STEM activities, seeking affirmation of maths strategies for particular year levels or individual students, or simply asking about a child's work from their previous year's teacher.

All teaching staff talked positively about their professional development opportunities and how they had implemented their new learning into their practices. The professional learning options included the work

conducted on specific points from the site improvement plan priorities, partnership initiatives, and incidental refresher training sessions at staff meetings (for example, ICT or interactive whiteboard updates). Staff valued the variety of professional learning, indicating that it made them more reflective of their practice, provided more 'tools for the teaching toolbox', and enabled them to keep up with contemporary pedagogical research.

The use of data across the school varied amongst staff. In the main, the staff referred to the achievement data through a whole-school exercise. This is initiated by the principal, and is used as a planning tool for mapping trends and setting site improvement plan directions. It is also used for identifying students for intervention support. There was limited use of data involving students directly, with some teachers beginning to share data results (for example, NAPLAN) with their students. This information is being used with some students in setting goals with their work.

Individual teachers use a variety of diagnostic assessment data to support learning and modify teaching strategies. There was some reference to cross-checking class datasets with the whole-school achievement data; however, this was not generally common practice. All of the staff were able to talk about how differentiation in their planning and teaching enhances the engagement of students. Differentiated learning strategies vary amongst staff with some individual student goal-setting done through examples of success criteria rubrics and class agreements. Teachers use the ICT programs and reading boxes as tools for supporting literacy programs. They also recognise and support the extra-curricular opportunities offered to the students and value them as additions to the learning program.

Student intervention programs such as Multilit and A Sound Way are regular programs conducted throughout the school. These are implemented by SSO classroom support personnel, and growth data is shared with teachers.

The parents recognised and commented on how the teaching staff know their children as individuals and acknowledged the support offered to all children. They are strong supporters of the reading to every child strategy adopted across the school, and work in partnership with the staff by helping in listening to children read where they can. The parents are supportive of the extra-curricular activities offered to all students, and see the benefits for their children both academically and socially. Parents see the staff as approachable and helpful when talking about their child's learning. Parents from outside the immediate catchment area are deliberately choosing to enrol their children at the school based on their knowledge of the learning program and the support offered by the school for their children. The governing council is well-informed about student achievement through regular reports and updates, while parents have access to electronic communication modes to enable them to keep track of their child's learning and progress.

The students felt safe at school and were generally happy. When asked 'What do you do when you are stuck with your work?' the students were able to describe a variety of strategies that they use before approaching their teacher. All of the students interviewed indicated their teacher supports them with their learning with strategies to think for themselves, by giving clues before resorting to supplying a direct answer. The vast majority of students indicated that a quiet classroom environment supports their learning. They identified a few strategies, such as using 'the quiet desk' or being able to talk in whispers with their neighbour or table group.

Taking into account the various levels of teaching experience within the staff cohort, it would be beneficial in identifying and developing effective and consistent pedagogical practices across the school. By strengthening teacher knowledge in task design that involves students through learner voice and

capabilities, it will further develop and embed effective and consistent pedagogical practice in curriculum planning.

Direction 2

Deepen the application of task design by teachers to develop explicit target-setting and intentional teaching, using student achievement data to inform decisions and actions at the individual student, cohort and class levels.

How authentic is the influence of students on their learning?

The students the review panel met with were enthusiastic in their discussions and proud of their school. They were eager to share their work with the panel, and are to be commended for being open and honest in their views and thoughts about their school. Students told the panel that they have good teachers, and upon examination of a range of student work, together with discussions about their learning, it was revealed that students were enthusiastic about the learning opportunities offered at school.

When asked 'what is the most important thing about school?' 12% responded with 'learning new things'. The students made comment that most of their classwork was set and based on routine tasks. Little or no examples of student choice in topics and class organisation were evident.

The students interviewed knew what NAPLAN was and some understood the outcomes. The students were unable to provide any clear evidence of how teachers had used the results to improve learning.

The language of growth mindset was evident across the school from reception to year 7 students. The students were able to clearly articulate what a growth mindset is and how they use the strategies to help them with their learning. They commented on how the teachers often used growth mindset terms when students were seeking clarification of a problem or task. It was noted that there was little or no evidence of support signage or cues about growth mindset strategies in classrooms visited.

The students were aware of strategies to assist them in improving their A-E grades, citing strategies such as practice and persistence. Students did not make comment or refer once to goal-setting. Students were able to articulate what they were learning, particularly in literacy, and knew they were good at mathematics through achievement of grades.

The numerous examples of student extra-curricular activities, including those involving students in other schools and the broader community, were mentioned by other students.

Teachers recognised that feedback from students on teaching planning/programming is limited, although some teachers adapted strategies from previous work sites. These include annual survey, exit cards, and a questioning matrix. Differentiated learning strategies vary amongst staff, with student goal-setting done through examples of rubrics and goal-setting agreements.

Teacher professional learning around a deeper understanding of student influence in the planning of curriculum and lessons would be a key factor in addressing learning design, assessment and moderation processes within the school. It has the potential to raise the intellectual challenge of students and stretch teaching for student learning across the curriculum. Planned work within year levels and learning areas in the development of transforming tasks would complement this and is seen as important work for the school to undertake. Implementing and embedding processes that provide all students with regular opportunities to discuss and demonstrate 'how' they learn will further strengthen teacher understandings of the student as a learner. Feedback about the 'how' of learning from a student perspective is critical in

establishing learning as a 2-way process. Students at all year levels benefit from the opportunity to have an authentic influence in their learning.

Involving students through learner voice and co-design, in their own and each other's learning, including in pedagogical and assessment design and decision-making, would deepen and enrich the quality of student learning and strengthen higher-bands achievement and retention.

Direction 3

Strengthen student influence in developing clear understandings of learning intentions and individual goal-setting.

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 Glenburnie Primary School.

The school's initiative of Reading to a Child (reception to year 3) program has been recognised and supported by students, parents and teachers. This daily reading program, which was an initiative of the principal, based on the NAPLAN reading trend, has been conducted over a period of 5 years. The Read to a Child program is a daily activity conducted across reception to year 3. Parent volunteers are active participants and are readily available to come into the school each morning to assist with the reading progress of the younger students. Senior students (years 6 and 7) were also trained to support the reading of younger students, and often volunteer to help out before the official school day starts. Parents who have been involved in the program commented on how they have seen growth in the reading skills of young students and their confidence in public speaking. The effectiveness of the program can be measured against the Running Records and year 3 NAPLAN reading SEA achievement levels of 94.3% (average) over the past 4 years.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

Glenburnie Primary School has demonstrated growth in student achievement at or above what would be reasonably expected of a school in a similar context.

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

1. Explore and implement approaches that integrate and effectively embed intellectual stretch, challenge and rigour into daily classroom teaching and learning.
2. Deepen the application of task design by teachers to develop explicit target-setting and intentional teaching, using student achievement data to inform decisions and actions at the individual student, cohort and class levels.
3. Strengthen student influence in developing clear understandings of learning intentions and individual goal-setting.

Based on the school's current performance, Glenburnie Primary School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



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.



Sam Griffith
PRINCIPAL
GLENBURNIE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson

Appendix 1

Attendance policy compliance

Implementation of the department's 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 93.6%.

Appendix 2

School performance overview

The external school review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the department's Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2017, 86% of year 1 and 88% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result for year 1 represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

In 2017, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 100% of year 3 students, 79% of year 5 students and 89% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 5 and 7, this result represents little or no change, and for year 3, an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For 2017 year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2017, 67% of year 3, 21% of year 5 and 22% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 14%, or 1 of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2017, and 40%, or 2 of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2017.

Numeracy

In 2017, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 100% of year 3 students, 79% of year 5 students, and 100% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For 2017 year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2017, 67% of year 3, 14% of year 5 and 33% of year 7 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 17%, or 1 out of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2017, and 14%, or 1 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2017.