

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

## EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

# REPORT FOR ELIZABETH NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Conducted in February 2015



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 overarching review question is "How well does this school improve student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and equity?"*

*This External School Review has evaluated the school's self review processes and findings, its achievement data and progress over time, the outcomes of the meetings and interviews with representatives from the school, including parent and student views, and conducted an analysis of key policies and procedures.*

*The support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community is acknowledged.*

*This External School Review was conducted by Rob Harkin, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and Susan Hyde, Review Principal.*

### **Policy compliance**

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

The Principal of Elizabeth North Primary School has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies, other than Part 2, Item 5 (teacher training access to the "Keeping Safe" Child Protection Curriculum) The Principal advises that the required training for teachers will be completed by 5 June 2015. In the interim teachers within the school who have current training will deliver child protection curriculum across the school in accordance with the school's whole school scheduling.

Implementation of the *DECD Student Attendance policy* was checked specifically against a documented set of criteria. The school has implemented comprehensive tracking and intervention processes, and was found to be compliant with this policy. In 2014, the school reported attendance of 88.4% which is below the DECD target of 93%.

### **School context**

Elizabeth North Primary School is a school with approximately 530 students, located in the northern suburbs of Adelaide. The school has experienced enrolment growth to the order of 150 additional students over the past few years. The school has an ACARA ICSEA score of 924, and is classified as Category 2 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 10% Aboriginal students, 12% Students with Disabilities and 6% students from an English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) background. A school based preschool is co-located on the site. The preschool has an annual enrolment that ranges between 80 and 100 children.

The school leadership team consist of a Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal (Learner wellbeing), Student Counsellor, and Intervention Coordinator. The Principal is in his second tenure, and the Deputy Principal is responsible for leadership of the preschool.

### Lines of inquiry

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

Student Learning:

How well are student achievements tracked over time?

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

School Community Partnerships: How well does the school develop partnerships with students, parents and the wider community to improve student learning?

#### How well are students achievements tracked over time?

The continuing challenge for Elizabeth North Primary School is to lift student achievement outcomes, particularly in the higher bands of achievement measured against a range of data sets. The pre-review analysis of the school's NAPLAN student achievement data indicates that over the past seven years, approximately 56% and 51% of students in all year levels have met the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) in reading and numeracy.

Further, the general trend over time has not increased. This is confirmed by school based data, and data analysis provided by the Education Director.

In contrast, there has been a continuing increase in the numbers of students at Year 3 who are represented in the higher achievement bands in NAPLAN reading (31%) and numeracy (12%). The outcome for reading is significant, however the school has been unable to maintain those achievement trends in Years 5 and 7 over time.

Teacher assigned A to E results in reporting against the Australian Curriculum were 1% A's reported across the school population for English, and 0.5% A's for Mathematics, which would represent 6 and 3 students respectively. This does not align with the school's NAPLAN achievement data. The school would benefit from an exploration of this anomaly.

The school has established a range of year level specific achievement targets which have been formulated against average achievement for the past three years plus 5%. The school is reporting improvement against those measures for some student cohorts for reading, spelling, grammar, number and algebra. For example in numeracy, Year 3 target 41% - achievement 44%, Year 5 target 18% - achievement 35% and Year 7 target 15% - achievement 29%. Those actions taken to shift student achievement should be shared and form the basis for a broader whole school approach.

The Review Panel saw evidence of the leadership team's acknowledgement of, and determination to reverse the overall trends, and this is articulated in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP identifies two key priorities for school improvement; a focus on Mathematics and on Literacy. The improvement strategies are evidence based and aligned with the evaluation measures. There is a strong focus on supporting the learning needs of students with needs ("Wave 3" and some "Wave 2" students).

Significant school resources are committed to a comprehensive whole of school intervention program, colloquially known as Hogwarts. The program, which involves regular withdrawal of large numbers of students from class (as high as 45%) is coordinated by a Intervention Coordinator who has post graduate qualifications in Special Education. Approximately 46% of the student population (238 students) is enrolled in the intervention program. All students have individual learning plans and goals, and their learning activities are aligned to those plans.

The program is well coordinated and resourced, and there is comprehensive collection of data and tracking of student progress over time. However the program is not delivering the intended outcomes for a significant number of students. For example, the school reports that in 2014, 20% of students in the Hogwarts reading intervention program, made no progress or regressed over time.

The Review Panel supports the school's decision to conduct a review of this program.

#### **Direction 1**

**Narrow and strengthen intervention processes, and ensure teachers deliver more targeted and differentiated classroom learning practices**

The Intervention Coordinator reported there is a correlation between student intervention outcomes and attendance patterns. The school has reported average annual attendance of 86% in 2014 (a slight increase of 1% on the previous year), compared to the DECD stage one target of 93%. Despite well managed processes for tracking, active intervention and support initiatives with families, this trend has tended to flat-line over time. Average attendance for the preschool is reported as 80% and this must be a focus for continued attention.

#### **Direction 2**

**As a priority, continue to focus on significantly increasing attendance in the school and preschool**

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

There is evidence of a school leadership style and behaviour that is coherent, focussed and guided by data. There is also evidence of respectful and strong leadership that is framed by the school values of pride, responsibility and persistence, and an active promotion of those values through various aspects of the school's work and operations.

Many teachers report there are high expectations placed on them to undertake professional learning, and moreover that significant levels of support are provided, in terms of extended professional learning opportunities, coherent curriculum guidelines and agreements, and teaching resources. The Review Panel saw evidence of this during the review.

The Review Panel also noted organisational and educational strategies that are evident across the school that contribute to a committed, safe, orderly teaching and learning environment; that classrooms are calm and students are on task. The management of behaviour is seen as a contributing factor. Behaviour management practices in the school are framed by a Behaviour Education Policy, which was reviewed in 2013. The Annual Report notes a 10% decrease in incidents across the school compared to 2012, and a 21% decrease in incidents for the R-2 cohort, and that this trend continued in 2014.

The Review Panel found there is a strong culture of care, support and inclusivity for students across the school.

There is a coordinated and comprehensive program of data collection, collation and analysis. It was observed that the school is data rich and that the data is visited often, and as a whole school at the end of each term, and in greater depth during a whole day focus in Term 4. The evidence is that the school's self review processes are aligned and cyclic.

A continuing theme in conversations with teachers and the leadership team was how the school could increase achievement levels for all students, and challenge and stretch those students who were already meeting the SEA. A number of teachers expressed the view that students were being extended as much as was appropriate. However, some parents also reported their belief that the school should do more to support students with the capacity to achieve at higher levels.

From conversations with some parents, teachers and students, it became evident that best intended school practices and programs to meet the needs of students have at times not achieved the intended improvement outcomes. The approach to intervention which is highly organised, coordinated and resourced, is an example. The work for the leadership team is to sharpen the focus on increasing and extending student achievement,

and the expectations staff members have of students' capacity to achieve, while maintaining a significantly supportive school culture.

### **Direction 3**

**Support students to achieve at the higher levels of NAPLAN and the Australian Curriculum by identifying and implementing teaching practices that lift learning expectations and rigour**

*How well does the school develop partnerships with students, parents and the wider community to improve student learning?*

The analysis of early years data – achievement against the Standard for Educational Achievement for Running Records, and phonological awareness data collected by the school using the SPA tool – indicates that a significant number of early years students are not achieving at age appropriate literacy levels. Teachers commented on their concerns that for a large number of children, the first year/s of school is a significant challenge for those children in terms of the social, emotional and academic skill sets they bring.

In contrast, the Review Panel identified that by Year 3, the school is able to achieve an increase in achievement outcomes in literacy and numeracy, for example, 60% at SEA in Year 3 Reading and 31% achieving in the Higher Bands. This indicates successful classroom practices being delivered by the early years team, and that a large number of students have the capacity to succeed.

There is an on-site school based preschool, whose annual enrolment ranges between 80 and 100 children. Almost all of the school's Reception level intake transitions from the preschool.

In the course of the review, some parents reported that the move from preschool into the school was not as smooth as they had anticipated. They noted that their children reported changed levels of teacher expectations, routines and learning contexts. Some parents noted the differences in some learning practices in the preschool and the experience at Reception level and wanted greater continuity.

The Review Panel has recommended a key action for improvement that focuses on continuing to capitalise on the significant opportunities presented by the on-site preschool. These include continuing to build strong and early connections with its community, and where possible, supporting the introduction of other programs which have been reported as achieving successful outcomes in DECD Children's Centres.

### **Direction 4**

**The preschool and early years team work together to improve early learning literacy experiences for all children and strengthen and align transition processes for children and their families**

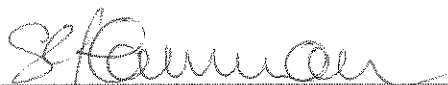
### OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Elizabeth North primary School is tracking well. Good performance was evident by the use of structured time for ongoing collaborative professional learning by teachers and the Leadership Team.

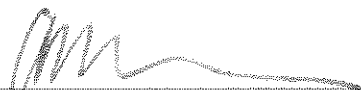
The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following directions:

1. Narrow and strengthen intervention processes, and ensure teachers deliver more targeted and differentiated classroom learning practices
2. As a priority, continue to focus on significantly increasing attendance in the school and preschool
3. Support students to achieve at the higher levels of NAPLAN and the Australian Curriculum by identifying and implementing teaching practices that lift learning expectations and rigour
4. The preschool and early years team work together to improve early learning literacy experiences for all children and strengthen and align transition processes for children and their families

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



Susan Cameron  
DIRECTOR  
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL  
IMPROVEMENT

The school will provide an implementation plan to the Education Director and community within 3 months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's Annual Report.



Graham Wood  
PRINCIPAL  
ELIZABETH NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson