

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW
REPORT FOR TEA TREE GULLY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Conducted in June 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,*
- *the school's achievement data and progress over time,*
- *the outcomes of the meetings and interviews with representatives from the school, and*
- *parent and student views about the school.*

The External School Review included an analysis of the school's key policies and procedures.

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

This External School Review was conducted by Lyn Arnold, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and Matt Saunders, 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 Tea Tree Gully Primary School has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

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 93%, which meets the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Tea Tree Gully Primary School is located 20kms north-east of the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2014 was 161 students. Enrolments have decreased in 2015, which reflects a steady trend over the past five years from approximately 200 students in 2010. The school is classified as Category 7 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage, and has an ICSEA score of 1017.

The school population includes 5% students with Disabilities, and 19% of families eligible for school card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a substantive Principal in the third year of his third consecutive five-year appointment at the school, and a 0.8 Deputy Principal (a substantive Principal) in her 12th year at the school with responsibility for the Library, Special Education, and digital leadership. There are 6 classes R-7, and 9 permanent teaching staff.

Lines of inquiry

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

Student Learning:	How well are students achieving over time?
Improvement Agenda:	How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?
Effective Leadership:	How effectively does the school leadership foster a culture of learning?

How well are students achieving over time?

Analysis of 2014 student achievement data shows that 94% of Year 3, 71% of Year 5, and 71% of Year 7 students met the DECD Standard of Achievement (SEA) on the NAPLAN Literacy-Reading test. Scores for the NAPLAN Numeracy test reveal that 94% of Year 3, 71% of Year 5, and 71% of Year 7 students achieved the DECD SEA.

Students in Year 3 have achieved consistently strong results in reading in recent years. On average, one-third to half of Year 3 students score in the higher proficiency bands, 14 Year 5 students and five of the 21 Year 7 students scored in the higher bands. No students were retained in the higher bands from Year 3 to 5, and only four of a possible eight students were retained in the higher bands from Year 3 to 7 in 2014. A similar pattern was evident in numeracy.

The achievement at Year 3 suggests strong foundational skills in literacy and numeracy during the early years of schooling, and signals a potential for more students to maintain that level of achievement and score in the higher proficiency bands over time; that is from Year 3 to Year 5 and Year 7. Given this potential, the school needs to explore ways to improve and maintain literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students, particularly from Year 3 to Year 7.

Direction 1

Increase the number of students reaching the SEA and achieving at the higher levels of proficiency by regularly monitoring and tracking student progress and maintaining high expectations of student outcomes.

On the basis of these trends in the student achievement data and discussions with the staff, the Review Panel undertook two complementary lines of inquiry exploring the school's improvement agenda, with particular attention on the use of data and self-review processes that influence improvement planning and resourcing, and the impact of the school's culture on student learning and outcomes.

How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?

With respect to self-review processes, to gain perceptions of the school's progress and improvement, the school collects information from staff annually and, in 2014, surveyed parents and groups of students. An outcome of this review process was a commitment from staff, throughout 2015, to focus "more on having higher expectations", and to foster, encourage and promote a whole-school cultural shift towards developing powerful learners and student mindsets that reinforce the belief that, with effort, they can learn and achieve.

In addition to reviewing perception data, there is a regular pupil-free day near the end of the year when teachers explore standardised data and plan for the coming year. There is evidence that teachers see their work as critical to the achievement of the school's improvement plan. Discussions with teachers also indicated they use various data sources as a starting point for planning and implementing learning programs. This includes class and student data, other than NAPLAN, to identify student progress throughout the year.

Building on the work of using data to inform teaching, the school is well-placed to undertake a rigorous review of the school improvement priorities, including identifying what is working well and what may require further consideration and incorporation into the school improvement plan.

Direction 2

Help more students experience higher levels of success by conducting rigorous evaluation and data analysis processes that determine the impact and effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies, programs and interventions in achieving identified improvement priorities.

With respect to the organisational arrangements that support school priorities, in general, a good level of support is provided, particularly by the SSOs, for students with identified special needs (NEP, ILP) and which is linked to specific funding streams. There is also volunteer support, which together with SSO support, is valued highly by parents and students. While parents spoke positively of the additional classroom support provided to meet the varied needs of learners, especially in Term 1 of this year, they would like to have this maintained and, where possible, increased across the school.

Direction 3

Improve learning outcomes for all students, including students in priority groups and those new to the school, by reviewing how resources are deployed strategically and aligned to school improvement priorities.

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

Parents like the community feel of the school, and that the staff and other parents know and support each other. They believe the school to be a safe environment for their child, and that they can approach teachers about issues or concerns. While parents like the small school atmosphere, they recognise that an increase in numbers would be beneficial. Through conversations with parents it became evident they believe a way to get more parents involved, and potentially promote the school and increase enrolments, is to engage parents in their child's learning through digital communication technologies. The Governing Council plans to investigate this strategy further with the school leadership team.

In talking with students, they spoke positively about their teachers and the SSOs because they 'help us learn' and students generally value schooling and education.

With respect to the planned shift in whole school culture towards powerful learning, students demonstrated an initial understanding of what it means to be an 'expert' or 'good' learner, and talked in ways that demonstrated a developing growth mindset.

The staff engages willingly in professional learning to enhance their teaching practice, and there is evidence that teachers are adopting new approaches that support the school's strategic site improvement directions.

While individual teachers are at different stages of implementation, and many processes are yet to be embedded fully into practice, there are examples of emerging effective practice. For example, rubrics were in evidence in classrooms, particularly in the upper primary, where students told the Review Panel they have a rubric for every assessment, which helps them find out how they are going.

Teachers and leadership also talked of participating in moderation tasks relating to the Australian Curriculum (AC). Given the different stages of embedded practice, there is scope for staff to explore ways the AC standards can be shared with students for individual benchmarking and goal-setting, and to promote greater student influence in decisions about planning for differentiation. There is also the opportunity for the whole school to explore ways in which the Australian Curriculum standards, and other achievement results, can provide formative feedback to students, in addition to summative assessment information.

While the staff have committed to developing positive student mindsets, the school needs to continue to build a positive school mindset and culture of continuous learning improvement, promoted across the school community. Teachers, for example, demonstrated to the Panel their professional capacity to meet the needs of high, middle and low achieving students, including those with complex needs. While support processes exist to meet the needs of low achievers, consideration should be given to the implementation of

strategies and processes that aim to intellectually challenge and extend the learning of middle and high achievers to ensure they also achieve their full potential.

As the school's teaching and learning approach is underpinned by Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL), revisiting the aspects related to expert learners in relation to growth mindsets and powerful learning will benefit the school's improvement agenda. For example, exploring ways that teachers and students can engage in authentic and regular discussions about personal progress and achievements, and teachers negotiating individual learning plans and goals with students, has the potential to provide clear indicators of how all students can improve and reach their personal targets. Further, it will build the capacity of students to see themselves as powerful learners and support the development of growth mindsets.

Direction 4

Lift student achievement across the school by evaluating the current implementation of the TfEL framework, align it with other school priorities, and identify key areas for further staff development, especially in relation to creating conditions for rigorous learning.

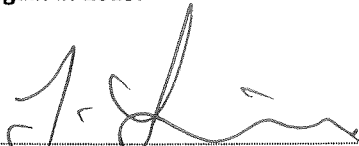
OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

There is room for improvement in student achievement at Tea Tree Gully Primary School. Building on strong performance in the Early Years, the school has an opportunity to increase stretch and challenge, and deliver higher levels of success for all students.

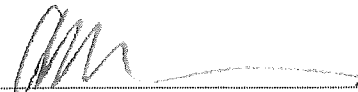
The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following Directions:

1. Increase the number of students reaching the SEA and achieving at the higher levels of proficiency by regularly monitoring and tracking student progress and maintaining high expectations of student outcomes.
2. Help more students experience higher levels of success by conducting rigorous evaluation and data analysis processes that determine the impact and effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies, programs and interventions in achieving identified improvement priorities.
3. Improve learning outcomes for all students, including students in priority groups and those new to the school, by reviewing how resources are strategically deployed and aligned to school improvement priorities.
4. Lift student achievement across the school by evaluating the current implementation of the TfEL framework, align it with other school priorities, and identify key areas for further staff development, especially in relation to creating conditions for rigorous learning.

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



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY

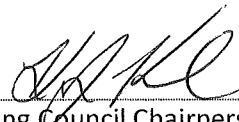


Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SCHOOL AND PRESCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT

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.



Grant Dolejs
PRINCIPAL
TEA TREE GULLY PRIMARY SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson