

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR REYNELLA EAST COLLEGE

Conducted in September 2016



**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 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 Liz Schneyder, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Paul Harmer, Chris Roberts and Kristen Masters, Review Principals.

Policy compliance

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

The Principal of Reynella East College has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

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 90%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Reynella East College caters for students from Preschool to Year 12. It is located 21kms south of the Adelaide CBD in the suburb of Reynella East. The enrolment in 2015 was 1674 students and in 2016 is 1814, including 25 International students. The school has an ICSEA score of 988 and is classified as Category 5 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

In 2015, the school population included 3% Aboriginal students, 7.5% students with disabilities, 11% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 1% children and young people in care, and 25% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The Leadership Team consists of:

- A Principal in her first tenure
- A Deputy Principal in his first tenure
- 4 Assistant Principals (B3) and 5 Assistant Principals (B2)
- A Business Leader and Personal Executive Assistant.

There are an additional 7 Coordinators representing Curriculum Learning Teams, 2 Coordinators responsible for Timetabling and Daily Routines, and 3 Counsellors.

School Performance Overview

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

Reading

In the early years, reading is monitored against Running Records. In 2015, 76% of Year 1 students and 74% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. There is an improvement in Year 2 from 61% in 2013 to 74% in 2015.

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate 76% of Year 3 students, 62% of Year 5 students, 79% of Year 7 students, and 53% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. These results represent an improvement from the historic baseline average at Years 3 and 7, and a decline from the historic baseline average at Years 5 and 9. Between 2013 and 2015, the trend for Year 5 students has been downwards, from 90% to 62%, and for Year 9 students, from 62% to 53%, for the same period. The school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system, except in Year 9, which is below similar schools across the DECD system.

In 2015 NAPLAN Reading, 41% of Year 3 students, 21% of Year 5 students, 20% of Year 7 students, and 9% of Year 9 students achieved in the top two bands. This result represents an improvement from the historic

baseline average in Year 3.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading in 2013, 53%, or 10 of 19 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015, 63%, or 12 of 19 students from Year 5 in 2013, remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015, and 25%, or 17 of 69 students from Year 7 in 2013 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2015. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average at Years 5 and 7.

Numeracy

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 78% of Year 3 students, 66% of Year 5 students, 78% of Year 7 students, and 58% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average at Years 3 and 5, an improvement from the historic baseline average at Year 7, and a decline from the historic baseline average at Year 9. The school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system. There is an improvement from 64% in 2013 to 78% at Year 7 in 2015.

In 2015 NAPLAN Numeracy, 29% of Year 3 students, 9% of Year 5 students, 10% of Year 7 students and 6% of Year 9 students achieved in the top two bands. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average at Year 3.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 25%, or 2 of 8 students from Year 3 in 2013 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015, 62%, or 5 of 8 students from Year 5 in 2013 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015, and 23%, or 9 of 39 students from Year 7 in 2013 remain in the upper bands in Year 9 in 2015. This result represents a decline from the historical baseline average at Year 5 and an improvement from the historic baseline average at Year 7.

SACE

In terms of 2015 SACE completion, 90% of students who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve their SACE. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2013 and 2015, the trend has been upwards, from 80% to 90%.

Ninety-two percent of grades achieved in the 2015 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Ninety percent of grades achieved in the 2015 SACE Stage 1 were C or higher. This result represents an improvement from 81% of grades achieved in 2013.

In terms of completion of the compulsory SACE subjects, 96% of students successfully completed their Personal Learning Plan in 2015, 93% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Literacy component in 2015, 89% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Numeracy component in 2015 and 95% successfully completed the Research Project in 2015.

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 are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?
- Effective Teaching:** To what extent is assessment used to inform curriculum planning and instruction?
- Effective Leadership:** To what extent is P-12 responsibility and collective action evident?

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

The Review Panel interviewed almost 80 students. These interviews indicated a strong sense of welcome, community and mutual respect at the school and good relationships between teachers and students, at all levels of schooling. The students can articulate what is good about their teachers and are polite, expressive and compliant.

Students believe many teachers have low expectations of them, and this was reinforced during interviews with leaders and many of the 80 teachers interviewed. Students could not talk about their input into their learning, but developing this is a priority in the current School Improvement Plan. Students were also unable to provide examples of how they are 'stretched' in lessons, but did talk about the multiple layers of support provided for students who require additional support.

Observations of lessons in the Primary School indicated students are generally engaged in their learning. Many have access to Multi-Lit, Pre-Lit and Mini-Lit, QuickSmart Maths, and a range of other programs to support their literacy development. There is a focus on improvement of literacy through games and play and the 'Literacy Block' initiative. There are specialist teachers for the arts, technology and HPE.

The lessons observed, and feedback provided by Year 8/9 students, indicate learning is generally teacher-directed, with a focus on textbooks, worksheets and copying off the board. An extensive review in 2014/15, led by the Middle School Assistant Principal, has resulted in the implementation of a new Middle School model in 2016, to address the quality of teaching and learning for Year 8 and 9 students. Students now have fewer teachers, with mixed ability classes, and a new, open-spaced learning environment. Most of the teachers are enthusiastic about the opportunities for student engagement and challenge in the new environment, and are appreciative of the support of the passionate Learning Community Managers in adapting to their new classes, new office space and team, writable walls and sliding glass doors. The whole school community commented on the positive outcomes of the new model in such a short time, particularly the significant reduction in incidences of misbehaviour.

Senior students enjoy their relationships with teachers and believe their teachers are committed to supporting them. Opportunities for challenge are provided through an extensive range of subjects and access to Vocational Education and Training. Disengaged students can participate in a well-structured Flexible Learning Options program. Arts, Sport and Innovators, and PE Academies have been introduced for 2017 to attract and engage highly aspiring students.

Gaining useful feedback from teachers is an issue for a number of students, because it is not consistently available. Students interviewed spoke about looking for 1:1 conversations with their teachers. There is limited written feedback in workbooks viewed by the Review Panel, and the encouragement of 'drafting' in the Secondary School is evident. Feedback to teachers is not yet common practice, but is a priority of the current Site Improvement Plan. However, Secondary School students know they can access additional support and feedback from their teachers in after-school sessions.

A Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) class has been introduced in 2016, and facilities and equipment are available to support increased engagement of students in the STEM agenda, although this is still new work. Some Middle School teachers have been accessing Professional Development in Project-Based Learning, however, this is yet to be embedded in their teaching practice or shared with colleagues. The teachers interviewed are enthusiastic about possibilities in the future for a cross-disciplinary STEM program for Years 6 to 9 students.

All Year 8 students have their own laptop and *Bring Your Own Device* (BYOD) is encouraged in the senior school. Other students access laptop trolleys and pods of desktop computers. The panel was told about some use of 'flipped classrooms' and observed the use of 'Kahoot' in Year 8 Maths. SEQTA is the school's Learner Management system. Improved access to, and use of ICT, and P-12 use of SEQTA for curriculum storage and parent communication, were consistently raised by students, teachers and parents, with the Review Panel.

SEQTA is used to monitor student attendance and manage attendance data, which has steadily improved since it was introduced. Improving student attendance is a priority on the Site Improvement Plan. SEQTA is also used by the passionate Wellbeing Team, and home group teachers, to track student achievement, and the datasets provided to the panel were comprehensive and displayed throughout the college. Parents on

Governing Council commented positively on the data, and appreciated the explanations provided by the Leadership Team. The accountability and transparency is seen by most staff as a positive step towards school improvement.

Direction 1

Ensure strategies exist across P-12 that engage and challenge students through the provision and receipt of feedback, implementation of the STEM agenda and consistent use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool.

To what extent is assessment used to inform curriculum planning and instruction?

Almost all teachers talked about task design, as a result of their participation in extensive Professional Development Programs in 2015. This was particularly evident in Upper Primary, where the Year 6/7 teachers share the preparation of units of work and Learning Assessment Plans, and use Common Assessment Tasks. Some teachers across the college shared with the Review Panel that they continue to struggle to understand how to stretch students, despite all their work on task design, and their genuine intent to improve outcomes for all students.

Students talked about rubrics and, in some cases, could show the panel examples in their workbooks, with a few able to discuss how they can achieve an 'A'. Some teachers were able to articulate strategies they use in their classes to extend the higher-achieving students, although few are accessing data about these students, and students are not aware of their own NAPLAN or PAT scores.

A challenge for many teachers is how to differentiate the learning to meet the needs of all students in their classes, particularly in the new Middle School and in composite classes in the Primary School. Some students interviewed shared that some of their teachers did not know how to extend them and believed they were, therefore, underachieving. Teachers are looking for more meeting time in the future to share strategies and better use the datasets available to inform their teaching. A new leadership position has been appointed to work with Primary School teachers, in particular, on their differentiation and data literacy, and feedback has been very positive.

All teachers have been involved in the 'Institute for Educational Assessors' program during 2016, which has been appreciated by many teachers across the college for its positive impact on their new work, task design, assessment practice, curriculum planning and teaching pedagogy.

The school is committed to the delivery of the Early Years Framework, the Australian Curriculum and the SACE. It was evident that a large number of individuals within most teams are sharing documentation and reviewing their practice. The school is working on the development of a Continuum of Learning, or Curriculum Map, across the teams.

Some teachers and leaders talked about using performance and achievement standards to inform their assessment practice, and there is variation in leaders' and teachers' understanding of the place of content, skills and capabilities in the delivery of the Australian Curriculum. The panel felt leadership of this work was needed in order to monitor and achieve consistency within and between teams, in what was being delivered and how it was being delivered and assessed.

Significant work has been done in collaboration with the DECD SACE Improvement Team to improve achievement of students in the SACE, using traffic lights, snapshots, shared task design, and in-school moderation. Moderation shifts are addressed and 'summer school' is in place to ensure all students achieve a pass in their SACE compulsory subjects. Increased VET options are available, with the significant support of local businesses and the wider community, which are being accessed to support SACE completion by many students. Curriculum leaders are expected to regularly review the density and viability of options provided for senior students. Parents are particularly appreciative of the breadth of options available to students at Reynella East College, and believe this is a major factor in the college's consistently increased enrolments and student achievement.

A number of successful strategies implemented in the Senior School are now becoming common practice across P-12, with the Primary School teachers involved in tri-school moderation, and all teachers expected

to load snapshot data for their students, every 5 weeks, on SEQTA.

Direction 2

Build the capacity and understanding of teachers and leaders to impact on, and be accountable for, improved achievement of P-12 students in the Early Years Framework, Australian Curriculum and the SACE, while ensuring curriculum coherence.

Direction 3

Continue to improve whole-school data literacy through targeted Professional Learning programs, so that teaching practice is informed and improved.

To what extent is P-12 responsibility and collective action evident?

The Review Panel was impressed with the passion and cohesiveness demonstrated by the Leadership Team, as they guide a large P-12 college from amalgamation into the future. Many of the team are relatively new to the school, but their support for the directions of the collaboratively developed new Site Improvement Plan is evident. This cohesiveness and professionalism have also been noticed by the community, including parents on the Governing Council, who have enjoyed increased involvement in, and knowledge about, the school under the new team. The parents also commented on the consistent and immediate communication they receive from the Leadership Team.

Students and parents are most appreciative of the commitment and patience of the senior school leaders and their teams. They are using sophisticated datasets to identify concerns about individual students, which are immediately shared with the students and their parents. The senior centre provides a safe haven for some students, who also appreciate the ready access to personal support from the leaders located in the area. The career and subject advice received, and the quality of the course selection process, were highlights mentioned by both students and parents.

There have been some recent changes in leadership structure and personnel in the Primary School, and most teachers are positive about the directions the school is travelling in, with both teachers and parents very appreciative of the support of Primary School and Preschool leaders. They talked about consistent implementation of school policies, such as zero-bullying, and the support for marginalised students. The display of Preschool and Primary School student wellbeing and achievement data in the Assistant Principal's office has raised awareness of the broad range of capacities of individual students, and there is a belief amongst the leaders, and teachers, that this will lead to improvements in teaching practice, and achievement for all students.

A new leadership structure put in place in the Middle School to support teachers and students is acknowledged and appreciated. The Learning Community Managers are enthusiastic and positive about the new journey and aware of the challenges they face. They appear to be very collaborative and supportive of each other, and the directions of the Leadership Team.

All staff, parents and most students, commented positively on the work done by the school's leadership to improve teaching and learning spaces, and teachers and aspiring leaders appreciate the opportunities provided, and support for their own Professional Development. They are looking forward to consolidation and consistent implementation of the school's Personal Development Plan process, the use of the teaching standards, and the line management process.

The speed and breadth of recent change has been a challenge for some leaders and teachers, a few of whom continue to be resistant to some of the new directions introduced by the Leadership Team. The team is aware of these challenges and the need for a cohesive, collaborative and transparent approach to the journey forward. A major strategy has been the introduction and display of student achievement and wellbeing data, for all students in all classes across the college.

They are also mindful that the success of the amalgamation will depend on their capacity to build a cohesive school from 3 previously separate entities. This challenge was raised in many interviews held during the visit of the Review Panel. Management of resources, particularly staffing, across one large campus, the need for P-12 curriculum leadership, the provision of planning time for teachers across P-12,

and development of the STEM agenda, are four priorities, and planning is underway. STEM may provide a vehicle for increased curriculum collaboration across P-12 and, already, the Learning Community Managers in the Middle School are talking about their intent to develop interdisciplinary units of work in STEM-aligned areas in the future. Design and technology, PE and LOTE teachers are planning for, or are already involved in, some lessons across Year 7/8.

Direction 4

Build a strong and inclusive culture where there is ownership of the school's improvement agenda by all teachers and leaders, a valuing of the connectivity, and a focus on maximising teaching and learning opportunities across a P-12 college.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

Reynella East College is moving forward as a P-12 campus, under the leadership of a new and effective Leadership Team, which is providing strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions. Comprehensive student wellbeing and achievement datasets are on display across the college, as one strategy to drive a culture of accountability, improvement and transparency.

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

1. Ensure strategies exist across P-12 that engage and challenge students through the provision and receipt of feedback, implementation of the STEM agenda and consistent use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool.
2. Build the capacity and understanding of teachers and leaders to impact on, and be accountable for, improved achievement of P-12 students in the Early Years Framework, Australian Curriculum and the SACE, while ensuring curriculum coherence.
3. Continue to improve whole-school data literacy through targeted Professional Learning programs, so that teaching practice is informed and improved.
4. Build a strong and inclusive culture where there is ownership of the school's improvement agenda by all teachers and leaders, a valuing of the connectivity, and a focus on maximising teaching and learning opportunities across a P-12 college.

Based on the school's current performance, Reynella East College 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.



Caroline Green
PRINCIPAL
REYNELLA EAST COLLEGE



Governing Council Chairperson