

The Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for North Haven School

Conducted in September 2018



Government of South Australia
Department for Education

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 Tony Sullivan, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Sue Mittiga, Review Principal.

School context

North Haven School caters for children from reception to year 7. It is located 21kms north-west of Adelaide, and is part of the Le Fevre Peninsula Partnership. The current enrolment is 311 students across 12 classes. The school is classified as Category 5 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score is 1001.

The school population includes 24 (8%) Aboriginal students, 99 (34%) EALD background students, 28 (9%), students with disabilities, and 98 (32%) students from families eligible for School Card assistance. Enrolment has been relatively stable over many years.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in his 3rd year of tenure at the school, an assistant principal, a numeracy/literacy leader and a STEM leader.

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:

Improvement Agenda: How well do teachers make data-informed judgements about student learning?

Effective Teaching: To what extent are the whole-school agreements about pedagogy and assessment in literacy and maths impacting in the classroom?

How well do teachers make data-informed judgements about student learning?

North Haven School has an abundance of learning data that the leadership team uses with staff to make strategic decisions about areas for improvement. The areas for improvement are reflected in the school's current site improvement plan (SIP) that has been developed through ongoing self-review and influence of the local partnership of schools. Recent improvement work focused on:

- Big Ideas in Number
- Big 6 in Reading
- Words Their Way (primary) and Jolly Phonics (junior)
- Natural Maths (problem solving), and
- STEM (solution fluencies).

To their credit, the leadership team acknowledged trying to do 'too much' and currently sharpening their focus on patterns emerging from school-based learning data. Within these key areas of the plan, the school has documented specific strategies to be implemented, particularly in maths, reading and writing. The review panel determined that these strategies can be honed even further through the school's next phase of review using data to guide the decisions about specific strategies to influence student learning at North Haven School.

The panel sighted a documented assessment schedule that clearly defines what assessments are undertaken from reception to year 7 across the school year. The panel confirmed many literacy and

numeracy datasets, including A-E grading across all subjects, and PAT science assessments (important given the school has a STEM focus).

Assessment information is stored and accessed by staff from a school-based learner data management system (MARKiT). A class information folder containing student learning data is made available to teachers at the start of the year to inform them of student performance and identified needs. This information is accompanied by face-to-face meetings between teachers at transition points.

Learning data is discussed at various forums and meetings across the school. Pupil free days, staff meetings, professional learning teams (PLTs), curriculum teams and performance meetings (snap chats) with staff, are avenues in which student learning data is discussed. These aspects were verified in documentation and through teacher interviews. A 'data wall' was established in 2018 to ensure visibility for staff of every student in the school, and to track improvement after major assessment periods for reading, numeracy and writing. The review panel sighted the data wall and discussed with the principal how this will be used with staff to track improvement in its current format. It was still work-in-progress, but it prompted staff conversations related to 'putting faces on the data'.

Teachers confirmed using various learning datasets to identify and validate intervention support for learning, both in-school and through external support. In-school support programs include: PreLit, MultiLit, Quicksmart (maths), and a school-funded speech pathologist (0.1FTE) currently assessing all year 1 students. In addition, the school has an in-school program, Literacy Intervention Teacher, where a teacher is employed at 0.4FTE to support students with identified learning needs in literacy. The school has only just commenced assessing students using a 'Ravens' assessment to identify those students who may need approaches in-class that 'stretch and challenge' their thinking. The review panel's analysis of system-based data indicates it as an area for a long-term strategic pedagogical response.

There is an impressive range of effective approaches across the school to stimulate student meta-cognition and higher achievement in learning, including:

- play-based investigations in junior primary
- inquiry in PIP and HASS projects using 'solution fluencies'
- use of rubrics to connect students to higher-level outcomes
- hands-on and 'real-life' connected learning
- 'next steps' discussions with students
- building subject-specific vocabulary
- multi-step problems, and
- provision of exemplars against standards and providing different entry/exit points during lessons.

Data is used to report and support the learning progress of students over the year. All participants confirmed the use of reading levels to reach independence in reading development. The review panel maintains that independent readers still require explicit teaching of reading to further levels of fluency and comprehension, particularly in the pursuit of high-level outcomes across all curriculum areas.

Students confirmed exposure to, and teaching of, various writing genres across year levels and individual goal-setting that occurs in some classes related to improving identified aspects in writing. Leaders and teachers confirmed the use of EALD scaling to support tracking in student writing. Some staff cited the existence of a school-based writing scope and sequence to ensure exposure and application of various text types across year levels. Others were not aware the school had a writing 'genre map' in place.

At a whole-school level, there is an effective collection, storage and analytical process in place to determine key patterns within the data for school improvement. The school has been strategic in supporting staff to build their capacity to improve achievement and growth in learning through targeted

professional learning. The leadership team specified the broad strategies to be implemented in literacy and numeracy across the school and documented these in whole-school agreements.

The next step for staff is to clearly define a few key strategies from these current agreements that it will implement uniformly across the school. Staff will need to deliver these strategies to a depth of practice and professional commitment to influence the improvement identified. Staff engagement with data (multiple measures) needs to be translated from a school level to team and individual levels to closely monitor the impact of agreed pedagogical practices on learning. Data at team and classroom levels must become central to teachers' work in planning, monitoring, tracking, evaluating and reporting improvement in teaching and learning across the school. In staff documentation to the panel there was a genuine expectation from staff to be accountable to students, colleagues and leaders for implementing the agreed teaching strategies with professional integrity. This professionalism is to be commended.

Direction 1

Create clarity and understanding with staff around the targeted pedagogical strategies to be implemented coherently in classes across the school, and build staff capacity to evaluate impact through multiple measures of data.

To what extent are the whole-school agreements about pedagogy and assessment in literacy and maths impacting in the classroom?

Staff are building capacity to design, assess and moderate student learning through a variety of professional learning opportunities linked to literacy and maths. These are reflected in the school's improvement plan and were validated through interviews with staff.

The school has a number of documented agreements in place that describe the teaching practices expected across the school, with the purpose of creating a common understanding for staff about what is required in their professional practice. These agreements include: literacy, maths, student engagement and wellbeing. In particular, literacy and maths agreements describe the pedagogy to be implemented, and the assessment, reporting and tracking expected of teachers. One teacher aptly stated: "If it's in the agreement, then we should all be doing it". Through development of a common understanding and coherent delivery of strategies, a common language for the learning process is used explicitly with students to create consistency of expectation.

Teachers are beginning to use learning intentions and success criteria to make learning (and how to be successful in learning) clearer for students, as they engage with new concepts in maths or writing, for instance. Many staff and students confirmed these are presented and discussed explicitly with students to build understanding from what they currently know to connect with 'new learning'. It is critical that this work is embedded deeply across the school with strong links to the Australian Curriculum.

Many students interviewed described effective strategies to support differentiation for students with varying needs, particularly in maths, such as working alone/with the teacher/SSO, gradually releasing students to work individually, and explaining expectations in a different way. Students described maths lessons as having a 'warm up', extension activities and reflection time. Some older students confirmed that teachers provide 'task cards' to make learning clear for them, and support their development as independent maths learners and thinkers.

The majority of students interviewed confirmed the need to plan for and provide further challenge within their lessons. This is an aspect that needs further discussion and agreement amongst leaders and teachers

about the specific age-appropriate strategies to be applied consistently across the school, to challenge all students in their learning experiences.

STEM is an aspect of the curriculum currently under development. It will be strategically important to align the agreed whole-school pedagogical strategies within STEM and vice-versa. In delivering this important work it is essential that the many systems and structures the school has in place are maximised to deliver the improvement the school is seeking. A useful strategy employed at the school to determine engagement in STEM learning was the collection of student perception evident in documentation provided. It would be beneficial to expand student voice in relation to other key practices initiated to determine effectiveness of the strategies used.

The panel confirmed that structures, systems and processes exist to support teachers' work, but there is a need to align all the structural components to work more effectively. Teachers commented that they need the time to work collaboratively to design, implement, monitor, adjust and embed the agreed practices. In particular, staff verified the coaching model is working well to support staff implementation of agreed practice in literacy and numeracy.

In concert with direction 1 (clarity of agreed strategies), the focus of meetings, performance plans, staff coaching, peer observations, staff sharing, and student feedback, need to be aligned to the defined strategies. This will require some refinement to existing operational structures, and strong self-discipline to stay focused on what matters in the classroom with respect to teaching and learning. In preparation for the review, the principal stated: "...it is clear we do need to reflect and check in more often on the strategies for... of improvement".

The review panel verified the professional capacity and commitment of leadership and staff to deliver a high-quality and rigorous learning program for students at the school given the time, support and ongoing feedback required to do so. Some adjustment to the operational structures will support this work.

Direction 2

Refine the strategic structures, systems and processes that support and enable staff collective responsibility to design, deliver and monitor the delivery and impact of agreed pedagogical agreements.

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 North Haven School.

The school is building teacher capacity very effectively. Leadership and teaching staff exhibited professionalism and drive to engage with contemporary curriculum and pedagogical initiatives for the benefit of students. This has been a characteristic exhibited over time, indicating a school that strives to make a positive difference to the students in their care. The majority of teachers are implementing many strategies and practices as a part of their professional learning. On display were many skilful teachers working in dynamic learning spaces with engaged students. The school has internal leadership capacity amongst its teaching staff to lead curriculum and pedagogical improvement with others. Supporting them in their quest for improved learning is a dedicated and helpful group of student support officers.


Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

North Haven School is performing well in providing educational opportunities and outcomes for students. Students are enthused and engaged with the learning on offer, and connect well with the staff across the school. The school leadership team works collaboratively to bring about improvement in school performance. Change across the school is driven by data which informs curriculum aspects that need a whole-school focus. Staff are professional in their commitment and approach to improving the learning outcomes for students. Staff and parents exhibit pride in their school; a strong feature during the review.

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

1. Create clarity and understanding with staff around the targeted pedagogical strategies to be implemented coherently in classes across the school, and build staff capacity to evaluate impact through multiple measures of data.
2. Refine the strategic structures, systems and processes that support and enable staff collective responsibility to design, deliver and monitor the delivery and impact of agreed pedagogical agreements.

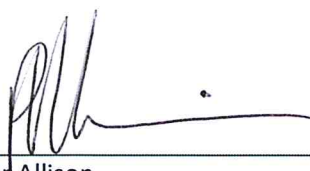
Based on the school's current performance, North Haven School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



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NORTH HAVEN SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson

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 90.3%.

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).

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2017, 56% of year 1 and 65% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. Both results represent little or no change from the school's historic baseline average.

In 2017, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 84% of year 3 students, 79% of year 5 students, and 76% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For year 3, this result represents an improvement, for year 5, little or no change, and for year 7, this result represents a decline from the school's historic baseline average.

Between 2015 and 2017, in year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving within the results relative to similar groups of students across departmental schools.

In 2017, 19% of year 3, 30% of year 5, and 28% of year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the school's historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading at year 3, 53% remained in the upper bands at year 5 in 2017, and 57% remained in the upper bands at year 7 in 2017.

Numeracy

In 2017, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 86% of year 3 students, 65% of year 5 students, and 76% of year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents an improvement, for year 5, a decline, and for year 7, little or no change from the school's historic baseline average.

For year 5, there is a decline from 85% in 2015 to 65% in 2017.

Between 2015 and 2017, in year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving within the results relative to similar groups of students across departmental schools.

In 2017, 23% of year 3, 7% of year 5, and 24% of year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the school's historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 29% of students from year 3 remained in the upper bands at year 5 in 2017, and 100% of students from year 3 remained in the upper bands at year 7 in 2017.