

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

Report for Port Lincoln High School

Conducted in August 2017



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.

The External School Review Process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented. This information is provided in Appendix One of the report.

This External School Review was conducted by Liz Schneyder, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Neil White and Mark Healy, Review Principals.

School context

Port Lincoln High School caters for students from Year 8 to 12, and is part of the Port Lincoln Partnership. The school's enrolment in 2017 is 812 students, including 125 FLO students. Enrolments have been stable over a number of years. The school has an ICSEA score of 936, and is classified as Category 3 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 16% Aboriginal students, 10% students with disabilities, 9% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 1.5% children/young people in care, and 31% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in his first tenure, a Deputy Principal, 6 Assistant Principals and 7.5 Coordinators. There are 50.3FTE teachers and 39 School Services Officers (SSOs).

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 three key areas from the External School Review Framework:

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

Effective Leadership: To what extent are the school's Professional Learning and Performance Development processes effective in building teacher capacity?

Improvement Agenda: How well are the results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions?

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

Port Lincoln High School has a diverse student population with almost 50% eligible for additional support with their learning. While there has been growth in some achievement data, particularly the NAPLAN, only 50% of students achieved the SEA benchmark in literacy and numeracy in 2016, while SACE completion declined from 97% to 84% in 2016.

The school's leaders, and many staff, are aware of this data, and a number of strategies are planned or already being implemented to improve the achievement of all students.

Improvement in literacy and numeracy is a priority in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP), and a documented agreement for all staff was provided to the Review Panel. There has been a long-term tradition to stream students from Year 8 in mathematics, but this strategy is now being questioned because of the low achievement of students in some SACE mathematics courses. There has been a focus on subject literacies for a number of years, through the 'Extended Response' across Years 8 to 12, and the success of students in the SACE Stage 2 Research Project, including some FLO students, indicates this program is beginning to have a positive impact.

There has been a focus in recent Professional Development programs and line management meetings on learning about, and sharing of, pedagogical and contemporary practices that engage students, and encourage them to both attend school and participate in learning. It was evident that there are some high quality teaching practices being used by a number of teachers, many using ICT tools. Students and staff acknowledged the positive impact this Professional Development on quality teaching is having on the engagement and challenge of students. There has been a steady growth in interest amongst other teachers over the use of the innovative strategies shared.

It was evident that there are increasing numbers of teachers who are introducing more inquiry-based learning, 'hands-on' activities, 'flipped' learning, group work, and multi-modal assessment to encourage student independence and ownership of their learning. This is a work-in-progress, with some teachers still relying on worksheets. The languages teachers are encouraging students to use their mobile phones as translators, and

the 'Yumi Maths' project and introduction of STEM programs are also encouraging teachers to use and share new pedagogies.

New facilities for middle school students have enabled teaching teams to deliver integrated units of work that are easily differentiated, engage students, provide multiple entry and exit points and multi-modal assessment opportunities. Staff are collaborating in the design of assessment tasks that ensure the needs of all the students are met and are enjoying the opportunities to work with colleagues. Teachers believe they are beginning to see improvements in student engagement, which is reflected in improved attendance in their lessons. Students indicated an enjoyment of these lessons and appreciated some of the more challenging tasks provided for them. The teachers are looking for more time in the Professional Development (PD) calendar to further collaborate on task design and moderation.

Documentation indicates there has not been a strong whole-school focus on SACE achievement, but rather on completion of Year 12, and this was reflected in comments made by parents, staff and students. The school community does, however, appreciate the breadth of subject options available for senior students that include a large range of vocational courses, at Certificate II level and higher, as well as the large number of extra-curricular opportunities. A new Band 3 leader is working with the VET Coordinator and other leaders and staff to improve the SACE achievement of all students. She has already initiated a number of strategies, including a review of subjects available to senior students and raising the expectations of staff and students, including 100% completion of the compulsory SACE units. The leader is working with teachers to reduce moderation shifts, improve exam results and the rigour at Year 10, and task design. Recent Professional Development through the ECD Partnership focused on collaborative moderation, supporting teachers to understand more deeply the assessment demands of the Australian Curriculum.

Direction 1

Ensure a whole-school commitment and cohesive approach to the design of assessment tasks, collaborative moderation and the use of innovative, contemporary and engaging pedagogies.

To what extent are the school's Professional Learning and Performance Development processes effective in building teacher capacity?

The school has invested significantly in a range of PD opportunities for staff. There has been a mix of externally led and internally managed programs, largely focused on improving teacher pedagogy, differentiation, task design, and the growth mindsets of students. Many of the programs are linked to the school's Site Improvement Plan (SIP), and individual teacher Professional Development Program (PDP) targets. SACE teachers are actively encouraged to become moderators and markers, while middle school teachers involved in the integrated learning program are keen to collaborate and plan. A number of early career teachers are eager for training in the innovative use of ICT.

However, teachers expressed a concern during the review about the overcrowded PD calendar with competing agendas, and minimal time for consolidation.

Professional Engagement Groups (PEGs) have been introduced by the Leadership Team in 2016 to foster the sharing of staff expertise and knowledge of all staff, professional dialogue between teams, and the contribution of all staff to school planning. The next stage of development will be to broaden the scope of PEG discussion to include class improvement data, SIP outcomes and student engagement strategies, and to ensure clear direction and accountability for improvement.

Many of the school's leaders are either new to leadership, in new leadership positions in the school or new to the school. While they are seeking greater clarity about their roles, they are also looking for relevant PD opportunities. Many were included in a 'Managing difficult conversations' program in 2016, and are looking to be involved in similar programs in 2017, such as 'Growth Coaching' and 'Classroom Observation for Leaders'.

Line management and PDP processes should be reviewed and analysed more closely with leadership roles. Currently, teachers are expected to collect feedback from their students using Survey Monkey and include this in their PDP documentation. There are also opportunities for staff to include their individual classes' A-E data, which is available in SEQTA. However, most PDPs sighted lacked reference to data, and most staff indicated that line management conversations were generally informal and irregular. Most leaders believed they monitored the performance of their teachers by sharing offices and teaching spaces. The Review Panel recommended to the Principal that a more accountable culture is needed if there is to be a cohesive approach

to meeting the learning needs of all students.

There is an expectation amongst teachers that it is the responsibility of leaders, not teachers, to manage student behaviour, and changing this culture is proving to be challenging for many leaders. A number of teachers indicated that the poor behaviour of some students impacted on their capacity to provide quality teaching. A documented Student Behaviour Management policy and process is in place, although not well known, and some PD opportunities have been provided for early career and teachers challenged by classroom management and establishing positive relationships with students. These programs have been appreciated, with leaders also providing strategies for managing disengaged students, including a focus on pedagogy. However, the large number of leaders currently responsible for supporting teachers in managing student behaviour is resulting in inconsistencies in the advice and information provided.

Direction 2

Establish a Professional Development calendar and an accountability culture that supports and enables the achievement of the SIP, and one that builds a cohesive team approach to pedagogy.

How well are the results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions?

Port Lincoln High School has systems in place to provide large amounts of data to leaders and staff in a range of formats that staff are able to access and analyse. NAPLAN, PAT, ELLI, SACE and A-E grades are analysed by leadership and shared with staff at staff meetings, and it is expected that team leaders will have further discussions with teachers in their team meetings.

Data walls are evident throughout the school and SEQTA is the main store for achievement data. Traffic light data for SACE achievement is available for SACE teachers and students, which is also shared with parents using the parent portal in SEQTA. This is appreciated by a number of parents who were interviewed.

Currently, the Middle School Assistant Principal is intent on implementing strategies to address the NAPLAN and PAT results, and is working with teachers and leaders to analyse NAPLAN data to improve student outcomes. However, there is limited ownership of the data by the class teachers who were interviewed, despite their acknowledgement that it is readily available on SEQTA.

There is also limited analysis of individual teacher A-E data, with most of this information displayed in subject areas only. The Principal was able to provide the NAPLAN, PAT and A-E data for a group of high-band and below-standard students over 4 years, for the Review Panel to triangulate. He indicated that the practice of triangulating data was not common, but he appreciated the value of the strategy in informing leaders and teachers about the progress of students and the effectiveness of the intervention being provided. He indicated that there continues to be reluctance from some staff and leaders to engage in conversations about individual teacher data, including SACE data, and this was confirmed in a number of meetings with teachers.

Leaders and teachers in the FLO, Aboriginal Education, Students With Disabilities (SWD), Bridge, Special Options and mainstream wellbeing teams, could provide the Review Panel with comprehensive datasets and evidence of significant intervention strategies they have implemented as a result of ongoing data analysis. They track each of their students, and monitor their attendance and achievement, even after they leave school.

SEQTA has the capacity for storage and sharing of curriculum materials, including Learning Assessment Plans, rubrics, resources and student assessments. Through the parent portal, teachers, parents and students are able to communicate and access attendance and achievement data, while teachers can provide feedback to their students on submitted drafts. At the moment, the quality and comprehensiveness of the documentation is inconsistent, which is proving to be frustrating for students and parents.

Direction 3

Improve the effective use of data to inform and enhance teaching and learning programs across the school.

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 Port Lincoln High School.

The school is contributing effectively to meeting the varied needs of all students through the establishment of 6 intervention/wellbeing teams:

- Mainstream Wellbeing team.
- Aboriginal Education Team.
- Students with Disabilities Team.
- Bridge Program – for middle school students who are disengaged from their learning.
- Special Options Program for students who have had limited previous involvement in education.
- FLO program, which is off-campus and caters for senior students who are chronic non-attenders.

Each of these teams has committed leadership and passionate staff, effective relationships with the students and their families, and credibility within the local community. The data provided by each leader indicated sustained improvement in attendance, achievement and successful post-school destinations for most of these students. Intervention strategies and the provision of qualified 1:1 support has been effective, as has the SASSTA program and the enrolment of students into a range of vocational courses. Monitoring of the effectiveness of these programs is significant. There has been a focus on students completing Year 12, gaining employment or an apprenticeship, and earning SACE accreditation.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

Port Lincoln High School has a diverse student population and programs have been implemented to meet the particular education and wellbeing needs of all students. There is some growth in student achievement in the middle school at a level which would be expected of a school in a similar context.

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

1. Ensure a whole-school commitment and cohesive approach to the design of assessment tasks, collaborative moderation and the use of innovative, contemporary and engaging pedagogies.
2. Establish a Professional Development calendar and an accountability culture that supports and enables the achievement of the SIP, and one that builds a cohesive team approach to pedagogy.
3. Improve the effective use of data to inform and enhance teaching and learning programs across the school.

Based on the school's current performance, Port Lincoln High School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



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.



Greg Barry
PRINCIPAL
PORT LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson

Appendix One

Policy compliance

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

The Principal of Port Lincoln High School 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 working towards being compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2016 was 81.4%.

Appendix Two

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 2016, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 52% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. Between 2014 and 2016, the trend has been upwards, from 31% in 2014 to 52% in 2016. The school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2016 NAPLAN Reading, 6% of students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 33%, or 6 of 18 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016, and 39%, or 5 of 13 students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016.

Numeracy

In 2016, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 54% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2014 and 2016, the trend has been upwards, from 37% in 2014 to 54% in 2016. The school is achieving lower than the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2016 NAPLAN Numeracy, 5% of students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 33%, or 4 of 12 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016, and 28%, or 5 of 18 students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2016, 40% of students enrolled in February and 84% of those enrolled in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE, did go on to successfully achieve their SACE. This result for October SACE completion represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2016, 98% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 88% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Literacy units, 69% successfully completed their Stage 1 Numeracy units and 91% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

Eighty-eight percent of grades achieved in the 2016 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Twenty-six percent of students completed SACE using VET, and there were 125 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2016.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2016, 7% of students achieved an 'A' Grade, and 39% achieved a 'B' Grade. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average for the 'A' Grade and an improvement from the historical baseline average for the 'B' Grade.

In terms of 2016 tertiary entrance, 48%, or 31 of 65 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score.

In 2016, the school had a moderation adjustment down for 26 students and moderation up for 3 students.