

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW
REPORT FOR CHALLA GARDENS 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,*
- *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 Julie Hardy, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and June Goode, 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 Challa Gardens 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. Attendance is monitored closely and consecutive days of absence are routinely followed up using a range of documented strategies. There is a strong focus on ensuring all students attend school and measures are in place to improve the attendance rate of 90.3% which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Challa Gardens Primary School is a Preschool to Year 7 school of approximately 320 students situated in the north western suburbs of Adelaide. It is classified as DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage Category 2 and has an ACARA ICSEA of 955. The school reflects a diverse community. Approximately 60% of students have English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) and approximately 14% of students are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. There is an on-site preschool.

The leadership team consists of the Principal, in her second tenure, Deputy Principal, a Coordinator and a Student Counsellor.

Lines of inquiry:

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

Student Learning:	How well are students achieving over time? How well do teachers work with students to set goals and targets and review their progress as a continual process?
Improvement Agenda:	How effective are the school's self review processes in informing and shaping improvement?
School Community Partnerships:	How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?

How well are students achieving over time?

The school has had a focus on improving literacy results in recent years. The pre-review discussion of student achievement data found that results in reading are consistent with similar schools and the percentage of students at or above the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) has increased over the last three years at Year 3, 5 and 7. For example, Year 3: 60% in 2012 to 69% in 2014, Year 5, 53% to 60% and in Year 7, 53% to 80%. While there has been a steady increase in the percentage of students achieving the DECD SEA at Year 7 in numeracy over the same period, 55% to 80%, this has not been the case at Year 3 and Year 5. In general, the achievement of students in numeracy is lower than in reading leading to the current school improvement focus on mathematics. The retention of students in the higher bands of NAPLAN was identified as an area for improvement. The lines of inquiry relate to those students at or above the DECD Standard of Achievement in Running Records and NAPLAN, who need greater challenge in their learning in order to master high level skills in reading and numeracy. The school has a focus on improving mathematics outcomes and implementing the Australian Curriculum.

How well do teachers work with students to set goals and targets and review their progress as a continual process?

Goal setting is a widespread strategy that is used to support student learning at Challa Gardens. Setting goals that drive learning and teaching is dependent on effective processes for collecting, analysing and storing relevant information about student learning. In evaluating the extent to which student learning is monitored and evaluated, the Review Panel observed thorough systems and processes to monitor the learning and attendance of all children including priority groups. Individual Learning Plans are negotiated with parents and documented for all Aboriginal learners. An Excel-based system is used to collate and store student achievement data as well as attendance data. Using these data, all children in priority groups are identified and electronic copies of individual learning plans (ILPs) and negotiated education plans (NEPs) are linked to data records. All staff members have access to these plans. Intervention strategies and programs are widespread and systematic and are focused on targeted in-class support for small groups and individuals who are achieving below expected levels. The Review Panel did not see evidence that very capable students are being tracked and monitored in the same way as students who are achieving below achievement standards. The principal provided information of the school working with small groups of high achieving students during reading and numeracy blocks. This important work is a priority for the school and students will benefit from greater levels of focused support.

Direction 1

Accelerate the learning of those students achieving well above the Standard of Educational Achievement using current data systems to identify and explicitly monitor their learning. Adjust current learning design practices to ensure all students are offered challenging choices in their learning.

Appropriate standardised assessments in Reading and Maths, along with EALD Language and Literacy levels and Australian Curriculum grades in English, Maths, Science and History provide the information teachers use to design tasks and track learning. Sustainable systems are in place to collect, collate and store data. Data is regularly interrogated by the leadership team and also by staff through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). At these meetings, staff members discuss student learning outcomes and collaboratively plan next steps. Staff identified PLCs as one of the most important changes within the school in recent years and reported that they value the opportunity to engage in discussions centred on student achievement data.

Whole school agreements are in place for literacy and outline expectations, assessment tools, resources, intervention, and evidence-based instructional strategies. Staff identified literacy agreements and the use of common language as important improvements in supporting student learning. A key strategy that impacts on student outcomes is students and teachers working together to review progress and set learning goals and targets. The setting of reading goals based on Running Records is a consistent practice in the early years and all students consulted, both in focus groups and informally, were able to talk to the Review Panel about the level they were currently reading and their target for the term.

Rubrics based on the Australian Curriculum are widely used to support student learning. Teachers and students reported that using data and feedback to set learning goals was a school wide practice, though the extent to which learning goals are set in areas other than literacy varied between classes. The Review Panel saw student learning goal documents and observed targets, learning goals, and scaffolds in classrooms to support literacy learning.

The consistency of approach in relation to literacy is not yet evident in relation to mathematics. The Review Panel was informed that work is underway to translate mathematics outcomes from the Australian Curriculum into “student friendly” language as a precursor to creating student rubrics to support mathematics. Given the success the school has had in improving literacy outcomes through targeted, consistent and agreed approaches to intervention and mainstream practice, a similar improvement process could be undertaken in mathematics.

Direction 2

Improve student learning outcomes in mathematics by developing, documenting and implementing a whole school agreement including expectations regarding students setting learning goals and using rubrics to improve learning outcomes

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

In determining the effectiveness of the school’s self review processes, the Review Panel was provided with documentation that indicated a cycle of evidence-based review and improvement. The leadership team work together effectively and make strategic decisions that support the improvement agenda. Programs and practices are regularly reviewed to ensure they are having the expected impact on learning. Changes in approach are data-informed and evidence-based. The leadership team and staff engage in a reflective and iterative approach to improvement which has been effective in raising student achievement in reading and writing over time. Professional learning is aligned to improvement priorities and teachers are supported to develop, trial and share innovative practice. Rubrics are widely used to support student learning by making task requirements explicit and supporting self-evaluation.

The school’s vision and values reflect the valuing of diversity and high expectations. The school values are displayed in classrooms and students, staff and the Governing Council chair talked about the school focus on valuing diversity and support for student learning and wellbeing. A strategic plan outlines the direction for improvement over three years with a focus on Mathematics and implementation of the Australian Curriculum. There are also one year operational plans in these areas. The Review Panel noted that the strategies and targets in the operational plans are not directly aligned to the improvement actions in classrooms.

Direction 3

Ensure the school improvement plan has a clear focus for classroom implementation, with specific and agreed strategies and targets for student learning outcomes

How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?

Teachers and students at Challa Gardens are exploring a range of ways of strengthening the influence students have on their learning. All students who spoke to Review Panel members were confident about their learning strengths and challenges and were able to articulate their learning goals and targets in relation to reading and, for older students, writing. ILPS are used in some classrooms and include input from teachers and students, are based on task feedback and are focused on learning goals.

In addition, students support each other during break times through a peer mediator program and contribute to school decision making through class meetings and the Student Representative Council. The Review Panel was informed that plans are underway for students to take a more active role in school decision making.

The Review Panel saw evidence of emerging initiatives that have the potential to strengthen student influence on their learning if adopted more widely. Initiatives include, students and teachers collaboratively developing learning goals in writing based on EALD Language and Literature levels, students providing feedback to their teacher and students displaying and discussing data in relation to their achievement and using it to identify next steps in their learning.

Direction 4

Improve learning outcomes for students by evaluating the impact of current approaches to increase student influence on learning and develop and document consistent, sustainable practices

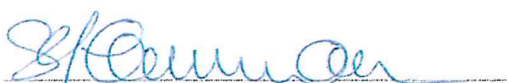
OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Challa Gardens Primary School is tracking well. Good performance was evident through a culture of improvement, strategic leadership and the use of student achievement data and other evidence to inform decisions and actions at the individual student, class and whole-school levels.

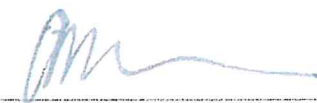
The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following directions:

1. Accelerate the learning of those students achieving well above the Standard of Educational Achievement using current data systems to identify and explicitly monitor their learning. Adjust current learning design practices to ensure all students are offered challenging choices in their learning.
2. Improve student learning outcomes in mathematics by developing, documenting and implementing a whole school agreement including expectations regarding students setting learning goals and using rubrics to improve learning outcomes
3. Improve learning outcomes for students by evaluating the impact of current approaches to increase student influence on learning and develop and document consistent, sustainable practices
4. Ensure the school improvement plan has a clear focus for classroom implementation, with specific and agreed strategies and targets for student learning outcomes

Based on the school's current performance, Challa Gardens 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 three months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's Annual Report.



Amelia Angelakis
PRINCIPAL
CHALLA GARDENS PRIMARY
SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson

