



EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

For

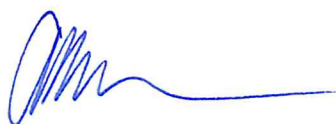
COROMANDEL VALLEY SCHOOL

Was conducted in August 2017

The External School Review process supports to raise student achievement and sustain high performance. It provides quality assurance to build and sustain public confidence in DECD schools.

The public report with directions for the future is available on the school website.

The Review Panel acknowledges the co-operation provided by the school during the review process.



Anne Millard

Executive Director, Partnerships, Schools and Preschools



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and
Child Development



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Report for Coromandel Valley Primary School

Conducted in August 2017



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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 Julie Bishop, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Brenton Conradi, Review Principal.

School context

Coromandel Valley Primary School caters for children from Reception to Year 7. It is situated 14kms south of the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment is 448. The school has an ICSEA score of 1107, and is classified as Category 7 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1.4% Aboriginal students, 2.5% students with disabilities, 2% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 0.2% children in care, and 5% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in her first tenure, a Deputy Principal, 1 Senior Leader 0.5FTE (IT), and a Coordinator Special Education.

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 students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?

Effective Teaching: How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

Effective Leadership: How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?

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

In a survey conducted during the External School Review (ESR) relating to a recent unit of work, 69% of staff indicated that they engaged students to a high degree. In the same unit of work, 62% of staff indicated that they had effectively created opportunities to intellectually stretch students to a high degree.

The majority of teachers indicated clear understandings that intellectual challenge was applicable to all students. It was reported that knowing there are different starting points and expectations that will involve diverse, extended and creative thinking with multiple answers and methods were aspects to be considered. It was also stated that giving students the option and freedom to investigate were important factors. There was a clear understanding that stretch and challenge are for all students, not just the 'high fliers'.

Teachers stated that taking an intellectual risk in their classrooms included the teacher modelling risk-taking and letting students explore their learning. Some staff indicated that they had begun with students being very anxious, and currently, two terms later, students were confident risk-takers, no longer being rescued, and there was now a 'buzz', with energy and enthusiasm in the classroom. Other staff reported that letting students be curious, getting into the 'learning pit' and helping students without rescuing were now commonplace in their classrooms. Giving students the time and opportunity to think deeply, challenging students to think as hard as they can, and making thinking visible were additional strategies used.

It was noted that parents generally only get to see the end point of the learning without seeing the processes of learning during the task. Further work in sharing the *how* of teaching with parents would strengthen common understandings and expectations for all.

Staff discussions identified a diverse range of approaches in supporting students to develop resilience and perseverance as learners. Staff reported that the introduction of a common approach to the teaching of literacy in the Early Years was helping students build their stamina and reflect on their progress. Staff had

observed that the focus on self-reflection had strengthened students' understandings in both literacy and numeracy, resulting in students now being comfortable to be challenged in their learning.

Perseverance and resilience have been strengthened for students in the older years through the provision of opportunities to learn about how the brain works; that is, developing an understanding that making mistakes builds on growing pathways in the brain.

Other staff identified that they were working on building resilience, and supporting students to own their mistakes. Developing understanding that when learning gets tough, students need to work through it and try again, was an ongoing focus. Some staff indicated that several students were still developing their skills as risk-takers and, as such, the implementation of a 'circle of trust' was currently supporting these students to strengthen their resilience. Staff reported that they use Growth Mindsets (GMS) and Positive Education language in the class; it was noted by staff that this language was not yet embedded practice for the students.

There is clear evidence that staff are improving stretch and challenge for students. Some staff noted that they were confident, particularly in the provision of intellectual challenge in English and maths, but that it was problematic when teaching an Inquiry Unit, as it was difficult to know where individual students 'were at', resulting in staff falling back to what they already knew about the student/s. This could be important work for Learning Teams when planning the next Inquiry Unit.

Many staff indicated the need to embed the terminology of positive learning dispositions across the school with four different approaches identified during the review. The school may benefit from discussions around the development of an agreed, coherent whole-school approach to a common language for positive learning dispositions. Once determined, it is important that this language is then also shared with parents and embedded across the site.

There is clear evidence that staff are strongly committed to improving student learning through the provision of learning tasks that are both engaging and challenging. There is further evidence that the school has already undertaken significant work in this area, which is important, as students stated that they would appreciate greater challenge in their learning.

Next steps include developing common understandings and terminology for students, parents and staff, so that intellectual stretch and challenge become embedded practice for all students and across all learning areas. This is especially important when reflecting on the higher-band achievement in Years 5 and 7 in writing and numeracy, where the challenge for the school is to sustain and retain higher-band achievement from Year 3 through to Year 7 and beyond.

Direction 1

Embed opportunities for all students to engage in intellectual stretch and challenge through planned learning across the curriculum, strengthened by the implementation of a common language for positive learning dispositions.

How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

There is clear evidence of a strong culture and commitment to professional learning across the school. The school is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school in both the Primary and Middle Years programs. The Middle Years program has been authorised for 14 years, and the Primary Program for 6 years. The work undertaken within these programs has provided the school with a strong framework of ongoing self-review, effective pedagogical practice and collaborative planning within the IB framework.

The established IB culture of continuous improvement has supported the embedding of effective pedagogical practices across the site. Parents indicated strong support for the IB program.

Staff are provided with release time to collaboratively plan and meet in learning teams. A high level of professional collegiality and strong commitment to collaboration was evident during interviews held with learning teams during the ESR. A curriculum group and Site Improvement Plan (SIP) group also operate across the site.

At the staff meeting held during the ESR, staff analysed the 2016 NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy

results, as well as Progressive Achievement Test Mathematics (PAT-M) and the Progressive Achievement Test Reading (PAT-R), and the mid and end-of-year A-E grade allocations. Staff identified the need to improve higher-band achievement in writing at Years 5 and 7. Conversations included the benefit of and need for the development of common assessment tools for writing across the school.

Staff observations also included the need to identify students at each year level with highest and lowest scale scores in the PAT-M and PAT-R assessments to ensure their growth is tracked and monitored. Discussions identified the wide range of differentiation required in both reading and mathematics across the site.

Teachers indicated that differentiation often required additional scaffolding for some students, including the modification of tasks. It was also noted that for some students with Negotiated Education Plans (NEP) responses could, at times, be verbal or visual.

Modification of assessments, whole-class exemplars, small group work, and SSO support were provided as examples of successful differentiation. Staff identified that observing students confident to undertake tasks, eager to extend their skills and using pre-learned skills, along with achieving their personal goals, were all key indicators of successful differentiation.

Staff indicated that differentiation could be further improved through the development of individual student plans, small group writing sessions, and additional support personnel.

In a survey conducted by the school prior to the ESR, teachers identified their teaching effectiveness against the following criteria: differentiation, assessment, effective pedagogy and Australian Curriculum. Interestingly, no staff identified that differentiation was *embedded* practice, compared to 26% for assessment, and 52% for effective pedagogy and Australian Curriculum.

It is apparent that differentiation is an identified area for improvement across the school. Next steps for the school will be to develop common understandings and practices around effective differentiation at each year level and across all learning areas. The development of effective differentiation within units of Inquiry will be important work for the school to undertake within this framework.

Direction 2

Develop and embed whole-school understandings in effective differentiation practices across all year levels and learning areas.

How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?

Performance Development processes at the school are well-established and valued by staff. Processes include staff being released to meet and plan with a member of leadership early in Term 1, where the data for the class and each student is analysed, leading to specific strategies for individuals and groups of students. Many staff reported that this focused strategy was a significant factor in ensuring that students were set up for success early in the year.

The school began peer observations in 2016. The leadership is to be commended for the strategic and careful implementation that ensured staff maintained ownership of the observation process throughout. An IB review has previously indicated that formative assessment was an area for further development across the site, which became the focus for peer observations.

Staff reported they used a protocol structure, which established a culture of trust and constructive support and sequenced feedback. Staff began by using the protocol to practice; this included some staff electing to film themselves and then asking a peer to view the lesson and reflect against the protocol criteria. Other staff nominated a trusted peer to undertake observations in-class and provide feedback via the criteria. Staff commented that the process had provided them with the opportunity to reflect, several indicating that the feedback had resulted in a change of practice. Other staff indicated that while they found it threatening initially, they now saw it as a useful strategy for personal growth. The careful and strategic implementation of observation to improve teaching practice and support feedback to improve learning has

resulted in a very positive approach to performance development across the school.

Feedback for learning is pivotal to ongoing improvement for all; the school is to be commended for the work undertaken thus far. Next steps for the school will be to incorporate opportunities for students to provide feedback about themselves as learners.

Staff indicated via a survey conducted during the ESR that opportunities for students to provide feedback about themselves as learners occurred in incidental conversations, reflections at the end of an inquiry unit and students providing feedback on what they wanted to learn in a specific area of learning. Other staff indicated that they asked students to write to them at the beginning of the year, reporting that this provided useful information about what students had learned and where they were successful.

Staff indicated that student feedback for learning could be strengthened by developing opportunities for students to engage in peer editing and feedback between students. Other staff indicated that the use of a digital learning portfolio in recording student feedback on reflections of what they had learned and what worked well was providing useful and clear insights to student perceptions.

'When students are involved in their learning as equal partners, and develop their self-awareness regarding their strengths, preferences and areas for improvement, we develop expert learners'. Two-way feedback provides students with the opportunity to give, as well as receive, feedback about themselves as learners. Discussions with staff during the ESR resulted in suggestions that students could be included in the planning of Inquiry Units at the beginning of each term, by providing feedback relating to the previous term's work.

The school has established a strong culture of feedback for learning, and is now well-positioned to further enhance this important work by ensuring that feedback is a two-way process, and is implemented across all aspects of student learning. Feedback about the *how* of learning from a student perspective is critical in establishing learning as a two-way process. Students at all year levels benefit from the opportunity to have authentic influence on their learning. The planned use of Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) perception data in relation to how students learn at the beginning and end of units of work will further strengthen student influence on their learning.

Direction 3

Develop and embed student influence for learning across all year levels, which includes planned use of TfEL pedagogical perception data as part of regular classroom reviews at the beginning and end of units of work.

What is the school doing particularly well and why is this effective?

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practices that are contributing significantly to school improvement at Coromandel Valley Primary School.

Effective practice in effective leadership was evident at the school. The positive and focused approach to improvement and change has been influenced by the strategic use of a diverse range of effective pedagogical practices, which provide clear structures and frameworks for embedding professional learning across the site. In particular, the panel noted the strategic use of tools that scaffold and support thinking in new contexts. Examples include the ladder of feedback as a guide for classroom observations and a range of strategies included in Visible Thinking routines that have supported staff to take on new learning within a safe and comprehensive framework. Staff use and refer to the thinking routines to support their learning. This has led to building congruence within and across the site, staff developing common understandings and embedding effective practices that have built teacher capacity across the site. Evidence of these practices was verified through staff interviews, Principal presentation and classroom walkthroughs.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

At Coromandel Valley Primary School effective leadership provides strategic direction and planning. There is a coherent and engaging curriculum that is embedded across the school. Teachers are provided with, and use, structured time for ongoing collaborative professional learning.

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

1. Embed opportunities for all students to engage in intellectual stretch and challenge through planned learning across the curriculum, strengthened by the implementation of a common language for positive learning dispositions.
2. Develop and embed whole-school understandings in effective differentiation practices across all year levels and learning areas.
3. Develop and embed student influence for learning across all year levels, which includes planned use of TfEL pedagogical perception data as part of regular classroom reviews at the beginning and end of units of work.

Based on the school's current performance, Coromandel Valley Primary 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.



Liz Pelling
PRINCIPAL
COROMANDEL VALLEY PRIMARY
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 Coromandel Valley Primary School has verified that the school is working towards being compliant in all applicable DECD policies. The Principal advised action is being taken to comply with the following DECD policy:

- Governance: collection of and sharing bullying data with Governing Council.

When the school's actions achieve compliancy with DECD policy and procedures, the Principal must resubmit the Policy Compliance Checklist to the Education Director.

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 2016 was 92.6%.

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 the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2016, 98% of Year 1 and 83% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average for Year 1 and little or no change from the historic baseline average for Year 2.

In 2016, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 95% of Year 3 students, 91% of Year 5 students, and 87% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3 and 5, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. For Year 7, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2012 and 2016, the trend for Year 3 has been upwards, from 78% in 2012 to 95% in 2016.

For 2016 Year 3 and 5 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving higher than the results of similar students across DECD schools. For Year 7, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across DECD schools.


In 2016, 79% of Year 3, 43% of Year 5, and 34% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands. For Year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 71%, or 17 of 24 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016, and 46%, or 13 of 28 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2016.

Numeracy

In 2016, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 95% of Year 3 students, 83% of Year 5 students, and 87% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD SEA. For Year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. For Years 5 and 7, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2014 and 2016, the trend for Year 5 has been downwards, from 90% in 2014 to 83% in 2016.



For 2016 Year 3 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving higher than the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools. For 2016 Year 5 and 7 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2016, 58% of Year 3, 24% of Year 5, and 23% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands. For Year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 44%, or 8 of 18 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016, and 53%, or 9 of 17 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2016.

