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 Lyn Arnold, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Judith Howie, Review Principal.
Policy compliance

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

The Principal of West Lakes Shore R-7 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 to be compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2015 was 93%, which meets the DECD target of 93%.

School context

West Lakes Shore Reception to Year 7 School is situated 13kms west of the Adelaide CBD. The school’s enrolment in 2016 is 673 students, and enrolments have increased moderately, from 626 in 2014 and 639 in 2015. The school has an ICSEA score of 1052. It is classified as Category 6 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 1.7% Aboriginal students, 3.6% Students with Disabilities, 29% students from Non-English Speaking Background (NESB), ≤1% students under the Guardianship of the Minister (GoM), and 17% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in the fourth year of her first tenure at the school, an Acting Deputy Principal, a 1.0FTE Assistant Principal: Student Wellbeing Participation and Engagement. There is a SHIP program working in collaboration with Seaton High School. West Lakes Junior Primary and Primary Schools amalgamated in 2013 to form the current West Lakes Shore R-7 school currently accommodating 25 classes.

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 2015, 69% of Year 1 and 85% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 96% of Year 3 students, 92% of Year 5 students and 89% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3, 5 and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2013 and 2015, the trend for Year 7 has been upwards, from 83% in 2013 to 89% in 2015.

In 2015, Year 3 and 5 students achieved better results than similar students across DECD schools.

In 2015, 57% of Year 3, 40% of Year 5 and 41% 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. There have been improving trends between 2013 and 2015 in Year 5 (29% to 40%) and Year 7 (27% to 41%), in students achieving in the higher bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 66% of students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015, and 86% of students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015. For Years 3 to 5 this result represents a decline, and for Years 3 to 7 retention results, this represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.
For the last 3 years, the trend for Year 3 to 7 upper band retention is upwards, from 59% in 2013 to 86% in 2015.

**Numeracy**

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 81% of Year 3 students, 87% of Year 5 students and 89% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2013 and 2015, the trend for Year 5 has been upwards, from 78% in 2013 to 87% in 2015.

For 2015 Year 5 and 7 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving better than the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

Between 2013 and 2015, the school has consistently achieved higher in Years 5 and 7 NAPLAN Numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2015, 32% of Year 3, 27% of Year 5 and 26% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 69% of students from Year 3 remained in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015, and 70% of students from Year 3 remained in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015. For Years 3 to 5 and Years 3 to 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

**Lines of Inquiry**

During the review process, the panel focused on two key areas from the External School Review Framework:

- **Effective Teaching:** How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?
- **School Partnerships:** How well does the school develop partnerships with students, parents and the wider community to improve student learning?

**How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?**

The school's teaching and learning program is underpinned by a set of guiding principles that include striving for excellence, personalised student learning and improving student engagement. The leadership provides clear guidelines and expectations of staff practice to achieve these outcomes, and teachers have engaged in a wide range of professional learning since the two schools amalgamated in 2013. The school, for example, has been a host school for the Local Partnership's TIEL Pilot for the past two years, trialling a number of initiatives, and has been part of the AITSL Learning Frontiers program for the last 3 years. The school has a strong focus on teaching Critical and Creative Thinking. As a result, several key initiatives have been implemented to improve pedagogy and student learning. There has also been a strong emphasis on gathering quality data, and staff have regular opportunities to explore student data that informs learning directions and resource allocation. At the time of review, many of the identified improvement initiatives were progressing from the knowledge-building phase into the implementation phase, with some aspects entering the consolidation phase.

In light of the extensive work undertaken by staff, the Review Panel was interested in understanding how teachers are putting their professional learning into practice in classroom contexts. Teachers were invited to outline the practices they implement that have the greatest impact or influence on student learning, and how they design assessments to support and inform the outcomes detailed in the SIP.

The Review Panel was provided with evidence of several pedagogical elements associated with TIEL, Powerful Learning, Visible Learning, and Critical and Creative Thinking being implemented across classes.
and year levels. A willingness to adopt new approaches to teaching and learning, and engagement in ongoing collegial discussions about pedagogy and curriculum in various school and partnership contexts, was also evident throughout discussions with the leadership and staff.

Examples provided by teachers and students further demonstrated emerging practices that connect and personalise learning, and promote positive growth mindsets. There is considerable variability, however, in how the approaches are articulated, applied, and the degree to which elements of each approach are embedded into classroom practice. While students in all groups, for example, reported that children needing extra support did different work, often with an SSO, most student groups told the Review Panel that everyone else usually does the same work in their classroom. Further, there was extensive variability in what students understood about learning intentions, success criteria, or the relevance of their learning, what helps them become a good or powerful learner, and how to improve learning outcomes. Comments ranged from “nothing really [helps you be a good learner]” to “mistakes prove that you are trying”, and “I don’t know why we do it [learning activity] or what we are learning it for” to “so we know how to do it”. This pattern of student responses presents an opportunity for the school to develop a consistent language and approach for sharing pedagogical approaches with students in support of the school’s strategic goal of improving students’ active participation and engagement in learning.

**Direction 1**

**Develop a coherent, cohesive approach for communicating beliefs and values about teaching and learning that enables students to engage in quality conversations about personal learning.**

Examination of students’ work and discussions with a range of students revealed several examples of students being encouraged to build independence through goal-setting and the achievement of identified learning objectives. Students spoke of how their teacher “tries to challenge us”, encourages high expectations and ‘pushes’ them to keep going when things are challenging; but many students also described the work as easy, and prefer it when they are given greater choice that can make their work more interesting. Further, it was observed that across Reception to Year 7 there were numerous examples of teachers motivating students but few examples of student-driven motivational actions and strategies. This suggests the next step is to build the capacity of students to engage in a range of self-motivating strategies that involve them in negotiating their learning and playing a role in setting realistic and achievable challenges with the teacher, for which they take responsibility.

In support of this outcome, teachers will benefit from examining how empowered learning and intellectual challenge is defined and planned in developmentally appropriate ways across the years of primary schooling, and how this maps onto the school’s approaches to complex reasoning, critical and creative thinking, attaining higher proficiency performance levels and personalised learning goals for students. The result of this planning can be described as a continuum of skills that is shared with students to assist them in collaboratively planning, monitoring and evaluating their growth in skills over time with the teacher.

**Direction 2**

**Challenge students to achieve high standards by developing a Reception to Year 7 school agreement outlining the skills, capacities, and expectations for experiencing empowered, personalised learning and intellectual challenge at each year level.**

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**How well does the school develop partnerships with students, parents and the wider community to improve student learning?**

Students at West Lakes Shore R-7 School are articulate, and talked about their learning enthusiastically and with genuine interest. In general, they are positive about their school environment. They like their school and value the extra-curricular activities the school offers, referring animatedly to involvement in a range of events such as South Australian Primary Schools Sports Association (SAPSASA) and other sporting events, the Japanese cultural immersion program, and choir.

Given students’ positive perceptions and the school’s emphasis on improving student engagement, the Review Panel was interested in how authentic student influence is on their learning, particularly the extent to which they are involved in collaborative planning and decision-making about their learning. In talking
with students about their learning, the Review Panel found they were able to talk about some of the strategies teachers used to help them learn; for example, the use of rubrics by some teachers to help them gauge their progress towards achieving assessment and learning goals. Teachers, in turn, reported linking these tools to the identified learning intention and success criteria based on Australian Curriculum exemplars and elements of TEL.

Examination of numerous rubrics revealed diversity in design and focus across process, outcome and/or time management components that support the teacher to make a determination of progress and achievement. There were a few examples that integrated student input into the development of the rubric or the determination of success criteria. In the assessment design and sharing of success criteria, there is opportunity for teachers to encourage students to engaging with their data in order to set goals for improvement in personal learning.

Similarly, with regard to feedback, staff have a commitment to providing formative assessment to students. Where feedback was observed, it was predominantly positive and affirming, for example, “great work”, “I can see that you have done your best”, “well done”, happy faces and stickers. Although students may receive verbal feedback, there is the opportunity for teachers to explore additional ways to provide quality written formative feedback that outlines constructive critiques of student work. While building teacher capacity to provide quality formative and summative feedback is an important strategy for the school to continue, students will also benefit from planned opportunities to develop their capacity to participate in effective and constructive feedback processes that authentically value their opinions, and enable them to influence their learning in positive ways. Further, the involvement of students in collaboratively determining success criteria, how work will be assessed and graded, peer assessment and self-assessment, together with discussions of summative grading within a formative framework, will help build ownership and empower students to achieve their personal best.

**Direction 3**

**Encourage students to achieve their personal best by developing consistent school-wide practices for involving students authentically in the design of assessment tasks, determining the associated benchmark measures, and establishing success criteria.**

Parents are highly supportive of the school and spoke positively of the smooth transition from two schools to one following the amalgamation in 2013. The Leadership Team work in a complementary, supportive and cooperative manner and spoke of trusting each other to take responsibility in their respective focus areas. Parents and teachers also spoke positively about the Principal’s influence on the school, and the many improvements realised since her appointment at the time of the amalgamation.

Students told the Review Panel they feel safe at their school and, while there are some behavioural incidents, these are dealt with by the teachers. This suggests there are effective behaviour management policies and strategies in place. There is a strong and active Governing Council, which is keen to work with the leadership to explore ways to ensure the safe and positive learning environment is sustained across the school into the future. A key topic of discussion was supporting consistency in how student learning is communicated with families, within and across year levels. Parents expressed interest in receiving consistent messages from all teachers that assist them in understanding what interventions may be available for their child, how they can engage with classroom activities and support their child’s learning progress. Given the interest expressed, it will be beneficial for the school to explore and implement strategies that build the capacity of all staff to share information regularly about how students are achieving and making progress, in formative ways, that add value to summative reporting procedures, and enable teachers and families to work together to maximise student learning.

**Direction 4**

**Promote consistent communication between home and school, across all classes and year levels, which supports the school and families in working together to maximise student learning and wellbeing.**
OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

West Lakes Shore R-7 School is demonstrating growth in student achievement at or above what would be reasonably expected of a school in a similar context. The school uses self-review processes regularly and strategically to determine the impact school strategies and practices are having on student achievement. Effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions. Teachers are provided with, and use, structured time for ongoing collaborative professional learning, and teaching practice reflects the TEL framework.

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

1. Develop a coherent, cohesive approach for communicating beliefs and values about teaching and learning that enables students to engage in quality conversations about personal learning.

2. Challenge students to achieve high standards by developing a Reception to Year 7 school agreement outlining the skills, capacities, and expectations for experiencing empowered, personalised learning and intellectual challenge at each year level.

3. Encourage students to achieve their personal best by developing consistent school-wide practices for involving students authentically in the design of assessment tasks, determining the associated benchmark measures, and establishing success criteria.

4. Promote consistent communication between home and school, across all classes and year levels, which supports the school and families in working together to maximise student learning and wellbeing.

Based on the school’s current performance, West Lakes Shore R-7 School 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.

Sue Toone
PRINCIPAL
WEST LAKES SHORE R-7

Governing Council Chairperson