

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

Report for Burnside Primary School
Conducted in March 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 Vonnie Dolling, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Rebecca Read and Ronnie Alderman, Review Principals.

School context

Burnside Primary School is a Reception to Year 7 school situated 7km east of Adelaide in the suburb of Burnside. The school has a current enrolment of 800 students. School enrolments have grown over the last 5 years from 738 in 2012, and the school has a Capacity Management Plan from 2016. The school has an ICSEA score of 1149 and is classified as Category 7 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3 Aboriginal students, just less than 2% students with disabilities, 9% (73) students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 4 children in care, and approximately 8% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in the final year of her first 7-year tenure at the school, a Deputy Principal and two Assistant Principals. One Assistant Principal role takes responsibility for Support Services and Wellbeing, and the other for Curriculum and Innovation.

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?

School Community Partnerships: How authentic is the influence of students on their learning?

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

Burnside Primary School is a high-performing school. The school is characterised by high expectations for learning for all and from all – students, staff and families, and there is a strong sense of community and belonging based on mutual respect. A deliberate focus on wellbeing for students and staff, as an underpinning foundation for learning and worth, has been nurtured over time, through a range of initiatives and strategies guided by the 'KidsMatter' framework. The Review Panel used the school's vision of "Creating intellectually stretched, self-directed powerful learners" to guide the review.

The school improvement plan includes targets for performance that are set at high levels, and there are consistently high levels of achievement and performance demonstrated in a range of ways and verified by percentages of students meeting the Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) over time. In NAPLAN Reading, the average percentage of students meeting the SEA over the last 8 years for Year 3 is 92%, for Year 5 is 91%, and for Year 7 is 94%, and in NAPLAN Numeracy, the average percentage of students meeting the SEA over the last 8 years for Year 3 is 91%, for Year 5 is 89% and for Year 7 is 93%. Generally, around half or more students are consistently achieving in the higher two bands of NAPLAN Reading and Numeracy.

Parents with whom the Review Panel spoke described the school as being supportive and proactive. There was a consensus that the school 'knew' each child and had programs that fostered the development of individuals. Parents gave examples that exemplified thoroughness in following-up any concerns, and there was agreement with the comment that the school "shines in tough times". These conversations are borne out by the 2016 Parent Opinion survey, where the strongest results from over 50 respondents were for agreement with, 'My child likes being at this school', 'My child feels safe at this school' and 'I can talk to my child's teachers about my concerns'. Both students and families expressed appreciation for the range of opportunities available through the school to develop students' skills and talents, including in-school curriculum and additional co-curricula opportunities, available during lunchtimes and after school, or as supplementary options for students to pursue passions and interests, such as the Chess Club, Robotics,

Debating and Coding Club. The school offers a rich, broad and engaging curriculum to all students. Specialist teachers are engaged in the areas of The Arts – music, dance and drama, science, physical education and French. The specialist learning areas are highly valued and regarded as integral to the fabric of the school. The specialist teachers support a number of additional learning experiences, such as extensive sporting opportunities for many, and other options for specific cohorts such as the Rock Crew and Band, two Choirs and the Years 2, 6 and 7 Musical.

During the on-site visit, the Review Panel observed students who were self-directed and self-managed. Observations and conversations confirmed a school driven by a relentless focus on learning, with students at the centre. Students readily described learning which engages them: “I really enjoyed it. The choice to use your own idea was engaging” (Year 7 boy) and “I learn best when the task is more creative” (Year 5 girl). Conversations with seventy-four students in focus groups, and others incidentally in learning spaces, verified that students have a strong understanding of what it means to be a powerful learner. Student responses included making connections with people or previous work; having a growth mindset; taking risks – for example, going for an opportunity; critical thinking; using initiative; managing distractions; being a willing team member; problem-solving; and trying to use 21st Century skills. The school-wide inquiry approach supports a common language for learning and students were able to articulate examples that illustrated their understanding of these concepts. The school has focused on empowering students to be powerful learners by intentionally building self-efficacy. The whole-school involvement in making this explicit and building a shared understanding by students, staff and parents is demonstrated in the processes that led to the current information flyer that clearly articulates *Self Efficacy; How to be a powerful learner*.

Throughout the review, the Review Panel heard that the school expects, provides opportunities for and supports everyone to be a lifelong learner. This is the case for staff as well as students. In accordance with this belief, the school has developed an ethos of ‘personal best’ that is practised and understood at all levels. During conversations with the Review Panel, students, staff and parents demonstrated a strong sense of this essence of Burnside Primary School and students were very clear about their role in being self-directed to achieve their best.

Teachers articulated a range of ways that students are intellectually stretched, verified by students and parents. Differentiation and challenge is supported and stimulated through both in-class pedagogies and external opportunities. In particular, the Review Panel observed and heard that teachers knew their students well and using data was critical to moving students’ learning forward. Students are offered challenge in learning through the task and additional complexities. Digital technologies are harnessed across the school to support differentiation, and ability groupings, flexible groupings and extension opportunities in class are regularly employed. Students are encouraged to show their learning in multiple ways. Some teachers talked of referencing the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) website to plan for progression. All teachers discussed with the Review Panel the use of open-ended tasks, problem-based learning and designing inquiry tasks to engage students with higher learning potential. Across the school, there is a range of opportunities for engaging some students in higher-level thinking; for example, Maths Olympiad, Oliphant Science Awards, the Years 2, 6 and 7 Musical, Coding clubs and the PMA Maths Challenge.

The Review Panel engaged staff in processes to explore this Line of Inquiry at a staff meeting. There are a number of strategies in place to support intellectual stretch, and some staff identified that improvement could be made by developing inquiry with students as leaders, and promoting ownership by student involvement in design and assessment. As facilitators, teachers would ensure intentionality of learning outcomes and enhanced critical and creative thinking.

Direction 1

Deepen the intellectual stretch that supports critical and creative thinking in students by further developing the whole-school inquiry mindset and approach to learning.

How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

The Review Panel observed that pedagogical approaches at Burnside Primary School are strongly reflective of evidence-based practices and current research. Effective teachers know how students learn and build on the knowledge their students already have. Conversations with parents, staff and leadership verified the use of a range of teaching strategies based on high levels of data literacy across the school. The Review Panel heard from families and staff that instruction is targeted, and the parent comment that the school "allows kids to find a way they can learn best", was verified in student conversations and classroom walkthroughs.

The school has been intentional in developing physical learning environments that support students in group interaction and personalised learning; play-based learning in the Early Years builds creativity and fosters curiosity. Quality professional learning underpins a priority of building teacher capacity and developing teachers as leaders. Structures for applying professional learning, linked to performance and development processes and expectations, combined with regular release for teaching teams and common non-instruction times, all work coherently to support improving practice. Systematic processes for induction of new staff that include mentoring and buddy relationships are in place.

Teachers are supported by a cohesive Leadership Team with high levels of expertise. This team has led a strategic approach to developing strong collaborative teams with teacher leaders. The sharing of resources and ideas is evident in a range of ways, including shared electronic drives, with formal and informal collaboration. Developing student proficiency and enhancing learning through using digital tools is highly evident. The Review Panel heard and saw evidence of a culture where staff are open to new learning. The school supports practitioners to take risks and be innovative. The Year 6/7 team, for example, is focusing on developing the concept of 'flipped learning' in their classrooms. Throughout all of the teacher interviews and focus groups, the Review Panel met teachers who were excited by ongoing exploration, trial and evaluation of new and innovative ideas. The model for implementation ensures value-adding, rather than different ways of doing the same thing. The Curriculum and Innovation committee shared the SAMR model, developed by Dr Ruben Puentedura, with the panel as a framework for guiding their thinking and acting in digital learning. The model assists teachers in designing, developing, and infusing digital learning experiences through the utilisation of digital technology and reflects the school's approach of choosing and using strategies with a clear sense of purpose and creating new learning opportunities.

The school's current School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities of Community, Collaboration and Creativity are integral to the identity of the school. The structures, processes and expectations that exist to support collaborative planning in year-level teams are strengthened by internal responsibility from within the team that demonstrates a culture of professional sharing. The Review Panel noted that this internal responsibility grew from initial external accountability requirements, such as the publishing of collaborative year-level plans on the school's website. A strategic focus on evolving and improving self-directed teacher teams that support collective effectiveness is evident. Peer observations were identified by teachers and leadership as a supportive improvement strategy to build teacher capacity and to improve practice. Currently, observations are generally carried out within existing year-level teaching teams and de-privatising practice in this non-threatening way is a very effective initial step. The impact of this strategy will be enhanced by clear intentionality and alignment to key aspects of pedagogy, for example, framing higher-order questions, with protocols in place that support transparency in instructional improvement.

Direction 2

Strengthen effective pedagogy across year levels and learning areas by building on the current peer observation processes to develop critical collegiality.

How authentic is the influence of students on their learning?

Burnside Primary School is involved in wider community partnerships that enhance wellbeing and learning for students in a range of ways. Examples include linking with the KidsMatter team, connecting with Adelaide University, utilising tertiary Social Work students in the school's work and recent engagement with an external agency to consider and trial measures of critical and creative thinking. The school and its staff work collaboratively within the Central East Partnership. Partnership initiatives, such as using the Teaching for Effective Learning Compass tool, support the school to capture student feedback and penetrate learner engagement. Teachers participate across the Partnership in moderation of student work and learning design, and the specialist teachers spoke of the support of Partnership networks in building learning area expertise.

Parents with whom the Review Panel spoke included representatives of those involved in the governance of the school and others who were not. All parents shared a clear and specific understanding of the key drivers for the school, acknowledging the focus on developing independent learners who "can adapt to anything". Parents described a school that was "outward-focused and part of the broader society", one which is "informed by current thinking in education", and where "current research-based strategies are enacted in the classroom". Parents regarded the balanced approach, focusing on the whole child through mindfulness and wellbeing, as a strength of the school. Parents highlighted the embracing of digital technology at the school, and one parent noted that the focus had shifted to "using technology, instead of building technology". Parents commented that "all teachers are trying to learn about how to use technology in learning", and gave examples of ways that the school is connecting with families through the classroom-based applications of *SeeSaw* and *Schoology*. On the whole, these tools support parents in finding out about what is happening at school rather than providing regular evaluations of student performance. The school is building the language of 21st Century skills with students and their families through student goal-setting.

Conversations with students in focus groups and classrooms indicated that students are motivated and committed to improving their learning. The Review Panel concurs that 'Students come to school ready for learning. They are generally cooperative and display positive behaviours' (School Context Statement 2017). All students use individual and personal goals to support them in learning. Students are involved in setting these goals, which are aligned to literacy, numeracy, PERMAH and 21st Century skills. PERMAH is an acronym that relates to the model of wellbeing promoted by Martin Seligman (Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Achievement), and, with the addition of Health, is used with senior students. These students are involved in collaboration and consultation in ways that the school can encourage and nurture PERMAH goals through a 'FLOURISH' initiative. Some students have home goals. All students were able to talk about their personal goals with the Review Panel.

The Review Panel saw examples of assessment rubrics and some students referred to these as supporting them to get the best possible grade. The school holds formal 3-way learning conferences that are highly regarded by all stakeholders and support ongoing reflection and review by students. The Review Panel observed individual conferencing in classes related to learning in literacy and teaching approaches, including the use of graphic organisers to support student thinking.

When asked by the Review Panel what helped them to improve in their learning, students responded with a strong sense of self-efficacy in managing their own improvement. They practise, try harder, ask questions of the teacher and ask for help from other pupils. Some students described feedback from teachers that supported them to know what they are doing well and where they need to improve. Students were less precise in describing feedback that supported them to know *how* to get better in their learning. There is opportunity to develop feedback that is formative for students to use in making improvements that take their learning forward.

Direction 3

Strengthen students as self-directed, powerful learners by developing ongoing monitoring and feedback processes linked to transparent, explicit, personalised success criteria.

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 Burnside Primary School.

An effective improvement culture exists that recognises the need for continuous monitoring, evaluation, and iterative review and planning. Students, staff and parents all referred to the ongoing processes of reflection and review that support the school's improvement agenda. Multiple measures of data are used to evaluate school effectiveness through regular and strategic self-review and to reflect on improvement priorities and plans for action. Staff identified a cultural change over the last 6 to 7 years of moving towards valuing and viewing staff as learners, amidst a culture of continuous improvement. This ensures that groups, including students, are brought together regularly to consider student achievement and growth, responses to surveys, such as that implemented as part of the 'Resilient Youth Australia' Partnership involvement, and the connections with school and teacher practices and beliefs. In the words of the school leaders, the analysis goes "beyond actions and outcomes and seeks to inquire what, how and why?" and "it's always about gathering data to inform where we go next".

An underpinning foundation of the success of the school is using processes that are inclusive. Supporting successful learning and results through valuing partnerships, internal and external to the school, and ensuring that all have a voice, is clearly evident at the school. Engaging with community ensures collective decision-making. Teacher renewal is informed by all stakeholders. Students, staff and families were asked for their input in describing the qualities of a teacher for Burnside Primary School as part of a consultation process for advertised teacher positions. Parents with whom the Review Panel spoke, reinforced that "Leadership walks the talk", and there were multiple examples of how inclusivity leads to a high trust environment. A Year 7 student commented, when asked to name the best thing about Burnside Primary School: "Every voice can be heard at this school, it focuses on skills, and it's not just teachers that get to make the decisions".

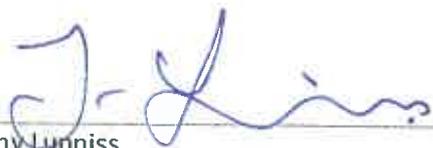
OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

Burnside Primary School demonstrates a culture of improvement and sustained high expectations over time. Professional learning and performance development is translated into effective teaching that actively engages learners and provides challenging tasks across the school. Effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions.

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

1. Deepen the intellectual stretch that supports critical and creative thinking in students by further developing the whole-school inquiry mindset and approach to learning.
2. Strengthen effective pedagogy across year levels and learning areas by building on the current peer observation processes to develop critical collegiality.
3. Strengthen students as self-directed, powerful learners by developing ongoing monitoring and feedback processes linked to transparent, explicit, personalised success criteria.

Based on the school's current performance, Burnside 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.



Sharon Broadbent
PRINCIPAL
BURNSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Emma Weber
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 Burnside 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 documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2016 was 94.5%.

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, 95% of Year 1 and 88% of Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). This result represents an improvement for Year 1 and a decline for Year 2 from the historic baseline average.

Between 2014 and 2016, the trend for Year 2 has been downwards, from 91% in 2014 to 88% in 2016.

In 2016, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 92% of Year 3 students, 91% of Year 5 students, and 95% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3, 5 and 7, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

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

Between 2014 and 2016, the school has consistently achieved higher in Years 5 and 7 NAPLAN Reading, relative to the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2016, 70% of Year 3, 47.6% of Year 5 and 58.8% 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. In Year 5, there is a decline from 62% in 2014 to 47.6% in 2016.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 69%, or 40 of 58 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016, and 76%, or 32 of 42 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 91% of Year 3 students, 91% of Year 5 students and 93% of Year 7 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Year 5, this result represents little or no change, and for Years 3 and 7, a decline from the historic baseline average.

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

Between 2014 and 2016, the school has consistently achieved higher in Year 5 NAPLAN Numeracy, relative to the results of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2016, 51% of Year 3, 36% of Year 5, and 56% of Year 7 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands. For Year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2014 and 2016, the trend for Year 5 has been downwards, from 43.5% in 2014 to 36.2% in 2016.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 67.5%, or 27 of 40 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2016, and 92.9%, or 26 of 28 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2016.