

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR FINDON HIGH SCHOOL

Conducted in February 2016



**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.

This External School Review was conducted by Liz Schneyder, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Marion Coady, 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 Findon High 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 policies:

Part 1 Governance: Data collection on bullying for the Governing Council will be a more formal process.

Part 2 Learning Improvement: Student Voice structures will be implemented as a priority in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) in 2016.

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 2015 was 87%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Findon High School is situated 9 kilometres northwest of the Adelaide CBD, and is part of the Inner West partnership. The enrolment in 2015 was 311 students, with enrolment trending downwards since 2011. The school is classified as Category 4 on the DECD Index of Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score in 2014 was 964.

The school population includes 5.5% Aboriginal students, 15.8% Students with Disabilities (includes 9 students with significant physical disabilities in an on-campus Disability Unit), 38.3% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 2 students under the Guardianship of the Minister (GoM) and 50% of families eligible for School Card assistance. Eight percent of students are enrolled in Flexible Learning Options (FLO) programs, and 50% of the current Year 8 cohort attracts additional funding for classroom support.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in her 4th year of a 5-year tenure, 2 Assistant Principals and 5 Coordinators.

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 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 52% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. The school is achieving results within range of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2015 NAPLAN Reading, 5.6% of students achieved in the top two bands. Between 2013 and 2015, the trend has been downwards, from 13.6% to 5.6%.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in Reading, 0 of a possible 6 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2015, and 2 of a possible 6 students from Year

7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2015. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Numeracy

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 56% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. The school is achieving results within range of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2015 NAPLAN Numeracy, 7.4% of students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in Numeracy, 2 of a possible 5 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2015, and 3 of a possible 5 students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2015.

SACE

In terms of 2015 Stage 2 SACE completion, 42% of students who had the potential to complete their SACE in February did go on to successfully achieve their SACE; 77% of October potentials were successful. The school had data and information to explain the history of each student who was a February but not an October potential completer, as well as the small number of October potentials who were unsuccessful.

Eighty-five percent of grades achieved in the 2015 Stage 1 SACE were C or higher; 88% of grades achieved in the 2015 Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents little or no change at Stage 1 but a trend upwards at Stage 2, from 66% in 2013 to 88% in 2015. There was improvement in students achieving across the A to B band from 2012-2014, and a decrease in students within the E-D band.

In 2015, 99% of students achieved their SACE literacy component, while 79% achieved their SACE numeracy component. In 2015, 93% of students successfully completed their compulsory Personal Learning Plan and 96% successfully completed the compulsory Research Project.

At Stage 1, there was improvement in student performance in English, cross-disciplinary and business and enterprise and technology, and decline in mathematics, humanities and PE. At Stage 2, the improvement was in humanities, arts and English. There was a small decline in mathematics.

Lines of Inquiry

During the 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?

Effective Teaching: To what extent are teachers' pedagogies reflective of the Teaching for Effective Learning Framework?

Effective Leadership: To what extent is leadership capacity evident across the school?

To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged?

The school has effectively resourced and promoted its *Findon Culture* team which ensures the safety and wellbeing of all students. This was acknowledged by students, teachers, leaders and parents, and is well-documented and supported by current and comprehensive data. This information informs all teachers about the capacity and support needed by each of their students and encourages differentiation in pedagogy.

Interviews with students, teachers and leaders indicated a need to now focus on student learning as a priority. This was reflected in the Site Improvement Plan and presentation by the Leadership Team.

Teachers and leaders saw declining student enrolments and subsequent reductions in staff numbers as impacting negatively on class sizes and opportunities for an increasingly complex but smaller group of students. Year 10 and 11 students discussed problems in attending classes they did not want to go to because of the decreasing number of subjects available to them, and parents were aware of this problem. VET was working well, and some students were studying off-campus. Year 12 students were generally happy with their courses and articulate about their post-school pathways, with a number of students enrolled in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The school has offered opportunities for aspiring STEM students to participate in University of South Australia programs through the Western Adelaide Secondary Schools Network (WASSN).

There was a commitment amongst teachers to improve student results, and a culture of data analysis and accountability exists amongst all teaching teams. Alternative sources of data that might better inform improvement were being investigated, particularly in maths and science. Teachers and leaders believed that tracking of students in the SACE had improved, and there was evidence confirming this. A number of Year 10 and 11 students who were interviewed or talked to in classroom visits were finding the increased expectations of senior schooling difficult.

The Leadership Team is supported by teachers who continue to introduce new programs and strategies to engage students, including a range of outreach programs, arts projects and a numeracy class. All students are involved in a robust goal-setting program, some Year 10 students do work experience, and ability grouping in maths at Year 8 is being trialled.

The support of a team of SSOs was appreciated by all and student learning in the Disability Unit is a priority.

Direction 1

While continuing to acknowledge the importance of wellbeing, shift the focus of all members of the school community onto engagement in learning and improved learning outcomes for all students.

To what extent are teachers' pedagogies reflective of the Teaching for Effective Learning Framework?

Teachers and leaders indicated that the improvement in SACE achievement, particularly at Stage 2, was a result of increased accountability of teachers, employment of a number of support strategies for students, and a focus on agendas at Teaching and Learning Team (TLT) meetings held each Monday night instead of staff meetings.

Teaching and Learning Teams meet weekly with a focus on quality teaching and learning. Documentation about the work of these teams is extensive and of high quality, but the panel found the agendas and work of the three teams to be inconsistent with the documentation; this was also noticed by some teachers interviewed. Leadership has asked for all curriculum documentation to be stored on the 'T' drive (the school's intranet), using an agreed and provided format. Assessment practice is consistent within and across curriculum areas and there was a focus on pedagogy, including the use of ICT. The Principal checked the 'T' Drive during the interview and shared her disappointment at finding spasmodic documentation restricted to Years 8 to 10 and a range of formats. When questioned, senior teachers admitted they stored their resources and planning on their own hard drives. There was some evidence of documented scope and sequence in curriculum areas, but some lesson plans were being prepared for uploading, to be shared at a future TLT meeting. Teachers were familiar with the TfEL Framework and the Compass tools, but there was little evidence that the framework or the tools had been effectively used at this stage.

Teachers talked about their capacity to differentiate effectively in their classes. They saw large class sizes, the broadening capacity of the student cohort and unreliable ICT as major hurdles. Inconsistencies in pedagogy were evident during classroom visits.

Teachers and leaders believed any growth in the quality of their teaching had been hindered by the slow roll-out of ICT and DayMap (the school's Learner Management System). Parents were grateful for the introduction of the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) program and students indicated they understood the program's intent. They did admit there had been limited take-up at this stage because few teachers were

using ICT and students often did not expect to use their computers in lessons. Students did not have access to DayMap and teachers indicated the need for a refresher course before they could use DayMap effectively. All teachers were required to use DayMap to record attendance.

The teaching practice observed and documentation provided in the Disability Unit were outstanding.

Direction 2

Provide greater consistency and coherence for learners, and achieve improvement in student outcomes, by focusing on curriculum scope and sequence, and consistent documentation, assessment and delivery in all subjects and at all year levels.

To what extent is leadership capacity evident across the school?

Leadership and teachers believed declining enrolments and the loss of an effective leader to another school would impact on the speed of progress in achieving school priorities. Teachers and leaders agreed with the new directions of the Principal, and evidence collected during the visit indicated their willingness to work in teams rather than individually, as was the case in the past, so the school can move forward by collectively addressing the data, including declining enrolments. They saw the Teaching and Learning Team model as having the potential to support these initiatives, as well as other teams, including *Findon Culture/Student Wellbeing*, *Year 12PLC* and *Findon Innovations*. Aspiring leaders were being encouraged to take on leadership roles in these teams.

The robust Performance Development Program, transparent line management structure and a strong focus on Professional Learning programs for all were appreciated by all teachers interviewed. There was an evident intent in the 2016 SIP to increase student participation in leadership and co-design during 2016, including their involvement in the provision of formal feedback for teachers.

Leadership within the *Findon Culture/Student Wellbeing* team was seen to be effective and aspiring leaders were being supported. Some other leaders at the school, however, shared that they were struggling with the breadth of their leadership responsibilities in a small school setting.

Direction 3

Develop leadership capacity and density in all areas of the school, in particular, teaching and learning and ICT, so that all priorities in the Site Improvement Plan are realised.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

Findon High School is developing a culture of improvement, and the Leadership Team is providing strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions.

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

1. While continuing to acknowledge the importance of wellbeing, shift the focus of all members of the school community onto engagement in learning and improved learning outcomes for all students.
2. Provide greater consistency and coherence for learners, and achieve improvement in student outcomes, by focusing on curriculum scope and sequence, and consistent documentation, assessment and delivery in all subjects and at all year levels.
3. Develop leadership capacity and density in all areas of the school, in particular, teaching and learning and ICT, so that all priorities in the Site Improvement Plan are realised.

Based on the school's current performance, Findon High 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 Burtenshaw
PRINCIPAL
FINDON HIGH SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson