The Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Kangaroo Island Community Education

Conducted in August 2018

Review details

A priority for the Department for Education 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 government schools.

The framework underpinning the 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 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.

We acknowledge the support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community. 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 review was conducted by Greg Graham, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Grant Small and Brenton Conradi, Review Principals.

School context

Kangaroo Island Community Education caters for children from preschool to year 12. It is situated 185kms from the Adelaide CBD, and is part of the Kangaroo Island Partnership. The enrolment in 2018 is 647 students, and has fluctuated over the last 5 years. The school is classified as Category 5 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 8% students with disabilities, 6% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 5 children/young people in care, and 16% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 2nd year of her tenure at the school, 3 heads of campus and 10 senior leaders. There are 37 teachers at the Kingscote Campus, 14 at the Parndana Campus and 6 at the Penneshaw Campus. There are 9 school services officers (SSOs) across 3 sites supporting the intervention programs.

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 3 key areas from the External School Review framework:

Student Learning: **To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?**

Effective Teaching: **To what extent is assessment used to inform curriculum planning and instruction?**

Improvement Agenda: **How well does the school make data-informed judgements about student learning?**

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

Kangaroo Island Community Education (KICE) is a unique school setting where the island's original 3 schools have combined to work as 1 large school campus. The focus of the journey for the 1 school has been, and still remains, to improve the learning outcomes of all students. This is to be achieved through the provision of a quality educational program that harnesses the professionalism of all teachers, the development of curriculum that caters for the aspirations of students, and is supported by appropriate resourcing to enable learning programs to succeed. Learning opportunities for all students from reception to year 12 are at the forefront of all the school does. This has been substantiated by the school's recent winning of the 2018 Australian Education Regional School of the Year award that recognised the school for its educational programs, community links, student leadership, learning pathways, internationalism and teacher professional learning.

There was a lot of discussion (both formal and informal) between teachers across all 3 campuses about students and their learning. Teachers acknowledged that professional development focused on improving teaching practice and learning for all students. All interviewed teachers stated that professional development opportunities offered to them impacted on their teaching practice. These ranged from whole-school activities, such as Learning Design and Moderation and professional learning communities (PLCs) work for faculty groups, to off-island conferences and school observations.

A learning priority of the KICE Strategic Plan states that the school 'will support unified programs across sites to develop all children and young people to achieve to their highest potential'. To achieve this, the school has made some significant changes to the learning programs offered by targeting specific subject areas in literacy and numeracy, and using intervention programs to complement the overall learning goals. Introduction of 7 Steps to Writing across all sites has demonstrated greater student engagement and improvements in writing skills, and deeper understanding of the mechanics of writing by students. STEM500 and Back to Front maths strategies have provided teachers with strategies to modify their teaching methods to engage all levels of learners. Several teachers commented on how the students were more enthusiastic about their writing and maths work. Teachers commented on the provision of PLC time and that the focus on these 2 curriculum areas has been beneficial in changing their approach to teaching that is more student-centred.

All staff recognised that each class has a diversity of learners, ranging from high achievers to students with identified learning needs. There was a common understanding about differentiated learning from the teachers, with the application of differentiated practices, ranging from group work conferencing, and modifying tasks to intervention support with SSOs. It was noted by the review panel that all SSOs involved in supporting students as part of the intervention program, were valued by teachers and students. As an extension to the intervention, the school is looking at options for implementing strategies to support students who may fall under the Gifted and Talented (G&T) category of learning, through identification of 2 focus teachers to investigate the concept of G&T, methodologies associated with it, and how it can be used in KICE.

Extension of senior secondary offerings in mainstream learning and Vocational Educational Training (VET) has resulted in an increased engagement of students with 100% of potential completers gaining their SACE in 2017. This result is further supported with 85% of students achieving A and B grade results. Senior students were able to clearly articulate the subject offerings available across the campuses, and recognised the pathways that they could opt for to achieve their SACE/ATAR, enabling further tertiary studies or work placements. Several students stated that learning programs were relevant and valued because they could lead to future work prospects either on or off the island.

The review panel interviewed over 100 students from reception to year 12 across the 3 campuses, and found common ground with the vast majority of responses from the cross-section of ages. Students indicated that their teachers made learning interesting through a variety of ways, including practical and hands-on lessons, group work, personal learning plans and technology. One student said their teachers find out what they are passionate about and connect them with their learning. Further comments included teachers explaining things clearly and using different ways to help individual students.

There was strong evidence of teachers using feedback with their students in order to support their understanding with individual conferencing being highlighted as the most common form. Other strategies included drafting work, comments in books, making reference to learning goals and peer assessments. Students also indicated that many of the teachers use the language of Growth Mindsets or Learning Pit to help them with any challenges in their learning.

Students interviewed indicated that the level of work offered was a mixture of hard and easy, with most of the primary students indicating their work was relatively easy (around the 50% degree of difficulty), while senior students said the degree of difficulty averaged at 60%. When asked how the work could be more challenging, responses included worksheets at a different level, more problem-solving in maths and harder work. A vast majority of students highly ranked 'learning new things' as important about being at school. Students felt engaged with their learning and were rarely bored.

Use of learning intentions and learning goals across the schools varied. Teachers have described their use of learning intentions as a mixture of whole-class or individual student goals. The format varies according to age levels, with examples such as a general class goal leading to the task with a success criteria process to measure the outcome to inquiry based activities, which are discussed in conjunction with personal interests and projects. A number of staff have indicated that it has given them focus with their teaching but believe it is still 'early days' for the students. Students indicated that learning intentions varied, with some focusing on maths only. Learning intentions were displayed in classrooms and, when students were asked what they meant, there was a low level of understanding of their purpose. Teachers recognised that using learning intentions is an area of further development.

Work with higher-band level students is evolving across the 3 campuses. Teachers offered a variety of approaches to accommodate the stretch and challenge within their planning. These ranged from open-ended questions and tasks, sequencing tasks, and higher year-level work, to negotiated modifications to assignments. Students indicated that teachers allowed them time to complete work, choice in personal learning projects and discussions with teachers. Some teachers are co-planning with other year levels, and others are now offering a greater scope of work to cater for higher bands.

Parents interviewed indicated that their children liked coming to school and acknowledged that relationships between students and teachers were very good. Parents appreciated the communication between the school, individual teachers and home, as well as the use of email and the SeeSaw app, as a useful way to give them immediate information on their child's learning and achievements. Some parents commented that high-achievers are doing well and are recognised for their efforts. Parents indicated that their children were willing to talk about their learning and achievements.

Taking into account the various levels of teaching experience within the staff cohort, it would be beneficial to identify and develop effective and consistent pedagogical practices across the school, as well as common understanding relating to intellectual stretch and challenge from the perspectives of:
- strengthening student agency within the planning and co-design of learning tasks, and
- intellectual stretch being applicable to all students and all learning areas.

In this way, a whole-school approach to intellectual stretch and challenge can become embedded practice that is known, understood and supported by students, staff and community.

Direction 1
Embed a whole-school approach to intellectual stretch, challenge and rigour into daily classroom teaching and learning, by building on the capacity of staff in the design of consistent teaching practices that strengthen student agency and influence in their learning from reception to year 12.

To what extent is assessment used to inform curriculum planning and instruction?

The KICE Improvement Plan 2018 identifies the use of assessment strategies to be a focus of improvement in curriculum planning and practice across the 3 sectors of schooling (early years, middle years and senior years), and congruence between the stages of development.

Through the LDAM strategy, the school has been strategic in undertaking *formative* assessment as a major focus in 2017 and to develop consistency of understanding and practice from reception to year 12. *Formative* assessment strategies are being applied across the campuses, using pre and post-tests, success criteria and rubrics, conferencing, questioning and observations.

Teachers indicated that they use a variety of assessment tools to set ability groups in reading, spelling and mathematics. In senior classes, teachers indicated they are using a mixture of *formative* and *summative* assessments for each subject, which are directly linked to SACE and VET requirements. Teachers are also making reference to the formal assessments such as NAPLAN, PAT tests, Running Records and SACE, to measure the achievements of students. Most teachers acknowledged the recent introduction of the Scorelink recording system has enabled them to access student achievement results more readily.

Teachers stated that professional development opportunities such as Back to Front maths, Jolly Phonics/Grammar and 7 Steps to Writing had an impact on how they assess and plan their lessons. Staff commented on these with: "… [These] led to a greater differentiation in my teaching", "…enabled me to recognise misconceptions in my maths teaching", and "…we co-plan as teachers in maths across the site".

Teachers use success criteria and rubrics charts to support assessment and planning. The use of the Australian Curriculum and SACE/VET requirements formed the basis for the examples of assignment or assessment criteria presented. Students made several references to the function of rubrics and success criteria as a means of assessing what they have done and how they can use these frameworks to improve or extend their work. In most situations they were used in research project work or in conjunction with the drafting process.

Intervention strategies that apply across all sites such as MultiLit and Quicksmart have demonstrated improvements and growth with targeted students. One student recognised that "by doing Quicksmart I will get better grades in maths". School services officers indicated that they are using more formal assessment tools as part of their intervention work with specific students.

Based on the information presented throughout the review, assessment processes varied across the school. The use of these tools to inform planning was mixed amongst the staff, depending on their degree of confidence and depth of understanding in using assessment to support learning. The use of assessment for supporting the planning of intervention programs was clear, especially with identified students. Opportunity exists for further work in expanding the use of assessment to cater for all students, with a starting point being a consistent understanding of *formative* and *summative* assessments, their connection across the reception to year 12 spectrum, and how they can support the improved learning of all students through task design and moderation that incorporates feedback processes to and from students.

Direction 2
Increase the effectiveness of the school for learners through whole-school agreed assessment processes, enabling collaborative and consistent use of moderated student performance against standards to inform learning design.

How well does the school make data-informed judgements about student learning?

The 4th learning priority of the KICE Strategic Plan states the school 'will collect, identify, share and plan around data, reviews and other practices, with an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement', with the focus on tracking, monitoring and responding to learner growth.

The principal and leadership team members have been the catalyst for strengthening the use of assessment data to inform curriculum planning and practice. The leadership team recognised that, historically, the collection and collation of student achievement data from the 3 sites was not well-managed, and have made changes to improve the recording of student data (via Scorelink), and plan to improve accessibility of data through DayMap. The school is also moving towards analysing numerical data and focusing on student growth as a means to monitor student achievement and progression rates.

Development of PLCs across the 3 sites has created rigorous discussion and sharing of student information and achievements. This structure has enabled teachers from each campus to compare and moderate student results with like groups and reassess their teaching programs. One teacher commented that "...the data gives me a guide and I have found 'holes' in my teaching". Teachers see data being used for different purposes, ranging from guided reading to displaying data walls in classrooms and maths progression.

Formal datasets from programs, such as Jolly Phonics, NAPLAN and PAT test results, are used to inform practice, although the review panel believe that the depth of impact of using such datasets amongst staff is inconsistent. Very few students talked about how their teacher(s) referenced any data (for example, NAPLAN or PAT scores) with them as part of their feedback and learning goals.

A teacher survey completed during the review process indicated that 58% of teachers who responded rated their use of data to influence their planning in the medium range, with a further 29% in the high range. A majority of staff indicated that they looked at the diagnostic data for students on an ILP or NEP, which enabled them to differentiate their lesson plans. The recent acquisition of the ABLES assessment tool for students with special needs has been valued. Although in its early stages of use, special education teachers can see the benefits of the program and the data it can offer to support specific student learning.

The parent community recognised the use of data throughout the school, and appreciated how it was explained and used at a whole-school level through the SIP to individual students during NEP meetings. Staff made time for data-sharing with parents at formal interviews, course counselling, report-writing and following individual requests. The governing council receives regular updates of reports and notifications on student achievement, coupled with explanations on how they are used to support the school's strategic directions.

The school uses information from a variety of datasets to support and plan for student learning. The next phase of the school's future planning would be to continue to work on explicit assessment criteria, task design and moderation that incorporate feedback processes to and from students.

Direction 3
Deepen the application of whole-school planning to include qualitative data and evidence-based feedback to develop explicit target-setting and intentional teaching.

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 Kangaroo Island Community Education.

1. The Beginning Teacher program is highly valued by the new career teachers and has an effect on other staff and PLC work.
2. The Key Teacher group initiative is valued by both new and experienced teachers in the pursuit of improving pedagogical practice.

The Beginning Teacher program targets professional development and building of teacher capacity for all beginning and early career teachers across the 3 campuses. This program is strongly supported by the leadership team who act as facilitators and mentors to new staff. The growth and popularity of the program has seen a movement from leaders managing the professional learning to its present stage where the program is run by the participants. The focus of learning is linked to SIP priorities and the work of the PLC groups operating across the school.

The success of this program has expanded into the Key Teacher group which is open to new and experienced teachers. This new initiative had overwhelming responses from teachers at all levels of their teaching career and experience. The focus is on positive class practices targeting development of learning intentions within task design. All teachers commented favourably on the impact on their teaching and learning with one teacher saying that "it was a strength of the school in pedagogical improvement".

Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

Kangaroo Island Community Education has demonstrated growth in student achievement, which is what would be expected of a school with a similar cohort, and incorporates effective leadership that provides strategic direction, planning and targeted professional learning.

The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

1. Embed a whole-school approach to intellectual stretch, challenge and rigour into daily classroom teaching and learning, by building on the capacity of staff in the design of consistent teaching practices that strengthen student agency and influence in their learning from reception to year 12.

2. Increase the effectiveness of the school for learners through whole-school agreed assessment processes, enabling collaborative and consistent use of moderated student performance against standards to inform learning design.

3. Deepen the application of whole-school planning to include qualitative data and evidence-based feedback to develop explicit target-setting and intentional teaching.

Based on the school's current performance, Kangaroo Island Community Education 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 3 months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's annual report.

Maxine McSherry
PRINCIPAL
KANGAROO ISLAND COMMUNITY
EDUCATION

Governing Council Chairperson

Appendix 1

Attendance policy compliance

Implementation of the Education Department student attendance policy was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy.
The school attendance rate for 2017 was 93%.

Appendix 2

School performance overview

The external school review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the Department for Education Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Reading

In the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2017, 55% of year 1 and 75% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline for year 1 students and an improvement for year 2 students from the historic baseline average from 2014 to 2017.

In 2017, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 80% of year 3, 74% of year 5, 86% of year 7, and 62% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA.

In year 7 reading, there was an improvement from 61% to 86% from 2015 to 2017 respectively. For years 3, 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement, and for year 9, little or no change from the historical baseline average.

In 2017, 33% of year 3, 26% of year 5, 29% of year 7, and 15% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 53%, or 8 of 15 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2017, 67%, or 8 of 12 students from year 5 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2017, and 23%, or 3 of 13 students from year 3, remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2017, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 83% of year 3 students, 79% of year 5 students, 91% of year 7, and 67% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA.

Between 2015 and 2017, there was an improvement from 71% to 79% in year 5, and 70% to 91% in year 7 numeracy, respectively.

For years 3, 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement, and for year 9, this result represents little or no change from the historical baseline average.

In 2017, 28% of year 3, 17% of year 5, 18% of year 7, and 8% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 68%, or 5 of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2017, 4 of 10 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 in 2017, and 40%, or 2 of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2017, 76% of students enrolled in February and 100% of those enrolled in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve their SACE. This result for October SACE completion represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2017, 98% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Literacy units, 100% successfully completed their Stage 1 Numeracy units and 94% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

One hundred percent of grades achieved in the 2017 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Twenty students completed SACE using VET, and there were 4 SACE students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2017.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2017, 23% of students achieved an 'A' Grade, and 62% achieved a 'B' Grade. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline averages for the 'A' Grade and 'B' Grade respectively.

In terms of 2017 tertiary entrance, 100%, or 16 out of 16 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There were no students who were successful at achieving a merit.

In 2017, the school had a moderation adjustment of -1.0.