

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR HENLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Conducted in August 2015



**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 overarching review question is "How well does this school improve student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and equity?"

This External School Review has evaluated:

- *the school's self-review processes and findings,*
- *the school's achievement data and progress over time,*
- *the outcomes of the meetings and interviews with representatives from the school, and*
- *parent and student views about the school.*

The External School Review included an analysis of the school's key policies and procedures.

The support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community is acknowledged.

This External School Review was conducted by Sue George-Duif, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability, and Antoinette Jones and John Tiver, Review Principals.

Policy compliance

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

The Principal of Henley High School has verified that the school is working towards being compliant in all applicable DECD policies. The Principal has ensured that the Anti-bullying policy is in an easily locatable and well publicised link on the school website and is working with the Governing Council to determine a process for collecting, analysing and reporting on school bullying data.

Implementation of the *DECD Student Attendance Policy* was checked specifically against a documented set of criteria. The school has implemented comprehensive tracking and intervention processes, and was found to be compliant with this policy. In 2014, the school reported attendance of 89%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Henley High School is a large secondary school of approximately 1350 students located in the western suburbs of Adelaide. The school has experienced growth over the past 5 years in the order of 223 students. The school has an ICSEA score of 1025, and is classified as Category 6 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 4% Students with Disabilities, 16% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 11 students under the Guardianship of the Minister, and 15% of families eligible for School Card assistance. The school hosts 100 international students and 32 students are enrolled in Flexible Learning Options (FLO).

The school has a Specialist Sport Program and houses a Disability Unit which caters for 30 students with significant learning difficulties.

The school executive leadership team consists of the Principal, Liz Schneyder, who is in her second tenure and the following leaders:

Deputy Principal

Director of Studies, Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Assistant Principal, STEM, Quality Teaching, Career Advice

Assistant Principal, Inclusivity, Student Learning Centre and EALD

Assistant Principal, School Operations, ICT and Human Resources

Assistant Principal, Accountability and Professional Development

Assistant Principal, SPESS

Assistant Principal, International Education Services

Assistant Principal, Middle School

Assistant Principal, Senior School

Finance Officer, Quality Assurance, Accountability and School Operations.

At the time of the Review the school was preparing for its five year visit as part of their accreditation with the Council of International Schools.

Lines of inquiry

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

Student Learning:

How well are students achieving over time?

To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning and how do you know?

Effective Teaching:

To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?

How well are the students achieving over time?

In 2014, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 72% of Year 9 students achieved the SEA.

- *Between 2011 and 2014, the average percentage of students who achieved the SEA is 74%.*
- *The percentage of students reaching the SEA compares to the average of 74% for Category 6 schools.*

There were 18% of Year 9 students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN bands in reading.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 33% or 27 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2014.

Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading Comprehension (PAT-R) data was collected by the school in 2014 and used to identify areas of whole-school improvement. This included the introduction and analysis of task type data by all learning areas. The school leadership reports that this data has not been utilised this year but they plan to use the data collected in the September 2015 tests more thoroughly.

In relation to numeracy, 77% of Year 9 students were above the national standard in Year 9 NAPLAN.

- *Between 2011 and 2014, the percentage of students at SEA was 75%, 75%, 71% and 77% respectively.*
- *The average of students over the four-year period was 74%.*
- *This compares with the average of 74% for Category 6 schools.*

Twenty five students, or 43%, who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy in Year 3, were retained in the higher proficiency bands in Year 9 NAPLAN testing.

In 2014, the percentage of students completing the SACE as a percentage of potential completers was 98%.

- *SACE data indicates that this figure is above the state average of 94%.*
- *Between 2011 and 2014 there is a trend upwards from 86% to 98%.*

The percentage of grades, above the SEA standard of C- or above for attempted Stage 2 subjects, was 98%.

- *Between 2011 and 2014 there is also a trend upwards with 90% of students achieving a C- or above grade in 2012, and 92%, 96% and 98% of students receiving a C- or higher in 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively.*

In relation to the compulsory literacy requirement of the SACE in Stage One:

- *96% of students achieved a C or above for the English subject.*
- *This percentage is above the SACE-provided average of 92%.*

The percentage of grades that are above the SEA standard of C or better for the compulsory numeracy requirement at Stage One was 84%.

- *This is the same as state average of 84% according to SACE provided data.*

The school collects and analyses Australian Curriculum A to E grades by cohort and faculty. Procedures are in place to ensure consistency of this data by the use of common assessment tasks and moderation of student work. The data is used to track and monitor students requiring support and to measure the effectiveness of the support provided by the Student Support Team. For example, the school's decision to employ School Support Officers to assist students who fall below the SEA, specifically, receiving D and E grades, has been successful, as the majority of students who have had access to this support are now performing at or above the SEA.

Analysis of the school's A-E data is consistent with the analysis of the SACE data in that the school has increased the number and percentage of students reaching the SEA (C and above grades) and supports the school's aim to improve the percentage of students achieving A and B grades. The school has seen a shift in grades from D and E grades to C and above, with the majority averaging in the B grades, across all year levels.

The ability of students to be prepared for the demands of secondary educational requirements of literacy and numeracy has been identified as an area for enhancement by the local DECD Partnership – Western Adelaide Shores. The school is keen to work with the primary schools in the area on this initiative; however, they have recognised that a large number of their 'feeder' primary schools are members of different Partnership networks.

The leadership structure of the school aligns with the three priority areas of the Site Improvement Plan, namely, Quality Teaching and Learning, Wellbeing of Students and Staff, and Community Engagement and our Educational Hub. The staff and Governing Council members interviewed were able to articulate an alignment of their work with the priorities and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the Site Improvement Plan. The Review Panel saw evidence of a positive, reflective and evidence-based culture towards student achievement and wellbeing.

The school is doing much to support students to achieve. Parents interviewed commented that they considered the school to be moving forward and improving. This accords with the considered opinions of the Leadership Team, the Governing Council, staff members and students interviewed during the course of the External Review.

To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning and how do you know?

The students, staff, members of the Governing Council and parents, acknowledged the efforts made by staff to support the learning and achievement of students and the success of moving students' grades from below the SEA grades of D and E to C and above, across all areas. Whilst this improvement is significant, staff identify a need to ensure all students reach their potential, and aim at moving the C grades to B, and B to A grades.

System and school collected data indicates that there is an opportunity to improve student attendance, particularly in Years 8, 9 and 10. A large number of absences from school can be attributed to exemptions from school for the purpose of family holidays or overseas travel. Staff, students and parents highlight the need to improve attendance and engagement with students in these year levels. The staff interviewed report that the system-collected data recorded in EDSAS does not match the school collected data in Scholaris and the school is working towards rectifying this issue. Despite this discrepancy, the staff wish to implement strategies to improve the attendance of students, particularly in Years 8 to 10.

The school has a documented and enacted attendance policy and procedures for managing non-attendance. There was an alignment between the school's policy/procedures and actual practice. This includes a regular 5 week review cycle of student achievement and attendance, analysis of data, priorities, and an improvement plan. The staff clearly articulate the roles performed by different staff in the school in relation to improving attendance, including the classroom teacher, Aboriginal Education Manager,

International Manager, mentor teachers, Sub-School Managers, Assistant Principals and the Counsellors. School Support Officers also provide support for the follow up of non-attendance.

The Student Support Services Team identify students with attendance issues and utilise Individual Student Attendance Improvement Plans to document the support negotiated with students who need to improve their attendance. These plans are published on the learner management system and are available for all staff. Key leaders ensure that the plans are enacted, carefully monitored and strategies utilised are documented on the learner management platform used by the school. All staff have access to the learner management system.

In order to meet the needs of students and to engage students, the school offers a broad curriculum and a variety of pathways. Students are encouraged to begin their vocational studies at Year 10 and, if possible, complete them by the end of Year 11, leaving Year 12 for them to complete the 'traditional' subjects. SACE data indicates that 66% of students who complete their SACE at Henley High School, have achieved VET accreditation throughout their schooling. This is above the state average of 40%. The school is proud of the range of Vocational Pathways offered to the students through the Western Area Secondary School Network (WASSN) and places particular emphasis on the range of pathways offered at the school. These include, but are not exclusive to, Vocational Qualifications in the areas of Electronics, Information Technology, Child Care, Sport and Recreation, Community Services, Hospitality, Metal Engineering and Furnishing.

The school's examination of the A-E, SACE and PAT-R data identified that critical thinking was an area for improvement, as was the need to extend students in the higher proficiency bands in NAPLAN. The panel was keen to explore to what extent students believed that they were engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning. Students interviewed indicated that they were keen to be challenged and were actively involved in goal-setting and working towards the accomplishment of their targets and challenges. Students, parents and staff indicate that the practice of setting goals is formalised through student engagement in the PLP (Personal Learning Plan) in Years 8, 9 and 10. Students reported positive relationships with their teachers and support staff and identified a variety of strategies used where students can access help outside the normal lesson. This most often occurs in the Homework Club, in the Middle School Area at lunchtime and in the Senior School Support Centre. Students believed that all requests for assistance with learning made by them are met. The Specialist Sports Program and the 'specialist STEM Year 8 group' activities and competitions also provide challenge for students.

The parents interviewed spoke very highly of the dedication and the positive working relationships with the staff. However, they did not believe their children were intellectually challenged in the middle years, but were stretched in the Senior School, due to subject demands and by the practice of acceleration of subject choices; for example, students studying Mathematics at a Year 11 level whilst in Year 10.

When Year 9 students were asked to describe when they were intellectually challenged and engaged, they all cited the STEM project that they undertook earlier that year. When asked to identify why the project stretched them as learners, the students said that they enjoyed the problem-solving nature of the task and working collaboratively with others. They also understood the success criteria and the assessment, which involved presenting findings to the community, including university representatives. Students believed that it was helpful to get assessment criteria at the beginning of assessment tasks for all assessments in all subject areas and to allow time for reflection on their learning before commencing the next topic. They felt that they were often rushed and did not have sufficient time to consolidate their learning.

When Senior School students were asked the same question they commented that there was not enough rigour in Years 8, 9 and 10. They believed that the learning expectations were higher of senior students than middle school students.

Parents commented that frequency of communication between the school and home was sufficient, with the main mode of communication being through electronic means e.g. email. They appreciated the variety of face-to-face communication opportunities for parents, such as Parent Interviews, SACE Evening and Subject Confirmations. A couple of parents suggested that they would like information on how they could help their children succeed in a secondary setting.

The Specialist Sports Program and Engineering and Maths (STEM) program were cited by the students, staff and parents as successful ways to engage students.

A number of staff suggested that Years 8 and 9 had a focus on relationship building and transition. They also described the strategy of using support staff to provide additional help to students and commented favourably about the staff employed in this capacity. The Review Panel observed support staff and teaching staff working with individual students, both within and outside of the classroom setting.

Direction 1

Increase the number of students attending school and attaining higher levels of achievement by identifying and promoting teaching practices that stretch and challenge learners.

To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?

The ongoing implementation and enhancement of the online learning environment was identified by staff as an effective way of communicating student needs and strategies used by staff to support them. The focus for this support tended to be on the students who were below standard or were in identified targeted groups. The increase of student achievement to C and above grades in both school and system data could be indicative of this focus.

Key personnel designed Individual learning plans for all students who fell into these categories and the plans for all students were 'uploaded' onto the school's learner management system. Examples include: Negotiated Curriculum Plans for Students with Disabilities, and Individual Education Plans for students who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Adjustment to learning opportunities and assessment are noted on the learner management system.

Staff and parents commented on the growing use of digital learning opportunities as a means of meeting the varied needs of learners. Students reported that they mainly used computers to email teachers for assistance or to access emailed learning materials. Some teachers in some subjects used the technology to differentiate learning, such as for mathematics skill development, flipped classrooms, detailed feedback and the use of Microsoft OneNote.

The staff interviewed were committed to addressing and improving the varied learning needs of the full range of students. The most common strategy identified by staff to differentiate learning was the support offered by School Support Officers and differentiated opportunities such as 'STEMlings', a Year 8 STEM program, University visits and the range of subjects and pathways.

Faculty, year level teams, and line manager meetings are utilised to assess the needs of cohorts of students and identify strategies for differentiating the curriculum. They believe they are held accountable for student results and coached through Performance Management and Development conversations with their line managers. Science teachers identified inquiry-based approaches as ways to both engage and differentiate learning.

A number of faculty leaders and teachers identified a need to redesign the curriculum in the lower year levels as it did not sequentially build skills necessary for success in the higher year levels. Choice of tasks, levels of difficulty and a range of tasks and assessments are also used to cater for students' needs. The application of these strategies, however, is inconsistent.

In the Review, the involvement of two staff in the Enriching Mathematics Professional Development Program provided stimulus for a group to discuss the use of task design. Staff who had not attended the professional development were keen for the teachers to share their learnings with them on task design.

Recent whole-staff Professional Development has included pedagogies to develop higher order and critical thinking skills and Action Research opportunities. Staff value professional development opportunities, and feel privileged to attend interstate conferences, such as EDUTech, with the SACE Board and moderation activities also ensuring consistency in marking with the schools in the Western Area Secondary School Network.

The panel concluded that whilst students at Henley High School are provided with, and participate in, a wide range of learning activities which take into account the varying learning styles of students, this is not consistent in all areas of the curriculum and with all teachers.

Direction 2

Raise and sustain higher levels of achievement for all students as they progress through the school by building teacher capacity to effectively design assessment tasks to cater for the full range of student learners and to measure the effectiveness of tasks.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

Henley High School is tracking well. The school has a positive, strategic and planned approach to improving student outcomes and is doing much to support students to achieve.

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

1. Increase the number of students attending school and attaining higher levels of achievement by identifying and promoting teaching practices that stretch and challenge learners.
2. Raise and sustain higher levels of achievement for all students as they progress through the school by building teacher capacity to effectively design assessment tasks to cater for the full range of student learners and to measure the effectiveness of tasks.

Based on the school's current performance, Henley High School will be externally reviewed again in 2019.



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SCHOOL AND PRESCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT

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 Schneyder
PRINCIPAL
HENLEY HIGH SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson