

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

**EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW**  
**REPORT FOR WUDINNA AREA SCHOOL**

Conducted in August 2016



**Government  
of South Australia**

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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 Tony Sullivan, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Susan Hart-Lamont, 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 Wudinna Area 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 5: Site Procedures Item 1

The hazardous chemicals register is to be reviewed annually and only contain chemicals on the Approved Chemicals list. The pre-purchase checklist is used when purchasing plant. All plant is included in the Site Plant Register. The Hazard Checklist for the Disposal of Plant and the Acceptance of Condition Form are used when disposing of plant.

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 92%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

### School context

Wudinna Area School is located 550kms north-west of the Adelaide GPO and around 213kms from the regional centre of Port Lincoln. The school caters for approximately 190 students from Reception to Year 12.

The student cohort consists of approximately 4% Aboriginal or Torrens Strait Islander (ATSI) students, 2% students from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds, 5% Students with a Disability, and 7% eligible School Card holders.

The school is classified as Category 5 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage with an ICSEA value of 1024.

The school leadership comprises a Principal in his second year of tenure at the school, two Assistant Principals and a Coordinator of Wellbeing.

### School Performance Overview

*The External School Review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).*

*Considering the data below, there needs to be some caution in making any judgement due to the lower numbers represented in some of the student cohorts at the school.*

#### Reading

In the early years, reading is monitored against Running Records. In 2015, 20 of 23 (87%) Year 1 students and 17 of 19 (90%) Year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). The Year 1 results are above the school's historic average, and the Year 2 results are below the historic baseline average.

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 13 of 14 (93%) Year 3, 18 of 22 (82%) Year 5, 13 of 14 (93%) Year 7, and 7 of 11 (64%) Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. The Year 3 and 7 results are above the school's historic baseline average; the Year 5 results are within the school's historic baseline average; and the Year 9 results are below the school's

historic baseline average. For Year 7, there has been an upward trend (69% to 93%) in demonstrated achievement from 2013 to 2015. For Year 9, there has been a downward trend (85% to 64%) in demonstrated achievement over this same period of time.

From 2013 to 2015 Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN Reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2015, 6 of 14 (43%) Year 3, 8 of 22 (36%) Year 5, 4 of 14 (29%) Year 7 and 1 of 11 (9%) Year 9 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands. For Year 3, this result is within the school's historic baseline average.

Of the 10 students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading at Year 3 (2013), taking into account arrivals and departures, 8 students remained in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015. This result shows an improvement compared to the school's historic baseline average. Of the 8 students in the top two bands at Year 3 (2011), taking into account arrivals and departures, 4 remained in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015. This result is higher than the school's historic baseline average. Finally, of the single student in the top two bands at Year 3 (2009), taking into account arrivals and departures over time, a single student remained in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2015.

#### Numeracy

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 11 of 14 (79%) Year 3, 16 of 22 (73%) Year 5, 12 of 14 (86%) Year 7, and 9 of 11 (82%) Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Year 3, the results are within the school's historic baseline average. For Years 5, 7 and 9, the results show a decline from the historic baseline average.

From 2013 to 2015, there is a downward trend evident for Year 5 numeracy (from 89% to 73%). There are no discernible patterns for Years 3, 7 and 9 throughout this period.

For 2015 Year 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN Numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2015, 3 of 14 (21%) Year 3, 7 of 22 (32%) Year 5, 4 of 14 (29%) Year 7, and 1 of 11 (9%) Year 9 students achieved in the top two NAPLAN Numeracy bands. For Year 3, this result is within the school's historic baseline average.

Of the 2 students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy at Year 3 (2013), taking into account arrivals and departures, 2 remained in the top two bands at Year 5 in 2015. Of the 5 students who achieved in the top two bands at Year 3 (2011), taking into account arrivals and departures, 3 remained in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015. From the single student who achieved in the top two bands in numeracy at Year 3 (2009), no student remained in the top two bands in 2015. The Year 5 result is within the school's historic baseline average, and the Year 7 result is above the school's historic average.

#### SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2015, 9 of 10 Year 12 students who had the potential to complete their SACE did successfully achieve their SACE. This result represents an improvement compared to the school's historic baseline average.

In the 2015 SACE results, 39 of 40 students' grades achieved were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement compared to the historic baseline average.

The 2015 Final Moderation Effects Report (SACE) indicated that: 8 of 9 grades in maths and 7 of 7 grades in English were moderated down by 1 grade; and 3 of 3 student results in visual arts were moderated down by two grades. This will require further investigation by the Principal and relevant staff to ensure school-based assessment is consistent with those of external moderators.

In Stage 1, all students achieved a C grade or higher, except in maths, where 90% achieved a C grade or higher. In Stage 2, 100% of students achieved a C grade or higher in all subject areas, except for science with 67%.

The Principal's presentation highlighted his focus on developing staff 'buy-in' to the agenda described in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP). He has sought staff input into developing the SIP to create ownership and commitment for the improvements being sought. He described the SIP as the key outline for the pedagogical improvements he wants to see implemented in all classrooms. He confirmed that the 'high

expectations' and increased student engagement in learning are aspects requiring further improvement across the school.

As a result of the above data and the Principal's presentation, the Review Panel explored the Lines of Inquiry below.

### Lines of Inquiry

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

<b>Student Learning:</b>	How effectively is student learning growth monitored and evaluated? To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?
<b>Effective Teaching:</b>	How effectively are teachers using DECD pedagogical frameworks to guide learning design and teaching practice?
<b>Effective Leadership:</b>	To what extent is a positive and focused approach to improvement and change evident? To what extent is the professional learning trialled, implemented and embedded into practice?

### How effectively is student learning growth monitored and evaluated?

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

Learning data is collected and analysed at the school level, but is yet to be translated into the classroom or individual student level, as there is no effective data management system to support this work. The data is stored on a common drive for staff to access, but this does not fully support regular monitoring and tracking as a systematised practice across the school.

Running Records (reading) are taken for students in Year 1 and 2 and entered into the EDSAS database. Achievement against Running Records is based on fluency and comprehension, meaning consolidation of both is required before moving levels. A range of strategies is applied in the early years of school to support and extend readers according to their developmental needs. These strategies include: 1:1 support, phonological awareness, personalised readers meeting individual student interests, use of Oxford word lists and student reading diaries to engender home support.

The staff have interrogated NAPLAN and PAT-R/-M data, and considered a miscue analysis between the school's and national results to identify some key teaching points for students at Wudinna Area School. This resulted in some fine-grained reading and numeracy goals that were included in documented 'trend data' plans presented to the Review Panel. A maths intervention program (Quicksmart) has been implemented to support fluency in 'maths facts' for students ranging from Reception to Year 10. As the impact of this intervention occurs, it will be tapered down to the younger students over time. Members of Governing Council verified the positive impact of this program.

The 2016 NAPLAN progress data from Year 7 (2014) to Year 9 (2016) indicates that 100% of students achieved medium or upper level growth in reading, and 50% of students achieved upper level growth in numeracy over this period. Students identified as needing intervention have Negotiated Education Plans (NEP) and Individual Learning Plans (ILP) developed to identify the specific needs and document the support to be implemented. Copies of these plans were sighted during the review. Learning goals linked to the Australian Curriculum were evident in both NEPs and ILPs. Parents reinforced the importance of acknowledging learning growth, effort and thinking skills, as well as levels of achievement against the SEA.

Staff use common language, terms and strategies to engage students in the 'productive struggle' associated with developing 'Positive Mindsets' for increased engagement and challenge in learning. Students talked about the term 'learning pit' as it related to effective learning requiring thinking and effort. Scaffolds for writing, word walls, ability groupings, use of multiple entry points into learning, multi-level questions, hands-on activities and student inquiry were strategies evident in classes visited across the school. One student interviewed expressed some frustration at remaining in a spelling ability group despite demonstrating success through weekly assessments. She has sought to discuss this with the teacher to maintain her level of challenge, which is both a commendable and desirable trait to be encouraged within the student group.

SACE data is monitored by Senior Secondary staff throughout Stages 1 and 2. The school has a record of high-level SACE completion. The staff were aware of compelling factors inhibiting a single student's non-completion of SACE in 2015. The Moderation Effects Report and the Chief Assessor's Report are used by staff to refine and improve opportunities to ensure student success in SACE. Further work in moderation by secondary staff may assist a refinement in assessment practices.

Learning and Assessment Plans are developed and shared at secondary cohort meetings to develop improved learning design and assessment practices across this section of schooling. Staff consider the design of assessment tasks (beyond writing) to further engage students and support their success as learners. Students and staff confirmed the use of assessment rubrics across the secondary years to ensure that the criteria against which students will be assessed is clear and explicit. Students confirmed that having these criteria available supported their determination to strive for higher grades. They also verified that some secondary teachers use exemplars to show students what an 'A' standard of work looks like. Importantly, one student commented in an interview: "We try for As". Again, this pursuit of achievement from the student cohort represents a healthy school culture.

A 'Student-Centred Learning' approach used across Years 8 to 10 helps to establish learner engagement and responsibility in the lead-up to the Senior Secondary years. Learning design, based on Hattie's model of learning, takes into account the interests and abilities of students through a level of negotiation with them. A variety of design folios, incorporating assessment, were provided to the Review Panel as evidence of this practice. Similar approaches to engage and challenge students were used in primary classrooms visited by panel members. Student investigations and 'wonderings' in HASS subjects using a variety of hands-on exploration, and delivering rich language experiences, clearly engaged students in their learning. The level of questioning, thinking and sharing during these observations was of a high order.

The staff used Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) 'flip cards' with students in the two 'school cohort' groups to gauge the level of student voice in learning. Student perceptions were gathered from Lower, Upper, Primary SRC representatives and Year 8. Staff perceptions were gathered from lower and upper primary as well as secondary staff. Whilst there were some discernible differences between staff and student perceptions, this data serves as a baseline for monitoring improvement in student voice and engagement in learning into the future. The staff have analysed this data and made plans for future action on further building student voice within learning.

The school must extend its collection, use and analysis of data (from various forms) to establish growth, engagement and challenge 'targets' for every class and for individual students. This data should 'flow' from teacher to teacher (year to year) to ensure that the planning and design for learning is connected and learning time maximised. This information should also include behavioural information and school strategies applied to connect students successfully to learning in previous years. Students and parents should be engaged in establishing, understanding and working towards outcomes linked to achievement, growth and engagement in learning.

#### **Direction 1**

**Raise challenge and levels of achievement through the collection and analysis of various data and evidence to monitor, track and target support for learners at the class and individual levels.**

**How effectively are teachers using DECD pedagogical frameworks to guide learning design and teaching practice?**

One of the primary teachers interviewed is using TfEL to elicit stronger student voice in learning, deeper engagement from students and differentiation based on students' intrinsic motivation to learn. Anecdotal evidence proved enthusiasm for learning transferred to home, improved attendance, increased on-task behaviour and greater 'stretch' for capable learners. Teachers, students and parents confirmed the positive impact generated from this pedagogical practice. Some of the secondary students interviewed verified that two of the secondary teachers seek constructive feedback from their classes as a strategy to authentically improve their professional practice. Importantly, they commented that they had noticed the teachers respond to their feedback and make adjustments in their teaching.

Secondary staff focused on transforming tasks and introducing more visual strategies to create deeper levels of understanding for all learners. They also introduced the language associated with Growth Mindsets to cue the students in to the approaches used by successful learners when confronted with new and challenging learning. A range of exemplars of tasks developed by the secondary staff was provided to the Review Panel. The documented tasks offered differentiated entry and exit points to cater for all learners. Evidence of challenge to extend top-end learners was presented. One teacher commented: "We want our learners to be independent learners". Parents confirmed that there was a focus on more independence in the secondary years compared to the primary years of schooling at Wudinna Area School.

Central discussions about pedagogical practice occur through the cohort and whole-staff meetings scheduled across the year. Staff commented on the need to share professional learning about pedagogical practices across the Reception to Year 12 staff. One member of the Leadership Team made comment about the importance of building staff capacity to form: "a high-performing team to drive improvement forward at this school". Written feedback from many staff reinforced the need for all staff to work together to connect curriculum and pedagogical practice to provide seamless learning experiences for students.

Students and parents commented about perceived differences in learning when moving into the secondary section of the school. This was not presented as a criticism but merely as an observation. Some parents described this shift as traditional in its construct. Students described this transition into secondary as being an anxious time for them. The school structures (leadership, staffing, class sizes, meetings, number of staff students relate to) and the cultural dimensions of language used within the school (for example, primary/secondary), as evidenced by the Review Panel, may have an unintended outcome of disconnecting the curriculum and pedagogical coherence across the school, particularly from Year 6 to 9.

Whilst 'high expectations' and learning independence are considered important by students and parents through the secondary years, they commented on the need for all staff to actively encourage and support students with varying ability levels. They acknowledged that the majority of staff worked this way but wanted to see these principles enacted by all secondary staff. Students were respectful and fair-minded in their feedback to indicate what works for them and their learning. Their comments centred on the importance of all staff: 'not assuming' students know or have been taught concepts; differentiating learning opportunities to extend highly capable learners while other students revisit or consolidate learning; using adults in classes (where possible) strategically to support differentiated learning based on student needs.

Students commented that by the time they had completed their learning at Wudinna Area School they had experienced a range of teacher skills and expertise giving them a broad range of positive learning experiences. They commented about limited opportunities to interact between primary and secondary students aside from a 'bridge challenge' undertaken in cross-age groups. One student commented: "Integrated learning units may be a possibility to break down barriers, work with more teachers and challenge students at their level".

It is important that the culture of 'high expectations', as stated by members of the Leadership Team, many staff and parents, resonates across all sections of the school and is realised through strategic structures and processes that connect effective teaching and learning in a coherent and seamless way.

**Direction 2**

**Build evident teacher capacity through strategic leadership actions that support and influence a whole-school culture of improvement and high expectations.**



To what extent is a positive and focused approach to improvement and change evident?

To what extent is the professional learning trialled, implemented and embedded into practice?

Parents commented positively about the Principal's optimistic approach to change and his approachability, and follow-up of presenting issues that arise. They affirmed that there was a developing connection with the community and that any perceived barriers "are now coming down". One of the parents interviewed described the SIP as "moving the school forward", and another commented that the school was currently in an "evolving environment of getting better".

The Principal has re-visited the SIP with staff and Governing Council to develop a clearer understanding and ownership of the improvement work to be undertaken across the school. The priority areas identified for improvement by the school include: Literacy, Numeracy, Student Engagement and Wellbeing. Whilst the SIP has strategies and targets identified, these could be further defined and clarified to make the professional work of teachers explicit, and the targets for improvement against the SEA, clearer for all.

The SIP is being used as a conduit for change across the school. Learning data has been interrogated by the staff to identify those areas within literacy and numeracy, in particular, where strengths and misconceptions have emerged in the data. The focus on learning data has enabled staff to identify the students requiring intervention.

Learning data that has supported this school-wide analysis includes: PAT-R, PAT-M, NAPLAN and Running Records. In-class and out-of-class interventions have occurred in aspects such as: inferring and interpreting from different texts, broadening student vocabulary (word knowledge and subject specific vocab), interpreting graphs and unpacking multi-stepped worded numeracy problems.

The Principal and Leadership Team are supportive of staff professional learning. A range of professional learning opportunities have been provided to staff to increase their capacity to deliver a high quality learning program from Reception to Year 12. Professional learning has been delivered at school, within the Partnership and electronically, using local and external providers, with a focus on evidence-based teacher pedagogy as the way to raise learning outcomes at Wudinna Area School.

The Principal is structuring opportunities for staff to share and lead aspects of school improvement through 'cohort' (primary and secondary) meetings and whole-staff meetings. Most recently, the Step 9-approved teachers presented their teaching programs to colleagues as a way to build staff teaming and shared accountability. This aspect was also evident in the staff presentation to the Review Panel at the commencement of the External School Review.

A focus on TfEL occurred throughout 2015 and was verified by teaching staff; however, this had taken less of a focus this year. Staff verified that some observations of 'cohort' colleagues teaching had taken place last year but had not carried into 2016. One teacher commented: "I would love to see what's happening in other classes". Providing opportunities for staff to give and receive feedback on their professional practice is commended and further encouraged. Providing scaffolds, protocols and codes of professional practice will work to overcome the ever-present challenges of working in a small community and maintaining professional relationships that foster confidence and collegial support for improvement.

### Direction 3

**Strategically embed the agreed and defined pedagogical approaches that deliver 'engagement and challenge' for all learners across the school in a connected and coherent way through staff collaborative endeavour.**



### OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

Wudinna Area School is achieving successful learning outcomes for its students. The school self-reviews using various datasets to identify curriculum foci requiring attention within the learning program. The school has an improvement focus and the staff actively engage in professional learning. Achieving alignment of strategies and approaches across the school through whole-staff collaborative work will achieve the 'next lift' in school improvement.

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

1. Raise challenge and levels of achievement through the collection and analysis of various data and evidence to monitor, track and target support for learners at the class and individual levels.
2. Build evident teacher capacity through strategic leadership actions that support and influence a whole-school culture of improvement and high expectations.
3. Strategically embed the agreed and defined pedagogical approaches that deliver 'engagement and challenge' for all learners across the school in a connected and coherent way through staff collaborative endeavour.

Based on the school's current performance, Wudinna Area 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.



Ned Loades  
PRINCIPAL  
WUDINNA AREA SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson