EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR JOHN HARTLEY B-7 SCHOOL
Conducted in AUGUST 2015
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 Ann O'Callaghan, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability and Brenton Conradi and Linda Richardson, 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 John Hartley Birth to Year 7 School has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

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 87%, which is below the previous year's rate of 89%, and below the DECD target of 93%.

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**School context**

John Hartley Birth to Year 7 School is a new purpose-built education facility established in 2010 on a greenfield site as a public-private partnership (PPP) project to accommodate the amalgamation of Daveron Park, Smith Creek and Smithfield Plains Schools and Smithfield Plains Kindergarten. The new facilities incorporate a Children's Centre and offer integrated learning hubs or 'schools-within-schools', providing child-care, preschool and primary school services on one site.

The school is located on Peachey Road in the suburb of Smithfield Plains, 31 kilometres north of Adelaide. The school has an ICSEA score of 906 and is classified as Category 1 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage. 75% of families are eligible for School Card assistance.

There has been rapid enrolment growth since 2010, with 560 students attending currently from Reception to Year 7. The school is at capacity with this 40% increase over five years. There are 25 straight year level classes across Reception to Year 7, and two multi-age Area Resource Special Classes (Reception to Year 2 and Years 3 to 7). The Reception to Year 7 population includes 86 (15%) Aboriginal students, 92 (16%) Students with Disabilities, 58 (10%) students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) and 9 students under the Guardianship of the Minister.

The Children's Centre has 76 children attending preschool for two long day sessions per week (15hpw) for each child. There are 8 children in the Speech and Language Program supported by a Speech Pathologist on three days per week. 40 families participate in regular parenting sessions, playgroup activities and occasional care programs. Parents from the wider community also access the on-site health and family services.

There are three sub-schools: Early Years (Birth to Year 2), Primary Years (Years 3 to 5) and Middle Years (Years 6 to 7). The Principal is in her original tenure after being appointed in 2009 to open the school. There are seven other members in the leadership team in their first tenure at the school. The team consists of: a Deputy Principal Birth to 7; Assistant Principal, Early Years and Literacy Birth to 7; Assistant Principal Years 3 to 7; two Senior Leaders: Mathematics (AC) and Learning Technologies; Co-ordinator: Preschool (Curriculum); and a School Counsellor Reception to Year 7.

All leaders work collaboratively across the site with each other, with specialist and support teachers, and other staff to ensure the development of a cohesive structure and curriculum. There are 46 FTE teachers, 18 SSOs, 6 ECWs and 2 ACEOs on staff. Approximately 20% of the teaching staff are permanently appointed graduate or early career teachers.

John Hartley B-7 School works closely with Playford Council and other agencies and is actively involved in the local Peachey Partnership.
Lines of inquiry
During the review process, the panel focused on three key areas from the External School Review Framework:

- **Student Learning:** How well are students achieving over time?
- **Effective Teaching:** How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?
- **Improvement Agenda:** How well are the results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions?

How well are students achieving over time?

An analysis of the John Hartley B-7 School data dashboard formed the starting point to consider how well students at the school are achieving against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

In the early years, Reading is monitored against Running Records. In 2014, 31% of Year 1 and 52% of Year 2 students achieved the Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). These latest results show improvement when compared to the 2010-2013 historic average of 26% at both Year 1 and 2. When looking at growth between Year 1 and 2, there were 24% more students in 2014 achieving the standard in Year 2 than was the case when the students were in Year 1 the previous year.

When the school’s Reading and Numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, are compared to other DECD schools in the same category, the proportion of students achieving the SEA at John Hartley B-7 School is greater across the middle to upper bands.

In 2014, the Reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 54% of Year 3 students, 59% of Year 5 students and 56% of Year 7 students achieved the SEA in 2014. There is an upward trend between 2012 and 2014 for Years 3, 5 and 7 from 42%, 40% and 36% respectively in 2012. In relation to students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN bands, 22% (16 of 74) were in Year 3, 7% (4 of 54) were in Year 5 and 4% (3 of 70) were in Year 7. The Year 3 results show an upward trend from 7% in 2012 to 22% in 2014.

In 2014, the Numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 41% of Year 3 students, 54% of Year 5 students and 40% of Year 7 students achieved the SEA in 2014. An upward trend is identified only at Year 7 – from 26% in 2012. There is not yet a trend at Year 3 or 5. The 2014 results are higher than the school’s 2010-2013 historical average of 38%, 31% and 35% at Year 3, 5 and 7 respectively. In relation to students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN bands, 5% (4 of 74) were in Year 3, 2% (1 of 54) were in Year 5 and 0% (0 of 70) was in Year 7.

The Review Panel also looked at the retention of higher band results over time. For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in Reading as Year 3s in 2010, 28% (2 of 7) of these students remained in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2014. No students retained results in the top two bands from Year 3 to 7 (2010-2012-2014) in Numeracy.

Sustaining and increasing the rate of improvement for each child from their early years’ development to achieving predicted targets from Year 2 to Year 3 and beyond, is essential to ensure the learning momentum is continued for each student.

The school’s improved distribution of student scores across proficiency bands is a promising indicator of the potential for more encouraging results over time.

An upward trajectory must now be planned for, mapped, monitored and maintained year after year, including increasing and retaining higher levels of learning in all subject areas of the Australian Curriculum (AC).

**Direction 1**
Strengthen the trajectory of student achievement, and sustain higher levels of learning over time, by improving the engagement and capacity of each student to attain the Australian Curriculum standards, initially in English, Mathematics and Science.
How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

Since 2011, the school has supported the implementation of the Teaching for Effective Learning Framework (TfEL) as the pedagogical basis for professional practice in classrooms from Reception to Year 7. The Australian Curriculum is implemented across the school in alignment with this lens and through leadership support for program design and planning that reflects the TfEL domains and the TfEL Compass.

The Early Years Learning Framework and the ‘Early Childhood Development and Parenting Outcomes Framework’ are used to guide practice in the Children’s Centre. Individual learning portfolios and plans are prepared to support the developmental learning stages of every pre-school child.

The Review Panel heard the Principal, the leadership team and focus teachers clearly state the high expectations they have for themselves and of others in relation to the development of effective teaching. Teaching and non-teaching staff who spoke to panel members were equally committed to achieving the aspirations they have for students and the professional expectations they have of each other.

Staff said that developing positive relationships with the students is ‘crucial’ if they are to be successful in challenging and supporting each child to reach full potential. As part of professional conversations, teachers are sharing ideas about how they can best “fit in with the children” and “start from where they are at”. As one teacher said: “We want to push the children that one step further”. Supporting students to develop effort and persistence is a constant for staff. As a result, use of techniques, such as allowing students to bring their own questions to the planning, is helping teachers to personalise and connect learning for the students, as is creating rubrics with criteria such as developing, satisfactory, and expert.

Adapting pedagogy to ask more open questions, to offer multiple entry points and to encourage intellectual stretch were challenges teachers said they were addressing with support from each other, their mentors and the leadership team. “The challenge ...” as one teacher said “is to know how to vary tasks” for each student so they can demonstrate their learning in ‘new contexts’ to show a C grade or above.

The Review Panel heard that reading comprehension has been a continuous focus to support learning in all curriculum areas. This year, problem-solving in Mathematics is an area for improvement across the school. At a meeting of staff during the review, teachers talked respectfully in their year level teams, about the effectiveness of the common assessment tasks used to identify understandings and any misconceptions of students at their year level. The discussions centred on the use of this assessment information to address teacher assumptions, and modify and plan next teaching steps.

Included in some discussions was the use of technology as a learning tool to demonstrate learning and support students to show higher levels of understanding. Staff reported that the use of various online tools, apps and software is also supporting them to differentiate their teaching.

Throughout staff interviews, the Review Panel heard strong support for the school values and the focus on ‘care of community’. The Principal reported that unity was a foundation upon which the school was built.

Parents were very proud of the school and its positive reputation. This was especially so for those involved prior to the amalgamations. All parents who spoke with the Review Panel liked the ‘one stop’ support. They said teachers were approachable and the daily and ongoing support from staff in the Children’s Centre was valued. The parents shared examples of when they had utilised family services that would otherwise be hard to access. Parents who were members of Governing Council said they were well-informed about programs and plans and felt they knew what was happening at the school.

The Principal reported that establishing and developing relationships, and maintaining positive communication with parents, is fundamental to supporting all children and young people in their learning. Open communication, and the entitlement to use the grievance processes, strategically ensures issues are addressed with respect and in a timely way.

Students clearly perceive school to be a place where they learn and where they ‘learn to be successful as a learner’...“I’m not scared to ask for help here”. They have a sense of belonging and could talk about the “at John Hartley” way. They knew about the school values of Trust, Respect, and Excellence. All students could easily talk about their learning and how teachers support them. For example, they talked about goals they had set to achieve in their reading; others mentioned the use of learning intentions and success criteria in their lessons; while some students gave examples of the connections between literacy and other areas of learning, like “using information reports in Geography”.

External School Review 2015 – John Hartley B-7 School
Students could explain the work samples they shared and describe routines in class and the sequence in their lessons, including 'checking for prior knowledge'. Students all knew that people who struggle get help. Early years students were enthusiastic about school, knew who could help them in their work, and were happily 'trying to get full marks' by improving their problem-solving. All students liked hands-on activities and excursions.

Older students talked positively about their learning and enjoyed opportunities like the visits with students from the University of Adelaide. Underpinning all their comments was evidence of their engagement in school and in being able to clearly talk about the importance of knowing and understanding the point of what they are learning. They said their teachers were supporting them by using student friendly language to share the Australian Curriculum standards with them and by showing them "how to get an A".

The school has established a comprehensive process for intervention, which includes tracking the literacy and numeracy achievement of all Reception to Year 7 students over time. Additional resources are allocated to ensure that the progress of identified students in priority groups is more regularly monitored.

There is an agreed core set of literacy and numeracy assessments used to improve student learning outcomes at all year levels. Such an approach is based on evidence that 'accurate and appropriate assessment is required to adapt teaching practices so learners are able to successfully learn the essential skills'. Two particularly positive features of the school's evidence-based documentation and teacher resource folders are the succinct explanation about 'why' the assessment is used, and the further instructions on 'how' to administer the tests and processes accurately.

An Intervention Teacher was initially appointed in 2011 to collect and collate existing data. Since then, the system has further developed to now include class teachers regularly entering data and the specialist staff in the intervention teams assisting with analysis and with monitoring specific needs of individuals and cohorts.

This information is used annually as growth and baseline data in the targeted intervention programs provided 'side-by-side' to the core (Wave 1) program delivered by the classroom teacher. A range of additional support (Wave 2) is provided for groups of students identified as achieving below benchmarks. Individual Learning Plans are prepared for all students in the priority groups. A single planning pro-forma is used by the school to incorporate the legal requirements of ILPs, NEPs and IEPs.

Staff said they use the diagnostic test results, formative assessment, and other measures as evidence to reflect with their colleagues and line managers on the impact of their teaching. This reflection occurs in learning team meetings and as part of performance and development processes.

The Review Panel heard evidence of the range of processes anc programs in place to ensure a safe and orderly environment is provided at the school. The philosophy of the school is that everyone benefits when students are supported to be in class. This involves the availability of back-up support from one of the school leaders at all times. Parents are supported by participating in the development of individual learning plans or behaviour education plans. All plans are negotiated – "one size doesn’t fit all".

The Review Panel was able to verify that the school is intentional in the implementation of its ongoing improvement agenda and visibly focused on the development of a whole-school approach to supporting students in their learning. As the Principal mentioned, effective teaching is critical to improving "student achievement, growth, engagement, challenge and equity".

**Direction 2**

Steadfastly monitor the wellbeing and progress of students, teaching each student how to learn, and create opportunities with them to personalise and connect with learning (TEL), so they can demonstrate achievement at higher levels every year.

How well are the results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions?

At the centre of the school’s strategic planning model is an agreed purpose ‘to develop confident learners who achieve their potential within a supportive school environment’.

The Site Learning Plan (SLP) has five ongoing priorities: Literacy, Numeracy, Learning Technologies, Wellbeing and Science. There are four components implemented: continuous focused improvement;
methodology in flexible learning spaces; oral literacy in the early years; and comprehension across the curriculum.

The Review Panel found that a positive and respectful culture of continuous improvement is evident in the school. Each year, the site improvement committees prepare a Site Improvement Plan (SIP) that reflects the SLP and records the strategies required at the school to improve outcomes for Birth to Year 7 children and students. These plans guide targeted action across the school and include measures to be achieved in the twelve-month period. Each plan has an individual quality and focus, with Literacy and Numeracy clearly stating the improvement percentages in selected data sets to be achieved.

The Review Panel found that the school is well placed to correlate all site data, including the Progressive Achievement Tests and the A–E Grades collected against the AC Achievement Standards, to influence strategic planning from a more holistic perspective of student achievement over time.

Further analysis of the available data and information will ensure that the school can both build a case for change (as is currently done) and also monitor the impact of the intentional introduction of the school’s newest challenges for students and teachers: developing ‘Intellectual stretch and a growth mindset’.

Now that this ‘new school’ is at the end of its initial growth period, it is timely to ensure that strategic planning and targeted actions are consistently implemented, for example, from trialling through to embedding, to ensure the learning pathway is continuous and guaranteed Birth to Year 7. This means sharing clarity about school improvement and student learning, and what it looks like to students at each stage of their education at John Hartley School.

Direction 3
Realise the targets and outcomes of the strategic planning model, by ensuring that student achievement and school effectiveness are monitored and judged against the school’s vision for learning and the analysis of multiple measures, including the perspectives of key stakeholders.
OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2015

John Hartley B-7 School is tracking very well. Through the Children’s Centre, parents and young children are increasingly making early connections with the school. Student performance is improving. Distributed leadership is highly valued and ensures ongoing professional learning, coaching and mentor support is provided to build teacher capacity. Relevant teaching and learning frameworks (Early Years and R-7), and the Australian Curriculum are guiding professional practices across the school. Performance and development processes are aligned with the school improvement priorities and teacher career stages.

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

1. Strengthen the trajectory of student achievement, and sustain higher levels of learning over time, by improving the engagement and capacity of each student to attain the Australian Curriculum standards, initially in English, Mathematics and Science.

2. Steadfastly monitor the wellbeing and progress of students, teaching each student how to learn, and create opportunities with them to personalise and connect with learning (TFEL), so they can demonstrate achievement at higher levels every year.

3. Realise the targets and outcomes of the strategic planning model, by ensuring that student achievement and school effectiveness are monitored and judged against the school’s vision for learning and the analysis of multiple measures, including the perspectives of key stakeholders.

Based on the school’s current performance, John Hartley B-7 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.

Aiva Ostitis
PRINCIPAL
JOHN HARTLEY B-7 SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson