

The Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Raukkan Aboriginal School

Conducted in June 2018



Government of South Australia
Department for Education

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 external school review 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 Julie Bishop, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Yunni Seindanis, Review Principal.

School context

Raukkan Aboriginal School caters for students from reception to year 5 who live in the Ngarrindjeri community of Raukkan. The current enrolment is 11, and has declined over the last 5 years. Preschool and occasional care also operates on the site.

The school has an ICSEA score of 694 and is classified as Category 1 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 100% (11) Aboriginal students, 9% (1) student with a verified disability, 100% (11) students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), and 100% of families are eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 2nd year of tenure.

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:

Improvement Agenda: How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?

School Community Partnerships: How well does the school develop partnerships with students, parents and the wider community?

Effective Teaching: How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

How effective are the school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement?

The most significant issue to address in shaping improvement at the school is to establish and develop common agreements and processes related to student behaviour management. Strategies supporting teachers in managing student behaviour at a class level, through working intensively with students as an alternative to suspension, have been implemented.

The school is supported by 2 Aboriginal health officers from Child and Adolescent Health Services (CAMHS) to counsel students, one of whom worked with the boys to unpack and understand what it means to be a strong Ngarrindjeri male.

It was noted that addressing issues while they were small had resulted in increased support from the community; community members were more engaged in the school, parents and elders were supportive of the school, with some of the elders coming into the school.

While allocated support for a student with an identified disability had been provided, targeted intervention processes were not in place. Work with specialist providers has resulted in the

implementation of processes and programs that are now focused on the specific identified needs of the student. Working with specialists had resulted in considerable, observable progress in student learning. There is clear evidence of a strong commitment to improvement.

The examples outlined above indicate evidence of improvement from a reactive perspective. Long-term, ongoing improvement needs to be driven from a proactive perspective. The site improvement plan provides the avenue for the school to articulate a planned approach to ongoing improvement.

The 2018 school year began with 100% turnover of teaching staff, including 2 Aboriginal teachers; all teachers are in their 1st year of working in an Aboriginal community. Governing council members indicated to the review panel that they wanted to see teachers remain at the school for several years.

Governing council and several non-teaching staff stated that the constant turnover of staff is very hard on the school and community. The principal reported that communication with the human resources section of the department to develop and sustain continuity of teaching staff was an ongoing priority.

Next steps for the school are to develop structures and processes to ensure that a collaboratively planned approach to school improvement is developed with all stakeholders. Processes and structures that are collaboratively developed and become embedded practice will strengthen the ongoing development of the school and potentially assist in redressing high rates of staff turnover.

At the staff meeting held during the review teachers worked in groups to review the implementation of the 2018 site improvement plan (SIP). It was reported that the SIP was developed by the principal, and shared with teachers during a staff meeting, where staff looked at achievement data to identify areas for improvement. The principal reported that the SIP was also shared with governing council, the Aboriginal community education officer (ACEO) and the school support officers (SSOs).

Three priorities were identified in the SIP: reading, number and place value, and student wellbeing and identity. Targets for reading comprised of sight words, Running Records, progressive achievement tests in reading (PAT-R) and NAPLAN reading results. Targets for number and place value were based on the progressive achievement tests in mathematics (PAT-M) and NAPLAN numeracy results.

When discussing student progress in learning, teachers identified a range of datasets that supported them in making judgements about how well students were learning over time. Assessments included Running Records, sight words, phonics, work samples and anecdotal records. These assessments are relevant to the site and to the learning needs of students.

Exploration of the Australian Curriculum literacy and numeracy progressions that show growth over time in discreet steps should be considered in addition to the Standards of Educational Achievement to provide meaningful data for all students; this will also inform parents and teachers of explicit next steps.

The SIP is pivotal to the ongoing progress of the school, and provides clear evidence of identified improvement priorities, strategies to achieve those priorities, targets that will inform progress and evaluation measures to track and monitor progress. Additional work is required to strengthen the SIP through the collaborative development of clear markers to track and monitor progress.

The current SIP indicates that the development of literacy and numeracy agreements to ensure consistency and congruence across the site was a significant evaluation measure. During the staff meeting staff acknowledged that this work was at the beginning stages of development. The development of common agreements across the site in literacy and numeracy are essential in the provision of a coherent curriculum for every student.

Site improvement plans are most effective when collaboratively developed with major stakeholders: students, staff and the parent/caregiver community through the governing council. The SIP is informed by

the collection, collation and review of student achievement, attendance and wellbeing data, perception data from all stakeholders and departmental priorities.

The school would benefit from including the SIP as a standing agenda item on staff meetings, for staff to share their knowledge, ideas and opinions, thus ensuring ongoing self-review processes and the collaborative development and ownership of the SIP.

Next steps for the school are to develop structures and processes to ensure that a collaboratively planned approach to school improvement is developed with all stakeholders.

Direction 1

Strengthen the SIP through the collaborative identification and development of priorities that are informed by regular self-review processes and strengthened by action plans with relevant, specific and measurable targets for each priority.

How well does the school develop partnerships with students, parents and the wider community?

The school provided clear evidence of a diverse range of partnerships developed to support effective school community partnerships, which include the Moorundi Aboriginal community controlled health services. The Moorundi team operate a health clinic at the school every Wednesday. The school works collaboratively with Moorundi in providing support for the students, which included a visiting dietician, eye checks, and relevant health support as required.

Meaning "meeting place" in the Ngarrindjeri language, Raukkan was for thousands of years an important meeting place for Ngarrindjeri. Raukkan is often the chosen location for events and performances. The school has recently hosted a performance, which was inspired by Ngarrindjeri storytelling and the Ngarrindjeri language.

The principal has worked with the council to develop mutually beneficial relationships with community meetings also being held at the school. Aboriginal officers from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) have also held several meetings at the school.

The school is looking at ways to increase and sustain enrolments; the lack of available housing has been a significant impeding factor to increasing enrolments. It was stated that increased international markets for Ngopamuldi (a native plants and flowers enterprise established at Raukkan in 2004), are likely to result in an increase in employment options, thus providing opportunities to also increase enrolments at the school. The principal's consultation with the council resulted in a decision to prioritise housing (as it becomes available) to families with school-age students.

Several years ago the decision was made for students to attend the local area school, attending at year 6 rather than year 8 as had previously been the case. The principal indicated that discussions are currently being held with the principal of the local area school to develop an agreement where students will remain at Raukkan Aboriginal School until they have completed year 6.

Representatives from the Raukkan Council provided a welcome to country and spoke at the local schools partnership day that was hosted at Raukkan Aboriginal School. The principal attends the Council AGM and provides a report to the community.

The governing council stated that the school was built by the community and, as such, they had a responsibility to make sure that the school building was always kept in the best condition and that the

community is kept informed of any issues relating to the building. There is clear evidence that the school plays an important role in developing and sustaining partnerships with parents and the wider community.

The school's next step is to focus on developing partnerships with parents and community to improve student learning.

School services officers indicated that they would like to have the opportunity to learn how the budget is formed and how the funds can be deployed. The school, in consultation with governing council and staff, can develop processes and practices to ensure transparency in the deployment of funds to all stakeholders. Clarity of financial practices together with the implementation of processes to provide transparency in the management and deployment of school funds is significant work for the school to undertake. Sharing the financial management processes and practices will strengthen common understandings relating to effective school management.

Staff indicated the desire to attend and contribute to staff meetings with the principal and teachers, which would support the development of a team approach across the school. It was also stated by some staff that they would like to undertake professional learning to better support students with specific needs. They would appreciate the opportunity to know and understand where the students were and where they should be in their learning.

In a small site it is important that all parties have the opportunity to collectively reflect, share observations and discuss progress, and staff meetings are a key venue where such discussions occur. When all staff attend and participate in regular meetings with teachers and the principal the development of common understandings in how to track, monitor and review the progress of every student will become everyone's business.

Sharing the data, especially the 'what' and 'how' of support for individuals and groups will support all staff in working collaboratively to develop common understandings of next steps for individuals and groups of students. It will be important to negotiate the 'when' of staff meetings.

Staff meetings that are collaboratively planned, inclusive of all parties, and provide opportunities for all to share their perceptions and understandings, are important first steps in developing a strong learning community. The provision for all staff to have regular opportunities to share and discuss school priorities and progress is important work for the school to undertake.

Direction 2

Develop and implement systems that will strengthen and embed collaborative decision-making to improve student learning and strengthen school community partnerships.

How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

The panel observed clear, detailed scaffolding for learning in classrooms; the small numbers in each class have provided ongoing opportunities for students to access intensive one-on-one support. Very clear evidence of strategic differentiation for students with a specific focus on literacy and numeracy was observed. Each student has a completed One Plan with identified broad goals.

Evidence of comprehensive tracking and monitoring of learning growth for all students was provided by teachers; this included providing evidence of increased learning improvement for some students since the external review preview. Staff identified that whole-school approaches in literacy and numeracy would provide consistency and congruence across the site. The development of literacy and numeracy agreements as noted in the SIP is significant and urgent work for all staff to undertake.

Teachers also provided specific evidence of how they use the Australian Curriculum to inform their planning. Observations in classrooms indicated some high-level work by many students, who were very excited to demonstrate and share their learning with the panel.

Teachers identified a range of strategies they use to track and monitor student entitlement to the Australian Curriculum. Teachers identified a range of ways they could improve planning in this context; suggestions included but were not limited to using a 'grid system' to highlight aspects achieved, and going to other like sites.

Moderation was identified by teachers as an area for ongoing development, in particular teachers identified that working in a small site had provided additional challenges. Teachers stated that working intensively with peers from like schools on a regular basis would support their capacity to confidently moderate student learning.

Teachers identified that 'in the moment' verbal and formative feedback were the most common forms of feedback provided to students. Teachers identified that providing specific and constructive feedback and letting students know 'where they were at' were areas for further development. Next steps for the school will be to work with students to develop and embed feedback from them about how they learn best. When students are skilled and can articulate their preferences about how they learn best they are operating in a genuine two-way partnership about themselves as learners.

As part of the review process teachers undertook a survey focused on supportive professional learning for teachers in schools with significant numbers of Aboriginal students. Professional learning in oral language development and cultural competencies training were the 2 common aspects that had not been undertaken by the teachers.

Students coming to school need to have the opportunity to develop the language of power in Australian society (Australian English) whilst knowing that their first means of communication – Aboriginal English – is equally valued and respected in the classroom.

Developing induction processes for teachers new to the school (who are unfamiliar with Aboriginal English) that address the importance of valuing and respecting Aboriginal English, whilst also highlighting the need to develop confidence and competency in Standard Australian English, will be important work. The opportunity to undertake cultural competency training may also be valuable for some teachers.


Several students, when interviewed during the review, stated that they wanted to learn more about Ngarrindjeri language, culture and history. These students reported that they learned best when they are learning about their culture, and strongly valued working with the Aboriginal community education officer (ACEO). Staff reported that they wanted their community to stay strong and proud.

Direction 3

Provide opportunities for all students to be engaged and challenged in their learning through embedding agreed effective pedagogical practices including oral language and Ngarrindjeri culture, history language.

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 Raukkan Aboriginal School.



Effective practice in school community partnerships was evident at the school. The teaching of Ngarrindjeri language, culture and history has provided opportunities for the students to engage in their own cultural heritage in a deep and meaningful way. Students indicated during interviews that their best lessons were with the ACEO because they were able to learn 'heaps about our culture'. High levels of engagement were observed when students spoke about their pride in being able to learn their own language. Effective school community relationships have resulted in Ngopamuldi staff working with students at the school and students would like to continue to learn from members of their community.

One of the priorities of the site improvement plan is student wellbeing and identity. The plan is focused on developing and embedding pedagogy that is inclusive of Ngarrindjeri perspectives, culturally appropriate and relevant. The intent is to develop and embed pedagogy that is inclusive of and beneficial for all Ngarrindjeri students.

The school is to be commended for prioritising Ngarrindjeri language, culture, history and identity through the site improvement plan.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

Raukkan Aboriginal School is working towards the development of self-review processes that will regularly and strategically be used to determine the impact that school strategies and practices will have on student achievement.

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

1. Strengthen the SIP through the collaborative identification and development of priorities that are informed by regular self-review processes and strengthened by action plans with relevant, specific and measurable targets for each priority.
2. Develop and implement systems that will strengthen and embed collaborative decision-making to improve student learning and strengthen school community partnerships.
3. Provide opportunities for all students to be engaged and challenged in their learning through embedding agreed effective pedagogical practices including oral language and Ngarrindjeri culture, history and language.

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



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
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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.



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PRINCIPAL
RAUKKAN ABORIGINAL SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson