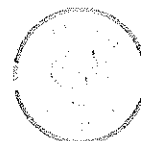DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE FOR EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

REPORT FOR VALLEY VIEW SECONDARY SCHOOL

Conducted in July 2016

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 Liz Schneyder, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Mary Asikas, 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 Valley View Secondary 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 2 Learning Improvement:

- TfEL Compass survey still to be implemented with students.

Part 4 School Organisation:

- Bonafides and monthly returns – identified as an issue, and recently implemented a change to ensure timely returns.

Part 6 Site Procedures:

- Further T&D required for staff to achieve competency in use of risk assessment tool.

Part 6 Site Procedures:

- WHS will be added as a standing item at staff and leadership meetings.

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 84%, which is below the DECD target of 93%.

School context

Valley View Secondary School caters for students from Years 8 to 12. It is situated 14kms north-east of the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2015 was 278 students, which represents a gradual reduction from 470 students in 2010. There has been a growth in Year 8 enrolments from 38 in 2014 to 45 in 2015, to 47 in 2016. The school has an ICSEA score of 934 and is classified as Category 2 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage. The local ECD partnership is Montague.

The school population includes 9% Aboriginal students, 10% Students with Disabilities, 36% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 1% children and young people in care, and 39% of families eligible for School Card assistance. There are 23 students enrolled in FLO programs.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal, a Deputy Principal and 5 other leaders. All leaders have multiple responsibilities across student wellbeing and curriculum.

School Performance Overview

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

Reading

In 2015, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 40% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. The school is achieving results within the range of similar groups of students across DECD schools in Year 9 NAPLAN.

In 2015 NAPLAN Reading, 5 students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 50%, or 1 of 2 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2015, and 50%, or 2 of 4 students from Year 7, remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2015.

Numeracy

In 2015, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 50% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. The school is achieving results within the range of similar groups of students across DECD schools.

In 2015 NAPLAN Numeracy, 2 students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 50%, or 1 of 2 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2015, and 50%, or 1 of 2 students from Year 7, remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2015.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion, 92% of students who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve their SACE. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Eighty-six percent of grades achieved in the 2015 SACE Stage 1 were C or higher and 87% of grades achieved in the 2015 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average at Stage 2. Between 2013 and 2015, the trend has been upwards, from 68% to 86% at Stage 1.

In 2015 SACE, 98% of students achieved a C or higher in their research project, 86% of students achieved a C or higher in their Stage 1 compulsory literacy and 89% achieved a C or better in their Stage 1 numeracy.

Thirty-six percent of students used VET competencies to complete their SACE. This represents a decrease from 47% in 2013 to 36% in 2015.

Lines of Inquiry

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

Student Learning:	How are students challenged to aspire and achieve?
Effective Teaching:	How well do teachers design tasks to engage students and to build on their prior skills and knowledge?
Effective Leadership:	To what extent has a coherent approach to curriculum been developed?
Improvement Agenda:	How does the school make data-informed judgements about student learning?

How are students challenged to aspire and achieve?

All students, teachers and parents interviewed by the Review Team believed the school has improved in the past 2 years, and all commented on the positive relationships that exist between students and teachers. Students believe most of their teachers are supportive and encourage them to perform their best. Their parents have similar expectations. The Leadership Team, including the Principal, know the students well and are able to articulate the range of factors impacting on their achievement. Parents indicated this was the reason for the enrolment of their children in this school.

The many datasets shared with teachers indicate there are significant numbers of students below benchmark in both literacy and numeracy, particularly in the Middle School. It was apparent, and verified, that intervention programs target students at risk, including those disengaged from their learning or not attending school. The 'Break Out room', managed by an SSO, is regarded by students and teachers as particularly effective. The 2015 SACE data indicates progress is being made to improve the number of students completing their SACE and reduce the number of students in the FLO program. All indigenous students in 2015 achieved their SACE. There has been a focus on reducing the numbers of Stage 1 and 2 students achieving a D or E.

There is a small number of students with Band 9 NAPLAN results, in both Years 7 and 9, and there is correlation between their PAT-M/R and A-E grades. Teachers interviewed were unable to identify these aspiring students, or articulate intervention strategies to support them. The students, however, did appreciate the certificates presented at assemblies for academic achievement and outstanding attendance.

Some students talked about being challenged through their participation in the C2C program, Engineering Beyond Borders, Innovation Challenge (Valley View Secondary School students came second and just missed out on a trip to America), Stage 2 courses conducted at Mawson Lakes (SMS), a broad range of sporting opportunities and the Pedal Prix. Over 50% of Stage 1 students use points gained from their Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses to complete their SACE. *The Children and Families Everywhere* (CaFE) SACE Program operating off-campus supports young mothers to complete their SACE. Some students talked about their success in PE because of the recent conversion to Integrated Studies, and the scaffolding provided by their teacher in the theory work.

Many students struggled to articulate what is expected of them in lessons, and why or what they are learning. This is particularly evident in the Middle School. There is a casual approach amongst the students towards their learning and evident inconsistencies in teacher expectations of students in lessons. The delivery of a differentiated curriculum to meet the varying capacities of students and challenge the aspiring students was not evident or discussed. There was concern expressed about the need for greater intervention for those students with low literacy levels, and teachers are looking for increased SSO support in their lessons. Most lessons are delivered using traditional 'chalk and talk' and students use textbooks or worksheets, despite the high-quality facilities and tools available to support innovative teaching, including ready access to ICT. Students indicated they enjoy PE, art, music and home economics because they are 'hands-on', and senior students and their teachers talked about regularly using ICT in their lessons, mainly for word processing.

Direction 1
Provide a learning environment where teachers can consistently focus on high achievement for all students.

How well do teachers design tasks to engage students and to build on their prior skills and knowledge?

The school has invested in a range of Professional Development programs, and finishes classes early on Mondays to provide training opportunities for staff. There has been a broad range of curriculum-related programs, including an introduction to TfEL, task design, moderation and explicit teaching. Other priorities from the Site Improvement Plan have also been programmed, including literacy and numeracy training, developing staff ICT skills, using DayMap for attendance tracking and curriculum storage, understanding and using data and strategies to address attendance. This training has yet to impact on the quality of the teaching, consistency in practice or student engagement in lessons.

Some students produced their Learning Assessment Plans for English lessons, and could talk about the rubrics, although they did not understand or use the TfEL language. Some could talk about what was needed to get an A using their rubric. Most senior students were vague about the career advice they had received and processes for changing courses. Some could articulate a post-school pathway. The Senior School Coordinator had impressive data that included pathways for all senior students.

Students appreciate the teachers who upload their plans, assessment tasks and timelines onto DayMap so they can be accessed from home. The panel met with the Deputy Principal to look at the work stored in

DayMap, and some inconsistencies were evident. The materials stored by the electronics and maths teachers were impressive. A scope and sequence across all curriculum areas from Years 8 to 12 is yet to be developed.

Leaders discussed the difficulties being experienced by many teachers as they transition from using Project-Based Learning almost exclusively, to more explicit teaching. This change in direction has been a result of the recent appointment of a new Principal. There are variations in the understanding of teachers about the expectations of the Australian Curriculum (AC) and the use of standards to inform assessment. A few teachers talked about working together to transform tasks to make them more engaging. Formative assessment is yet to be a priority, so students received limited feedback from teachers, except in their reports. Traffic lights are used by the Senior School leader to track student achievement.

Senior School teachers discussed moderation strategies and the need to work with colleagues in other schools because most were in single-person faculties. This is managed through the Secondary School network in the north-east and is effective and appreciated.

Direction 2
Develop a whole-school curriculum framework that is consistently documented and includes all learning areas, so that engaging and innovative pedagogy, challenging task design, and relevant assessment tasks, are common practice.

To what extent has a coherent approach to curriculum been developed?

The Leadership Team at Valley View Secondary School is committed to improving the school, and is supportive of the new Principal and his directions for the future. The parents on the Governing Council were equally supportive and enthusiastic. There was a strong feeling that all were keen to 'get on the new bus'.

However, decreasing enrolments have resulted in an increasingly compact Leadership Team. The appointment of short-term leadership positions and changes to job and person specifications, have been an attempt by the Principal to allocate leadership to all school priorities. Individuals within the current team admitted to some frustration about their tenure and the demands of the multiple leadership roles assigned to them. Some had visited other similar schools to gather and share strategies for effectively leading change when 'wearing many hats'.

The Review Panel felt the school would benefit from whole-school curriculum leadership. Most leaders have a curriculum responsibility, and also manage student behaviour and/or monitor a year level of students, and they agreed that managing student wellbeing dominated their time at school. The leadership of intervention processes, provided by the new counsellor, was appreciated by several teachers and leaders.

The conflicting demands on leaders' time has also impacted on their capacity to effectively monitor teacher accountability. This was especially evident in the inconsistent uptake of new school directions presented in the Professional Development programs and inconsistent documentation and storage of curriculum. A Performance Development Program, where teachers reflect on their performance against the AITSL standards, has been introduced, with the inclusion of student feedback a priority for the future.

Direction 3
Reconceptualise the leadership structure to enable a greater focus on learning, curriculum, and whole-school improvement and accountability.

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

The school is able to provide thorough and well-presented data about all students, on a range of MS Excel spreadsheets and MS Word documents. These are regularly updated. Members of the Leadership Team could talk about their past and present students and were aware of their personal difficulties/capacities and post-school destinations. They took pride in the intervention strategies they are leading to ensure current at-risk students are supported. They did know who the aspiring and high-performing students were, but could not articulate strategies in place to stretch these students.

Members of the Leadership Team generated and managed most data in the school. DayMap was not being used to track students, thereby making it difficult for teachers to access much of the data available. Teachers had been trained to access the relevant datasets in the Data Warehouse, but this was not proving to be effective due to the current slow Internet speed at the school. A move to the NBN in the near future is expected to address some of these concerns. The Deputy Principal ensures data from the primary schools about new Year 8 students can be accessed and shared.

However, while this data had been shared with staff at Professional Development sessions and in line management meetings, it was evident in the interviews with the Review Panel, that most teachers did not know the capacity of their individual students and were not using the data to inform their practice.

Direction 4
Ensure data is efficiently produced and easily accessed, and staff are accountable for its use in informing improved practice and achievement of outcomes for all students.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

Most members of the Valley View Secondary School community are supportive of the new directions being established by the Leadership Team, and enthusiastic about being part of the school's future. However, significant work is needed, particularly in curriculum implementation and teacher accountability, if the school is going to achieve its priorities.

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

1. Provide a learning environment where teachers can consistently focus on high achievement for all students.

2. Develop a whole-school curriculum framework that is consistently documented and includes all learning areas, so that engaging and innovative pedagogy, challenging task design, and relevant assessment tasks, are common practice.

3. Reconceptualise the leadership structure to enable a greater focus on learning, curriculum, and whole-school improvement and accountability.

4. Ensure data is efficiently produced and easily accessed, and staff are accountable for its use in informing improved practice and achievement of outcomes for all students.

Based on the school's current performance, Valley View Secondary School will be externally reviewed again in 2017.

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.

Steve Marshall
PRINCIPAL
VALLEY VIEW SECONDARY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson