

The Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Warriappendi School

Conducted in May 2018



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 Helen Tunney, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Mark Vincent, Review Principal.

School context

Warriappendi School caters for young people from Year 8 to 12. It is situated in Marlestone, 5kms south of the Adelaide CBD, and is part of the Flinders Park 2 Partnership. Enrolment in 2018 is 42 students including 3 FLO enrolments, and capped at 45 students. Enrolment has decreased from 51 in 2013 as more students are enrolled into FLO directly from mainstream schools. The school is classified as Category 1 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage.

Warriappendi School has 100% Aboriginal cohort. Students enrolled seek a second chance to achieve success in secondary schooling. All students have had previous difficulties negotiating secondary school, with non-attendance, behavioural, social and emotional challenges. Almost all students have English as an additional language or dialect, with an Aboriginal language/dialect as their home language; the majority are urban students. Many have missed significant schooling and, therefore, have multiple challenges in literacy and numeracy.

While the school is available to students from all areas of Adelaide, the majority come from the west between Marlestone and Port Adelaide. One hundred percent of the students are eligible for School Card assistance. Many students have a Department for Child Protection social worker and live in extended families in need of support. Some students are referred through the education department's Student Support Services referral process.

To enrol, students and their carers are invited to an initial meeting with the daily business coordinator and an Aboriginal community education officer to discuss enrolment conditions, share information, and take a tour of the site. Students may be declined a position in the school based on a range of factors relating to the appropriateness of the placement and ceiling numbers. The principal and leadership team use discretion to assess the school's ability to offer programs to individual students. The school uses a range of strategies to re-engage young people, including personalised programs on a full and part-time basis. The school has developed an environment that gives students involvement in decisions and individual support to improve their learning outcomes. Staff are highly skilled in curriculum development and behaviour management, and are committed to teaching and learning. There is a focus on SACE completion, VET and future pathways.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 2nd year of his tenure at the school, and 3 coordinators (with a combined 1.9FTE teaching load). There are 5 other teachers (3.6FTE), including 3 in the early years of their career, an Aboriginal community education officer and 5 school services officers.

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:

Student Learning: **How effectively is student learning growth monitored and evaluated?**

Effective Teaching: **To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?**

School Community Partnerships: **How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?**

How effectively is student learning growth monitored and evaluated?

Through this line of inquiry the panel explored how student learning is being used to track and monitor learning improvement to ensure learning programs are tailored to address the next learning steps for each student.

The panel found all staff and students have a strong knowledge of where every student is at in their learning. The school uses multiple measures to plot student learning development, and constantly explores and investigates new ways to accurately understand individual student learning needs. The school has a goal of 1 year's learning growth for 1 year's attendance at school. Student learning data informs teaching, and is used to ensure every student is being extended in their learning from the point they are currently at. All staff understand and use data, and work with students from an evidence base.

The school is making regular use of a range of assessment tools, including:

- EALD language and literacy levels
- Running Records, and
- engagement and wellbeing surveys.

There is an opportunity to build staff capacity by training all teachers in writing levelling through Language and Literacy Levels. Multiple datasets and types of data are used to develop a school-based profile of the individual student learning needs. When students understand the purpose of testing, they commit to and engage with the tasks.

The school uses a 'rolling assessment' program to address the high transience of students. Students are quickly evaluated for learning needs when they come to the school. Data is used to identify students for interventions (a Wave model), and further assessments by school support officers are arranged if needed. The school seeks to develop evidence-based measures to track growth in student social and emotional competencies. The school should also explore additional school-based literacy and numeracy assessment tools such as those currently being used in primary schools.

There are very effective processes for attendance management and for following up on attendance concerns. The school uses multiple strategies to address and improve school attendance, such as contacting families by phone (multiple times until contact is made), home visits, and weekly leadership scrutiny and problem-solving around the highest non-attenders. Unexplained attendances have been reduced by 30% since 2017. All students interviewed stated that they now attend school regularly and far more than in previous settings. The biggest issue that impacts the attendance of students is funerals. 'Sorry business' can take students out of the school for 6 to 8 weeks, and longer, if there are financial issues that impede returning home, mostly over long distances from remote places. The school works tirelessly, respectfully, non-judgementally and proactively to bring students back into their learning programs as seamlessly and quickly as possible. The school could further develop school practices to demonstrate growth in student attendance and learning, for school successes to be more publically shared and the achievements of the school promoted.

The school plots and continually monitors a trajectory of success for every student. Whilst growth achieved frequently remains outside of the SEA expectations, strong relative growth for each young person is being achieved. The department's data dashboard is starting to become useful to the school to indicate growth. The school continues to track and monitor students in their first year after leaving the school, and continues to offer individual support to facilitate a successful transition for each student into further learning or work opportunities.

The panel found there is a lack of clarity about entry pathways to Warriappendi School.

School practice in tracking and monitoring student learning growth is exemplary. There are high levels of data literacy, and sophisticated data use to bring an evidence-base to its tireless efforts to improve student attendance and achievement. However, students come with learning levels that are significantly below the SEA, and much of the growth added by the school cannot be reflected in the SEA. It is important that the school develops ways to demonstrate to external stakeholders the value it is adding to student attendance, learning development and post-school pathways.

Direction 1

Devise ways to demonstrate and celebrate the educational and personal achievements and milestones of Aboriginal students to a range of audiences in order to enhance the aspirational improvement focus of the school.

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

Through this line of inquiry the panel explored differentiated teaching. There is a shared moral purpose embedded in the school about quality learning and outcomes for every student. Students, families and staff are all clear that the purpose of the school is to facilitate quality academic learning outcomes for every student regardless of their levels of learning.

SACE completion and work readiness are valued by all stakeholders as the ultimate goals for every student. The school aspires to be a site of excellence for Aboriginal education. Every student has an individual learning plan (ILP) and the school is now moving to the new 'One Child, One Plan' (OCOP) format. Students frequently come without an ILP, and it is hoped the new OCOP process will improve this.

Students also come having missed months and years of schooling through previous non- or low attendance and/or being made a FLO student. The school strives relentlessly to address large delays in literacy and numeracy skills, and to individually support the student to achieve their SACE in their secondary schooling. The school turns around previously failing students who are at risk of dropping out and not finishing their SACE.

Students reported that the main reason the school is better for them is the individualised learning support they receive and the small school environment. The school can add value to its current work by ensuring all teachers develop understanding of and expertise in the development of literacy and numeracy skills. They could consider the development of whole-school literacy and numeracy agreements and the use of the ACARA Literacy and Numeracy continuums to inform intervention and subject-specific practices.

The school could link in more with training for primary and early years teachers around explicit literacy and numeracy practices and use the department's Literacy and Numeracy First Primary Years Focus Information for Principals to identify best practice literacy and numeracy practices and interventions.

Learning design is informed by student achievement data and is deeply scaffolded to enable access by all students. Multiple entry points for tasks are created to enable students to be challenged to their next individual point of learning. Students are supported in small groups and 1:1. The school is well-placed to develop a wider toolkit of literacy and numeracy intervention strategies, especially in numerical fluency, for example, Quicksmart.

Teachers are strongly invested in student success. There is a focus on hands-on learning activities to cater for preferred learning styles. High-engagement activities are frequently provided, for example STEM, robotics, woodwork, and visual arts. The school uses multiple individually tailored strategies to reduce

student anxiety and to develop better social and emotional self-regulation such as the '5 point scale'. Teachers all recognise that Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum are highly engaging for students, and frequently enable students to connect with new learning through personal links to country, family and culture.

The school offers multiple opportunities and courses for students to become work-ready, such as:

- 'white card'
- driver training
- first aid, and
- hospitality certificates I, II and III.

The school makes careful provision for the physical and material needs of every student to ensure there are no barriers to the student attending and growing in learning at school. The school uses its own resources to do this and also links strongly to other services and opportunities in the community. Students are supported daily with transport, food, and school uniform, and have access to regular health, dental, vision, hearing checks, and counselling. Students are also supported to access legal documents, such as birth certificates and certification of their Aboriginality.

Students are maintained in the same care or home groups for their whole time at the school. Siblings are allocated to the same care group to support quality home-school relationships. This also means they may already know their care group teacher through an older sibling. Parents reported that staff focus relentlessly on keeping their young person's learning on track, and said the school supports students to develop a post-school pathway and a back-up plan.

The panel concluded that teachers are skilled in differentiation and use of student data to design intentional teaching. The school would add value to this work by developing all teachers as experts in best practice literacy and numeracy. As well, the school needs to explore, develop expertise in and implement a wider range of interventions. Looking at current work in early and primary years in this space would be most appropriate.

Direction 2

Investigate and deploy a broader range of targeted intervention strategies, and monitor the effectiveness of the strategies, changing them depending on the learning outcomes for students that they bring about.

How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?

Through this line of inquiry the panel explored how student learning is being enhanced through student metacognition and development of students as agents in their own and each other's learning. Such challenging work requires an exceptionally high degree of trust and respect in school, student and family relationships.

The school has very strong partnerships with the school community and outside agencies. Every possible opportunity to successfully support student learning and a post-school pathway into work or further learning is actively explored. Families value the school for the success it provides to their young people. Many parents attended the school in the past, and the panel was told multiple stories of lives being 'turned around' by the school.

Families have a strong sense of ownership and connection to the school. They value it for the second chance schooling success it provides, but also for the deep respect and valuing of Aboriginal identity that students can access and learn within. Students and families spoke of the positive relationships with school staff. The trust they have in the principal, and the high-level mediation skills of the ACEO meaning issues and complexities can be dealt with proactively, and in ways that de-escalate issues and keep them small.

Students were articulate about the reasons why they value learning at Warriappendi School. All of them were positive about their learning at the school, identified that their learning was progressing, and knew they could improve more with better organisation and effort. They now complete their work, their teachers tell them they are doing well, and they are checking off tasks needed to achieve their SACE. However, staff said students have a narrow view of success at school, where students see being successful as 'being able to do big sums'.

Students were clear about the reasons why they were attending Warriappendi School instead of a more mainstream setting, and the improvements in their attendance and learning the school had provided. One senior student said he realised now that he would have had more options in SACE if he had stayed in a mainstream high school, but was glad he had come to Warriappendi School and turned himself around before it was too late. There is a strong student action team, who raise money to improve break time activities.

Teachers use a range of pedagogies and practices to engage students and to link learning to student interests and preferred learning modalities:

- mind mapping
- brainstorming
- gathering prior knowledge
- using a story and arts to introduce topics
- using film and viewing, and
- using tactile experiences such as the provision of historical artefacts to stimulate interest.

Students like to learn through doing and observing, and are supported with less preferred ways of learning, such as reading, writing and speaking. Students are caring and protective of families, so linking learning actions to family benefit is an important motivator for students.

Through training and development in recent years, staff explored processes to embed critical and creative thinking into learning design:

- Blooms Taxonomy
- Natural Maths
- 6 Cs, and
- learning styles.

Some work in growth mindsets has been done to improve student self-confidence as learners. Teachers said students avoid and struggle with activities and tasks that require higher-order thinking and risk-taking. Getting students to self-reflect and self-evaluate is difficult. Students struggle to articulate what they have done in their learning and why, or identify goals for improvement. They also struggle to interpret mathematical problems and identify the numerical process needed to solve a maths problem. Staff meeting discussions indicated that teachers have varied and limited understanding about student metacognition, and about student agency in their own and each other's learning.

Students at Warriappendi School have a strong Aboriginal identity. There is potential for them to take an expert role in teaching about Aboriginal culture and perspectives to non-Aboriginal students in other school settings, and to adults in cultural awareness programs. The school has increased the number of

staff who are themselves Aboriginal, which is contributing to the strength and success of the school for students and their families. The ACEO is active and effective in the cultural induction of new staff and in providing ongoing advice around cultural issues. The current ACEO is a respected Anangu elder who has worked at the school for many years. It would be practical to consider proactive succession planning for this pivotal role in the specialised work of Warriappendi School.

The panel concluded that the school has highly effective, trusting relationships with students and their families, which enable students to safely and successfully re-engage with schooling and achieve learning successes. The school can use this trust to increase student challenge and risk-taking in learning, and work with assessment for learning strategies to carefully support students in learning about learning, and to assist with their ability to set meaningful personal learning goals.

Direction 3

Explore student metacognition and student agency in learning to empower students for greater ownership of learning, and learning confidence and successes.

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 Warriappendi School.

There is a documented and enacted attendance policy and monitoring action process. From 2017, the school has implemented processes to follow-up on every student every day they are not at school, with the aim of no unexplained absences by the last lesson each Friday. 'Whatever it takes for every kid every day' has been adopted as a mantra. This change in procedure has had a significant positive impact, and has seen a significant reduction in unexplained absences.

The school has explicitly targeted the 'Top 10' non-attenders. At each weekly leadership meeting the attendance data of these students is scrutinised by the school leaders and actions planned for the following week. Data shows an overall lift in attendance from 50% to 80% in term 4 2017. Individual 'Top 10' student data that tracks the student's attendance across all their years of schooling shows reductions in non-attendance by between 25% and 100%.

The school uses community resources to complement teaching programs and post-school pathways. The school used federal and school funds to construct a trade skills centre to deliver accredited food and hospitality courses certificates I, II and III. Every student studies food and hospitality throughout their schooling and can reach an employment-recognised level of achievement. This ensures every student has a viable pathway into a job as they study at school and beyond or leave secondary schooling. Being work-ready is critical to the post-school future of young people whose cumulative life circumstances position them highly at risk in adulthood.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

At Warriappendi School there is a culture of improvement characterised by high expectations for students. Student achievement data and other evidence are used to inform decisions and actions at the individual student, class and whole-school levels. Effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions. The school works in partnership with parents and stakeholders.

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

1. Devise ways to demonstrate and celebrate the educational and personal achievements and milestones of Aboriginal students to a range of audiences in order to enhance the aspirational improvement focus of the school.
2. Investigate and deploy a broader range of targeted intervention strategies, and monitor the effectiveness of the strategies, changing them depending on the learning outcomes for students that they bring about.
3. Explore student metacognition and student agency in learning to empower students for greater ownership of learning, and learning confidence and successes.

Based on the school's current performance, Warriappendi School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY

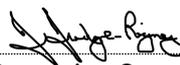


Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS

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.



Dave Basher
PRINCIPAL
WARRIAPENDI SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson

Appendix 1

Attendance policy compliance

Implementation of the Education Department student attendance policy was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy.

The school attendance rate for 2017 was 51.1%.

Appendix 2

School performance overview

Measuring the Warriappendi School performance through use of standardised data tests is often inaccurate and misleading due to a number of factors, including student unwillingness to participate in testing, absenteeism, and fear of failure due to low levels of literacy and numeracy. Many students have not sat NAPLAN in the past for the same reasons. The school uses these test results where possible for individual student planning and intervention.

As the site has 100% Aboriginal students, it utilises an effective ILP/OCOP process, which maps and tracks student progress through identifying educational, social/emotional and behavioural needs, SACE and VET data, success and engagement strategies and communication with families. The site operates on a case management basis, and with low student numbers, the staff maintain intimate knowledge of the varying needs of each student in their care.

Senior students have tailored SACE/VET programs because their literacy and numeracy is often in a primary school range of capabilities, and the intense support provided has seen ongoing impressive SACE achievement for each student who attends regularly. Student performance does not remain static, literacy and numeracy levels tend to drop with long-term absenteeism. The opposite is also true: students who attend regularly and engage in learning tend to show worthwhile improvements.

Australian Curriculum A-E achievement

When the school decided to implement the Australian Curriculum 8 years ago, there was considerable discussion amongst staff about its advantages and disadvantages. Most people felt that a focused and rigorous approach would be welcome as there had been a somewhat hit and miss approach to curriculum with a heavy emphasis on worksheets. The dilemma that existed then, as it does now, is very low levels of literacy and numeracy. It was decided that teachers would teach the subject areas at the appropriate year levels (that is, years 8 and 9), but would assess and report at a lower level that would allow students to achieve a 'C' based on formative and summative assessment tasks.

Each student is assessed using the Achievement Standard of their ability level rather than their actual year level, giving them the opportunity to achieve success, and the school the opportunity to more effectively report on student progression throughout the year.

Writing Audit

Each student is required to submit a writing piece each term. These common assessment tasks are moderated using the EALD language and literacy levels, which are entered into EDSAS at the beginning of term 3 for census, as required. Students undertake this writing task under test conditions and without the use of the scaffolds and supports that are usually in place in regular classroom curriculum. This structure

has been extremely effective in enabling the school to obtain accurate information on students' writing levels and abilities. Student writing levels are tracked year-to-year, measuring growth in students' writing abilities, understanding and literacy levels. Regular attenders who participate fully in their learning show improvement of around 1 level per year; conversely, those students whose attendance and engagement are poor tend to not only stay on 1 level, but also may decline a level.

PAT-M and PAT-R Data

In mainstream schools students are generally assigned a PAT test based on their current year level rather than their ability levels. Due to the low literacy and numeracy levels of students, the school assigns each student 4 years below their current year level, which is more reflective of their ability and allows the student access to the test. This process enables the school to effectively track the data year-to-year and measure student progression.

SACE Data

SACE is heavily resourced, with teachers, mentors and SSOs allocated to classes to deeply support students in achieving their SACE. This flexibility of SACE also allows all students to achieve regardless of their low literacy levels. The SACE completion data indicates that those who finish Stage 2 achieve 100% 'C' grades. In 2017, there were 3 completers; a number of those in year 12 dropped out earlier in the year due to life circumstances.

VET is a core component of senior school offerings, with hospitality being the major focus in recent years, encompassing work readiness and associated curriculum learning and training opportunities. Successful transition for students to outside training and employment has long been a challenging area and continues to be one of the school's key strategic priorities. Due to ongoing low rates of school attendance and significant disadvantage at home, students are generally very deficient in employability skills, and don't have positive or realistic outlooks for themselves as workers and positive contributors to society as adults. The approach to student transition is individualised, and each student is supported within the school's work-ready curriculum and with individual career counselling suited to their interests and abilities.