

The Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Oak Valley Anangu School

Conducted in September 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, Lead Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate, Julie Bishop, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate, and Christine Bell, Review Principal.

School context

Oak Valley Anangu School services the children and young people (preschool to year 12) of its Aboriginal community. Oak Valley is a remote Indigenous community on the Maralinga Tjarutja Lands, managed and operated by Maralinga Tjarutja Inc. It is located approximately 1350kms from Adelaide and 520kms north-west of Ceduna. The community, with an average population of 70-100, fluctuates considerably according to seasons, tradition, cultural and family obligations.

School enrolment has fluctuated over the last 5 years. In 2017, numbers at any one time varied widely, with high degrees of transiency across the community at large. Currently, there are 8 regular students, however, in 2018, another 30 students have visited Oak Valley and spent time in the school. There are 3 students in the preschool program, and 3 young mothers with babies who participate in the playgroup program. The school is classified as Category 1 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage. The local Partnership is Anangu Lands.

The school population includes 100% Aboriginal students, 1 student with a verified disability, 100% of families eligible for School Card assistance, 100% of students of EALD background (first language Pitjantjatjara), and 75% of students in care situations.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 3rd year of her tenure at the school. There are 3 teachers (2.5FTE), including 1 in the early years of their career. The school has a permanent relieving teacher (PRT) who is a Step 9, and works mainly at Yalata. The school employs 1 Aboriginal education worker (AEW).

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:

Effective Leadership:	How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent, high-quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?
School Community Partnerships:	How well does the school engage with and use community resources, agencies and other educational services and institutions?
Effective Teaching:	How effectively are teachers using departmental pedagogical frameworks to guide learning design and teaching practice?

How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent, high-quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?

High quality leadership is a critical element in building successful schools and improving student outcomes (External School Review Framework). At Oak Valley Anangu School, strong, transparent, responsive leadership was evident. Leadership capacity is being built across the staff, and all staff are

involved in decision-making. There is strong delegation to staff, and opportunities are provided for staff to lead in a variety of different areas.

There is quality attention paid to developing teacher capacity. This includes regular performance development meetings, training and development linked to the site improvement plan, observations - both internal and external, and professional development against the AITSL standards. There is strong induction and performance and development. The principal has a deep awareness of her responsibilities to pay positive attention to the professional needs of the many graduate teachers who come to this remote school. The principal uses the registration summary record of sources of evidence as a tool to share growth and look at next steps: "It's two-way process; we sit side-by-side at the screen".

There is evidence on the term planner that staff have opportunities for quality professional development outside of Oak Valley Anangu School. Opportunities are provided and resourced with an expectation the learning will be shared in the school. An example observed by the panel is a teacher, who brought back photos of STEM practices from a recent visit to 3 schools in Adelaide, sharing these visuals at a staff meeting with colleagues.

Partnership professional learning communities (PLCs) meet weekly, with one co-led by an Oak Valley Anangu School teacher, which keeps all the school staff informed. There is good use of Partnership resources to develop teachers; an example is the Essential Skills for Classroom Management program, which teachers have all attended.

The single most important element in successful school improvement is capacity building with a focus on getting results for students (External School Review Framework). Whilst work with teachers is strong, there was little evidence of self-review to deliberately target and improve student learning outcomes. Examples of reviews provided focused on the success of the organisational strategies, rather than the achievement improvement of targeted student learning. There is a lack of evidence about the impact of observations and feedback on improving practice. Parents value the school more for wellbeing services than learning, and were not able to comment on their students' learning.

The school is well-placed to bring an evidence base to strategic planning, which will be especially important to and facilitated by the recently implemented system of school improvement practices. Such practices will ensure more targeted strategic improvement, targeted development of teacher capacity, and higher expectations of student academic learning.

Direction 1

Raise expectations of student learning and increase standards of achievement through data-informed site improvement planning.

How well does the school engage with and use community resources, agencies and other educational services and institutions?

Effective schools value two-way communication, ensure all have a voice and sense of identity, and make use of resources in the wider community to enhance students' educational outcomes and school experiences. This school-community partnership is critical for Anangu students to access the formal curriculum through their first (Pitjantjatjara) language, as the students only hear and use English at school.

The panel spoke to 2 parents and the Anangu Community Manager, who verified the strong links that school staff have with its community. Support for the school from the Anangu Community Manager is

strong. The school is seeking to have community connect through the formal establishment of a play group.

Student behaviour management is supported through community links and when behaviour issues arise, the community provides the necessary intervention. Student behaviour on-country is very good. The school is looking at expanding time on-country through designated bush days, and developing two-way science with community. On-country learning is linked to the Australian Curriculum Science.

Teachers are skilled at foundation units of learning with connections to country. There is a strong focus on the learning environment to make it culturally inclusive and supportive of learning. Every indoor and outdoor learning space is very inviting, with deliberate selection of resources that are culturally familiar. There is very strong use of environment to inform pedagogy.

Students can act as teachers in the delivery of Pitjantjatjara language lessons, and opportunity should be sought to increase the use of Pitjantjatjara speakers to ensure formal classroom learning is connected with student identity and culture.

The problem of poor school attendance due to frequent family times out of community is particularly problematic, and has a negative impact on student learning.

It is critical that the school works in different ways to bring Anangu regularly and deeply into students' learning. This will make learning more coherent for students, and has the potential to increase the profile of school learning in the community. The quality of the existing connection between the school and its community can be used to facilitate deeper learning connections between Anangu and formal school learning.

Direction 2

Work in partnership with the Oak Valley Community and PYEC Education to ensure students are able to access literacy and numeracy learning through the first pathway of Pitjantjara language.

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

Planning for teaching is detailed and comprehensive with links to school and Partnership agreements and the Australian Curriculum. There is evidence of a literacy and numeracy block. A recent initiative of the school has been to change the focus of reading in the school, which now has engaging texts, resources and environment. Students know the routine for morning reading, and want to engage more in reading. Oak Valley Anangu School students interviewed at Yalata, who are moving between Oak Valley and Yalata as much as once per month, said that they are doing more work and learning more at both schools. Each student knew what reading level they are on and could identify when they had last gone up a reading level. However, there was little evidence of explicit scaffolding in the literacy and numeracy blocks and no evidence of interventions to build fluency. Structures and routines for teaching of reading were minimal. The next step in improving reading is to use the improved engagement in reading to more explicitly teach reading. This would involve more explicit teaching of reading strategies such as concepts of print, and tracking student progress in reading. Student fluency in reading could be strengthened using audio resources that match reading texts so that students can develop fluency and automaticity.

Learning goals, success criteria and learning intentions are displayed in classrooms; they were mostly complex. The panel was not able to see use of these tools for student agency in practice, as there was only 1 child at school on the 2 days that the panel was on-site.

The new improvement dashboard is welcomed by staff as an opportunity to better track the learning of both mobile students and those students who attend more regularly. There is an opportunity to strengthen the use of data by all teachers. Teachers knew about the partnership Assessment Agreement but the panel found only minimal links between teacher planning and assessment data. The panel concluded that current planning for teaching is not strongly evidence-based. Teachers, when asked, were able to anecdotally list some examples of student learning. However, this is not evidence-based or linked to baseline targets for learning improvement. Literacy and numeracy automaticity is worked on in teaching, but student fluency development is ineffectively monitored through assessment. Learning growth is predominantly monitored anecdotally, and greater attention to student transference of literacy and numeracy skills would be helpful.

The panel concluded that there is a gap between what teachers think they are teaching and what students are actually learning, as evidenced through data. The learning growth of students who are regular attenders could be significantly improved. There is a need for teachers to make better diagnostic use of data to inform intentional teaching, and assess more frequently in a range of appropriate ways, to determine the efficacy of their teaching. Phonics screening has highlighted the need for more student support to transfer skills to reading and writing. The learning program for students needs to become more coherent in order to effectively develop literacy and numeracy competence and capacity for higher levels of learning.

Direction 3

Make more regular and systematic use of diagnostic and formative assessment in short cycles of targeted teaching.

The panel also recommends that, because of the amount of time that Oak Valley Anangu School students spend at Yalata (around 50% so far in 2018), the 2 schools work collaboratively to develop consistent literacy and numeracy practices so that the narrative, flow and structures of formal learning is the same for students regardless of the school they are attending.

Direction 4

Work collaboratively with Yalata Anangu School to develop and maintain consistent teaching and assessment practices for the explicit development of student literacy and numeracy.

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 Oak Valley Anangu School.

The school has successful and effective practices to ensure that students have access to hygiene and nutrition. Students are taught hygiene practices and food hygiene and nutrition in line with the Australian Curriculum. Students access breakfast and a cooked lunch daily. The school is a consistently safe, supportive, healthy, clean and calm environment for students and their families.

The school is visually attractive and strongly culturally representative. Colours, soft furnishings and teaching aids are chosen or commissioned to ensure that Anangu have a sense of cultural familiarity, representation, respect and appreciation.

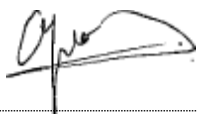
Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

At Oak Valley Anangu School teachers are provided with and use structured time for ongoing collaborative professional learning. Teaching practice reflects the TfEL Framework and the school works in partnership with families.

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

1. Raise expectations of student learning and increase standards of achievement through data-informed site improvement planning.
2. Work in partnership with the Oak Valley Community and PYEC Education to ensure students are able to access literacy and numeracy learning through the first pathway of Pitjantjara language.
3. Make more regular and systematic use of diagnostic and formative assessment in short cycles of targeted teaching.
4. Work collaboratively with Yalata Anangu School to develop and maintain consistent teaching and assessment practices for the explicit development of student literacy and numeracy.

Based on the school's current performance, Oak Valley Anangu School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



Andrew Wells
MANAGER
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Tony Lunniss
A/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS

Rox Boyce
PRINCIPAL
OAK VALLEY ANANGU 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 84.7% (when its students are in community).

Appendix 2

School performance overview

The core group is 8 students who regularly attend school when in community.

The following datasets are kept by the school: Running Records; Language and Literacy Levels; Phonological Awareness and Skill Mapping; and Concepts of Print.

Since 2011, no year 1 or year 2 students achieved the department's Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) in Running Records.

Since 2011, only 1 student at year 3 has achieved the SEA in NAPLAN Reading.

Since 2011, no students achieved the SEA in NAPLAN Numeracy.