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 Ann O'Callaghan, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Lyn Bretag, Review Principal.
Policy compliance

The External School Review process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are implemented and adhered to.

The Principal of Lameroo Regional Community School has verified that the school is working towards being compliant in all applicable DECD policies and that the current Leadership Team will develop a site process and timeline for DECD policy review and implementation. The Principal has advised action is being taken to comply with the following DECD policies:

Part 1 Governance: Items 7 and 8
- The Principal has indicated that the Parent Complaints Policy is yet to be developed.
- A process for reporting data related to bullying will be included in 2016.

Part 2 Teaching and Learning: Items 3, 4, 5 and 10
- Professional learning records related to teaching the Keeping Children Safe curriculum will be analysed in Term 1, 2016 to arrange training as required.
- VET in Schools Policy is not documented.
- The Guidelines for Work Experience and Structured Workplace Learning are not yet documented.
- There is no formalised Aboriginal Strategy.

Part 3 School Organisation: Items 2, 3 and 4
The Principal has indicated that the school is developing a full Attendance Policy and that the School Discipline Policy and the Bullying and Harassment Policy are under review.

Part 4 Human Resource Management: Items 3, 4 and 5
- The Principal has indicated all staff members do not as yet have documented performance plans.
- The development of the Induction Policy and a process for employee complaints is scheduled for 2016.

Part 5 Safety: Item 5
The Principal has indicated that the Cyber Safety Policy is yet to be developed.

Part 6 Site Procedures: Items 1, 2 and 3
The Principal has indicated that site policies are to be developed in relation to:
- WHS management matrix
- Emergency response procedures
- Business Manager systems
- Records Management.

When the school’s actions achieve compliance 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 working towards full implementation of the policy. In 2015, the school reported attendance of 92.5%, which is marginally below the DECD target of 93%.
School context

Lameroo Regional Community School is located 199 kilometres east of Adelaide, in the Murray Mallee of South Australia. As a regional school, there are strong connections with the students and families at Geranium and Pinnaroo primary schools. The school has an ICSEA score of 990 and is classified as Category 5 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The enrolment of 168 students reflects a decline of 20% from 203 students in 2010. There are currently 11 Aboriginal students and 11 Students with Disabilities. Twelve percent of families are eligible for School Card assistance. Seventy per cent of students travel to and from school on one of five school buses.

After five principals in five years, the Leadership Team consists of the new Principal in the second year of her first tenure, the Deputy Principal in her first year of a second tenure, who also has a 0.2FTE School Counsellor component and is responsible for Foundation/Reception to Years 6/7, and the Senior Leader: Secondary, in the first year of his first tenure in the role.

A new structure exists at the school from 2016, with four classes in the Primary (Foundation/Reception to Years 6/7), and four base groups in the Secondary (Years 8 to 11/12). Five new contract teaching staff started teaching at the school in 2016.
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 the early years, reading is monitored against Running Records. In 2015, there were 92%, or 12 of 13 Year 1 students, and 56%, or 5 of 9 Year 2 students, demonstrating the expected DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). At Year 1, the recent results are an improvement on the historic average of 82%, and at Year 2, the results are downwards from the historic average of 76%.

Reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 90% of Year 3 students (9 of 10), 80% of Year 5 students (12 of 15), and 83% of Year 7 students (15 of 18) demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Years 3, 5 and 7, there was an improvement from the historic baseline average. For 2013 to 2015, the results at Year 7 show a trend upwards, from 60% to 83%.

At Year 9, 47% of students (7 of 15) achieved the SEA, a decline from the historic average. These results show a downwards trend from 86% in 2013 to 47% in 2015.

In 2015 NAPLAN Reading, 50%, or 5 of 10 Year 3 students, 13%, or 2 of 15 Year 5 students, 28%, or 5 of 18 Year 7 students, and 7%, or 1 of 15 of Year 9 students, achieved in the higher two bands. For Year 3, the result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN Reading bands in 2015, 33% (2 of 6) of students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 5, 80% (4 of 5) of students remain in the upper bands at Year 7, and 50% (1 of 2) of students remain in the upper bands at Year 9. For Year 7, the result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Numeracy

The 2015 numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 90% of Year 3 students (9 of 10), 60% of Year 5 students (9 of 15), 61% of Year 7 students (11 of 18), and 67% of Year 9 students (10 of 15), demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. For Year 3, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average, while at Years 5, 7 and 9, results are declining compared to historic averages. For 2013 to 2015, there was a trend downwards at Year 7, from 80% to 61%.

In 2015 NAPLAN Numeracy, 40%, or 4 of 10 Year 3 students, achieved in the higher two bands, which is an improvement from the historic baseline average. Seven percent, or 1 of 15 Year 5 students, 11%, or 2 of 18 Year 7 students, and 13%, or 2 of 15 Year 9 students achieved in the higher two bands in 2015 NAPLAN Numeracy.

For those students who achieved in the higher two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, no students from Year 3 in 2013 remain in the upper bands at Year 5 in 2015, 50%, or 2 of 4 Year 3 students from 2011 remain in the upper bands at Year 7 in 2015, and from 2009, 33%, or 1 of 3 students remain in upper bands at Year 9.

SACE

At SACE Stage 1 in 2015, 8% of students (1 of 12) achieved a B grade and 92% of students (11 of 12) achieved a C for the required Literacy component. For the Numeracy component, 8% of students received a B grade, 77% of students (9 of 13) achieved a C grade, and 23% (3 of 13) achieved a D grade.

In terms of SACE completion in 2015, 100% of students (12 of 12) who had the potential to complete their SACE did so. In addition, 91% of subject grades achieved were C- or higher, including 46% at C range (compared to 29% for the state), 30% at the B range (compared to 45% for the state) and 15% at A and A- (compared to 21% across the state). One student applied to achieve an ATAR.

On the basis of the overall school performance data, the Review Panel considered several Lines of Inquiry to determine the directions Lameroo Regional Community School is required to take. They relate to raising levels of learning for all students, supporting consistent retention of achievement over time, from one year to the next, and intervening immediately to address the needs of students currently achieving below standard.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of Inquiry</th>
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<td>During the review process, the panel focused on three key areas from the External School Review Framework:</td>
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<td><strong>Student Learning:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Effective Leadership:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Effective Teaching:</strong></td>
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**How well are students achieving over time?**

The student achievement results at Lameroo Regional Community School indicate that the school has a significant challenge ahead, to ensure a whole-school approach to targeted teaching is focused on improving learning outcomes for all students. The school recognises that while there have been some improvements in aspects of student performance in 2015, achievement levels are not consistent and are not sustained over time. In fact, at some year levels across the school, and in some learning areas, especially mathematics, there is a pattern of declining results over time. For some students this has also resulted in a decline in their learning from one year to the next (for example in reading), which has a negative impact on their capacity to access the school curriculum.

In response to questions from the Review Panel about "how well are you achieving?" students shared their views about learning and teaching, confidently and openly, acknowledging that everyone could and wants to do better. Students recognised that everyone struggles at some time in class "when you learn something new" or "when you don't know what to do". Of concern to them was that some students don't always get extra help with their learning: "if you can't read you can't do anything".

Younger students (Foundation to Year 3) reported that they thought they could all improve by trying their best and having a go. They were looking forward to learning new things in science and to doing the new "Ag" lessons. Primary students talked about what they liked at school, what helped them in their learning and what didn't help. Firstly, they felt school was fun and they especially liked PE. However, from their perspective, English and mathematics were slow: "we are not always challenged", "if you already know it, you just tag along". They like learning new things, and having teachers who are organized and who don't talk too much. When they were doing new work, one group said they liked the written feedback they received from their teacher: "the teacher told us what to keep working on and gave an example of how to do better". This approach was seen as more useful than when teachers just say "good work".

Older students like those teachers who listen to them, who help them when they need it, who know where they are up to in their learning, and who make lessons engaging. These characteristics develop good working relationships. Alternatively, the absence of these characteristics makes learning difficult. Some students also expressed concern about use of textbooks, saying that they sometimes teach themselves. Some Year 8 to 10 students knew about SACE, others knew about the PLP. All thought 'study skills' should be a focus.

The collection of perceptive insights and views of students, like those reported above, can regularly be used by the school to evaluate the effectiveness of current practices. When student feedback is gathered in conjunction with student achievement data, the school is working from an evidence-base to inform planning and professional practice. The Review Panel heard evidence that the majority of staff have not previously used individual student achievement data as a whole-school approach, nor analysed a range of data sets at a cohort or class level.

This important work has recently been initiated. The aim from now on is to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of where each student's starting point is in their learning and where they are up to at points in time. Complementary professional learning about formative assessment has also been introduced. The Review Panel found that the development of this whole-school approach should be intensified and supported as a high
priority to ensure all students are successful.

Direction 1
Ensure all students are achieving at and beyond the SEA, by enabling all staff to use data analysis and formative assessment processes to understand, respond to and support each student in their learning.

To what extent is a positive and focused approach to improvement and change evident?

The Review Panel heard appreciation from students, parents and staff about the way the new Principal has established an 'open style' and is fostering a student-focused culture of learning. Students in particular, did not hesitate to offer comment that the school was getting better because the Principal 'listens to us' and 'cares about the students'. There are positive signs to parents that 'the school is on a turnaround', that public confidence is returning and, as a consequence, the enrolment and retention has the potential to increase. The intention to develop a whole-school approach to ensure effective teaching helps all students to be successful was also well-supported. Parents said they have faith in the commitment and integrity of the whole leadership team, and believe that this is filtering down to all staff and across the school.

The Review Panel heard from the Leadership Team that the vision for the future at Lameroo Regional Community School is for all students enrolled at the school to successfully complete SACE to their highest level. As one student reinforced when talking about recent improvements: "since the teachers have knuckled down, the students have knuckled down". The 2016 Senior Secondary students were especially clear about their intention, and commitment to each other, to work together to lift the school's results, "to be the best Year 12 group ever".

The Review Panel heard that there has previously been limited opportunity/expectation for staff to engage in developing the school improvement agenda; or, if so, it had not been fully embraced to achieve the desired results. For much of the time, teachers have been able to work in isolation from each other. The Review Panel heard that it was a long time since the school was "humming along".

However, at the time of the review, it was observed that staff had good morale and that they understood the new expectations. Although some felt to a certain degree overwhelmed by the agenda ahead, they all reported that 'working together will make the difference'. Working together with a purpose commenced last year with an extensive self-review process. The new Principal received feedback from all staff, and undertook observations in all classrooms, with the explicit intention of surfacing and understanding the range of issues impacting on the quality of teaching and learning at the school.

The Principal also led the staff through several ongoing processes to identify topics 'to work on'. These were collated and prioritised: focus on learning; work as a team; develop a concise behaviour management policy; develop a whole-school approach to mapping core areas; and differentiate teaching for higher- and lower-achieving students.

By the end of Term 4 2015, staff reviewed progress and made decisions to inform ongoing planning for 2016. The current three-year Site Improvement Plan is comprehensive. Sections include Curriculum, Pedagogy, ICT, and Community and Culture. To support implementation and evaluation, the Leadership Team have 100 Day Plans for each semester. The staff priority list is scheduled into the school's staff meeting calendar.

The Review Panel was also made aware that school improvement discussions last year did not include any analysis of student performance data. Student outcomes as evidence of improvement have not yet been included in the new version of the strategic plan. Although reference is omitted in the documentation, in practice, this has recently commenced with groups of staff looking at whole-school data in ways that are new to many of them. At a staff meeting during the external review, and in review discussions, teachers indicated they could now see it was necessary to analyse all types of data to find the 'starting point' for all students; the benefit comes in using the information to understand students and inform teaching to meet the range of student needs.

This year, some renewal has already been implemented, including new staff, redeployment of some existing staff and the implementation of a new sub-school structure. During the review, staff identified a number of
other strategies that would also help to develop new approaches across the school. These included requesting direction about what to prioritise and what is the expected outcome; being supportive of the open agenda for teachers to work together in professional learning teams; and requesting more opportunity to share new teaching strategies (for example, assessment).

This year, the Leadership Team has planned for release time structured into the timetable for teachers to plan and work with each other. There is also time periodically scheduled after school for teams.

Although there is some sharing between teachers, the designated team meetings are not yet focused on everyone understanding where each student is in their learning, or on working out how best to respond.

Currently, the team agendas are loose rather than tight, cooperative rather than structured and there is some low level of ‘buy-in’ not yet addressed.

Until there is clarity around the evidence-base of the expectations, an agreed model for action, and clear professional protocols, there will be limited success in developing a truly collaborative approach to improvement.

**Direction 2**

Implement a systematic approach to leading school improvement, by establishing processes that focus and support the development and accountability of collaborative professional learning teams.

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**How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?**

Parents respectfully shared different examples of how well their children are supported in their learning. They said they appreciated good teachers and, as a general rule, they felt the teaching is fine, unless your child is ‘struggling’. Some parents felt their children received the help they needed, some felt they had to negotiate with the teacher or the school, while others felt they had to learn for themselves about how to help their child.

Governing Council and Parent Club members were happy to see a ‘push for excellence’ coming from the new Principal and through the school improvement plan. Reinforcing the need for the school community to be an orderly and safe place for learning was also appreciated. The parents wanted to see the best for all students.

Staff reported that there was yet to be coherence in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, in all classrooms, across year levels and from Foundation to Year 12. It was acknowledged that improvement was required to not only address what is taught, but how it is taught and how it is assessed. Examples included: how best to engage all students; how to manage the varied needs of students in each class; how to provide intervention for those students whose achievement is below standard; and how to support those children and young people whose schooling is most at risk. This information concurs with aspects of the information gathered at the beginning and end of 2015 through internal self-review processes.

The self-review processes also raised strategies like having planning templates to assist with a consistent approach to designing units of work and assessment tasks. Linking achievement standards criteria with a bank of evidence required to assign A–E grade guidelines was identified as collaborative work yet to be undertaken and moderated.

All staff, at the staff meeting during the external review, had the opportunity to provide evidence about what they thought it would take to ensure they themselves, and others, are able to ‘understand each learner’s starting point’ as the first step in learning design. This feedback was collated by the Review Panel. The high frequency words speak for themselves: common agreement, consistency, collaboration, direction, and high expectations. These actions were discussed with the Leadership Team and left at the school to share with staff.

During the external review interviews, some staff described strategies that they had already put into place this year to better support students in their learning. These included: involving students in unit design by offering a choice in assessment task; use of a case-management approach in Year 11 and 12 with students having individual Learning Development Programs; a One Plan approach in the primary section for all students with disabilities and special learning needs; evidence-informed planning by tracking subject-specific results (mathematics and numeracy) from one year to the next, to identify patterns and trends over time; making
recommendations for professional learning; use of traffic lights, thumbs up, and data walls to introduce feedback for learning and goal-setting.

The Review Panel was made aware that some staff are hesitant to contribute fully to the change agenda, preferring to work with the familiar rather than join the future orientation. It is important that all teachers are supported to come on board, learn from their own starting point and plan for student learning with the end in mind. Without all staff being involved, the chances for improvement will be diminished and the school will not be able to realise the achievement it is aspiring towards. The panel also discussed with the Leadership Team the future provision of opportunities to trial, implement and embed pathways for the students that will support future learning options, including STEM subjects, the Arts and the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities.

Exploring new curriculum delivery options will also ensure the spacious classrooms, new facilities and the valued and reinstated Agriculture program will be utilised to capacity.

The Review Panel found that the extent to which all teachers are future-oriented from now on will be fundamental to any assertion that the students at Lameroo Regional Community School are being well-supported in their learning.

In 2015, performance and professional expectations have been made transparent by the Principal. A plan and timeline were developed and included: lesson observations with line managers (with written feedback); sharing of term planners and assessment tasks; and ongoing performance conversations. The associated documentation in 2016 will necessitate that teachers build on the work from last year and reflect upon the changes they are making in their teaching and the improvement impact on the students and their learning.

It was pleasing to see that the development of 21st Century skills is incorporated into the proposed 2016 performance and development planning process through the required reference to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST). As is exemplified through the APST, focused and systematic collaboration with the full commitment of all staff is at the heart of whole-school improvement work.

**Direction 3**

Build teacher capacity across the school by implementing performance and development processes and quality professional learning that is informed by research, relevant to classroom practice and aligned to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.
OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2016

Lameroo Regional Community School is engaged in a significant reform agenda focused on improving and sustaining higher levels of learning over time. The development of a whole-school approach to the provision of effective teaching and the delivery of a coherent curriculum is central to the renewal. This focus provides an authentic opportunity for the school to listen to the confident voices of the students who have much to say about how to improve learning.

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

1. Ensure all students achieve at and beyond the SEA, by enabling staff to use data analysis and formative assessment processes to understand, respond to and support each student in their learning.

2. Implement a systematic approach to leading school improvement, by establishing processes that focus and support the development and accountability of collaborative professional learning teams.

3. Build teacher capacity across the school by implementing performance and development processes and quality professional learning that is informed by research, relevant to classroom practice and aligned to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

Based on the school's current performance, Lameroo Regional Community 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.

Annette Williams
PRINCIPAL
LAMEROO REGIONAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson