

# **The Department for Education**

## **External School Review**

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

**Report for Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment School and  
Services**

Conducted in March 2018



Government of South Australia  
Department for Education and  
Child Development

## 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.

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

This review was conducted by Helen Tunney, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Cam Wright, Review Principal.

## School context

Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment School and Services (Kilparrin) delivers education to children from birth to year 12. The school is situated 10kms south from the Adelaide CBD and is part of the Marion Inland partnership. The enrolment in 2018 is 32 students, including 4 in the early learning centre. The school capacity is capped at 30 students. The school is classified as Category 6 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage.

Kilparrin is a unique school in the SA education system. It provides, coordinates and enables early learning and schooling for students with significant, multiple disabilities. All children and students have either verified hearing or vision impairment (in some cases both) and intellectual disability. Students frequently have associated autism spectrum disorder and/or physical disability in addition to sensory and cognitive impairments. They may also be terminally ill.

The current school population includes 1 Aboriginal student, 100% of students with multiple disabilities, 57% of families eligible for School Card assistance, no students of EALD background, and 1 student in care. Enrolment has increased over the last 3 years, from 24 in 2016 to 32 in 2018.

Kilparrin is both a site of early learning and schooling for identified children and an outreach program called Statewide Support Service (SSS). The SSS assists early learning and schooling for eligible children and students in other educational settings. The SSS is accessible to eligible children and students in all educational sectors in SA, including Catholic Education and the independent school system. Both site-based and SSS staff are highly qualified. Teachers are required to have qualifications in vision and/or hearing impairment or, minimally, to be working towards such qualifications. All have Auslan skills and are experienced in the application of strategies for Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC). Teachers deliver professional learning across the state, nationally and internationally.

Kilparrin delivers services both on and off-site to children and their families from birth to age 18+. Statewide Support Service staff can provide a home-based service to families from the birth of an eligible child. The family is then fully supported to choose from options available as a child develops and transitions through preschool into formal schooling. Currently, the SSS is supporting 171 clients: in 66 government schools, 6 non-government schools, 8 early learning centres, and 18 in-home.

Students can be transferred between Kilparrin and other departmental schooling options, such as special schools, disability units, special classes or mainstream.

The leadership team consists of a principal in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of her tenure at the school, and 4 senior leaders, including a deputy principal and 3 Band 1 coordinators (ICT, AAC and strategic intervention). There are 12 (9.8FTE) teachers, including 1 in the early years of their career and 3 Step 9 teachers, and 9 teachers (8.4FTE) work in the SSS. There are 19 school services officers (SSOs) with a range of hours per week from 12.3 to 37.5.

## 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:

<b>Effective Teaching:</b>	<b>How effectively do teachers monitor progress and support students to meet their goals?</b>
<b>School Community Partnerships:</b>	<b>How well does the school engage with other educational services and institutions?</b>
<b>Improvement Agenda:</b>	<b>How well does the school evaluate the effectiveness of programs and strategies?</b>

### **How effectively do teachers monitor progress and support students to meet their goals?**

Through this line of inquiry the panel explored individualised and intentionalised teaching to ensure each child is continuously moving forward in their learning. The panel found evidence of a genuine desire to empower students. Staff and families talked of the need to 'unlock' the abilities of these significantly disabled children. A parent said "the school takes your hand and leads you through a pathway of darkness". Families are supported by the school to communicate with their children and regard their future with hope and optimism.

In the day-to-day school life of a child at Kilparrin there are many disability-related disruptions (health and care needs) to the flow of teaching and time on-task for students. The school's strong commitment to working collaboratively in order to optimise time on-task for each child was evident across the school.

The emphasis for schooling for each student is future-oriented. Staff work collaboratively with families to consider where students need to be in 5 years' time, and then backwards-plan to ensure the ongoing acquisition of skills that students will need. The school has an 'open-ended' rationale for the learning potential of each student, working tirelessly to continuously improve schooling outcomes.

The panel found clear evidence of tracking student learning growth over time, sophisticated applications of data collection and analysis, and an evidence-based approach to facilitating individualised learning growth.

Evidence-based systems are being used to quantify student learning growth. Teachers verified that they are using and valuing evidence-based approaches to learning design, such as the Ability Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) and the Rubric of Communication Competence. In addition, staff recognise the risks and shortcomings of these assessment tools, and are continuously monitoring the value of them to the learning growth of students. The school has begun to moderate student achievements in ABLES.

The school uses several key programming approaches in order to address the aspects of student development that are disability-related and impact significantly on the learning needs of students:

- ABLES
- Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD)/communication
- Movement Opportunities via Education (MOVE), and
- Intensive Interaction.

There is also focus on the development of fine motor skills and sensory awareness. The negotiated education plan (NEP) process drives programming for each individual child, and includes personal care and family life goals for each student. Through the NEP, these key programs and priorities inform individualised NEP goals and are linked to literacy, numeracy and curriculum learning goals. All these elements are incorporated through the quality NEP process to be fully coherent, integrated and effective for the child and the family. SSOs do not currently contribute to the NEP process. Involving them would add great value to the work of the school and serve to narrow the focus of work even more onto improving student learning outcomes.

The panel found consistency in the pedagogical and curriculum approaches used across the school. The school uses 4 Blocks of Literacy, consistent themes in the Child Protection Curriculum (body parts and feelings), and curriculum scope and sequences for PE and maths in all classes.

Increments of learning are very small, but every class uses strategies to record and capture these small increments of achievement. Student achievements are recognised at assemblies, and parents value the detailed learning stories that are regularly provided by teachers. The school has developed ways to record 'wow moments', which is practised consistently in all classrooms, and SSOs can contribute to recording these moments.

Work in developing student communication is very advanced, and all staff are embedded in this work. The school uses a wide range of Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) devices to ensure the optimisation of the communication abilities of each child. The panel found evidence of challenge and intellectual stretch for students, particularly in communication work, which was verified by parents, and done consultatively with families.

Whilst the panel found a strong student learning-centred culture in the school, SSS teachers told the panel that they see their role as to support the teacher and the family, rather than the learning of the students they are supporting in sites other than Kilparrin. There are opportunities for SSS teachers, in collaboration with the staff of sites in which students are being taught to better link student learning outcomes to service provision by SSS teachers. This could be facilitated in a number of ways, most importantly, by ensuring that the SSS teacher is present at NEP meetings and reviews. The panel recognised the potential of the Kilparrin culture of sophisticated monitoring of student progress and supporting students to meet their goals to add value to the learning of HI/VI/additional needs students in mainstream settings. Shifting the culture of the SSS from one of providing advice about the technicalities of vision and hearing impairment, to a focus on optimising learning outcomes for identified students in other settings could serve, over time, to not only improve the learning outcomes of these students, but would raise the profile of the services offered and raise awareness in other educational settings of the possible eligibility of other students.

The panel concluded that the school provides highly effective teaching and learning programs that are individualised and enable students to meet their goals. This work is driven through the NEP process, which is highly evolved and sophisticated. A next step for the school is to strengthen the NEP process for students by including the voices and expertise of the SSOs in the NEP processes. As well, support for students beyond Kilparrin through the SSS will be strengthened by greater consistency in SSS teacher participation in the NEP process.

## Direction 1

Strengthen the planning and design of learning tasks to meet the varied needs of students by:

- SSOs participating in the NEP planning and review process for Kilparrin students
- SSS teachers participating in the NEP planning and review process for students supported through the SSS in mainstream settings.

## How well does the school engage with other educational services and institutions?

Through this line of inquiry the panel explored the quality of collaboration between Kilparrin services and other stakeholders. The school offers quality learning at all levels of schooling to students with high level sensory and additional needs. Students are supported on-site in the early learning centre (ELC) or school and off-site in homes or other school settings through the SSS. This work requires strong collaboration with other departmental and non-departmental stakeholders.

The complexity of relationships with other service providers is recognised, and the school works proactively to ensure cooperation. Parents told the panel about how the school's high-level assistance with the development of student milestones.

There is a strong, united drive in the school to optimise the independence of each student. The school works tirelessly to collaborate with 'the team around each child' to facilitate this, managed around and through the NEP process.

The school has worked with a private speech pathology provider to develop a tool to track and monitor development of communication in this largely non-verbal population of children. The tool is the Rubric of Communication Competence, and enables teachers to closely intentionalise the teaching to develop each student's ability to communicate independently.

Teachers are highly skilled in supporting parents with the emotional enormity of the educational futures of their children. Parents said teachers and all staff provide generous, empathetic, continued and timely support to them. The physical demands of each child in the home environment inform foci for each child through the MOVE program. Choir facilitates participation in the broader community. This year there is a combined Errington/SASVI/Kilparrin choir as well as participation in the Primary Schools' Music Festival.

The school has worked actively in the past few years to strengthen links with the co-located South Australian School for Vision Impaired (SASVI), especially in the outreach services that each offer.

Statewide Support Service provides strong, targeted support for transitions of students between levels of schooling and schooling options, although access to services is not well-defined. The placement process appears to be inconsistent and opportunistic. The panel found examples of children who could have had much earlier access to the specialised, optimal services.

Assessments by SSS teachers appear to be disability rather than educationally based. There is potential to improve student learning outcomes by bringing a more evaluative, evidence-based student learning focus to the work of the SSS teacher. The SSS teacher should monitor the impact of the sensory accommodation advice given on the learning growth of the student. The SSS teachers could use some Kilparrin programs, such as ABLES and 4 Blocks of Literacy, to assess and report on the learning of SSS supported students. This could better inform the NEP goals.

Statewide Support Service reports provided are extremely varied, ranging from a summary of the support provided to a report about cortical vision. There is a potential to standardise the provision of an SSS report that makes clear the links between accommodations and student learning outcomes.

The panel concluded that the school engages very effectively with other educational services, institutions and stakeholders. A point of leverage for the school is to address the quality of reporting between SSS teachers and the classroom teacher of students being supported. By better linking the advice provided to evidence-based learning outcomes, SSS will enhance the efficacy of its support.

#### **Direction 2**

**Strengthen the links between the support provided by SSS teachers and desired student learning outcomes by developing a reporting process and template that ties strategies to evidence-based student learning outcomes.**

### **How well does the school evaluate the effectiveness of programs and strategies?**

Through this line of inquiry the panel explored improvement culture development and its influencing work. School leadership has a deep understanding of cyclical school improvement, and improvement processes are generally sophisticated and specifically developed for the specialised needs of the students. There is evidence of collaborative and consistent planning with each SIP priority resourced with a PLC and a SIP planning process in place. The school is refining its self-review processes. There are strong connections to the partnership self-improvement processes, which is embedded in the work of all staff.

An evidence-based culture has been developed and is in place. ABLES is being used to generate a profile of learning improvements across the school. It provides a way to quantify learning in children who make very small increments of growth. There is innovative work at the school, and ways are continuously sought to 'unlock' each child, while the school is monitoring the impact of each of its efforts and initiatives along the way.

The school has well-developed leadership capacity. Those in leadership are leading proactively to develop practices that enable continuous improvement in the efficacy of teaching in the school. In recent years the school has recruited staff well, and has processes in place to effectively build leadership capacity.

There is clear encouragement by leadership for continuous professional learning. The school provides in-school training for staff and parents, and makes this training available electronically to those who cannot attend in person. Attention is paid to the training needs of staff new to the school, especially in relation to whole-school programs such as MOVE.

Professional learning is of high quality, focused on SIP priorities, and ensures all staff are fully qualified in working with students with high-level sensory needs (vision and hearing). The school has strong national and international links to professional learning, and a provider of national and international professional learning.

Staff and families have clear respect for the skills of the current school leader, and value opportunities that are available to staff, students and families. Positive change in the last few years is acknowledged and staff said they are 'not afraid to have a go'. There is a strong sense of being valued, 'all voices heard', and order and purpose at the school. All stakeholders at Kilparrin appear calm, relaxed and happy. Communication between stakeholders at the school is good. Minutes of all meetings are kept diligently and are accessible to all staff. Staff communication in the school is strong; however, communication between teachers and SSOs tends to be more informal than formal. There is a place for more formalised

communication outside of staff and team meetings, in particular, to increase teacher-SSO dialogue about student learning.

There are high-quality performance and development processes in place for teachers and SSOs. Staff talked about the value of professional development to them professionally and personally.

A more formalised induction for SSOs would add value, who rely mostly on informal support and induction from their peers. A role statement for SSOs would add value to their work. It could include a rationale or belief statement about the intersection between the work of the teachers and the SSO to the delivery of student learning outcomes.

Staff feel they are at the forefront of technology use for disability education. And the school is monitoring the effectiveness of ICT as a tool for student communication and learning.

The panel concluded that the school attends well to self-improvement and has developed an evidence-based culture of monitoring and continuous improvement. A point of development for the school is to more formally utilise the expertise of SSOs and to more intentionally connect their work to intended student learning outcomes.

### **Direction 3**

**Develop a role statement for the SSO positions that makes apparent the links between SSO work with students and the realisation of student learning goals.**

## **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 Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment School and Services (Kilparrin).

*Teachers recognise the role of language in learning.* The Rubric of Communication Competence that has been developed at Kilparrin enables the school to incrementally and developmentally support the attainment of communication competence and independence in each student. The rubric provides a detailed description of elements of communication. It enables a plotting of each child's current competencies, and facilitates planning for next steps of development and tracking of growth over time. The rubric gives the 'team around the child' a common understanding of a child's skills, and a common language to plan for and monitor learning/skill growth.

The school has appropriate curriculum structures and processes in place. Specialist learning areas at Kilparrin are music and child protection curriculum. This teaching and learning is designed and delivered by specialist teachers who modify the Australian Curriculum to accommodate the needs of the Kilparrin student demographic. These 2 learning areas have been carefully selected by the school. Ongoing learning over time in child protection is critical to the wellbeing of all but, in particular, these significantly disabled students. Music education compliments education about feelings in the child protection curriculum as well as offering a modality of pleasure, expression, and participation in the broader community.



## Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

At Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment School and Services there is a culture of sustained high expectations and a culture of improvement. There is a shared vision, strategic planning and interventions that are data-informed and sustained over time. There is shared leadership across the school and evaluation of programs and strategies to determine effectiveness on student achievement and growth.

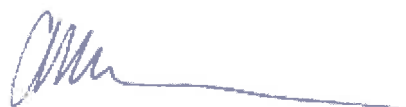
The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

1. Strengthen the planning and design of learning tasks to meet the varied needs of students by:
  - SSOs participating in the NEP planning and review process for Kilparrin students
  - SSS teachers participating in the NEP planning and review process for students supported through the SSS in mainstream settings.
2. Strengthen the links between the support provided by SSS teachers and desired student learning outcomes by developing a reporting process and template that ties strategies to evidence-based student learning outcomes.
3. Develop a role statement for the SSO positions that makes apparent the links between SSO work with students and the realisation of student learning goals.

Based on the school's current performance, Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment School and Services will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



Brendyn Semmens  
A/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.



Cathy Roche-Wells  
PRINCIPAL  
KILPARRIN TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT  
UNIT



Governing Council Chairperson

## Appendix

### School performance overview

The external school review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the departmental Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Priorities for Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment School and Services are:

- To ensure all students finish their schooling with at least one modality for communication.
- To quantify the educational growth of students through ABLES (Abilities Based Learning and Education Support).
- To continuously self-evaluate the efficacy of the SSS.
- To support the transition of funding arrangements for the personal care of students in schooling from departmental to the NDIS.

#### Reading

All students have an individualised communication goal in their NEP and a literacy rating identified by an Ability Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) profile. School-based data shows that in 2017 a number of students moved along the ABLES continuum of literacy development.

A communication rubric has been developed by the school which will assist in the future tracking of the development of student communication.

#### Numeracy

All students have an individualised numeracy goal in their NEP.

#### SACE

In 2017, 3 students successfully completed SACE modified subjects in the areas of English Pathways, Personal Learning Plan, Research Project Maths pathways.