

The Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Heathfield High School

Conducted in May 2018



Government of South Australia
Department for Education

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 Rob McLaren, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Tim Kloeden, Review Principal.

School context

Heathfield High School caters for children from year 8 to 12, and is situated in the Adelaide Hills 15 minutes from the Adelaide CBD. Enrolments have steadily increased to 827 in 2017, with 5 students currently enrolled in Flexible Learning Options (FLO). The school has an ICSEA score of 1058 and is classified as Category 7 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 0.5% Aboriginal students, 2% students with disabilities, 2% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 1 child/young person in care, and 12% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 2nd year of his tenure at the school; 4 assistant principals who each have year level responsibility and a whole-school priority; and 10 Band 1 coordinators, whose responsibilities include middle and senior school, curriculum, VET, teaching and learning, and stretch and challenge. There are 61 teachers, including 12 in the early years of their career and 590 school services officer hours. This structure will be reviewed in 2018 and reshaped to better deliver the school's priorities.

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:

Improvement Agenda: How effective are the school's self-review processes, using data-informed judgements, in informing and shaping improvement?

Student Learning: To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in learning?

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

How effective are the school's self-review processes, using data-informed judgements, in informing and shaping improvement?

The External School Review (ESR) conducted at Heathfield High School showed that the principal, with support from the school's executive leadership team, is collaboratively promoting a culture of improvement through a positive, focused and evidence-based approach to change.

Shared and collaboratively developed vision and documented strategic priorities, with annual self-review processes, were provided to the panel. The majority of teachers interviewed expressed their confidence in the leadership of the school, their support for these priorities, and felt a shared ownership of its development. Parents and governing council members were equally supportive of these priorities, especially in relation to the 'Stretch' strategy for student learning.

The principal provided evidence of how these priorities, strategies and targets documented within the school improvement plan (SIP) 2018-20 were being enacted. Professional learning and improvement

communities (PLICs) have been established, such as Visible Learning, curriculum review, SACE improvement and 'external 30% assessment'. These PLICs use evidence-based approaches to reflect, challenge and modify structures and practices to better support learning initiatives.

The improvement culture has been in existence for 6 years through the connected curriculum self-review processes. The 2018 curriculum review in which parents, students and staff had input, focused on developing innovative curriculum addressing identified learning issues, 21st century global learning, and opportunities for more innovative learning approaches and flexibility of delivery.

The Visible Learning professional learning program provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on effective teaching practice through evidence-based research and develop strategies to improve student learning outcomes. Teacher conversations and classroom visits verified to the panel that some of these strategies, questioning techniques, feedback for learning, learning intentions and success criteria were becoming more prominent in teacher practice.

In the annual review of SACE performance data, a senior student support strategy was developed for the improvement of student outcomes. This strategy has influenced positive shifts in SACE completion, and higher A and B grades. The 'external 30% assessment' PLIC formed this year is analysing data about moderation shifts in the external assessment component of subjects. The data analysed is informing teachers on how to improve their assessment practices leading to better outcomes for students.

Other groups collected sets of data, including termly student A-E grades, student surveys about learning, NAPLAN, PAT and Aboriginal student performance to monitor, analyse and plan for improvement.

While the panel believes there is evidence of a culture of improvement, self-review processes and use of data to inform improvement, the effective implementation of these strategies into classroom practice relies on leaders and teachers working together in a consistent and agreed manner.

Direction 1

To better achieve the school priorities, build the capacity of leaders and teachers to effectively use datasets and diagnostic resources to inform judgements that improve the quality of teaching, learning and wellbeing programs.

To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in learning?

Students described a trusting relationship with their teachers, who are approachable and supportive of them in ensuring successful learning. They also believed that teachers provided challenge through feedback and, in some cases, the design of learning and assessment tasks, especially tasks requiring them to make decisions about the way in which they explored and presented their learning. However, in their experiences, this was not considered to be consistent throughout the school.

Opinion surveys from parents and students cited good relationships with teachers as an important factor in learning success. They believed a high percentage of teachers were organised, confident and passionate about teaching, and had good control of the class.

Perception data collected through the Visible Learning program from students, teachers and parents was providing guidance to staff in how best to make teaching and learning more challenging and effective. Student responses highly rated interest and relevance as an aspect of effective learning, while parents believed that a teacher who engaged and related well with their children in a positive way was important. Teachers' perception around positive mindframes for learning showed more than 90% agreed that all

students can make progress, and greater than 80% felt that students at Heathfield High School were 'assessment-capable' learners.

The panel observed many teachers setting clear learning intentions and success criteria and using data to pre-plan and focus learning. Some provided students with effective feedback on how to extend or stretch their learning. Students said this feedback provided them with clarity about what they should be learning and how they could be successful. Teachers described using DayMap to access student data to plan and deliver differentiated learning activities to meet specific learning needs. DayMap and the school's Moodle platform were also used by teachers, students and parents to access learning resources and monitor progress.

While NAPLAN results in reading and numeracy and high-band retention have shown little or no improvement, it was clear to the panel that staff were interrogating data more deeply, which has led to the formation of agreements and supported literacy and numeracy intervention programs Headstart and MacQLit for year 8 students. These were viewed positively by students and parents.

Strategies described in the SIP attempt to shift student performance, with some success evident in the data provided to the panel of positive shift in 2017, with the number of SACE 'A' and 'B' grades, SACE completion and compulsory completion rates high.

While there is evidence many processes and programs are in place to support students in their learning, the panel identified that there were inconsistencies about teacher expectations and practices in how students were being engaged, challenged and stretched in their learning.

Direction 2

Develop teaching and learning agreements, referenced to the evidence-based Visible Learning program and pedagogical frameworks, that give clear guidance to teachers and support staff about how to more consistently improve learning, challenge and stretch.

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

The executive team and principal are strong drivers of the school's improvement agenda. The panel spoke to a number of community members about the school's priorities, who responded that leaders have provided consistent messages to the school community.

The strategic establishment of PLICs with a focus on driving priorities of improvement was viewed positively by all, and endorsed by parents and the governing council. Two examples offered a focused approach to improvement and change.

The curriculum review team, with a focus on development of innovative and high-performance curriculum, collected feedback from staff, students, parents and the wider school community. This guided the development of recommendations and proposals for improved flexibility in learning, innovative methods of delivery, and support for visible learning initiatives for the future. Similarly, the Visible Learning team, leaders and staff working collaboratively, provided to the panel action plans and data on how to affect improvement and change in classroom practice. Other future initiatives on student careers and pathways, and improving teacher practice by peer observations, were being developed.

Performance and development planning (PDP) policies, processes and structures were provided to the panel. Through meetings with line managers, staff created goals for improving practice, monitored and checked their progress, and established professional learning goals aligned with school priorities and the

AITSL professional standards. Processes or strategies undertaken that allow teachers to meet their goals were described to the panel as undertaking professional learning, often off-campus, and involvement in PLICs. The panel heard that the opportunity for staff to engage in peer observations later in term 3 has been offered, and was designed to focus on improving an aspect of practice.

The panel concluded that PDP is a key element in ensuring that staff portray expectations in the achievement of the school's intended outcomes. Processes that document and then implement strategies that the line manager and staff member will undertake in partnership to achieve performance targets, are a significant aspect of authentic PDP. Staff and leaders at Heathfield High School are well-placed to further deepen the impact of PDP on practice at the school.

Opportunities exist to develop middle leaders further to take these priorities into practice at learning and focus area levels utilising action plans and PDP processes to influence classroom practice.

Direction 3

Review the school's improvement agenda and align all leaders' roles and responsibilities to ensure effective monitoring and accountability is in place to achieve the school priorities.

What is the school doing particularly well and why is this effective?

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practice's that are contributing significantly to school improvement at Heathfield High School.

Fostering a culture of learning through effective leadership was very evident in the Big Brother/Sister (BBS) program. This program has been operating for many years, and supports year 8 students with mentors from the senior school for 12 months. Year 11 and 12 students apply for positions in this program, "as a way of giving back", as a senior student remarked. Their mentoring roles, which require formal training, provide pastoral care support to a small group of students for the year. This program is highly regarded by staff, students and parents, to reinforce a strong positive identity and a sense of belonging. This supported the Headstart intervention program in literacy and numeracy at year 8, providing a positive transition into secondary schooling for all students.

The school's self-review processes in informing and shaping improvement were evident in the 2018 curriculum review. This is a positive example of all members of the school community working together to influence and shape innovative curriculum and high-performance flexible learning options for the future.

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 88.2%.

Appendix 2

School performance overview

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

Reading

In 2017, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 72% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For 2017 year 9 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2017, 16% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 45% from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9, and 40% from year 7 remain in the upper bands at year 9 in 2017.

Numeracy

In 2017, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 75% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 9, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For 2017, year 9 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within than the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2017, 14% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 44% from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9, and 44% from year 7 remain in the upper bands at year 9 in 2017.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2017, 81% of students enrolled in February and 95% of those enrolled in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve their SACE. This result for October SACE completion represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2017, 96% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 99% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 90% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

Heathfield High School's effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted intervention promoting a culture of improvement with demonstrated growth in student achievement. It has developed self-review processes, which are regularly and strategically used to determine the impact school strategies and practices are having on student achievement.

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

1. To better achieve the school priorities, build the capacity of leaders and teachers to effectively use datasets and diagnostic resources to inform judgements that improve the quality of teaching, learning and wellbeing programs.
2. Develop teaching and learning agreements, referenced to the evidence-based Visible Learning program and pedagogical frameworks, that give clear guidance to teachers and support staff about how to more consistently improve learning, challenge and stretch.
3. Review the school's improvement agenda and align all leaders' roles and responsibilities to ensure effective monitoring and accountability is in place to achieve the school priorities.

Based on the school's current performance, Heathfield High 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.



Roy Page
PRINCIPAL
HEATHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL



Governing Council Chairperson

Ninety-seven percent of grades achieved in the 2017 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2015 and 2017, the trend for has been upwards, from 92% in 2015 to 97% in 2017. Twenty-eight percent of students completed SACE using VET, and there were 2 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2017.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2017, 17% of students achieved an 'A' grade, and 42% achieved a 'B' grade. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline averages for the 'A' grade and 'B' grade respectively.

In terms of 2017 tertiary entrance, 103 students achieved an ATAR and 113 students a TAFE SA selection score. There were also 2 students who were successful at achieving a merit.

