

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

On-track evaluation report for Yorketown Area School

One-year return conducted in May 2019



On-track evaluation process

Our education system aspires to become the best in Australia by seeking growth for every student, in every class and in every school.

The purpose of the External School Review (ESR) is to support schools to raise achievement, sustain high performance and to provide quality assurance to build and sustain public confidence in government schools.

All government schools are externally reviewed over a 3-year cycle. After the review the principal and the governing council chairperson receive a written report with a number of directions for improvement.

A copy of the ESR report is available on the school website.

The external school review framework is referenced throughout all stages of the ESR process.

In some cases, when the review panel identifies limited achievement and growth, together with evidence about the school's capacity for systematic improvement, a school is advised that they will be visited again in 1 rather than 3 years' time (1-year return).

Schools with a 1-year return are assisted by the education director and other department staff to receive additional coordinated and targeted support. This intervention is focussed on building the school's capacity to improve teaching and learning across the school, lift expectations and achieve improved student learning results as measured against the Department for Education Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Following intervention, which occurs for 12-15 months after the ESR, a review panel conducts an on-track evaluation (OTE) to determine the extent to which the school has, with external support, developed sustainable internal capacity to improve effectiveness and raise student achievement.

The school's school improvement plan (SIP) is the main document used to inform the OTE.

This OTE visit was conducted by Helen Tunney, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate, and Rob Knight, Review Principal.

The OTE report should be read in conjunction with the report of the External School Review conducted at Yorketown Area School in June 2016, and the report of the On Track Evaluation conducted at the school in May 2018.

Directions from the External School Review report, June 2016 (revised in May 2018)

- Direction 1** Develop a school statement of vision and moral purpose that clearly identifies improving student academic learning outcomes as the core business of the whole, and each sector, of the school.
- Direction 2** Prioritise performance and development strategies that include focused classroom observations and formative feedback for staff.
- Direction 3** Ensure every teacher is accountable for continuously improving their practice through the implementation of agreed whole-school curriculum and pedagogies, as informed by training and development.
- Direction 4** Develop data practices in the school to track and monitor student learning growth over time and to inform short cycles of intentional, differentiated teaching.

Additional information about the school context

The principal advised that enrolments have declined in 2019 and the R-6 sub-school has reduced from 4 classes to 3. There has been some teacher change, but the leadership team has remained stable.

Development of a school improvement plan

The principal advised that a revised Priority improvement Plan (PIP) was developed in term 2 2018.

The plan was sent to the Executive Director, Partnerships, Schools and Preschools in term 3, 2018.

Strategic support provided to the school over the past 12 months

The principal advised that the school has been well supported through the Learning Improvement Division (LID), the local education team, and the partnership. In 2019 the partnership Senior Leader, learning improvement primary (SLLIP), was based at the school and this has proven beneficial to improvement at Yorketown Area School.

Evidence and evaluation referenced to directions in the school improvement plan

- Direction 1** Develop a school statement of vision and moral purpose that clearly identifies improving student academic learning outcomes as the core business of the whole, and each sector, of the school.

On-track evidence

The school's vision is focused on learning, in particular student learning outcomes, and this was clearly articulated by all stakeholders throughout interviews and observations. The new learning-centred school vision statement is used regularly in each sub-school to motivate and guide standards and expectations. Leaders are united and purposeful. Staff have a shared understanding about what they are doing and why.

There was also evidence from all teachers about the impact of the shared vision in the classroom. It was apparent across all stakeholders that there has been a significant increase in aspirations for academic learning, and students now believe that standards and expectations of them are high.

Review panel evaluation

Improving student academic learning is clearly identified as the school's core business. A focus on learning now drives and unites the school. All stakeholders accept and operate within this shared moral purpose.

Direction 2 Prioritise performance and development strategies that include focused classroom observations and formative feedback for staff.

On-track evidence

Line managers are undertaking formal observations with staff. All staff have also been trained in peer observations with some engaging in peer observations already. Secondary teachers were very positive about observations by leaders and peers and said the observations process was the key driver of change in the school. Some teachers said that the observations were less valuable because they hadn't yet been followed up with a discussion. Informal observations are occurring at the sub-school level but not R-12 yet. As the peer observation process evolves, a shift in focus from evaluation to coaching will accelerate staff development. Teacher performance issues have been addressed and some teachers talked about the value of performance and development and its links with training and development, observations and the school improvement plan.

Review panel evaluation

Committed to building teacher capacity, the school has worked actively and effectively to engage all teachers in observations and performance and development. Observations and performance and development have been linked to whole site improvement targets, resourced with expert leadership, and due to the collaborative nature of these processes, cross-school collaboration between teachers has been fostered. Whilst its impact varies between sub-schools, the effectiveness of this capacity building work was evident in conversations with teachers and students, and also during class walkthroughs. Secondary teachers reported being pleased with how things have changed this year. 'It's now more coherent, things are linked, and we feel like we have direction and know more about what we are doing'.

Direction 3 Ensure every teacher is accountable for continuously improving their practice through the implementation of agreed whole-school curriculum and pedagogies, as informed by training and development.

On-track evidence

Targeted professional development has provided staff with an R-12 lens as they develop pedagogy. Opportunities to work collaboratively are supporting growth and change and staff have formal and informal opportunities for collaboration both within, and across different levels, of schooling. A new PLC focus on literacy and numeracy has resulted in staff working collaboratively in R-12 teams around improving student learning. A number of whole-school agreements have been developed and implemented to improve consistency of practice and focus on student learning. Programming, task design, and assessment practice

is now more consistent through the use of DayMap. There is also increased teacher collaboration between levels of schooling.

Whole-school training and development has been undertaken in priority areas including feedback, observation, Agile Leadership, reciprocal teaching and Thinking Maths. R-12 staff are involved in sharing student work samples at the school level and as part of regional moderation processes. This year, the focus is on English. There is an R-Year 9 focus on the use of feedback to support student learning. It was clearly evident that practices and approaches that have been agreed to are being implemented in classes. Students in years 2-12 were articulate and could talk about their learning.

Review panel evaluation

It was clear that whole-school agreements have been negotiated and developed. These agreements are active in the school. There has been a whole-school focus on aligning R-12 teacher practice in targeted focus areas, aimed at strengthening the school's learning culture. This has resulted in staff having a shared understanding of what needs to be done in order to improve student learning.

Direction 4 Develop data practices in the school to track and monitor student learning growth over time and to inform short cycles of intentional, differentiated teaching.

On-track evidence

Student learning data is being used at all year levels to guide improvement. Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) data has been reviewed in comprehension and used to develop the middle school English program at each year level. Traffic light data sets on attendance, behaviour and achievement are analysed by each sub-school every 5 weeks. Data has been used to better target intervention with teachers responsible for the efficacy of identified learning interventions. The use of data has been mindfully developed. Whilst not extensively used, data collection and analysis is made more valuable by the regular collection of feedback from students, to teachers, about the impact of their teaching. Data is being used effectively to engage and motivate students across all levels of schooling. A student conference process has been introduced this year to improve reporting. Students speak confidently about their reading levels.

Review panel evaluation

Data practices have been intentionally developed. This work has been purposeful and considered. The school has thought carefully about the type of data that needs to be collected, analyzed and used to improve student learning outcomes. Data is being used systematically by all levels of schooling to target those areas for maximum impact and lift. Students own their own learning data, can articulate its meaning, and establish future learning goals in response to it.

Outcomes of the on-track evaluation

Based on the evidence provided, Yorketown Area School is on-track to effectively implement the ESR directions.

The influence of the ESR directions is evident in the school's growth and improvement planning and monitoring processes are now being used effectively to raise student achievement. Teacher and leader practice is positively impacted by effective systems that build capacity and the school is providing effective conditions for student learning.

The review panel found that:

- Improving student academic learning is clearly identifiable as the school's core business
- Collaboration and performance and development processes are building teacher capacity
- Agreed, whole-school curriculum and pedagogical approaches ensure learning coherence for students
- Data is used effectively to track growth, and to intentionalise and differentiate teaching.

The principal will continue to work with the education director to implement the OTE key actions: focus on student learning, collaboration for teaching improvement, consistent implementation of agreed whole-school approaches and evidence-based tracking and monitoring of growth.

Based on current performance, Yorketown Area School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



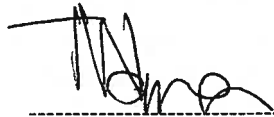
Tony Lunniss
DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS



Fiona Haselgrove
PRINCIPAL
YORKETOWN AREA SCHOOL



GOVERNING COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON