

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Yorketown Area School

Conducted in March 2021



Review details

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.

The External School Review framework is referenced throughout all stages of the ESR process.

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 here, they have all been considered and contribute to the development and directions of this report.

This review was conducted by Simon Harding, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Chris Brandwood, Review Principal.

Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relevant to the lines of inquiry:

- Presentation from the Principal
- Class visits
- Attendance at staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Yorke town Area School caters for students from reception to year 12. It is situated 230kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 172. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 172. The local partnership is Kadina.

The school has a 2019 ICSEA score of 973 and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 10% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 30% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 1st year of first tenure. There is a Deputy Principal in their 5th year tenure and secondary coordinator in their 1st year of tenure.

There are 16 teachers, including 2 in the early years of their career and 2 Step 9 Teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- 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 assessment 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.**

What impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?

Staff developed common understandings and expectations for teacher practice and student achievement through the development of non-negotiables in practice. These have supported staff to work towards a common purpose and focus students on the expectations for their learning.

Leadership developed structures to strengthen processes for performance and development. Staff participated in training and took part in peer observations. Leadership resourced this process releasing teachers to both lead the observation and provide feedback through follow-up discussions. Leadership committed to observations and provided written feedback at least once a year.

Teachers' intentional work was led by leadership to deprivatise, reflect on and share practice. Staff valued the opportunity to share practice through both providing and participating in 'Spotlights on practice' aligned to the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities. Peer observations also supported this same

direction. These processes raised the level of accountability and collective responsibility for improvement in practice.

Leadership led processes with staff to strengthen their understanding of data analysis. Staff were trained in using formative assessment, developing a range of strategies to support students in their learning. Teachers establish goals and track progress on a regular basis with students. Students are now leading conferences when sharing learning with parents.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions based on their impact on student learning?

The SIP reflects student achievement data. Leadership led processes with staff to analyse data informing decisions to establish and monitor the improvement priorities. Staff understand the importance of building a collective approach to improvement. Professional learning communities (PLCs) were established in literacy and numeracy, aligned with site priorities. Teachers have engaged in a commitment to action to trial and regularly reflect on the impact of the actions taken through the PLC structure. Leadership supported staff to monitor progress of the plan by tracking progress of actions and collated this information for staff to reflect on next steps. Teachers understand their responsibility to build their own capacity to best support students with whom they work.

Staff value the alignment of professional learning to the site improvement priorities. Learning staff undertook in Big Ideas in Number is an area where staff recognise collective changes in practice, evident in the consistent language teachers and students use. The approach to improvement includes professional learning, time to implement and regular times to share the learning during PLCs. Planned opportunities to work collaboratively in teams to share and reflect is strengthening collective understandings and practices. There are expectations of linking professional development plans to SIP priorities. The principal provides regular updates on the progress of the plan to parents through governing council.

Staff are committed to the SIP priorities and understand their key role in effective implementation of actions in the plan, and measuring the positive impact practices have on student achievement. Leadership created processes for teachers to build common understandings through sharing of unit plans and providing peer feedback closely aligned to SIP priorities. Strengthening processes to support staff to collectively monitor the impact of actions more effectively through the challenges of practice and success criteria will continue to enhance the school improvement strategies.

Direction 1 Strengthen the ongoing collective self-review processes where staff effectively monitor the impact of the SIP, with clear line of sight across the data, teacher practice and success criteria.

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers analyzing assessment and feedback data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction?

Students can talk about the importance of learning new things, receiving constructive feedback, and how these impact on their motivation for and achievement in learning. There is evidence of students having opportunity to peer assess and provide feedback for each other; however, this varied across the school. Learning intentions and success criteria are used widely across the school to support students in their learning. Rubrics are a common structure for students to reflect on their work either by themselves, with a peer or in consultation with the teacher. Teachers provided some strategies they use to give feedback to students, such as conferencing, use of small group work to provide verbal feedback, and specific written feedback. Continuing to develop common high-yield practices in effective feedback for students and peer feedback, are next steps for the school to focus.

Parents value the information they receive through the formal reporting processes, including mid-term progress reports, where teachers provide initially students, then parents, with clear information of how they are going. Traffic lights are used to highlight how a student is going. Teachers use conferencing with students to set goals for the next steps in the learning, and share this with parents, who value this. They appreciate teacher willingness to meet with them about their child's progress at other times in the year.

The school has processes in place to track, monitor and analyse student achievement data. This analysis of data is increasingly informing discussions by staff and decisions they make, at a school level, in relation to improvement. Teachers are working with an agreed assessment schedule, using a range of strategies for assessment of student learning, including both formative and summative. Teachers talked about how they use data to inform teaching at a class level, for example, finding collective gaps in learning. Data was collated by leadership and provided for teachers. The school is in the process of providing a system where teachers can access the agreed datasets in an ongoing way. While it is acknowledged that there is some good practice in the school, there is not yet consistency of analysis and use of data at an individual level to effectively inform differentiated planning and instruction across the school.

Direction 2 Develop staff capacity and collective practices to analyse data to effectively inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction optimising outcomes for all students.

Effective leadership

How effective are the school's professional and performance and development processes in building teacher capacity?

Quality teaching is the single most influential factor on student achievement. Teachers and leaders are committed to strengthening practices to support students effectively in their learning. There are clear expectations and support from leaders for improving achievement for both teachers and students. Professional learning is prioritised and aligned to the SIP priorities. Staff value the opportunities they had to undertake targeted training to support teaching and learning. From teacher conversations, there is impact on practice of whole-school training in formative assessment and Big Ideas in Number.

Leadership led processes, which assisted staff to deprivatise practice and build collective ownership of the achievement progress of students over time. Teachers talked about how they willingly participate in observations from both leaders and peers. Leadership place value on these processes by giving release time for feedback provision, and for processes where teachers are collaboratively involved in audits of units of work. Implementation of teachers sharing practice through offering Spotlight sessions was appreciated by staff and built capacity and common understandings across the school. Teachers commented about how this work has influenced their practice. Structures are in place to support and upskill early career teachers (ECT), including assigning a trained teacher mentor to support this. Time is made available for these teachers to meet on a regular basis and support is individualised. Leadership meet regularly with the ECTs to clarify expectations and provide an extra level of support. Teachers are committed to working collaboratively to provide quality learning for the students with whom they work. They value the opportunity to share practice, both formally and informally; however, there is opportunity to deepen conversations to develop robust collaboration. Continuing to develop skills across the teaching team to strengthen critical collaboration are next steps the school is well-placed to undertake.

Direction 3 Develop effective processes which support staff to critically collaborate when implementing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of expected practices.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

There is a demonstrated commitment by staff towards the improvement journey and students with whom they work. There is a sense of cohesion and willingness to take on new challenges and building skills and knowledge to enhance learning for students. Parents acknowledge how the school strives to meet the needs of individual students, and teachers provide clear information about their child's learning.

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

- Direction 1** **Strengthen the ongoing collective self-review processes where staff effectively monitor the impact of the SIP, with clear line of sight across the data, teacher practice and success criteria.**
- Direction 2** **Develop staff capacity and collective practices to analyse data to effectively inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction optimising outcomes for all students.**
- Direction 3** **Develop effective processes which support staff to critically collaborate when implementing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of expected practices.**

Based on the school's current performance, Yorketown Area School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



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Appendix 1

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 the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2019, 67% of year 1 and 57% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. These results represent little or no change from the historic baseline averages.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 73% of year 3 students, 92% of year 5 students, 83% of year 7 students and 73% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline, year 5 this result represents an improvement, for years 7 and 9 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline averages.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 3 has been downwards from 88% to 73%.

For 2019 year 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN reading the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2019, 27% of year 3, 58% of year 5, 25% of year 7 and 5% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 83% or 5 out of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 33% or 2 out of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, and 13% or 1 out of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 64% of year 3 students, 100% of year 5 students, 92% of year 7 students and 82% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3 this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. For years 5, 7 and 9 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 9 has been upwards from 63% to 82%.

For 2019 years 3, 7 and 9 NAPLAN numeracy the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools. For 2019 year 5 NAPLAN numeracy the school is achieving higher than the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 18% of year 3, 8% of year 5, 25% of year 7 and 14% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3 this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for years 3 and 5 has been downwards from 35% to 18% for year 3 and 29% to 8% for year 5.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy 20% or 1 out of 5 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 25% or 1 out of 4 students from year 3 remain

in the upper bands at year 7, and 25% or 2 out of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2020, 100% of students enrolled in February and 100% of those enrolled in October who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve SACE.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2020, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 97% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 82% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2020, 94% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 14% of grades were at an 'A' level and 56% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents little or no change for the 'C-' level or higher grade, an improvement for the 'A' level grade and an improvement for the 'B' level grade from the historic baseline averages.

Ninety three percent of students completed SACE using VET and there was one student enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance 64% or 9 out of 14 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score.