

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Gawler and District College B-12

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 Kathryn Entwistle, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Rosie Heinecke, Natasha Hefford and Roley Coulter, Review Principals.

Review Process

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

- Presentation from the Principal
- Class visits
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers.

School context

Gawler and District College B-12 caters for students from reception to year 12. It is situated 42kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 was 1189. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 1206. The local partnership is Greater Gawler.

The school has an ICSEA score of 953 and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 7% Aboriginal students, 18% students with disabilities, 3% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 4% children/young people in care and 43.9% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

There are two school zones, one smaller one for the primary school and a much wider catchment comprising 15 suburbs for the secondary school.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the second year of tenure, Deputy Principal, Junior School Head of School, Middle Years Head of School and Senior Years Head of School.

There are 102 Teachers including 17 in the early years of their careers and 27 Step 9 Teachers.

The previous OTE directions were:

Direction 1 Using Reading as the focus, design and convene professional forums inclusive of mixed cohorts that enable collective professional learning and dialogue and better facilitate a cohesive B-12 culture.

Direction 2 Design processes that build the capacity of line managers to support all teachers to meet school expectations; establishing a shared culture of commitment and accountability.

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

Reading is a clear focus across the Foundation to 12 cohorts. The priority is understood and valued by all staff and governing council representatives. In responding to the previous direction, the leaders have developed a more unified culture through this priority. Teacher and leaders from the junior school have worked with staff in the middle and senior years to progress the teaching of reading and effective assessment of students' abilities. Professional forums are increasingly focused on this priority. This is explained further against line of inquiry 1 in this report.

Leaders in the middle school have convened a coaching and modelling opportunity to support teachers to teach vocabulary in maths. This is representative of their ability to understand and promote effective practice. A more concerted and ongoing approach will be of benefit, as will be discussed further in this report. In the junior school, leaders provide staff access to evidence-based research into effective teaching of reading in order to grow and refine their practices.

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?

In the junior school a concerted and intentional approach to the implementation of the phonics program is highly evident. Expected practice is delivered with fidelity and actions have been closely monitored to bring about consistency, within a strong culture of accountability and commitment. Guided reading groups are convened across the R-6 classes and teachers have opportunities to co-plan these forums.

Literacy action plans intended to align with site improvement plan (SIP) actions are developed across cohorts and faculties. In the junior school and a few faculties, teachers have then developed their personal action plan, also aligned with the SIP.

When considering the concept of monitoring the 'impact' of teaching, there is an opportunity for development. Whilst data regarding student achievement is commonly collated, particularly in the junior school, reflection on the implications for teaching is not as prevalent. In the R-6 classes, teachers are now well placed to ask themselves if a student has not demonstrated the desired learning achievement, what they can do differently to change this outcome. Enhancing practice in response to student data ensures all learners' needs are better met. Review of the SIP success criteria to ensure they describe what students can say, write, make or do, rather than teacher practice, will further support accurate monitoring.

Leaders in the middle school conducted a professional learning opportunity to model the effective teaching of vocabulary in maths. Student feedback saw them adjust their original practice responsively. This represents a high yield approach to building teachers' capacity to implement agreed practice. The need for a more sustained and ongoing approach is now evident. Secondary teachers are committed to adopting the reading strategies, yet are still unsure of the specific expectations and exactly how to action them. The development of regular forums dedicated to scaffold teachers to fully understand and effectively teach reading strategies is the next important step in the school's improvement piece.

- Direction 1** **Meet the needs of all learners in R-6 classes by using student data to determine the impact of teaching and making appropriate modifications to practice.**
- Direction 2** **Ensure teachers in the secondary classes are equipped to teach reading strategies by specifying what actions are expected and increasing opportunities for on-going professional learning.**

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers analysing assessment and feedback data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and design?

Meeting students' learning needs is a priority discussed by many teachers and leaders. A far greater appreciation of the value of data and its potential to inform planning is evident in 2021. The term 'differentiation' is employed widely across the school. What this means for planning and teaching is diversely interpreted.

In the junior school, teachers review students' reading data and analyse where the learners' miscues lie. Groups are then formed to attend to these areas. The composition of these groups is flexible according to student progress. Spelling groups based on ability see students provided with more simple or complex word lists. In R-2 classes, the phonics program is routinely delivered to the whole class.

School Service Officers (SSOs) are allocated to classes to support students with learning plans. Often, SSOs will take small groups of students experiencing difficulties to support them in order to better understand and complete work. SSOs were commonly reported as key to supporting students at risk. Scaffolds or teaching to support students performing at higher levels were less evident.

In senior secondary classes, students report that teachers will deliver the content using varied approaches. These include offering a range of task options, providing explicit teaching, utilising media or convening discussion groups. The opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding through varying modes was commonly reported.

Leaders in the middle school have developed data informed documents that indicate if students are at risk, high performing or at standard. These include an improvement strategy that directs teachers to differentiate 'within lesson/ task design'. To respond to this effectively, teachers need to understand how to diversify content, process and product and to consider students' learning styles.

Developing greater clarity regarding the characteristics of differentiated practice and a more refined understanding of task design is the school's next step. Reference to departmental frameworks and evidence-based research will support this work and ensure the school's clear intent to meet the needs of all learners.

Direction 3 Extend the potential of each learner by deepening staff's understanding of the elements of differentiated practice and the implications for planning and teaching.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

At Gawler and District College B-12, every Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) student has an allocated staff support person. As part of the performance and development process, teachers and leaders review the data of one ATSI learner and plan actions to ensure they are able to support their learning, attendance and wellbeing. Teachers can monitor student progress informally, through dedicated meeting times or by accessing data.

The school improvement priorities are understood by all. The school's focus on reading is broadly articulated and leadership roles and responsibilities are designed to progress this. The senior executive team (SET) hold an unrelenting focus on the school improvement planning goals and work strategically to develop systems to ensure these are met. The directions generated from the external school review will contribute to the work undertaken thus far at the school.

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

- Direction 1** **Meet the needs of all learners in R-6 classes by using student data to determine the impact of teaching and making appropriate modifications to practice.**
- Direction 2** **Ensure teachers in the secondary classes are equipped to teach reading strategies by specifying what actions are expected and increasing opportunities for on-going professional learning.**
- Direction 3** **Extend the potential of each learner by deepening staff's understanding of the elements of differentiated practice and the implications for planning and teaching.**

Based on the school's current performance, Gawler and District College B-12 will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



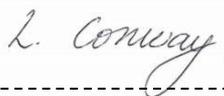
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Governing Council Chairperson

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 57% of year 1 and 65% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 1 has been downwards from 73% to 57%.

In 2019 the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 68% of year 3 students, 63% of year 5 students, 62% of year 7 students and 53% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 9, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average and for year 7, little or no change.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 53% to 68%.

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

Between 2017 and 2019 the school has consistently achieved lower in year 9 NAPLAN reading relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019 24% of year 3, 12% of year 5, 8% of year 7 and 8% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For years 3 and 9, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average, for year 5, little or no change and year 7, a decline.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 50% or 3 of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 22% or 2 of 9 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, 30% or 11 of 37 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2019 the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 61% of year 3 students, 58% of year 5 students, 51% of year 7 students and 40% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 5 and 7, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average and for years 3 and 9, little or no change.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 3 has been upwards from 47% to 61% and for years 7 and 9, downwards from 58% to 51% and 46% to 40% respectively.

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

Between 2017 and 2019 the school has consistently achieved lower in year 9 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019 16% of year 3, 5% of year 5, 8% of year 7 and 5% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For years 3, 5, 7 and 9 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 100% or 2 of 2 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 67% or 2 of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7 and 33% or 6 of 18 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2020, 63% of students enrolled in February and 90% of those enrolled in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve SACE. This result for October SACE completion represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2020, 85% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 89% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 73% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 96% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2019, 73.85% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 10% of grades were at an 'A' level and 23% of grades were at an 'B' level. This result represents little or no change for the 'C-' level or higher and 'an improvement for 'A' and 'B' grade from the historic baseline averages.

Thirty two percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 70 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance, 31% of students achieved an ATAR. There were no students who were successful in achieving a merit.