

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Woodville High School

Conducted in August 2020



# 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 and Anti Macri, Review Principals.

## 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
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parent groups
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

## School context

Woodville High School caters for young people from year 8 to year 12. It is situated 10kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 1070. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 954. A steady increase in enrolments is apparent. The local partnership is Inner West.

The school has an ICSEA score of 961 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 11% Aboriginal students, 13% students with disabilities, 30% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 1% children/young people in care. Thirty-eight percent of families are eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their last year of tenure, 2 Band 5 deputy principals (curriculum, professional development, teaching and learning and music and the arts), 2 Band 3 senior leaders (middle school/teacher professional growth/year 8 management and student wellbeing and student services/year 11 management), a senior leader Band 2 (whole-school organisation, daily routines and year 9 management), 12 Band 1 leaders responsible for curriculum, special needs and career pathways and 2 Band 1 leaders in student counselling.

There is a large ATSI team comprising 2 Aboriginal Secondary Education Transition Officer (ASETO) and 2 Aboriginal Education Teachers. The school funds an Aboriginal Education Coordinator position as a part of this team.

Total teaching staff equals 79 FTE, which includes 3 special class teachers, 3.55 FTE EALD teachers, and a pastoral care worker with 15 hours per week. In 2020, the school established an Intensive English Class for international students. The governing council has funded a youth worker and a school psychologist.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Provide all students across the school opportunity to engage in critical and creative thinking by deepening every teacher's capacity to plan processes of inquiry, and to design learning that enables students to respond to provocations and solve problems.
- Direction 2** Strengthen the teaching of literacy and numeracy across the middle years of schooling through collective inquiry into, and consistent implementation of, effective practice in these areas.
- Direction 3** Ensure students understand the purpose of, and progress within, their learning by consolidating the effective implementation of teaching strategies and scaffolds designed to promote student agency within the learning agenda across the school.
- Direction 4** Deepen teacher capacity to respond to the school's priorities through a collective review of the organisation of professional learning teams and building on existing performance and development processes to identify ongoing strategies that achieve agreed goals.
- Direction 5** Deliver intentional and differentiated teaching that meets the needs of each learner in every classroom, through an analytical and responsive use of student achievement data across the school.

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

Opportunities to engage with higher-order thinking are offered in some classrooms, where students are provided provocations that they respond to through processes of inquiry and synthesis. Application of their understanding and skills further authenticates cognitive development. As pedagogical implementation varies across the school, the opportunity to continue to broaden contemporary practice that provokes critical and creative thinking is apparent.

In 2020, year 8 and 9 maths and English teachers interact more strategically with data. Tracking students is more commonly practiced and specific cohorts have been identified as priorities. There is clear intent to reflect on the evidence sourced through tracking, to develop a more analytical and responsive approach to achievement data. The site improvement plan (SIP) challenges of practice specify the literacy and numeracy teaching strategies that teachers will employ. A focus on academic vocabulary, sentence construction and numerical thinking has informed practice in the middle years and across learning areas.

Significant work has been undertaken to ensure students have access to scaffolds that maximise their potential to understand the purpose, criteria of, and standards within, their learning. Learning goals, rubrics, proficiency scales, and statements of intent support students to understand, monitor and progress their learning. These are utilised commonly across the school. Students report this provides clarity about their progress and allows them to deliberately work towards higher grades. Recent upward trends in SACE 'A' and 'B' grades reflects this.

In 2020, professional learning teams (PLTs) are structured to align with school improvement imperatives and follow a 'research, trial, implement and evaluate' model. The first line of inquiry in this report will discuss these forums, and performance and development processes, in more detail.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school use improvement planning processes to raise student achievement?

The challenges of practice and actions within the SIP are data-informed and evidence-based. The challenges of practice are specific about teaching literacy and numeracy skills, and some teachers explain that the teaching of academic vocabulary and the structure of different genres are implicit within their learning area's work.

Professional learning teams (PLTs) have focused on assisting staff to implement expected approaches to writing and numeracy. PLTs are focused and aligned with school priorities, with most reports indicating use of the 'research, trial and evaluate model'. Strategies are implemented over an agreed time frame and decisions regarding the efficacy of the strategy are established on conclusion. In some PLTs, evaluation is informed by quantifiable evidence, whereas in others, perception data determines decisions. The concept of proven, quantifiable evaluation, remains an area for further development.

Staff performance development plan (PDP) goals are aligned with school priorities. Goals are documented to determine which approaches teachers will develop and implement. Specificity about actual strategies they will employ to achieve their goal is an area for greater clarity. Whilst reference to attendance at varied professional learning forums is reported, an ongoing, deliberate approach to improved practice, and the responsibilities of both the teacher and line manager, can be further developed.

Leaders describe themselves as leaders of effective teaching and learning. When discussing their PDP processes, a leader with line management responsibility discussed using their teachers' goals as the starting point for their PDP conversation and how they can better support teachers to achieve their outcomes. Middle leaders' PDP was described as varied in intent and impact. To bring about rigour within teachers' PDP, line managers need to be fully equipped to build the capacity of others. Scaffolding leaders to plan and conduct observations, provide feedback and model effective practice will further strengthen the implementation of the school's challenges of practice and maximise improvement in practice.

**Direction 1      Broaden implementation of the SIP challenges of practice by scaffolding all line managers to develop the strategies required to effectively lead systems that build teachers' capacity to improve practice.**

## Conditions for effective student learning

To what extent are all students, including Aboriginal students and other priority groups, achieving in their learning?

Intervention programs for higher performing students and those identified as not at SEA are implemented across the school. Year 8 students' potential to excel can be maximised through inclusion in the Students of High Intellectual Potential (SHIP) program that students explain accelerates their completion of units of work. Opportunities for these students to engage with higher-order thinking through tasks designed to extend their capabilities will further enhance the potential of high-performing students.

EALD and Aboriginal learners are supported by their cohort teachers and the ASETOs. The Aboriginal education team report that learning area teachers are expected to design teaching that meets Aboriginal learners' needs. Students within priority groups reported that they are more likely to progress their learning with the support of their specialist teachers, than in general classes. Some teachers indicate that they would welcome more professional learning regarding culturally responsive pedagogy and task design.

Teachers have access to a range of student data and understand the levels students have achieved. DayMap and data walls and rooms provide extensive quantifiable data. In the main, teachers will access this data to identify which students are struggling and require extra support. Building teachers' data literacy to develop a deeper understanding of what the data is indicating and how to then translate this into strategically designed learning tasks is the next step.

Differentiated approaches to students' social, cultural, and relational needs ensure wellbeing for all learners. There is a commitment to meet every students' learning needs, and to raise the understanding and implementation of differentiated teaching practice. Perceptions regarding how this is practised varied significantly, ranging from the belief that extra human resources (SSOs) ensure differentiation, through to teachers describing a differentiated approach to task design. Some exploration into what differentiated practice looks like and how this will be implemented has been undertaken by executive leaders. Engaging staff in research and inquiry regarding this concept will ensure collective commitment and understanding. Task design that maximises student access, and is informed by data analysis, will further contribute to the exceptionally inclusive culture of the school.

**Direction 2** Identify and address the learning needs of students across the school by building teachers' capacity to analyse and interpret data to inform planning that is intentional and differentiated.

**Direction 3** Develop a consistent approach to task design that maximises the potential of all students, by developing collective understanding of effective approaches to differentiated planning and teaching.

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

At Woodville High School, all staff are committed to supporting students through strategic and differentiated approaches that maximise wellbeing. A culture of inclusivity, respect and diversity is celebrated by all. Conditions for learning are optimal. Since the previous external school review, scaffolds that intentionally support students to monitor and adjust their learning and to understand the characteristics of learning standards, have been embedded across the school. Professional learning forums align with improvement imperatives to trial and implement effective practice. Data that identifies students' achievement and indicates next steps is collated and, increasingly, teachers and leaders work to respond analytically to this evidence. The findings of this report will see the school continuing to refine existing effective practices and further build on their intent to meet the learning needs of the diverse student community.

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

- Direction 1**    **Broaden implementation of the SIP challenges of practice by scaffolding all line managers to develop the strategies required to effectively lead systems that build teachers' capacity to improve practice.**
- Direction 2**    **Identify and address the learning needs of students across the school by building teachers' capacity to analyse and interpret data to inform planning that is intentional and differentiated.**
- Direction 3**    **Develop a consistent approach to task design that maximises the potential of all students, by developing collective understanding of effective approaches to differentiated planning and teaching.**

Based on the school's current performance, Woodville High School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



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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 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 50% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For 2019, year 9 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving below the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2019, 9% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 9, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 31%, or 10 of 32 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 52% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For 2019, year 9 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 10% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 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, 47%, or 9 of 19 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

### SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2019, 80% 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. This result for October SACE completion represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend has been upwards, from 87% in 2017 to 100% in 2019.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2019, 95% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 95% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 85% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 99% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2019, 98% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 17% of grades were at an 'A' level and 47% of grades were at an 'B' level. This result an improvement from the



historic baseline averages for the 'A' and 'B' level grades. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for C- and above has been upwards, from 88% in 2017 to 98% in 2019.

Forty-two percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 78 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2019.

In terms of 2019 tertiary entrance, 65.5%, or 97 out of 148 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There was also 1 student who were successful in achieving a merit.

In 2019, 6 out of 36 subjects had a moderation shift, two up 1 level, 3 down 1 level, one down 2 levels.