EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW
Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

Report for Woodville High School

Conducted in September 2017

Review details

A priority for the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) 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 DECD schools.

The framework underpinning the External School 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 of the External School Review 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.

The support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community is acknowledged. 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.

The External School Review Process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented. This information is provided in Appendix One of the report.

This External School Review was conducted by Kathryn Entwistle Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Sandy Richardson and Mick O'Connell, Review Principals.

School context

Woodville High School caters for children from Year 8 to 12, and is situated 10km north-west of the Adelaide CBD. Enrolments have steadily increased from 858 in 2015 to 875 in 2017, with 68 students enrolled in Flexible Learning Options (FLO). The school is classified as Category 2 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage. The school's ICSEA score is 928.

The school population includes 15% Aboriginal students, 11% students with disabilities, 52% families eligible for School Card assistance, 57% students of EALD background, and nine children/young people in care.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in the second year of her third tenure at the school, and the following: two Band 5 Leaders responsible for Curriculum and Teaching, and Learning and Special Interest Music and the Arts; three Senior Leaders Band 3, with leadership of Middle School, SACE and Student Wellbeing; one Senior Leader Band 2, responsible for HPE and Student Wellbeing, and one School Services Officer (SSO). There are 13 Band 1 Coordinators whose responsibilities include literacy and numeracy intervention, EALD, Aboriginal Education, VET, HASS, science and STEM, mathematics and English, and student counselling. There are five Year Level managers and five Area of Focus managers, including Flexible Learning Options and International student support. In 2017, there are 78FTE teachers employed at the school.

The Wiltja Secondary College operates off the school's campus. Year 8 to 10 Aboriginal students from Anangu Lands attend the school on short or long-term programs, most of whom access limited mainstream lessons. The External School Review at Woodville High School in 2017 did not include the Wiltja program.

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 four key areas from the External School Review Framework:

Effective Teaching: **How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?**

School Community Partnerships: **How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?**

Effective Leadership: **How effectively does the school leadership foster a culture of learning?**

Improvement Agenda: **How well does the school make data-informed judgements about students' learning?**

How effectively are teachers supporting students in their learning?

The External School Review (ESR) conducted at Woodville High School made highly evident to the panel that a number of initiatives, pedagogical approaches and structures, have been introduced to the school in order to maximise the potential of all learners at the school. The panel particularly notes that these implementations operate within a culture designed to promote inclusivity, unity and genuine appreciation and respect for diversity.

The student population at the school is clearly diverse as characterised by cultural backgrounds, as well as students who bring a breadth of life experiences to the classroom. During the ESR, the panel sourced strong evidence of the response the school has taken in aspiring to support each learner's needs and, that whilst highly strategic in design, the initiatives introduced to maximise the potential of each student operate within a culture of utmost care and commitment. The leadership model has been deliberately structured to ensure the development and maintenance of programs that attend to students' diverse needs. The wellbeing agenda sees the school as a member of the Safe Schools Coalition; providing safe spaces for students of varying cultures, genders or religions to learn, socialise or worship. Students transitioning from Year 7 are afforded a tailored approach to secondary schooling as staff from the school work closely with feeder primary school staff. Year 7

student learning, emotional and social needs are discussed, and achievement data collated to inform a seamless entry to Year 8. All students new to the school are provided a follow-up process that sees staff dedicate time to assess students' assimilation and progress after five weeks. The commitment to meeting individual students' learning, and social and emotional needs, was evident through every process conducted during the ESR, and highly commended by the team.

In considering how effectively teachers are supporting students in their learning, the panel notes that data generated from SACE assessments represents a steady increase in completion over a three-year period, and that 'A' and 'B' grade achievement is also at a three-year high (see Appendix Two). Senior students with whom the panel spoke reported that almost all teaching staff, with whom they work, are committed to ensuring students achieve their SACE and, in particular, stated that regular and ongoing formative feedback during assignments was significant in influencing their potential success. Evidence was sourced that some students now in Year 12 are adamant they would not have continued at school after Year 10 if it had not been for the intervention and encouragement of teachers at the school.

The concept of critical and creative thinking, complemented through processes of Inquiry, is a priority at the school. Professional Learning that promotes this has been accessed by leaders and, in turn, will inform Learning Area agenda, as teachers develop an understanding of the strategies and planning that enable students to engage in learning that deepens cognitive processing. Once again, the initiation of this approach has been led strategically. The area previously used as a more traditional library has been redesigned to develop what is termed the 'Learning Hub'. In this fluid learning space, teachers bring classes or groups to access technology that supports processes of inquiry and, importantly, to work alongside a staff member whose position has been developed to model and promote pedagogy that inspires critical thinking. The role acts as a coaching or mentor model, and sees teachers provided opportunity to grow their understanding of how best to stimulate intellectual stretch and to challenge students' thinking. During the ESR, the panel sourced evidence that, in some Learning Areas, and year levels, students participate in learning that builds on prior knowledge, requires them to plan and conduct inquiry and that engages them in responding to rich provocations. It was also evident that in other Learning Areas or year levels, students were provided worksheets or were copying text from the board, and that a number of students had opportunity to answer teachers' questions, rather than engage with and solve problems. The panel acknowledges the work undertaken thus far to ensure students at the school are afforded opportunities to access contemporary practice that builds their cognitive functioning and promotes their potential to become critical thinkers. Continuing to prioritise this approach, building teacher capacity, and understanding how to accommodate this within daily practice, will be key, as the school progresses this important priority.

A highlight of the ESR findings was the establishment of the school's data room. This initiative will be discussed in more detail in the Improvement Agenda aspect of this report. However, in brief, the enterprise ultimately provides teachers with data that informs them of Year 8 and 9 student achievements in literacy and numeracy, and the areas for improvement. Conversation with teachers and class visits made evident that response to this data across Learning Areas was not consistent. Some staff have deep tactical knowledge of effective approaches to the teaching of reading or numeracy strategies and employ these in responding to the data. However, this was not represented across all middle years classes. At the time of the ESR, draft documents regarding agreements as to how concepts are taught within literacy and numeracy at Woodville High School, were sourced. The panel agrees that developing consistent implementation of practice in these areas will ensure that the intent of the data room, which is to respond to individual student needs strategically and intentionally, will be realised.

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.

How authentic is the influence of students on their learning and throughout the school?

The culture of inclusivity apparent at the school is represented through a number of initiatives that see students and their opinions afforded respect and influence. Each year the school conducts the Effective Teaching Survey, that is designed to harvest students' or, as some staff at the school term them, 'clients'' perceptions regarding the efficacy of the learning they access. These opinions, once collated, are provided to teachers to consider the feedback and potentially adjust their practice. Some of the responses students provided teachers at the end of 2016 included a request for timely feedback on their learning, a suggestion to provide exemplars regarding passing grades, and to allow students time to process their thinking and ask questions. During conversations with teaching staff, it was evident that some teachers take this feedback seriously, reflect on practice, and have indeed incorporated changes accordingly.

Student influence is also exemplified through the development of the Graduate Habits for Success. Staff sought student voice to generate an agreed document that identifies the qualities of a successful Year 12 graduate. The document determines one attitudinal and two cognitive attributes that the successful graduate will display, and students have then discussed and recorded the behaviours that characterise these. This collectively generated plan provides all students across the school an aspirational model towards which they can deliberately progress.

Many processes of the ESR allowed the panel to see the work that has been undertaken to embed the Art and Science of Teaching (ASoT) approach across the school. The principles inherent in the model are clearly focused on students' agency, or influence and connection, within the learning agenda, as represented: *Help students understand the progression of knowledge they are expecting to master and where they are along the progression* and *Help students understand how their test scores and grades are related to… their progression.* Significant evidence of this approach and its implementation was apparent across the school. In almost every learning area visited and every conversation with staff or students, the panel saw or heard of the use of Learning Goals, designed to allow students to understand the purpose of the learning, and the provision of Proficiency Scales (Year 8 to 10) or Performance Standards (Year 11 to 12) that allow students to understand the criteria for success and monitor their progress toward grades. The panel acknowledges that the intent behind this approach, to develop informed and independent learners, is aspirational and contemporary and, at the time of the review, has had significant impact on some teachers' practice.

The panel heard some students report that the provision of the learning intentions and developmental continuums has supported them in understanding why they are participating in the learning and in monitoring their progress. Some students discussed their understanding of what they would need to do to achieve a higher grade, and reported that this positively influenced how they will approach the next assignment. The broader impact of these scaffolds on student learning is yet to be realised as, at the time of the ESR, reports and observations regarding their implementation were varied. Some students were able to refer to the continuums and their influence, as discussed, whilst others were aware of the documents but did not use them. Learning Intentions too, had varying impact on students understanding the purpose of the learning. The panel agrees that, in some classes, the learning intention was more a description of the task at hand than the intended skill or understanding that students were working towards. Students were quite astute in explaining that the validity of the learning intention relied on the teachers' ability to explain it clearly and to then return to the intent regularly throughout the learning cycle. The language employed to describe proficiency or performance standards was also reported as too complex by some students.

The panel wholeheartedly agrees that the introduction of the ASoT to the school is of significant value in working towards the vision to offer 'effective teaching and success for every student', and encourages the continued provision of professional learning opportunities that ensure all staff fully understand and incorporate the approach effectively across the school.

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.

Throughout the ESR, the panel spoke to a number of school community members and, when asked what the school's priorities are, the responses invariably included a focus on learner achievement, inclusivity and wellbeing. The leaders' presentation left the panel in no doubt that these aspects of school culture and improvement planning are indeed the priorities of the school. The understanding of this across the student, parent and staff cohorts, represents the consistent message that the leaders have provided to the school community. In fact, one staff member reported that, whilst in the past a more sporadic approach to improvement was apparent, she truly believes it is now "all coming together".

In 2017, Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) have been convened, and comprise Learning Area teachers and Coordinators. These forums allow staff to engage in processes of shared inquiry aligned with the school's priorities. Staff reported that they appreciate that teachers generate the inquiry question and design the resultant process. An example of one inquiry undertaken involved examination of Year 9 NAPLAN data and the trialling of processes to raise achievement in this area. Evidence that these inquiry processes are monitored and adjusted, represents an emergent approach to improvement and is commended by the ESR panel. Conversations with staff made apparent that, in most instances, the PLT model is having a positive impact on their practice, and that they support the maintenance of the process. However, it was a widely held belief that for the forums to have the maximum impact on practice, more regular meetings and opportunity to focus on one area over a longer period of time, would be welcomed.

The existing structure of Performance and Development (PD) is clearly understood by all staff with whom the panel spoke. The process is characterised by a meeting in Terms 1 and 4, the initial meeting allowing the teacher to establish three goals for improved practice; one aligned with school priorities, one with the AITSL standards and one career or personal goal. The meeting at the end of the year allows the teacher to discuss achievement of the goals. Processes or strategies to be undertaken that allow the teacher to meet their goals were mainly described to the panel as undertaking professional learning, often off-campus, although a few staff discussed the recent advent of PLTs as supporting them in working towards their goals. The panel heard that the opportunity for staff to engage in peer observations strategically designed to focus on an aspect of practice has been offered, due to the securing of a grant. This opportunity will continue with school funding in 2018. Some staff certainly appreciated this optional process. The ESR panel appreciates the priorities that exist at the school and the expectation that staff respond to these accordingly; namely, implementing ASoT, using data responsively, and engaging students in critical thinking. The part that PD plays in ensuring teachers' capacity to enact expectations is key in achieving 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 PD. Staff and leaders at Woodville High School are well-placed to further deepen the impact of PD on practice at 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.

The profile of data at Woodville High School has been raised significantly over the last two years, and is used increasingly tactically to support improvement in attendance and learner achievement. Conversation with staff responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) learners, as well as time spent with students in the Nunga Room, allowed the panel to understand the process that supports improvement in attendance. Each ATSI student has a place on a data wall displayed in the room, and every week the student plots themselves against a percentile depending on their previous week's attendance. Conversation with students made very apparent that they take ownership of the process and have taken responsible steps to ensure improvement. The panel applauds the initiative.

Another strategic use of data is represented by the 'Snapshot' process. Four weeks prior to grade finalisation, teachers examine student achievement data to determine if students are at risk of not achieving a 'C' or higher. These students' families are contacted, and a plan to intervene and re-direct the learner is devised

collaboratively. Parents with whom the panel spoke appreciated the impact this has had on their children's learning.

The panel sourced evidence of processes that have contributed to steady improvement in SACE completion and grade point average. Staff responsible for senior year learners reported the development of a process of quality assurance, whereby time is dedicated twice a term for teachers and leaders to examine and analyse student progress data, through ongoing assignment assessments or draft work. This regular monitoring of students' progress has seen staff evaluate and adjust approaches for individual SACE students. The panel acknowledges this as a highly differentiated approach to student learning and significant in ensuring the best possible outcome for them.

As aforementioned, the school has recently developed a data room that collates Year 8 and 9 student literacy and numeracy achievement data. Every student is represented on a card that identifies PAT scores, Year 7 and 9 NAPLAN Band achievement and attendance data. The students are categorised as below, at or above Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA). Prompts that encourage teachers to reflect on the data include: 'Am I modifying my language instruction to assist EALD students?' and 'What other information should I consider before acting?' Leaders have also created a scaffold for teachers to complete questions, such as: 'What circumstances have led to a decline in these students' performance?' and 'What interventions/differentiation have you tried?' Also displayed in the room are the PAT Maths and Reading question types and 'substrands'. The panel highly commends this initiative and the intent to bring about intentional and differentiated teaching. Some teachers with whom the panel spoke clearly had a deep understanding of how to respond to the data and to differentiate teaching to meet the needs of the students. This enabled them to address students' miscues and to build on others' strengths. Other teaching staff reported that intentional use of data for differentiation was an area they appreciate as important and, at the same time, one they would like to improve. In some conversations, the concept of differentiation was described by teachers as providing students a choice as to how they present work. These perceptions indicate an opportunity to review collective understanding and implementation of differentiated practice, informed by data analysis.

In order to maximise the outstanding potential the establishment of the data room provides, the panel sees the next step as developing a more sophisticated approach to its use. The systems of performance and development, or the school's well-established PLTs, provide an opportunity to develop staff analytical and diagnostic use of data to differentiate practice and meet the diverse needs of the learners at the school. The panel sees this as an exciting and appropriate next step in Woodville High School's continued improvement imperative.

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

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practice that is contributing significantly to school improvement at Woodville High School.

Effective practice in the School Community Partnerships aspect of the External Review Framework was evident at the school. The culturally diverse school community has been discussed throughout this report, and it is important to acknowledge that the Principal has worked with staff to develop an appreciation of this diversity as a highlight of the school. The concepts of celebration, mutual respect and unity take precedence over the usual traditional perception of 'complexity'. An example of this is characterised by the Cultural Parent Groups convened to capture and engage the voice of all families. Governing Council takes representation from the ATSI, European, African and Vietnamese parent groups. It was acknowledged during conversations with members of these groups that many families would not usually approach the school, provide input or seek clarification regarding their children's learning. However, the Cultural Parent Groups afford potentially disempowered families a voice in the school. In particular, the panel noted that, recently, the ATSI parent group had brought the issue of flying three flags, thus including the Torres Strait Islander flag, to Governing Council. This was discussed and ratified, a flag ordered and an additional pole erected. The ESR panel, again, acknowledges the exceptional culture of inclusivity apparent within the school. Evidence of this practice was verified through conversations with Governing Council representatives, parents and leaders.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

At Woodville High School effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions, and teachers are provided with, and use, structured time for ongoing collaborative professional learning, characterised through collective inquiry. Student achievement data and other evidence is increasingly used to inform decisions at the individual student and whole-school levels.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Based on the school's current performance, Woodville High School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.

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 three months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's Annual Report.

Meredith Edwards
PRINCIPAL
WOODVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Governing Council Chairperson

Appendix One

Policy compliance

The External School Review process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented.

The Principal of Woodville High School has verified that the school is working towards being compliant in all applicable DECD policies. The Principal advised action is being taken to comply with the following DECD policies:

Governance 1.2 and 1.8

- The collaborative development of the Site Improvement Plan.

- Working collaboratively with the Principal to monitor the site's policy and practices in relation to student behaviour including suspensions, exclusions and expulsions.

- Site bullying data/trends/initiatives for the purpose of updating the school Governing Council twice a year.

Learning Improvement 2.0, 2.5 and 2.6

- The South Australian Teaching for Effective Learning Framework.

- All teachers to access the professional learning program that supports the implementation of the materials, before delivering the Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum.

- Individual Learning Plans developed for all Aboriginal students, and children under the care of the Minister.

School Organisation 3

- Implement the DECD Attendance Policy and an Attendance Improvement Plan, which has clearly stated targets and strategies to manage attendance.

People and Culture 4

- Staff are aware of their obligations in regard to professional conduct standards described by the Code of Ethics for the SA Public Sector, and the responsibilities of DECD staff in regards to corruption, misconduct and maladministration in public administration.

Site Procedures 6

- The WHS General Risk Assessment Tool used for activities, such as working from heights, working in isolation, changes to workplace or systems of work, working bees, excursions, camps and sporting activities.

- The WHS Specific Risk Assessment Tools used for infection control, hazardous manual tasks, inclement weather, hazardous chemicals and plant management.

Plant Management 6

- Pre-purchase checklist used when purchasing plant.

- All plant included on the Site Plant Register.

- Maintenance schedules maintained for all plant.

- The Hazard Checklist for the Disposal of Plant and the Acceptance of Condition Form used when disposing of plant.

When the school's actions achieve compliancy with DECD policy and procedures, the Principal must resubmit the Policy Compliance Checklist to the Education Director.

Implementation of the *DECD Student Attendance Policy* was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2016 was 83.8%.

Appendix Two

School Performance Overview

The External School Review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).

Reading

In 2017, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 47% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. The school is achieving lower than the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2017 NAPLAN Reading, 6% of students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 18%, or 5 of 28 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2017, and 37%, or 7 of 19 students 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 49% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the DECD SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

The school is achieving within the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2017 NAPLAN Numeracy, 4% of students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 6%, or 1 of 17 students from Year 3, remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2017, and 42%, or 5 of 12 students from Year 7, remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2017.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2016, 55% of students enrolled in February and 88% 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. Between 2014 and 2016, the trend has been upwards, from 79% in 2014 to 88% in 2016.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2016, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 93% 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.

Ninety-one percent of grades achieved in the 2016 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2014 and 2016, the trend has been upwards, from 82% in 2014 to 91% in 2016. Eight percent of students completed SACE using VET, and there were 68 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2016.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2016, 16% of students achieved an 'A' Grade, and 39% 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 2016 tertiary entrance, 66.9%, or 69 out of 103 potential students achieved an ATAR and 77.6% or 80 of 103 potential students achieved a TAFE SA selection score. There were also three students who were successful in achieving a merit.