Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Parafield Gardens High School

Conducted in September 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 Marion Coady and Mat Evans, Review Principals.

Review Process

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

- Presentation from the leadership team
- Class visits
- Attendance at staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parents
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Students
  - Teachers.

School context

Parafield Gardens High School caters for year 8-12 students. It is situated 16kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 985. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 913. The local partnership is Hollywood Lakes and Gardens.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 946 and is classified Category 3 on the Department for Education's Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 6% Aboriginal students, 8% students with disabilities, 37% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 5% children/young people in care and 42% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 1st year of tenure a Deputy Principal, 6 Band 3 leaders, responsible for Inclusive Education, Wellbeing, EALD/International, SACE, Timetable/Daily Operations, Systems & Structures, 1 Band 2 Behaviour Coach, 1 Band 2 Transition of Year 7 into High School, 11 Band 1 Leaders including 6 Learning Area Coordinators, 4 Learning Community Managers, 1 Band 1 Daily Operations, SSO 5 Business Manager, SSO4 ICT Manager, SSO 3 Resources Manager, and a Principal's Assistant There are 89 teachers including 10 in the early years of their career and 33 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR directions were:

Direction 1   **Deepen pedagogical reform by identifying imperative high yield teaching approaches and making expectations regarding the implementation of these clearly understood and consistently applied**

Direction 2   **Further progress the achievement of school priorities by developing greater coherence and intentionality in strategic planning across faculties and cohorts.**

Direction 3   **Improve all students' literacy skills by deepening teachers' capacity to respond to data analysis and implementing a specific approach to the teaching of literacy strategies across the school**

Direction 4   **Build teachers' capacity to implement the school's pedagogical agreements through a more intentional and scaffolded approach to professional learning communities.**

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

Senior secondary teachers and leaders have identified a number of high yield approaches to teaching and selected the six they believe will have the most significant impact on student achievement. Included in these, are strategies designed to develop greater student ownership and autonomy within learning. Examples of contemporary practice were evident in some classes and faculties. Opportunities for students to develop skills of prediction, experimentation, evaluation and modification operated within year 10 science classes. In year 11 maths classes, students conducted investigation within a structured learning task. Many teachers discussed designing tasks and teaching, to deliberately connect with students' interests and real-life situations. Evidence of teaching that was less purposeful or engaging was also apparent. Some students and teachers discussed the impact this may have on students' behavioural choices. Leaders are aware of the effective practice that operates in some classes and faculties and are committed to broadening this across the school.

Previous directions 2 and 3 will be discussed against lines of inquiry 1 and 2 of this report.

Strengthening collective efficacy is a priority for the new leadership team. Systems and forums to build teacher and leader capacity have been initiated and strategically lead. A 'train the trainer' model has been introduced to scaffold curriculum leaders to conduct consistent and targeted faculty meetings with teachers. These have included professional learning opportunities and systems to evaluate the implementation of school priorities. Early career teachers have also been supported to develop their practice through opportunities to meet and share ideas and experiences.

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?

It is widely reported that in 2021, teachers are more fully aware of school improvement priorities and their role within these. Commitment to improving students' reading capabilities through the 'Before, During and After' (BDA) approach is highly apparent. Teachers have made some modifications and adapted the strategy to their subject area. This initiative has enhanced students' potential to connect with learning across faculties. Implementation of this approach varies across the school, and leaders will continue to embed consistent application of the strategy through faculty meetings and performance development processes.

A process to evaluate the implementation of BDA was conducted during the External School Review. The panel attended faculty meetings that had been co-designed by the Deputy Principal and curriculum leaders. As a result, these forums were consistent in intent and structure. A common document was provided to teachers, asking them to consider the application of BDA, students' response to the strategy and what improvements might be introduced. The panel acknowledges the intent to review actions and to consider adjustments. Evaluating the actual impact on student learning through evidence- based findings will refine this process and bring about greater accuracy and precision.

In order to introduce an ongoing and authentic approach to monitoring the impact of teaching, reference to the success criteria within the site improvement plan (SIP) will be of value. These criteria will allow teachers to accurately assess the impact of the strategy and to make modifications to their teaching practice accordingly. Understanding of, or reference to, the success criteria is not yet broadly apparent within the teaching staff. Leaders report that the criteria could be reviewed and redeveloped to better identify what students will demonstrate if the reading strategy has had the desired impact. The panel agrees that collective review of the success criteria through faculty meetings will ensure all staff understand and can effectively refer to the measures.

Direction 1   **Evaluate and enhance the impact of improvement strategies using criteria that accurately informs the impact of teaching on student learning.**

Effective teaching and student learning

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

The profile of data has been raised at the school in 2021. Data has been collated for each student and includes achievement, attendance, behaviour and wellbeing information. Colour coding allows teachers to assess the level of risk or potential students bring to their learning. Teachers appreciate the opportunity it provides to better understand students' level of attainment or any issues that may compromise effective learning.

A data map, (schedule), has been developed and includes achievement, perception, demographic and process data. Prompts have been provided against each of these areas to allow staff to identify which data sets will provide the appropriate information. The purpose and a date for review of the data are documented and roles and responsibilities included. The intent to develop a data rich teaching and learning culture to better meet students' needs is evident.

The use of data to inform students' miscues, misunderstandings or strengths, and to tailor teaching in response to this, is not yet common. In most cases teaching was described or observed as pitched at the whole-class. Some teachers and learners stated that students who are struggling to reach standard are provided one on one assistance from the teacher during the lesson. Tasks designed to allow universal access, for students at varying levels, were limited.

The term 'analysis' was often used by teachers and some leaders to describe the school's use of data. When the panel explored this in more depth, it was apparent that the use of data is more quantified than analytical. Teachers report that faculty meeting time is often spent reviewing data and that this allows them to understand trends across years or classes. If it was used more diagnostically, the achievement data that the school collates could provide greater information regarding students' actual learning needs and inform intentional teaching. Building staff's capacity to use data analytically to design inclusive, differentiated teaching is the next step in improving student achievement.

Direction 2   **Meet the learning needs of all students by building staff's capacity to understand what data is indicating and to use this to design differentiated teaching.**

Effective teaching and student learning

How well do teachers plan to ensure students receive their year level curriculum entitlements?

Teaching planned to ensure students develop the skills and understandings within the Australian Curriculum (AC) and South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) standards is evident. Some task design was intentional and focused on learning outcomes. In these instances, assessment is designed to allow students to demonstrate their progress against the AC and SACE achievement standards. Students with access to targeted teaching and assessment design were more commonly provided success criteria and performance standards. These support them to monitor their progress and aim for a certain grade.

Teachers have explored planning, using the Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) backwards by design template. They have considered what the intended learning is, how evaluation of learning outcomes will be identified and how these will be taught. Teachers pooled their knowledge to identify possible actions to deliver the teaching, and methods to measure impact. There are some examples of teachers employing this, or a similar approach, within the school. Teaching that is less intentional and focused more on the development of a product or assignment was also evident. In these instances, criteria for student assessment, align more with organisational or structural expectations, such as word count. Some teachers and students describe a lesson or unit of work as what they are *learning*, while others describe them as what they have to *complete*.

Students expressed uncertainty regarding the allocation of grades. Some believe completing assignments by a due date will guarantee a pass. Others report that grade allocation is dependent upon which teacher is doing the marking.

In order for students to attain the anticipated learning outcomes, it is vital that teaching aligns with achievement standards, and that assessments allow students to fully demonstrate their outcomes. Designing faculty meeting times to allow teachers to collectively revisit student learning outcomes, and review effective planning and assessment practices, will be of value. Sharing and broadening existing effective practice will characterise this work. Reference to systemic resources and consultation with the Local Education Team (LET) will also be of value.

Direction 3	**Ensure students access their curriculum entitlements by deepening teachers' understanding of AC and SACE learning outcomes and the implications for planning teaching and assessment.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

At Parafield Gardens High School, the new leaders have begun to introduce significant change. A pre-existing culture of behaviours that compromised learning is being challenged through the introduction of consistent policies, high expectations and accountability. Parents are particularly appreciative of this change. The panel commends the position the leaders have adopted, whilst acknowledging that work continues to be done in this area. The school improvement priorities have been strategically led, and widespread commitment to implementing these in practice, is evident. Systems to build teachers' capability to deliver expected practice have been effectively designed. The 'train the trainer' model is a high yield approach that will establish consistent leadership and build capacity across faculties. The importance of authentic evaluation of improvement practices is understood by leaders, who are working to develop efficacy in this area. The directions from the External School Review will guide and contribute to this work.

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

Direction 1   **Evaluate and enhance the impact of improvement strategies using criteria that accurately informs the impact of teaching on student learning.**

Direction 2   **Meet the learning needs of all students by building staff's capacity to understand what data is indicating and to use this to design differentiated teaching.**

Direction 3   **Ensure students access their curriculum entitlements by deepening teachers' understanding of AC and SACE learning outcomes and the implications for planning teaching and assessment.**

Based on the school's current performance, Parafield Gardens High School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.

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Kirsty Amos   Governing Council Chairperson
Principal
Parafield Gardens High School

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 56% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 9 has been upwards from 47% to 56%.

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

In 2019 6% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading 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 reading 19% or 4 of 21 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2019 the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 53% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no improvement from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019 4% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. 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 numeracy 37% or 3 of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2020 71% of students enrolled in February and 99% 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 2018 and 2020 the trend has been upwards from 96% in 2018 to 99% in 2020.

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, 79% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2020 97% of grades achieved were at 'C-'level or higher, 17% of grades were at an 'A' level and 47% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents an improvement for the 'C-'level or higher grade, and an improvement for both the 'A' and 'B' level grade from the historic baseline averages. Between 2018 and 2020 the trend for 'C-'or higher has been upwards from 92% in 2018 to 97% in 2020.

Thirty nine percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 12 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance 49% or 65out of 133 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There were also 7 students who were successful in achieving a merit.