

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Naracoorte High School

Conducted in August 2019



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 Rob McLaren, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Peter Mader, 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
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Support Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Naracoorte High School caters for young people from year 8 to year 12. It is situated 331kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2019 is 348 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 385.

The school has an ICSEA score of 941 and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 5% Aboriginal students, 6% students with disabilities, 5% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2 young people in care and 23% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the first year of their tenure at the school. The school has 2 assistant principals, an Independent Learning Centre (ILC) manager and 4 coordinators. There are 27 teachers including 2 in the early years of their career and 5 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Improve student achievement by the collaborative development of a Site Improvement Plan that is concise, timely and based on data.
- Direction 2** Improve student achievement by the development of clear roles and responsibilities around data, timelines and schedules for data collection and interpretation.
- Direction 3** Development of whole-school learning agreements that aligns with the Strategic Plan.
- Direction 4** Enhance teacher and leadership capacity by the development and implementation of a coherent whole-school approach that is planned, implemented and evaluated.

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

The leader's presentation described a developing school culture of improvement in response to the directions from the previous review. The consolidation and use of a learner management system and a site-developed data analysis tool has enabled leaders, and to a lesser degree teachers, greater access to a range of student achievement data and an ability to interrogate the data for planning and decision making. Teachers and leaders commented that they have been further supported with agreements cited in the data collection and performance management schedule and ongoing professional learning to further develop their skills to interrogate and triangulate data.

Responses from staff confirmed that the goals for improvement outlined in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) were developed through a collaborative, evidence-based process. Teachers clearly knew the goals and were making connections to their work in the classroom. Teachers' commented that the goals were providing focus for improvement. Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) which meet regularly, were using learning improvement sprints to develop and reach agreement on what is best practice. A review of the schools performance development processes has ensured greater alignment to support the achievement of improvement goals.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How well does the school use evidence from student achievement and growth data to inform relevant and high-impact goals and targets for improvement?

Conversations with leadership and staff provided ample evidence that the priorities for improvement outlined in the 2019 SIP goals were developed collaboratively using systems and school-based student achievement data. Staff described how they were able to identify areas of strength and weakness in student performance when presented with data analysis. Agreements were reached on the improvement goals: reading comprehension, writing and numeracy.

In 2019, further refinements to the goals were made with reading comprehension narrowing its focus to inferring. Smaller working groups were continuing to develop practice and resources on narrative writing and multiplicity in numeracy. PLTs further supported the improvement agenda with opportunities for teachers and leaders in year level teams to regularly meet, target students using achievement data and engage in 4 week learning improvement sprints to reflect and refine their practice.

Leaders whose roles were carefully aligned to the SIP priorities referenced the use of best practice papers, literacy and numeracy guidebooks, and a documented data and performance management schedule which outlines the data collection, analysis and review processes. Access to a data analysis tool supports PLTs to track and monitor student progress and growth of a range of students and priority groups at class, cohort and school level.

The established structures and processes are positive steps taken to enable staff to reflect on and develop best practice. To utilise these more effectively and develop a shared ownership, there is a need to clarify the roles of staff, the Challenges of Practice (COP) in PLTs and the effective use of triangulated data to monitor progress in achieving set targets and goals.

Direction 1 To enact the Challenges of Practice, use PLTs to make more explicit the changes in teacher practice needed to improve student achievement.

EFFECTIVE PEDAGOGY

How effectively are teachers using evidence-based pedagogical practices that engage and challenge all learners?

Observations in classrooms and conversations with teachers confirmed that many teachers approach learning in a proactive and planned way. Students commented that teachers and SSOs supported them and had high expectations of them to succeed. Parents and students commented that positive relationships between teachers and students were essential for successful learning and that this was the case with many teachers at the school. In senior classes, close relationships between students and teachers was very evident with teachers working with small groups or in many cases providing one-on-one support.

Classroom observations showed that many teachers had established a positive and engaging learning environment through consistent processes and clear supportive resources. Learning intentions and success criteria were observed in a small number of classes to make the purpose of learning clearer, relevant and connected. Students in these classes commented positively about the clarity of expectations.

Students received feedback from teachers both informally in classroom conversations and more formally in comments on draft work, quizzes and summative work. Formative assessment for improvement in learning was less evident in junior classes with summative assessment in assignments and tests prominent.

In a small number of classes teachers were constructing student groups based around their learning needs. Teachers described how they were intentionally planning differentiated learning activities to accommodate the learning needs of students in these groups or providing specific support for individual students. Year 8 mathematics is programmed on at the same time so that groups can be constructed. In many classes the same learning and assessment tasks were presented to the whole class and then students were supported by SSOs and teachers. A large number of learning and assessment tasks cited lacked multiple entry points and scaffolding.

Leadership provided an insight in their initial presentation about their plans to collaboratively develop and implement a school-wide positive behaviours support strategy, in conjunction with an Explicit Instruction Model (EIM) aligned to the department's Learning Designs, Assessment and Moderation (LDAM) strategy. The key principles around the EIM are to; optimise engagement, promote high levels of success, increase content coverage, for students to spend more time in instructional groups, scaffolding of instruction, address different forms of knowledge and therefore a release of control of learning from teacher to student.

This combined with the work of PLTs and other professional development processes will support the development of agreements of high yield pedagogical practices to ensure all learners are engaged and challenged.

Direction 2 **Ensure pedagogical coherence and support for all learners by establishing agreed high yield practice that will be implemented consistently across the school.**


LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

To what extent does the school provide and monitor a safe, supportive and respectful environment to maximise engagement, wellbeing and achievement?

The panel observed many classes which provided students with a safe, supportive and a respectful learning environment. Students reported that they felt a sense of belonging and that many of their teachers had high expectations and are supportive of them. Parents' comments were equally positive referring to many changes which have recently taken place in promoting appropriate behaviours for learning and consistent responses by leadership to inappropriate behaviours which are contributing to a supportive and respectful learning environment. Leadership has articulated its further development of behaviours for learning through a whole-school positive behaviour support strategy.

The school has been transitioning from a narrow academic curriculum to a much more balanced and inclusive curriculum for all learners. Flexible learning pathways through VET courses, school-based apprenticeships and an Independent Learning Centre (ILC) have been developed to support students who might not be engaged or do not find school relevant or challenging. Additionally students can seek support through negotiating release from lessons to receive support in the learning centre or the wellbeing hub.

The panel believe the plans for development of the EIM, as articulated by leadership is a first step in the development of agreements on conditions for effective learning and leading to engagement and challenge in learning for all learners.



Direction 3 To support a learning environment that maximises engagement, wellbeing for learning and achievement, reach common agreement and enact the conditions for effective learning.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

Documentation provided in the leaders' presentation confirmed that many developments evident in the school's improvement were in response to the previous ESR directions. The school's improvement planning and monitoring processes to raise student achievement are now evidence-based and targeted. There is a coherent and engaging curriculum for students using the Australian Curriculum and SACE, while effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions.

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

- Direction 1 To enact the Challenges of Practice, use PLTs to make more explicit the changes in teacher practice needed to improve student achievement.
- Direction 2 Ensure pedagogical coherence and support for all learners by establishing agreed high yield practice that will be implemented consistently across the school.
- Direction 3 To support a learning environment that maximises engagement, wellbeing for learning and achievement, reach common agreement and enact the conditions for effective learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Naracoorte High School will be externally reviewed again in 2022.



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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 2018, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 63% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For 2018 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools. In 2018, 9% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 20%, or 4 out of 20 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9, and 29%, or 2 out of 7 students from year 7 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 72% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For 2018 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools. In 2018, 13% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

For those students in 2018 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 50%, or 5 out of 10 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9, and 70%, or 7 out of 10 students from year 7 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2018, 75% of students enrolled in February and 98% 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 little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2018, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 94% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 90% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2018, 98% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 23% of grades were at an 'A' level and 42% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents an improvement for both the 'C-' or higher and 'A' levels and little or no change for the 'B' level from the historic baseline averages, respectively.

Eleven percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 60 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2018. In terms of 2018 tertiary entrance, 53%, or 28 out of 57 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There were also 2 students who were successful at achieving a merit.