

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Kapunda High School

Conducted in October 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 Rob McLaren, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Sharryn Daley, 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 Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Kapunda High School caters for young people from year 8 to year 12. It is situated 86kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 479. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 485. The local partnership is Goyder and Light.

The school has an ICSEA score of 978 and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 10% students with disabilities, less than 6 students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 30% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

Thirty-three per cent of students have a Kapunda postcode with main feeder schools being Kapunda Primary School, Freeling Primary School, Roseworthy Primary School and Wasleys Primary School. Students also travel from the Greater Gawler area (via public bus) and Eudunda/Robertstown with a small number from the Barossa Valley.

The school leadership team consists of:

- principal in their 2nd year of a third tenure
- deputy principal (curriculum, timetabling, school organisation) in his 1st year of second tenure
- four B-2 leaders (pedagogy/learning support/learning excellence; senior school/SACE; science/technology/STEM; Flexible Learning Pathways) (all have a Learning Area focus)
- three B-1 leaders (wellbeing; mathematics/numeracy; English/arts/literacy)
- five year level managers.

There are 40 (including 16 part-time) teachers including 6 in the early years of their career and 9 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

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| Direction 1 | Create a learning environment where all year 8 to 12 students, with a full range of abilities, are challenged and supported to achieve excellence. |
| Direction 2 | Further develop a scope and sequence of curriculum skills and build greater consistency in expectations of teachers, across years 8 to 12 in all faculties, including a focus on STEM pedagogies and the capabilities. |
| Direction 3 | Build the capacity of current and aspiring leaders, and clarify their roles in line with the Site Improvement Plan, to ensure sustained quality and accountable educational leadership. |
| Direction 4 | Monitor and improve the access to and use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Daymap (learner management system) by all teachers and students. |

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

The previous external school review directions have had a positive impact on the improvement direction and practice of the school, evident in the actions and outcomes listed below.

Direction 1 - To support a more inclusive curriculum and learning environment which engages and challenges all:

- Created an assistant principal leadership position in pedagogy, learning support and learning excellence.
- Created whole-school leadership positions in the improvement of literacy and numeracy.
- Increased student voice opportunities to inform teacher practice by introducing a twice-yearly Pivot student feedback survey at an individual, learning area and whole-school data level.
- Provided coaching for success for all students.
- Systemised performance and development processes through the school calendar that support leaders' learning conversation.

Direction 2 - To build greater consistency in expectations of teachers, across years 8 to 12:

- Created an assistant principal leadership positions in science, technology and STEM with a strong focus on leading pedagogical improvement, primarily through the LDAM strategy.
- Increased the focus on developing students in the high bands of achievement through moderation and task review at both school and partnership level.
- Increased collaboration with families to raise the level of success for students with disabilities assessed at different year levels.
- Introduced modified SACE approaches to support a broader range of students to be successful.
- Expanded the mentoring program to provide individualised support for a larger number of students.
- Introduced a professional learning community (PLC) model for staff to engage in evidence-based approaches in action research and trialling of practice at the classroom level.
- Reviewed and made effective the Responsible Behaviour Policy and time out room processes.

Direction 3 – To build the capacity of leaders to ensure sustained quality and accountable educational leadership:

- Increased the proportion of Band B-2 leaders that brought additional expertise and experience to the school.
- Provided Growth Coaching for leaders, which supported more effective line management responsibility (including support staff).
- Provided classroom observation training for leaders, including year level managers.
- Supported crucial conversation training/discussions which were a focus of leadership meetings during 2018.
- Formalised ongoing mentoring and support for year level managers from members of the senior leadership team.

Direction 4 - Improve access to and use to all of modern ICT and a learner management system:

- Fully implemented a 'bring your own device' approach with a range of options for all families.

- Upgrading existing ICT network to ensure the reliability of service for all students and staff.
- Introduced continuous reporting processes using the Daymap learner management system with clear and consistent expectations for all staff.
- Developed a common electronic repository for all curriculum resources giving access for all staff.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

Improve practice and monitor strategies and actions: How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions based on their impact on student learning?

The leaders' presentation provided context to the school's journey in improvement work and the impact of the previous ESR directions. Outlined in the school improvement plan (SIP) goals are the school's priorities for improvement:

- Literacy: Increase student capacity to undertake the writing demands of SACE subjects through a focus on text types and vocabulary.
- Numeracy: Increase student achievement in mathematics through a focus on strengthening number skills.

Clear actions support achievement of goals and the agreed challenges of practice. It was clear from the presentation and documented data schedule that the executive leadership group effectively use and analyse data to monitor the progress of these actions and indicators of success. Leaders developed action plans in learning areas, SACE improvement and attendance, to further support the achievement of goals. They described monitoring the SIP progress in their leadership meetings, while referring to outcomes achieved in their action plans. The principal explained that these meetings provided a basis for progress reports to the governing council and staff meetings. The principal believed there was more work to be done in involving staff in this process.

Collaborative improvement work was evident in established professional learning communities (PLCs) for literacy and numeracy. Some teachers and leaders described how data from pre- and post-testing, surveys and anecdotal teacher comments, provided evidence of progress for identified students. Others commented that moderation activities carried out internally and on student free days externally gave them feedback about the quality of their tasks and consistency of their judgements of achievement.

Teachers varied in their explanations of how they used critical analysis of data and other evidence to support the improvement of their practice. Some described using formative assessment to judge students' understanding of concepts, but were less clear how this had an impact on the strategies they used. Other teachers referred to the value of classroom observations in receiving feedback, but were quick to point out that these were not targeted or standard practices. Performance development planning (PDP) processes were well-documented, and described by staff as more formal in their organisation and frequency. Cited PDP documents showed teachers aligning their goals to the SIP goals for improvement. In descriptions from several staff members, professional conversations in these meetings were supportive but not evidence-based. Some believed that expectations from line managers in this process were mixed. An opportunity exists to connect and strengthen proven performance development strategies and professional learning that build teacher capacity to support the achievement of challenges of practice.

Direction 1 Further develop the use and understanding of data to monitor the impact of teacher practice on student progress.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

In planning for learning and monitoring learner progress, teachers described the increasing importance of data to inform their work. They highlighted a detailed data schedule to guide them in the collection, analysis and use of datasets. Additionally, they explained how they access a variety of student achievement data, learning and assessment plans and resources, while providing feedback to students through continuous reporting on Daymap. Students and parents also access this and Google classrooms to obtain feedback on learning progress and learning materials.

All teachers and leaders spoken to believed that useful feedback was essential to improve student learning. Several teachers were observed in classes using effective formative assessment strategies and questioning techniques, providing students with immediate feedback for improvement. Written feedback provided by teachers was evident using comments on drafts or notes in Daymap to inform next steps in learning, while many provided verbal feedback to students in the class. Students were positive about the feedback they received from many teachers, and had a good perception of their progress. Several teachers described unpacking achievement and performance standards to inform students of the criteria for success and steps to improve.

Assessment tasks seen by the panel showed some consistency across the school in identifying the demands of the curriculum and expectations for the student and indicators for success. There was considerable variation in task design, incorporating differentiated practices to allow all students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Students also believed that the format and clarity of expectations of assessment tasks varied and could be more consistent. Mixed evidence was provided by teachers of regularly checking student achievement data to inform and refine teaching practice or preparation at an individual or class level.

PDP processes are well-documented and understood by teachers and leaders. It was clear from conversations that approach and expectations in these meetings differed, and could be strengthened by having a greater focus on evidence-based discussions with teachers, reflective on the impact of their practice.

Teachers are utilising a variety of effective assessment techniques to promote ongoing learning and determine student progress and success. An opportunity exists to further develop and consolidate understanding of highly-effective assessment strategies, and build teacher capacity in using evidence to inform ongoing planning that engage and challenge all students.

Direction 2 Ensure challenge and stretch for all learners by reaching agreement on what is highly-effective differentiated practices in assessment and learning.

Effective leadership

Building Teacher capacity: How effective are the school's professional learning and performance development processes in building teacher capacity?

Parents, students and teachers described a collegiate culture of improvement led by the principal and the executive leadership team. Leaders said the alignment between the school's improvement priorities, performance development processes and targeted professional learning, supported the development of this culture. Transparent documentation of expectations for leaders, performance development processes, attendance and intervention, a PLC framework and assessment and reporting procedures, guide teachers and leaders in their work.

Leaders described how they support early career teachers with mentoring and coaching, while teachers are encouraged to apply for lead and highly accomplished teacher certification. Although there are transparent documented processes that support leaders in carrying out their roles, the principal recognised the need for a review and updating of induction processes, especially in line management roles, performance feedback and mentoring.

Teachers positively described PDP processes, which they found as supportive and well-documented. However, when questioned about expectations of them in this process, there were diverse responses. Few line managers engaged with them in evidence-based discussions with expectations of bringing data to represent how they were developing their practice. Connections to other performance development processes, peer or leader observations, surveys and student feedback, were very informal in their take-up. While teachers were clear about their expectations in these processes, several commented that the performance development outcomes varied due to the different approaches and expectations by some line managers. To ensure the achievement of school priorities, the school needs to build leadership capacity and develop consistency of practice and expectations in processes that support the advancement of teacher practice.

Direction 3 Continue to build capacity of leaders to implement high-quality professional learning and performance development practices.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

At Kapunda High School, the influence of previous directions is evident in the establishment of a clear roadmap for improvement, supported by planning processes that are evidence-based and targeted to raise student achievement. Effective systems that build capacity are developing, affecting positively on teacher and leader practice. The school is providing effective conditions for student learning.

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

- Direction 1** Further develop the use and understanding of data to monitor the impact of teacher practice on student progress.
- Direction 2** Ensure challenge and stretch for all learners by reaching agreement on what is highly-effective differentiated practices in assessment and learning.
- Direction 3** Continue to build capacity of leaders to implement high-quality professional learning and performance development practices.

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



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Review, Improvement and Accountability



Anne Millard
Executive Director
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Kristen Masters
Principal
Kapunda High School

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 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 66% 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 within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2019, 12% 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 9 out of 29 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 65% 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 63% to 65%.

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

In 2019, 12% 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, 53%, or 10 out of 19 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2019, 73% 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.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2019; 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 95% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2019, 99% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 34% of grades were at an 'A' level and 49% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents, an improvement for the 'A' and 'B' level grades, from the historic baseline averages.

Twenty-nine percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 3 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2019.

In terms of 2019 tertiary entrance, 56%, or 36 out of 64 students achieved an ATAR. There were also 3 students who were successful in achieving a merit.

In 2019, the school had a moderation adjustment of 0.

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