

EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

Report for Kapunda High School

Conducted in February 2017



Government of South Australia

Department for Education and
Child Development

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 Liz Schneyder, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Peter Mader and Sue Burtenshaw, Review Principals.

School context

Kapunda High School caters for students from Year 8 to 12. It is situated 77kms north-east of Adelaide. In 2017, there are 484.8 students, including 22 Flexible Learning Option (FLO) students. This is marginally more than in 2016. School enrolments have continued to grow, particularly over the past 5 years, and the school is now considered to be at capacity. The school has an ICSEA score of 970 and is classified as Category 5 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 11% students with disabilities, 0.6% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 0.2% children and young people in care, and 24% of families eligible for School Card assistance. Thirty-eight percent of students are from Kapunda and the local district, while 62% travel from other communities, representing 19 different postcodes.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in the 4th year of her second tenure, a Deputy Principal who began his tenure in 2015, and 2 Assistant Principals, one responsible for Pathways and VET, and the other for Senior School. There are 5 Band-1 Coordinators, responsible for curriculum leadership, including a Student Counsellor, and an Administration Officer who also manages the school finances. There are 5 year level managers.

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 three key areas from the External School Review Framework:

Student Learning: To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?

Effective Teaching: How effectively are teachers using the Australian Curriculum and SACE to support and improve student learning?

Effective Leadership: How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?

To what extent are students engaged and intellectually challenged in their learning?

Datasets for Kapunda High School indicate improvement over time in almost all areas, including NAPLAN, PAT and SACE. The students have performed above the results of similar students in NAPLAN literacy, while 100% of students passed the Stage 2 Research Project, Personal Learning Plan and SACE Stage 1 literacy in 2016. The Student Wellbeing Survey provides evidence that students' perceptions about the school and their achievement are similar to those of other students, except in perseverance and school climate, indicating there is still some work to be done in these areas. Four staff are about to be trained in the 'positive psychology' program, which they will be presenting to other staff later this term, and which will be a focus for 2017.

Students, teachers and parents discussed this improvement in student achievement and attributed it to the consistent drive and vision of the Principal, the increased focus on pedagogy in staff, faculty and leadership meetings, the implementation of the Australian Curriculum (AC), and the ongoing tradition of teachers providing outstanding support for Stage 2 SACE students. There is an expectation that teachers will access feedback on their performance from their line managers and peers and will use the data they are provided with, which is readily available and frequently shared by the Principal in staff meetings, to inform changes in their practice and a differentiated approach to their teaching.

Students in the junior school (Years 8 to 10) talked about the good teachers they have and how these teachers provide hands-on/activity-based and problem-solving opportunities, care about their achievement and encourage the use of ICT. A few ask for feedback and provided rubrics. All junior school students are ability grouped for mathematics and English, and a School Services Officer (SSO) uses MacQLit to support a number of selected students whose literacy levels in the NAPLAN test are below the SEA. A Learning Support Centre is available for this program, as well as being a safe haven and quiet study space for other students, and an area where students who are struggling in their classes can access additional help. The junior school students shared that there is a small number of teachers who focus on copying from the textbook and using worksheets, leading to a lack of engagement and behaviour issues in class.

Support for all students in the senior school is evident. The quality of the mentoring, career advice and course selection process is appreciated, and the range of subjects and other VET opportunities is impressive, given the size of the school. Almost all teachers provide and explain rubrics while success in exams and moderation shifts are monitored. The senior school team check on student progress using the traffic light system, which the students appreciate. Attendance of all students, particularly those who are part-time or in VET courses, is carefully monitored, while all students enrolled in VET courses are mentored to ensure their achievement in their other classes is not compromised.

Students, teachers and leaders did highlight the pedagogical practice of some teachers and appreciated their use of ICT in lessons, sharing of teaching tools and innovative practice, encouragement of higher-order problem-solving skills and group tasks. The Leadership Team is hoping increased engagement in the STEM program will further enhance students' involvement in creativity, creative thinking and problem-solving. Unreliable connectivity and a lack of quality ICT devices across the school continue to be a problem. This was raised in interviews by students, staff and parents, as the major concern.

Almost all teachers raised concerns about the impact of current facilities on their ability to challenge and engage all of their students, namely, sharing of, and access to, quality and challenging resources, as well as limited group work, due to limited classroom space in the junior school. The school is expecting additional classrooms shortly.

Teachers did comment that, despite training in growth mindsets as part of ECD Partnership Professional Development, there is not a consistent focus on excellence and high achievement. Many students are happy with a 'C' and they believed this is also the expectation of some of their teachers, even in SACE. This has been identified as an area for improvement in the school.

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.

How effectively are teachers using the Australian Curriculum and SACE to support and improve student learning?

The focus on the SACE curriculum is traditionally a priority at Kapunda High School. A broad choice of subjects is available and two thirds of senior students participate in some VET. SACE data is readily available and is analysed by teachers, with the support of the Principal and SACE/Senior School Assistant Principal. Traffic light data is analysed every 5 weeks, providing quality feedback to students and teachers. Improvement in all areas of their school's SACE is testimony to the sustained work in this area. Success in the Research Project is seen to be supporting student achievement in other subjects, while most Year 10 students find the Personal Learning Plan helpful in starting conversations about post-school pathways. Improvement in SACE literacy has been largely attributed to the work of a team of effective English teachers.

SACE flexibilities are managed by the SACE Assistant Principal, with a number of students moved into Community Studies B and gaining Special Provisions, as required. There has been an increase in the number of students achieving their required ATAR and post-school tertiary destination. A small number of students are enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program, several of whom continue to participate in one or more subjects on campus to support possible SACE completion.

The Australian Curriculum has been implemented under the guidance of the Principal. The four Phase 1 subjects have Learning and Assessment Plans; conversations about task design and moderation are common

according to the teachers interviewed. Teachers in the other faculties believe they have almost completed their documentation and are using A-E grades. All the teachers believed their A-E grades are authentic as a result of frequent internal moderation. They have undertaken moderation with Eudunda Area School in 2015, however, there were some limitations due to their secondary component. They believe their geographical location is impacting on their capacity to use pedagogies that challenge and more fully engage their students, and are looking for more leadership and faculty time to develop a better understanding of the AC intent, and to create strategies to increase both teacher and student enjoyment of lessons.

The capabilities are a focus in most teachers' work, with the Principal driving the inclusion of problem-solving units in junior school maths. Digital technology skills are encouraged by a small group of highly skilled teachers who are negotiating for equitable time in the Year 8 timetable. Sharing of classes and equipment, and flexible group work, is a challenge for most teachers because of the widely spread location of classrooms. Implementation of an integrated STEM focus is in its infancy, and confined to some preliminary work by a small group of interested science and design and technology teachers, led by the Deputy Principal.

It was very evident to all members of the Review Panel that there is a strong element of collegiality within faculties, with most teachers willing to share resources, share faculty responsibilities and promote their subject area. They are proud of their SACE data, have pride in their work, and are supportive of the directions of the Principal and the Site Improvement Plan.

However, this same level of cohesion and consistency was not evident between faculties. Work has not yet begun on developing a Year 8 to 12 curriculum and quality teaching framework, and there are different expectations with regard to storage of resources, student access to materials, use of rubrics, the provision and receipt of student feedback, sharing of equipment and excursions, and the inclusion of innovative and challenging pedagogy in lessons. There is some high quality educational practice evident and this is appreciated by the students.

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.

How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?

Kapunda High School has an academic tradition that is respected, supported and promoted by parents and the local and wider community. The students are very proud of their school's history, and the homestead that is heritage-listed and is now a refurbished office area. There is a widespread positive culture that has emerged in the past few years, developed through the commitment and passion of the Principal and her leaders. There has also been a change in demographics of the student population over this time, with less than 50% of the student cohort now living within the local community. An increase in enrolments, and subsequent pressure on facilities, is now a tension within the school and community.

The Principal, and her executive Leadership Team, have worked hard to focus the efforts of teachers and faculty leaders on improvement in student achievement and the quality of the teaching and learning. The school has a commitment to self-review, and all staff are aware of the targets articulated in the Site Improvement Plan. Enrolment and facility pressures, changes in leadership positions resulting in a number of new and inexperienced leaders, and changes in the expectations of teachers, many of whom want to be part-time, has made progress difficult at times. A small number of teachers have been resistant to these changes.

It was clearly evident that most leaders are good managers who are struggling to provide the educational leadership that many teachers are looking for. As in many small schools, several leaders have multiple roles, including leadership of a faculty and a year level. They admitted to finding this difficult and believed they spent most of their time supporting teachers with managing student behaviour.

As a result, a number of teachers are taking on some faculty leadership roles. The Principal strongly encourages distributed leadership as a strategy to build capacity, which faculty leaders have attempted, with mixed success. However, some teachers are aspiring leaders, and are appreciating opportunities provided for them within the school, including the role of a year level manager. They are looking for more professional development in educational leadership and leadership of others, in particular, dealing with conflict and

supporting under-performing and early career teachers.

Year level managers use data to track student wellbeing and achievement and support teachers in the junior school. The senior school Assistant Principal works with the senior school year level managers to monitor the wellbeing and achievement of the Year 11 and 12 students. Students did not see student behaviour as a major issue at the school, and also believed that there is little harassment and bullying. Any issues are immediately dealt with by year level managers and this was reinforced by parents, who are pleased with the school's intervention and communication processes.

Performance and Development Plans (PDP) have been in place for a number of years, with line management processes clearly defined, and an expectation of peer observation and feedback. It was evident that there is a need by leadership to refocus staff back to this program, including collection of student feedback. Currently, students have little input into the quality of their learning, although the role of the Student Representative Council is respected and students believe they have a strong role in school governance. They are particularly proud of their work in instigating and achieving uniform changes and managing the school socials.

Inconsistency in expectations of leaders, particularly in the use of DayMap, was the major cause of frustration for students and their parents. Unreliable internet connectivity, variations in teacher and leader expectations about ICT use in classes, as well as inconsistent use of DayMap by teachers in uploading assignments, learning assessment plans and providing online feedback, were the issues constantly raised with the Review Panel. In addition, currently, teachers are able to store resources and student information on their own hard drives, on the school's internal hard drive, or on DayMap, which is an issue for the school's ICT Manager. Concerns have been raised in the community and at the Governing Council about the cost of devices, equitable access to devices, safety of storage at school, connectivity at home and teachers' homework expectations. The school's leadership is being challenged to resolve these discrepancies and concerns, and provide a contemporary learning environment and communication processes that will support the students and their families.

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

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practices that are contributing significantly to school improvement at Kapunda High School:

[There is a whole-school commitment to the history and traditions of the school, including success for all students at SACE Stage 2.](#) This is evident not only in the pride students have in the restoration of the original homestead, but also in discussions with current and past students, teachers, parents and community members, all of whom were keen to contribute to the review. Many school events are passionately discussed, and there is active and sustained support from the community, including support for VET from local businesses and the council, and scholarships provided by the Kapunda High School Centenary Foundation.

[Opportunities for all students to become engaged in the school, and support for them to achieve, particularly in the SACE, are impressive for a small school.](#) This includes the range of traditional SACE academic options, VET, sport, the Learning Support Centre and use of MacQLit. This is the result of ongoing community respect and support for the school and the commitment of, and astute strategic and resource planning by, the Principal.

OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

Kapunda High School continues to be respected within the local and wider school community, with enrolments growing and demonstrated growth in student achievement that is at or above what would be expected of a school in a similar context. Self-review processes are regularly and strategically used to determine areas for celebration and improvement, and there is community support for the current Site Improvement Plan.

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

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.
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.
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.
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.

Based on the school's current performance, Kapunda 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.



Kristen Masters
PRINCIPAL
KAPUNDA 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 Kapunda High School has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

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 88.2%.

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 2016, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 74% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2014 and 2016, the trend has been upwards from 55% to 74%. The school is achieving higher than the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2016 Year 9 NAPLAN Reading, 17% of students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 38%, or 10 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016, and 58%, or 14 students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016.

Numeracy

In 2016, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 68% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under 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 2016 Year 9 NAPLAN Numeracy, 10% of students achieved in the top two bands. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 29%, or 5 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2015, and 57%, or 8 students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2016, 66% of students in February and 98% 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 little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For the successful completion of compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2016: 92% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Literacy units, 94% successfully completed their Stage 1 Numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

Ninety-eight percent of grades achieved in the 2016 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Eighteen percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 22 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2016.

Nineteen percent of students achieved an 'A' Grade, and 44% achieved a 'B' Grade in 2016 SACE Stage 2 subjects. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline averages for the 'A' Grade and 'B' Grade respectively.

In terms of 2016 tertiary entrance, 59% of students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There were also 3 students who were successful at achieving a merit.