

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Valley View Secondary School

Conducted in February 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 Kathryn Entwistle, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Joe Priolo, 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:
 - Aboriginal Community Education Transition Officer (ACETO)
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - School Support Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Valley View Secondary School caters for young people from year 8 to year 12. It is situated 16kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 341 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 278. The local partnership is Montague.

The school has an ICSEA score of 958 and is classified as Category 3 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 42% of families eligible for School Card, 9% Aboriginal students, 23% with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, and 13% students with a disability. There are 2% of young people in care.

In 2020, the school leadership team consists of an acting principal since term 2, 2019, an assistant principal, a student wellbeing leader, 6 Band 1 faculty leaders and four house managers.

There are 22.5 FTE teachers including 5 in the early years of their career and 4 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR directions were:

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| Direction 1 | Provide a learning environment where teachers can consistently focus on high achievement for all students. |
| Direction 2 | Develop a whole-school curriculum framework that is consistently documented and includes all learning areas, so that engaging and innovative pedagogy, challenging task design, and relevant assessment tasks, are common practice. |
| Direction 3 | Reconceptualise the leadership structure to enable a greater focus on learning, curriculum, and whole-school improvement and accountability. |
| Direction 4 | Ensure data is efficiently produced and easily accessed, and staff are accountable for its use in informing improved practice and achievement of outcomes for all students. |

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

The school's response to previous review directions has been rigorous, and has resulted in significant change in some areas. Direction 1 has been addressed through a review and renewal of school values, the behaviour education policy, expectations of students' potential and the concept of accountability for all. Conditions for effective student learning have improved notably, which is an achievement acknowledged and celebrated across the school community.

The establishment of agreed approaches to pedagogical implementation and task design has been undertaken at the school. The 'Before, During and After' (BDA) model to progress students' reading skills has been explored across faculties. Agreed task design proformas have been developed and introduced through faculty meetings. Students report that in 2020 teaching is more 'innovative'. The panel agrees that to fully implement challenging task design and consistent pedagogical approaches, the school will need to continue their work in this area, as variance in teaching practice is evident across the school.

The leadership structure has been reconceptualised to focus on the teaching and learning agenda. Leaders' roles are clear and the historical practice of duality of responsibility has been resolved. The

recent establishment of the House model, alongside rejuvenated approaches to behaviour education, has seen management of student concerns or issues more streamlined and efficient.

Line of inquiry 2 of this report elaborates on the school's response to direction 4.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

To what extent are staff supported to improve their practice in the identified challenge areas?

The recent iteration of the Site Improvement Plan (SIP) is reflective of effective, evidence-based planning. The improvement imperatives have been strategically developed and consultation has resulted in widespread understanding of the school's priorities. All staff and parents with whom the panel spoke are conversant with the school's goals and direction. Teachers report that leaders employ an educational leadership model and regularly discuss teaching, learning, and improvement. Staff report that a coherent narrative is promoted by a leadership team focused on learning. Teachers and leaders across faculties commonly discuss the challenges of practice and the connection with their work.

In some faculties, professional learning has influenced trials of, and changes to, teacher practice. Some teachers discussed the availability of resources to support them in responding to challenges of practice and to introduce a stronger literacy component to their teaching. The panel acknowledges the work of faculty leaders in focusing discussions on valid areas for improvement. It will be crucial to continue to work together to develop fully consistent planning that ensures every teacher, in every faculty, accesses coherent and aligned professional learning opportunities.

A variance of the impact that capacity building systems have on improving teacher practice was made apparent to the panel. Teachers reported that in 2019 and 2020, performance and development processes are more aligned with the SIP. Documentation from 2019 performance and development processes confirmed that teachers' goals, in the main, reflect school priorities. What is less apparent is the strategic process and ongoing follow-up that the teacher and line manager will engage in to ensure the teacher achieves the identified goal. Most teachers report that after the initial performance and development conversation, actions to achieve the agreed goal is at their discretion, and that there are limited opportunities for monitoring or seeking feedback on performance. Whilst informal and encouraging 'catch-ups' may occur incidentally, the opportunity to formalise and systematise approaches to performance and development is evident.

Leaders' capability to conduct professional learning conversations and performance and development processes to build the capacity of others will be a critical consideration when progressing agreed actions.

Direction 1 **Build the capacity of teachers and leaders to implement the challenges of practice and agreed actions, through consistent, rigorous professional learning and performance and development processes that directly impact and influence practice.**

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Improvement planning is clearly data informed and the profile of data and the value of its place in designing plans has been raised at the school. All teaching staff indicated an appreciation of the importance of data in meeting students' needs. The panel viewed documents staff have generated that identified students' grade and PAT band achievement. Against each student, teachers had posed perceptions regarding the reason they thought the student had achieved that outcome. Students' engagement and attendance were commonly perceived as barriers to potential achievement. The panel notes that diagnosis of the student's PAT assessment, or reflection on teaching practice and pedagogy, did not inform this inquiry. Leaders discussed their intent to continue to develop a more evidentiary approach to the analysis of students' achievement and to use findings to promote teachers' self-reflection. The panel agrees that evidence-based and defensible findings will further inform tailored and engaging learning.

Some staff discussed having accessed either PAT, NAPLAN or SACE data to identify opportunities for improvement. This was in the main expressed as 'moving' students through bands or improving grade achievement. Deeper analysis to identify students' misconceptions and to inform teaching points was not common. Many staff reported that data is used to identify students requiring intervention as an important and intentional approach. However, reports that teachers use data to inform planning for higher performing, or students at standard, were more limited.

The importance of differentiation and its value in supporting all students' needs is widely understood. It was uniformly reported that 'teachers want students to do well'. Teachers explain that they will vary expectations, due dates, work-output and the manner in which students demonstrate their learning. Students commended teachers' readiness to offer extra support for those who struggle. Evidence that teachers approach planning from a data informed position, one that is responsive to analysis that identifies each student's miscues, misconceptions or strengths, is not yet highly apparent. This constitutes the next, value-adding step in the school's data informed direction.

Direction 2 Meet the needs of all students and ensure informed, differentiated planning by continuing to raise the profile of data and building the capacity of both teachers and leaders to use data analytically and responsively.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

To what extent do teachers ensure that students have authentic influence in their learning?

The recent review of conditions that enable effective learning has seen the school culture emerge where students are well-placed to understand and influence school improvement. Students articulately explain the reason for new structures and processes and value the opportunity they provide to maximise a focus on learning.

Significant work has been undertaken to ensure students are provided with valid and constructive feedback, through varying forums and approaches that positively impact on learning. Many students expressed their appreciation of the input teachers offer and how this has supported improvement. In a few instances, students explained that teachers also actively seek their input regarding the efficacy of their practice. Some teachers discussed how student input had helped them understand misconceptions that they were previously unaware of. These teachers described scaffolds they now provide to ensure greater student connection with the learning.

SACE performance standards are reportedly influential in supporting senior students to monitor and adjust their progress and in attaining a desired grade. Students in years 8 to 10 access rubrics or success criteria, which in some instances refer to the skills they will develop, as informed by the Australian Curriculum. The panel noted that many of these scaffolds provided to students referenced the inclusions required for successful completion of an assignment or presentation, rather than the actual achievement standards.

A few examples of students setting goals were apparent. Students reported that Home Group sessions might see provided activities where they set goals regarding some areas for improvement. Evidence that this is influential in positively affecting student achievement was not apparent and this concept remains an area that the school can further develop.

The school's intent to raise student agency in learning is apparent. Recent initiation of the House model sees students provided opportunities to exercise leadership skills, and forums established to seek student input. As the school continues to explore and build student influence in learning, consistent application of teaching strategies that elicit student ownership, and the concept of co-constructed task design, are aspirations to work towards.

Direction 3 Strengthen students' capacity to understand, monitor and influence their learning through collective inquiry into, and implementation of, teaching strategies that elicit effective student agency in learning.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

At Valley View Secondary School, intentional and determined leadership has brought about significant change in culture and conditions for learning for all. Collective review and renewal of traditional norms has seen expectations of staff and students raised, whilst a respectful and unified culture is still evident. Accountability to self and others is an overarching concept to which all members of the school community are responding positively and with pride. All persons with whom the panel spoke with described the changes that have been introduced and their commitment to them. Parents and leaders are aware of the significant difference this has had on community perceptions regarding the school, and in turn, on enrolments.

The panel notes the school's improvement imperatives and the clear focus on effective teaching and learning. The executive leadership team adopt an educational model and inspire teachers to trial and embed changes in practice. The panel is confident that this ensures the school has the capacity to respond to the following directions.

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

- Direction 1** Build the capacity of teachers and leaders to implement the challenges of practice and agreed actions, through consistent, rigorous professional learning and performance and development processes that directly impact and influence practice.
- Direction 2** Meet the needs of all students and ensure informed, differentiated planning by continuing to raise the profile of data and building the capacity of both teachers and leaders to use data analytically and responsively.
- Direction 3** Strengthen students' capacity to understand, monitor and influence their learning through collective inquiry into, and implementation of, teaching strategies that elicit effective student agency in learning.

Based on the school's current performance, Valley View Secondary School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



Andrew Wells
A/DIRECTOR
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND
PRESCHOOLS



Yvette Swaalf
PRINCIPAL
VALLEY VIEW SECONDARY 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 54% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement 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, 9% 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, 29%, or 2 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy 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.

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

In 2019, 7% 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, 33%, or 1 out of 3 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2019, 39% of students enrolled in February and 84% 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, 86% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 89% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 63% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 93% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2019, 89% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 2.3% of grades were at an 'A' level and 31% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents little or no change for the 'A' and 'B' level grades, from the historic baseline averages.

Forty-two percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 26 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2019.

In terms of 2019 tertiary entrance, 35%, or 11 out of 31 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There were also no students who were successful in achieving a merit.

