

Department for Education

External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Modbury High School

Conducted in April 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, they all have been considered and contributed to the development and directions of this report.

This review was conducted by Kathryn Entwistle, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Ngaire Benfell and Heather Makris, Review Principals.

Review Process

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

- Presentation from the principal
- Class visits
- Document analysis
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Staff meeting survey and Site Improvement Plan (SIP) activity
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Support Officers (SSOs)
 - Student groups
 - Teachers

School context

Modbury High School is situated 15 km north-east of Adelaide and was opened in 1965. Slightly increased from 2018, in 2019 the enrolment sits at 730. In 2015, when the first External School Review was conducted, the enrolment was 887.

The school has an ICSEA score of 995 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 3% Aboriginal students, 9% students with disabilities, 34% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 10 young people in care, and 26% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the third year of her tenure, 2 deputy principals, 1 of whom is part-time, 2 assistant principals and 10 senior leaders. In 2019 there are 53 teachers and 25 support staff.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Raise and sustain higher levels of achievement by reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of the 'Performance Grouping' structure to ensure differentiation of the curriculum to engage and challenge every student.
- Direction 2** Raise levels of student achievement by developing assessment rubrics across all learning areas and year levels to provide students with what they need to do to improve, and so that they know what constitutes an A-E grade.
- Direction 3** Improve student achievement and engagement by strengthening performance and development processes, promoting a consistent school-wide approach to provide critical and constructive feedback to support teachers to share best practice, and for teachers to reflect on practice and use this information to improve.
- Direction 4** Strengthen self-review processes and the impact of whole-school improvement processes by regularly collecting, tracking, monitoring and reviewing multiple sources of data to measure the effectiveness of programs and strategies, and to make informed decisions about what should be implemented.

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

Assessment rubrics have been introduced to the school since the previous ESR with evidence of this across the school. These rubrics identify the criteria of A-E grades and are provided to middle years students and in senior secondary years, allowing students to monitor progress towards performance standards. Students report that these scaffolds have greater impact when the teacher introduces and then continues to refer to the criteria. Some criteria in rubrics are more product or effort-based and leaders acknowledge the need to deepen the alignment of rubrics with the Australian curriculum standards.

Performance and Development processes (PDP) are more structured and formalised in 2019. Meetings with line managers are routinely conducted and goals for improvement closely aligned with the school's priorities. A number of teachers report seeking and responding to student feedback as valuable in growing their practice. Line managers have participated in professional learning that allows them to

conduct observations and a number of teachers report that this has supported their professional growth. Clarity regarding expectations of teachers to engage in observations will further strengthen this initiative.

Whilst the concept of authentic differentiated practice is more widely understood by staff in 2019, evidence indicated, and leaders agree, it remains an area for further development. This will be discussed against Line of Inquiry three in this report.

The following report identifies the school's current position regarding self-review and improvement planning.

Lines of inquiry

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

How effectively does the school use improvement planning processes to raise student achievement?

The process undertaken to establish the school's three goals was conducted collaboratively. An early start in term three saw leaders provide teachers with a selection of NAPLAN, PAT and SACE data in order to identify areas for growth. As a result, almost all teachers, including those new to the school, are able to articulate the three goals on the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Support staff report less certainty regarding the process undertaken or the priorities. It is understood that there are plans to include ancillary staff in a whole school planning and review day later this semester.

The first goal, to improve the reading capabilities of year nine students, sees the challenge of practice identify a common approach to developing students' capabilities. The panel acknowledges that at this early stage, teachers have already accessed professional learning, led by an external provider, which has allowed them to explore concepts such as the strategies that enable comprehension. Many teachers discuss the importance of incorporating reading as a focus within their learning area and how they are working on plans to incorporate this. Learning area coordinators discuss the professional learning they have engaged in and how they will continue to present this learning to their teams to ensure reading practices are embedded.

In preparation for the review, investigation of 2016-2018 NAPLAN data made evident that students' writing skills are declining. In 2018 44% of year nine students met SEA. In discussion with leaders, it was reported that this issue is understood and that the focus on reading is intended as an entry point to improve writing. The panel acknowledges this approach. However, uncertainty regarding the focus of literacy improvement exists. Staff report varied perceptions about which areas of literary teaching are targeted for improvement and why. Whilst a few staff understand reading is the entry point for improvement in writing, this is not widely understood and teachers' awareness of data that determines achievement in writing is limited. There is a need to strengthen all staff's understanding of the literacy priority in order to further connect their work with this improvement imperative.

Direction 1 Establish clarity regarding literacy improvement by ensuring the data sets used to identify priorities are evident to all staff, and that literacy goals are fully understood and actions consistently implemented.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Opportunities for students to engage with teaching that inspires and challenges thinking are evident in some areas of the school. Senior years students report teaching that involves 'Flip' learning, access to google classroom and the provision of ongoing, formative feedback. Opportunities for collaborative learning are reportedly more common in the senior years' classes.

Students uniformly describe effective teaching and learning as that which is collaborative, practical, purposeful and stimulating. Evidence sourced through conversation with staff, and class visits, made clear that some staff are working towards teaching that engages students. Some students are provided opportunity to ask, rather than answer, questions. Some participate in learning that is highly intentional and relevant to their lives and interests. In some classes, rubrics and success criteria allow students to independently monitor and evaluate their progress.

The panel agrees there is an opportunity to broaden this form of pedagogy across the school, as what students term 'text book' learning and summative assignments are still common practice. The panel saw students completing workbooks, responding to closed questions and encouraged to work quietly on their own.

It is clear that the leader has a sophisticated understanding of effective and contemporary practice. The panel commends the leader's approach to classroom visits and commitment to speaking with students about their learning. The intent to develop pedagogical approaches that stimulate learning and engage students is highly apparent. The school is well placed to develop an agreed approach to teaching practice and to extend the effective practice currently operating in some areas of the school. Implementation will be developed through the school's rigorous Professional Learning forums and Performance and Development processes.

Direction 2 Develop school-wide agreements regarding pedagogy that stimulate and challenge all students' thinking and implement this consistently across the school.

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE STUDENT LEARNING

To what extent are all students, including Aboriginal students and other priority groups, achieving in their learning?

Planning for the ESR process ensured that this line of inquiry would focus on differentiated practice and the expectations staff have of learners.

A common theme throughout the ESR was that once a student begins year 11, expectations teachers have of them are greater. Staff, students and parents uniformly report the importance year 11 and 12 have in secondary schooling. Accordingly, the panel heard that expectations of achievement in years 8-10 were less rigorous. Whilst students agree that some teachers always want them to 'do their best' it is evident that aspiration for middle years (MY) students is less demanding. MY students discuss motivation as their responsibility, whereas senior students explain that teachers see it as their obligation to ensure students achieve high grades. The mantra throughout years 11 and 12 is 'B or better', whereas MY students and parents agree a 'C' grade is generally anticipated.

The concept of differentiated practice was a direction forged from the previous ESR, and remains an area for development in 2019. Most staff with whom the panel spoke regarded differentiation as relating to a student's need for intervention; that they are not meeting standard. In most instances, it is reported that a student in this situation would exit class to access assistance in the Learning Support Centre. Discussion of accommodations or interventions provided in class was not commonly apparent. Students meeting or

exceeding standard are reportedly directed to help others with their work or in some cases, given 'extra work'. Teaching that enables varied points of entry or that is designed to allow students to explore concepts and develop their understanding according to need is evident in a few classes, but not broadly enacted across the school.

Indigenous students with whom the panel spoke agree that expectations of their potential to succeed depend upon which teacher they have. These students report that they have had learning plans documented, however uncertainty regarding the content, or impact, of the plans was at times apparent. Equally, plans for students identified with a disability, whilst reportedly available on the learner management system, are not widely reported as informing teachers' planning.

Strengthening the concept of high expectations for all learners and ensuring students' learning needs are met is the responsibility of all teachers are areas for further development. Teaching tailored to maximise students' potential will assuredly contribute to the school's intent to raise learning outcomes for all.

Direction 3 Raise expectations for all learners by developing a school-wide understanding of differentiated practice and confirming that it is the responsibility of all teachers to plan for the needs of all students in their care.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2019

At Modbury High School, professional learning teams have been established to progress contemporary practice across the school. Teachers discuss formative assessment, questioning techniques and the concept of two-way feedback as areas they have explored. The school's reading goal has also been the focus of professional learning as staff work to incorporate literacy learning across faculties. The panel is confident that the leader's focus on effective pedagogy and determination to establish high expectations for all will see the school continue a successful process of improvement.

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

- Direction 1** Establish clarity regarding literacy improvement by ensuring the data sets used to identify priorities are evident to all staff, and that literacy goals are fully understood and actions consistently implemented.
- Direction 2** Develop school-wide agreement regarding pedagogy that stimulate and challenge all students' thinking and implement this consistently across the school.
- Direction 3** Raise expectations for all learners by developing a school wide understanding of differentiated practice and confirming that it is the responsibility of all teachers to plan for the needs of all students in their care.

Based on the school's current performance, Modbury 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 67% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For 2018 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2018, 11% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 27% or 14 of 52 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9, and 54% or 13 of 24 students from year 7 remain in the upper bands at year 9 in 2018.

Numeracy

In 2018, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 73% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2016 and 2018, the trend has been downwards from 78% in 2016 to 73% in 2018.

For 2018 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving above the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

Between 2016 and 2018, the school has consistently achieved higher in NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools. Notably, the school has consistently achieved higher than similar groups of students since 2011.

In 2018, 15% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 41% or 15 of 37 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9 and 62% or 18 of 29 students from year 7 remain in the upper bands at year 9 in 2018.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2018, 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. 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; 99.4% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 96.5% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 89.5% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

Ninety nine point four percent of grades achieved in the 2018 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Eight percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 51 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2018.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2018, 25% of grades achieved were an 'A' grade, and 49% of grades a 'B' grade. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average for the combined 'A' and 'B' grades, with an increase in 'A' grades from 20% in 2016 to 25% in 2018.

In terms of 2018 tertiary entrance, 85% or 96 of 113 potential students achieved an ATAR and 91% or 103 of 113, a TAFE SA selection score. There were also 5 students who were successful at achieving a merit.