

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Hallett Cove School

Conducted in March 2021



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 Meredith Edwards, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Peter McKay and Marion Coady, Review Principals.

Review Process

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

- Presentation from the Principal and his leadership team
- Class visits across R-12
- Attendance at a brief meeting with staff and observations by the team of the scheduled moderation meeting
- Document analysis
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives who are parents of students in the school
 - Leaders
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers

School context

Hallett Cove School caters for students from reception to year 12. The school is located 21kms from the Adelaide CBD. It is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education's Index of Educational Disadvantage. The local partnership is Marion Coast. The school has a 2019 ICSEA score of 1018.

The enrolment in 2021 is 1187 students, with 30% of students eligible for School Card assistance. The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 2% children/young people in care, 8% students with disabilities, and 3% students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The school was founded in 1987 to cater initially for reception to year 10, expanding to cater for years 11 and 12 in 1996. The school is organised into 3 levels of schooling: junior school (reception – year 6), middle school (years 7-9) and senior school (years 10-12), with a head of school in each sector.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal, a Deputy Principal in his 2nd year acting as Principal, 2 Heads of School, 7 Assistant Principals, 6 Band 1 Coordinators, 95 teachers and 40 school support officers (SSOs).

There are 95 teachers, including 5 in the early years of their career and 30 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR directions were:

- Direction 1** Use the STEM agenda, an ICT strategy and a range of intervention strategies to drive cohesive and contemporary pedagogical practice that engages all students and is implemented by all staff across R-12.
- Direction 2** Strengthen the R-12 continuum of learning through more effective use of data, backwards planning and moderation.
- Direction 3** Build the capacity of all teachers by continuing to provide access to quality professional learning opportunities and ensuring leaders monitor and evaluate the use of the learning to provide quality teaching for all students.

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

The leadership team have responded to the previous ESR directions with focus and fidelity. The 2021 ESR team were provided with evidence of the use of STEM resources and pedagogies to support learning in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics across the school. Similarly, the leaders' learning about Learning Design, Assessment and Moderation (LDAM) has influenced the school's focus on high impact pedagogies in professional collaboration groups. The involvement of maths teachers in the *Thinking Maths* program is evident in the promotion of multiple ways of solving a mathematical problem. This is referenced in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The Department's guidebooks for literacy and numeracy are used strategically.

Key leaders are skilled in their sophisticated use of multiple datasets to identify levers for learning improvement for all learners, irrespective of ability level. Growth in student achievement is identified in each teacher's professional development plan along with strategies to support students who are just

below SEA and HB and those at risk of dropping below SEA. Learning growth is measured through grades, standardised test results and in the upwards shift in SACE grades. Executive team leaders upskill middle managers and teachers in the use of data to monitor the impact of teaching and intervention strategies.

The school used COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 as an opportunity for curriculum mapping and updating documentation and agreements. This work was informed by the backwards mapping of the skills and knowledge to build student capabilities for success in SACE. Recently, the school has returned to its focus on the moderation of teacher judgement against the AC Achievement Standards. The Review Team observed productive moderation activities. The current ESR has again identified the need for classroom observations to monitor the fidelity and frequency of the use of agreed teaching strategies in all classes for all students.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

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

A clear line of sight between the SIP and key vehicles of site improvement is evident at Hallett Cove School through:

- a rigorous focus on data gathering and analysis in choosing and monitoring the impact of strategies through site improvement planning steps
- aligned professional learning
- aligned performance development plans with students identified to track
- a comprehensive curriculum review and planning in 2020
 - scope and sequence
 - unit overviews
 - master rubrics to guide rubrics in areas of study
 - assessment tasks
 - moderation and benchmarking processes which use rubrics to check if an assessment task allows students to demonstrate learning at an A or B grade.
- agreements relating to the challenges of practice
- collaborative learning through Pedagogy Action Groups.

In redesigning the former Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs), teacher groups have more choice about which high-impact teaching strategies they will trial and evaluate. Choices are drawn from the *Visible Learning* list of effective teaching practices. Some Pedagogy Action Groups are furthering their understanding of the role of formative assessment. Others are working on how to support students to understand the criteria for success by unpacking assessment rubrics. There is evidence of the continued use of successful evidence-based teaching strategies from the former TLCs. Data is used widely to monitor and enhance improvement strategies.

The school's site improvement processes could be further strengthened by the re-introduction of more formal classroom observation to ensure that pedagogical agreements are being implemented consistently across all classes for all students, with fidelity and frequency. Written feedback to teachers, about effectiveness of pedagogical practice that engage and challenge all learners, will strengthen the improvement strategy. Formal processes for classroom observation with written feedback would augment each teacher's professional development plan, which identifies students to track who are just below SEA or Higher Bands along with interventions to support achievement growth.

Direction 1 Implement more formal processes for classroom observation with written feedback to teachers to ensure pedagogical agreements are implemented with fidelity and frequency in all classes.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

There is a well-established focus by leaders in promoting intentional teaching to engage and challenge learners in the school. Teachers across the school draw from previous work with an international consultant on tools and processes to nurture independent student learning along with current programs such as LDAM, *Visible Learning* and *Thinking Maths*. The shared focus is on evidence-based strategies to improve the effectiveness of teaching and the conditions for student learning.

Assessment rubrics, as a tool for formative feedback, are embedded in all classes. Expert rubrics are used by teachers who unpack requirements for higher band performance in assessment tasks in student-friendly language. Annotated exemplars are used by many teachers to encourage students to aim for more than a C grade. The school's policy, on drafting work, supported by the use of *Google Classrooms*, is also valued by students. However, senior students commented that not all teachers provided quality feedback.

Similarly, the school's focus on close reading as Challenges of Practice to raise literacy achievement has variable implementation across the school. The explicit teaching of the steps of close reading is most consistently used in the junior and senior schools. Middle school students were less familiar with the process. By contrast, maths teachers spoke with enthusiasm about the success they are observing due to closer attention to the literacy component of maths problems and investigations. They attributed this to both close reading strategies and their learning through the *Thinking Maths* program.

There is an opportunity to structure multiple entry points in assessment tasks to engage and challenge all learners. Unit overviews do not highlight multiple entry points to cater for students with a range of abilities and interests. Neither do the assessment tasks document differentiated opportunities for students to enter the learning and demonstrate their progress. Staff have access to highly skilled inclusive education leaders, but students would also benefit from further attention to inclusive assessment tasks.

Direction 2 Review and refine curriculum documentation to highlight the importance of differentiated entry points into learning and assessment tasks to engage and challenge all learners.

Effective leadership

How well does the school's strategic leadership support and sustain a culture of learning and improvement?

There is an established commitment at Hallett Cove School to support and sustain a culture of learning and improvement for both staff and students. This is achieved strategically by members of the executive team. "Scaffolded" was a key word used regularly by both leaders and teachers in discussions with the review panel. Executive leaders scaffold rigorous analysis of multiple datasets with middle managers who then scaffold discussions with teachers about data which demonstrates a need for deliberate intervention. Many middle managers confidently guide discussions about monitoring, evaluating and refining the impact of the teaching strategies selected by teachers as foci for their collaborative work in Pedagogy Action Groups. Similarly, many teachers spoke of supporting students to use strategies to progress in their literacy and numeracy learning. Some used the example of close reading as a strategy to develop inferential reading skills. Others gave examples of how they demonstrate to students the importance of trying different ways of problem solving in maths. Students across the school confirmed that many teachers explicitly teach these skills and that they share the language of learning with them.

The role of middle managers in strategically building the capacity of teachers to develop a range of effective teaching strategies is central to raising student achievement. This level of leadership plays an important role in sustaining a culture of learning and professional reflection. The review team spoke with a number of leaders who spoke confidently of their evaluation of the effectiveness of particular strategies to support high levels of student achievement. Staff appreciate both formal and informal opportunities to share ideas with these middle managers about teaching strategies to support and stretch students as learners. Not all middle managers demonstrated the same level of confidence in sharing expertise on specific whole-school strategies identified in the SIP or selected from *Visible Learning* as foci of Pedagogy Action Groups.

Direction 3 Continue to build the instructional leadership capabilities of all line managers to strategically support teachers to implement the agreed curriculum and contemporary evidence-based pedagogies.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Despite changes in leadership in recent years, the school is to be commended for its continued focus of sustaining a culture of learning and improved teaching. A wealth of evidence provided to the review panel demonstrates that this has been achieved through a shared focus on effective teaching and comprehensive site improvement planning processes. There is widespread commitment to addressing both the wellbeing and learning needs of the students from reception to year 12. Leaders, staff and members of the governing council commented favourably on the progress that the school has made since the previous external school review. Not only has the school attended to the previous 2017 directions, but it has embraced the literacy and numeracy foci of the site improvement planning processes since 2018. There is a clear sense of the school enacting its published vision which references higher-order thinking to empower students who are effective problem solvers, able to take risks in their learning.

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

- Direction 1** **Implement more formal processes for classroom observation with written feedback to teachers to ensure pedagogical agreements are implemented with fidelity and frequency in all classes.**
- Direction 2** **Review and refine curriculum documentation to highlight the importance of differentiated entry points into learning and assessment tasks to engage and challenge all learners.**
- Direction 3** **Continue to build the instructional leadership capabilities of all line managers to strategically support teachers to implement both the agreed curriculum and contemporary evidence-based pedagogies.**

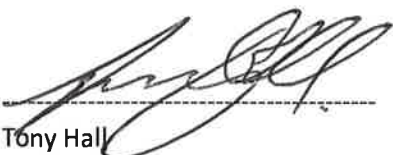
Based on the school's current performance, Hallett Cove School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



Kerry Dollman
Director
Review, Improvement and Accountability



Anne Millard
Executive Director
Partnerships, Schools and Preschools



Tony Hall
Principal
Hallett Cove 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 the early years reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2019 59% of year 1 and 70% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 86% of year 3 students, 87% of year 5 students, 80% of year 7 students and 63% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5, and 7 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. For Year 9 it represents a decline.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for years 3 (83% to 86%) and 5 (73% to 87%) and 7 (71% to 80%) has been upwards.

For 2019 years 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN reading, the school is within the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2019, 58% of year 3, 29% of year 5 and 26% of year 7 and 10% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, 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, 53% or 18 out of 34 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 61% or 14 out of 23 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, 29% or 6 out of 21 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 88% of year 3 students, 80% of year 5 students, 73% of year 7 students and 74% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 9 this result represents an improvement, and for year 7, little or no change, from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for years 3, 5, and 9 has been upwards, from 84% to 88% for year 3, 74% to 80% for year 5, 71% to 73% for year 7 and 62% to 74% for year 9.

In 2019, 46% of year 3, 13% of year 5, 23% of year 7 and 7% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. These results represent an improvement from the historic baseline average an improvement for all year levels.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 33% or 8 out of 24 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 70% or 9 out of 13 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, 29% or 4 out of 14 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2020, 72% 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.

Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2020; 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 99.2% 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 2020, 97% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 17% of grades were at an 'A' level and 43% of grades were at an 'B' level. This result represents a decline for the 'C-' level or higher grade, an improvement for the 'A' level grade and little or no change for the 'B' level grade, from the historic baseline averages. Between 2018 and 2020, the trend for 'C-' or higher has been downwards, from 99% in 2018 to 97% in 2020.

Thirty-three percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 32 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance, 69% of students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There were also 4 students who were successful in achieving a merit.

In 2020 the school had a moderation adjustment of 2.6%.