

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Grant High School

Conducted in September 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 Christine Bell, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Rosie Heinicke and Warren Symonds, Review Principals.

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
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers

School context

Grant High School caters for students from year 8 to 12. It is situated 436kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 893. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 820. The local partnership is Mount Gambier 1.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 978 and is classified as Category 3 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 6% Aboriginal students, 5% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 5% children/young people in care and 21% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the first year of their second tenure, five Band 3 Community Leaders who are responsible for transition, behavior management, wellbeing, and direct connection with families. There are 12 Band 1 leaders with responsibility for:

- Vocational Pathways / career education
- SAASTA programs
- HPE / Wellbeing across curriculum
- HASS / Powerful learning and languages
- Wellbeing
- Design and technology / digital technologies
- Science / STEM promotion
- ARTS / assessment and reporting
- English / effective feedback
- Cross disciplinary subjects / curriculum pathways
- Math / data driven improvement strategy

There are 61 teachers including 6 in the early years of their career and 17 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Broaden the opportunity students have to engage in purposeful learning by collectively exploring and identifying agreed pedagogical approaches that enable students to think critically, and ensuring expectations are made explicit across the school.**
- Direction 2** **Enable a collective and strategic approach to improvement and change through the establishment of a collaborative, ongoing cycle of self-evaluation, informed by data analysis and systematically implemented over time.**
- Direction 3** **Track student growth accurately and regularly, and design teaching responsive to needs, through the establishment of processes that ensure teachers better understand and utilise data to inform intentional planning.**

Direction 4 Build teacher capacity to respond to school expectations through consistent and influential educational leadership and line management, and the development of regular professional learning forums that are aligned with the school's priorities.

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

Direction 1:

The Principal and the Community Leader in charge of curriculum, have implemented the learning from training at a portfolio level on Teaching Sprints, which has resulted in curriculum leaders now forming a sub-committee of the leadership team. This has led to greater consistency of documentation around learning and assessment plans (LAPS), ensuring a specific focus on the Australian Curriculum (AC) capabilities.

Direction 2:

There is an expectation that South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) data is analysed at a faculty level and is responded to, by teachers. Progressive achievement tests (PAT) Maths and (PAT) Reading data is analysed to varying degrees in English and maths.

Direction 3:

Data is analysed by the Aboriginal and Torrens Strait Islander (ATSI) team to support student improvement. 2021 NAPLAN shows improvement in higher bands for these students in writing and reading. The school recently developed a Band 1 leadership position to drive data improvement strategies for ATSI students across the school.

Direction 4:

The school attracts a significant number of graduate teachers and has focused on supporting them. Designated line managers regularly attend training that enables them to support teachers from graduate to proficient. Over the past two years, 6 emerging leaders have attended the South Australian Secondary Schools Principal Association (SASPA) 'Unleashing Your Leadership Potential' program and this professional learning has enabled two leaders to progress into Band 3 positions.

Lines of inquiry

Effective school improvement planning

How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions for improvement?

Grant High School has had a focus over recent years on developing a rich environment, that allows students to work in a caring space which fosters cultural, emotional, and social wellbeing. The school is to be acknowledged for this work as it has enabled teachers to now focus on teaching, students to focus on learning, and leadership to focus on leading. The panel were presented with evidence of this work through positive conversations with parents and students, who explained how the positive change to school culture has impacted on their sense of belonging, academic aspirations, and overall wellbeing.

Staff have devoted considerable time in building their capacity to use learning sprints as a tool, to intentionally design learning that supports improvement in writing. However, there appears to be some variance in how this is implemented, monitored, and reviewed. Developing a holistic understanding of the school improvement cycle, and ensuring staff are collaboratively engaged at each step of the process, will support continuous improvement informed by evidence of students' learning and effectiveness of best practice strategies.

To strengthen the impact on students' learning, the school can build on this work to develop a whole-school strategic approach to, developing, implementing, and monitoring improvement planning processes that includes frameworks, systems, and statements of expectations. This will support the clear line of sight from the External School Review directions, the school improvement plan (SIP), the professional development plan, professional learning opportunities and improved classroom practice, resulting in improved student learning outcomes.

Quality school improvement planning requires continuous monitoring of teacher pedagogy and the impact this has on students' learning and growth. Holding all to account for improved practice through collaboratively developing and documenting the schools' challenge of practice, will ensure teachers are committed to achieving the school's goals and targets for student learning improvement. The school is well positioned, due to its relentless work around providing excellent conditions for teaching and learning, to develop strategic plans for continuous improvement.

Direction 1 **Ensure consistent growth for all students through the collaborative development and implementation of consistent expectations, and systems, to track, monitor and respond to achievement data.**

Effective teaching and student learning

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

The school has provided a number of opportunities for students to have an authentic voice in decisions that impact their learning. The student leaders articulated how the school has fostered their self-worth and engagement, which has led to them being significantly more motivated academically. Evidence of this was the establishment of the student led development (SLED) group and their contribution to partnering with leaders to make decisions about the new continuous assessment model. This group is also responsible for developing the school mobile phone policy, naming of the new building and being part of the panel to appoint the next student leaders.

Progress checks are used to review and refine practices to improve teaching and learning across the school. Most staff spoken to by the panel had varying understandings of their pedagogical impact on students, and how critical quality pedagogy is to students' engagement in learning and resulting achievement.

Opportunities exist to develop a whole-school strategic approach to embedding high impact teaching strategies that include setting explicit learning intentions, developing success criteria, engaging in peer-to-peer tutoring, feedback loops and student collaborative learning. This will ensure opportunities for students engage in challenging and meaningful education. As these strategies are embedded, teachers and students will develop a consistent use and understanding of the language of learning.

Most teachers indicated a readiness for further developing their craft of teaching and to stretch and inspire their students. This will occur as teachers consistently use assessment for learning strategies to prompt feedback from students that is used to inform, and respond to, the effectiveness of their pedagogical practices. Building staff capacity to differentiate the learning to meet students' needs, prior knowledge, skills, and interest, will build increased engagement and connectedness.

The school has in place a structure of quality leaders that are capable of supporting teachers to successfully develop and action their challenge of practice and are well placed to provide strategic direction that positively impacts teacher practice and student learning.

Direction 2 **Continue to use improvement planning processes that build staff capacity to improve teaching practice and implement high impact strategies to strengthen the impact on student learning.**

Effective leadership

How successfully does the school leadership promote high expectations and quality teaching?

Relationships across the school between students, teachers, ancillary staff, and parents, indicate the school community are working as partners in education, which ensures students' educational and schooling experiences are positive. Governing council members and parents could articulate the school vision and had a solid understanding of the improvement culture that has been established over the previous years by all staff members and the positive impact this has for their children.

The school leadership has developed a culture of autonomy for staff and students to implement innovative methods of teaching and learning and there are clear processes of how these actions are applied. Students and staff, spoken to by the panel, were confident to approach leadership with their ideas and feedback, and felt the process was fair and reasonable.

Some leaders use faculty improvement plans (FIPS) to articulate areas for improvement and contextualise discussion regarding curriculum development and implementation. This work can be expanded upon by leaders collaboratively developing a coherent approach to curriculum and pedagogy, by ensuring curriculum documentation, whole-school agreements or statements of expectations, curriculum mapping and data schedules are developed, are consistent, and are actioned with accountability.

The development of the new continuous assessment and reporting system and the strategic appointment of two data leaders, will support all leaders to review the effectiveness of processes and use data to improve school performance. Opportunities exist to further develop strategic practices, which allow for data led performance management discussions, that ensure teachers effectively track, monitor, and respond to each learners' progress.

All staff spoken to by the panel commented positively of the observations and feedback process used by the site leader. The school can continue to build on this work around feedback for teachers to improve their pedagogical practices by effectively targeting professional learning and performance development processes that balance the needs of the school and that of the individual teacher. Regular feedback to teachers that is aligned to the Australian professional standards for teachers, will support teachers to set goals and targets which are aligned to school priorities, as a platform to review their progress as quality educators.

Direction 3 Develop and implement structures and process that strategically align the work of middle leaders to the school's improvement plan and other priorities that positively impact on teaching practice and learner achievement.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Grant High School is to be commended for its effort to provide a safe, productive, and inclusive environment for all students and staff. The school is well cared for and students demonstrate a proudness of their educational community. The school is well positioned and prepared to welcome the year seven students and the establishment of communities and community leaders, will ensure this transition is seamless. The opportunities for student leaders to handover to the new student leadership team will guarantee authentic student voice remains a high priority as the school continues its learning journey.

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

- Direction 1** **Ensure consistent growth for all students through the collaborative development and implementation of consistent expectations, and systems, to track, monitor and respond to achievement data.**

- Direction 2** **Continue to use improvement planning processes that build staff capacity to improve teaching practice and implement high impact strategies to strengthen the impact on student learning.**

- Direction 3** **Develop and implement structures and process that strategically align the work of middle leaders to the school’s improvement plan and other priorities that positively impact on teaching practice and learner achievement.**

Based on the school’s current performance, Grant High School will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



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Fleur Roachock
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Grant 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 69% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 9 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 9 has been upwards from 64% to 69%.

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

In 2019 19% 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 57% or 23 out of 40 year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2019 the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 70% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 9 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 9 has been downwards from 72% to 70%.

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

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 9 has been downwards from 72% to 70%.

In 2019 15% 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.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 9 has been upwards from 9% to 15%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy 52% or 16 out of 31 from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2020 67% 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. This result for October SACE completion represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2018 and 2020 the trend has been upwards from 96% in 2018 to 98% in 2020.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2020 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 91% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 85% 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, 15% of grades were at an 'A' level and 46% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents little or no change for the 'C-' level or higher grade, a decline for the 'A' level grade and an improvement for the 'B' level grade from the historic baseline averages. Between 2018 and 2020 the trend for 'C-' or higher has seen little or no change.

Thirty-one students completed SACE using VET and there were 77 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance 56% or 60 out of 107 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There were also 6 students who were successful in achieving a merit.

In 2020 the school had a moderation adjustment of 1.7%.