

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Salisbury High School

Conducted in August 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 Rob McLaren , Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and John Tiver and Ray Marino, 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

Salisbury High School caters for year 8 to 12 students. It is situated 26kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 909. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 898 students. The local partnership is Orion.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 933 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 10% Aboriginal students, 20% students with disabilities, 17% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2% children/young people in care and 42% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

There are 352 English as an additional language including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Over 30 different languages are represented in this cohort, with students coming from 24 other countries. There are 45 off-site FLO students.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of tenure, a Deputy Principal, a B4 senior leader for IT/new builds, six B3 senior leaders for senior school, middle school, maths/science/numeracy, HASS/LOTE/International Programs, inclusive and special education. In addition, there is a B2 wellbeing leader who leads the counselling team and 13 B1 Coordinators.

There are 60 teachers including 4 in the early years of their career and 12 Step 9 teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1**     **Develop whole-school agreements on the learner dispositions, capabilities and the processes to monitor and evaluate learner growth.**
- Direction 2**     **Develop whole-school agreements on high-impact pedagogical approaches that would support the further development of teacher practice and enable learning for all students.**
- Direction 3**     **Collaboratively review, develop and align the site priorities, leadership roles and responsibilities, self-review and performance development processes to enable and quality assess their enactment.**

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

Salisbury High School has a strong focus on quality teaching and learning. Since the last review in 2018 significant work focussed on developing a whole school agreement to create a documented quality teaching and learning agreement. Using the powerful learners model, staff developed a whole-school agreement that identifies the learner attributes of students and provides a framework and direction of quality teaching and learning practice. All staff reviewed the agreement during term 2, 2021 and agreed that respecting diversity was an essential and relevant component.

Whole-school agreements developed and implemented are regularly reviewed for Guided Reading, Modelled Reading, Running Records and Levelled Literacy Intervention.

Over the past three years, the school used evidence-based approaches to ensure all learners achieve excellence. The leadership team strategically planned and resourced to build on its work in literacy and SACE improvement. The impact of COVID-19 was significant, but their improvement journey has continued. Stability of the leadership team, and staff in general, allowed for a consistent approach, with a strong ongoing investment in building staff capacity to deliver quality teaching and improved learning outcomes. The school improvement plan (SIP) was modified and expanded due to consultation with staff and leaders, to consolidate their priorities, and ongoing self-review and improvement processes.

The SIP was expanded to include a third goal focusing on improving student numeracy skills. NAPLAN student achievement data in numeracy indicates that this is an area requiring significant improvement. As a result, the focus on numeracy blocks intensified. Numeracy support is available for teachers towards preparation for numeracy blocks and support small group differentiated instruction during weekly numeracy blocks across years 8 to 10. Teachers and leaders in mathematics are accessing professional learning to build their understanding of the Big Ideas in Number. A numeracy team, established early in 2021, identified the need to revisit the first 2 of the Big Ideas generally assumed in a secondary setting ('trusting the count' and 'place value'). The team has sourced, modified and is currently trialling, a diagnostic tool to identify students' individual learning needs across year 8 in numeracy, in these 2 areas of the Big 6. The intention is that in 2022, differentiated numeracy blocks in years 7 and 8, will focus on ensuring all students met these standards.

Performance development and line management processes continue to be a high priority supporting change. A whole-school transparent mapping process was implemented to ensure accountability, consistency and equity occurs. A document on the shared network drive is accessible to all leaders across teaching and support staff, to complete performance and development plan (PDP) processes, classroom observations and access professional learning.

The staff perspective survey provided greater insight and saw adjustments made to their processes and practices, including establishing an ongoing staff team of volunteers to provide feedback to leadership.

## 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?

As part of implementing the SIP, Salisbury High School committed to a narrow and deep focus on reading, writing and numeracy, and a widespread ownership and responsibility to literacy and numeracy blocks. Staff can articulate the school-wide focus and there is a strong connection between the goals for improvement and their role in enacting them. Some staff confidently describe how the challenge of practice was being developed in their classrooms.

The school's recognition of the role of data in improvement is seen through attention given to monitoring student achievement at a whole-school level by leaders and by teachers at a classroom level. Teachers access NAPLAN, PAT, phonics data, as well as school-based grade-point averages and attendance data, and use this to inform their planning to deliver a differentiated curriculum. Analysis of data allows students to access evidence-based literacy and numeracy interventions matched to individual student need.

Staff professional development plans are aligned to the SIP and there are formal and informal processes allowing teachers to give explicit feedback on their practice. Teachers increasingly survey and act on student responses to modify their practice. There is a process to review the SIP annually, using a range of datasets involving a wide range of staff. Leaders analyse end-of-year data and share their findings with teachers, but there is opportunity to involve all staff in the continuous monitoring and reviewing of the SIP and use finer-grained achievement data to measure the impact of intentional teaching strategies over shorter periods of time.

Providing opportunities and processes for staff to participate in intentional, regular, self-reflection, to evaluate the impact of their practice on student learning, will further strengthen and refine teacher pedagogy to deliver on the SIP goals.

**Direction 1** Provide opportunities and processes for teachers to regularly evaluate and reflect on the impact of their practice on student learning to inform next steps.

## Effective teaching and student learning

How effective are teachers using assessment and feedback to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction and support students' learning?

Teachers access a range of data sources on student achievement and wellbeing that enables them to plan learning and assessment tasks to meet individual student needs. Leaders outlined support provided to teachers through the use of agreed planning templates, weekly professional learning time for all teaching staff and agreements of practice outlined in the collaboratively developed quality teacher agreement.

Teachers highlighted that students and parents are informed of learning progress regularly through 5-weekly snapshot, term and semester reports. Students were observed in personal development sessions reviewing this feedback, discussing with teachers and setting goals for improvement. Teachers explained how they used student work samples and rubrics, linked to curriculum performance and achievement standards, to make clear learning expectations and what is needed to improve. Students appreciated that many teachers provided this level of scaffolded support to ensure they were successful.

During classroom observations teachers were using a variety of questioning techniques to check student understanding before progressing to the next steps. Many teachers were observed providing continuous verbal feedback in class and using formative assessment in responses to student drafts and conferencing. Some classes illustrated students engaging in peer and self-assessment strategies. Several students commented that they preferred teachers explaining to them individually or in small groups ways to improve their work.

Leaders emphasised the importance of teachers differentiating learning and assessment for students, to meet the wide range of student needs in classes. Highly effective differentiated practice was seen in literacy and numeracy blocks, EALD classes and intervention classes where there were students with special needs. Students in literacy blocks were grouped based on Running Records testing and then provided with targeted support from teachers and school services officers. Student groupings and approaches changed in response to regular retesting. This level of differentiation appeared in pockets across the school, but was not common practice. Ongoing development of highly effective differentiated learning design and assessment, and use of formative assessment practices will support all learners, including those students in high bands to achieve their personal best.

**Direction 2 Collaboratively strengthen teachers' capacity to design and implement learning experiences that further enable differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge to be an integral aspect of everyday learning for all.**

## Effective leadership

To what extent is leadership capacity developed across the school to improve student learning?

A cohesive and collective culture of responsibility encourages staff to take on leadership roles. Leaders work alongside others to build capacity in staff and build distributed leadership to support student learning. Teachers feel valued and are provided with access to professional learning. The high-level transparency and collegiate nature of leadership resulted in teachers stepping up and leading, often in complex roles.

Leader roles and responsibilities were strategically developed to support the SIP and maintain a clear focus on improved teaching and learning. Leadership are proactive in utilising PDP to support staff and provide accountability. Performance and development plans are aligned to the SIP and regular opportunities for feedback; leadership walkthroughs assist teachers to refine their practice. Focused data conversations and regular tracking and monitoring individual student progress supports teacher planning and programming. A series of formal and informal conversations assist new leaders to hone and adapt their leadership.

Recent review and development of the representative student council resulted in creation of student action teams, which open opportunities for student leadership development. Students are increasingly owning their learning but there is scope to amplify this and further develop student leadership in all areas across the school.

Whilst most teachers are willing and encouraged to lead within the school, processes to build leadership capacity are mostly informal. In order to strategically build capacity, it is essential to establish and document an intentional and planned approach to developing leadership. Having structured processes to identify and prepare future leaders and measure their impact on take-up of their role, will further improve professional practice and improve student learning outcomes.

**Direction 3      Document and embed intentional and strategic structures and processes to develop leadership capacity.**

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

At Salisbury High School the influence of previous ESR directions is seen in the school's improvement. Effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions. The school's planning processes are proven and targeted, effectively using improvement planning and monitoring processes to raise student achievement. Teacher and leader practice is positively affected by effective systems that build capacity. The school is providing effective conditions for student learning.

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

- Direction 1** Provide opportunities and processes for teachers to regularly evaluate and reflect on the impact of their practice on student learning to inform next steps.
- Direction 2** Collaboratively strengthen teachers' capacity to design and implement learning experiences that further enable differentiation, intellectual stretch and challenge to be an integral aspect of everyday learning for all.
- Direction 3** Document and embed intentional and strategic structures and processes to develop leadership capacity.

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



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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 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.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 9 has been upwards, from 49% to 54%.

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

In 2019, 10% 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, 44%, or 10 out of 23 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 47% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 9 has been downwards, from 51% to 47%.

For 2019 year 9 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving lower than 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.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 9 has been upwards, from 1% to 7%.

For those students in 2019, who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 33%, or 5 out of 15 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

### SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2020, 89% 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.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2019, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 97% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 100% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units, and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2020, 99% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 18% of grades were at an 'A' level and 54% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents little or no change for

the 'A' and 'B' level grade from the historic baseline averages.

Sixty-one percent of students completed SACE using VET, and 45 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance, 38%, or 50 out of 131 potential students, achieved an ATAR score.

In 2020, the school had a moderation adjustment of -1.4 average down and 1.0 average up.