

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Adelaide Secondary School of English

Conducted in October 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 Andrew Gilsenan-Reed, 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 the staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Discussions with:
 - Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - Parent groups
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Adelaide Secondary School of English provides an intensive English language program catering for secondary school aged newly arrived students from non-English speaking backgrounds. It is situated 8kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 213. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 419. The local partnership is West Torrens.

The School has a 2020 ICSEA score of 949 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes less than 5% Aboriginal students, 100% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 5% children/young people in care and 79 % of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school population is highly diverse in terms of cultural background and first language. There are 22 languages recorded as being first languages. The most popular languages are Dari (12.5%), Hazaraghi (24.43%), Vietnamese (9.09%) and Arabic (8.52%). Over 51% of the school's current members are Afghan diaspora (27.84% were born in Afghanistan, and 13.64% were born in Quetta, Pakistan). Other significant cultural groups include Syrians (7.39%) and Vietnamese (9.09%). The cultural and linguistic characteristics of the school shift constantly and rapidly. Many students have undertaken complicated migration routes before settling in Australia and may learn English as their third, fourth or fifth language.

A significant proportion of the school's student population is from a refugee background (29.55%), while only two students (1.14%) were born in Australia. A significant proportion of the school's remaining migrant students are family reunions sponsored by families who came as refugees.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 4th year of tenure, a Deputy Principal (school operation) in their 3rd year of tenure, a senior leader (quality teaching and learning) and a senior leader (student services and community engagement). There are also 8 Band 1 leaders. 37.7 FTE permanent teachers are appointed to the school, with 14 of these temporarily relocated for the remainder of 2021 and 4 on leave, of the remaining teachers currently at the school 19 are Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Deepen the School's agreed approach to differentiated practice and planning and meet the learning needs of all students through continued professional processes that allow teachers to build expertise in this area.**
- Direction 2** **Broaden the intent to engage students in creative thinking and inquiry processes through opportunities for all staff to access regular, tailored professional learning and engage in ongoing collaborative planning.**
- Direction 3** **Ensure all staff respond to the School's agreed expectations through an explicit focus on teacher pedagogy within performance and development planning and strengthening ongoing and strategic approaches that build teacher capacity.**

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

A range of professional learning activities and collaborative work in professional learning teams (PLTs) enabled the school to address many aspects of the previous directions. The appointment of a Student Engagement & Differentiated Learning Coordinator has supported teachers to advance differentiated practice in producing quality differentiated teaching plans and introducing a level of adjustment matrix. Differentiated teaching plans are submitted to the coordinator. A learning support map was developed identifying how students are supported when key learning targets are not met, necessitating additional support through Wave 2 interventions or inclusive education support program funds. Teachers have utilised student surveys to gather student feedback on various issues to do with learning and assessment.

The appointment of an Assessment for Learning Coordinator supported teachers to refine learning design and assessment practices. After completing professional learning in learning design, assessment, and moderation a team was formed to document an action plan mapping out staff training throughout 2019 and 2020. Classroom observations verified teachers demonstrating effective questioning techniques and pedagogical tools to check for understanding and direct next steps in learning. All teachers trialled different approaches, and staff reflected on the changes to their practice and student learning outcomes, including conversations in line management meetings. In collaboration with the Senior Leader, quality teaching and learning, staff were supported in developing goal 2 of the SIP - increase student achievement in writing (by incorporating oral language activities in each lesson). Senior Leaders' regular classroom walkthroughs evaluated how teachers articulate learning intentions and implement oral language activities into the learning program.

The leadership team worked with all staff to develop a new vision statement to act as a lens for reviewing current practice and guiding future decision-making. It makes explicit reference to the Department for Education vision of a world-class education. Leaders recognise that strong relationships, a well-planned curriculum and pedagogy, and wellbeing for learning are essential to achieve this. There has been an expansion of the range of pedagogies in trauma-informed practices restorative justice, teaching of phonics, Google Classrooms and oral language techniques. An instructional framework to complement the vision statement, identifying core areas of focus in language education, supporting resources and assessment processes is in development to be implemented in 2022.

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?

The school has recently reviewed and aligned its vision and mission statements with the school improvement plan (SIP). Staff personal development plan (PDP) goals align to the SIP, referencing the professional teaching standards and trauma-informed practices Teachers spoke positively of how this alignment and greater involvement at a school level has provided clarity in their work.

Leaders plan to improve data literacy and accessibility through whole staff agreements. Learning and wellbeing data is collected, analysed, and made accessible to staff on the school's data platform. Examples include literacy growth, identifying starting points in the initial literacy assessment, monitoring using Learning English: Achievement and Proficiency (LEAP) levels, Running Record data, and phonics levels. These data sets support evidence-based decision making for intervention support, class allocations, and teacher planning. Staff value the development of this data platform and the insight it provides for their work. Executive leaders regularly monitor and review the impact of the SIP actions through student case management sharing student progress data with pathway and wellbeing leaders. Teachers described formative feedback, questioning techniques, observing student behaviours, using surveys, class meetings, and monitoring school data sets as evidence that informs them of their impact on learning. Teachers supplied examples of how they have changed their practice in response to this evidence as well as feedback from leaders and peers through discussions, class walkthroughs, observations, or PDP meetings. Several teachers and leaders explained how their involvement in structured PLTs advanced their knowledge and understanding of evidence-based approaches influencing changes to their practice. Some of these changes have led to whole-school agreements.

Leaders described performance development processes they believed supported the improvement of school priorities. Teachers and school services officers viewed many of these processes as valuable but highlighted the clarity of expectations and consistency of practice in these processes varied. An opportunity exists to strengthen and connect performance development processes to improving student achievement. Building staff data literacy, using agreed data representing growth in learning and reaching agreements that enable ongoing review of data to inform strategies and actions will support this.

Direction 1 **Support the improvement of student achievement by strengthening and connecting self-review and performance development processes that enhance evidence-based teacher reflection leading to agreements of best practice.**

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Conversations with teachers and classroom observations highlighted that teachers use diverse teaching strategies to support learners. Teachers described clear pathway program expectations of what to teach, well documented in the school's teaching and learning guide. Quality teaching and learning plans illustrated teachers planning on a school-based differentiation template. Many teachers referenced the teaching and learning cycle as a strength in their planning processes.

Classroom observations identified some students involved in quality collaborative learning. Several teachers provided examples of tasks that promoted students engaging in challenging group activities. Some leaders viewed student group work could further support differentiated learning and recently developed improvement priorities in oral language. However, observations in some classes showed a more prominent feature of teacher talk or students completing the same task.

Students' responses suggest that they have a strong sense of ownership of their learning. They take pride in their work and at being successful. They described goal setting to focus their learning on achievable outcomes.

The learning environment in mathematics, English as an additional dialect (EALD) classes and foundation classes showed posters, scaffolds, exemplars of annotated student work, vocabulary, sentence starters, and formulas displayed around the room.

A significant challenge for students and a focus in teacher planning is the development of language skills in a short space of time. The school's pathway structures valued by staff provide necessary and appropriate support for students with a range of educational and cultural backgrounds and varied abilities in English. When asked what highly effective evidence-based practices support students and how they know they are effective, responses varied with reference to past professional learning elements. Others used techniques they know work from experience. Teacher explanations of how they effectively differentiate learning and assessment also varied, with some teachers describing characteristics of high-impact teaching strategies.

It is timely to review the effectiveness and connection of existing strategies to further develop, consolidate and connect pedagogical agreements that are differentiated and articulate the roles of teachers, students, and parents to meet the needs of all students.

Direction 2 Consolidate teacher practice by developing a collective understanding and agreement of high impact pedagogical practices that translate into all three pathways of learning.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

At Adelaide Secondary School of English, the influence of previous ESR directions is evident in the school's improvement. Planning processes are evidence-based and targeted. The school is effectively using improvement planning and monitoring processes to raise student achievement. The demonstrated growth in student achievement is measured by a range of qualitative observations and quantitative data.

Teachers reference data from the school's data platform as well as formative assessment data to design differentiated learning. Effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning, and targeted interventions while teacher and leader practice are positively impacted by effective system to 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** **Support the improvement of student achievement by strengthening and connecting self-review and performance development processes that enhance evidence-based teacher reflection leading to agreements of best practice.**
- Direction 2** **Consolidate teacher practice by developing a collective understanding and agreement of high impact pedagogical practices that translate into all three pathways of learning.**

Based on the School's current performance, Adelaide Secondary School of English will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



Kerry Dollman
Director
Review, Improvement and Accountability



Anne Millard
Executive Director
Partnerships, Schools and Preschools



Anti Macri
Principal
Adelaide Secondary School of English



Governing Council Chairperson

Appendix 1

School performance overview

Reading

Whilst the school relies heavily on data sourced through Running Records assessments and LEAP levels, this data is not provided to the system, as it is not aligned with regular chronological standards.

Leaders regularly examine EALD and reading data as part of a weekly case management meeting and a termly students at risk meeting. Each term approximately 5-10% of students are identified as being at risk of not reaching targets. Interventions for these students include reading support, numeracy support, differentiation at a classroom level, repeating a level, additional in-class support from School Services Officers, Bilingual School Services Officers or volunteers, and/or support from the inclusive education teacher. Intervention support for reading is provided through the Levelled Literacy Intervention program and the Phonics through Reading program for those at very low levels of reading.

Numeracy

Maths for Learning Improvement (M4LI) is the program that is offered every term for numeracy intervention. M4Li is a 4-part program recommended by the Department for Education for its basic skills/ low literacy demands.

Of this term's current cohort, all but one completed the pre and post testing. In the pretesting, scores were between 39-52%. In the post testing, students scored between 59-82% showing a minimum increase of 20% with 60% showing an increase of 30% or more.

Over the 2020-2021 period, there was an average 15% improvement in the performance of students accessing the small group numeracy intervention support (M4Li).

SACE

In 2020 most senior students (pathway A, B & C) were enrolled in personal learning plan (PLP), stage 1 essential English, trialled for the first time, stage 1 community studies and stage 1 integrated learning (work studies) as an optional after school subject for all senior school students in their final two terms at the school.

In 2020, 83 % of students in integrated learning, 81% in community studies, 100% of essential English, 16% of integrated studies and 99 % in PLP achieved a C grade or better.