

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Christies Beach High School and Southern Vocational College

Conducted in November 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 Mat Evans and Eva Kannis-Torry, 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 Chair and parent group
 - Leaders
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Christies Beach High School and Southern Vocational College caters for young people from year 8 to 12. It is situated 30kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 712. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 788. The local partnership is Beach Road.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 918 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 16% Aboriginal students, 22% students with disabilities, less than 5% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 5% young people in care and 52% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school hosts an Inclusive Education Centre and there is an off-site Flexible Learning Options program.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 5th year of tenure.

- Assistant Principal - Intervention and Support (Band 4)
- Assistant Principal - Engagement and Wellbeing (Band 4)
- Assistant Principal - Senior School – Years 10-12 (Band 3)
- Assistant Principal - Middle School – Years 8-12 (Band 3) (*vacant*)
- Assistant Principal - Inclusive Education (Band 3)
- Senior Leader - Aboriginal Education (Band 2)
- Student Wellbeing Leader (Band 1)
- 5 Learning Area Leaders (Band 1)
- 5 Year Level Leaders (Band 1).

A revised leadership structure is being developed.

There are 60 teachers including 12 in the early years of their career and 15 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** To improve learning outcomes for every student, widen data-led collaborative, classroom action-research to engage all teachers in monitoring the impact of specific pedagogies and interventions.
- Direction 2** Develop and implement a continuum of learning across years 8 to 12, where required skills are taught using differentiated learning task design and authentic assessment.
- Direction 3** Ensure engagement and improvement in learning by engaging a collaborative, evidence-based development of the site improvement priorities.
- Direction 4** Develop teacher and leader capacity to use data effectively to monitor student achievement and respond at the class, cohort, and whole-school levels.

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

The school has attended to each of the previous External School Review directions with focus and commitment. Professional learning calendars provide evidence of the school's attention to upskilling teachers in the important role of clear learning intentions and success criteria as a significant strategy in focusing student engagement. The review panel found there is room for greater levels of understanding in the importance of these being linked to rubrics for formative feedback to progress student learning.

Comprehensive skills maps were sighted which have been developed as continua of learning for every learning area as well as the inclusive education centre. They reflect a backwards design approach from year 12 to year 8. Teachers are currently reviewing their skills maps against the Department for Education's curriculum scope & sequence. Teachers are engaging with the curriculum units but are conscious of the need to make the recommended tasks more accessible in the context of their school.

Involvement in the partnership's developmental language disorder project influenced the school's decision to fund Speech Pathologists to build teacher competency in approaches to creating more language friendly and inclusive classrooms. There was extensive evidence of the influence of this work in the expectations of consistent documentation of assessment plans with explicit statements about the context of the class. Assessment tasks were presented in a format which made the tasks accessible to a range of students.

Members of the leadership team have good data literacy and support teachers to consider student achievement data in developing teaching and learning plans Access to a range of student achievement data through a learner management system and use of this data in classroom research is increasing data literacy across the school.

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 draft 2022-2024 school improvement plan (SIP) shows greater clarity of targets, enabling measurement of the impact of challenges of practice on student achievement. Recently, the school has focused on building the data literacy of teachers and leaders, with comprehensive achievement data made available. In addition, there is a widening recognition of the need to use finer grained data to measure impact over shorter periods of time.

The importance of finer-grained data was highlighted in the school's involvement in projects addressing the learning needs of students with developmental learning disorders in 2019, all students were tested using CELF-5. The data revealed that over 60% of students required inclusive teaching practices to enable access to the valued curriculum in a secondary school. This project and the school's decision to self-fund Speech Pathologists provided a catalyst for school improvement. These inclusive education specialists were central in building teacher capacity to create language-friendly classrooms. They focused on writing accessible assessment tasks and teachers using inclusive language of instruction. The success of this approach was reinforced in recorded interviews with students.

Curriculum leaders play a critical role in this improvement work. With direct line of sight into the classrooms, they monitor the quality and impact of inclusive teaching practices. The recent introduction of formal classroom observations has enhanced this quality assurance role. The value of classroom observations was confirmed in the online teacher survey.

Conversations with teachers about the success of recent trials of explicit teaching of expanded complex sentences, highlights the importance of data-informed, classroom-based action research. Results of these collaborative improvement groups emphasises the importance of monitoring the impact of intentional teaching over shorter periods. Participating teachers demonstrate higher levels of data literacy in measuring the impact of intentional teaching practices. Currently, participation in these collaborative action research groups is voluntary. There is an argument for wider participation in such school improvement processes.

Direction 1 **To improve learning outcomes for every student, widen data-led collaborative, classroom action-research to engage all teachers in monitoring the impact of specific pedagogies and interventions.**

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Considerable professional learning has been initiated in evidence-based pedagogies that engage and challenge all learners. An example is the explicit reinforcement of Before, During and After strategies to improve student capacity to meet the challenges of reading in a secondary school. In 2020, all staff were involved in professional learning focused on 'before reading' strategies. While a voluntary improvement group explored 'during' and 'after' reading strategies, this work has yet to be amplified more widely across the school. This has resulted in variable implementation of these strategies. While the online teacher survey indicated that the biggest take-up by teachers from their professional learning was the importance of attending to vocabulary, Year 10 and 11 students commented that vocabulary was mainly taught in English and HASS classes.

The review panel noted varying approaches to the explicit teaching of subject-specific vocabulary. Approaches range from glossaries and word walls to more isolated examples of deeper engagement with academic language. There is little evidence of widespread use of research-informed strategies for students to deeply engage with subject specific content knowledge through vocabulary. This is an area requiring further investigation by curriculum leaders.

Neither is there an agreed understanding of the role of explicit learning intentions nor consistent language in articulating them. Recent work by leading educational researchers highlights the importance of learning intentions written in terms of what students will know, understand and be able to do. Variability in terminology can produce cognitive overload for those students trying to navigate instructional language. Similarly, learning intentions are not consistently aligned to the Australian Curriculum achievement standards or SACE performance standards. In addition, there is a need for stronger links between learning intentions and success criteria. Rubrics can be a tool for providing formative feedback to empower students as independent learners. The role of consistent wording of learning intentions and use of rubrics for self-assessment, formative feedback and individual goal setting are areas requiring further work.

Direction 2 Develop greater consistency in understanding and implementation of agreed pedagogies such as explicit learning intentions and the use of rubrics for self-assessment and formative feedback.

Effective leadership

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

Instructional leadership at all levels is key to school improvement. The challenge for senior leaders is to build leadership capacity that can accommodate leader turnover and support aspiring leaders. This is achieved most effectively when each member of the Principal's team sees themselves as instructional leaders and continues to develop expertise in leading improved instruction across all sections of the school.

Members of the senior leadership group recognise the key role of curriculum leaders in quality assurance processes underpinning school improvement. The current Band 1 Leaders are a collaborative team with an appreciation of their role in supporting improved conditions for student learning. They spoke of a range of professional learning opportunities that have supported them in this improvement role, including reading improvement strategies and moderation processes. Many respondents to the online teacher survey highly rated the curriculum leadership of their line managers highly. They provided examples of professional support such as feedback on teaching plans and assessment tasks, leading professional learning in reading improvement and conducting classroom observations with evidence-based feedback.

Curriculum Leaders appreciated being consulted in the most effective ways to introduce the SIP goal of improving student reading in a secondary school context. They felt professionally empowered when trained as facilitators in the Before, During and After reading strategies. This enabled them to both implement the practices in their own classrooms and support their teaching teams. As a result, they were positioned to establish credibility as instructional leaders. Consequently, teachers approach them for assistance in designing teaching plans and in implementing pedagogies to engage all students. As trained facilitators, they have strong ownership of ensuring the success of approaches to reading improvement across the subject areas they lead. Training in formal classroom observations and involvement in learning sprints have provided additional tools for their leadership toolkit.

The Principal and senior leaders have the challenge of how to best support a sustainable model of instructional leadership.

Direction 3 Strengthen instructional leadership at all levels for continued implementation and monitoring of pedagogies that support improved student achievement in both the middle and senior years.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Christies Beach High School and Southern Vocational College has drawn upon internal and external sources of expertise in setting and progressing the course of its improvement journey to both engage students in their learning and build the foundations for improved student learning outcomes. Leaders and teachers spoke enthusiastically about the work they are undertaking to cater for the learning needs of their diverse student cohort. Students in the middle school confirmed the impact of this work. The next step is to consistently embed effective pedagogies across the school and measure their impact on improved student achievement.

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

- Direction 1** To improve learning outcomes for every student, widen data-led collaborative, classroom action-research to engage all teachers in monitoring the impact of specific pedagogies and interventions.
- Direction 2** Develop greater consistency in understanding and implementation of agreed pedagogies such as explicit learning intentions and the use of rubrics for self-assessment and formative feedback.
- Direction 3** Strengthen instructional leadership at all levels for continued implementation and monitoring of pedagogies that support improved student achievement in both the middle and senior years.

Based on the school's current performance, Christies Beach High School and Southern Vocational College will be externally reviewed again in 2024.



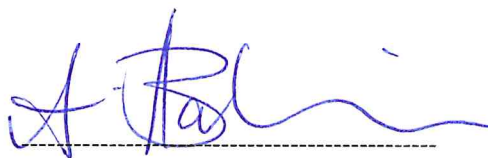
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Appendix 1

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 2021, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 46% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2018 and 2021, the trend for year 9 has been upwards, from 39% to 46%.

For 2021, year 9 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within the results of similar students across government schools.

Between 2018 and 2021, the school has consistently achieved lower in year 9 NAPLAN reading, relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2021, 5% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 9, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2021 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 21% or 3 out of 14 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2021, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 40% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2018 and 2021, the trend for year 9 has been upwards, from 37% to 40%.

For 2021, year 9 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving lower than the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

Between 2018 and 2021, the school has consistently achieved lower in year 9 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2021, 1% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 9, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2021 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 10%, or 1 out of 10 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2020, 39% of students enrolled in February and 94% 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. Between 2017 and 2020, the trend has been downwards, from 97% in 2018 to 94% in 2020.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2019, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 90% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 59% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 98% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2020, 98% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 4% of grades were at an 'A' level and 38% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents an improvement for the 'C-' level or higher grade, little or no change 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 upwards, from 96% in 2018 to 98% in 2020.

Sixty percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 160 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance, 19 students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score.

In 2020, the school had a moderation adjustment of 1-2 marks in three subjects.