

# **The Department for Education**

## **External School Review**

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

**Report for Kadina Memorial School**

Conducted in July 2018



Government of South Australia  
Department for Education

## Review details

A priority for the Department for Education is to improve the educational attainment and wellbeing of South Australia's children and young people.

The purpose of the External School Review 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 underpinning the review identifies the key levers for school improvement and has been shaped and informed by research.

The overarching review question is "how well does this school improve student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and equity?"

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, they all have been considered and contributed to the development and directions of this report.

This review was conducted by Rob McLaren, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Deborah Hemming and Warren Symonds, Review Principals.

## School context

Kadina Memorial School caters for children from reception to year 12. It is situated approximately 150kms east of Adelaide on the Yorke Peninsula, and is part of the Clare/Kadina Partnership. The enrolment in 2018, which includes FLO students and students in the Disability Unit, is 1,197. Enrolment has increased since amalgamation (1,036 in 2013). The school has an ICSEA score of 961, and is classified as Category 4 on the department's Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 7% Aboriginal students, 12% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD), 1% children/young people in care, and 30% of families eligible for School Card assistance.

There are 5 sub-schools – early years (reception to year 2), primary school (years 3 to 6), middle school (years 6 to 9), senior school (years 10 to 12), and the Flexible Learning Options unit (FLO).

The school leadership team consists of a principal in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of his tenure at the school, a deputy principal who is head of reception to year 6, assistant principal/head of senior school, assistant principal/daily operations and coordination of FLO/flex programs, and assistant principal/head of middle school.

There are 90 teachers, including 6 in the early years of their career, 26 Step 9 teachers, 2 lead teachers, and 5 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) lead teachers.

## Lines of inquiry

In considering the data summary in the school performance overview (Appendix 2) and the principal's presentation, the review panel explored the following lines of inquiry to evaluate the school's effectiveness towards raising student achievement and sustaining high performance.

During the external review process, the panel focused on 3 key areas from the External School Review framework:

**Student Learning:** How effectively is student learning growth monitored and evaluated, including student engagement and intellectual challenge?

**Effective Teaching:** How effectively are teachers and leaders using the department's pedagogical frameworks to guide learning design and teaching practice?

**Effective Leadership:** To what extent is collective responsibility and collective action evident?

### How effectively is student learning growth monitored and evaluated, including student engagement and intellectual challenge?

In 2013, the amalgamation of the primary and secondary schools into Kadina Memorial School took place. The reference to 'memorial' in the name is honoring the past servicemen and women from the region, and the value the community places on the arts, agriculture, achievement and sport. Early in the review, the panel was made aware of the collaborative culture that had developed between staff. Conversations with parents and students confirmed that, in their perspective, the amalgamation had strengthened the culture of success and provided greater opportunities for students. Leadership, staff and parents have worked to refocus the school through its policies and processes around its new structure.

Students commented that they felt safe at school and supported in their learning. When asked what they believe is good teaching and learning the responses were varied. Students in the early years commented that good learning is about producing neat and tidy work, concentrating in class and not being off-task, 'giving it a good go', making mistakes and finishing on time. Students' responses in the higher years described feedback from teachers as important, especially when it was focused and timely. Other attributes included teachers recognizing the level of learning and then adjusting the teaching to suit. All comments had a common thread in which students believed that great teachers were those who built strong relationships with them and clearly communicated the expectations of the learning.

Leaders and teachers described how they used various datasets, including attendance, behavior, literacy and numeracy levels, subject grades and Grade Point Average (GPA) to place students in classes, track and monitor academic progress and make decisions at a whole-school, sub-school, year or classroom level for intervention if needed.

Staff and students described the use of the DayMap learner management system positively, allowing easy access to students and staff through their respective portals. Students access resources for learning and, like parents, access live reports about learner achievement. Senior students and their parents receive their mid-term 'Traffic Light' progress reports through DayMap, as well as being posted out to them. While internet access still is an issue for some, parents commented that DayMap was one of a number of positive tools keeping them informed of their child's progress. Others believed it was still necessary to communicate using other services such as telephone, email or Class Dojo.

Senior students spoke positively of their mentoring groups in which their teacher mentor monitored their progress and negotiated learning goals and targets with them. They also believed learning rubrics, which some teachers reworded into student-friendly language, provided them with clear direction on how to be successful in learning, self-monitor their progress and what is needed to achieve a higher grade.

The panel was able to verify that the school attempts to track and monitor student learning growth using student achievement data. This data is used in conversations at every level in leadership meetings and communication with parents and students.

In conversations with staff and leaders, it was clear that a common language around Growth Mindsets and a variety of strategies are being employed to engage, challenge and stretch students. However, when questioned further, answers provided lacked clarity and consistency of understanding of the type of learner and characteristics of that learner that the school is trying to develop. There is an opportunity to develop common agreements about the learner dispositions and capabilities the school believes are important, as well as the processes that monitor and evaluate learner growth. This could better inform students, teachers and parents about learner growth, and influence improvements in teacher practice, student engagement and challenge.

#### **Direction 1**

**Develop whole-school agreements on aspirational learner dispositions, capabilities and processes to monitor and evaluate learner growth.**

### **How effectively are teachers and leaders using the department's pedagogical frameworks to guide learning design and teaching practice?**

Teachers described that they have ready access through DayMap, data dashboard and other data sources for planning of learning. From observations, common planning tools were consistently used in the early and middle years and less in senior years, with teachers referencing established scope and sequences of

work. Curriculum documentation provided to the panel showed a clear alignment with requirements of the prescribed curriculum.

Some examples of differentiation of the curriculum were provided to the panel in documentation or described in conversations with teachers. The arts provided students with choice within their units of work and stretch and challenge through the further refinement of skills. In mathematics there was evidence of teachers co-designing learning with students, and rubrics being unpacked to look for opportunities for stretch and challenge. Learning intentions and success criteria were features in some classrooms as a method of providing greater clarity of the purpose of learning and learning expectations.

The articulation of the curriculum throughout the school was well-developed, with some agreements on attendance, assessment procedures, checklists supporting moderation procedures for consistency of judgement, and use of genre maps. Whole-school agreements in literacy and numeracy were developing.

From classroom observations and conversations with teachers and leaders it was evident that there was no common language of teacher pedagogy. The 'what', including curriculum scope and sequence, assessment plans, skills and capabilities, were more commonly used to describe how learning was delivered. Some teachers were able to describe the 'how' in terms of creating safe and rigorous learning, developing expert learners, and personalizing and connecting the learning. Departmental pedagogical processes were referenced in teacher performance development processes. Through conversations with line managers, teachers developed professional learning goals referenced against the TfEL framework and linked to AITSL standards. The development and achievement of these goals was up to the teacher.

Teachers and leaders expressed a need for the school to provide a consistent pedagogical framework that is understood by teachers and reflected in professional language.

#### **Direction 2**

**Develop whole-school agreements on high-impact pedagogical approaches that would enable learning from reception to year 12.**

### **To what extent is collective responsibility and collective action evident?**

With the amalgamation of the 2 schools and increased enrolments, staff leadership opportunities have developed. Many of the existing leadership roles still reflect the old structures of the 2 individual sites with some taking on a whole-school focus. In the principal's presentation, leaders described the 3 'mini' improvement teams, which were aligned to the 2018-20 SIP, incorporating literacy, numeracy and STEM, that were endeavoring to influence improvement from reception to year 12.

The numeracy coordinator described an action research project developing problem-solving skills in mathematics, with year 5/6 boys using the Launch, Explore, Share and Summarize (LESS) model approach. After researching quality practices in developing problem-solving skills and then planning and delivering lessons to the students, she shared her reflections with colleagues. These reflections of practice shared using emails and face-to-face meetings created discussions and further investigation by teachers to try with their own classes. This had a positive influence on teacher practice in mathematics across the school. The year 5/6 students were also acting as mentors in problem-solving to their peers in classes.

The reception to year 12 literacy development, which had a focus of professional learning and implementation 3 years ago, is being revisited due to the lack of improvement of student outcomes. New strategies with a focus on developing students as powerful literacy learners around student voice and reading for a purpose were being investigated.

STEM across reception to year 12 is a new initiative in which staff are looking for strategies that develop students' thinking. In the early years, STEM 500 is focused on developing students' skills in being better learners. In years 5 to 6, an integrated model of learning in mathematics and science is focusing on measurement and design. While in years 7, 8 and 10, students are taking part in cross-curriculum learning across mathematics, science, English and HASS. Selected students, STEM ambassadors, are also driving recycling initiatives across the school to reduce landfill waste. These 3 initiatives are forging a collective responsibility and action to issues identified in the SIP across the school.

The panel heard of other examples where the school could explore and further develop this collective responsibility across the school. A long-standing staff mentoring program, which many staff believe is successful, has 3 quarters of the staff trained in the MET program that supports new and early career staff. Staff appreciated the support they received from these mentors when arriving to the school, but also saw it as a way of giving back when they were trained.

The student representative council described their leadership for students as running student activities, competitions and organizing fundraising. In discussions about leadership and what they would like to be involved in further and have a say in, they expressed a desire to have more say in shaping their school and the learning they experienced.

The present sub-school structures are well-supported and provide greater connectivity for students to a group of teachers and a focus for teaching and learning specific to that cohort. This was very evident in conversations with leaders, teachers and students within these groups. Teachers described sub-school teams collaboratively working together and knowing a group of students well as a strength.

With the appointment and placement of the new principal, it is an ideal time to review and refocus the school's current priorities, leadership roles, structures and processes to strengthen the impact teachers have on learning in a reception to year 12 school.

### **Direction 3**

**Review the current school priorities, staff roles and responsibilities, structures and processes to further enable collective responsibility and action for a reception to year 12 school.**

## **What is the school doing particularly well and why is this effective?**

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practices that are contributing significantly to school improvement at Kadina Memorial School.

Effective practice in student learning in relation to engagement and challenge was evident at the school, particularly in the reception to year 12 numeracy action research project involving year 5/6 boys exploring and developing strategies to improve problem-solving in mathematics.

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2018

Kadina Memorial School has demonstrated growth in student achievement at and above what would be reasonably expected of a school in a similar context. Student achievement data and other evidence are used in self-review processes regularly and strategically to determine the impact school strategies and practices are having on student achievement. A culture of improvement characterized by high expectations for students exists at the school.

The principal will work with the education director to implement the following directions:

1. Develop whole-school agreements on aspirational learner dispositions, capabilities and processes to monitor and evaluate learner growth.
2. Develop a whole-school agreement on high-impact pedagogical approaches that would enable learning from reception to year 12.
3. Review the current school priorities, staff roles and responsibilities, structures and processes to further enable collective responsibility and action for a reception to year 12 school.

Based on the school's current performance, Kadina Memorial School will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



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Governing Council Chairperson

# Appendix 1

## Attendance policy compliance

Implementation of the Education Department student attendance policy was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy.

The school attendance rate for 2017 was 89.7%.

# Appendix 2

## 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 2017, 54% of year 1 and 67% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline at year 1 and improvement at year 2 from the historic baseline average.

In 2017, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 74% of year 3 students, 75% of year 5 students, 66% of year 7 students, and 55% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the SEA. For years 3 and 5, this result represents little or no improvement, and for years 7 and 9, a decline from the historic baseline average.

For 2017 year 3, 5 and 9 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within, and for year 7, lower than the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2017, 22% of year 3, 27% of year 5, 14% of year 7, and 6% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 53% of year 3 students remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2017, 32% of year 3 students remain in the upper bands at year 7, 17% of year 3 students remain in the upper bands at year 9, and 35% of year 7 students remain in the upper bands at year 9 in 2017.

### Numeracy

In 2017, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 74% of year 3 students, 74% of year 5 students, 73% of year 7 students, and 65% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5 and 9, this result represents little or no change, while for year 7, a decline from the historic baseline average.

For 2017 year 3, 5, 7 and 9 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2017, 22% of year 3, 12% of year 5, 12% of year 7, and 10% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

For those students who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 50% of year 3 students remain in the upper bands at year 5 in 2017, 40% of year 3 students remain in the upper bands at year 7, 59% of year 3 students remain in the upper bands at year 9, and 59% of year 7 students remain in the upper bands at year 9 in 2017.



## SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2017, 97% of students enrolled in February and 99% of those enrolled in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve their SACE. This result for October SACE completion represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2017, 99% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 95% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 94% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units, and 99% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

Ninety-nine percent of grades achieved in the 2017 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Eighty-three percent of students completed SACE using VET, and there were 39 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2017.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2017, 17% of students achieved an 'A' grade, and 46% achieved a 'B' grade. This result represents little or no change from the historic baseline averages for the 'A' grade and 'B' grade respectively.

In terms of 2017 tertiary entrance, 94%, or 99 out of 105 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There were also 2 students who were successful at achieving a merit.