

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Kadina Memorial 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 Meredith Edwards, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Ronnie Alderman and Angela Falkenberg, Review Principals.

## Review Process

The following processes were used to gather evidence relevant to the lines of inquiry:

- Presentation from the principal
- Class visits
- An online survey of teachers with questions aligned to line of inquiry
- Document analysis
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student representatives across Reception to Year 12
  - Teachers in the mainstream and in the Disability Unit and Special Options classes



## School context

Kadina Memorial School caters for young people from reception to year 12. It is situated 150 kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in the 2021 census is 1088. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 1197. The local partnership is Northern Yorke.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 965 and is classified as Category 4 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 8% Aboriginal students, 12% students with disabilities, less than 5 students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2% young people in care and 43% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

Since amalgamation in 2013, the year 7 students have been included in the high school setting with a structure created around 3 sub-schools – primary (reception to year 6), middle (years 7 to 9) and senior secondary (years 10 to 12). The school is the centre for the Yorke Peninsula's Disability Unit – 17 students - and Secondary Special Options class, which can contain up to 12 students.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of their first tenure, a Band 6 leader as head of reception to year 6 in their 5<sup>th</sup> year of a second tenure, a Band 4 leader: daily routines and FLO in their 1<sup>st</sup> year of a three-year tenure, a Band 4 leader as head of middle school in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a second tenure, and a Band 4 leader as the head of senior school in the last year of their first tenure.

There are 85 teachers (37 who are part-time), including 6 in the early years of their career and 37 Step 9 teachers.

### The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1**     **Develop whole-school agreements on aspirational learner dispositions, capabilities and processes to monitor and evaluate learner growth.**
- Direction 2**     **Develop a whole-school agreement on high-impact pedagogical approaches that would enable learning from reception to year 12.**
- 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 impact has the implementation of previous directions had on school improvement?

Kadina Memorial School's vision of "inspiring learning that challenges and supports" guides their improvement journey. This aspirational goal is a foundation towards addressing the belief amongst many of the primary and middle school students interviewed that they are not challenged. These student views are underlined by some teachers' perception that many students do not stretch themselves. The school currently has in place processes to address this aspect of school improvement. To promote a growth mindset, students are encouraged to reflect on not only their Grade Point Average, but also their Effort Point Average to set improvement goals. To reinforce this focus on achievement progress, all classrooms display the focus questions: "What am I learning?", "Why am I learning this?" and "How will I know I have

been successful?”. When leaders conduct classroom walkthroughs, it is expected these questions lead conversations with students.

The school has a clear focus on only using evidence-based pedagogies in their improvement journey. Teachers and leaders access the Department’s literacy and numeracy guidebooks and incorporate learning from Partnership meetings and conferences, such as the Learning, Design, Assessment and Moderation (LDAM) strategy. This work will lead to documented agreements about high-impact pedagogies. Aligning leadership roles with school improvement priorities, and a whole staff student-centered focus, will strengthen the school’s capacity to progress its improvement journey.

## 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?**

There is a clear line of sight from the school improvement plan through to staff performance and development plans (PDP). The school aims for every teacher, through PDP processes, to be able to identify and provide evidence of aspects of their teaching that have improved and the impact it has had on student learning. All PDPs are aligned to priorities in the SIP. In this way, scheduled formal professional development conversations provide a forum for linking professional growth to the challenges of practice in the SIP.

The school's 3 key approaches to monitoring and enhancing improvement strategies are formal observations and walkthroughs, data analysis and collaborative classroom research. Staff appreciate classroom walkthroughs conducted by leaders, followed by constructive feedback on what they are doing well and ways in which they can further develop as effective teachers. In recognition of the importance of consistent practice in school improvement, many teachers describe observations as a valuable part of shared accountability for implementing agreed practices. The Principal's walkthroughs, which are followed by individual feedback and a shared summary of his observations in staff meetings, were highlighted by many as adding value to their work.

There is productive discussion about achievement and wellbeing data in all 3 sectors of the school. Data is mainly collated and shared by school leaders. The next step in school improvement is to build teacher data literacy through a focus on 'fine-grained' data to measure progress at a classroom level. This capacity-building will be facilitated by greater ease of access to student achievement data on one platform. While collaborative classroom research informs improvement discussions, it is not always informed by data to measure the impact of agreed pedagogies on student achievement. There is opportunity for the school to consider more fine-grained data to inform teacher collaboration, with recommendations amplified more widely across the school. This work would align with the current Portfolio focus on data-led professional learning communities.

**Direction 1**     **To provide greater consistency in effective classroom practices reception to year 12, develop a shared approach to data-led professional learning communities to monitor the impact of agreed pedagogies.**



## Effective teaching and student learning

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

Kadina Memorial School has a clear focus on using only evidence-based pedagogies in their improvement journey. A pedagogy, which is key to their work in effective teaching and student learning, is formative feedback linked to explicit learning intentions and success criteria. This and the focus on reading improvement across reception to year 12 are identified as challenges of practice in the SIP. Leaders and teachers spoke of sourcing evidence-based pedagogies through literacy guidebooks, literacy conferences and involvement in the Department's LDAM professional learning.

Despite all teachers being aware of the school's focus on formative feedback and success criteria, there is variable implementation and reinforcement of explicit learning intentions and the use of rubrics to clarify criteria for success. In discussions with students and classroom visits, the review panel did not see consistent use of rubrics for either formative feedback from teachers, peer-assessment or self-assessment. Neither is there consistency in the provision of feedback that moves learning forward through a drafting process. Students and parents highlighted inconsistent opportunities for students to submit drafts and receive constructive feedback to support improved grades.

While recognising the impact of the turnover of a key literacy leader, there is also a need for greater fidelity, frequency and consistency, in the implementation of approaches to reading improvement within and between each section of the school. With progress being made across reception to year 6, continuing the successful trial of close reading strategies in the middle school is needed.

Another commendable feature of the school's instructional leadership is "staying the course" and refining agreed pedagogies rather than changing direction. This disposition will provide the necessary opportunity for the school to both refine agreed pedagogies and address the concern that high achievers are not challenged in their learning. Further progress would be gained from a shared definition of effective teaching, including the role of learning intentions and success criteria, along with a common understanding of age-appropriate approaches to reading improvement across the school.

**Direction 2      Maintain a focus on reading improvement and formative feedback to increase the consistency of effective practice to support and challenge all learners, including high achievers.**

## Effective leadership

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

There is both a desire for leadership opportunities among teachers and a recognition by executive leaders of the importance of developing both aspiring and current leaders within the school. One B1 leader commented: "We know that 93% of the Resource Entitlement Statement is for teachers, because they are our greatest resource and so managing them well is an important goal". So too does the executive leadership team view instructional leadership of B1 and 2 leaders as critical to school improvement.

Longer-serving leaders at the school value opportunities to develop leadership skills through programs such as Change-makers, Agile Leadership and Growth Coaching. Access to such rich opportunities has positioned many leaders to win promotion positions in other schools. Leadership density is also affected for extended periods when part-time working conditions are necessary for some experienced leaders. This poses a challenge for Kadina Memorial School in maintaining continuity in both good management practices and leading pedagogical improvement.

The school finds it difficult to attract applicants for B1 and 2 leadership positions, and the executive leadership team recognises the need to provide leadership opportunities for teachers. This can pose a challenge for those who rise through the teaching ranks, if they find themselves having to lead difficult performance conversations, while maintaining relationships in a country school and small town. Consequently, aspiring leaders identify professional learning in leading change, along with managing conflict, as key areas for growth. Recently appointed leaders are well-mentored in management roles, but also look to be upskilled in their role as leaders of school improvement. These are challenges that the school recognises and is addressing. It is important that a sustainable model of leadership development focuses on 1 or 2 programs so that new leaders are not overloaded.

**Direction 3      Use in-school expertise and external opportunities to provide evidence-based leadership development for current and aspiring leaders, which balances effective management and instructional leadership.**

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Kadina Memorial School is a cohesive educational community focussed on providing its students with an extensive range of opportunities and support structures for learning. All sections of the school community, including leaders, teachers, ancillary staff and students are reflective practitioners who are open to suggestions for improvement. Governing Council members are also actively engaged in improvement discussions. With its clear focus on refining and amplifying current practice, the school is in a strong position to continue its improvement journey.

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

- Direction 1** To provide greater consistency in effective classroom practices reception to year 12, develop a shared approach to data-led professional learning communities to monitor the impact of agreed pedagogies.
- Direction 2** Maintain a focus on reading improvement and formative feedback to increase the consistency of effective practice to support and challenge all learners, including high achievers.
- Direction 3** Use in-school expertise and external opportunities to provide evidence-based leadership development for current and aspiring leaders, which balances effective management and instructional leadership.

Based on the school's current performance, Kadina Memorial 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 the early years, reading progress is monitored against Running Records. In 2020, 66% of year 1 and 55% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents little or no change.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 72% of year 3 students, 69% of year 5 students, 71% of year 7 students and 64% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. For year 5, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. For year 7, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For year 9, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for 5 has been downwards, from 75% to 69%. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 7s has been upwards, from 66% to 71%. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 9 students has been upwards, from 55% to 64%.

For 2019, year 3 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving similar than the results of similar students across government schools. For 2019, year 5 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving lower than the results of similar students across government schools. For 2019, year 7 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving lower than the results of similar students across government schools. For 2019, year 9 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving higher than the results of similar students across government schools.

Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved lower in year 3 NAPLAN reading relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools. Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved similar in year 5 NAPLAN reading relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools. Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved lower in year 7 NAPLAN reading, relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools. Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved lower in year 9 NAPLAN reading, relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools, except in 2019 when it achieved above similar groups.

In 2019, 40% of year 3, 21% of year 5, 21% of year 7, and 9% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For year 5, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. For year 7, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For year 9, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

For those students in 2019, who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 62%, or 13 out of 21 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 42%, or 17 out of 40 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, and 26%, or 9 out of 34 students, from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

## Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 76% of year 3 students, 70% of year 5 students, 74% of year 7 students and 60% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. For year 5, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average. For year 7, this result shows little or no change within the historical range. For year 9, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 students has been upwards, from 74% to 76%. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 5 students has been downwards, from 74% to 70%. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 7 students has been upwards, from 73% to 74%. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 9 has been downwards, from 65% to 60%.

For 2019, year 3 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving within than the results of similar groups of students across government schools. For 2019, year 5 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving lower than the results of similar groups of students across government schools. For 2019, year 7 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving lower than the results of similar groups of students across government schools. For 2019, year 9 NAPLAN numeracy, the school is achieving withing than the results of similar groups of students across government schools

Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved higher in year 3 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools. Between 2017 and 2019, in year 5 NAPLAN numeracy the school has consistently achieved within the relative results of similar groups of students across government schools. Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved higher in year 7 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools. Between 2017 and 2019, the school has consistently achieved within in year 9 NAPLAN numeracy relative to the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019, 15% of year 3, 14% of year 5, 18% of year 7 and 6% 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 year 5, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average. For year 7, this result represents a little or no change from the historic baseline average. For year 9, this result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been downwards, from 22% to 15%. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 7 has been upwards, from 12% to 18%. Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 9 has been downwards, from 10% to 6%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 47%, or 8 out of 17 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 64%, or 14 out of 22 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, 31%, or 4 out of 13 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

## SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2020, 81% 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. This result for October SACE completion represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Between 2018 and 2020, the trend has been consistent, from 100% in 2018 to 100% in 2020.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2020, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 96% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2020, 100% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 19% of grades were at an 'A' level and 41% of grades were at an 'B' level. This result represents an improvement for the 'C-' level or higher grade, little or no change for the 'A' level grade and a decline for the 'B' level grade, from the historic baseline averages. The trend for 'C-' or higher has been upward, from 99% in 2018 to 100% in 2020.

Sixty percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 40 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance, 54%, or 51 out of 94 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There were also 4 students who were successful in achieving a merit.

In 2020, the school had a moderation adjustment of 5.9% with 4% from one subject.



