

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Paralowie School

Conducted in June 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 Christine Bell, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and David Ness, Harry Stassinopoulos and Roley Coulter, 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

Paralowie School caters for students from reception to year 12. It is situated 30kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 1464. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 1369. The local partnership is Orion.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 927 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 9% Aboriginal students, 7% students with disabilities, 17% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 2% children/young people in care and 37% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in the 8th year of tenure and the following leaders:

- Deputy Principal in 1st year of tenure
- Deputy Principal reception to year 6 in 2nd year of tenure
- Senior leader senior school in 1st year of tenure
- Senior leader middle school in 1st year of tenure
- Senior leader reception to year 6 in 2nd year of tenure
- Senior leader Aboriginal education in 2nd year of tenure
- and a senior leader reading improvement in 2nd year of tenure.

The school has been without a business leader since July 2020.

In addition to the senior leadership team, there are 22 other leaders, 4 at B2, 18 at B1 and 2 Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers.

There are 96 Teachers including 10 in the early years of their career and 23 Step 9 Teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Embed a culture that maximises learning opportunities for all students and promotes the sharing of quality teaching practice across the school.
- Direction 2** Establish a leadership structure that is aligned to agreed R-12 school priorities and systems and provide mentoring for all leaders in the achievement of targets and consistent implementation of systems, as well as opportunities for the sharing of targets and strategies between leaders.
- Direction 3** Review the use of the current Learner Management System, and establish a culture of regular self-review amongst all teachers and leaders, to ensure effective use of the data available to inform their work so that all students are engaged and challenged.

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

Direction 1: Considerable work was done to implement consistent practice in the use of Learning Design Assessment and Moderation (LDAM) with a focus on the use of learning intentions, success criteria, formative assessment and feedback. Task design was also addressed and in the middle years (7-9), there was an attempt to standardise the format of task sheets across the learning areas.

Sharing of practice in reception to year 6 occurred in year level teams and, in years 7 to 12, through learning area teams.

The change of improvement focus to reading impacted embedding of the LDAM work and over the past 3 years, it became less consistent, as expectations and accountability in the reading improvement work increased. The sharing of practice is still very evident in the reading improvement work through the reception to year 6 learning teams and the year 7 to 12 learning area teams.

Direction 2: There has been a change to leadership structures and portfolios of responsibility as per the attached organisational chart. Leadership portfolios are specifically aligned to improvement work, performance development and professional learning. The school established a professional coaching agreement approved by the Union which was implemented in 2021.

Direction 3: DayMap and the parent portal are fully implemented and monitored by the Deputy Principal. Staff and parents were offered training in DayMap. Data analysis and review sits in each school team and used in a process to determine teaching points that sit alongside the individual student's data. The school is working with the Department to have internal datasets included in the learner achievement dashboard and it is a work-in-progress.

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 school improvement plan (SIP), Paralowie School committed to a narrow and deep focus on reading, and a widespread ownership and responsibility to the literacy block and close reading strategies. All staff, students and families can articulate the school-wide focus on reading and how it has improved student outcomes.

There is a process to review the SIP annually, using a range of datasets involving a wide range of staff. All staff professional development plans are aligned to the school improvement plan, which was noticed as a strength in 2021; however, there is an opportunity for the school to expand on this to ensure a line of sight of this work into the classroom. The step 4 processes are emerging and understood by leaders, with the need to involve all staff in the continuous monitoring and reviewing of the school improvement plan.

Data analysis processes at reception to year 2 and senior secondary school are influencing student learning. Teachers indicated datasets are reviewed regularly, Running Records are complete, teaching points are determined and all staff review phonics data during learning team meetings, targeting students accordingly. There is now strategic planning in place to enable academic improvement in writing for SACE achievement.

There are pockets of evidence in years 3 to 10 of use of data to inform practice. Staff reported that the validity of A-E achievement levels varied depending on teacher professional judgements, and there needs to be a quality moderation process to ensure consistency across reception to year 12. Self-review processes rely heavily on Running Records data, and there is an opportunity to expand the data literacy of teachers.

There is significant impact on improvement in reading achievement across the school. Primary writing teaching and learning is a strength, with agreements around pre and post-tests and moderation. A challenge for the school is to ensure numeracy pedagogical practices and professional development opportunities exist to compliment the growth in literacy.

Direction 1 Develop a system where all staff maximise the impact of the step 4 process and collaborate and reflect their practice against the success criteria to refine and adjust actions for improvement.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

Students unanimously identified the importance of the student-teacher relationship and the impact on their learning. The school invested in the Berry Street model, and there is an opportunity to further develop pedagogical practices of all staff to create a culture of high learning expectations, in line with the school vision of achievement for all. The wellbeing leadership team has the foundations and plan ready to implement; however, valued time needs to be given to ensure the right conditions for teaching and learning are in place, teachers can teach, and all students are ready to learn.

There are some exceptional educators who are implementing high-impact strategies in their classroom practice and are sharing their practice across the school. These strategies maximise student engagement and learning outcomes. Evidence of this includes the year 12 grades – As and Bs, reading and writing improvement across the school, and high percentage of Australian and Torres Strait Islander students achieving South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) in 2020. The challenge is for these pockets of outstanding practice to be common practice for all. This can be achieved by deprivatisation of classrooms, supporting teachers through formal and consistent lesson observations and feedback, and implementing processes that allow for the sharing of best pedagogical practice.

The school's vision statement emphasises the importance of achievement for all. The higher-achieving students feel that lessons are being targeted to the C level and there is very limited high-order thinking opportunities provided. There is limited evidence that all teachers are effectively designing and differentiating the learning to meet the needs of all students, including challenge for more capable students. The challenge is for teachers to use formative and summative assessment processes in all subjects, to ensure they know where the students are at in their learning and what the next steps are to move their learning forward. While the reading focus is a strength of the school, a coherent whole-school approach to formative and summative assessment will further support all students, particularly those that require challenge and access to complex texts.

Direction 2 Develop a consistent classroom observation process, that includes peer observation with a focus on high-impact teaching strategies.

Effective leadership

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

The school's leaders are highly motivated, passionate and committed to student improvement and the wider school community. Parents were very respectful and were complimentary of leadership's ability to address their concerns in a timely manner. The deputy role is realigned around quality assurance and is pivotal in supporting the development of the middle-level leaders. Both the SACE improvement leader and the ATSI leader have clear systems and processes in place to track and monitor student achievement.

Educational and strategic leadership shows through leaders implementing the school improvement reading strategy. There is a 100% uptake and commitment of teachers to be upskilled, and the whole-school approach to close reading and literacy block has enhanced students' achievement.

Teachers and leaders are respectful and collaborative. Staff engage in professional learning, including on weekends and during holidays, which is directly connected to the school's improvement agenda. This commitment provides leadership with an opportunity to effectively build teacher capacity, manage performance and lead professional learning. This will include leaders articulating and modelling high expectations for teaching and student achievement, through monitoring the quality of units of work and learning assessment plans, engaging resources, differentiating learning assessment tasks and leading moderation process of A-E data.

There is evidence of instructional leadership which provides a chance to continue building middle leadership capacity promoting high expectations and quality teaching for all staff and students. A focus on the effective use of collaborative decision-making is vital to ensure there is a culture of shared accountability, ownership and responsibility. The school has capacity in the leadership team to build a culture of high achievement for all students, by raising the potential of all staff to actively engage collaboratively with colleagues on curriculum understanding, and learning design, implementation and moderation.

Direction 3 Develop middle leaders' capacity to review and implement essential layers of the curriculum areas to ensure a collective understanding of a coherent school-wide approach is embedded at each year level.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

Paralowie School has a strong executive leadership base to focus on building a culture of shared accountability, ownership and responsibility amongst all staff. The school collects extensive datasets and has clear processes in place to analyse and develop actions for improvement in all areas. The commitment to Aboriginal students' learning, and results recently achieved, are commendable. The wider school community appreciate the connection they have to all teachers and leaders and compliment the school's achievements.

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

- Direction 1** **Develop a system where all staff maximise the impact of the step 4 process and collaborate and reflect their practice against the success criteria to refine and adjust actions for improvement.**
- Direction 2** **Develop a consistent classroom observation process, that includes peer observation with a focus on high-impact teaching strategies.**
- Direction 3** **Develop middle leaders' capacity to review and implement essential layers of the curriculum areas to ensure a collective understanding of a coherent school-wide approach is embedded at each year level.**

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



Danielle Chadwick
A/Director
Review, Improvement and Accountability



Anne Millard
Executive Director
Partnerships, Schools and Preschools



Peter McKay
Principal
Paralowie School



Governing Council Chairperson

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 2019, 20% of year 1 and 42% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents a decline from the historic baseline average.

Between 2018 and 2019 the trend for year 1 has been downwards, from 30% to 20%, and for year 2 has been downwards from 45% to 42%.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 65% of year 3 students, 67% of year 5 students, 67% of year 7 students and 47% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5, 7 and 9, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been downwards, from 70% to 65%, year 5 has been upwards from 60% to 67%, year 7 has been upwards, from 61% to 67% and year 9, has been upwards from 34% to 47%.

For 2019 years 3 and 5 NAPLAN reading, the school is achieving within, and for years 7 and 9, lower than the results of similar students across government schools.

In 2019, 32% of year 3, 12% of year 5, 8% of year 7 and 5% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 3, 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, 29%, or 2 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 33%, or 4 out of 12 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, and 30%, or 3 out of 10 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 57% of year 3 students, 57% of year 5 students, 54% of year 7 students and 40% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3, 5, 7 and 9, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 3 has been upwards, from 49% to 57%, for year 5 has been upwards from 47% to 57%, for year 7 upwards from 55% to 54%, and for year 9 upwards from 30% to 40%.

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

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 3 and year 5 has been upwards from 49% to 57%, and 47% to 57% respectively.

In 2019 16% of year 3, 8% of year 5, 11% of year 7 and 5% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3 this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019 the trend for year 3 is upwards from 8% to 16%, year 5 downwards from 14% to 8%, year 7 upwards from 4% to 11%, and year 9 upwards from 0% to 5%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy 42%, or 3 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 67%, or 4 out of 6 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, 43%, or 3 out of 7 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2020 80% of students enrolled in February and 95% 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 2018 and 2020 the trend has been upwards from 93% in 2018 to 95% in October enrolments and upwards from 68% to 80% of February enrolments.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2020, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 98% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 83% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% 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, 6% of grades were at an 'A' level and 32% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents little or no change 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.

Thirty two percent of students completed SACE using VET and there was 1 student enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020. All other FLO students enrolled in SACE were in year 11.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance 34 out of 92 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There were no students who were successful in achieving a merit. One student achieved an A+ in the Research Project, however fell just short of receiving the Merit.

In 2020 the school had a moderation effect of -1 in 2 subjects, Industry and Entrepreneurial Solutions where 1 student was impacted, and in HPE where 4 students were impacted, resulting in a total of 5 students being impacted by a moderation adjustment of -1.