

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Jamestown Community 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 Rob McLaren , Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Sharryn Daley, 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 staff meeting
- Document analysis
- Discussions with:
 - ☐ Governing Council representatives
 - Leaders
 - ☐ Parent groups
 - ☐ School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - ☐ Student representatives
 - ☐ Teachers.

School context

Jamestown Community School caters for students from reception to year 12. It is situated 203kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 211. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 234. The local partnership is Upper Mid North.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 982 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 6% Aboriginal students, 3% students with disabilities, no students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, less than 6 children/young people in care and 23% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 4th year of tenure with other leaders, including:

- B2 Deputy Principal
- Band B1:
 - senior school coordinator (years 10 to 12)
 - middle school coordinator (years 7 to 9)
 - primary coordinator (reception to year 6)
 - wellbeing and engagement coordinator.

There are 22 teachers, including 2 in the early years of their careers and 3 Step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** **Maintain high expectations while supporting all students to make progress through more tailored and targeted planning and personalised teaching practices.**
- Direction 2** **Develop and enact rigorous evaluation of programs and practices over time, to ensure they are having the intended positive impact on students' learning, and make strategic decisions and plans on the basis of this evidence.**
- Direction 3** **Challenge all learners to improve through the design of learning tasks, making learning intentions clear and involving students as co-constructors in the criteria for success.**

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

A vision statement for the school was collaboratively created and illustrates a focus on achievement. This led to student leaders collaborating with all students to construct word clouds displayed across the school. Several measures have been implemented to achieve a more tailored and targeted approach to teaching and learning. An analysis of programs supporting literacy in the early years resulted in agreed approach to phonics and grammar, which provided greater consistency into the primary years. Data schedules provide clarity of collection, analysis and use of data to inform planning and progress.

Development and documentation of school policies and processes provide greater clarity of expectations for staff in their work. Students are now able to access the curriculum, tasks and resources through teacher-developed modules on MS Teams. Teacher groups that meet every 5 weeks develop and monitor school improvement priorities. Supporting the school's vision, leadership promoted recognition and celebration of academic achievement and advancement, while engaging students in goal-setting.

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, pedagogical, and assessment practice?

The school improvement plan (SIP) is data driven and focuses on reading in the early years, as well as achievement of students exceeding the standard of educational achievement and above in years 7 to 9. Most staff members and parents could articulate the goals within the plan. Teachers in the early years focused on the development of the challenges of practice in reading. A strategic approach to build capacity in evidence-based phonics and grammar programs has resulted in consistent implementation in early years and primary years classrooms.

Staff improvement teams monitor and progress agreed school priorities. Many staff commented that the work of these teams, and narrowing of the school's SIP, enabled them to see a clear connection between their work and the improvement agenda. Regular self review led to the development of statements of practice.

Data analysis of student achievement was a feature of the Principal's presentation. This analysis provided teams with evidence to track and monitor student progress, plan learning and identify success and intervention. Teachers use of data to plan, monitor and track student progress, and inform them of their impact on learning, was variable and not prominent in conversations. Teachers described using grades and levels as sources to measure their success and impact on learning. Many teachers referenced work in improvement teams to measure impact, but were unclear how this impacted on their practice.

Staff saw performance development planning (PDP) meetings as the only avenue to discuss their practice. Whilst PDP goals were aligned to the SIP the sources of evidence used by staff for these conversations varied. Classroom observations and student feedback could further strengthen these sources of evidence with assurance of agreed practice across the school.

There were limited responses on how teachers use evidence-based practices of self-reflection that lead to improvements in and agreements of best practice. Some referenced collaborative work in their improvement teams but this was not consistent practice. The school is well-positioned to review, connect and reach agreements on processes and structures that enable teachers and leaders to reflect and monitor their impact on learning leading to improvement.

Direction 1 Provide structures and processes for teachers to regularly evaluate and reflect on the impact of their practice against the SIP goals and targets to inform the next steps.

Effective teaching and student learning

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

A variety of highly effective reading programs supported by targeted training were described by staff and observed in practice. These evidence-based pedagogical approaches have positively impacted on student achievement data, especially in reception to year 2. Teachers are supported through leadership and peer observations, feedback and the work of improvement teams.

To increase engagement in the senior school, improvement teams described how they were refining task design, assessment rubrics and work samples to make learning and assessment expectations clearer, and provide greater challenge. Students commented positively about these changes and the time teachers are taking to ensure tasks are delivered with clarity and learning intentions are apparent.

Teacher clarity and understanding of what is highly effective evidence-based pedagogical practice and differentiated learning varied in responses. Some referenced past training in programs or shared resources with colleagues when describing pedagogies they use. Explanations about how they effectively differentiate learning to meet the needs of all learners varied, with elements of high-impact teaching strategies and choices or levels in tasks. Many commented that challenge and stretch were personalised with small classes, and could involve providing open ended tasks to students when they finish.

Many students, who would be considered as high-band students, believed they were not being stretched in their learning and felt this was teacher dependent. Students acknowledged that they could request more demanding activities and were always supported by their teachers, especially in their senior years.

It is timely to review the effectiveness and consistency of current pedagogical approaches used to engage and challenge students. Researching current best practice and using department guide books would support staff to create an agreed approach and statements of practice to guide their work.

Direction 2 Collaborately develop agreements of which high-impact evidence-based pedagogical practices will be used to support engagement and challenge for all learners.

Effective leadership

How effectively are the school's professional learning and performance and development processes in building teacher capacity?

The leadership team remained resolute in developing teaching and learning, and setting high expectations across the school to ensure quality curriculum delivery. The Principal highlighted that historically, there was a lack of consistency in teacher practice to meet students' varying needs at the school. Several teachers and students described how some students in the past had disengaged with learning, displaying poor learning behaviours in class with some not attending. Parents and teachers positively described the clarity on how the current Principal has drawn 'a line in the sand' and made expectations for teaching and learning clear.

Leadership's clear strategic planning is evident with documentation detailing the progress and support in building teacher capacity to implement quality teaching and learning. A range of effective, targeted professional learning and support processes were implemented to support school priorities. Leaders described staff meeting and improvement team meeting times as providing opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning, reflect on its effectiveness and report back on efficacy of trialled strategies. Several teachers believed the inclusion of leaders in improvement groups maintained a whole-school focus on the SIP goals.

Teachers explained that informal performance development processes and conversations were valued and commonplace in a small school. In PDP meetings, they saw alignment to the SIP and professional learning, with at least 1 of their individual goals referencing the schools priorities for improvement. The use of data and evidence in these formal discussions varied. Some believed this is an area for further consideration.

Cohesive and supportive evidence-based PDP processes are vital in providing effective feedback to teachers and leaders. Consolidating and refining existing performance structures and processes, with clear expectations, will support staff to deliver on school priorities and student learning targets. Some leaders described how classroom observations, student feedback and mentoring and coaching were practices that could be explored further.

Direction 3 Strengthen teacher capacity to implement agreed school priorities and quality teaching and learning through highly effective, cohesive evidence-based performance development processes.

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

At Jamestown Community School, the influence of previous ESR directions is evident in the school's improvement. Effective leadership provides strategic direction, planning and targeted interventions.

The school has built capacity so that its planning processes are evidence-based and targeted, while effective improvement planning and monitoring processes to raise student achievement are in operation.

The demonstrated growth in student achievement is at what would be reasonably expected of a school in a similar context. Effective teaching is developing through targeted professional learning and is consistently practiced to actively engage and challenge students.

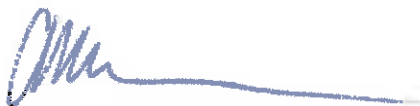
The Principal will work with the Education Director to implement the following directions:

- Direction 1** Provide structures and processes for teachers to regularly evaluate and reflect on the impact of their practice against the SIP goals and targets to inform the next steps.
- Direction 2** Collaboratively develop agreements of which high-impact evidence-based pedagogical practices will be used to support engagement and challenge for all learners.
- Direction 3** Strengthen teacher capacity to implement agreed school priorities and quality teaching and learning through highly effective, cohesive evidence-based performance development processes.

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



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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 2020, 68% of year 1 and 88% of year 2 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA.

In 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 54% of year 3 students, 86% of year 5 students, 83% of year 7 students and 72% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For year 3, this result represents a decline, for years 5 and 7, an improvement and for year 9, little or no change from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 15% of year 3, 24% of year 5, 29% of year 7 and 11% 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 in 2019, who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 50%, or 4 out of 8 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 67%, or 6 out of 9 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, and 25%, or 1 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 61% of year 3 students, 81% of year 5 students, 88% of year 7 students and 78% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. For years 3 and 9, this result represents a decline, and for years 5 and 7, an improvement from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019, 23% of year 3, no year 5, 38% of year 7 and no year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 3, 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 numeracy no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 5, 100%, or 4 out of 4 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 7, and no students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2020, 91% 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. Between 2018 and 2020, the trend has been upwards, from 94% 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, 100% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 93% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2020, 97% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 23% of grades were at an 'A' level and 36% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents an improvement for the 'A' level grade and a decline for the 'B' level grade from the historic baseline averages.

Twenty-one percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 0 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance 50%, or 9 out of 18 potential students, achieved an ATAR selection score. There was also 1 student who was successful in achieving a merit.

In 2020, the school had 1 moderation adjustment in a Stage 2 subject.

