

Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

Report for Le Fevre High School

Conducted in September 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 Kathryn Entwistle, Review Officer of the department's Review, Improvement and Accountability directorate and Joanne Costa, 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
 - School Services Officers (SSOs)
 - Student representatives
 - Teachers.

School context

Le Fevre High School caters for young people from years 8-12. It is situated 16kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021, as at the February census, is 601 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 541. The local Partnership is the Le Fevre Peninsula Partnership.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 973 and is classified as Category 2 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 14% Aboriginal students, 10% students with identified disabilities, 9% students with English as an additional language or dialect, less than 5% young people in care and 39% of students eligible for School Card assistance.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in their 1st year of tenure

- Assistant Principal: Wellbeing, Intervention and Support
- Assistant Principal Curriculum
- Assistant Principal Maritime and Career Development
- Assistant Principal: Operational Leadership and Timetabling Innovation (currently advertised).
- Assistant Principal: Middle School
- Assistant Principal: Senior School
- Assistant Principal: Aboriginal Education
- 5 Leaders: Heads of Curriculum

There are 59 teachers including 3 in the early years of their career and 19 step 9 teachers.

The previous ESR directions were:

- Direction 1** Collaboratively develop agreements of evidence-based pedagogical approaches that support intellectual stretch and challenge in student learning.
- Direction 2** Strategically implement a structured development of leadership capacities to support pedagogical development and accountability, and evaluative processes within teams.
- Direction 3** Develop the capacity of leaders to use data more effectively to further enhance the focus on student learning improvement.

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

The provision of exemplars, rubrics and success criteria are commonly practiced across year levels and learning areas. Consequently, students have the opportunity to understand the elements of grade achievement and can work towards learning goals. In some classes, pedagogical approaches prompt students to extend their thinking and to engage with challenging learning. Examples of stimulating questioning techniques and rigorous class discussion were evident. In some classes, teachers conducted formative assessment to inform and potentially adjust their teaching, according to student achievement and perceptions. In other classes, students solve problems, engage with experimentation, and apply their learning in varying contexts. As an International Baccalaureate school learning through inquiry-based processes would be commonly expected. This is an area that leaders may choose to revisit and renew, as teaching through textbooks that requires limited cognitive processing was evident.

Previous ESR Directions 2 and 3 will be addressed against line of inquiry 2 of this report.

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?

Leaders understand the importance of monitoring the impact of school improvement plan (SIP) actions on student learning and are working to develop effective systems to do so. This is currently progressed through professional learning communities (PLCs) that reportedly vary in effectiveness, dependent on the approach the leader employs. Some work has been undertaken to evaluate the impact of the teaching of problem solving strategies in maths and the tactical teaching of reading and writing. Some PLCs trialed the use of student work samples to evaluate the impact of their teaching. Leaders reported that they understand this may not provide the most accurate measure, as the concept of teacher judgement and limited moderation of work samples can compromise precision.

The English PLC used Lexile data to evaluate the impact of tactical reading strategies, identifying a plateau in student achievement. Understanding that this data indicated a need to adjust teaching, the PLC members discussed differing potential approaches. Teachers reported that they selected and implemented varied actions at their discretion. Some used commercially produced programs, whilst others developed and adjusted their teaching intuitively. Reference to recognised resources, such as the department's literacy & numeracy guidebooks, was not evident. The panel commends the model the PLC employed; to use valid data to assess impact, and then to seek adjustments. To further strengthen this, and bring about greater clarity and consistency, it will be important to reference systemic, evidence-based guides when introducing adjustments to practice.

Evidence of teachers evaluating the impact of their teaching in class was sourced. Some teachers design and conduct pre and post teaching assessments and respond to the findings by altering their approach to better support students to reach expected outcomes. These processes were initiated at the teachers' discretion, and may provide a model when developing consistent monitoring practices across the school.

The panel acknowledges the existing evaluation models in place at the school and provides the following direction to further strengthen and broaden these systems across all PLCs.

Direction 1 **Accurately monitor and enhance the impact of teaching on student achievement by using measurable data across PLCs and referring to evidence-based resources to inform adjustments to practice.**

Effective leadership

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

A theme that emerged throughout the review was the concept of moving from 'managing to leading'. The newly appointed Principal has implemented systems to focus executive leaders and Band 1 leaders on teaching and learning, introducing a model of shared leadership. Executive leaders have engaged with professional learning to scaffold their understanding of high yield teaching strategies in literacy.

To progress the SIP actions, executive leaders have worked strategically with Band 1 leaders to support them to consistently introduce problem solving and tactical teaching to staff. Strong evidence of these concepts being implemented in learning areas and within priority groups was sourced.

Teachers' descriptions of the performance development process (PDP) varied. Some teachers described a valuable, ongoing process with their line manager; working together to achieve goals and collaboratively monitor progress. Informal catchups were commonly reported. Some teachers attend six-monthly meetings with no intermediate support or input. The potential impact of the PDP is reliant on the approach employed by the leader. An opportunity to strengthen and validate teachers' ongoing learning to build capacity is apparent. Developing the capabilities of leaders with line management roles to work effectively with teachers is vital. It will be important to re-design the leaders' PDP to allow them to better plan and conduct classroom observations, model expected practice and provide feedback. This will ensure that systems consistently progress SIP priorities and scaffold improvement for all.

In progressing SIP priorities, the concept of data literacy must be considered. Leaders and teachers across the school discuss and use data with varying levels of understanding and effectiveness. Reference to wellbeing data and the use of achievement data to inform trends or progress was common. A diagnostic understanding of how to use achievement data to identify and respond to students' miscues and strengths, was limited to a few examples. To meet students' learning needs, it will be essential for teachers and leaders to establish a full understanding of how to read and respond to data analytically.

Direction 2 **Strengthen the capacity all teachers have to implement SIP actions by scaffolding leaders to further build teacher capacity by facilitating processes and providing feedback on effective teaching practices.**

Direction 3 **Meet students' varied learning needs by developing teacher and leader capacity to understand and analyse data to effectively use it to inform planning.**

Effective teaching and student learning

How effectively are teachers analysing assessment and feedback data to inform differentiated curriculum planning and instruction?

The profile of data has been raised at the school and staff hold positive perceptions about its value in informing progress at the school. Colour-coded data is displayed to allow students to identify their progress to achieving a passing grade. Teachers discussed the potential that progressive achievement test (PAT) data has to inform strategic teaching, although this was reported as an area staff are yet to fully explore.

Evidence confirmed that much time and support is provided to students who have not yet achieved the Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA) level. Some teachers modify tasks to meet at risk students' needs. This includes reducing the number of words in an assignment or offering options for presentation of work, rather than designing learning tasks to include the varied needs of all students. It was evident that students at, or exceeding SEA, are more likely to be left to engage in self-driven learning, whilst the teacher works to support those students less likely to achieve standard. Some students in the high achievers' classes report that, while they engage with rich discussion with the teacher and peers, in the main, the teaching they are provided is the same as the mainstream classes.

Teaching across the school is mostly pitched to the whole class, with some evidence of grouping students by ability. Tasks designed to allow universal access to maximise outcomes for the range of learners, is an area for development. To better meet the needs of all students, it will be important for staff to collectively explore and establish an agreed approach to learning design for differentiated teaching. Reference to systemic documents such as the curriculum guides and the Teaching for Effective Learning framework will support this. As referred to in direction 3 of this report, a deeper understanding of data analysis and its place in intentional planning, will underpin this work.

Direction 4 **Maximise learning outcomes for all students by collectively establishing a consistent approach to inclusive learning design.**

Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

The newly appointed leader has identified areas for improvement during their short time at the school. The findings of the external school review align closely with their intentions and perceptions. The significant process used to collectively develop the positive behaviours for learning agreement is commended as a vital initiative from which to develop continuous improvement. This was strategically lead. The positive culture of the school and commitment to improving student learning outcomes is apparent across the staff.

The panel agrees the following directions will contribute to the systems and processes the leaders have introduced so far. They are designed to enhance the school's intent to support and extend achievement for all students.

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

- Direction 1** **Accurately monitor and enhance the impact of teaching on student achievement using measurable data across PLCs and referring to evidence-based frameworks to adjust practice.**
- Direction 2** **Strengthen the capacity all teachers have to implement SIP actions by scaffolding leaders to further build teacher capacity by facilitating processes and providing feedback on effective teaching practices.**
- Direction 3** **Meet students' varied learning needs by developing teacher and leader capacity to understand and analyse data to effectively use it to inform planning.**
- Direction 4** **Maximise learning outcomes for all students by collectively establishing a consistent approach to inclusive learning design.**

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



Kerry Dollman
Director
Review, Improvement and Accountability



Anne Millard
Executive Director
Partnerships, Schools and Preschools



Kirri Minnican
Principal
Le Fevre High 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 2019 the reading results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 53% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

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

In 2019 14% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. For year 9 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 42% or 13 of 31 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

Numeracy

In 2019 the numeracy results as measured by NAPLAN indicate that 48% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For 2019 year 9 NAPLAN numeracy the school is achieving lower than the results of similar groups of students across government schools.

In 2019 8% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. 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 numeracy 31% or 5 of 16 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2020 64% 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 an improvement from the historic baseline average.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2019 85% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 95% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 65% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2020 94% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 21% of grades were at an 'A' level and 42% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents an improvement for the 'C-', 'A' and 'B' level grades from the historic baseline averages.

Forty nine percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 38 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance 29% or 17 of 59 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. There were also 9 students who were successful in achieving a merit.