

# Department for Education External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

## Report for Golden Grove High School

Conducted in March 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 John Tiver and Alison Colbeck, 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
- Scan of Aboriginal Education Strategy implementation
- Discussions with:
  - Governing Council representatives
  - Leaders
  - Parent groups
  - School Services Officers (SSOs)
  - Student groups
  - Teachers

## School context

Golden Grove High School caters for students in years 8 to 12. It is situated 21kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2021 is 1357 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 1329. The local partnership is Golden Way.

The school has a 2020 ICSEA score of 1013 and is classified as Category 5 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 4% Aboriginal students, 14% students with disabilities, 3% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 1.5% children/young people in care and 25% of students eligible for School Card assistance (2020).

A fully integrated Disability Unit (called the Discovery Centre) is located in the heart of the school and caters for up to 52 students with diagnosed learning difficulties. The Discovery Centre comprises 5 disability unit classes (1 to 8 ratio) and 1 Special Class (1 to 12 ratio).

Golden Grove High School shares facilities with 2 other schools – Gleeson Catholic College and Pedare Christian College. The 3 schools operate within a number of joint use agreements and share curriculum opportunities and facilities such as materials technology, senior science laboratories, senior home economics kitchens, music facilities and the trade training centre (IT, Electronics, Robotics and CAD).

The school has a joint use agreement with Gleeson College for the Dame Roma Mitchell Centre which is a flexible space with the capacity to seat 650 people. It is predominantly used as a performance space for dance and drama, to hold student assemblies, staff meetings and community presentations to large groups.

The school is a member of North Eastern Secondary Principal's Network (NESPAN). The NESPAN alliance (8 schools) offers a wide range of vocational offerings to students in member schools. Staff from the 8 schools come together once a year to complete collaborative moderation activities around the Australian Curriculum (2019 – consistency of interpretation of the achievement standards, 2020 – curriculum planning, teaching approaches and task design).

The school has a high number of students enrolled from defence families. This attracts a fully funded Defence School Mentor (DSM), who provides counselling support to defence students and their families across the 3 schools. The DSM is located in the Hub on-campus.

The school leadership team consists of a Principal in his 5<sup>th</sup> year of tenure, a B6 Deputy Principal and a B5 director of studies, four assistant principals and a SS05 business leader.

There are 102 teachers including 8 in the early years of their career and 41 Step 9 teachers.

## The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** In order to challenge and engage students, develop a coherent and consistent approach to pedagogy that is understood by all teachers.
- Direction 2** In order for teachers to more effectively differentiate their teaching, improve their access to data and their capacity to understand and apply it more effectively in teaching and learning.
- Direction 3** Collaboratively develop, with all stakeholders, a Site Improvement Plan that has a particular focus on self-review and building a culture of highly effective pedagogy.

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

#### **Direction 1: In order to challenge and engage students, develop a coherent and consistent approach to pedagogy that is understood by all teachers.**

Engagement and challenge were found as areas for improvement. High expectations by teachers and use of high-impact strategies to challenge students were not prominent practice across the school. Many teachers described students as very capable, compliant but complacent and satisfied with only passing grades. Leaders and teams initiated a review of learning with the aim of developing guiding documents, which would support improvements in teacher practice and improve learning outcomes. A Golden Grove High School Pedagogical framework was developed utilising 3 pillars of:

- Personalisation: knowing students and their needs and utilising time, technology, and feedback to maximise success.
- Collaboration: enlisting processes that promotes collaborative interaction between teachers, students, and their peers to achieve successful learning outcomes.
- Purposeful design: utilising learning design to connect curriculum requirements while providing challenge through explicit differentiated learning and assessment tasks.

Several support strategies were described by leaders in supporting the framework implementation:

- targeted professional development in Visible Learning to build teacher capacity
- appointment of a pedagogical coach
- improved use of technologies to support collaborative learning
- development of learner dispositions
- documentation of a Charter for Success.

#### **Direction 2: In order for teachers to more effectively differentiate their teaching, improve their access to data and their capacity to understand and apply it more effectively in teaching and learning.**

Development of learner and data management systems allowed teachers and leaders to access and use student achievement data more effectively to plan differentiated learning and monitor progress. Professional learning, leadership support and opportunities in teams have built the capacity of teachers to plan and discuss learner progress.

#### **Direction 3: Collaboratively develop, with all stakeholders, a Site Improvement Plan that has a particular focus on self-review and building a culture of highly effective pedagogy.**

The school's strategic and school improvement plans outline the roadmap for improvement within the school. Each were developed in consultation with all stakeholders and referenced to learner achievement data. Alignment of these documents to staff performance development planning (PDP) goals and targeted professional learning, represented in a documented calendar, allowed a more focussed approach to improvement.

## Lines of inquiry

### Effective school improvement planning

Determine the challenge of practice: How well does the school critically evaluate current curricular, pedagogical, and assessment practices to determine challenges of practice?

Goals for improvement, documented clearly in the school improvement plan (SIP), were well-understood by most staff interviewed. Leaders detailed the process they used to arrive at these goals, reviewing the school's improvement stage and a range of datasets from NAPLAN testing and student achievement in Australian Curriculum and SACE results. Further analysis of data informed refinements to improvement goals about gender and pathways. The agreed goals of the SIP include raising the achievement of writing, increasing high-band achievement in numeracy and high-band performance of boys in SACE stage 1.

The leader's presentation confirmed that challenges of practice were constructed by the Principal and a small group of the leadership team to ensure clarity and focus in guiding teachers' work. Asked how they supported the school's improvement work, teachers' responses varied in their knowledge and understanding of developing the challenges of practice. Several referred to practices developed in the recent visible learning professional development of how they support the development of the goals. The leadership team promoted current documentation of the school's pedagogical framework, learner dispositions, and charter for success as guides for teacher practice.

The panel was provided with action plans by curriculum leaders detailing how they were developing the priorities for improvement in their teams. However, teachers in these teams varied in their responses in effectively addressing the development of SIP priorities and the challenges of practice. Many described their curriculum teams as highly supportive, providing opportunities for regular informal conversations about learning and learners. Several commented that their teams were using data to inform discussions of improvement of practice. The majority agreed it was necessary to develop a greater understanding and connection to developing the agreed challenges of practice as they believed consistent changes and modifications in practice could improve learning. Documented processes of performance development and improvement (PDI) provided opportunities for leaders to check how teachers were progressing against individual staff PDI goals aligned to those of the SIP.

To achieve the school's agreed goals and targets for student learning improvement, teachers need to develop a shared understanding and ownership of the agreed challenges of practice. To further support this development, a greater alignment of leadership roles and supportive PDI processes are needed.

**Direction 1      Ensure the achievement of improvement priorities and challenges of practice are implemented through strategic performance development processes that enable teachers to develop and deliver effective teaching practices.**

## Effective teaching and student learning

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

Classroom observations by the panel confirmed that most students were taking part in well-organised and structured lessons. Effective teaching and assessment practices were prominent in the learning centre – Health and Physical Education, Flexible Learning Options (FLO) and the Excel program for academically gifted students. Students get quality support from teachers and student services officers (SSOs) in setting work that meets their needs and challenge level. There was little evidence of a language of learning. Several teachers in these programs described using practices developed and influenced by recent whole-school visible learning professional development, TfEL documents, and best practice guidebooks. They have a strong alignment to the pillars of the school's pedagogical framework of personalisation, collaboration, and purposeful design; the quality of other programs varied across the school with some pockets of best practice.

In the leader's presentation, the Principal highlighted a need to shift teaching practice to be more student-centred and aspirational when appointed. This is enhanced through building leader and teacher capacity in professional learning, and developing clarity of expectations through the pedagogical framework, expectations of learners (student dispositions) and connecting areas of improvement for success to achieve this. Teachers commented that these recent initiatives need to be clarified and developed further with all staff regarding their purpose, staff understanding, and staff expectations to implement them. Several staff saw opportunities to strengthen the effectiveness of these initiatives by making connections between the SIP's challenges of practice, agreements in literacy and numeracy, high-impact teaching strategies and performance development processes. More time to do this and embed it in practice was a typical response for the next steps in development. Several teachers felt overwhelmed by the rapid rate of changes and believed it was time to embed these practices with leadership support.

It is timely to collaboratively review and develop the effectiveness, connection, and clarity of current documentation of agreements that guide, support, and assure quality teacher practice and successful learning outcomes for students. To ensure this, the school must align leadership roles and implement rigorous PDI processes with clear expectations.

**Direction 2      Ensure teacher understanding and agreement of high-yield pedagogical practices that engage and challenge all learners.**

## Effective leadership

Educational leadership – How well does the leadership facilitate the development of coherent high-quality curriculum planning and effective teaching?

Recent appointments and refinements to leadership roles supported the development of school improvement priorities in writing, numeracy and SACE achievement. Effective and targeted professional learning has built teacher and leadership capacity in understanding and constructing a language of learning observed in conversations with some staff. Leadership described how they developed and implemented several key documents to guide teachers' work.

Leadership outlined quality assurance processes they developed to ensure coherence, continuity, and progress of learning across the school. Templates created provided consistent structures for teachers and learning area teams to populate curriculum requirements. An improvement schedule outlining roles and responsibilities of staff, timelines and links to school agreements was provided, and leaders described how they checked their quality in team discussions and performance development sessions. Curriculum documentation ensuring continuity of learning was evident in scope and sequence documents, learning and assessment plans, assessment tasks and unit plans. To better support intentional and evidence-based teacher planning in unit and topic plans, teachers were given greater access to agreed data through the Daymap learner management system, and access to live data through a developing Power BI application. Teachers confirmed a clear expectation of knowing each learner and planning to meet their needs.

Leaders outlined clear documentation of performance development and improvement processes and line management teams. Resources of performance development support referring to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership standards, coaching conversations and classroom observations were connected and readily accessible to all staff. Teachers described how their individual PDI goals were aligned to the SIP, supporting the school improvement priorities. However, when asked to describe these processes and how they influenced improvement in practice, considerable variation existed in teacher and leader responses. Expectations from line managers differed; some had informal conversations of support, others, more evidence-based discussions from a mixture of sources when engaging in these processes.

Leaders acknowledged the importance of developing teacher understanding of the agreed priorities for improvement, the challenges of practice and the role of teachers in developing these in classroom practice. To support this, greater alignment between leaders' roles and responsibilities, the SIP priorities and performance development processes is needed.

**Direction 3** Ensure quality curriculum and highly effective teaching practice by clarifying and aligning school priorities, leadership roles and responsibilities, and rigorous and intentional PDI processes.

## Additional thoughts outside the scope of the review

- Possible review of the effectiveness of the Mathematics Pathway program in delivering the intended outcomes:
  - Effective teaching and learning of mathematics
  - Ensuring the entitlement of the Australian Curriculum requirements for all students – assessment and reporting and alignment
  - Clarity and support of the challenges of practice.

# Outcomes of the External School Review 2021

At Golden Grove High School, the influence of previous directions is seen in documentation, supported by planning processes that are evidence-based and targeted to raise student achievement. Effective systems that build capacity are developing, positively affecting teacher and leader practice. The school is providing effective conditions for student learning.

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

- Direction 1**      **Ensure the achievement of improvement priorities and challenges of practice are implemented through strategic performance development processes that enable teachers to develop and deliver effective teaching practices.**
- Direction 2**      **Ensure teacher understanding and agreement of high-yield pedagogical practices that engage and challenge all learners.**
- Direction 3**      **Ensure quality curriculum and highly effective teaching practice by clarifying and aligning school priorities, leadership roles and responsibilities, and rigorous and intentional PDI processes.**

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



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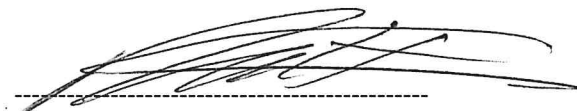
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Anne Millard  
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Peter Kuss  
Principal  
Golden Grove High School



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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 2019, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 67% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 9 has been upwards, from 65% to 67%.

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

In 2019, 13% 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, 26%, or 25 out of 97 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 72% of year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement against the SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 9 has been upwards, from 67% to 72%.

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

In 2019, 9% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 9, this result represents little or no change from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 9 has been upwards from 8% to 9%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 29%, or 13 out of 45 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 upwards, from 97% 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, 93% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2019, 21% of grades achieved were at 'C- 'level or higher, 21% of

grades were at an 'A' level and 40% of grades were at an '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. Between 2018 and 2020, the trend for 'C- 'or higher has been downwards, from 98% in 2018 to 93% in 2020.

Twenty six percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 87 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2020.

In terms of 2020 tertiary entrance, 60%, or 113 out of 189 potential students achieved an ATAR selection score. There were also 11 students who were successful in achieving a merit.

In 2020, the school had a minimal moderation adjustment for 9 students.