

# Department for Education

## External School Review

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools division

### Report for Banksia Park International High School

Conducted in August 2020



## 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 Lia Tedesco and Sylvia Groves, 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

Banksia Park International High caters for students from years 8 to 12. It is situated 19kms from the Adelaide CBD. The enrolment in 2020 is 891 students. Enrolment at the time of the previous review was 768. Banksia Park International High School is part of the Tea Tree Gully partnership.

The school has an ICSEA score of 1014 and is classified as Category 6 on the Department for Education Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 2% Aboriginal students, 12% students with disabilities, 1% students with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD) background, 1% children/young people in care and 25% of students eligible for School Card assistance. The school's international programs enrol approximately 6% full fee-paying internationals per term.

The school leadership team consists of a principal in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of tenure, 6 B3 senior leaders (assistant principals) and 12 B1 coordinators. The department funds the assistant principal in charge of entrepreneurial education as part of its entrepreneurial strategy.

There are 62 teachers, including 5 in the early years of their career and 15 Step 9 teachers.

## The previous ESR or OTE directions were:

- Direction 1** Increase opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning and assessment, and participate in higher-order learning processes, through engaging, challenging and innovative teaching practice.
- Direction 2** Raise the expectations of all leaders to cooperate and collaborate in the ongoing implementation of a whole-school, integrated approach to curriculum delivery, including the STEM agenda.
- Direction 3** Review, monitor and evaluate the use of key datasets to improve teaching practice.
- Direction 4** Provide an effective and efficient process for students to provide regular feedback to their teachers, which results in an improvement in teaching practice and informs teachers' performance development planning.

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

The school improvement plan (SIP) outlines professional learning and resources that have built teacher capacity in literacy, numeracy and formative assessment. Using data to evaluate areas for improvement and measure progress became more focused, as cited in the precise target high-band strategy, year 10 'precise target' mentoring and the SACE A and B improvement strategy. Broadening of subject offerings, pathways and approaches to learning strengthened student engagement. For example, collaborative work with other schools in developing entrepreneurial skills in learning, contributed to the school's recognition as an entrepreneurial specialist school. As a result, new SACE courses were provided, and students got opportunities to take part in programs promoting innovation and change.

Recent work by leaders, in consultation with staff, produced a whole-school pedagogical agreement. Embedded in the SIP and performance development processes, this agreement will guide teachers' work in planning, and ensure a more significant impact on student achievement. Established interdisciplinary professional learning communities (PLCs) monitored student achievement, developing strategies and

courses that promote higher levels of engagement and achievement. A focus on student agency led to student involvement in a student exhibition, discussing innovation in teaching and learning.

# Lines of inquiry

## EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Improve practice and monitor strategies and actions: How effectively does the school monitor and enhance its improvement strategies and actions based on their impact on student learning?

The school's prospectus and strategic plan clearly articulate the agreed vision and purpose of the educational program, while the SIP goals and actions provide a roadmap for improvement in raising achievement in reading, writing, numeracy and SACE. Challenges of practice align to best practice, referenced in guidebooks, and success criteria are transparent and student-centred.

The principal's team established transparent processes for school improvement planning, supported by documentation and aligned leadership roles. Leaders described several evidence-based strategies to monitor the SIP progress and promote teacher reflection of their impact on student learning at a whole-school, team and individual teacher level.

- Staff review meetings every 5 weeks, as part of step 4 of the improvement process and annual end-of-year reviews, which includes staff reflection on their practice, and review of planned actions and how they are translating into learning outcomes.
- Learning area team meetings where teachers review end-of-semester achievement data.
- PLCs where staff collaboratively use precise target tracking to share and reflect on practice.
- Learning area leaders conduct evidence-based professional discussions with teachers about student progress.
- Year 12 snapshot of achievement every 5 weeks to monitor learning progress.
- Tracking and monitoring of year 10 student GPA scores as an indicator of future success.

Teachers and leaders commented that agreed SIP goals provided clarity and cohesion in their work, and time provided to reflect on practice to attain these goals was valuable. However, several teachers said other priorities or administrative tasks could weaken this time. Leaders said that majority of staff have 'an improvement headset' and work well together.

Banksia Park International High School completed a comprehensive plan of school improvement outlined in the SIP and strategic plan. Supportive strategies, positively viewed by staff, are in place to enable teams and individual teachers to reflect on their practice and its impact on student learning outcomes. These strategies are effective because they align to the SIP goals' development and ability to change teacher practice, while supporting challenges of practice. Clarifying and connecting the roles of these strategies to support established agreements will strengthen their effectiveness and focus.

**Direction 1**     **Maximise the impact of teacher practice on student learning by further refining and reaching agreements on highly effective and supportive evidence-based reflective processes.**

## EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

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

Leaders described a range of proven pedagogical practices that evolved across the school to promote student engagement and challenge. They highlighted support from departmental project officers, and use of guidebooks to build teacher capacity in literacy and numeracy. Entrepreneurial learning skills and knowledge, and formative assessment practices, were developed through targeted professional learning and collaborative networks. Confirmation of the school as a specialist school in entrepreneurial education will provide focus and opportunities to develop strategies that support engagement and challenge across all learning. Several teachers positively described using formative feedback and how it enhanced their ability to gauge students' understanding of concepts and guide them in their next steps of learning. While this was not a prominent feature in classroom observations, students received meaningful feedback from teachers in a variety of ways, including verbal comments in class, detailed comments on draft work and summative tasks.

Documentation of the extended home group program describes opportunities for students to develop dispositions and a language of learning. Several students interviewed in the junior years referred positively to sessions at the beginning and end of term, where they reflected on their progress using grades and GPA scores, and constructed SMARTAR learning goals. Some used language learnt about dispositions of successful learners to describe how they could improve. All students interviewed said they received feedback from teachers about their learning progress in the form of termly or snapshot reports, verbal and written comments on drafts and assignments. Effectiveness of this was dependent on the teacher.

Teachers' responses varied when asked how they plan learning to meet the needs of all students and provide stretch and challenge.

This included:

- using data to guide planning of learning tasks
- offering choices to students in presenting their learning and classwork
- accommodating tasks.

Developing practices in task design in entrepreneurial and STEM learning, and reviewing tasks that provide a challenge for high-band learners from precise target teams, is influencing effective differentiation practices. Leaders described a pedagogical framework recently shared with staff, outlining 'essential practices' that guide teachers in effective planning, delivery and review of teaching and learning. Developed by leaders in consultation with staff, it brings together important aspects of recent professional learning, the Teaching for Effective Learning framework and Australian professional standards for teachers. While teacher connection to the framework is just beginning, several teachers commented that it was an example of the school's growing clarity of expectations for effective practice.

Implementation of a variety of pedagogical approaches to support learners is evident. Clarity of what the school believes is highly effective practice is in the current pedagogical framework. It is timely to review effectiveness and connection of each, develop further and consolidate the pedagogical agreements, to guide practice on high-impact learning approaches for all students.

**Direction 2     Strengthen teacher practice by collaboratively developing a collective understanding and agreement of high-yield strategies through the established pedagogical framework that engages and challenges all learners.**

## EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Building teacher capacity: How effective are the schools professional learning and performance development processes in building teacher capacity?

The principal's executive team provided clear documentation of the school's strategic direction on a vision for learning, and supporting documents of how to achieve this. Team members described how they regularly meet with coordinators, monitor and provide support in the development of SIP priorities in their focus areas. Teachers and support staff trust the executive team leadership, and feel supported by the professional learning opportunities and resources for their work.

The panel observed coordinator-led PLCs, which met regularly for staff to review student progress, discuss and plan for improved student achievement. Teachers found this time valuable in sharing ideas and support from peers for planning learning. However, it was not clear how teacher practice was changed or how agreements of best practice were reached. To maintain focus and productivity of these teams, professional learning was provided to coordinators to support them in their role.

A well-structured and coherently implemented approach to performance development planning (PDP) was evident. All staff complete departmental forms, some before and others at, an initial PDP meeting with line managers. They set goals and strategies to work towards, and document them in the performance development plan. All plans sourced showed alignment of the majority of individual goals to those of the SIP. Conversations with teachers indicated that the focus of these meetings varied in the expectations of line managers and the level of robust evidence-based discussion.

Effective leadership continuously builds teachers' capabilities and develops leadership capacity in all staff. Teachers were very positive of the collegiate support they received from leaders towards their work. They believe their leaders ensure they are provided with necessary direction and resources to deliver the curriculum effectively. Roles and responsibilities of leaders, while clear, need review to effectively support the school's priorities.

Analysis and data use, by middle leaders, to improve teacher practice and school performance, requires strong support and leadership. Further alignment and focus of the SIP, PLC and PDP processes and expectations will strengthen teacher practice and achievement of the agreed school priorities.

**Direction 3     Build staff capacity to achieve school priorities through the development of strategic, intentional processes of professional learning and performance development linked to school priorities.**

## Outcomes of the External School Review 2020

The influence of the previous ESR directions is apparent in the school's evidence-based approach to improvement. Effective PLCs provide opportunities for teacher collaboration in reviewing student achievement through precise targets and monitoring of the progress of implementation of SIP priorities. Demonstrated growth in student achievement is at or above what would be reasonably expected of a school in a similar context.

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

- Direction 1**    **Maximise the impact of teacher practice on student learning by further refining and reaching agreements on highly effective and supportive evidence-based reflective processes.**
- Direction 2**    **Strengthen teacher practice by collaboratively developing a collective understanding and agreement of high-yield strategies through the established pedagogical framework that engages and challenges all learners.**
- Direction 3**    **Build staff capacity to achieve school priorities through the development of strategic, intentional processes of professional learning and performance development linked to school priorities.**

Based on the school's current performance, Banksia Park International High School will be externally reviewed again in 2023.



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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 77% 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 62% to 77%.

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

In 2019, 12% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN reading bands. 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, 23%, or 12 out of 53 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

### Numeracy

In 2019, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 74% 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 66% to 74%.

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

In 2019, 12% of year 9 students achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN numeracy bands. For year 9, this result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

Between 2017 and 2019, the trend for year 9 has been upwards from 9% to 12%.

For those students in 2019 who achieved in the top 2 NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 44%, or 14 out of 32 students from year 3 remain in the upper bands at year 9.

### SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2019, 80% 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.

For compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2019, 100% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 92% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 literacy units, 86% successfully completed their Stage 1 numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

For attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2019, 99% of grades achieved were at 'C-' level or higher, 25% of grades were at an 'A' level and 47% of grades were at a 'B' level. This result represents an improvement for the 'A' level grade and little or no change for the 'B' level grade, from the historic baseline averages.

Thirty-nine percent of students completed SACE using VET and there were 20 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program in 2019.

In terms of 2019 tertiary entrance, 74.4%, or 97 out of 130 potential students achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score. Three students were successful in achieving merit.