



# EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW

Partnerships, Schools and Preschools Division

---

## Report for Roma Mitchell Secondary College

Conducted in June 2017



Government of South Australia

Department for Education and  
Child Development

### **Review details**

*A priority for the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) is to improve the educational attainment and wellbeing of South Australia's children and young people.*

*The purpose of the External School Review is to support schools to raise achievement, sustain high performance and to provide quality assurance to build and sustain public confidence in DECD schools.*

*The framework underpinning the External School Review identifies the key levers for school improvement and has been shaped and informed by research.*

*The overarching review question is "How well does this school improve student achievement, growth, challenge, engagement and equity?"*

*This Report of the External School Review 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.*

*The support and cooperation provided by the staff and school community is acknowledged. While, not all review processes, artefacts and comments are documented, they all have been considered and contributed to the development and directions of this Report.*

*The External School Review Process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented. This information is provided in Appendix One of the report.*

*This External School Review was conducted by Liz Schneyder, Review Officer, Review, Improvement and Accountability Directorate and Marion Coady, Sue Burtenshaw and Mark Healy, Review Principals.*

### School context

Roma Mitchell Secondary College caters for Year 8 to 12 students in the suburb of Gepps Cross. The enrolment in 2016 was 1301 students and is 1289 students in 2017. The college has three campuses: a Girls' Education Campus with 371 enrolments, a Co-education Campus with 848 students, and a Special Education Campus with 70 students. The school has an ICSEA score of 942 and is classified as Category 2 on the DECD Index of Educational Disadvantage.

The school population includes 7% Aboriginal students, 13.5% students with disabilities, 50% students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), 17 young people in care, and 35% of families eligible for School Card assistance. The Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) enrolments have increased from 38% in 2012 to 50% in 2017.

The school Leadership Team consists of a Principal in her second tenure at the school, a Deputy Principal, 4 Heads of Campus, 9 Assistant Principals and 9 Coordinators. There are 107.5FTE teachers, including 4 in the early years of their career, and 39.45FTE School Services Officers (SSOs).

### Lines of Inquiry

In considering the data summary in the School Performance Overview (Appendix 2) and the Principal's presentation, the Review Panel explored the following Lines of Inquiry to evaluate the school's effectiveness towards raising student achievement and sustaining high performance. During the external review process, the panel focused on three key areas from the External School Review Framework:

<b>Effective Teaching:</b>	<b>To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?</b>
<b>Effective Leadership:</b>	<b>How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching across all campuses?</b>
<b>Improvement Agenda:</b>	<b>How well are the results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions?</b>

### To what extent does the school cater for the varied needs of learners?

Roma Mitchell Secondary College is a complex school with three campuses: a special education campus, a co-education campus, and a girls' campus. It also hosts three Special Education or regional classes for the district. Over 50% of students do not speak English as their first language, and many are not literate in their first language.

The college has needed to invest in a range of programs, and employ additional staff, to address the low literacy levels of many of its students, on all campuses. New students from the Secondary School of English, or new refugees with limited English, are enrolled in the Intensive Secondary English Course (ISEC). Students in the Special Education campus have literacy blocks 4 days a week, and leaders have been appointed specifically to guide the implementation of the upgraded literacy and numeracy agreements and to line-manage the literacy and numeracy coaches. Students engaged in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IBMYP) Personal Project and in the SACE Research Project can access significant in-class support, and are encouraged to attend the homework club, which operates after school Monday to Thursday and is staffed by volunteers from the Smith Family, Temporary Relief Teachers (TRTs) or school staff. Individual Learning Plans are developed for many of these students and uploaded onto DayMap, the school's Learner Management System, so that intervention strategies can be shared. Leaders are also expected to engage in a deep analysis of the NAPLAN and PAT data and initiate strategies to support students in areas identified as of concern. There has been increasing triangulation of datasets to compare individual student performance in NAPLAN, PAT and IBMYP assessment, and the college is investigating a number of software programs that students can access to support individualised programs in literacy. Some videos of effective teaching of literacy by some teachers are being shared in meetings.



The college was opened seven years ago, and is an amalgamation of 4 different schools. The IBMYP was introduced in 2015 as a strategy to develop cohesion between the teachers and leaders from the 4 schools and provide a context for a cohesive learning continuum from Year 8 to 12 on all campuses. Accreditation was achieved earlier this year. Evident to the Review Panel was a cohesive approach to the documentation of unit plans, led by faculty leaders, and the use of consistent assessment practices across the co-ed and girls' campuses. All faculties could provide Common Assessment Tasks to support collaborative moderation, and there was evidence of clear learning intentions and scaffolding in many classes visited. Teachers are being encouraged to build a greater focus on urgency, because many students are having too much time to complete work and meet deadlines, which is resulting in some ineffective use of time and limited improvement in the quality of the work completed.

The Review Panel observed some innovative pedagogy, particularly through project-based learning and interdisciplinary teaching of some units of work that are expected in the delivery of the IBMYP, especially in the middle school classes. Many teachers indicated in interviews that they believed it is now time for the college to focus further on the quality of their teaching. Students talked about the good practices of some of their teachers, that made their lessons 'fun' and were designed to meet the different learning capacities of students. Many of these teachers challenged the students and had high expectations of them. Unfortunately, this was not always the case, with the use of textbooks and worksheets still evident, and limited options provided to students who had completed required work or are high achievers. Teachers are looking for more time in meetings and student free days to share new pedagogical practices and prepare integrated units of work. Most teachers encourage students to use ICT in classes, and are keen to have time to work with the ICT coaches to become more confident in the use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool that will better engage a number of students. Some teachers meet regularly as part of the Apple Aspiring Leaders Training Program.

The college has invested in strategies to improve the number of students who complete their SACE and achieve their expected ATAR, with 2016 data indicating significant progress. It was evident in all interviews that the Principal has identified SACE completion for all students as a major priority and most staff indicated their commitment to ensuring all of their students receive their entitled support. SACE teachers are generally sharing resources and strategies, there is increasing internal moderation, clearer learning intentions, and teachers are reviewing task design and transforming tasks. An increased focus on exam preparation has resulted in minimal impact of exams on final Stage 2 results. The Year 10 students indicated they would, however, like more exam preparation in the future. Some feedback to students from teachers has been of a very high quality and has had significant impact. However, students did indicate this was not always the case. The school uses drafting services software to encourage the submission of drafts. While SACE data in the girls' campus is quite impressive, students and teachers indicated that more work was needed on stretching the girls to achieve their potential and better cater for their individual needs, including the high achievers.

There are 'gifted and talented' and 'single sex' classes in Years 8, 9 and 10 in the co-ed campus, which students and staff believe are having a positive impact on achievement by increasing opportunities for students to be challenged and engaged in their learning. Year 11 and 12 students in the co-ed and girls' campuses share some subjects, which broadens their subject options and provides a challenging learning environment for a number of the students.

The college's SACE team supports teachers to access flexibilities within the SACE to maximise opportunities for all students, including Community Studies, Community Studies B, Integrated Studies, Workplace Practices and Scientific Studies. Participation in VET courses is low, which is attributed to students being reluctant to travel to other schools. Hence, the college is investigating Certificate II and III courses, which might be delivered at the college, to enhance opportunities for SACE completion, and possibly an ATAR, for some students. The Aboriginal Education Team has been effective in supporting students' attendance and achievement, as is the team responsible for Students With Disabilities, ensuring all students have Negotiated Education Plans loaded onto DayMap. The South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy (SAASTA), the 'Work about' program and other community programs are critical in engaging and retaining many of these potentially marginalised students at school.

There are some challenging students in the Special Education campus in terms of behaviour and learning capacity, but teachers are supportive of the leader's intention that all will achieve their modified SACE. Teachers are seeking additional professional learning opportunities for themselves and the support staff to develop and implement strategies that will increase the engagement and achievement of all of their students. There is also an intention in the future to engage some of these students in parts of the IBMYP.



**Direction 1**

**Ensure all teams are focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and maximising the opportunity for all students across all campuses to complete their SACE.**

**How well does leadership facilitate the development of coherent high quality curriculum planning and effective teaching across all campuses?**

The college's Leadership Team has been relatively stable over the seven years of its history. The executive leadership and directions established by the Principal are well-known, highly respected and guide the determination of priorities. She believes all students can achieve their SACE, while also acknowledging the challenges most of her students face on a daily basis.

Interviews with leaders indicated that much of their focus in the past few years has been on implementing the IBMYP in the co-education and girls campuses, developing collegiality between teachers and leaders from 4 different schools and addressing the inappropriate behaviour of some students. Parents, students and some staff referred to the significant reduction in critical incidents in the last few years. The school reviewed its processes for managing student behaviour in 2016 and subsequently reintroduced a focus room in 2017. Teachers are also being supported to take more responsibility for managing individual student behaviour in their lessons, following a culture of leaders intervening in most cases in the past.

The college's leadership structure has all leaders assigned a dual responsibility of leadership of learning and support of staff wellbeing, including supporting the management of student behaviour. Faculty leaders have been responsible for ensuring all documentation required for IBMYP accreditation is completed, involving all members of their team. This documentation is impressive. However, a number of leaders indicated in interviews their ongoing struggle to have the time to focus on the leadership of learning and monitoring of quality teaching, in the IBMYP and SACE, because of ongoing expectations of teachers for support in managing student behaviour. All current leaders have participated in recent on-campus professional learning programs on leadership skills, including the management of conversations with underperforming teachers and colleagues. It was evident to the Review Panel that most leaders are looking for more learning about time management, delegation and mentoring processes. It was also apparent that there are some quality aspiring leaders in the school who are looking for opportunities to develop their leadership experience. They indicated their appreciation of the permission and encouragement they receive from the Principal to explore alternative solutions.

A number of teachers are also seeking advice and guidelines from the Leadership Team in regard to the capacity of students to be able to achieve the IBMYP accreditation, SACE, and participate successfully in the NAPLAN and PAT testing regimes. This can be because of students' literacy levels, the timing of their enrolment into the college, often from the Adelaide School of Languages or from overseas, as refugees, or their limited or unsatisfactory experiences of schooling. A cohesive Year 8 to Year 12 approach to supporting these students has a focus on their wellbeing. A team of highly effective and committed leaders is working with teachers, support staff and community personnel to successfully engage with these students, assimilate them into the college, and monitor their attendance and achievement. The Review Panel believed leadership with a similar cohesive and accountable approach to monitoring the achievement of all students, across all campuses, focused on quality teaching and learning, could be the focus of all leaders, included in all of their Job and Person Specifications and in each person's Key Performance Indicators.

**Direction 2**

**Build the capacity of all teachers to ensure their effective management of student behaviour in all classes to allow for a greater focus on quality teaching and learning.**

**Direction 3**

**Clarify the roles of current leaders and continue to build their capacity so that there is a cohesive approach to leading school priorities across all three campuses.**

### How well are the results of data and evidence translated into targeted actions?

Roma Mitchell Secondary College has a culture of self-review and reflection, led by the Strategic Directions Committee. The Review Panel was provided with a 3-year Strategic Plan and annual Site Improvement Plan. Staff and members of the Governing Council confirmed their knowledge of the plans and priorities, and their involvement in the development and endorsement processes. They are regularly shown datasets and appreciate the time taken to explain the impact of the data. Achieving IBMYP authorization also requires evidence of a high level of self-review.

Data is readily available in a number of formats for teachers on the girls' and co-ed campuses, as an indicator of current improvement and as a driver of future directions. Locating and using relevant data for students in the Special Education campus is also a focus of the leaders of this campus. Most current data is available to all staff on DayMap, which is also used for storage of curriculum documentation across the college, while IBMYP unit plans are stored on Manage Bac. Currently, leaders believe 50% of staff are using DayMap to mark and publish their results, while 90% are using it to plan lessons, and share assessment tasks. Parents and students are looking for more consistency from teachers in utilising DayMap and informing the parent portal, which is currently being accessed by 226 families.

Data from the SACE, IBMYP, Running Records, Probe, Oxford sight words, PECS and Numicon, NAPLAN and PAT testing, and the Survey of Wellbeing and Student Engagement is used to inform individual student plans, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Staff are also encouraged to access the DECD Data Dashboard. Staff from the special education campus do not yet have access to DayMap for recording their achievement data and teaching programs, but the ICT team are working on an improved and more cohesive and efficient approach to the collection and dissemination of data across all campuses, and the college has employed highly effective support staff to ensure accurate data entry, efficient production of data for staff and effective collection and monitoring of attendance data. This includes trying to align information in Manage Bac with that stored in DayMap.

The SACE leaders of all campuses work collaboratively, and the Review Panel was impressed with the attention to detail, and proactive use of data for tracking and monitoring of all students. Student performance is monitored through the use of snapshot data across Years 8-12, that is collected every 5-6 weeks, and students are expected by most of their teachers to reflect on their performance and discuss strategies for improvement. Students indicated they enjoy this opportunity. Destination data for FLO students and students leaving during Year 12 is available and was provided to the panel.

It was also evident, however, that the same level of accountability is not a priority for all leaders across the school, and increased monitoring of teachers, including those new to the SACE and its assessment requirements, is needed, to reduce the number of moderation shifts at Stage 2.

Leaders are expected to share relevant datasets with their teaching teams, and most teachers confirmed these conversations, although they also acknowledged that most of their time is spent analysing data at the expense of time to develop and share strategies in how to use it to inform their teaching. The Leadership Team sees this as a work-in-progress linked to the renewal of the staff Personal Development Program (PDP). Leaders are looking to review and update PDP documentation and increase the inclusion of student feedback and formal peer observations in the new guidelines. Staff will be expected to include analysis of relevant data sets in their documentation. A draft 4-page proforma for guiding peer observation has already been produced. A number of staff indicated their appreciation of the observations of their lessons by some members of senior leadership, and are seeking more frequent feedback.

#### **Direction 4**

**Enhance the current performance development process to include a focus on supporting teachers to develop teaching strategies based on analysis of data.**



### What is the school doing particularly well and why is this effective?

During the review process, the panel verified the following effective practice that is contributing significantly to school improvement at Roma Mitchell Secondary College.

**There is a common and clear moral purpose across the school community, with a strong focus on improving teaching and making a difference.** A critical factor in fostering quality teaching and learning has been the role of the leadership teams to provide and encourage opportunities for growing relationships between students and between staff and students to improve student engagement and the quality of student learning.

Students at the college are able to access a wide range of learning opportunities and extra-curricular activities that are shared across all campuses including:

- Homework club
- Links with the soccer club and velodrome
- World Challenge
- International program
- North Eastern Vocational Opportunities (NEVO) and Universities
- Arts performances
- Sport as a strong focus
- House system
- STEM challenges.

Students indicated their appreciation of their access to the programs and the support they receive from teachers and leaders.

## OUTCOMES OF EXTERNAL SCHOOL REVIEW 2017

Roma Mitchell Secondary College is committed to catering for the educational needs of a widely diverse student population on three campuses, including the achievement of SACE completion for all students.

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

1. Ensure all teams are focused on improving the quality of the teaching and learning and maximising the opportunity for all students across all campuses to complete their SACE.
2. Build the capacity of all teachers to ensure their effective management of student behaviour in all classes to allow for a greater focus on quality teaching and learning.
3. Clarify the roles of current leaders and continue to build their capacity so that there is a cohesive approach to leading school priorities across all three campuses.
4. Enhance the current performance development process to include a focus on supporting teachers to develop teaching strategies based on analysis of data.

Based on the school's current performance, Roma Mitchell Secondary College will be externally reviewed again in 2021.



Tony Lunniss  
DIRECTOR  
REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY



Anne Millard  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
PARTNERSHIPS, SCHOOLS AND  
PRESCHOOLS

The school will provide an implementation plan to the Education Director and community within three months of receipt of this report. Progress towards implementing the plan will be reported in the school's Annual Report.



Sandy Richardson  
PRINCIPAL  
ROMA MITCHELL SECONDARY  
COLLEGE



Governing Council Chairperson



## Appendix One

### Policy compliance

*The External School Review process includes verification by the Principal that key DECD policies are adhered to and implemented.*

The Principal of Roma Mitchell Secondary College has verified that the school is compliant in all applicable DECD policies.

Implementation of the *DECD Student Attendance Policy* was checked specifically against documented evidence. The school was found to be compliant with this policy. The school attendance rate for 2016 was 87%.

## Appendix Two

### School Performance Overview

*The External School Review process includes an analysis of school performance as measured against the DECD Standard of Educational Achievement (SEA).*

#### Reading

In 2016, the reading results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 42% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. The school is achieving lower than the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2016 NAPLAN Reading, 5% of students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in reading, 25%, or 9 of 36 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016, and 37.5%, or 9 of 24 students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016.

#### Numeracy

In 2016, the numeracy results, as measured by NAPLAN, indicate that 46% of Year 9 students demonstrated the expected achievement under the DECD SEA. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. The school is achieving lower than the results of similar students across the DECD system.

In 2016 NAPLAN Numeracy, 5% of students achieved in the top two bands.

For those students who achieved in the top two NAPLAN proficiency bands in numeracy, 33%, or 8 of 24 students from Year 3 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016, and 52%, or 11 of 21 students from Year 7 remain in the upper bands at Year 9 in 2016.

#### SACE

In terms of SACE completion in 2016, 73% of students in February and 96% in October, who had the potential to complete their SACE did go on to successfully achieve their SACE. This result for October SACE completion represents an improvement from the historic baseline average.

In terms of successful completion of compulsory SACE Stage 1 and 2 subjects in 2016, 99.6% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Personal Learning Plan, 98% of students successfully completed their Stage 1 Literacy units, 78.8% successfully completed their Stage 1 Numeracy units and 100% successfully completed their Stage 2 Research Project.

Ninety-six percent of grades achieved in the 2016 SACE Stage 2 were C- or higher. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline average. Twenty-three percent of students completed SACE with some VET, and there were 83 students enrolled in the Flexible Learning Options program in 2016.

In terms of the number of grades for attempted Stage 2 SACE subjects in 2016, 10% of students achieved an 'A' Grade and 38% achieved a 'B' Grade. This result represents an improvement from the historic baseline averages for the 'A' Grade and 'B' Grade.

In terms of 2016 tertiary entrance, 77.9%, or 148 out of 190 students who completed their SACE achieved an ATAR or TAFE SA selection score in 2016.

In 2016, the school had a moderation adjustment of at least -1 in Stage 2 Arts, Business, Enterprise and Technology, English, HPE, Mathematics and Science subjects.