



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education

Cottesloe Primary School

2017

Review Findings



Independent Public School Review

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Mr Graham Dart
Board Chair:	Ms Julie Colvin
School Address:	530 Stirling Highway, Peppermint Grove WA 6011
Number of Students:	350
ICSEA ¹ :	1152
Reviewers:	Mr Greg Clune (Lead) Mr Tom Campbell
Review Dates:	August 16 and 17, 2017

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this review is to provide assurance to the principal and school community, the board and the Director General of the Department of Education of the extent to which the school staff and board have met the commitments of the Delivery and Performance Agreement (DPA). The review verifies the degree to which there are effective processes in place bringing about improved student learning.

¹ The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is a scale of socio-educational advantage that is computed for each school. It allows for comparisons to be made between schools that are matched according to their socio-educational advantage, allowing fair comparisons of NAPLAN results between schools with students who have a similar ICSEA. The median ICSEA value is 1000.
http://www.acara.edu.au/resources/Fact_Sheet_-_About_ICSEA.pdf

Review Methodology

Underpinning the review methodology is the understanding that the principal is required to ensure the roles and responsibilities of the DPA are met; school performance and student improvement targets and priorities, as detailed in the school's business plan, are assessed, reviewed annually and an annual report made publicly available. The review seeks to determine the extent to which these commitments have been met.

The principal provided the school self-review conclusions to the reviewers one month prior to the commencement of the review.

The reviewers supplemented the information provided by the principal with information on the school's achievements, its processes and its student performance data from a number of sources which included:

- the *My School*[®] website
- School Performance Monitoring
- Schools Online reports

Reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school self-review documentation to verify achievement of the DPA and business plan commitments, and developed lines of inquiry where further in-school verification was required.

An agenda for the site visit was negotiated with the principal to enable the gathering of evidence to verify claims made in the school self-review statements. During the review visit the reviewers sourced evidence to support the claims through observation and discussion with leaders, teaching and support staff, board members, parents and students where required.

The evidence provided by the principal, along with information gathered by the reviewers prior to and during the review visit, was used as the basis for judgements made in verifying how well the school staff and board have met the commitments of the DPA and business plan.

Business Plan

How effective was the business plan in responding to the school's context and improving student learning (progress, achievement and engagement)?

Cottesloe Primary School celebrates its 120th year in 2017. It has been located on the same site since 1897 after moving from the nearby St Columba's church hall where the school was established in 1896. Currently, a major capital development project is in progress to remodel and upgrade the school's original building as an administration centre. Additions have been made to the school over the century with the last major building project in 2011. The school acquired, by amalgamation, the co-located Hearing Impaired School in 2014.

The school enrolls students from the Mosman Park, Peppermint Grove, Nedlands, Dalkeith and Cottesloe areas of Perth's western suburbs. Enrolments, at the time of the review were 350. The school's ICSEA value places it in the top 10% of schools with 66% of the school's families in the top quartile of the ICSEA scale and 9% in the bottom half of the scale. The school reported a high transiency rate (up to 12%) due mainly to the enrolment of children of short-term overseas parents who are undertaking tertiary courses or work placement. English as an additional language or dialogue is approximately 8% of enrolment.

The school places emphasis on achieving high academic standards and on developing quality relationships based on developing 10 defined 'core values.'

Findings

- The school's business plan provides a systematic and strategic target setting approach to improving student learning outcomes. Student improvement targets are specific and quantitative (comparison with like-schools). The business plan has been used to track achievement in student performance and to inform annual operational plans and focused improvement targets. The reviewers were advised by the principal and school leaders that the business plan is used to measure school progress in terms of target achievement. However, the leadership team does have concerns about the strategic usefulness of the business plan and intend to make changes to the structure and targets. The reviewers consider the business plan has the elements of an effective plan: the explicit statements of beliefs, values, strategic intent, key focus areas with targets and strategies have been effective in guiding the school's strategic intent and providing direction to promote improved student performance through annual operational plans.
- Data is used consistently to undertake a comprehensive and transparent review of target achievement. Data regarding outcomes of the business plan is presented for discussion and review to the school board.

- Comprehensive review was undertaken by the principal and board of the extent to which the school has met the commitment of the DPA. The reviewers considered this assessment and were satisfied it is thorough and transparent and demonstrates the school is proactively meeting its DPA obligations.
- Evidence of a program of cyclical review demonstrated for the reviewers the school undertakes thorough examination of data which is used to establish targets for the annual operational plans. The outcomes of data review are understood by staff and board members.
- The business plan is available to the school community via the school website.

Areas of strength

- The comprehensive business plan which defines academic targets within a framework of key focus areas, shared beliefs and core values.
- Authentic self-review processes and conclusions.

Areas for improvement

- Refinement of the next business plan in terms of priorities and value-adding targets.
- Establishment of systematic whole-school evidence-based procedures to ensure rigorous and informed analysis to identify where support is needed most for aspects of the learning program and for individual student support.

Teaching and Learning

How has the quality of teaching improved and sustained student learning (progress, achievement and engagement)?

Findings

- The leadership team and staff acknowledged the concerns with the 2016 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results. Student performance improved slightly in 2017 but results have been inconsistent over the past five years. It was also evident the targets set in the current business plan have not fully served the purpose of articulating achievable goals.
- Six academic targets with annual milestones are articulated in the business plan.

- Target 1: “Increase to above ‘like-schools’ the percentage of students who achieve in the top bands for all domains of NAPLAN in Years 3 and 5.”

The 2016 milestone, endorsed by the board, was “to match like-schools performance.” Although the school was close to meeting the milestone, results did not match like-schools performance in all domains with reading and spelling of greatest concern. Given the historical trend in the data, this was a somewhat aspirational target although the school leaders acknowledge a need to address these concerns with a focus on pedagogy, assessment and support. The notion of developing student test stamina is also considered to warrant attention.

- Target 2: “Decrease to below like-schools the percentage of students who achieve in the bottom two bands for all domains of NAPLAN in Years 3 and 5.”

The school met this target in all but three areas. The school recognised this target, with a negative focus on schools’ weakest cohorts, was not well chosen. However, individual education plans were developed for students identified as being below the national minimum standard to support them.

- Target 3: “Year 3 and 5 students will achieve ‘above expected’ in the 2017 NAPLAN testing period for literacy and numeracy.”

The school did not meet any of the milestones for this target. Given the historical trend in the data, it is probable this target is too aspirational. In documentation provided, staff members on the board were keen to persevere

with the target indicating a belief that, with continued focus on enhancing pedagogy and assessment, the target may eventually be achieved.

- o Target 4: “Students from Year 3 to Year 5 will achieve student gain at or better than that of students with the same starting score (as detailed in the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority My School® – Student Gain graphs).”

Although this target was not achieved, there have been some variable progress with improvements in some domains and not others. The school acknowledged the target is cohort dependent and may not be a valid measure of school improvement. The data did affirm the decision of the school to continue to focus on writing and numeracy in 2017.

- o Target 5: “Students will from Year 5 to Year 6 show improved performance in Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Progressive Assessment Tests (PAT).”

The 2016 milestone for this target was that the Year 5 students will participate in the PAT to establish a benchmark for future testing in Year 6. Although the 2017 testing had not been completed at the time of the review and could not be used as a benchmark, the results do provide feedback to staff with respect to student performance in these learning areas.

- o A sixth target, which focuses on data collected from a variety of sources (eg Australian Early Development Index, Early Years Learning Framework, On-entry testing) to guide early intervention, is essentially a strategy. It has significant implications; however, as the leadership team has recognised the need for more rigour in identifying ‘at risk’ students in the early years.

- Non-academic targets included:

- o Student attendance rate to be above like-schools by 2017.

This target was achieved and though there are some concerns with in-term absences, communication with parents and administrative follow-up of absentees has been successful.

- o Maintain and improve student, parent and staff satisfaction survey results.

This target has been achieved with the positive survey results confirmed in discussions with parents, teachers and students.

- o Continue to develop and embed the role and responsibilities of the school board as articulated in the DPA.

Most staff noted they were satisfied with the work of the board. While parents generally agreed the board was performing effectively, there was a significant number who appeared unaware of its role.

- The leadership team has agreed that in the new business plan, effective target setting should be a priority. In particular academic targets, which while challenging, need to be realistic. Scrutiny of the 2017 NAPLAN data will be an integral part of this process.
- Staff are included in an annual interrogation of NAPLAN data. This has resulted in most teachers having a sound understanding of the overall performance of the school in addition to specific information regarding the students in their classrooms. It is an expectation of the leadership team that all staff will be competent in the analysis of whole-school data.
- The student services team has ensured that individual education plans are prepared for those students below the national minimum standard. Detailed information is kept on individual students and conferences between staff and parents have been effective. Funds allocated for students 'at risk' have been expended appropriately and where possible additional resources have been made available. Education assistants play a critical role in catering for students with special needs.
- The school has recognised there is a challenge to improve school performance and has begun to implement programs and processes to achieve this. It has included a continued focus on whole-school approaches in English and mathematics, an emphasis on effective teaching (eg explicit and instructional strategies), the implementation of evidence-based programs (eg 7 Steps to Writing, Letters and Sounds 2018), curriculum differentiation and the promotion of enrichment opportunities. These initiatives will require the support and commitment of all staff.
- The phase of development (PoD) meetings, which occur two to three times a term, have provided a vehicle for staff involvement in collaborative discussion. Regular agenda items include planning across learning areas, common assessments, moderation, data analysis and sharing of effective practice. Whole-of-staff meetings have also been important in ensuring all stakeholders are consulted in the formulation of the new business plan. Staff have an opportunity to put forward their ideas on school priorities and targets.
- A performance management process is in place and aligns with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and connects with operational plans and individual professional goals. Discussions with the leadership team confirmed

classroom observation is becoming an accepted practice and it is expected this will be expanded further as staff become comfortable with the process.

- Professional learning has played an important role in the school's efforts to move forward. A focus on critical and creative thinking; literacy; numeracy; instructional strategies; Habits of Mind; coding and robotics; and specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited goals are indicative of the determined effort being made to upskill staff.
- Discussions with teachers confirmed there is a significant number of staff members who are confident that, with a determined and coordinated focus, student performance in the national testing regime can be improved. The challenge for the school is to ensure all staff share this commitment and willingness to implement whole-school approaches and evidence-based strategies to make this possible.
- Although the recent NAPLAN results were of concern, the reviewers noted several significant positive school indicators. There is a sense of enthusiasm and commitment to effecting appropriate change. It was agreed the current leadership team was in a strong position to move the school forward and board and parent support is positive. The reviewers are confident that, given this environment, the changes required to improve school performance have every chance of success.

Area of strength

- The leadership team and staff have identified areas of concern and have begun implementing initiatives to address these.

Areas for improvement

- Formulate a new business plan which has clear, challenging and realistic targets with the involvement of the board, leadership team and staff.
- Continue to focus on the need for staff to be proficient in digital literacy, early identification of 'at risk' students and differentiated teaching strategies.
- Include all staff in the implementation of whole-school programs designed to impact school improvement.

Student Performance Monitoring

How well established are the school's self-assessment practices in accounting for school improvement?

Findings

- All staff are included in an annual self-review process following the publication of the NAPLAN data. An analysis of target achievement is completed and teachers interrogate the data to determine the needs of their students. This informs teaching programs and individual and group student plans. Discussions on school improvement also occur at regular staff and PoD meetings. It was noted teaching and support staff have been encouraged to contribute to the development of the new business plan.
- A monitoring and assessment schedule is in place outlining other whole-school assessments and timelines. The schedule requirements are implemented by staff and results collated by the leadership team. It is the intention of the school's administration to develop access to this information electronically.
- A range of other data is collected to evaluate school performance. Detailed documentary evidence confirmed assessment strategies are aligned with each of the business plan priorities. The "successful student" focus area is measured through information gathered from On-entry testing, NAPLAN, the Kindy Assessment Tool, PM benchmarking, MultiLit assessments and normed basic facts assessments. Primary Extension and Challenge assessments (network and in-school) provide additional data. Measures for the "high quality teaching" focus area derive from performance management processes, staff profiles and surveys. The "safe, stimulating and sustainable environment" focus area is assessed from National Quality Standard (NQS) and student attendance records and the "engaged community and strong sustainable partnerships" focus area is assessed through an analysis of parent surveys.
- In discussions with teachers and in visits to classrooms, it was noted a wide variety of student monitoring tools (eg checklists, assessments, rubrics, learning stories, anecdotal records) are in use. Within the PoD meetings, there are opportunities for staff to share effective monitoring strategies. Time is allocated for an annual handover of student information between teachers. From discussions with staff, reviewers formed the opinion there is scope to improve the effectiveness of these handovers.
- As a result of professional learning sessions, staff have had an opportunity to become competent in data interrogation. Given the concerns with the trends in

NAPLAN in recent years, it is recommended this emphasis continues as a priority to ensure all classroom teachers are gaining an understanding of student progress and achievement.

- Teacher judgements were of concern in 2015 although they were much more at expected levels in 2016. It is likely that moderation during PoD meetings has had a positive impact on grade allocation and it is desirable that this continues to further refine teacher judgements.
- The NQS review has been ongoing with a deputy principal overseeing the process and a staff member coordinating verification with early childhood teachers. The school confirmed that it is meeting Quality Area 6 (collaborative partnerships with families and communities) and Quality Area 7 (leadership and service management) while it is working towards the other five quality areas. The coordinator assured the reviewers that NQS verification will be a focus in 2018.
- An annual report, which is endorsed by the board, is published in a timely manner. The report includes a detailed review of the key business plan priorities, messages from the board chair and principal, comment on NAPLAN performance, progress on targets and milestones, future actions and various other aspects of school operations and is available on the school's website.
- The school has effective monitoring strategies in place which should ensure sustainability of this process. It is imperative all staff are familiar with the processes required and can competently analyse whole-school data.

Areas of strength

- The annual report which includes a detailed analysis of student progress and achievement towards business plan targets.
- An embedded self-review process which offers an opportunity for all stakeholders to contribute.

Areas for improvement

- Ensure all classroom teachers gain an understanding of student progress and achievement.
- Explore options for implementing an electronic student tracking system which allows staff ongoing access to student data.
- Enhance the effectiveness of the annual handover of student progress and achievement details.

Program Delivery

How well has the school performed in providing education programs that promote learning and wellbeing for all students?

Findings

- The Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline is fully implemented including the teaching of a language.
- The school has a strong commitment to student safety and wellbeing. Policies, such as behaviour management and excursions, are provided to ensure student safety and welfare. In addition, support services provided internally through the chaplain and psychologist complement the school's commitment to student welfare. Staff have completed the protective behaviours curriculum online training to facilitate the introduction of this curriculum. Parents reported a strong level of support for their children and for other parents through, for example, the classroom representatives model which supports families at times of need.
- Discussions with staff, parents, board members and students, as well as observation, confirm the school is well led, capably administered and orderly. There appears to be a cohesive and mutually supportive leadership team committed to achieving the school's goals.
- The staff handbook, as well as induction procedures for new and relieving staff and other documentation (eg the school newsletter and website), suggest the procedures and responsibilities of the school support a safe and embedded environment in which students, staff and parents are respected and valued.
- Regular opportunities for examination of students' needs and progress, as well as structures such as the junior and senior PoDs which provide opportunities for collaborative leadership, confirm there is a high level of confidence the school can sustain and improve its programs for student learning and welfare.
- The financial commitment of an active Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) to support the provision of additional services (such as chaplaincy and resources) provides assurance of the sustainability of these initiatives. An engaged board is a feature of the school and with continued development, will add to the sustainability and accountability of the school's improvement agenda.

Area of strength

- Structures to facilitate distributed leadership.

Areas for improvement

- Adopt whole-school programs and strategies to raise academic progress and achievement.
- Develop a broader data base to show comprehensive value adding.
- Implement whole-school evidence-based standardised and diagnostic assessment procedures.
- Develop a whole-school strategy of classroom and peer observation.
- Focus on PoDs to broaden leadership capacity and to drive and improve student outcomes.

Resourcing and Support

How well has the school established systems to monitor and review the allocation of resources to meet strategic and operational priorities?

Findings

- Documentation provided by the school confirmed monitoring of the self-review process was ongoing. This has included a report to the board with an assessment of the progress made in satisfying the requirements of the DPA. The school has also reviewed the outcomes achieved in each of the business plan focus areas and operational plans are linked to this process. All staff are included in an annual self-review meeting where the most recent NAPLAN data is analysed and an evaluation of the implementation of the business plan and targets is completed. The staff are currently being provided with an opportunity to contribute to the formulation of the new business plan.
- Discussions with the principal and manager corporate services provided evidence the school is in a sound financial position and well-managed. Cost centre managers are required to provide budget requests which are considered by a finance committee. The budget is linked to the business plan priorities which are well-resourced.
- The P&C has been very supportive of the school providing some \$40 000 annually for projects. The recent contribution to the extensive nature playground was greatly appreciated as has an ongoing commitment to providing learning resources for classrooms.
- Funding for students with special needs has been expended appropriately and where possible additional support has been provided.
- The workforce plan is detailed and endorsed by the board chair. In addition to including the status of the current workforce, the workforce plan identifies areas of risk and priorities for the employment of future staff, gender imbalance, an ageing workforce, the management of part-time staff, leave liability and the recruitment of effective specialist staff. Within the bounds of Equal Employment Opportunity principles, when employing new staff, an emphasis on gender balance, enthusiasm, an interest in catering for high achievers and a willingness to work with others and the community are considered.
- In implementing the workforce plan, the leadership team has also been proactive in providing additional human resources where appropriate. This has included an

increase in education assistant time for teacher support in classrooms and special needs students, an NQS coordinator and enrichment support person.

- Classroom observations and conversations with staff revealed that, while information and communications technology (ICT) resources are adequate, there is scope for increasing these. Staff also commented that connectivity was an issue and not all teachers were confident in using the resources available. A solution to these problems, which to some extent will be resolved with the administration upgrade, along with support from a colleague participating in the network Dream Project, is likely to make a significant difference to curriculum delivery.
- The capital works program which is renovating the original building to create an administration centre is expected to have a positive impact on the school. The renovation, which will include a refurbished staffroom and other key facilities, should provide additional incentive for those staff who are motivated by the prospect of positive change.
- School resources are well-managed with a focus on key priorities. Given the strong support of the community, growing enthusiasm of staff and the intention of the leadership team to continue its commitment to the implementation of whole-school practices, the reviewers are agreed the processes already in place will be sustainable.

Area of strength

- Resources are well-managed by the leadership team and finance committee.

Area for improvement

- Plan to increase the provision of ICT resources and resolve connectivity issues being experienced by staff.

School Board

How effective has the board been in carrying out its functions, roles and responsibilities?

- The board has transitioned from a school council to an effective school board which understands its functions and contributes effectively to the school's improvement aspirations. Board members consider their role is to 'add value' to the school and discussion with members confirmed the assessments of school leaders, that the board is indeed 'adding value' to the school. Its membership is representative of the school community. The board has a diverse range of skills and expertise which enable members to contribute meaningfully to meeting the requirements of an independent public school board. Discussion with board members demonstrated clear understanding of the board's functions. Minutes of board meetings show the board is fully informed regarding the school's performance and engages in analysis of data presented and in development of policies. Reviewers were informed the board 'agonises over results' and has an explicit focus on improving outcomes.
- The board has participated in:
 - endorsement of the DPA
 - development and endorsement of the annual reports
 - the development, endorsement and review of the school budget and business plan
 - processes to review the school's performance
 - processes to determine satisfaction levels of parents, staff and students, with results reported in the annual report
 - the review of the school in the final year of the DPA.
- The annual report includes contribution from the board.
- The board receives:
 - relevant financial reports
 - results of school audits and surveys
 - advice on school performance and student improvement targets as detailed in the business plan.

- The Principal's reports to the board are comprehensive and transparent. These enable the board to participate effectively in the school's self-review processes. The board responds cooperatively to the data to identify successes and areas for improvement.
- Board members are conscious of the need for the board to communicate effectively with its community. Board members attend, formally and informally, various school functions/activities to provide the board with a profile in the school. The board communications subcommittee demonstrates its focus on effective communication. Parent focus groups have been conducted to inform and engage parents in the formulation of the new business plan. The annual report includes a section from the board chair.
- The board undertakes annual review of its performance. New members are provided with an induction pack. The chair has completed board training and professional learning is an element of each meeting.
- The board's understanding of its role and responsibilities and the positive support for the school leadership to achieve targeted outcomes, give assurance of the sustainability of its practices.

Areas of strength

- The comprehensive and transparent reporting to the board by the principal.
- Board leadership and the range of member's skills and experience to engage in meaningful accountability processes to improve student outcomes.
- The trusting and cooperative relationship between board and school leadership.
- The commitment to communication with the school community.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to develop the skills and understandings of board members to further enhance contributions to the school.
- Raise the board profile in the school community.

Conclusion

The school has processes and structures in place to facilitate improved student learning. School leaders, staff and the board demonstrated a keen commitment to achieving the targets of the business plan. Review of the implementation of the DPA and the achievement of the business plan targets has been systematic and thorough.

There is a developing whole-school culture of commitment to achieving the targets. Changes in the staff cohort and leadership team have generated a developing culture of high expectation of staff and students to underpin the school's endeavours. Greater focus on whole-school and collaborative processes, fostering distributed leadership, coordinated whole-school data collection and analysis by staff to provide regular and systematic measurement of progress may lead to improved outcomes.

Parent meeting and parent survey data show there is a high degree of mutual respect and trust in the school. Parents informed the reviewers they have confidence in the school to provide support for their children through a safe, inclusive and holistic educational environment. They are satisfied the school facilitates development of a broad range of skills for their children who are given a sound foundation for success in their secondary education.

Declaration

We confirm the information in this document is, to the best of our knowledge and based on the verification of the evidence provided by Cottesloe Primary School, true and correct.

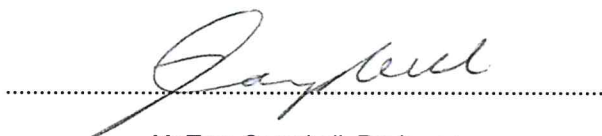
The principal and board chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Mr Greg Clune, Lead Reviewer

9 October 2017


Date



Mr Tom Campbell, Reviewer

9 October 2017

Date



Mr Ken Perris, Director
Independent Public School Review

16 October 2017

Date