Warriapendi Primary School

2016

Independent Review Findings
Disclaimer

This document reports the findings of the Department of Education Services' review and verification of the school's self-review. The school's self-review has been complemented by information provided by the Department of Education and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

The findings of the independent review are forwarded to the School Principal, the Board Chair, the Director General of the Department of Education and the Minister for Education.

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School and Review Details

Principal: Mr Peter Jakimowiez
Board Chair: Mr Dean Evensen
School Location: Redcliffe Avenue, Balga WA 6061
Number of Students: 189
Reviewers: Mr Bill Gibson (Lead) and Mr Tom Campbell
Review Dates: 31 March and 1 April 2016
Initial Review 19 September, 24 and 25 October 2012

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the independent review is to provide assurance to the school and its community, the Director General of the Department of Education and the Minister for Education on the extent to which the school has met its commitments as outlined in its Delivery and Performance Agreement (DPA) and associated Business Plan.

The focus of the review is on:

- how well the school has implemented self-review
- how well the school has improved student learning (achievement, progress and engagement) for all students
- how well the school has created an environment that promotes learning and student well-being
- how well the school is placed to sustain and improve its performance.
Review Methodology

The school has been required, under the DPA, to undertake annual self-assessments of its performance. The outcome of these assessments formed the basis for the school’s self-review. The school sent its self-review documentation to the IPS Review Team, Department of Education Services one month prior to the commencement of the review.

The IPS reviewers supplemented the information provided by the school 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
- the Department of Education School Performance Monitoring System
- Schools Online reports.

Reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school’s self-review documentation to verify achievement and developed lines of inquiry where further verification was required.

An agenda for the review visit was subsequently negotiated with the Principal to enable the gathering of evidence to verify claims made by the school. During the review visit the reviewers sourced evidence to support the school’s self-review claims through observation and discussion with leaders, teaching and support staff, board members, parents and students.

The evidence provided by the school, along with information gathered by the reviewers prior to and during the review visits, was used as the basis for the verification of how well the school has met its commitments as outlined in the DPA and Business Plan.

This document reports on the findings of the independent review.
School Context

What are the important features of this school's context that have an impact on student learning?

Warriapendi Primary School is located in the northern suburb of Balga, 13 kilometres from the city centre. In recent years, the suburb has undergone significant rejuvenation. While much of the housing is rental, opportunities exist for families to purchase properties. The school is on an attractive site surrounded by trees and well-kept grounds.

Under the direction of the Principal, buildings have undergone renovation and maintenance with attention to improving the learning environments. Two classrooms have been redesigned to accommodate the Child and Parent Centre catering for children aged 0–4 years. The site also hosts a dental clinic to service students from the surrounding Balga district.

The student population (189) includes 46 nationalities and 36 languages other than English incorporating some with humanitarian, temporary and provisional visas. Prior to arrival in Australia, a number of students have experienced significant trauma and require support to settle.

The enrolment includes 9% Indigenous students, two students in the care of the Department of Child Protection and Family Services (DCPFS), 39 (20.6%) registered on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data as School Students with a Disability and two students receiving Disability Resourcing Services support.

The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) of 869 in 2015 is 48 points lower than in 2013. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Socio-economic quartiles table for 2015 places 19% of students in the top two quartiles compared to 21% in the same quartiles in 2013.

The 2015 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) assessed 25 students with 11 identified as developmentally vulnerable in two or more domains. This is a significant increase on the previous two surveys. Two domains, social competence (32%) and emotional maturity (40%), recorded the greatest proportion of vulnerability.
Student transiency (22.6% in 2015) continues to impact on stable cohorts for National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) testing with only 48% of students (10 of 21 tested) forming the stable cohort in 2015. In addition, students with a language background other than English (increased from 36% in 2013 to 52% in 2015) and those requiring teaching and learning adjustments also impact on operations and procedures.

In 2015, the overall attendance rate was 92.6% with 77.5% of students recording regular attendance; the former being equal to like schools and the latter improved from 66.9% in 2013. Improvement is attributed to diligent monitoring by staff and ongoing encouragement of students.

The staffing profile includes a principal and two (1.2 Full Time Equivalent [FTE]) Level 3 deputy principals in leadership positions, 17 (9.8 FTE) teachers of whom eight are fixed term. Included in this group are specialists in visual arts, music and science. The profile also includes nine (8.71 FTE) support staff.

During the period of the DPA, the school has experienced instability in the Principal's position with three appointees prior to the current substantive Principal's appointment in 2015. This appointment has had a positive impact in the final year of the current triennium.

The 10-member School Board has responded to recommendations from the 2012 IPS Review. Four community members including the Board Chair and the Child and Parent Centre Manager, two parent representatives, the Principal and three staff members work collaboratively to fulfil obligations outlined in the DPA.

With representation on the School Board, the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) has contributed to the implementation of the Business Plan. In addition, the P&C oversees a viable canteen and organises fundraising activities to provide updated resources for support teaching and learning.
The School’s Self-Review Process

*How effective was the school’s self-review in accounting for its performance during the period of the DPA and Business Plan?*

Collaborative whole-school and learning-phase reviews were conducted throughout 2015 on a wide range of valid data including NAPLAN, On-Entry Assessment and Year 1 and Year 2 retesting, and the AEDC. In addition to support, self-assessment evidence from English as a Second Language (ESL) Progress Maps, moderated teacher judgements, PM Benchmarks, Australian Council for Educational Research—Progressive Assessment Tests (ACER—PAT), surveys and school-based standardised testing was referenced.

The emerging process, introduced by the newly appointed Principal in 2015, includes a detailed analysis of evidence, a summation of progress and recommendations for future improvement. The *Independent Review 2016 School Self-Assessment* statement summarises progress against all targets in each key focus area and facilitates comparisons against like schools.

The critical approach to self-assessment that includes considered evaluation of individual student learning as reported in the Department of Education’s Education Assessment Reporting Software (EARS) data is demonstrated by the timely response to evidence indicating many students were struggling with aspects of literacy. Following a careful examination, staff resolved to establish a whole-school approach supported by a comprehensive scope and sequence statement to guide teaching and learning in literacy.

It is recommended the school aligns key documentation including the Business Plan, Annual Report and internal operational statements.

Meetings with the Leadership Team and the Board reflected documentation provided and enabled reviewers to verify a data-driven review process was utilised to analyse and report performance in areas of focus.
School Performance—Student Learning

*How well has the school performed in improving learning (achievement, progress and engagement) for all students?*

The key performance areas for improvement include academic and non-academic priorities. Academic targets focus on NAPLAN performance with achievement expected to be the same or higher than like schools. The extent to which children achieve On-Entry Assessment expectations is also targeted. The non-academic targets focus on Partnerships, Safe and Caring Learning Environment and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Within each of the priority areas, targets have been set and milestones identified.

Academic performance over the course of the current DPA has been inconsistent. This was acknowledged by the Principal and Board Chair who suggested instability of leadership in 2013 and 2014 had limited progress on the Business Plan and associated strategies and programs. A similar comment was made during conversations with teachers who had experienced the problems associated with ongoing change. All indicated a return to leadership stability in 2015 had impacted positively.

A longitudinal comparison with like schools indicates that, in 2013, the Year 5 cohort were either close to or above like schools in numeracy, reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation. In 2014, the Year 5’s were below like schools in all domains except writing, where they were close. The Year 3, 2013 data indicates above like-schools performance in writing, slightly below in numeracy and spelling and below in reading and grammar and punctuation. In 2014, the Year 3 cohort was below like schools in all areas with the exception of writing.

The Leadership Team shared concerns regarding 2014 data that was generally well below expected levels. The 2014 cohort had undertaken ACER-PAT testing with similar results. The team proposed a higher than expected ICSEA (913 in 2014 compared to 869 in 2015) made like-schools comparisons problematic. While this is a possibility there was general agreement other influences may have impacted on student performance. A number of new enrolments immediately prior to the testing period and ongoing transiency of staff may have also contributed.
In 2015, the Year 5 cohort was more than one standard deviation above the predicted school mean in numeracy and writing and at the expected range in all other domains. The Year 3 students were above expected performance in writing and spelling and within the expected range in numeracy, reading and grammar and punctuation. This is confirmed by data displayed on the *My Schools*® website. Overall, the 2015 NAPLAN results indicate commendable improvement.

Reviewers were able to verify the school staff’s assessment of progress towards the achievement of the academic targets from NAPLAN data and the self-review analysis conducted at the school.

A comparison of the progress made from Year 3 to Year 5 (2013–2015) by the stable cohort was also discussed with the Leadership Team. In numeracy and spelling, progress is greater than like schools, close to like schools in writing and below in reading and grammar and punctuation. The staff have identified concerns with the latter two and is taking action to correct these trends.

The student transiency rate (22.6% in 2015) has impacted the stable cohort with, in the 2012–2014 comparison, only nine of the original 15 students tested included in the stable cohort. The 2013–2015 comparison is similar with 10 children (48%) remaining from the original 21 assessed two years previously.

On-Entry targets focus on student performance meeting expected levels in literacy and numeracy. The evidence provided in the self-review indicates the percentages increased during the DPA. In literacy, 95% of Pre-primary students in 2015 attained a level 1.0 compared to 63% in 2014. In 2015, the Year 1 and 2 cohorts, 77% and 64% of students respectively, reached targeted levels of 1.5 and 2.0.

Numeracy results are similar with 100% of students in Pre-primary attaining a 1.0 in 2015. In Year 1, 89% achieved 1.5 and in Year 2, 73% achieved the expected 2.0.

Analysis of the On-Entry testing is thorough. Students requiring individual teaching and learning adjustments are identified with those just below level but expected to reach the standard supported with targeted group intervention. The analysis also identifies target areas and recommends teaching strategies. Teachers are involved in this process and take account of the recommendations in their classroom practice.
A comprehensive intervention program, co-ordinated by the Deputy Principal, in consultation with classroom teachers and support staff, provides specialised point-of-need intervention through negotiated individual and group education plans (IEPs/GEPs). An electronic tracking system ensures sustainable ongoing management of the considerable number of individual plans.

The alignment of teacher judgements with NAPLAN indicates significant discrepancy. To support teacher moderation, the Leadership Team is considering the Brightpath strategy which is designed to accurately assess work samples against a bank of exemplars derived from public primary schools.

A number of initiatives have been implemented in an endeavour to strengthen and maintain student achievement including whole-school approaches in literacy and numeracy and the implementation of a variety of ‘best practice’ strategies. To support this initiative, the staff have developed detailed operational plans.

In literacy, vocabulary was identified in research undertaken in the Principals as Literacy Leaders (PALL) project as an area requiring special focus, with an emphasis also being placed on explicit teaching of phonics, phonemic awareness and comprehension. The Letters and Sounds program has been introduced and resources purchased to support guided reading.

In numeracy, the Envision Mathematics program with its focus on good lesson design has been introduced along with Maths Mastery which is used to strengthen mental mathematics.

Importantly, whole-school literacy and numeracy strategies are supported with explicit teaching in literacy and numeracy blocks.

The non-academic priority of Partnerships targeted the increased participation on the Board and P&C of parents of English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) and Aboriginal children. While increasing the engagement of some subgroups has proven difficult, the Leadership Team and Board have concluded that the goal to increase parent community involvement is on track.

The intention of the priority was also to broaden staff knowledge on how to best cater for significant sub-groups including EAL/D students, as well as to focus on developing the social and language skills of the students.
Significant work has been undertaken and while progress will be ongoing, milestones have been achieved.

From discussions with the Leadership Team and the Board it was evident planning for the next iteration of the Business Plan is progressing. The Board and Leadership Team have taken into account a variety of factors and information in an effort to develop a plan that will include high expectations for all students.
School Performance—Quality of the Learning Environment

*How well has the school performed in creating an environment that promotes learning and well-being for all students and the attainment of the school vision?*

A culture of high expectations is embedded in the motto ‘To Look, To Seek, To Find’ which is underpinned by the values of confidence, organisation, persistence, resilience and getting along. A positive learning environment focused on improvement and care is embedded.

The *Diagnostic Inventory of School Alignment* survey completed by staff, parents and students in 2015 recommended a review of the vision statement. It was evident through interviews with staff, parents, board members and students the school is well positioned to embrace the recently collaboratively developed vision ‘Developing the Whole Child’.

Interviews, reviewer observations and survey summations verify the vision, values and motto remain at the forefront of documentation, planning and operational processes. Students, including those recently enrolled, indicated their classrooms are safe, inclusive and happy places where they are known and treated as individuals.

The Business Plan (2013–2015) includes a focus on the development of safe and caring environment, with targets set to ensure the continuing provision of a ‘physical and emotional environment that is safe, inclusive and optimises student learning’.

The Leadership Team regularly monitors data collected from the School Information System, surveys and IEP documents. Initiatives including ‘You Can Do It’, which responds to areas of social and emotional vulnerability identified in the AEDC, the highly regarded Chaplaincy program, the *Manna Kids* breakfast club, the *Active After-School* program, school celebrations and cultural studies underpin the development of an environment where student learning can occur. Members of the Board and parents are fully supportive of programs that provide for the pastoral and emotional needs of students.

Attendance targets aimed to have 73% of students in K–2 attending regularly and reduce the percentage of students in Years 3–6 in the moderate risk category to 7% and moderate category 14%. This target has been achieved.
The target to improve the attendance of 63% of Aboriginal children to 90% has not been achieved.

The development of a positive and supportive learning environment as evidenced by sound levels of regular attendance and a focus on positive student behaviour is commended.

A differentiated teaching program supports the learning of students. Collaboration with the on-site Child and Parent Centre, as exemplified by the joint response to the National Quality Standard assessment and the inclusion of the Centre Manager on the School Board, enhances early engagement and intervention.

English as a Second Language progress maps are used to identify areas of need to assist the significant subgroup of EAL/D students (52% in 2015) with early intervention strategies implemented where appropriate.

The Leadership Team has committed to cultural growth by developing a learning environment characterised by enhanced professionalism and student well-being.

Coaching and collaborative planning to support the delivery of a differentiated teaching program is developing. This is enabled by:

- the introduction of staff ‘classroom walk-throughs’ to support collaboration and improved pedagogy
- the allocation of common release time
- a focus on professional learning related to the direction set in the Business Plan.

The staff respond to information gathered to collaboratively identify strategies and resources to support teaching and monitor the effectiveness of teaching and early intervention strategies. The commitment to ongoing review of strategies and programs is affirmed. Programs and strategies to support differentiated teaching and student learning include:

- interactive boards in all teaching areas, a computer laboratory, a robust network, trained staff and class access to tablet technology support a targeted commitment to ICT and student engagement
- establishment of literacy and numeracy blocks to enable selected cross-setting opportunities
the use of ESL strategies including progress maps to support EAL/D students

- additional learning opportunities including the school choir, peripatetic guitar lessons and the recently-introduced robotics program

- Guided Reading and Spelling, Spelling Mastery and *Envision Mathematics* to steer explicit teaching.

A commitment 'to foster and strengthen productive and sustainable relationships' is targeted in the Business Plan. Conversations with parents and the Board Chair verified national school survey data indicating accessibility of the Leadership Team and teaching staff is highly valued by parents. Members of the community were high in their praise for the way in which children were known to staff and their needs identified.

A commendably strong relationship with parents through positive and effective communication of the learning and social needs of students is evident. Short Message Service (SMS), Connect, school website, translation services, prominent on-site electronic signage and a fortnightly newsletter that includes Business Plan links support effective parent communication and respond to a recommendation from the 2012 IPS Report.

Strong collegiate links have been developed with co-located facilities including the Swan Behaviour Centre, Gladys Newton School, the Child and Parent Centre and Balga Senior High School. Professional relationships with the Swan West Education Network, Edith Cowan University, Curtin University, the University of Southern Queensland and the Fogarty Foundation's *EDvance* school improvement program support the implementation of appropriate strategies to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve. Affiliations with Youthcare, EdConnect Australia, WADJAK Northside Aboriginal Community Group and the City of Stirling enhance community connections.

The Principal and staff are commended for embedding a positive social-emotional setting conducive to a productive learning environment for all students. Parents and members of the Board were very positive and believe the number of 'out of area' enrolment applications suggest Warriapendi Primary is becoming a 'school of choice' in the area.
School Performance—Sustainability

*How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance into the next planning cycle?*

The school is establishing effective collaborative self-review practices that, when embedded, will guide the assessment of academic and non-academic performance and the improvement agenda. The Leadership Team, whole staff, learning phases, classroom teachers and Board all participate in the analysis of performance data. Key documents including the DPA, Business Plan and supporting operational plans will be collaboratively and regularly reviewed to confirm staff engagement and teaching alignment.

To enhance the effectiveness of self-assessment processes, the Principal engaged the University of Southern Queensland to review the organisational health of the school. A Diagnostic Inventory of School Alignment (DISA) survey completed by staff, parents and students in 2015 identified key focus areas for the next Business Plan including a review of the vision statement and increased student engagement. The school is commended for adopting *The Research-based Framework for Enhancing Organisational Coherence* to guide future target setting.

Board capacity has developed over the three-year period of the DPA. Active parent and community representation, participation in training sessions and ongoing guidance by the Leadership Team enhances the Board’s oversight of school improvement. Development was evidenced through board minutes and a meeting with members.

The Board is well positioned to assist the school to set and monitor directions and fulfil its governance obligations. Members articulated an understanding of contextual factors that influence teaching and learning. It is recommended board members explore opportunities to further develop community understanding of their role and responsibilities.

In response to a recommendation from the 2012 IPS Review, and to support continuous improvement, the Principal has implemented a distributed leadership structure with roles and responsibilities to empower staff members to deliver improved outcomes and engage with the expectations of the DPA and the Business Plan. Staff are actively encouraged and supported to aspire to leadership positions.
Professional learning continues to enhance the capacity to deliver contextually appropriate teaching and learning for all students. Staff development is enriched by participation in local network and Fogarty Foundation EDvance program learning opportunities. In the pursuit of professional excellence, leaders will shortly commence the 360-degree feedback performance management process; teachers use the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and non-teaching staff participate in structured performance management. Targeted collaborative mentoring is provided by the highly regarded ‘classroom walk-through’ model to ensure whole-school and phase strategies and programs are consistently delivered.

A meeting with members of the Finance Committee indicated that, with stable enrolment, the ongoing support of the P&C, and continuing high level of parent voluntary contributions (currently in excess of 70%), the school is well positioned to sustain key initiatives.

The school is well placed to consolidate and improve its performance. Implemented structures and processes will support teaching and learning sustainability. Teachers and leaders are involved in collaborative data-driven review of school practice and quality planning strategies. The Board is well positioned to provide oversight of strategic planning, monitoring and review processes. The next Business Plan will seek to embed initiatives while continuing to emphasise student engagement and the provision of a comprehensive learning program for all students.
Conclusion

Warriapendi Primary School enjoys a positive standing in the community.

A comprehensive pastoral care program builds on the foundations developed by the on-site Child and Parent Centre to create an environment in which students feel valued and are confident to engage in learning.

The school staff continue to respond to contextual changes to deliver student performance generally consistent with Western Australian like schools. While some challenging targets remain unachieved, student performance continues to improve in many academic and non-academic areas.

Recently refined self-review processes examine a comprehensive set of valid evidence to determine achievement and engagement standards and to guide adjustments.

A strategic and professional Leadership Team, informed Board, supportive community and committed staff will continue to collaborate to ensure effective teaching and learning is delivered.

Commendations

The following areas are commended:

- the development of a positive and supportive learning environment for students as evidenced by sound levels of regular attendance and a focus on positive student behaviour
- improved 2015 NAPLAN results
- the establishment of strong relationships with parents through positive and effective communication of the learning and social needs of students
- the creation of a positive social-emotional setting conducive to a productive learning environment for all students
- engagement with the University of Southern Queensland’s Research-based Framework for Enhancing Organisational Coherence to guide future target setting.
Areas for Improvement

The following areas for improvement are identified:

- align key documentation including the Business Plan, Annual Report and internal operational statements
- explore opportunities to further develop community understanding of both the role and responsibilities of the Board.
Declaration

We, the undersigned, hereby confirm that the information provided in this findings document is to the best of our knowledge true and correct and is based on the verification of the evidence provided by Warriapendi Primary School as part of the Department of Education Services' independent review process. The Principal and Board Chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.

Mr Bill Gibson, Lead Reviewer

6 May 2016
Date

Mr Tom Campbell, Reviewer

5 May 2016
Date

Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,
Department of Education Services

17/5/2016
Date