

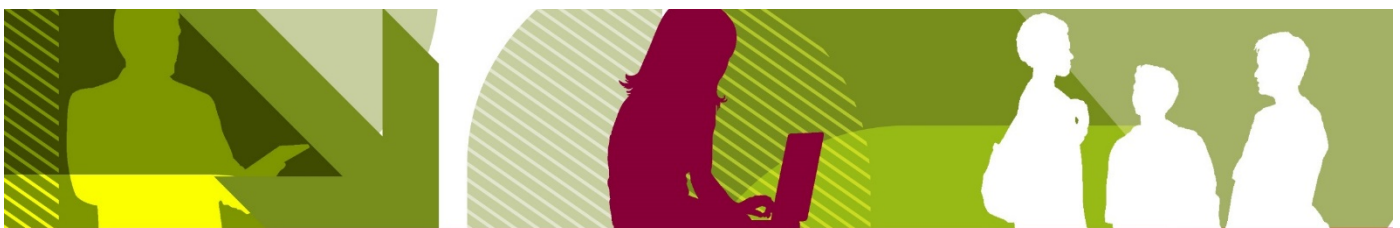


Government of Western Australia
Department of Education

Mullaloo Heights Primary School

2017

Review Findings



Independent Public School Review

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Ms Caroline Booth
Board Chair:	Mrs Vicki Rasmussen
School Address:	27 Charonia Road Mullaloo WA 6027
Number of Students:	244
ICSEA¹	1061
Reviewers:	Mr Keith Newton (Lead) Dr Lesley Payne
Review Dates:	30 and 31 October 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. Where the school belongs to an Independent Public School cluster of schools the review considers whether the purpose of the cluster has been met and the benefits to the school.

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)?

Mullaloo Heights Primary School, located in the northern Perth metropolitan area in the suburb of Mullaloo, caters for students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

The school is set on spacious grounds, where trees provide natural shade and students have ample space to explore. Purpose-built teaching blocks include a refurbished library, a dedicated information and communications technology room, a specialist art/science room and a music room. There is a fully enclosed undercover area and an environmental garden, along with a sensory area, a chicken coop and a variety of playground equipment for specific age levels.

The school serves a predominantly Australian-born community with many families originating from the United Kingdom, New Zealand and South Africa. Approximately 5% of its student population has English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).

The school's leadership team and staff are committed to meeting the needs of the 'whole child' in a positive, caring culture, which was evidenced by interviews with students, parents and staff. A suitable mix of long-term and newly appointed staff is enabling the school to introduce whole-school initiatives in an environment conducive to the development of common understandings and continuity of practice.

The school is supported by an active Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) and a school board composed of staff, parents and community members.

Findings

- The business plan provides a brief context overview, a vision statement, a set of values and a statement of beliefs that underpin the direction of the plan. The plan was developed in collaboration with the staff and community and endorsed by the school board.
- The business plan outlines three key focus areas: "success for students", "high-quality teaching and leadership" and "community connection".

- High-level targets and milestones are contained within the business plan to provide direction, along with a set of strategies that guide a whole-school approach within each focus area. Some targets, while indicating which outcomes are to be improved, lacked clarity about the measure of the improvement sought and were altered accordingly during the period of the plan.
- The leadership team and the board work collaboratively in monitoring and reviewing progress against the existing business plan and are actively engaged in the development of the next iteration.
- The leadership team and the board have responded to the DPA by providing evidence from the outcomes of the school's self-assessment against the business plan and the implementation of an ongoing monitoring process.
- The information provided during this review indicated that student achievement is tracked at the class, phase-of-learning and whole-school level and is used to inform planning for improvement in a coherent and consistent manner which is well understood by staff and members of the board.
- The business plan is available to the community in hard copy and digitally through the Department of Education's website.

Area of strength

- The school's leadership and the board's understanding of the strategic direction required to meet student learning needs.

Area for improvement

- Set targets in the school's next business plan that provide clarity about what is to be achieved and how it will be measured.

Teaching and Learning

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

- The modified 2015–17 Business Plan targets seek to ensure:
 - students progress by five progression points or more in numeracy between testing in Pre-primary and Year 1
 - National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) scores increase to be at or above like-schools by 2017
 - the proportion of Year 3 and Year 5 students in the top 20% of NAPLAN assessments is at or above like-schools by 2017
 - the percentage of students who achieve below the minimum standard in NAPLAN assessments to be at or below that of like-schools by 2017
 - the ‘stable cohort’ makes good to excellent progress in line with like-schools
 - positive measures of student attitude, behaviour and effort are maintained as demonstrated by attitude, behaviour and effort grades on student reports
 - opportunities are increased for staff to share professional learning.

- The 2016 and 2017 target monitoring indicate that:
 - the target of students progressing by five progression points or more in numeracy between Pre-primary and Year 1 was met.
 - NAPLAN scores in writing in Year 3 spelling and reading, and in writing in Year 3 and Year 5 were at or above like-schools. The gap was also closed in other areas apart from numeracy and Year 5 spelling. Despite low achievement relative to like-schools, progress between Year 3 and Year 5 is better than like-schools in reading, writing and grammar and punctuation.
 - the proportion of Year 3 and Year 5 students in the top 20% of NAPLAN assessments is the same as that of like-schools in reading and writing, with progress being made in reducing the gap in other areas.
 - there has been a decrease in the percentage of students who achieve below the national minimum standard in NAPLAN assessments compared to like-schools in Year 3 reading, writing and spelling, and in Year 5 numeracy and grammar.

- the 'stable cohort', the measures of attitude, behaviour and effort and the professional learning targets were met.
- NAPLAN progress and achievement for Year 3 to Year 5 against like-schools from 2014 to 2016 indicates lower progress and lower achievement for grammar and punctuation, with higher progress but lower achievement in numeracy and reading and higher progress and higher achievement in spelling and writing. For the period from 2015 to 2017 students made higher progress and higher achievement in writing, higher progress and lower achievement in reading and grammar and punctuation, and lower progress and lower achievement in numeracy and spelling.
- The longitudinal trend in all aspects of NAPLAN other than Year 3 and Year 5 numeracy and Year 5 spelling and reading is within the expected range of comparative performance.
- Although there was some discussion about the analysis of achievement on the basis of subgroups such as gender, the school did not present evidence of this being part of its routine data analysis, reporting of performance and planning for improvement.
- A range of teaching and learning strategies are being embedded across the school to improve student achievement. Specific examples were provided where teachers have used assessment information to guide pedagogical processes, and that where progress in student achievement was not being made, teachers have implemented different strategies to improve student performance.
- All students with an identified disability or identified by the school as being at educational risk can access the curriculum through targeted goals set in an individual education plan (IEP). There is a strong focus on early identification, referral and intervention. Progress is mapped regularly against the plans which reports student achievement. However, more attention could be given to extending high achieving students and to raising the expectations of all students.
- The school has a strong and established collaborative culture, which acts as a driver for successful teaching and learning. It was evident in meetings with staff and in one-to-one discussions with teachers in their classroom that they are empowered to address the individual needs of students while working within a common framework to raise student academic standards.
- The professional and caring work of staff is highly regarded by all groups that the reviewers met. All staff (teaching and support) are equally valued across the school for their innovation, engagement and participation.

- While there is strong collaboration among staff and high-quality monitoring, it was apparent to the reviewers that the coordination of all data into a consolidated, ongoing record of student achievement, engagement and progress could be improved. Such a record could be used to link information from different sources, enable analysis of patterns in performance and to ensure the school maintains its focus on implementing teaching and learning strategies that improve student learning.
- Annual performance monitoring is conducted to drive improvement in the quality of teaching. A continuous improvement ethic among teachers was displayed in various review meetings, with teachers demonstrating a drive to improve their own and others' teaching.
- The sound mix of staff expertise and experience and the embedded nature of teaching and learning processes used across the school contribute significantly to the sustainability of student performance. Teachers and the leadership team can account for progress being made over time and they can predict likely outcomes in terms of student performance.
- Curriculum policy and planning provide for continuity across the Years K–6 phases of learning. The school is using the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline with humanities and social sciences, health and physical education and the revised curricula for English, mathematics and science in place. Although some attention has been given to the implementation of a protective behaviours curriculum there is no whole-school plan. An intensified focus is needed in this area.
- A structured performance management process is undertaken by all staff with links to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Access to professional learning targeted directly to classroom needs is readily available for all staff including education assistants (EAs), but the EAs do not access it as much as the teaching staff. The staff present as passionate, enthusiastic and dedicated to providing opportunities for growth in all students.
- The openness in which all staff and the board engage in the analysis, planning and reporting of performance enables it to respond appropriately in a timely manner to the key accountability questions of 'how well are we doing?' and 'how can we do better?'.
- The reviewers are confident that with the maintenance of the new practices being put in place the school will redress current academic issues and demonstrate improvement.

Areas of strength

- The ongoing development and adoption of whole-school teaching and learning strategies along with strong encouragement and support for professional learning that support the achievement of targets.
- The strong collaborative culture that ensures the adoption of innovative practices and consistency in the implementation of teaching and learning strategies linked to ongoing monitoring and support to meet the individual needs of students.

Areas for improvement

- Raise student expectations.
- Provide extension opportunities for high achieving students.
- Establish a whole-school approach to the explicit teaching of protective behaviours and ensure it is implemented.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- The school's self-assessment and review process provides a structured, embedded methodology that is rigorously applied for gathering and analysing systemic and school-based performance information. Data is analysed to evaluate pedagogical processes and if the information provided is not fit for purpose, it is replaced with more suitable instruments.
- All staff are involved in the interrogation of the data and evidence-based decision-making about learning programs and interventions. Links are made to expectations, strategies and milestones in the business plan and the DPA. Analysis of progress is noted and commented on by the staff and the board, with intentions for improvement recorded. This is evident in school operations, implementation of planned strategies and ongoing planning for improved standards of student achievement.
- School planning responds to student and community needs, addresses legislative and policy requirements, and engages all staff. This is manifested in three levels of planning: strategic, operational and classroom.
- The school has a comprehensive assessment schedule using a number of contemporary assessment tools and external data analysis mechanisms, including Schools Online Performance Monitoring and the Student Achievement Information System. Valid and reliable data are used to measure progress in literacy and numeracy.
- All staff are involved in the analysis and interpretation of achievement, behaviour and attendance data. Information collected through this process is used to develop strategies at the whole-school, phase-of-learning and individual student level to address identified deficits in student performance. It is also used to inform teaching practice, school improvement targets and resourcing decisions. This evidence-based collaborative approach is well understood at all levels across the school, including the board.
- The School Curriculum and Standards Authority judging standards are being used across the school along with common assessment tasks to ensure consistency of judgement about the standard of student achievement.

- The school has commenced the development of a comprehensive data-based student performance tracking system to enable it to make sound, evidence-informed summative and formative decisions about progress and interventions required.
- Annual reports for 2014, 2015 and 2016 were available to the reviewers and the school community in both hard copy and digital format. The reports provide an analysis of the student performance data as prescribed in the business plan.

Area of strength

- The acknowledgement and acceptance of the importance of data and student performance monitoring in informing decision-making, program delivery and individual teaching practice.

Area for improvement

- Develop and use a consolidated data-based student performance tracking system to analyse patterns in student data (academic and non-academic) over time at the individual, classroom, cohort, year and school levels to inform high-quality teaching and learning and sustain student performance.

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- The principal confirms she has ensured education programs are designed and delivered to meet the needs of students and in accordance with the requirements of the *School Education Act 1999*, *School Education Regulations 2000* and the *School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act 1997*. Reviewers confirm a broad range of programs are delivered across the school to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing.
- Specialist teachers for science, French, music, health and physical education complement the range of programs available for students. Digital technology is yet to be addressed. The science program provides for Years 1–6 in a functional science room and culminates in a Science Week. Students in Years PP–6 are taught music, and French is taught in Years 2–6. There is also a choir which participates in singing festivals. The physical education teacher provides fitness, fundamental movement skills and game skills across the school from Pre-primary.
- Although not specified in the business plan, several strategies have been implemented across the school to ensure the safety and welfare of students. These include Harmony Day activities and Friendly Schools Plus. The Friendly Schools Plus social and emotional program is being implemented to support the values program and behaviour expectations. The school chaplain runs the Build Up Zone program and a Girls Club as well as undertaking one-to-one counselling. Daniel Morcombe Day is recognised each year and police officers give talks on safety; however, there is no whole-school approach to the explicit teaching of protective behaviours which at present is conducted by individual classroom teachers and not monitored.
- A National Quality Standard (NQS) audit has not formally been undertaken but the school has written an operational plan based on the NQS.
- A group of students from Year 1 to Year 6 talked positively about feeling safe, both on and away from school premises. The perception of a safe and inclusive learning environment reported by parents and students was further affirmed by an analysis of satisfaction survey data. The reviewers affirm high standards of student behaviour through data analysis and discussions with parents and students.

- Opportunities are provided for students to take leadership roles in the school through roles on the student council and as faction leaders.
- A distributed leadership model is being developed to support the sustainability of school programs with opportunities for all staff to become leaders.
- The stability and collaboration of capable staff contribute to effective management and sustainability of school programs. Staff have a shared sense of responsibility while also understanding their individual responsibilities. The reviewers note the commitment to developing distributed leadership and to ongoing professional learning linked to school programs and performance management.

Area of strength

- The safe and attractive environment for students.

Areas for improvement

- Develop a whole-school approach to the implementation of digital technologies in the school.
- Undertake an NQS audit to formulate a quality improvement plan of specific targets and further resources needed for the early childhood area.

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

- The school reports to the board each term with a financial overview. The manager corporate services provides regular financial reports and advice to the board through the principal and ensures appropriate financial statements are published in the school's annual report.
- Financial and human resources are used to deliver education programs that provide all students with opportunities to meet their learning needs. Resourcing is well aligned to school priorities and operational school planning. While EAs have access to professional learning targeted directly to their role and classroom needs, they reported they had not always taken up the opportunity and were infrequently included in professional learning with teaching staff on school development days.
- A school psychologist is available to assess students' academic needs. The school reports only two identified students with diagnosed disabilities. These students have support from assistants. There is also only a small number of students with IEPs. These plans are monitored by the deputy principal.
- The current workforce management plan for 2017–19 considers the complexity of the school with its stable workforce and limited staff movement, and addresses areas of current and future staffing needs.
- The reviewers are confident there are sufficient resources to sustain current and intended program delivery and provide for student improvement.

Area for improvement

- Implement processes to ensure further inclusion in professional learning and school strategies for EAs.

School Board

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

Findings

- Through discussions, reviewers confirm that school board members are very supportive of the school and willing to contribute to its ongoing development. Board membership is representative of the school community including teacher, parent and independent community members with a range of expertise and skills ensuring compliance with the *School Education Act 1999* and *School Education Regulations 2000* which specifies the membership categories and composition.
- Board members indicated that they are well informed about school programs, performance and operations and the annual cycle of self-review. They receive and endorse relevant monthly financial reports and data is presented to the board, as evidenced through discussion and board minutes. There is interrogation of school performance data although evaluation of business plan targets is made difficult because many targets lack measurement strategies.
- In 2017, several of the parents on the board are new although the board chair has served for eight years. It was acknowledged that a more formal induction process needs to be put in place for board members to build knowledge and capacity, principally regarding the DPA. The school recognised that for continued sustainability, succession planning is important, particularly for the board chair. Reviewers were informed a review of board performance has yet to be carried out.
- The board has endorsed the DPA and has a developing understanding of its own functions. Annual school reports are approved but do not include information or reports from the board or the board chair.
- Reviewers acknowledge the commitment of the board members. In discussion, board members acknowledged the need for the inclusion of specific measurable targets in the next business plan and the need for further training and formal induction. Such processes would assist with the sustainability of its membership and practices.

Area of strength

- The commitment of board members to support the school improvement agenda.

Areas for improvement

- Conduct annual self-review of board performance.
- Implement appropriate induction and training to ensure clarity of the board's role and understanding of its relevant accountabilities.
- Use the annual report to communicate with the broader school community regarding the board's function and activities.

Conclusion

Mullaloo Heights Primary School has established a comprehensive self-review strategy that enables it to analyse performance against the priorities and targets in its business plan and obligations under its DPA. Detailed conclusions about performance against targets, standards of student progress and achievement are made along with judgements about the effectiveness of programs and strategies employed to achieve improved curriculum outcomes.

The school has a positive and collaborative teaching and learning culture characterised by strong relationships among its staff that is conducive to optimising student learning and ensuring ongoing school improvement.

Data from a range of sources including NAPLAN indicate that standards of student achievement are as expected and strengthening, particularly in the early years. Most of the broad targets for student achievement of the business plan have been achieved. The extent of achievement of more specific targets in operational plans provide valuable information for whole-school, year-level and class-level planning.

The move towards a whole-school approach to curriculum planning and pedagogy is manifest. The professional knowledge and enthusiasm of the leadership and staff in creating an environment where students build confidence and social skills, and staff are committed with a genuine interest in the students, was evident throughout the review.

The school provides a safe, respectful learning environment for all students where decisions are grounded upon theory and research and are data-driven and evidence-based.

The school is characterised by a keen sense of community. Dedicated leadership and the professional commitment of staff has resulted in the school being held in high regard by students, parents and the wider community.

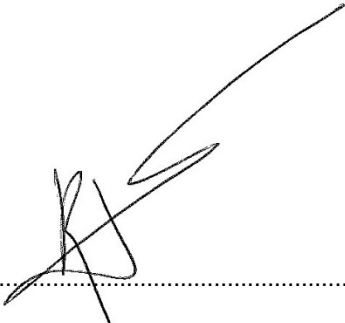
The school has a well-informed and very capable board that sets the strategic direction, oversees implementation and holds the school to account for its performance. This, when aligned with the highly effective leadership team, competent staff and targeted use of resources ensures the school's goals are evident throughout its operations.

Overall, the school's governance processes, leadership structures and development of whole-of-school plans and policies make it well placed to undertake the next step in its drive to improve student performance.

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 Mullaloo Heights 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 Keith Newton, Lead Reviewer

17 November 2017

Date



Dr Lesley Payne, Reviewer

17 November 2017

Date



Mr Ken Perris, Director
Independent Public School Review

22 November 2017

Date