



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Education Services**

# **North Beach Primary School**

**2017**

**Review Findings**



**Independent Review of  
Independent Public Schools**

## Disclaimer

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## **School and Review Details**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Principal:</b>           | Mr Michael Black                            |
| <b>Board Chair:</b>         | Mrs Kelly Riddle                            |
| <b>School Address:</b>      | 75 North Beach Road, North Beach WA         |
| <b>Number of Students:</b>  | 360   |
| <b>ICSEA<sup>1</sup></b>    | 1100  |
| <b>Reviewers:</b>           | Mr Greg Clune (Lead) and Mr Noel Strickland |
| <b>Review Dates:</b>        | 13 and 14 March 2017                        |
| <b>Initial Review Year:</b> | 2014  |

## **Purpose of the Review**

The purpose of the Department of Education Services' independent review is to provide assurance to the principal and school community, the board, the Director General of the Department of Education and the Minister for Education and Training 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.acara.edu.au/resources/Fact_Sheet_-_About_ICSEA.pdf)

## Review Methodology

Underpinning the review methodology is the understanding 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 forwarded the school self-review conclusions to the Department of Education Services one month prior to the commencement of the review.

The Department of Education Services' 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
- the Department of Education's School Performance Monitoring
- Schools Online reports.

Reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school's 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 school's claims through observation and discussion with leaders, teaching and support staff, board members, parents and students.

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 (achievement, progress and engagement)?***

North Beach Primary School is a well-established school with a stable staff cohort of teaching and support staff. Enrolments are steady at 360. The school's ICSEA places it in the top 10% of schools; 79% of the school's families are in the top two quartiles of the ICSEA scale with 7% in the bottom quartile. There is a diverse student population comprising students from a range of socio-emotional and academic needs. Aboriginal (2%) and English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) (5%) enrolments are low. The school places an emphasis on positive and collaborative relationships with all its stakeholders. The quality of these relationships is a strength of the school which was confirmed by the reviewers through observation and discussion with staff, students and parents.

Despite changes in principal, leadership remained stable through the school's effective distributed leadership processes.

### **Findings**

- 2017 is the second independent review for the school. The independent review undertaken in 2014 to assess the effective implementation of the first DPA period commented positively on the extent to which the school had met the agenda set by its first business plan targets.
- At the commencement of 2017, using a range of data from 2015 and 2016, a comprehensive, thorough and transparent internal review of target achievement was completed by the principal, board chair and staff. This latter review is consistent with the first review and demonstrates the school is meeting its DPA responsibilities relating to the business plan.
- Reviewers confirm the staff undertakes cyclical and rigorous interrogation of data which is used to direct annual operational plans. Review processes are guided by the school's annual self-assessment schedule. The outcomes of review are understood and supported by staff and board members.
- The business plan provides strategic direction to focus on educational improvement through meaningful learning and other targets: academic improvement targets are clearly defined in terms of comparisons with like-schools. The business plan sets a framework for annual operational plans which are adjusted according to detailed assessment of current data sets.

- Recommendations of the 2014 independent review have been effectively implemented.
- The business plan is available to the school community through the school website.

### **Areas of strength**

- A highly effective and broad business plan which encompasses academic and wellbeing outcomes.
- Effective meeting of the responsibilities of the DPA in relation to the business plan.
- The systematic self-assessment schedule and authentic and detailed self-review processes.
- The ongoing commitment to improvement processes in a period of leadership uncertainty.

## Teaching and Learning

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

### Findings

- The North Beach Primary School Business Plan 2015–2017 identifies academic improvement targets for Year 3 and Year 5 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data in all five areas. Non-academic targets were set to:
  - reduce reported behaviour incidents
  - increase the percentage of students with regular attendance of at least 90%
  - establish meaningful reserves for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the school's information and communication technologies (ICT) infrastructure
  - improve the percentage of staff agreeing they are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop as a leader
  - ensure at least 90% of parents agree the school develops mutually supportive and trusting relationships between staff, students and parents.

The targets demonstrate a holistic commitment to high expectations for all children in both academic and non-academic outcomes.

- The leadership team has ensured all staff monitor student performance using a comprehensive set of external and internal tools by providing staff with organised meeting times and a structured assessment schedule. Teachers complete an Assessment Audit which ensures all assessments are completed.
- The assessment schedule provides for the use of an extensive range of data gathering tools such as NAPLAN Testing (Years 3 and 5), Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) in reading and Maths (Years 2, 4 and 6), PAT science testing (Years 3–6), On-entry testing, Kindergarten Assessment Tool, Rainbow Assessment Tool (Kindergarten, Pre-primary and Year 1 students at educational risk), High Frequency Words (Years 1 and 2), Words Their Way (Years 1 and 2) and PM Benchmark Reading Assessment Resource (PP–Year 6). Data is used to inform differentiated learning, in response to individual student needs, which is reflected in individual education plans and group education plans across all year levels.
- Discussion with the leadership team, teachers and board members, together with documented evidence, confirmed a very strong commitment to evidence-based



decision-making by the whole-school community through embedded processes used to ensure sound decision-making. The reviewers were satisfied there is rigorous and systematic analysis of performance in terms of the business plan targets.

- The performance against targets has been assessed on two years' data (2015–2016). Further assessment of these targets will be undertaken during this last year of the business plan cycle (2017).
  - The first NAPLAN target, *for the **progress** of students from Year 3 to Year 5 is at or above like-schools in all NAPLAN assessments*, was achieved in spelling, grammar and punctuation and numeracy but not in writing and reading.
  - The second NAPLAN target, *for the **achievement** of students in Years 3 and 5 to be at or above like-schools in all NAPLAN assessments*, was achieved in reading, grammar and punctuation and numeracy but not in writing and Year 3 spelling.
  - The third target, *to reduce school wide reported behaviour incidents*, was achieved.
  - The fourth target, *to increase the percentage of students with regular attendance to at least 90%*, was not met. The principal and staff reported unauthorised absences are the main determinant for this statistic. The importance of attendance is emphasised through newsletters and individual correspondence to parents.
  - The fifth target, *to establish meaningful reserves for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the school's IT infrastructure*, was achieved. The school's infrastructure has been supported by staff appointments (ICT coordinator and technician) and the acquisition of robotics materials.
  - The sixth target, *to improve the percentage of staff agreeing that they are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop as a leader*, was met in 2016 as shown in the survey of staff.
  - The seventh target, *for at least 90% of parents to agree that the school develops mutually supportive and trusting relationships between staff, students and parents*, was not achieved in 2015 (84%) or 2016 (81%) (parent surveys).
- A highly structured and comprehensive annual self-review process involving all staff and the school board is evident. The school's distributed leadership model, including planned collaborative meeting times (whole staff, phase of learning (POL) teams and year level teachers), ensures the self-review process is integral and active across the school and throughout the year. Agenda for POL and other meetings demonstrate professional issues are considered and addressed through collaborative processes.



- All staff take part in formal performance management procedures which involve self-reflection of their individual performance focusing on the ability of the staff member to meet goals in line with the requirements of the business plan and yearly operational plans. Discussion with staff and the leadership team confirmed plans to introduce informal classroom 'walk-throughs' and formal classroom visits to the performance management process. The performance management process has varied in recent years but is now formalised throughout the school and accepted by staff with reference to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.
- Analysis of NAPLAN data and comparisons with grade allocations have been identified by staff as an area for concern; the NAPLAN expected grade distributions not being consistent with teacher judgement. Additional professional learning in this area has been identified as a possible solution to ensure reliable and consistent teacher judgement.
- Embedded school practices, including a distributed leadership model and board monitoring of performance, gives a high level of confidence the school can maintain student progress. The capacity of the staff and board to maintain stability during significant leadership uncertainty is further evidence the school can sustain its review and improvement processes.

### **Area of strength**

- The embedded collaborative self-review procedures, which are supported by staff, encompass a wide range of internal and external tools which add value to the overall education of all students.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Student performance in Year 3 and Year 5 writing and spelling.
- Increase the number of Year 3 and Year 5 students in the higher NAPLAN proficiency bands across all domains.
- Improve the correlation between report grade allocation and NAPLAN results through the provision of appropriate professional learning.

## Student Performance Monitoring

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

### Findings

- Systematic, comprehensive and transparent self-review and assessment processes have been well established to inform school leaders, staff and board of student progress in terms of the business plan targets and to identify areas for improvement. There is a well-planned and timely process for self-assessment which informs detailed annual operational plans. Student performance is monitored through several monitoring tools which demonstrate a data-driven approach to planning for student learning.
- The school's assessment schedule confirms a wide range of valid and rigorous data gathering tools are used to inform teachers of student outcomes, to adjust pedagogy, to address identified needs and to inform the school of individual student and cohort performance. The school's achievements and details of performance against the targets of the business plan are reported regularly to the board and in the annual report which is publicly available through the school website.
- The reviewers have a high degree of confidence the school's performance assessment is sustainable because of an embedded culture of systematic and honest self-review through systematic whole-school, POL and individual teacher professional reflection. Programs and strategies implemented because of data analysis (such as the provision of a literacy specialist and MultiLit and MiniLit programs) are likely to be sustained since they are funded through the Independent Public School funding flexibility, supported by the board's commitment to sustaining critical programs, and are not reliant on variable external funding and resourcing.
- Student performance monitoring and tracking are embedded in the formal operations of the school.

### Areas of strength

- The rigorous, comprehensive and active assessment schedule.
- The systemic analysis of student performance data to inform planning.

## Program Delivery

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

### Findings

- There is an established program of curriculum delivery in accord with the requirements of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline which guides what is taught within the school. The exemplars of standards of work provided are being used to moderate teacher judgements in the allocation of grades on school reports as the correlation between grade allocations and NAPLAN results has been identified as an area for improvement.
- The leadership team has successfully used data-driven analysis of school performance to identify specific needs. Once needs have been identified, staff have either collaboratively developed their own strategies or investigated commonly used programs to identify strategies to meet the needs of their students. Examples of these programs include:
  - MiniLit and MultiLit programs to improve literacy development and performance of identified students
  - Robotics and Maths Olympiad to cater for the needs of Years 2–6 extension students
  - whole-school literacy and numeracy plans
  - Talk 4 Writing to improve writing results
  - Visible Learning
  - Words Their Way to improve spelling results in Years 3–6
  - Big Buddies, Protective Behaviours, Virtues and You Can Do It Programs to improve identified wellbeing issues such as anxiety, depression and resilience.
- The safety and welfare of students is prominent in all school activities. The Staff Handbook outlines staff requirements in child protection issues together with safety requirements for excursions and school based activities. The school motto of 'We Care' is prominent throughout the school with staff, students and parents being able to speak of its impact on school life. The wellbeing committee is very active within the school. Staff have developed a wellbeing policy rather than a behaviour management policy as it is believed this emphasises the need to focus on what is happening within a child (the cause) rather than the behaviour displayed (the symptom).
- Staff (and some parents) provide and lead a variety of activities for children to participate in before school and lunchtime to cater for different interests and

needs. These include running club, veggie patch, chess, Lego, tennis, coding, music, choir, dance, football, art and library clubs or sessions. The Kids Hope program is a community adult mentoring program which provides opportunity for social interaction for identified students. These activities ensure all children are catered for during the school week especially those having difficulty socialising with others. An audit of community networks shows the school has, in addition, established a network of community engagement initiatives to support students and to broaden the education experience.

- Specialist programs are offered in music, physical education, art and French. In addition, the school funds a robotics enrichment program and intervention programs by providing a literacy specialist and the MultiLit and MiniLit programs.
- Discussion with staff and parents, validated by survey results, has confirmed the day-to-day management of school operations and the school's program delivery is of a high standard. Effective performance management procedures, together with school developed program audits, ensure all staff are delivering programs in a coordinated manner.
- North Beach Primary School operates almost completely on its base grant from the Department of Education. Because of this, all programs are thoroughly investigated and monitored to ensure their value to the education processes of the school. The funding of initiatives from the school's one-line budget ensures the sustainability of programs since they are not reliant on external grants or donations. An active Parents and Citizens' Association raises funds to supplement the school's initiatives.

### **Area of strength**

- The well-embedded programs which seek to cater for identified needs of all students.

## 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

- There is a systematic, rigorous and embedded approach to the review and efficient allocation of resources, both human and material, to support the school's programs and learning environment. There is regular reporting to the school's finance committee and the board.
- Data is used to inform decision makers, including the board, as an integral element of resource allocation. An emphasis on continual improvement is evident to the reviewers through both the school's documented thorough review of performance and through discussion with members of the school community.
- There is close monitoring of the use of funds by both school administrators and the board. Staff are wisely deployed to maximise support for the school's teaching and learning programs. Funds are expended in accord with the requirements of the annual Funding Agreement for Schools.
- A detailed workforce management plan identifies trends and gaps to be addressed. Critical areas for focus through this plan include addressing the age profile of the staff (38% aged 55 or over) and possible retirements, retention of quality staff especially those on fixed-term contracts and the recruitment of staff with expertise in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This will assist in the provision of a quality curriculum, managing a surplus of Level 3 education assistants (a consequence of fewer students with diagnosed disability) and the impact of uncertainty regarding staff on leave or those in acting positions. Possible strategies have been identified to address the perceived workforce challenges.
- Efficient recruitment processes and the use of the one-line budget to make staffing decisions to suit the school and which are supported by the board, has ensured the school's capacity to sustain the current programs. The school values, develops and utilises the expertise within its community thereby adding to the sense of sustainability.

### Area of strength

- The judicious use of the one-line budget to support initiatives.

## School Board

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

### Findings

- Board membership is representative of the school community and meets the requirements of the *School Education Act 1999*. Members bring a broad range of professional skills and expertise to ensure a high functioning board. In response to a recommendation in the previous independent review, all board members have undertaken training or are currently enrolled to attend training. An outcome of the training is that board members are confident, they have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and are capable of holding the school to account for its performance. Board minutes demonstrate the board's ability to rigorously question the school on its performance and to endorse policies and procedures.
- The board:
  - endorses the DPA
  - participates in the development and endorsement of the annual report
  - participates in the development, endorsement and review of the school budget and business plan
  - participates in processes to review the school's performance
  - participates in processes to determine satisfaction levels of parents, staff and students, with results reported in the annual report
  - participates in the independent review of the school in the final year of the DPA and the report is made available to the public.
- Evidence of board participation is available in board minutes and was confirmed in discussion with board members and the principal.
- There is a high standard of board communication with the school community. The board chair sends a newsletter outlining the work of the board to all parents after each meeting and the board chair has an annual report in the school's annual report. While the school board does not have a prominent profile in the school community, discussion with parents indicated they know of its roles and responsibilities within the school. The board chair attends events as a parent and attends the school graduation, Anzac ceremony and other school events in an official capacity. The board holds an annual open meeting which has been well attended, especially by community members.

- The board receives relevant financial reports, the results of school audits and reviews, advice on school performance and student improvement targets and a copy of the independent review report. Minutes of board meetings and conversation with members indicate the board is well informed and exercises a prominent role in reviewing data, seeking justification for decisions taken and exercising an accountability role. There is real and high quality reporting to the board as demonstrated by the principal's review of the school progress in meeting the commitments of the DPA.
- While the board members have diverse skills, discussion with board members indicated the board was becoming more strategic in seeking future board members who can bring additional skills, such as partnership development and sponsorship linkages, to the group.
- The board's well-established collaborative practices and determination to add value to the education process will ensure its ongoing success.

### **Areas of strength**

- The high quality of reporting to the board by the principal.
- The well-established practices which demonstrate the board's ability to exercise accountability for the school's performance.
- The high level of communication between the board and the school community.

### **Area for improvement**

- The development of networks with other school boards or board chairs to broaden knowledge of board operations.



## Conclusion

Effective processes are in place to maintain and improve student learning outcomes through a committed approach to continual improvement. The review of implementation of DPA responsibilities and achievement of business plan targets was systematic, meticulous and transparent and provides confidence the school is meeting its commitments and addressing the targets of the business plan. Staff demonstrated there is an embedded culture of review and improvement which provides for a holistic response to student learning and developmental needs.

Survey data, conversation with parents and observation of parent conducted programs (for example, the running club and the veggie patch) show there is a high level of trust in, and support for, the school from its community. Parents expressed high levels of confidence in the school through its provision of a well-rounded education and preparation for secondary schooling.

The school culture is highly relational in response to its motto 'We Care' through empowering relationships, a commitment to excellence and promotion of high expectations. There is a strong sense of 'the culture drives practice'. Staff and board are skilled in responding to the needs of the school.

## Declaration

We confirm the information provided is, to the best of our knowledge, true and correct, based on the verification of the evidence provided by North Beach Primary School for the Department of Education Services' independent review.

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

4 May 2017

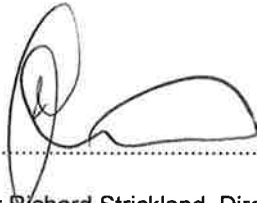
Date



Mr Noel Strickland, Reviewer

4 May 2017

Date



Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,  
Department of Education Services

12/5/17

Date

