



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

Karratha Primary School

2017
Review Findings



Independent Review of
Independent Public Schools

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Mr William Davis
Board Chair:	Ms Daphne Trevurza
School Address:	40 Turner Way Karratha WA 6714
Number of Students:	322
ICSEA¹	917
Reviewers:	Mr Tom Campbell (Lead) Ms Kerry Oliver
Review Dates:	30 and 31 May 2017

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 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 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 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 (IPS) 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)?

Karratha Primary School opened in 1971. In 2011 the students were moved into newly built premises and amalgamated with the Karratha Education Support Centre the following year. Since that time, it has been recognised for its focus on inclusivity which is greatly appreciated by parents of special needs students. Of concern to school leaders and staff has been the high transiency levels and irregular attendance patterns of a significant number of students. This has had an impact on the teaching and learning environments, particularly in those programs where ongoing sequenced delivery of content is of critical importance.

Findings

- The business plan includes key elements with a school vision, motto and context articulated and has a long term strategic focus with three key priority areas. These are 'Teaching and Learning', 'Behaviour' and 'Health and Wellbeing'. Targets, strategies and monitoring procedures are included for each priority.
- There are strong links between the business plan and operational plans. Discussions with staff confirmed they have been involved in the formulation of these plans and ensured that they were taken into account in classroom planning. Classroom visits supported this evidence and it was noted that a copy of the business plan is included in the staff information booklet.
- Annual reports have provided the community with a detailed analysis of the extent to which the targets have been achieved. Although it is not well-read, parents were aware of the business plan and it is available on the school's website and in hard copy at reception.
- It was acknowledged by the leadership team that as understanding of the process has grown, the current business plan has been modified. At annual reviews, targets and strategies have been adjusted where required. It is the school's intention to make further changes as the new business plan evolves. This will include a clear distinction between precise targets and strategies with consideration given to the inclusion of milestones. Currently a significant number of the achievement targets focus on improvement in school grades. Comparisons with like-schools should assist in more accurately measuring the targets which are presently reliant on effective teacher judgements.

- It was noted that members of the board have a sound knowledge and interest in the business plan. The board has been involved in and endorsed changes to the plan.
- The reviewers agreed that the business plan satisfies the requirements of the DPA, has been adjusted where appropriate and is likely to be further critiqued prior to the formulation of the new plan.

Area of strength

- The school's proactive approach in refining the business plan where warranted, and involving all stakeholders in the process.

Area for improvement

- Ensure a focus on the formulation of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited (SMART) targets with an increased emphasis on comparisons with like-schools rather than student grades.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- Student performance as measured against the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) targets set in the 2015–2017 Business Plan is variable. In some areas progress has been made. This was evident in the Year 5 comparative performance; however, the Year 3 results were generally trending downward. The targets in the original business plan were modified for 2017 in response to analysis which indicated that in some cases they were not challenging enough (e.g. On-entry testing – reading) or too challenging (e.g. Year 5 – numeracy).
- In Teaching and Learning Targets – Reading, the target for Year 1 was for 30% of students to be at or above 1.0 progression point in On-entry testing Module 2. This was achieved, with 40% reaching this target in 2016; however, as the school analysis acknowledges, this is an indicator of low expectations since the expected achievement for all students is 1.0 progression point by the end of Pre-primary. The target was modified to 60% for 2017. The target for Year 3 reading was for the NAPLAN trend line to be go upwards (relative assessment). This was not achieved, as the trend line went down. In Year 5, the reading target was for the student performance score in NAPLAN to be above that of like-schools (longitudinal summary). Here the result was very close to like-schools though it was acknowledged that this same cohort was above like-schools in 2014.
- In Teaching and Learning Targets – Writing, the target for Year 1 for 40% of students to be at or above 1.2 progression point in On-entry testing Module 2 was not achieved and results have become substantially worse, with only 15% at this point. For Year 3, the target was set for the average student performance score in NAPLAN to be above that of like-schools (longitudinal summary). Again, the target was not achieved with the performance of Year 3 writing in 2016 dipping compared to like-schools. In Year 5, the target was for the average student performance score in NAPLAN to be equal to that of like-schools (longitudinal summary). Although the target was not achieved, in 2016 the performance of Year 5 writing was much improved and is approaching the achievement of like-schools.

- Spelling and grammar and punctuation were not part of the business plan and both are below expected in Year 3 on comparative performance; however, Year 5 spelling was at expected performance and grammar and punctuation was above expected performance.
- In Teaching and Learning Targets – Numeracy, the target for Year 1 that 50% of students will be at or above 1.4 progression point in On-entry testing Module 2 was exceeded in 2016 and the target was modified to 60% achieving 1.4 progression point for 2017. For Year 3 the target was for the percentage of students in Proficiency Band 4 and above to be equal to the State percentage (proficiency bands). There was no progress towards this target, and there was a substantial decline from 2014. The target for Year 5 for 50% of students to achieve at or above the national mean (student distribution) was not achieved, with only 16% reaching this target. For 2017 this target was modified to the average student performance being above that of like-schools.
- In the second key priority area of Behaviour, the first target was for the number of positive behaviours recorded in the School Information System (SIS) to reflect a ratio of at least four positives to one negative was exceeded, as the ratio was 139:1. It is acknowledged that no data existed to make comparisons with historical data. The second target was that 90% or more students will demonstrate attitudes, behaviours and effort indicators often or consistently. 80% of students achieved this target. The final target in this area was for the total number of negative behaviours for the year recorded in SIS to be below 250. There were 710 negative behaviours recorded on SIS in 2016; however, the majority of these were related to causes which are now being addressed. There is evidence of substantial improvement with structured responses to inappropriate behaviours.
- In the key priority area of Health and Wellbeing, one target was for the school's overall attendance to be at least 90%. The overall attendance was 87.7% and there is a steady improvement trend. This target has been refined for 2017 with the focus on improving regular attendance to 70% or above. A second target was for early identification to occur for students with mental health concerns. It was acknowledged that this was a strategy rather than a target. Data does indicate an increased number of referrals, particularly since a chaplain has been engaged three days a week. A third target is for staff health and wellbeing to be at high levels as measured by surveys. The analysis provided indicates that this target would be a better fit if included in the workforce plan as it is not a student performance target. Nevertheless, data does indicate a relatively sound level of staff health and wellbeing, with only student behaviour recording less than a four in surveys (five being the highest rating) which in itself is an improvement on previous surveys.

- The principal and the administration team have a consistent focus on improvement based on valid data. Tracking of students includes detailed data on attendance, student performance through following up on goals set in independent education plans (IEPs), and various assessments apart from NAPLAN (e.g. Progressive Achievement Tests, PM Benchmark Reading Assessment Resource and Brightpath). The programs are adopted based on rigorous examination of data and research to find the most appropriate options. All programs are also adopted only after extensive stakeholder input and consultation.
- Improving teacher performance is a focus of the administration team. Performance management is based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and staff are encouraged to engage with the local network to source professional support. In addition, the school has employed a teacher development coach.
- Coaching and use of carefully developed peer observation and administration walkthroughs promote teacher improvement and consistency. These initiatives address school-wide goals as well as personal development goals. Graduate teachers are well supported and teachers confirmed that they found the coaching model extremely valuable. Professional learning is provided and focuses on achieving the priorities outlined in the business plan. The principal models this self-improvement focus by employing a personal coach to further improve his own performance.
- Distributed leadership is evident with a committee structure covering both academic and non-academic areas, with all staff members encouraged to join a committee. Documented role descriptions covering the leadership team provide guidance and ensure sustainability. Several staff members undertake to lead curriculum areas and cost centre management. These staff are mentored to provide leadership in the various curriculum areas. A committee focusing on school improvement has also been established and meets regularly. This has been a valued initiative which should have a positive impact on the formulation of the new business plan.
- Examples of excellent documentation developed by staff to assist in the delivery of the curriculum in literacy, numeracy and science were presented. Consultation and inclusion of all stakeholders is evident in developing curriculum materials.
- Documentation such as the Assessment Schedule and forward financial planning to ensure the continuing appointment of the teacher development coach, as well as a strategic approach through the workforce plan to recruitment, ensure sustainability of the teaching and learning programs.

- Education assistants (EAs) are an integral part of the teaching and learning program. They are appreciated by staff and have a positive impact on classrooms and individual students. Like the teachers, EAs have contributed to a smooth amalgamation with the education support centre which has resulted in a very positive inclusion experience for the school's special needs students. The reviewers noted that the EAs enjoy their work and those who were longstanding at the school commented on the positive changes that have taken place over the years.

Areas of strength

- The appointment of a teacher development coach.
- The distributed leadership model characterised by whole of staff involvement, commitment and support of a cycle of self-review.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- School performance and student improvement targets and priorities are reviewed on a regular basis. Tracking of all aspects of student performance (academic and non-academic) is detailed and data is shared and discussed at regular fortnightly school improvement meetings. This tracking and data collection goes beyond what is detailed in the business plan to ensure all aspects of student wellbeing and performance are regularly monitored. The board has a review schedule which includes review of school policies and of the data which monitors school improvement.
- An assessment schedule outlining a range of assessments and data collection strategies exists. Teachers are provided with an assessment package to ensure sustainability and consistency of data collection. Large numbers of carefully developed IEPs are in place for students at risk either through learning difficulties or in need of extension. Academic extension programs are a recent introduction and were in response to an identified gap in the teaching and learning programs. They have been welcomed by students and parents. The introduction of evidence-based programs such as Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), Talk for Writing and Letters and Sounds are directed at addressing the level of student performance resulting from the analysis of NAPLAN and other diagnostic testing and observations.
- Data is used to develop the annual operational plans. These cover a wide spectrum of the curriculum and specifically outline year group targets in reading, writing and numeracy. Discussion with teachers indicated a sound understanding of the targets and use of the operational plans in developing the teaching and learning programs. Evidence of teacher engagement in tracking students was presented with both central and class by class records being regularly updated.
- During a verification visit it was confirmed that the school had achieved five out of the seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard (NQS). Classroom observations provided evidence that early childhood staff were very aware of the NQS and this was taken into account in providing an appropriate learning environment for their students.
- The leadership team introduced a school review schedule in 2017 to collect a range of data and ensure that the focus on improvement remained high.

- The annual reports are detailed and publicly available though it is noted that the 2015 Annual Report did not have data on the targets as set out in the business plan. This has been rectified in the 2016 Annual Report.
- Self-review exists at all levels from board self-review to performance management techniques including peer review, walkthroughs collecting student feedback and more formal surveys.

Area of strength

- The development of detailed assessment and self-review schedules.

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- From documentation presented and in discussions with the leadership team and staff it was confirmed that the school has satisfied the requirements for the implementation of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline, Early Years Learning Framework and Kindergarten Guidelines.
- The school has been proactive in supporting key staff to ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum and enhancement of staff capacity. This has included the recruitment of a teacher development coach and appointment of leaders in literacy, numeracy, science and humanities and social sciences who are endeavouring to keep abreast of change, develop appropriate resources and keep staff informed.
- Staff are appreciative of the work of the teacher development coach who has facilitated continuity in program delivery. With a recent focus on learning intentions and success criteria, teachers have been enabled to implement this emphasis in their classrooms. It was brought to the reviewers' attention that the coach supported staff development with absolute discretion and this has resulted in staff openly and honestly reflecting on their performance.
- The learning support coordinator (LSC) also plays a key role in ensuring identified students have an opportunity to reach their full potential. The LSC has developed an effective student tracking system for those requiring adjusted programs. Staff has access to information on attendance, grades, goal achievement, comments and interactions with parents.
- Regular collaboration in year levels, staff meetings and school improvement meetings, recently introduced, has reinforced the commitment to effective curriculum delivery and program development. Some staff expressed an interest in having an opportunity to meet in phase of learning teams to share common interests.
- It was noted that there is a commitment by the school to the implementation of evidenced-based programs. The introduction of the Letters and Sounds, Multilit (early intervention) and Talk for Writing are likely to have a positive impact on those areas which have been identified from data as a concern.

- A feature of the school has been its strong pastoral care focus implemented by a very effective staff committee. KidsMatter forms an overarching framework within which detailed attention is given to ensuring students are catered for in a safe and supportive learning environment. After some investigation, the introduction of the Friendly Schools Plus program was introduced to cater for the social and emotional learning needs of the students. The elements of this program are taught by all teachers who are supported with resources and professional learning.
- The pastoral care committee has also been responsible for promoting an anti-bullying policy, the Act Belong Commit program with a focus on mental health, facilitating the ongoing Aussie of the month awards, a breakfast club and assembly activities which reinforce the school's values and virtues focus. Involvement in the Angkor project is also considered important. A sister school relationship has been formed with Ang Phek in Cambodia. On Angkor Day the students are involved in activities which raise their awareness and appreciation of schooling in Cambodia in addition to fund raising to support the project.
- The implementation of the PBS framework has also had a significant impact on the school culture. Documented evidence, discussions with the leadership team and longstanding staff members confirmed that the change of focus has led to a reduction in inappropriate behaviours and importantly to an emphasis of positive interactions between members of the school community. The focus on Care, Personal Best and Responsibility was clearly obvious to the reviewers and confirmed by a selection of students who were very aware of what it means to be a PBS school. Parents who have had an opportunity to attend an information session on the framework were appreciative of the efforts being made to ensure that a safe, supportive and positive environment was provided for the students.
- In addition to the emphasis on developing a positive culture within the school it was noted by the reviewers that strategies to ensure the safety of students in the classroom and playground are assured. Risk management procedures are in place with a detailed evacuation plan and effective policies to deal with bullying and inappropriate behaviours.
- Procedures for the induction of new students were noted by the reviewers. The expectations of the contribution of current students are detailed and involve a buddy system which enable a smooth transition for students continuing their schooling at Karratha.

Areas of strength

- The commitment to the implementation of programs which are evidence-based.
- The strong focus on the creation of a safe, supportive and positive environment for all school community members.
- The diligence of the leadership team in ensuring that curriculum commitments are met and that the school operates in an orderly fashion.

Area for improvement

- Consider the introduction of phase of learning collaborative meetings.

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 has a documented cycle of self-assessment and the board a schedule of data analysis commitments. Although this has developed in recent times the leadership team and board are cognisant of the fact that these processes should be ongoing as the new business plan evolves.
- Business plan priorities are well-resourced with funds allocated for the teaching and learning programs, staff professional learning, the PBS framework and the varied initiatives of the pastoral care committee.
- The school is well-resourced with a focus on evidence-based programs and the provision of information and communications technology resources (e.g. interactive white boards) and other hardware in classrooms. The library is spacious and includes a wide variety of up to date resources for staff and students to access.
- Cost centre managers have been assigned and a finance committee is charged with ensuring resources are used effectively and efficiently. From discussions with the principal and manager of corporate services it was confirmed that the leadership team was proficient in managing the school resources through the one line budget.
- As has been articulated in this report the school has focused on implementing evidence-based programs in its endeavours to ensure students have the opportunity to reach their potential. Funds have been appropriately allocated to these initiatives to ensure their sustainability.
- IEPs for special needs students provide details of how Disability Allocation funding is utilised to impact upon the teaching and learning adjustments. EAs have been deployed full-time in Pre-primary classes and provide support for the Letters and Sounds program.
- The workforce plan is detailed and addresses the priorities of recruitment, flexibility, staff capacity and satisfaction. Consideration has been given to succession planning, staff gender balance and addressing problems of recruiting for specialist roles.

- Funds have been allocated to allow for the recruitment of a teacher development coach. Funding has also been provided for an increase in time for the LSC whose assistance in identifying students and supporting staff has been critical.
- Although turnover impacts on school improvement, an effective induction process is in place with staff confirming that there were no significant difficulties in maintaining consistency with the ongoing teaching and learning programs.
- Following discussions with the principal and manager corporate services the reviewers were confident that the budget is well managed, funds are being expended in a timely manner and resources will be available to ensure the sustainability of current programs and future initiatives.

Areas of strength

- Effective and efficient budget management strategies are in place.
- The focus on securing resources which are well researched and meet the needs of the students.

School Board

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

Findings

- The school board comprises a range of members reflecting the diversity of the school and community. Strategic recruitment of community members has ensured that the board has a range of skills and is well able to engage with school personnel in developing and monitoring the business plan. For example, a person with expertise in the disability area has been recruited and although currently there are no Aboriginal members on the board every effort has been made to rectify this. Currently there is another plan to remedy this situation by working in conjunction with a neighbouring school experiencing similar difficulties. The composition of the board is unusual in that there are only two staff members plus the principal included, and the balance of the 11 members are either parents or members of the community. However, several of the other board members have an educational background and have proven to be most valuable in their contributions to both policy and planning. The board chair is very experienced and is both enthusiastic and positive in her efforts to recruit, professionally develop and engage all board members. New members receive induction to the roles and responsibilities of the board as per the DPA and the board has been proactive in developing a comprehensive code of conduct and appropriate terms of reference.
- Minutes of meetings and the endorsement of the board members confirm that the board has a meaningful role in determining the strategic direction of the school and regularly examines data on student performance and the degree to which the parents, staff and students are satisfied with the school management and progress. The board has a schedule which ensures timely consideration of data at each meeting.
- Board members showed sound knowledge of the current and former business plan and were involved in recent adjustment to the targets of the current plan. They are already engaged in thinking about the next business plan and will follow the schedule to examine data as it becomes available and engage with the school staff in developing the priorities and direction of this plan.
- The board has endorsed the annual reports and approved the analysis of results that these reports contain. Regular financial reports are received and board members take an active role in ensuring that resourcing for school initiatives is both adequate and sustainable.

- The board does not currently formally communicate information about its activities to the wider community although profiles of board members are published in the school newsletter and conversation with parents indicated a degree of awareness about the board and its role. Board members and particularly the chair indicated a willingness to investigate ways to raise the profile of the board and to communicate in a more structured way with the community.
- The board has conducted a self-review and is actively seeking to ensure future sustainability including that a range of skills and interests are represented. The current chair of the board indicated that her term of office was nearly complete and she is preparing to provide a comprehensive handover once a replacement is appointed.
- The board has fulfilled its requirement to have an annual open meeting although no one has availed themselves of the opportunity to attend. Perhaps with more effective communication this may change in the future.
- Conversation with members gives the reviewers every confidence that the board is both effective and efficient and will be sustainable into the future. The level of governance is high and the willingness to engage and learn is evident.

Areas of strength

- The skill set and enthusiasm of board members contributes to a high functioning board with an excellent understanding of their role in monitoring school progress towards achieving the targets developed in the business plan.
- The leadership provided by the chair of the board sets high expectations of all members and the support she provides ensures every member can contribute and be consulted.
- The participation of the board in data analysis, planning, monitoring and overseeing financial viability is exemplary.

Areas for improvement

- Continue efforts to recruit representatives from the Aboriginal community.
- Consider further communication strategies to better advise the school community and parents about the board's functions and activities.

Conclusion

Despite having to contend with factors such as irregular attendance and transiency, the leadership team and staff of Karratha Primary School have been diligent in their efforts to provide consistency for the students. The implementation of evidence-based learning programs in all classrooms and agreed common goals by staff has assisted with this.

The school has a positive emphasis on inclusivity. Parents of special needs students have acknowledged they have been reassured by the safe and welcoming environment that is provided for their children. This is complemented by the focus placed on pastoral care.

With the implementation of several key initiatives facilitated by committed staff members, the school environment has evolved to one where Care, Personal Best, and Responsibility and Respect are embedded values.

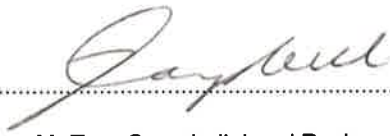
The school board, which comprises members with varied expertise, has been proactive in its support of the school and has played a significant role in the evolution of the current business plan and the oversight of its implementation. The experience gained by board members ensures that their involvement in the formulation of the new business plan will be productive.

The school is well positioned to begin a new cycle in its IPS journey. The leadership team is aware of adjustments required for the 2018–2020 Business Plan. There is a willingness to continue to research and implement programs to enhance student performance. It is likely that any resulting initiatives will be supported by staff who have the skills and interest to ensure their successful implementation.

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 Karratha Primary School for the Department of Education Services' independent review.

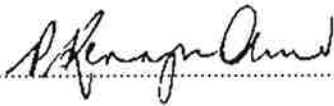
The principal and board chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Mr Tom Campbell, Lead Reviewer

29 June 2017

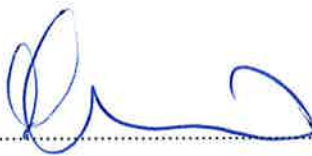
Date



Ms Kerry Oliver, Reviewer

29 June 2017

Date



Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,
Department of Education Services

30/6/17

Date

