



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education

Koorana Education Support Centre

2017

Review Findings



Independent Public School Review

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Ms Marion Wright
Board Chair:	Ms Vivienne Steur
School Address:	109 Coronata Drive, Warnbro WA 6169
Number of Students:	20
Reviewers:	Ms Georgina Detiuk (Lead) Ms Cris Sandri
Review Dates:	7 and 8 December 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.

Review Methodology

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Business Plan

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

Koorana Education Support Centre provides for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The centre is located within Warnbro in the City of Rockingham, approximately 55 kilometres from Perth, and shares a campus with Koorana Primary School with whom it has an inclusive and supportive partnership.

Shared facilities include a playground area, healthy canteen, library and a very active Parents' and Citizens Association. Reciprocal arrangements between both facilities allow for students to combine for excursions, incursions and special events such as the athletics carnival. Integration sessions are organised when appropriate, enabling some students to experience classes in a mainstream setting.

The centre has experienced a 53% increase in enrolment over 2015–17. Of the current enrolment 50% of students have an intellectual disability, many with comorbid diagnosis of additional disabilities. In 2017, the enrolment ratio represented 30% girls and 70% boys.

The centre has a new state of the art multi-sensory room and employs an occupational therapist and speech therapist. School staff are highly trained and professional and teachers are qualified practitioners in the field of special needs and disabilities education. Students have access to classroom computers and iPads. Interactive whiteboards in each classroom are used to further engage students in their learning. Partnerships and strategies to use external agencies and specialists to support learning are well embedded in practice.

Supported by the values of learning, excellence, equity and care, the vision of the centre is to develop innovative students and help them to achieve their best to lead and inspire others in the wider community.

Findings

- The Business Plan 2015–17 is consistent with the DPA three year requirements and sets objectives and strategies of key focus areas to ensure improvement in school and student achievement. The business plan was informed by staff reflection, student performance information and developed in consultation with staff, members of the combined school board and information from a parent survey. The business plan is contextualised, specific to the school community and aligned to system documents including the Department of Education 2015, 2016 and 2017 Focus documents, Strategic Plan and Classroom First strategy.

- Medium to long-term targets were set for student academic improvement in literacy, numeracy, health and physical education. Early intervention and student non-academic targets were set in health and wellbeing, differentiated curriculum and behaviours. The business plan includes strategies for the key focus areas of:
 - success for all students
 - high quality teaching and leadership
 - improved student attendance and behaviour
 - a capable and responsive organisation.
- Each focus area of the business plan is supported by an annual operational plan containing finer grained detailed objectives, strategies, resources including funding and success indicators.
- Documented evidence was provided to reviewers verifying the centre leadership and staff have undertaken reflective self-review through a continuous school improvement cycle encompassing the following components:
 - assessment of data and evidence of student achievement
 - operational planning
 - implementation of identified strategies.
- The business plan has provided the basis for teaching and learning and a documented comprehensive self-review schedule ensured timely, adequate and rigorous review processes were in place to measure success against the business plan.
- Staff have a clear understanding of the business plan and demonstrate a commitment to engage in ongoing review and consistent recording of corresponding data to determine progress made against the plan and strategies required to ensure targets are met.
- The business plan was issued to all school staff, members of the school board, parents and families of the school community. A copy of the plan is on the school website and on Schools Online.
- Performance against the business plan targets is contained in annual reports.

Areas of strength

- Development of the 2015–17 Business Plan through a highly consultative process on commencement as an Independent Public School.
- A comprehensive and collaborative self-review process.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- Students of Koorana Education Support Centre, in small group and one to one teacher-student settings, are provided instruction and learning opportunities planned to meet their academic, social and emotional needs to develop independence, resilience and life skills. Where possible, learning opportunities are reflective of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline. Planning is also guided by the Abilities Based Learning Education Western Australia (ABLEWA) resource and the Peron Education Support Alliance (PESA) checklist. The principal participates actively in curriculum decision-making, coordinating and overseeing the teaching and learning process.
- All students require teaching and learning adjustments. Each student has an individual education plan (IEP) constructed collaboratively each semester between teachers, parents, therapists, support staff and outside agencies relevant to providing for student needs and requirements. Teachers monitor progress of these adjustments through the IEP. Data is collected from the student progress and achievement of IEP goals and on a semester basis, for individual students and for the centre as a whole. Individual achievement against the goals is reported to parents and involved stakeholders resulting in data that can be used to inform the student's IEP for the next semester. Whole-school data is collated and used by staff to assess teaching and learning programs and is also presented to the school board.
- Staff aim to provide literacy and numeracy learning based on authentic learning activities to promote skills required for each student towards independence. Staff recognise the value and are astute in providing every opportunity to embed literacy and numeracy across all learning programs. There is clear evidence that a student's social and emotional learning is a vital part of the learning program.
- The academic target to increase the percentage of IEP literacy objectives achieved by each student was achieved in 2015, 2016 and 2017 including incremental increase with four students who achieved 100% of their objectives in 2015, seven in 2016 and 11 in 2017.
- The academic target to ensure students demonstrate literacy improvement as indicated by comparison benchmark data was achieved by those students able to be tested showing an improvement in reading and spelling.

- The academic target to increase the percentage of IEP numeracy objectives achieved by each student was achieved in 2015, 2016 and 2017 with incremental increase and with two students achieving 100% in 2015, four in 2016 and nine in 2017.
- Ensuring students demonstrate numeracy improvement as indicated by comparison benchmark data was achieved by those students able to be tested showing an average improvement of three months in numeracy ability.
- Discussion with the principal and staff and sighting of recorded data indicated the school is consistently recording the achievement of students in relation to their IEPs, and where and when necessary changes are made.
- Data collated from Semester 1 of 2015 through to Semester 1 of 2017 shows consistent improvement in student progress and overall improvement in individual IEP achievement.
- The target to increase the percentage of IEP health and physical education objectives achieved by each student was not met as it remained neutral. These objectives included interpersonal skills and self-management skills which were set to meet a need at a specific point in time and not based on any scope and sequence plan.
- The target for student achievement in the early intervention program to equal or exceed the average achievement of the previous year was met, with five students successfully integrated into their local mainstream school after attending the centre for one or two years.
- The non-academic improvement target to identify students at risk and implement strategies to improve their outcomes was met, with parent attendance at case conferences increasing from 77% in 2015 to 100% in 2017, and the consistent effective involvement of relevant outside agencies such as the Department of Communities (Child Protection and Family Support and Disability Services) working with speech and occupational therapists employed by the centre.
- The target to ensure that each student would have a differentiated curriculum suitable to their individual needs, planned to match student learning objectives to student capabilities is recorded as met. Students have individual curriculum data checklists which determine what a student needed to know, should know and could know. Data collected informs ongoing planning and provides information regarding the skills and abilities of a student for the teacher of the following year. Staff review of data indicated a direct correlation between the incidents of 100% differentiation and the increase in objectives achieved. Staff professional learning

relating to the writing of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited goals has resulted in further understanding and capacity to set more defined objectives and an increase in the percentage of curriculum differentiation.

- The centre has reported considerable success by students who have participated in the early intervention program enabling re-entry to mainstream classes at their local schools.
- Data regarding the target to reduce the number of negative behaviours for individual students was a concern in 2016 and the school has been working with the School of Special Educational Needs (SEN): Disability and SEN: Behaviour and Engagement. Data for 2017 shows a reduction in negative behaviours.
- The majority of teaching staff are employed at the centre part-time, which has contributed to the challenge of convening teacher collaboration time. In 2017, this has in some measure been overcome through timetabling and targeted resourcing to have all teachers on the school site on one day each week. Classroom meetings are scheduled to occur three times each week and a whole-centre communication meeting is held each week.
- Processes and procedures for staff development were reviewed in 2016 resulting in a workable format aligned to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the business plan. This has been complemented by staff being provided with individual iPads, using the My Standards application and self-reflecting on their professional practice as part of the performance development process. A positive result of the staff self-reflection of a low rating in regard to Aboriginal students has resulted in a focus on the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework and the intended undertaking of further professional learning to build capacity in this area. Education assistants (EAs) are valued and recognised as vital to the success of centre programs and initiatives. Their annual performance development process has been reviewed and like the teaching staff is aligned to the business plan targets and focus areas. Staff reported high levels of satisfaction with their opportunities for professional learning, significantly the application of the Applied Behaviour Analysis training.
- The centre is participating in a Department of Education initiated lighthouse network program known as Instructional Rounds in Education to assist educational leaders and practitioners to develop a shared understanding of what high quality instruction looks like and what schools and networks can do in support of it. Through the program and the centre active participation in the PESA network, peer observation should become a process adopted and effectively used by centre staff.

- A feature of the teaching and learning within the centre is the staff commitment to the business plan focus areas. Reviewers were able to verify through meetings with teachers, EAs, support staff and parents the diligence of a team of educators in striving to achieve success for all students. High quality teaching and learning is evident through teaching programs that are data-driven ensuring a differentiated curriculum for each student and the awareness of the impact that professional learning and practice has on determining student outcomes.
- Whole-of-centre practices such as use of Auslan, Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) for non-verbal students, and the Applied Analysis strategy are embedded and respected by staff auguring well for sustainability of practice with appointment of a new principal in 2018.

Areas of strength

- Data-driven planning.
- Commitment of staff striving to meet the needs of individual students.
- Involvement of all stakeholders in developing student IEPs.
- Enabling progress of students to enter mainstream as a result of participation in the early intervention program.
- Embedded whole-centre practices.
- A collaborative and supportive team of staff.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- The comprehensive 2015–17 self-review schedule based on the Department of Education School Improvement and Accountability Framework (2008) has provided guidelines for the centre's accountability and improvement. It details the collection of qualitative and quantitative performance information, as well as processes and structures to monitor student achievement and school operations. Documented timelines and procedures outline a continuous cyclical self-review process involving assessment of performance, planning for improvement, actioning the planning and reference to the curriculum assessment cycle.
- Student performance against the business plan has been assessed and reviewed twice annually. Staff have interrogated the priority areas and evaluated performance against the targets evaluated. Strategies for improvement are registered along with suggested actions. The outcome of each annual review of the business plan involving the principal and key teaching staff informs the following year's planning.
- Each student has an individual curriculum guide providing a profile of student continuous achievement which staff use to continually reassess their practices, programs and strategies to ensure correlation to student needs.
- Each student has a tray system, which on a daily basis has IEP goals and relative learning tasks. Staff monitor student application and record outcomes, make teaching and learning adjustments accordingly and provide immediate feedback to students. Complementing this process is the development of documentation designed to assist students in self-regulation and resilience training in the form of student schedules; Anecdote, Behaviour and Consequence charts; and Think Spot Sheets.
- A strong feature of the centre is the staff commitment in using data to monitor student and school performance. A pyramid model has been adopted, the process of which includes: collection of meaningful assessments; discussion with parents and external providers; gaining information and meaning and analysis within a student's context; making judgements, connections and comparisons to the collective application of data knowledge; and ultimately making informed decisions regarding student need.

- The range of student assessment instruments include IEP achievement, curriculum guide data checklists, Neale analysis of reading, Key Maths, Words Their Way and Pre-primary On-entry data. Collected data is presented to and discussed by staff during planning days, school development days and selected staff meetings throughout the year. Reviewers were able to verify through documentation provided and meeting with the centre leadership and staff that there is rigorous discussion concerning student achievement against IEP goals. Staff question and discuss validity of data and have strong interest in continuing to pursue how best to improve in writing and assessing student achievement of IEP goals. Factors considered have included the ability of students to be assessed against the normative and summative assessment, the interpretation of data, the influencing variables at the time of assessment, the small cohort and the characteristic of students with special education needs regressing from time to time in some areas of their learning.
- Staff worked with members of the PESA network to initially review adherence to and ability to meet the National Quality Standard (NQS) and have subsequently conducted a self-audit. A whole-of-centre approach has been implemented and internal audits have guided the centre improvement plan. The Department of Education audit conducted during 2017 included comprehensive and positive comment in verifying each of the seven quality areas as being met.

Areas of strength

- A continuous cyclical self-review process.
- Purposeful use of data to inform planning.
- Tracking individual student progress and achievement over time.
- Comprehensive and effective planning and implementation of the NQS.
- Staff commitment to pursuing how best to improve writing and measuring IEP goals to ensure the best learning outcome for students.

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- The curriculum is consistent with the requirements of the *School Education Act 1999*, *School Education Regulations 2000* and the *School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act 1997*.
- All teaching staff are experienced and qualified in delivering learning programs to students with special educational needs. Three staff members successfully completed the Applied Behaviour Analysis Program to teach in the early intervention program and junior classes. Two other staff completed courses on Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communications-Handicapped Children (TEACCH) complementing the school's collective expertise.
- The school employs a number of tools to ensure education programs are designed and delivered to meet the specific needs of each student. The curriculum is individually differentiated with goals and objectives tracked through IEPs and entered into the Special Education Needs Reporting to Parents tool. Curriculum data checklists and annual benchmark assessments are used to inform the student's individual curriculum and support tracking of progress.
- Staff report that parents and caregivers are seen as integral to the school's learning program. Student development and learning is shared with all stakeholders during regularly scheduled case conferences, with parents/caregivers at additional individual meetings, and in daily contacts. Discussions with parents and caregivers confirmed the strong individual child-centred focus in the school with open communication and support for the student and the family.
- Classrooms, programs and routines are established and organised to maximise each child's learning. An early intervention program caters for students from Pre-primary to Year 6 and the efficient, whole-school approach to the use of visuals inside and outside the classroom is highly effective.
- The recently completed multisensory facility and accompanying program became operational in Term 4 of this year. Despite some initial teething problems, evidence of potential benefits is emerging. Students are encouraged to regulate their own behaviours and emotions to place them in the right mental frame for optimal learning. Changes to student behaviour are evident as is a growing

student and staff understanding of student 'engines' before and after attending the rooms.

- School policies are reviewed regularly to ensure appropriateness for the current cohort of students. A new behaviour management policy is being trialled supporting the inclusion of individual behaviour management plans and risk management plans for students requiring more individualised attention. The excursion policy has also been updated to better reflect rigorous risk management and emergency response planning.
- Collaboration between staff, support services, consulting teachers from SSEN and the school psychologist ensure the safety and welfare of all students on school premises and away from school premises while on school activities, and procedures are in accordance with Department of Education policies.
- To further support the complex needs of the students, teachers and EAs have undergone training to deliver Social and Emotional Learning in the form of protective behaviours, Rock and Water, Massage in Schools and Drumbeat.
- Staff professional learning and involvement with Teacher Development Schools and in networks has provided verification of staff commitment to the delivery of quality learning opportunities for students. It has provided valuable opportunities for further training particularly with protective behaviours, AAC and TEACCH methods.
- A strong relationship exists with Koorana Primary School. Students are integrated as much as possible particularly at whole-school events and celebrations. Integration into the mainstream playground and classes for art, music and physical education occurs as appropriate for the individual student to further foster student engagement and achievement of curriculum standards.

Areas of strength

- The pastoral approach by all staff to ensuring the specific needs of each student is acknowledged and supported.
- The leadership and staff of the school for their efforts to create a safe, enriching and successful learning environment, which are appreciated and supported by parents.
- The strong individual child-centred focus in the school with open communication and support for the student and the family.

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

- Financial and human resources are prioritised, aligned with learning priorities as described in the business plan, and continue to be allocated at point of need. They are used effectively and efficiently to deliver education programs that provide all students with the very best opportunities to achieve high levels of proficiency.
- The school has facilitated the additional employment of a speech pathologist and occupational therapist together with the completion of the multisensory facility to cater for identified needs in the student population.
- Classroom visits demonstrated that teachers have readily available resources that are used and produced to deliver a very individualised curriculum.
- School resources are overseen by the finance committee. The committee meets regularly to determine and monitor the use of resources to implement current and proposed appropriate teaching and learning. The school leadership, including the manager corporate services, indicated that there are sufficient resources to sustain current and intended program delivery.
- Disability allocation funding is apportioned to the student. Due to the small student cohort and student transiency (including those who complete their early intervention program and return to their mainstream school), planning allocation of resources can be a challenge. This is recognised by leadership and allowances are made by the school in the allocation of contingency funding in the budget.
- A comprehensive workforce plan is in place that identifies areas of current and future staffing needs. A needs analysis is undertaken at the end of each year. Workforce planning is a priority for the leadership due to student funding allocation and movement and the number of part-time permanent positions. 2018 planning indicates the possibility of addressing this imbalance where appropriate.

Area of strength

- The management of human and financial resources in the context of a small high functioning education support school.

School Board

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

Findings

- Meeting with the principal, the board chair and board members provided valuable context in relation to the current position of the board. Until May 2017, the school shared a board with Koorana Primary School. At that time, the joint board agreed that the strategic objectives of both schools required differentiation. As a result the Koorana Schools board was disbanded in May 2017 following due process, and a new Koorana Education Support Centre Board was established in July 2017.
- A strong relationship continues to exist between the two schools with high levels of collaboration evident. A memorandum of understanding between the schools is in place to strengthen the commitment to work together for the betterment of the schools' communities.
- Since July 2017, the board has adopted terms of reference that reflect understanding of its functions as prescribed in the *School Education Act 1999*, *School Education Regulations 2000* and Department of Education policy. With several current members having served on the joint board and a dynamic, competent board chair in place, there is a renewed sense of optimism, enthusiasm and purpose evident in discussions with the newly established board.
- In reviewing board minutes of both the previous joint schools board and the current board, it is evident that the board has the understanding and capacity to fulfil its functions as prescribed in the *School Education Act 1999*, *School Education Regulations 2000* and Department of Education policy. Time is allocated at each board meeting to progress through the Department of Education board training modules.
- Membership of the board currently consists of the principal, one elected staff representative, two elected parent representatives and three community members, one of whom is the principal of Koorana Primary School. The membership is representative of the school community and complies with the *School Education Act 1999* and *School Education Regulations 2000* which specify the membership categories and composition.

- There is a strong desire expressed by board members to effectively communicate with the community regarding its functions, roles and activities as well as progress and achievement towards business targets.
- As a new board moving into the next business planning cycle, it is acknowledged that establishing processes to not only endorse but participate in the development of school functions as prescribed in the DPA, such as the next business plan, is desirable.

Areas of strength

- A renewed sense of optimism, enthusiasm and purpose evident in discussions with the newly established board.
- The strong relationship that continues to exist between the two schools.

Area for improvement

- Ensure processes are put in place to reflect the requirements of the DPA.

Conclusion

Evidence was provided through the review process that Koorana Education Support Centre uses individualised planning and delivery to provide educational opportunities to support the special needs of its students in meeting their potential and in developing skills of independence in their learning.

A strong collegial ethos is apparent with a focus on how modifications and improvements can be made to individualise students' curricula to meet their changing learning needs. Students are central to the strategic direction of the centre and the day-to-day whole-school approaches based on agreed policies and processes. A wide range of learning opportunities are provided through inclusive education and participation in community access programs.

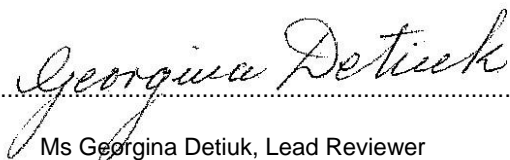
There is evidence of responsible allocation of financial and human resources that will provide the best opportunities for all students and an acute awareness of the need to deploy the right staff in the right places to meet the needs of students while also providing staff with career opportunities.

The positive and informed leadership of the principal has engendered invigoration of staff, and with the collaborative practices within the centre, the strong support of parents and a committed school board, Koorana Education Support Centre has the focus, capacity and community support to continue to address the challenging learning and social needs of the students.

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 Koorana Education Support Centre, true and correct.

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


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Ms Georgina Detiuk, Lead Reviewer

17 January 2018
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Date


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Ms Cris Sandri, Reviewer

17 January 2018
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Date


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Mr Ken Perris, Director
Independent Public School Review

24 January 2018
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Date