



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

North Fremantle Primary School

2017

Review Findings



Independent Review of
Independent Public Schools

Disclaimer

This document reports the findings of the Department of Education Services' independent review.

The Department of Education Services does not endorse any commercial organisation, product or service mentioned in this report.

The Department of Education Services can only guarantee the authenticity of original documents. This document is uncontrolled once printed.

To help people with disabilities obtain access to information, this document can be provided in alternative format on request. Please contact ipsreview@des.wa.gov.au with specific requests or telephone 08 9441 1900.

School and Review Details

Principal:	Ms Linda Chandler
Board Chair:	Ms Christine Oldmeadow
School Address:	30 John Street, North Fremantle WA
Number of Students:	164
ICSEA¹	1082
Reviewers:	Mr John Iacomella (Lead) Mr Alby Huts
Review Dates:	15 and 16 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)?

There are 164 students enrolled at North Fremantle Primary School. This is a significant increase from 2010 when the student enrolment was 55. Discussions with staff and parents indicate the increase in enrolments is due to the local community having increasing confidence in the quality of education provided at the school.

The school comprises a two story building which is adjacent to a local government oval that students use for playing areas. The local football club rooms, located at the oval, is used as an undercover area for assemblies.

The willingness and efforts of the local community to support the school by collaborating with staff to enhance the educational program and improving the grounds and facilities is further evidence of community confidence in the school. The local community highly values the school and supports the staff to maintain the strong sense of 'community'.

The outdoor classroom developed and built by the parent community is an example of the support for the school. The outdoor classroom enables the students to participate in sustainable practices as part of the science and sustainability learning programs.

Findings

- The values and objectives of the school as outlined in the business plan reflect the school's vision of providing a 'holistic and inclusive environment where all children are nurtured to become confident lifelong learners by developing their academic, social, physical and creative potential.'
- Four strategic areas to achieve the vision are included in the business plan: Successful Students; Excellence in Teaching and Learning; Building a Positive School Culture and Strong Community Partnerships; and Providing a Safe, Supportive and Sustainable Environment.
- The business plan details a diverse range of programs, activities, targets and milestones within the four strategic areas.
- The business plan is very comprehensive and was developed after lengthy consultation with the school board. The business plan demonstrates the close working relationship between the school and local community. The strategies in

the business plan help achieve and maintain the culture of strong community with the school.

- Discussions with staff confirm the content of the business plan provides the context for planning and preparing their classroom teaching programs.
- Student academic targets included in the strategic areas are listed as reducing the percentage of students performing below expected year level or achieving positive trends in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results.
- The low number of students in a year level does make it difficult to design whole-school improvement targets. The school will need to continue to develop an individual student tracking system to monitor student progress.
- Discussions with parents confirm the business plan is widely available to all in the community. However, there were varied responses as to the extent parents read or understood all of the content of the business plan.

Areas of strength

- The consultation process in developing the business plan that enables the local community to have strong ownership of the plan.
- Recognition of the needs of student at educational risk and the plans to improve their educational outcomes.
- The availability of the business plan within the local community.

Areas for improvement

- Simplify the next business plan to describe the essential elements of the school's key focus areas, strategies and student improvement targets.
- Include a reference to all learning areas in the next business plan.
- Include specific student achievement targets that can be measured and demonstrate student progress.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- The reviewers verify a shared vision with staff, students and parents through classroom visits, extensive staff interactions and discussions with board members, students and parents. The students are encouraged to embrace the school motto of 'A Small School with Big Ideas' and are supported by the staff's determination to continue 'putting our students first'.
- Curriculum planning and analysis of school performance data is conducted during collaborative planning meetings and then regular data analysis by the leadership team and the board. The reviewers confirm the leadership team's approach of working collaboratively with staff to ensure they regularly analyse data to identify underperforming students and develop and implement individual education plans to assist them to meet their needs.
- The curriculum is designed to ensure all students are provided with an engaging, relevant and meaningful educational program. The specialist programs include art, music, French and science and sustainability.
- The leadership team has compiled comprehensive longitudinal documentation of student performance including data analysis for each individual student to determine whether the targets of the business plan have been achieved.
- Each learning area has a committee responsible for supporting teachers implementing the relevant teaching and learning area program to improve student outcomes. Terms of Reference, membership and roles and responsibilities are well defined. Discussion with teachers confirm participation in the committees enhances their capacity to improve student outcomes.
- The first business plan target for the Year 3 and Year 5 stable cohort from 2015–2019 NAPLAN was to demonstrate positive trends in the percentage of children with moderate, high and very high progress in numeracy and reading. The small numbers of students in a stable cohort make it difficult to generalise year level achievement targets. The 2016 NAPLAN data demonstrated that Year 3 students achieved above the Australian mean in numeracy and reading. Whereas the performance of the seven Year 5 students in 2016 when compared to similar schools in numeracy was substantially below and in reading was slightly below that of like-schools. NAPLAN 2014–2016 Student Progress and Achievement

data for Year 3 to Year 5 when compared with like-schools demonstrated 'lower progress-lower achievement' in numeracy and reading.

- The second business plan target for 2015–2019 NAPLAN was to establish a positive trend in NAPLAN writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation results from Year 3 to Year 5. The 2016 Year 3 NAPLAN results demonstrated a positive improvement of outcomes over the past three years in all NAPLAN domains. However, NAPLAN 2014–2016 Student Progress and Achievement data for Year 3 to Year 5 when compared with like-schools demonstrated 'lower progress-lower achievement' in numeracy, writing and reading and 'higher progress-lower achievement' in spelling and grammar and punctuation.
- Discussions with parents and teachers indicate a need to develop a set of student learning targets focused on student progress compared to national benchmarks that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited (SMART).
- Whole-school planning occurs following annual reviews and plans are re-evaluated during collaborative team meetings. Each child's progress is mapped from screening in Kindergarten; On-entry assessments from Pre-primary to Year 2; Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) in reading, mathematics and punctuation and grammar; and NAPLAN in literacy and numeracy. Teaching staff also exercise teacher judgements, a case management approach and individual education plans to monitor student knowledge and how accurately they reflect student learning and understanding.
- Staff capacity is focused towards excellence in teaching through provision and engagement in quality mandated and optional professional and personal growth opportunities. The staff has adopted a set of stated beliefs about excellence in teaching, class practice, coaching, collaboration and professional learning and self-assessment based on the explicit teaching model.
- Self-reflection by teachers is against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, the business plan and student performance. Professional learning for teachers is linked to personal professional learning plans as part of the annual performance management process where they receive feedback and support through a collegial culture using peer observations and walk throughs to help improve the quality of their teaching.
- Parents affirmed that students receive programs appropriate to their learning needs and the vision outlined in the business plan.
- The leadership team closely monitors the implementation of the curriculum, student progress and readily identifies gaps in curriculum provision and student

underperformance. The collaboration between staff, the distributed leadership and the support from the board ensures the sustainability of the appropriate curriculum and improvement in student performance.

Areas of strength

- The holistic and collaborative approach to teaching and learning evident by providing a rich, engaging and inclusive educational environment for students.
- The preparedness of staff to continually reflect and monitor their effectiveness in improving student outcomes.

Area for improvement

- Develop a set of SMART student learning targets focused on student progress compared to national benchmarks.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- The extent to which the objectives from the four strategic areas from the business plan were met was part of the self-review process from 2015 to 2017. The review process assessed the achievement of business plan targets, which programs were effective and which programs were to be changed, deleted or added for the following year.
- This review process enabled the school to refine school operations by identifying focus areas to improve student learning.
- The review process concluded most of the objectives have been achieved and the remainder are in progress to being achieved.
- Reviewers can verify the conclusions from the self-review process.
- Student data from NAPLAN assessments, PAT in reading comprehension, grammar and punctuation and mathematics, On-entry assessment of all students from Pre-primary to Year 2 and the National Quality Standard are the essential elements of the school's self-assessment process.
- The school implemented an assessment and intervention program based on PAT assessments in 2015. This program enables the school for Years 1–6 to: monitor student performance, direct planning and evaluation, begin a progress file for students and analyse the effectiveness of specific programs. This data is used with student data from NAPLAN and On-entry to verify student progress. The self-review process indicated areas of concern in literacy and numeracy in Years 1–6, lower than expected skill levels in Pre-primary and a lack of reliable and valid assessment procedures in science.
- Staff participate in regular collaborative meetings for whole of school planning, analysis of student performance and evaluation of the teaching and learning program. The agenda for these meetings are prepared at the beginning of each term. Discussions with teachers indicate these meetings ensure student progress is monitored and analysed. Teaching and learning programs are adjusted in response to student performance.

- Teachers confirm they continuously evaluate their teaching and learning program by analysing student data from standardised and their own classroom assessments. This information assists teachers in preparing their classroom programs and updating the current operational plans.
- At the end of the year all teachers participate in reviewing the extent business plan targets have been met. This review informs planning for the following year including adjustments to the teaching and learning program, allocation of resources, schedule of assessment dates and assigning key responsibilities to teachers.
- The analysis of this data includes cohort improvement and tracking of individual student achievement. Conclusions are made on the extent the business plan targets have been met. Further judgements are made on the range of student improvement. Intervention strategies are developed to address areas of concern and appropriate resources are allocated. Discussions with teachers confirm the rigorous self-assessment process. Teachers confirm they adjust their teaching and learning programs to better meet the educational needs of students. For example the Year 5 reading results were below like-schools in the PAT. New strategies implemented included providing additional support time to differentiate the reading program for selected students.
- The annual reports are very comprehensive. NAPLAN results linked to the business plan targets and On-entry data constitute the student performance results. The annual reports include brief positive and negative comments describing student progress and relative performance of the students compared to similar schools. Relative performance includes comparisons with State and national means and statistically similar schools. Discussions with parents indicate the annual reports are readily available.
- NAPLAN data in the business plan refer to 'expected year level'. The NAPLAN data in the annual reports refer to 'like-schools' and 'national minimum standards'. Operational plans also refer to 'State means'. The school could consider using one consistent comparative measure throughout its planning documents.
- The early years education teachers participated in the self-review process for the seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard in 2016. The external auditor confirmed the school was meeting four of the quality areas (staffing arrangements; relationships with children; partnerships with families and communities; and leadership and service management) and was working towards the other three (education program and practice; children's health and safety; and physical environment).

Areas of strength

- The comprehensive annual reports that include a thorough analysis and commentary on student performance.
- The preparation and implementation of the whole of school assessment schedule.
- The ongoing review of the extent the objectives from the business plan have been met.
- The adjustments to the teaching and learning program in response to the analysis of student achievement.

Area for improvement

- Use a single measure for comparison when describing NAPLAN results in key documents including the business plan and annual reports.

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- The comprehensive program of curriculum delivery is in accordance with the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) requirements. Teachers report to parents and carers in all eight learning areas.
- The school organisational structure operates through learning teams and the concept of shared leadership successfully contributes to the day-to-day management of the school's program delivery.
- Teachers demonstrated commitment to strategies designed to enhance teaching and learning after consideration of alternative strategies, programs and resources through whole-school commitment to literacy and numeracy improvement using a range of programs and resources such as Letters and Sounds, Words Their Way and the Origo Stepping Stones mathematics program.
- Moderation of student grades is achieved by using the SCSA exemplars, Brightpath (writing) and network moderation of common assessments.
- Operational plans have been developed for each learning area as well as for sustainability and waste management. Teachers demonstrated a clear grasp of the requirements for implementation of the literacy and mathematics plans. Whole-school familiarity and understanding of the operational plans for other learning areas was not evident.
- The principal has successfully led the school community to create a positive culture of care and wellbeing for all students as well as a welcoming environment for parents and carers. The development and successful implementation of student behaviour and student welfare policies have ensured planning and delivery of school activities provides a safe learning environment for students.
- The consistent implementation of a whole-school positive behaviour support policy supported by specific programs such as 123 Magic, Little Heroes and Highway Heroes embedded in school practice supports a safe and orderly learning environment.

- Staff were acknowledged for providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for students from feedback provided by students and parents and confirmed in student and parent surveys.
- The school leadership team utilised the Australian Council for Educational Research National Improvement Tool in the following three domains to make judgements about the effectiveness of the school:
 - an explicit improvement agenda
 - analysis and discussion of data
 - a culture that improves learning.
- Reviewers are confident that the school can sustain education programs that are designed and delivered to meet the needs of students in accordance with the requirements of the *School Education Act 1999*, *School Education Regulations 2000* and the *School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act 1997*.

Area of strength

- The whole-school and community involvement in providing a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment for all children.

Area for improvement

- Review the preparation and implementation of operational plans for all the learning areas including evaluation requirements and assessment of student achievement targets.

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 operational plans for the eight learning areas of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline and an operational plan for sustainability. The operational targets within each plan is written in terms of student achievement. Each operational plan details the resources and support for implementing the teaching and learning strategies, timelines, teacher responsible, budgets and evaluation.
- There has been a significant reduction in the percentage of students requiring an individual education plan over this period, from 44% in 2015 to 21% in 2017. The percentage of students requiring an individual behaviour plan has also fallen from 8% in 2015 to 4% in 2017. The school has allocated considerable resources and support to the students at educational risk. Teachers have been supported in implementing targeted programs such as Explicit Teaching and 123 Magic to achieve these improvements. Education assistants are allocated to specific students to improve their learning. The learning outcomes of each student at educational risk is closely monitored with a deputy principal having overall responsibility. Each student's progress is formally reviewed at the end of each term. Discussions with parents confirm the effectiveness of the educational programs to cater for students at educational risk.
- Discussions with parents indicated their appreciation of the school's capacity to allocate resources to support students at educational risk.
- The school has gradually increased the number of teachers on permanent staff as compared to fixed term appointments. One teacher leaving the school has a significant impact due to the relatively small size of the school with 10.1 full-time equivalent teaching staff. Presently all three teachers in administration are in acting positions or fixed term for this year. Staff transiency is an issue for the parents.
- The school site is restricted given its location on the side of a hill. This has focused the school community to maximise the use of the existing school and community facilities. The local community has established an outdoor classroom to enable students to study sustainable practices as part of the science and sustainability programs. Students can grow their own vegetables, care for free range chickens and play in a natural bush setting. The school has access to two

local sports ovals and the football club rooms for assemblies. Parents and Citizens' Association funding supports the school camp graduation ceremony and the Athletics program.

- The significant and ongoing support from the local community will ensure the school will have adequate resources to provide a challenging and engaging learning environment for all students.

Area of strength

- The assessment and intervention program and the allocation of resources for students at educational risk.
- The combined and sustained efforts of the school staff and local community to fully utilise the restricted school site so that it enriches the learning environment for all students and enhances their educational opportunities.

Area for improvement

- Establish direct links between the student achievement targets from the business plan and the operational plans.

School Board

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

Findings

- North Fremantle Primary School draws on the professional expertise of a highly functioning school board that plays an active role in setting the strategic directions for the school business plan. The board is well established, well led and is focused on ensuring the strategic directions of the school to reflect those of the broader school community. Roles and responsibilities, terms of reference, membership and meeting procedures are well documented and implemented.
- Members have undergone induction with respect to their roles and responsibilities to assist members with their oversight of school performance and to improve their understanding of the business plan.
- The board played a significant role in the development of the current business plan as well as reviewing and endorsing annual reports.
- The board is meeting its governance obligations and its representative membership consisting of parents, community members and staff. The board has engaged in self-review by conducting, and analysing a school board effectiveness survey to improve its own procedures.
- Discussion with board members together with the board minutes demonstrated that the school provides comprehensive student performance information such as NAPLAN results as well as attendance data for monitoring the achievement of targets in the business plan. Members have purposely engaged with student performance information, survey results, policy development, monitoring of the business plan, facilities and resourcing.
- The board has also been actively involved with workforce planning, staff recruitment and the development, endorsement and review of the school budget.
- While the board conducts an annual open meeting, these are poorly attended and have limited value in providing feedback for board operations. However, members of the school community are encouraged to attend any board meeting at any time.

Areas of strength

- The collaboration between board members and the school staff in analysing student performance against the business plan targets is a feature of board operations at the school.
- The biannual news brochure (winter and summer) distributed to the local community and developed by the board highlights the quality educational outcomes at the school.

Conclusion

North Fremantle Primary School has made significant progress in the recent years as evidenced in the substantial increase in student enrolment. The challenges presented by the small site have successfully been used to galvanise the school and the local community to work together to provide a rich and engaging learning environment.

The staff collaborate to provide a curriculum that meets the diverse needs of all the students. Teachers adjust the curriculum to better meet the needs of the students and to target those students at educational risk.

The reporting and assessment program enables staff to monitor student progress, plan for improving student outcomes and report the effectiveness of the teaching and learning programs to the community.

Teachers confirm student learning outcomes are improving based on evidence from standardised tests and teacher assessments. Gaps in student learning are identified followed by remediation programs.

Parents confirmed their satisfaction with the quality of education provided by the school and the safe learning environment for their children. The parents are advocates for the school and take all opportunities to support the school.

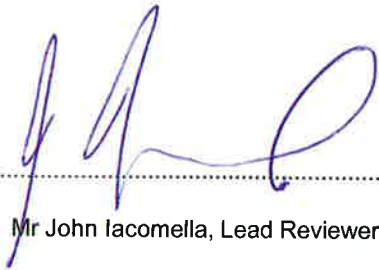
Students confirmed their satisfaction with the educational program at the school, the readiness of staff to assist their learning and the safe environment.

Reviewers verify the school's self-review findings and the extent to which the curriculum engages, promotes and supports learning for all students.

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 Fremantle 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 John Iacomella, Lead Reviewer

22 June 2017


Date



Mr Alby Huts, Reviewer

29 June 2017

Date



Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,
Department of Education Services

30/6/17

Date