



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

Currambine Primary School

2016

Independent Review Findings



Independent Review of
Independent Public Schools

Disclaimer

This document reports the findings of the Department of Education Services' review and verification of the school's self-review. The school's self-review has been complemented by information provided by the Department of Education and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

The findings of the independent review are forwarded to the School Principal, the Board Chair, the Director General of the Department of Education and the Minister for Education.

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Mr Geoff Smith
Board Chair:	Mr Daniel Devellerez
School Location:	28 Ambassador Drive, Currambine WA 6028
Number of Students:	844 (at the time of the review)
Reviewers:	Mr Bill Gibson (Lead) and Ms Aileen Jones
Review Dates:	15 and 16 August 2016
Initial Review:	2013

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the independent review is to provide assurance to the school and its community, the Director General of the Department of Education and the Minister for Education on the extent to which the school has met its commitments as outlined in its Delivery and Performance Agreement (DPA) and associated Business Plan.

The focus of the review is on:

- how well the school has implemented self-review
- how well the school has improved student learning (achievement, progress and engagement) for all students
- how well the school has created an environment that promotes learning and student well-being
- how well the school is placed to sustain and improve its performance.

Review Methodology

The school has been required, under the DPA, to undertake annual self-assessments of its performance. The outcome of these assessments formed the basis for the school's self-review. The school sent its self-review documentation to the IPS Review Team, Department of Education Services one month prior to the commencement of the review.

The IPS reviewers supplemented the information provided by the school 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 School Performance Monitoring System
- Schools Online reports.

Reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school's self-review documentation to verify achievement and developed lines of inquiry where further verification was required.

An agenda for the review visit was subsequently negotiated with the Principal to enable the gathering of evidence to verify claims made by the school. During the review visit the reviewers sourced evidence to support the school's self-review claims through observation and discussion with leaders, teaching and support staff, board members, parents and students.

The evidence provided by the school, along with information gathered by the reviewers prior to and during the review visits, was used as the basis for the verification of how well the school has met its commitments as outlined in the DPA and Business Plan.

This document reports on the findings of the independent review.

School Context

What are the important features of this school's context that have an impact on student learning?

Currambine Primary School was established in the City of Joondalup, 27 km north of Perth in 1997 and became an Independent Public School (IPS) in 2011.

Air-conditioned facilities including purpose-built specialist teaching areas, library and enclosed undercover area provide a rich learning environment. Guided by a collaboratively developed master plan, the leadership and Board monitor and resource maintenance and improvements.

The Index of Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) of 1055 and socio-economic distribution of 61% of students in the top two quartiles was confirmed by the Principal and the Board Chair as accurately reflecting the diverse student population.

The current enrolment of 844 Kindergarten to Year 6 students includes 53% male and 47% female students. Due to an open enrolment policy and positive reputation, a significant 55% of students attend from outside the suburb of Currambine. Approximately 34% of students are from migrant families; predominantly from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand.

The diverse enrolment includes 0.5% Aboriginal students, 16% of students for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D), two students under the care of the Department of Child Protection and Family Services and 2.2% (18 students) receiving Disability Resourcing support.

The staffing profile includes a Principal and three associates in leadership positions, 47 (39.0 Full Time Equivalent [FTE]) teachers and 31 (21.9 FTE) non-teaching staff. The allocation includes seven (6.4 FTE) Level 3 Teachers and 15 Senior Teachers. Stability is noteworthy with teaching staff working at the school an average of 10.2 years and education assistants an average of 11.2 years.

The Workforce Action Plan (2016–2019) identifies staffing profiles, leave liability and employment flexibility as impacting on the continued delivery of a quality education program. Staffing flexibility is assisting to sustain essential

programs and enhance learning with appointed staff committed to the vision and culture of the school.

Specialist programs are offered in the arts (visual art and music) and physical education, while French is delivered to students, beginning in pre-primary. Visiting instrumental specialists, funded by the School of Instrumental Music, extend the music program for identified students while other selected students attend Primary Extension and Challenge sessions.

The Board has provided stable governance for the duration of the DPA. Currently, six parents, including the Board Chair and one community representative, work with the Principal and three staff representatives to fulfil obligations outlined in the DPA.

A collaborative leadership team, stable staff, informed Board, supportive community and a culture established over 20 years are combining to underpin the school's response to a range of identified contextual factors.

The School's Self-Review Process

How effective was the school's self-review in accounting for its performance during the period of the DPA and Business Plan?

Collaborative whole-school, year level and individual class teacher reviews are conducted on a wide range of data. The comprehensive process includes a detailed analysis of evidence and a summation of progress in three areas: Successful Students and Effective Teachers; Health and Well-being; and Learning Environment.

Targets for improvement are regularly monitored with progress reported at board meetings and to the community in annual reports. The *Response to Business Plan* document summarised progress against academic and non-academic targets in the three areas and detailed comparisons against Australian schools, like schools, Western Australian public schools and ACER PAT norms.

A documented review cycle outlined in the *Management Information System 2015–2016* ensures a consistent collaborative assessment process. The cycle guides assessment in all learning areas and provides evidence the staff monitors all aspects of the curriculum.

Reviewers commend the consistency evident in the Business Plan, Annual Report and internal operational statements. The Board endorsed 2015 Annual Report is indicative of the alignment. The report provides a comprehensive account of performance in all focus areas and outlines recommendations for improvement.

Modifications to operational plans demonstrate an appropriate response to the outcomes of self-assessment.

The commitment to ongoing self-review of a significant set of academic and non-academic data to inform teaching and learning adjustments is commended.

School Performance—Student Learning

How well has the school performed in improving learning (achievement, progress and engagement) for all students?

The *Business Plan 2014–2016* described a first wave improvement agenda based on analysis of 2011–2013 data, consideration of the Department of Education Services' review (2013) and strategic and pedagogical aspirations. The academic focus on 'Successful Students and Effective Teachers' includes 10 targets related to achievement in English, mathematics, science and humanities.

Meetings with the leadership team and key committees, together with information provided by the Department of Education School Performance Monitoring System (SPMS) and ACARA *My School*, enabled the verification of the *Self-Review against the Business Plan Targets 2014–2016* document. The analysis confirms self-review findings that, with 2016 NAPLAN data yet to be analysed, most academic targets have yet to be fully achieved. The humanities target could not be evaluated due to the discontinuance of Western Australian Monitoring Standards in Education (WAMSE) testing.

Literacy

Reading

Target 1: *Years 3, 5 and 7 will perform at or above the Australian Average for Reading by 2016.*

While this target has not yet been met, the steady improvement achieved in Year 5 is encouraging. The Year 7 cohort achieved the target in 2014.

Target 2: *Increase the percentage of Year 3, 5 and 7 students in the top 20% of the NAPLAN Reading.*

Based on the SPMS Percentage of Students Distribution tables, this target has been met.

Writing

Target 3: *Year 3, 5 and 7 students will perform at or above 'like schools' for writing by 2016.*

SPMS Longitudinal Summary tables verify this target has not yet been met by Year 5, with 2016 data to come, but achieved by Year 3 in both 2014 and 2015.

The Principal highlighted encouraging Year 5 improvement as reflected by the SPMS Comparative Performance Summary table which indicates improvement from -0.7 in 2014 to 0.0 in 2015.

Target 4: Increase the percentage of Year 3 students in the top 20% of NAPLAN writing.

Commendably, there has been a significant shift of students located in the top 20% from 8% in 2013, to 31% in 2014, and 32% in 2015. This target has been met.

Spelling

Target 5: Year 3, 5 and 7 will perform at or above 'like schools' for spelling by 2016.

While discussions with the leadership team determined there is an encouraging upward trend within the Year 3 cohort, based on SPMS longitudinal summary of averages, this target is yet to be achieved with 2016 performance still to be considered.

Language Conventions (Grammar and Punctuation)

Target 6: Year 3, 5 and 7 students will perform at or above 'like schools' for language conventions (grammar and punctuation) by 2016.

This target has not been achieved, with 2016 data to come.

Numeracy

Target 7: Year 3 students to perform at or above the Western Australian Average for numeracy by 2016.

Year 3 performance remained below targeted Western Australian Public School average in 2014 and 2015. While some improvement is noted, numeracy continues to be a concern with programs to improve learning currently being formulated.

Target 8: *Year 5 and 7 students to perform at or above the Australian average by 2016.*

While the Year 5 performance in 2015 showed encouraging improvement, the target has not been achieved, with 2016 data to be analysed.

Science

Target 9: *Increase the percentage of students in the top 23% on the ACER PAT Science test for Years 2, 4 and 6.*

Testing of Year 4 and 6 students in 2014 resulted in performance comparative with the top 23% of the normed distribution. In 2015, 24% achieved in the top 23% of the distribution. While early results are encouraging, an upward trend is not yet evident.

Humanities and Social Sciences (Society and Environment)

Target 10: *Increase the percentage of students in the top 20% of the distribution for Year 5 and 7 in the WAMSE Society and Environment Assessment.*

As WAMSE data is no longer available to facilitate comparisons, progress against the target was not possible to determine. However, the curriculum committee, while currently exploring assessment options, continues to use teacher judgements to inform planning and track student progress in this area. SPMS data indicates humanities and social sciences judgements are 'within the expected range' moving from -0.24 in 2014 to -0.12 standard deviations from the expected grade allocation in 2015.

While the SPMS performance overview indicates NAPLAN achievement in the current DPA is 'within the expected performance range but with elements of concern', a promising upward trend in all Year 3 NAPLAN domains is evident with writing showing considerable improvement to be consistent with like schools. An upward trend in spelling, grammar and punctuation, and mathematics, though still below like schools, is also encouraging. The Year 5 overall relative achievement as recorded by SPMS indicates improvement from -0.98 in 2014 to -0.36 in 2015.

Students receiving Disability Resourcing, identified EAL/D students and those below national minimum standards are among the two hundred students on individual case management plans. Intervention programs developed by

classroom teachers in consultation with an associate principal and the parent/carer, provide short-term targeted point-of-need teaching and learning adjustments. A tracking system ensures ongoing management of the considerable number of plans.

A range of intervention programs for identified students operate across the school including *Mini-Lit* for Year 1 students, *Reading Mastery* for Year 2 and 3 students, *Multi-Lit* for Year 4 and 6 and *Direct Instruction Mathematics* for students in Years 3, 4 and 5.

Management of the significant sub-group of EAL/D students includes on-enrolment screening followed by, if appropriate, an in-class assessment to determine if referral to an Intensive English Centre is required. If a referral is not required, staff complete progress maps and consider an in-class teaching and learning adjustment.

The Principal indicated an intention to review the case management approach as it is his belief an individual student case management load of this magnitude might be counterproductive. Currently, associate principals are consulting with staff to review the efficacy of this approach.

Although some academic targets are yet to be achieved, the integrated and cohesive first wave approach to implementation of curriculum pedagogy and assessment practices is evident. The Principal is confident continuing pedagogical development in the next DPA will lead to achievement comparable with like and statistically similar schools.

School Performance—Quality of the Learning Environment

How well has the school performed in creating an environment that promotes learning and wellbeing for all students and the attainment of the school vision?

A strong sense of community and commitment is embedded in the school and reflected in the positive National Opinion Survey results.

The vision to ‘grow each child’s academic knowledge and skills, leadership capacity, sense of well-being and intrapersonal skills in an inclusive, engaging, diverse and positive learning environment’ was clearly evident during discussions with parents and students, and visible in and out of classrooms.

A focus on health, well-being and the learning environment is included in the plan, with one target set to ensure a continuing commitment to ‘the reduction of incidence of social bullying’.

The leadership team regularly monitors student surveys and has determined the rate of moderate and severe social bullying declined from 2013 to 2016 with moderate social bullying remaining the most common form of bullying reported by students. While the target has been achieved, parental and staff concern for the increase in levels of cyber-bullying has been identified as a focus for the future.

Established programs including *Aussie Optimism*, *The Leader in Me*, *I Do It*, *Friendly Schools PLUS*, *Bounce Back*, *Protective Behaviours*, *Drumbeat* and the highly regarded twice weekly chaplaincy service, continue to support the emotional needs of the students within a positive and supportive learning environment.

The attendance target ‘to increase the percentage of students achieving regular attendance from 87% to 91%’ has not been achieved with SPMS data confirming regular attendance in 2015 was 84.7%, some 1% lower than in 2013, and well below the targeted 91%. Although the target remains unachieved, the overall attendance rate (94.5%) in 2015 is above both like schools (93.8%) and Western Australian public schools (92.7%). At risk categories continue to decline with all comparing favourably with Western Australian public schools.

Irregular attendance remains a focus with strategies including case management intervention and acknowledgement for full-time attendance being utilised.

The leadership team indicated the learning environment target to 'increase the average rating score on the Survey of Teaching Strategies from the Business Plan for 3.38 to 3.50 or above' has been achieved with staff reporting very high levels of engagement with and implementation of strategies identified in the plan.

Reviewers observed a curriculum characterised by broad and inclusive programs of learning that contribute and add value to students' cognitive, social and emotional learning and well-being. The focus on the whole child through a range of skills programs, a comprehensive suite of academic strategies including co-operative learning and small group interventions cater for the diverse student population.

Continuing development of a consistent integrated approach to the delivery of the curriculum, planning processes, key pedagogies and assessment practices, in English and mathematics has been supported by actively engaged teaching committees in literacy and numeracy and the year-level professional learning committees (PLCs). Strong curriculum leadership, evident during the review, fosters collaborative practices among teachers and is providing appropriate strategies including literacy and numeracy blocks to engage and improve student learning. The development of planning and assessment documents including scope and sequence statements, targeted professional learning, performance management and classroom observation together with the introduction of English and mathematics coaches, is supporting a systematic approach to the improvement agenda.

To further enhance student transition between learning phases, it is recommended the emerging PLCs work closely with curriculum committees to embed alignment of all whole-school and learning-phase programs and strategies.

In response to the 2013 Department of Education Services' findings, there has been a strong focus on the implementation of the Western Australian Curriculum. Planning processes and assessment practices have been developed in science, humanities and social sciences and health and physical education. Professional learning in science and health has been embraced and there is developing confidence in peer coaching. Competent

deconstruction of the new physical education curriculum, as well as French classes utilising the *Accelerated Integrated Method*, has allowed specialist teachers to reflect and adjust their practices to ensure improved learning outcomes.

Discussions with board and parent representatives highlight widespread satisfaction with the school, although both staff and parent groups identify communication as requiring continued focus. Parents report varying levels of engagement with the website, *CONNECT*, eNews and the school 'app' digital communication links. The regular *Currambine Chronicle* newsletter is highly regarded. The commitment of the Principal and Board Chair to continue to monitor the effectiveness of communication strategies is affirmed.

Board oversight of parent, student and staff surveys gives confidence that views are being considered and acted upon. The response to feedback was exemplified when *Digital Learning* was identified as an area for improvement. Robust conversations as to what and how technologies and digital instruction were to be implemented, are occurring. The aim to develop 'really good teachers that can use technology' not 'really good technology teachers' has been the driver in the technologies learning areas with a focus on digital learning. Teachers use e-boards, integrated tablet learning programs in the early years and notebook computers from year four. A coaching model used successfully in the tablet program ensures teaching programs have a rich digital flavour.

Connections with the City of Joondalup, Edith Cowan University, North Metropolitan TAFE and professional affiliations with West Coast Language Development Centre, the Joondalup Learning Community and other external agencies support teaching and learning. The school community benefits from the support of a committed Parent and Citizens' (P&C) Association that oversees the management of the daily canteen and uniform store.

Meetings with parents and members of the Board verified the community holds the school in high regard. Parents were very positive and expressed their appreciation of the Principal and staff and affirmed the provision of an environment where students were supported, safe and included.

School Performance—Sustainability

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance into the next planning cycle?

An embedded cyclic review of academic and non-academic performance continues to guide the improvement agenda. The robust process includes the leadership team, whole staff, focus committees, professional learning communities, Board and classroom teachers reviewing performance data. Committee meeting minutes and annual reports verified the staff regularly reviews progress against targets and strategies.

Informed parent and community representatives enhance Board oversight of school improvement. Minutes, the School Board Operational Plan/Reporting Schedule 2016 and a meeting, evidenced board governance.

Under the highly regarded leadership of a parent representative as Board Chair, the commendably dynamic Board continues to make a valuable contribution through insightful analysis of student achievement and survey feedback, policy development and ratification of the Business Plan, budgets and annual reports. The introduction of annual School Board Awards to acknowledge and celebrate the quality and contributions of staff, shows the Board's commitment to enhance community awareness of its role. Post assembly 'meet and greet' morning teas together with an open night hosted by the Board have also elevated the community profile of board members.

The commendable collaboration between the Board Chair and Principal, the focus on member induction, training and the cyclic tenured membership for elected positions will provide assurance it remains strong, strategic and decisive in its governance role.

Meetings with staff, parents and the Board members acknowledged the role of the leadership team in managing change and guiding improvement. To support continuous and sustainable improvement, the Principal has implemented a distributed leadership structure to empower staff to engage with the accountabilities outlined in the DPA.

Performance management and professional learning continues to enhance the capacity to deliver contextually appropriate teaching and learning for all students. In the pursuit of professional excellence, teachers reflect and are

observed against the *Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. Non-teaching staff participate in structured performance management using specific job descriptors to guide conversations.

The 2013 Independent Review recommended, '*that the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and pedagogical practices across the whole school are closely monitored to ensure shared understandings of the curriculum and consistent, comprehensive embedding of practices and high expectations*'. In response, the leadership team is confident the emergence of professional learning communities to support year-level collaboration in planning, assessment and pedagogical practice, together with the developing culture of coaching to build teacher capacity and ensure strategies and programs are consistently delivered, will enhance teaching and learning.

The Principal, marketing coordinator and business manager all indicated that, with stable enrolment, the ongoing support of the P&C, and a continuing level of parent voluntary contributions, the school is well-positioned to sustain key initiatives.

The school is well-placed to sustain and improve performance. Teachers and leaders are involved in data-driven review of teaching practices and learning outcomes. The Board is actively engaged in providing oversight of strategic planning, monitoring and review processes. The leadership team and Board are committed to targeting high academic and non-academic expectations for all students in the next Business Plan. Targets, they indicated, will increasingly focus on like school comparisons.

Conclusion

Currambine Primary School has embedded a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment for its diverse student population.

A committed leadership team, engaged and supportive staff and proactive Board work collaboratively to guide teaching and learning for all students.

Although many academic targets have not yet been met, achievement is generally within expected performance range. The leadership team and curriculum committees expect sound progress against remaining targets by the conclusion of the current DPA and are confident strategies currently being implemented should provide sustained improvement in student outcomes.

The parent body expressed confidence in the leadership team, staff and the Board and remain enthusiastic supporters of the school.

Commendations

The following areas are commended:

- the consistency evident in the Business Plan, Annual Report and internal operational statements
- the commitment to ongoing self-review of a significant set of academic and non-academic data to inform teaching and learning adjustments
- the significant increase in Year 3 students achieving in the top 20% of NAPLAN writing from 8% in 2013, to 31% in 2014, and 32% in 2015
- the collaboration between the Board Chair and Principal providing assurance that governance is strong, strategic and decisive
- the Board makes a valuable contribution through analysis of student achievement data and survey feedback, policy development and ratification of the Business Plan, budgets and annual reports.

Areas for Improvement

The following area for improvement is identified:

- To further enhance student transition between learning phases and year levels, it is recommended the emerging professional learning communities work closely with curriculum committees to embed alignment of all whole-school and learning-phase programs and strategies.

Declaration

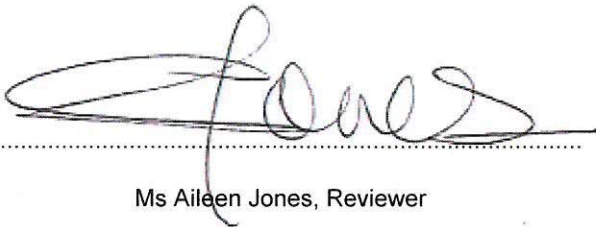
We, the undersigned, hereby confirm that the information provided in this findings document is to the best of our knowledge true and correct and is based on the verification of the evidence provided by Currambine Primary School as part of the Department of Education Services' independent review process. The Principal and Board Chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Mr Bill Gibson, Lead Reviewer

14 September 2016

Date



Ms Aileen Jones, Reviewer

14 September 2016

Date



Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,
Department of Education Services

28/9/16

Date

