



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

Success Primary School

2017

Review Findings



Independent Review of
Independent Public Schools

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Ms Sue Knight
Board Chair:	Mr Sam Nunn
School Address:	390 Wentworth Parade, Success WA 6164
Number of Students:	669
ICSEA¹	1046 (3)
Reviewers:	Ms Margaret Banks (Lead) Mr Greg Clune Ms Kathy Ritchie
Review Dates:	26 and 27 June 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 several 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 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)?

Success Primary School commenced in 2009 and has been an IPS since 2015. Enrolments are steady at around 670. The school's ICSEA places it in the top 30% of schools with 60% of the school's families being in the top two quartiles of the ICSEA scale and 13% in the bottom quartile. The student population comprises students from diverse national and cultural backgrounds and with a range of socio-emotional and academic needs. English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) enrolments are high (27%). Aboriginal enrolment is low (less than 1%). Up to 80 education support students with a diagnosed disability are enrolled in a specialist centre within the school. These students are an integral part of the school community through the school's commitment to inclusivity and integration. The school places an emphasis on raising standards in all learning areas with a focus on positive, respectful and quality relationships. The quality of these relationships is a strength of the school which was confirmed by the reviewers through observation and discussion with staff, students and parents.

The school has experienced leadership instability with five principals in eight years. The current principal and most of the leadership team have nevertheless provided stability since 2015.

Findings

- The Success Primary School Business Plan 2015–2017 has not been effective in providing a framework for school improvement. The business plan has not been used as intended. However, operational plans were developed to provide a schema for strategic planning and define specific student improvement targets and strategies to guide teaching and learning. The operational plans were then used in place of the business plan.
- The reviewers were not provided with evidence to demonstrate there had been a review of the extent to which the commitments of the DPA and the targets of the business plan had been met. At the commencement of 2017, using a range of data from 2015 and 2016, a comprehensive, thorough and transparent internal review of operational plan target achievement was completed by the principal, the senior leadership team and staff. The review findings were presented to the board. This review demonstrates the school is meeting its DPA responsibilities relating to the business plan.

- Given the significant number of education support students (12%) and that one of the school's core values relates to inclusivity and diversity, it was expected the business plan would reference this group of students in highly visible ways. A focus on improvements through strategies and milestones did not adequately recognise this unique feature and opportunities afforded with the inclusion of these students into the school. It is recognised that measurable targets for the diverse needs of the group are difficult to include; however, development of targets in the next business plan is expected.
- Through the school visit, reviewers could confirm there is interrogation of data to inform annual operational plans.
- The business plan is available to the school community via the school website.

Areas of strength

- Focused leadership with continued commitment to improvement.
- An embedded practice of distributed leadership.
- Annual operational plans.

Areas for improvement

- Develop a business plan which defines targets in terms of specific student learning outcomes.
- Establish systematic self-assessment schedule to review progress in meeting the targets of the business plan.
- Develop operational plans linked directly to implementation of the business plan.
- Incorporate education support student targets in the business plan.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- The 2015–2017 Business Plan identified targets in literacy and numeracy, the provision of a safe and supportive environment, high quality teaching and leadership and development of partnerships. Academic improvement targets were set for each National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) area. Non-academic targets were set to increase student self-management, the provision of pastoral care, attendance standards, satisfaction levels, the development of performance management and distributive leadership processes and the establishment of partnerships and supportive networks. The targets demonstrated commitment to providing an environment of high expectations and quality individual student support including for those with learning adjustments.
- Individual education programs (IEPs) are used to identify targets tailored for each student with special needs. Each IEP is developed in partnership with parents, therapists, teachers and others supporting the student's learning program. The use of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited targets, linked to performance descriptors for education support, form the basis for monitoring learning progression and demonstrating improvement for the individual student.
- While specific review data was not provided to demonstrate discrete analysis of the achievement of the business plan targets, observation, conversation with staff, students and parents and analysis of annual reports provided insight into the extent of their achievement.
- The 2016 Annual Report and Schools Online data shows the degree of achievement of academic targets. The annual report shows the first NAPLAN target, *for students in Years 3 and 5 to equal or exceed like school comparison in each of the NAPLAN areas*, was achieved in writing and spelling but not in grammar and punctuation, reading and numeracy. NAPLAN data indicates performance is, generally, comparable to like-schools except for Year 3 reading and Year 5 numeracy where the trends are downward. The NAPLAN data shows variability from 2014 to 2016.
- The second NAPLAN target, *to reduce the number of students below the benchmark in all areas of the NAPLAN test areas* reveals contrasting outcomes in Year 3 and Year 5. There were positive trends in writing (Year 3), grammar

and punctuation (Year 3), spelling (Year 3 and Year 5) and numeracy (Year 3 and Year 5). Negative trends (2014–2016) were evident for writing (Year 5), grammar and punctuation (Year 5), reading (Year 3 and Year 5).

- The third NAPLAN target, *to increase the percentage of students achieving NAPLAN scores in the top proficiency band*, was not achieved except for grammar and punctuation (Year 3), spelling (Year 3) and reading (Year 5).
- The target *to maintain attendance to be equal to or above like schools and ... better than Western Australian public schools* was not met in 2016 for like-schools but was met for public schools. Specific operational plan attendance targets were set for 2017 to *decrease the number of unauthorised absences to below 30%* and to *increase the number of students with regular attendance to 95%*.
- Data for the target *to continue to improve student/parent/staff satisfaction levels and school survey results show student/staff/parent satisfaction achieves 80% or more* indicates good levels of satisfaction across the groups. This was validated by conversation with parents, students and staff who have very high satisfaction levels with the school.
- Other stated targets were more akin to strategies. However, the reviewers could validate *productive partnerships* have been established. Examples include the Cockburn Community Education Network (CCEN), preservice tertiary institutions and Camp Australia. *Community use of our school facilities* occurs through use of the hydrotherapy swimming pool while *student self-management and independence in Literacy and Numeracy learning* is observed through individual student goal setting. Staff report *performance management systems to support staff growth* have been implemented. Conversations with staff indicate the intent to *foster a distributed leadership model across the school* has been successful and is an embedded practice and feature of the school.
- NAPLAN data is supplemented by diagnostic and standardised assessments, which include On-entry testing and PM Benchmark reading, to inform operational and teacher planning. Each year group has common duties other than teaching (DOTT) time which enables teachers to engage in collaborative planning, resource sharing and moderation.
- The reviewers are confident relevant data and research informs pedagogy.
- Education support staff, including education assistants, are included in whole-school professional learning such as Pathways to Spelling Success. Programs and resources, evidenced in classrooms, such as Oxford Word Lists, are research based and consistently used, including in education support classes.

- Discussion with the leadership team and teachers, together with documented evidence provided before and during the school visit, confirmed a very strong commitment to evidence-based and collaborative decision-making to promote improved student outcomes. Data is sought and used to inform differentiated learning, in response to individual student needs, which is reflected in individual education plans. The progress of each student is identified and tracked throughout the year. The progress of all students is visible on data walls and in whole-school tracking spreadsheets. Additional support is provided to all students identified to be at educational risk. The information on individual student achievement is provided to the following year's teachers to enhance and facilitate transition. Teachers, through observation and discussion, demonstrated high levels of commitment to their students and to the school.
- The significant education support dimension of the school was not a focus of the business plan. Self-review by the education support staff indicated targets were set for student behaviour in terms of '*reducing the severity of anxious type behaviours, explicitly teach and immerse (non-verbal) students in language to encourage communication, developing profiles and assist with transition, implement the Four Blocks of Literacy focus, trialling Augmented Communication and implementation of the Abilities Based Learning Education, Western Australia (ABLEWA) curriculum in 2017.*' The assessment undertaken by education support staff is that all targets were met.
- The reviewers concluded there is rigorous and systematic analysis of performance in terms of improvement targets.
- Teachers and support staff demonstrated commitment to the school priority of distributed leadership by undertaking proactive roles in school-wide initiatives and committees.
- Analysis of NAPLAN data and comparisons with teacher grade allocations has been identified as an area for concern that is the NAPLAN expected grade distributions are not consistent with teacher judgement. Additional professional learning and moderation have been identified as possible solutions to ensure accurate, reliable and consistent teacher judgement.
- The school has excelled in the implementation of the National Quality Standard (NQS) for early childhood education and care. This was recognised when the school was awarded Lead School status for the NQS.
- To embed the NQS, the school has used the standard across the school. This underpins pastoral care, health and safety and partnerships with families and is reflected in the approach to behaviour management with the core expectations

being: strive for success, take responsibility, always inclusive, respectful and stay safe (STARS). The importance and understanding of this initiative was confirmed in meetings with parents, students and staff.

- All staff take part in structured performance management procedures which involve self-reflection of their individual performance with their line manager and peer observation/coaching. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers is used to identify areas for improvement and professional learning. The performance management process has evolved in recent years but is now formal and accepted by staff as a positive aspect of their professional growth.
- The embedded practices, with the capacity of staff to maintain commitment to the improvement agenda, gives confidence the school can sustain its review and improvement processes.

Areas of strength

- Classroom level monitoring of student achievement.
- Analysis of NAPLAN data.
- The successful implementation and lead role in the NQS.
- The use of the NQS across the school as a structured framework for improvement.
- The provision of common DOTT time for all year groups.

Areas for improvement

- Align teacher judgements with NAPLAN results.
- Provide additional focus to addressing those areas identified through the analysis of NAPLAN results.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- The targets and priorities of the business plan were not assessed or reviewed. The school advised the changes to leadership had meant the business plan was neither owned by staff nor helpful in taking the school forward on its improvement pathway.
- The leadership team has worked extensively to analyse school data and in consultation with the teacher teams and committees, devised the operational plans with specific targets for years and learning areas. These have been implemented across the school.
- The operational plans describe clear, fine-grain targets and monitoring processes for each year group and learning area. Had these plans and monitoring been linked directly to the business plan they would have demonstrated how the priorities and student improvement targets were met.
- Reviewers verify that widespread review processes are used across the school. Data is collected and used to inform student improvement strategies within classes and year groups.
- Teacher interviews, viewing of data walls, check lists and records verified teachers use the operational plans for daily planning and systematic tracking of the progress of each student against these targets.
- Monitoring includes a variety of tools and practices, for example, Letter and Sounds Tracking, PM Benchmark Reading Assessment Resources, Fountas and Pinnell benchmarks and running records and EAL/D Progress Maps.
- School Curriculum and Standards Authority common assessment tasks and the CCEN network groups are used for moderation of assessments.
- Data is collected throughout the year from NAPLAN, Pre-primary On-entry assessment, Student Information System, performance descriptors for education support and teacher judgements.
- The National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) was used to reflect on processes and strategies for improving teaching and learning and the NQS applied across

the school and analysed to identify areas for improvement and not simply for early childhood. Both the NSIT and NQS instruments provided rigorous self-assessment frameworks for the school to plan for and implement improvement strategies.

- Annual reports for 2015 and 2016 provide detailed information on a wide scope of school activities for that year. NAPLAN data for the school compared with like-schools and Western Australian public schools was included providing parents and community with information on the students' progress in Year 3 and Year 5 literacy and numeracy. Information on parent, staff and student surveys was included. Other priority areas and targets of the business plan were also not addressed. Summaries and photographs of activities from learning areas provided details of the school's programs. The reports included aspirations, refreshed targets and strategies for the following year.
- The school has embedded robust processes for monitoring student performance across the school. Data is recorded systematically, displayed, shared and discussed and used by teams of teachers to inform pedagogy.
- The learning area committees and teacher teams provide a structure for developing and continuing the current practices related to monitoring the performance of students.
- The principal, associate principal and deputy principals work collaboratively and have shown effective leadership for detailed analysis of data, the findings of which are shared with teachers to inform their plans, strategies and expectations.

Area of strength

- The systematic collection and sharing of data.

Area for improvement

- Link review processes explicitly with the business plan and demonstrate whole-school improvement against the business plan specific targets.

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- The Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline is fully implemented in accord with the implementation timeline.
- The safety and welfare of students is central to the school's endeavour. There is a keen sense of pastoral care throughout. Student welfare is provided through the leadership team, a chaplain, nurse and psychologist with access to external services as necessary. The STARS behaviour expectations ensure a supportive school environment is sustained through a positive reinforcement approach to behaviour management and relationships. Students reported the school offers a caring and safe environment in which they feel valued and their academic learning goals can be achieved.
- Student wellbeing issues have been identified to provide focus for the school's pastoral providers and programs. Through consensus of staff and parents, anxiety, trauma, self-esteem and self-image, social support, integration and connection of EAL/D families and grief and loss were identified as issues to be addressed.
- Through the distributive leadership process, staff work collaboratively to identify learning needs and suitable strategies and programs. Staff leadership teams have been established across the school to address learning outcomes and develop a culture of school-wide reflective practice. Teams include English, mathematics, EAL/D, oral language and reading.
- For all students, including education support students, a systematic approach ensures continuity, effective transition and communication of needs through structured documentation for each student's progress. This includes a detailed profile, IEP, assessments, records, strategies and work samples. The combination of a strong team approach, commitment of teachers and well-trained education support assistants provides quality programs for students.
- Interaction between mainstream and education support students is as frequent and routine as possible to meet learning and social needs of all students. Buddy classes, music, art, assemblies and sport are shared experiences as well as integration into other programs for individual students.

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- Reviewers observed and staff and parents confirmed the day-to-day management of school operations and the school's program delivery is of a high standard.
- Education support has well established routines aimed at maximising communication and literacy levels. Individual approaches include the use of alternate augmented communication, blocks of literacy, sensory strategies and the community access program. An on-site hydrotherapy pool is used with a full-time swimming teacher conducting programs for all students. Adjustments to school infrastructure, procedures and practices have created and embedded an inclusive and sustainable model of schooling for education support students.
- A key factor in the sustainability of the school's enterprise is the effective practice of distributed leadership through staff teams tasked to focus on priority areas for improvement and promote a coordinated delivery of teaching and learning programs. Established effective performance management procedures are linked to school priorities to reinforce the school's improvement agenda. Established networks, such as the CCEN, supplement the professional learning and monitoring capacity of staff and are likely to continue to add to the school's repertoire of professional skills.

Area of strength

- Staff passion and commitment to provide opportunities to maximise student learning.

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's leadership team comprises the principal, associate principal, three deputy principals and the manager corporate services. Each has specific leadership and support responsibilities ensuring efficiencies and effectiveness in school management. Collaboration between members of this team was evident to reviewers throughout the review visit. The organisational structure of the school supports involvement of teachers in leading teams and committees.
- When established, the school was a new model of 'two schools in one' which has required several financial adjustments to the school's funding over the past few years. The school reported budgetary challenges during the previous year necessitating designated leaders and teacher specialists to take on teaching roles thus limiting their capacity to lead in curriculum and administrative areas. It was reported the school's funding for 2017 has been increased thereby enabling more effective responses to student's needs and the reallocation of time for teacher specialists to provide instructional support for classroom teachers.
- From interviews with staff, parents and students, it was evident the school's resources are used to deliver quality education programs and appropriate teaching and learning adjustments are made to meet the needs of all students.
- Investment has been made in enhancing teacher skills and confidence and improving learning outcomes through upgrading technology equipment through leasing and purchase and providing information and communications technology (ICT) support services. An ICT specialist teacher has provided a focus for implementation of a structured approach to developing teacher and student capability with ICT.
- The school infrastructure and grounds are of a high standard including the hydrotherapy pool, sensory room, specialist playground for students with disability, nature play area, ICT laboratory, music and art rooms, class gardens, gymnasium and sports fields.
- Established as a separate specialist facility for students with a disability, the education support area has now been 'opened up' and become an integrated area of the whole school along with classrooms for education support students being integrated into the general teaching blocks. While the needs of all students

are maintained, these modifications to the use of facilities has further encouraged inclusive practices across the school.

- The workforce includes 45 (30.6 full-time equivalent [FTE]) teachers in classrooms, five (5.0 FTE) specialist teachers for music, visual arts, ICT, physical education and swimming for students with disabilities, three (2.0 FTE) teacher curriculum leaders and 64 (43.1) education support and early childhood assistants.
- The focus of NQS has ensured resources have been appropriately targeted to early childhood especially through the emphasis on literacy and numeracy support.
- Workforce requirements have been adjusted according to the funding model applied to the school. With stable funding to meet the needs of the large group of students with disabilities, the school is now able to sustain the current staffing and programs. The school reported its workforce planning was ongoing and a gap analysis had been undertaken which demonstrated uncertainties including the temporary status of the principal. A strategic workforce plan has not been developed.
- A strong partnership with parents and a contingent of volunteers has delivered benefits to individual students and to the whole school and includes literacy support, Parents and Citizens' Association activities and events and communication between parents and teachers. The school supports its staff to play active roles in the CCEN by providing professional learning opportunities and exposure to evidenced-based practices.

Areas of strength

- Allocation of resources to ensure skilled teachers support student learning across seven learning areas. Plans are under way for the introduction of Japanese to meet the requirement for Year 3 languages other than English in 2018.
- The commitment and skills of education assistants in supporting students and teachers to maximise student learning and positive management of student behaviour.

Area for improvement

- Develop a workforce plan from the gap analysis and workforce data available through the Department of Education.

School Board

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

Findings

- The school board has made the transition into its governance role with the introduction of terms of reference and membership categories. The board chair has signed the DPA.
- The skill set of parents is broad and complemented by staff representatives. The board acts coherently and is supportive of the school and the principal. The school board shows an awareness of and commitment to, its responsibilities. The board has tried, without success, to attract community members. Only the board chair has completed board training and the board has not conducted a self-review of its performance.
- Discussions with the board and the board minutes evidence that the principal and senior staff regularly present a range of student learning and financial data. This includes NAPLAN results, attendance and student welfare initiatives which are targets in the business plan. The board minutes and discussions with the board do not demonstrate this data has been interrogated.
- The board has taken a proactive role in dealing with the difficult financial position the school experienced in 2015 and 2016 and supported the principal in her efforts for a budgetary review. The board understands the budgetary situation restricted the school's ability to implement all aspects of the school priorities and strategies in the business plan. In 2017, the school was provided with additional resources to reflect the needs of the student cohort. The board is now able to work with the school to address the school targets and priorities.
- Individual board members endorse the annual contributions and charges and the annual report by signing an endorsement sheet retained in the school. The board minutes and discussions do not indicate the business plan and school budget have been endorsed by the board.
- The board has reviewed the results of satisfaction surveys of staff, parents and students which have been published in the annual report. Discussions with parents indicate they have limited knowledge of board activities.

- Discussion with board members confirm the board is mindful of the need to enhance its profile in the school community and to extend its communication. There is also an intention for the board to review its own performance.
- Board members have the skills to effectively monitor how the school is meeting the requirements of the DPA and achievement of business plan targets. As members gain insights into their holistic role, they will be able to add value to the school's enterprise.

Areas of strength

- The board is well led, has a broad skill set and works cooperatively as a board and with the school principal and leadership team.
- The enthusiasm and willingness to contribute to the school and to work with the principal and staff to improve student achievement.

Areas for improvement

- That the board:
 - contribute to the development of annual reports, budgets and business plans and to endorse and sign these documents
 - receive and interrogate monthly financial reports
 - interrogate school data to inform itself and the school community of the progress of student achievement
 - develop a systematic process for board member induction
 - undertake a regular performance self-review
 - examine strategies for effective communication with the school community.

Conclusion

Student learning is at the core of the vision and strategies adopted by the school. Reviewers verify the processes of self-review including analysis of data and the adoption of evidence-based strategies are leading to improvements across the school. While the business plan was not used as the driver of change, operational plans have built consistency, scope and sequences and frameworks for monitoring school-wide improvements.

Placement of the education support school and a local school into a single structure has enabled the emergence of a new inclusive model of education for students with disabilities in a mainstream school in Western Australia. This model provides benefits for all students, has allowed for siblings with diverse needs to attend the same school and for inclusive practices to be fully implemented.

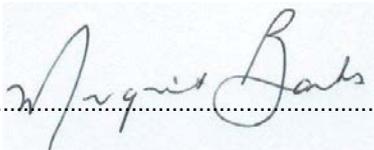
A strong culture of collaboration and partnerships between staff and parents is supporting the achievement of the school's vision.

Staff, parents and students are commended on the supportive and encouraging culture ensuring all students have the best opportunities of achieving and belonging.

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

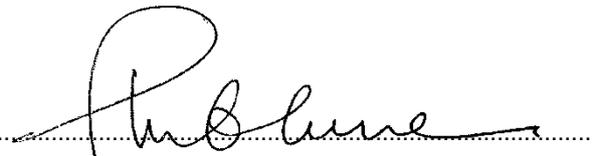
The principal and board chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Ms Margaret Banks, Lead Reviewer

3 August 2017

Date



Mr Greg Clune Reviewer

3 August 2017

Date



Ms Kathy Ritchie Reviewer

3 August 2017

Date



Mr Ken Perris, Director,
Independent Public School Review

16 August 2017

Date