



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

Queens Park Primary School

2017

Review Findings



Independent Review of
Independent Public Schools

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Ms Julie Loader
Board Chair:	Mr Mark Van Der Leeden
School Address:	202 Treasure Road, Queens Park WA 6107
Number of Students:	224
ICSEA¹	988
Reviewers:	Mr Alby Huts (Lead) Mr John Iacomella
Review Dates:	29 and 30 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 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)?

Queens Park Primary School was established in 1905 and has occupied the existing site since 1906. The February census enrolment was 224 students and the school has an ICSEA of 988. The school enrolment comprises 54% of students from an English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) background. At the meeting with reviewers six of the seven students came from different countries. There are 26 Aboriginal students currently enrolled at the school representing 12% of total enrolment.

The principal informed reviewers the school is currently exempt from offering a language other than English as part of its curriculum provision due to more than 50% of its students having a language background other than English.

The school grounds are spacious and well maintained. The facilities are extensive and a mix of traditional design around the central quadrangle with new facilities for music, art and library. Discussions with students, parents and staff confirm pride in the school's heritage and acknowledgement of the positive learning environment for all the students.

Student transiency is an issue at the school. In 2014 the transiency rate was 49%, 34% in 2015 and 27% in 2016. The relatively high student transiency rate makes it difficult for the school to develop and maintain whole-school measures of improvement in student learning.

Findings

- The school's vision is to *'empower our students to be creative, positive and independent people, who strive to academic excellence and are committed to value our society and environment'*. The business plan details the four values that drive the educational program: *'Resilience, Respect/Tolerance, Honesty and Independence'*.
- The business plan does not explicitly state the focus areas or strategic direction of the school. *'Excellence in Teaching and Learning'* is included in the academic targets of English, mathematics and science. There are strategies and milestones for each target.
- Student academic targets include On-entry and National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results. On-entry and NAPLAN targets are that results will be *'at or above like schools'*.

- The science target is that '*Yearly Progressive Achievement Testing (PAT) science online test will show value adding from Years 3–6.*'
- There is no reference to the other learning areas in the business plan.
- Non-academic targets are based on improving attendance rates and student behaviour.
- Discussions with teachers indicated an awareness of the business plan with some application in preparing their operational plans and classroom teaching and learning programs. The links between the business plan and operational plans were not always evident.
- Discussions with parents indicated limited awareness of the business plan. An issue for the school is that many parents have limited English skills. The school will need to prepare future business plans in a manner and style that is meaningful to the local community.
- The business plan is not included on the school's website.

Areas for improvement

- The business plan to outline the long-term strategic approach of the school and explicitly detail the key focus areas to achieve improvement in student learning outcomes.
- Include reference to the other learning areas in the business plan.
- Prepare business plans that are meaningful to the local community.
- Ensure there is a continuous link of the strategic directions and focus areas from the business plan to the operational plan and then to the annual reports.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- The reviewers verified 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 '*Strength Through Knowledge*' and are supported by the staff's commitment to assist students to strive for academic excellence.
- Curriculum planning and analysis of school performance data is conducted during collaborative planning meetings as well as regular data analysis by the leadership team. The reviewers confirm the leadership team's approach of working collaboratively with staff to ensure they regularly analyse data to identify underperforming students and to 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. Specialist teachers provide lessons in oral language/drama, music, and health and physical education.
- 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.
- Operational plans have been developed for each learning area to support teachers to implement the relevant teaching and learning area program to improve student outcomes. Discussion with teachers confirm these enhance their capacity to plan appropriate teaching and learning programs.
- Targets for key focus areas were established in the 2015–2017 Business Plan as follows: Academic targets for excellence in teaching and learning were set in English, mathematics and science. Non-academic targets were set for attendance and behaviour and a target was also set for community partnerships.
- The first academic target was that '*On-Entry results will be at or above like-schools at the end of preprimary for English and Mathematics*'. On-entry data analysis with respect to each individual student in Pre-primary was recorded for speaking and listening, reading, writing and numeracy. In 2016, 91% of Pre-primary students at the school were above the recommended level in

numeracy when compared to results across the State population where 90% perform above the recommended level. In reading 53% of Pre-primary students at the school were at, or above, the recommended level in numeracy when compared with 50% of the State population being at or above the recommended level.

- It should be noted that the target stated in the business plan was to compare performance of the school's Pre-primary students against like-schools not against the State population. The school must ensure that school improvement is measured against the targets that are stated in the business plan.
- For English, targets were based on NAPLAN results for the stable cohort and that results would be *'at or above like-schools for Year 3 and Year 5 students in reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation'*. It should be noted that 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 met this target in spelling and reading but not in writing or grammar and punctuation. Whereas the performance of the Year 5 students in 2016 when compared to similar schools in reading, spelling, writing and grammar and punctuation was above that of like-schools.
- For mathematics, targets were also based on NAPLAN results for the stable cohort and that results would be *'at or above like-schools for Year 3 and Year 5 students in numeracy'*. This target has not been met as Year 3 NAPLAN numeracy results have been below that of like-schools for the past 3 years. Whereas the Year 5 NAPLAN numeracy results were above that of like-schools in 2015 but slightly below that of like-schools in 2016. It should be noted that the stable cohort of Year 5 students closed the achievement gap with like-schools between 2014 and 2016.
- For science, the business plan target states that: *'Yearly PAT science online test results will show value adding from years 3 to 6'*. The 2016 PAT data demonstrated that this target has been met for Year 4 to Year 5 and Year 5 to Year 6 but not for Year 3 to Year 4 results.
- With respect to attendance the school has met its targets with improved attendance of Aboriginal students and the reduction of students in the severely 'at risk' attendance category from 2015 to 2016.
- The school has also met its target to reduce the total number of days students were suspended; however, it did not meet the target to reduce the number of detentions from 2014 to 2016.

- With respect to community partnerships the business plan target was '*to increase the level of parent participation in school events*'. Data showed significant participation by parents and carers in school events. However, no longitudinal data was available to demonstrate whether there had been an increase or not. However, anecdotal information confirmed significant parental involvement at school events.
- Staff capacity is focused towards excellence in teaching through provision and engagement in quality mandated and optional professional and personal growth opportunities. Staff has adopted a set of stated beliefs regarding excellence in teaching, class practice, coaching, collaboration and professional learning through the Gradual Release Model of Responsibility.
- Self-reflection by teachers is against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, the business plan targets, operational plans 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 from their line manager 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.

Areas of strength

- The holistic and collaborative approach to teaching and learning evident by providing an engaging and inclusive educational environment for students.
- The preparedness of staff to continually reflect and monitor their effectiveness in improving student outcomes.
- The successful Little Learners 0-3 year old weekly literacy program conducted for parents and children.
- The highly successful annual art exhibition and weekly Coderdojo after school club.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- The Whole School Reporting, Assessment and Data Collection framework outlines the student assessment program. Student assessment is programmed throughout the year that includes use of standardised assessments, common assessment tasks from the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) and teacher judgements.
- Information and data are collected to measure the effectiveness of programs and strategies in achieving the non-academic targets from the business plan.
- Data is collected and analysed from standardised assessments that include NAPLAN, PAT for Years 3–6 for reading, science and mathematics and PM benchmarks.
- The operational plans for seven learning areas comprise student achievement targets, focus areas, links to the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline, teaching strategies and assessment guidelines.
- The English and mathematics operational plans detail achievement targets for specific students or groups of students. For example, the English K-2 operational plan specifies *'all case managed students will achieve a score of 1.5 on the On-entry Assessment at the end of Year 1'*.
- Discussions with teachers confirm their use of the operational plans when preparing their classroom teaching and learning program.
- Teachers participate in collaborative meetings each term. The operational plans provide teachers with the basis for their professional discussions. The meetings enable teachers to review student achievement targets, review the operational plans, identify students who are at educational risk and discuss the effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategies. Discussions with teachers confirm the collaborative meetings provide them the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of their classroom teaching program and the extent to which they have improved learning outcomes for all students. Teachers have an opportunity to raise issues or concern, for example, lack of time to cover the curriculum and need to differentiate the curriculum.

- The collaborative meetings enable teachers to discuss programs and strategies that are improving student outcomes and to use this information for the next planning phase. For example, student learning data indicated that there had been a reduction of Year 5 students achieving below expectations. Teachers determined the focus on reading was effective and planned to maintain the literacy block focus with explicit teaching and continue the gradual release model.
- The annual reports are comprehensive with a discrete section focusing on the extent the business plan targets have been achieved. Data is presented in graphical form followed by a commentary '*What is the data telling us?*' Discussions with parents indicate varied use of the annual reports in the community. Parents did indicate discussions with the classroom teachers enabled them to understand the progress of their children and of the school in general.
- Currently the principal and deputy principal assume overall responsibility for monitoring student progress and achievement for the whole school and have the major role in the collection, analysis and distribution of student learning data and information. This is a major task which could be shared with key teachers within the school to ensure the work load is distributed throughout the school and gives other teachers leadership opportunities. The principal and deputy would then assume the strategic planning roles within the school.

Areas of strength

- The preparation and implementation of operational plans for all learning areas.
- Collaborative meetings that enable teachers to review their pedagogy and effectiveness in a professional and supportive setting.

Area for improvement

- Revise the school structure to establish a committee with key teachers having shared responsibility for the self-review process.

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 SCSA requirements. Teachers report to parents and carers in all eight learning areas.
- Teachers demonstrated a commitment to strategies designed to enhance teaching and learning after consideration of alternative strategies, programs and resources through a whole-school commitment to literacy and numeracy improvement using a range of programs and resources such as guided reading and the Envision mathematics program.
- Moderation of student grades is achieved by using the SCSA exemplars and network moderation of common assessments.
- Operational plans have been developed for each learning area and the teachers demonstrated a clear grasp of the requirements for implementation of all operational plans, particularly the English and mathematics plans.
- 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 framework, supported by specific programs such as Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies, is embedded in school practice to support 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.
- 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*.

Areas of strength

- The whole-school and community involvement in providing a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment for all children.
- The Youth Parliament with their active designated student leadership roles.

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 is well resourced in terms of classroom materials, available facilities and additional staff to support students in need. For example, the school has funded a part-time speech therapist to assist staff with students having language difficulty. Discussions with staff and parents confirm the value of this appointment and the success in assisting students' learning.
- All operational plans include a 'resources' section detailing the resources to be deployed to implement the teaching and learning program. The resources listed range from curriculum materials to specialist equipment. Discussions with staff indicate a growing awareness of being more specific in linking the resource to be used to improving student learning targets from the business plan.
- Teachers have been supported with additional resources and access to professional learning to develop individual education plans for students at educational risk.
- Education assistants are appointed to suit the diverse needs of the students at the school. For example, teachers have confirmed the significant value of the ethnic and special needs education assistants in helping them provide students at educational risk with the best possible opportunity to improve their learning.
- The principal conducted an internal audit against the National Quality Standard. The audit rated the school as 'meeting' two of the quality areas and as 'working towards' the other five. The school intends to verify this rating by having an independent assessment completed soon.
- The school has experienced stable leadership during the term of the current business plan. Staff are appointed to best reflect the cultural diversity of the school. Teachers recruited have experience and demonstrated skills in teaching EAL/D students. Discussion with the principal confirmed the capacity to differentiate the curriculum will be an essential criterion for teacher appointments. The school leadership acknowledges the current workforce plan requires updating to plan for future needs.

Area of strength

- Appointment of specialist staff to assist teachers to enhance the teaching and learning program for students with special educational needs.

Area for improvement

- Update the workforce plan to ensure staff appointments reflect the school's vision, culture and meet the school's future needs.

School Board

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

Findings

- Queens Park Primary School draws on the expertise of a school board that is currently going through a process of transition following the appointment of a number of new members.
- The board has played a role in setting the strategic directions for the school business plan and these directions reflect the diverse school community.
- Induction for new board members appears to be ad hoc. Members should undergo a structured induction, as well as training, to ensure that they can effectively fulfil the requirements of their roles and responsibilities and to assist with their oversight of school performance and the business plan.
- The board has participated 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.
- 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 involved with workforce planning 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.
- Discussion with several parent groups demonstrated that they had limited knowledge of board membership or the purpose of a school board.

Area of strength

- The collaboration between board members and school staff in analysing student performance data and to determine progress made against the business plan targets.

Areas for improvement

- The board reviews its own performance and acts on its findings.
- The board consider the establishment of a structured induction process to assist new members understand their roles and responsibilities.
- The board considers communication strategies to regularly advise the parents and carers of student progress and achievement against the business plan targets as well as lifting the profile of board members within the school community.

Conclusion

Queens Park Primary School has made progress in recent years as evidenced by the implementation of programs that meet the need of students from 39 different language backgrounds. The challenges presented by this complex multicultural environment have been successfully used to galvanise the school and the local community to work together to provide a rich and engaging learning environment.

The staff regularly collaborate to provide a curriculum that meets the diverse needs of all the students. Teachers adjust the curriculum to meet the identified needs of 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.

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

The principal and acting board chair are confident that strategies and programs currently being implemented will continue to provide a comprehensive learning environment for all students.

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

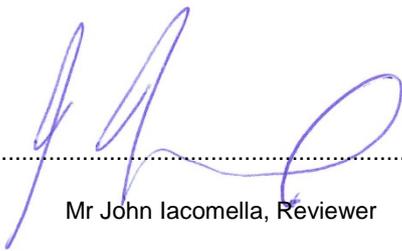
The principal and board chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Mr Alby Huts, Lead Reviewer

6 July 2017

Date



Mr John Iacomella, Reviewer

6 July 2017

Date



Mr Ken Perris, Director,
Independent Public School Review

28 July 2017

Date