



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Education Services**

Baynton West Primary School

2015

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 Education and the Minister for Education.

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School and Review Details

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| Principal: | Ms Lisa Ledger |
| Board Chair: | Ms Lauren Edwards |
| School Location: | Marniyarra Loop Baynton West WA 6714 |
| School Classification: | PS Class 5 |
| Number of Students: | 601 |
| Reviewers: | Mr Keith Newton (Lead) Mr Michael Duncan |
| Review Dates: | 24 and 25 November 2015 |

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the independent review is to provide assurance to the school and its community, the Director General 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 and developed lines of inquiry where further verification was required.

An agenda for the two review visit days was subsequently negotiated with the school to enable the gathering of evidence to verify claims made by the school. During these two days 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?

Baynton West Primary School, located in a newer part of Karratha approximately 1500 kilometres north of Perth, opened in 2013 after intensive community representation. The suburb of Baynton West is a family-oriented area where families are typically larger than the Australian average reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The diverse multicultural community is passionate about the Independent Public School initiative and the potential it has for the betterment of their children's all-round development. The parents/caregivers and community at large demonstrate a strong sense of ownership and protectiveness towards the school.

The school's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is 1001 (Schools Online). There is a rapidly growing enrolment, which at the time of the review was 601 children, in 25 classes from Kindergarten to Year 6. Further growth can be accommodated without undue pressure on the available space for outdoor activities. A dedicated allotment has been set aside for future building, located adjacent to a large playground and community oval shared by the Shire of Roebourne and the school. This adds to the emphasis on the school being central to the host community.

The overall attendance rate for Semester 1, 2015 was 89.3%, which is well below that of like schools (93.0%) and that of all Western Australian public schools (92.7%). This is largely due to the impact of the local mining and oil and gas industries where holidays are prescribed to the workers, often falling outside gazetted school breaks. This is exacerbated by families from interstate (about 35% of the population), many of whom take extended holidays.

The attendance rate for Aboriginal students, who make up 13% of the enrolment, was 74.9%, which is lower than that in both like schools (85.6%) and all public schools (81.2%).

In 2014, 63.8% of all students had regular attendance; 22.5% had indicated 'at risk' attendance; 9.3% had a moderate 'at risk' attendance and 4.2% had severe 'at risk' attendance.

In Semester 1, 2015 the corresponding figures for all students were 59% for regular attendance and 25.6%, 12% and 3.2% respectively for the other categories compared to 78%, 15%, 5% and 2% respectively for WA Public Schools. The transiency rate is significant at 38.7%.

The school has a teaching staff of 42 (37.4 FTE) inclusive of three allocated to school administration and a further 21 (16.2 FTE) staff in support roles. The majority of staff (72%) are between the ages of 25 and 44 with an average age of 34 for teaching staff and 41 for support staff. Seventy-two per cent of the teaching staff have permanent contracts. The school has had five deputy principals in the last three years with three leaving to take up principal roles elsewhere. The current deputy principals were appointed in July and October 2015.

The School Board comprises 11 members including the Principal and Executive Officer. Of the remaining nine, six are parents and two are community representatives. The composition of the Board has been relatively stable since inception.

The school has established a wide array of networks, in order to benefit the quality of teaching and learning and the provision of a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. It also plays a significant role in assisting other schools through its selection by the Department of Education as a Teacher Development School.

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?

Baynton West Primary School, since its inception, has engaged in a rigorous ongoing self-review process. This is based on contemporary research-based frameworks that focus on improving school performance, including student learning, teaching, the learning environment, leadership, governance and partnerships. This was evident in the school's overview presentation of its self-review process.

Staff are heavily engaged in the review process with time provided for meetings to ensure careful consideration is given to analysing the achievement of targets and effectiveness of the strategies employed. This identifies key issues and changes in practice required for improved performance, all of which are acted upon as early as possible once substantiated by triangulated data.

The detailed analysis of performance against the four priorities of the Business Plan centres on four guiding questions: 'Where are we now? What should we celebrate? What should we be concerned about?' and 'What do we need to do next?' based on data collected from National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), On-entry Assessment, and staff, student and parent surveys. The data is rigorously interrogated and compared to like schools and State and national standards and informs decisions about action plans for the whole school, classes, cohorts and individual students.

The transparency of the process ensures a high degree of accountability for the quality of inputs across the cognitive, social-emotional and physical spectrums of learning outcomes. There is clear evidence of a whole-school approach to data collection and analysis and a commitment to improvement to ensure the highest quality of provision possible within the human, financial and physical resources available.

The decision-making process incorporates a cycle of planning, monitoring and review. Staff are consulted and given every opportunity for professional learning and to provide input into all planning.

The extent of achievement of student performance and other targets of the Business Plan is reported to the Board regularly and published in the school Annual Report. Further the Board is very active in holding the school to account for the performance of the students and in setting the direction and standards for the school to achieve.

School Performance—Student Learning

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

Achievement of the targets set within the inaugural Business Plan has been directly affected by the constant change to the enrolment in the school's first two years. Early projections by the Department of Education indicated an opening enrolment of around 250 students, but this quickly changed to 350 on the first day of school in 2013 and rose almost on a daily basis to just under 500 by the start of 2014. This has since risen to over 600 even with the transfer of Year 7 to secondary schooling. The school had little to no baseline data on which to develop improvement targets and appropriately matched processes, relying instead on the professional judgements of the highly competent foundation staff. As a consequence, targets set were sufficiently ambitious to avoid under-selling the capabilities of the students, while at the same time viewed as within the realm of being attained.

It is within this context that the school and the reviewers critically examined the trends and patterns in the data collected to date, whilst being mindful of the school's stated objective of ensuring success for all students.

The 2015 NAPLAN results indicate an upward trend, with school achievement in most instances above that of like schools. This is the case for Year 3 and Year 5 reading and mathematics and for Year 5 grammar and punctuation and writing, but not for Year 3 or Year 5 spelling. The NAPLAN progress and achievement data for the 2013 to 2015 period indicates higher achievement and higher progress for reading and numeracy compared to like schools, with the other domains falling into the higher progress but lower achievement category. When compared to all WA public schools the same pattern emerges, although the relative result for each domain in the higher progress/lower achievement quadrant was below that of like schools.

In addition, the staff closely monitored and evaluated student achievement on a gender basis against detailed operational targets set against 2015 On-entry Assessment and NAPLAN data. Of these, few were met, although some significant gains were made.

As a consequence the staff has renewed focus and changed practices in an endeavour to improve speaking and listening in the early years; and punctuation and grammar, writing and spelling in all years.

Part of this response has been: the introduction of the *Talk for Writing* program; a whole-school approach to the use of 'Spelling Journals'; a commitment to additional staff to ensure the continuance of the *Cracking the Code* program in Kindergarten; a partnership with the Smith Family to establish the *Let's Count* program as part of a mathematics intervention in the early years; occupational and speech screening at the beginning of Kindergarten, and the implementation of an explicit framework for teaching grammar.

In order to ensure consistency across teaching in literacy and numeracy the Principal has adopted a dispersed leadership model that centres on highly competent and well-trained program and year-level teacher leaders.

Staff commitment to the school's articulated direction and collaboration has been significant. This is reflected in time allocated to professional learning, through which staff have embraced the importance of whole-school strategies and the need to implement these in their classrooms. Regular program and year-level meetings reinforce desired pedagogical approaches and allow for staff to engage in moderation and professional coaching and mentoring activities. The outstanding leadership demonstrated by the teacher leaders and the overall staff willingness to engage in these detailed collaborative and collegial discussions, is commended.

In order to promote student social and emotional intelligence the school deploys the *Positive Behaviours* strategy. Of particular note is the manner in which the student population as a whole has been able to take on and develop a high degree of self-confidence, risk management and resilience; so much so that behaviour management is not an immediate issue. It was evident from the information supplied by staff, students and parents that the values-based inclusive culture within the school is helping to meet the social and well-being learning needs of all students.

The affective domain area of student performance is important to teachers. The staff work assiduously to improve student and community attitudes to learning and measure the progress made.

Targets have been set for attendance and there is evidence available that progress is being made in meeting them, although the rate is still below the school's attendance target of 90% and that of like and WA public schools.

Other features of the teaching and learning program that support the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of education provision include:

- endeavours by staff to learn from research evidence and other schools to find ways to improve on current student outcomes
- adoption of the National Quality Standard in the early years and the innovative development of a nature play area in partnership with the community
- specialist programs in science, music, visual arts, and physical and health education
- specialist coaches and peer observation
- teacher access to a range of technologies to enhance the teaching and learning program.

Interviews with students, parents, teachers and other staff indicated the high quality of the programs and their positive attitude to the balanced curriculum offerings at the school. Evidence obtained from a wide cross-section of staff, students, parents and community members indicated the high level of satisfaction with student progress, and that the learning needs of all students are being met.

School Performance—Quality of the Learning Environment

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

The *Baynton West Primary School 2013–2015 Business Plan* declares, in the school vision: ‘Children are at the heart of our school’. The Business Plan lists the motto: ‘Growth and Inspiration’ and incorporates the purpose and the school priorities of ‘Success for All’, ‘School Culture’, ‘Early Childhood Education’ and ‘Resourcing the School’. Each priority has broad strategies and milestones to provide clear direction for staff and parents of the school. The motto represents the emphasis placed on setting high standards in all school activities and on the partnership with the community. The school’s values are explicitly detailed in the plan and collectively foster an outstanding, positive learning culture.

The school’s policies, support systems and practices employed by the staff demonstrate a high level of knowledge and understanding. The classroom visits confirmed rooms are well resourced and provide students with a positive learning environment. The classrooms presented as bright, intellectually stimulating learning centres. Students displayed a respectful attitude to each other, their teachers and to the deputy principals and Principal. Students appeared deeply engaged in their learning and demonstrated pride in their work. A feature of the visits was the preparedness of students to share their learning with others, either in a formal presentation to the whole class or on a one-to-one basis.

Staff use explicit teaching methodology in literacy and numeracy blocks and this is being extended to all areas of the curriculum with the objective of improving student performance. The school has developed clear, successful learning pathways to support students through various points of transition: K—PP, PP—Year 1 and Year 6—Year 7. The reviewers observed a very high level of curriculum planning and sharing between staff, supported by curriculum teams, collaborative teams and the leadership team. The use of information technology is well advanced with the use of classroom sets of laptop computers and iPads on trolleys, smartboards in each classroom and wireless technology across the school. Teachers in the senior primary years use the *Connect* system to facilitate online connection between school and home.

Teachers attested to the value of and their commitment to the school's processes and strategies that supported their work and that are instrumental in their pastoral care program in a diverse multicultural community. Key elements of the care demonstrated for students were evident in the comprehensive focus on individual performance, the students at educational risk program and English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) teaching. These support programs are delivered in a range of teaching scenarios designed to meet individual needs including assistance to staff in making adjustments to the learning programs for students with individual education plans (IEP). Despite a considerable number and range of students entering the school, mainly in the early years, the school is making significant progress in accommodating their needs.

The provision of primary academic extension classes and specialist programs in visual arts, music and physical education has enabled the school to enrich the learning environment and extend the learning experiences for all students. Meetings with staff, parents and students confirmed the strong community attachment to the school. Students commented that teachers were approachable and prepared to listen. They gave examples of how the school was inclusive irrespective of individual abilities and capacities, such as finding roles for all students in leadership, music and performing arts presentations and physical activities. They commented on how the school supported students with learning difficulties to improve their achievement. The students believed they were always supported in their learning.

The School Administration Team (comprising the Principal, two deputy principals and the Manager, Corporate Services), with the cooperation and support of staff, is driving a climate of innovation. The school has pursued a number of partnerships and innovative programs that have resulted in a range of benefits for student learning and for the school community. For example, the school has developed a strong relationship with the Karratha Network, through which students are invited to share experiences and teachers undertake and deliver professional learning and moderation.

Communication with parents occurs through a variety of means, including electronic distribution of the newsletter, an up-to-date school website and the Baynton West Primary School telephone application. The school's assemblies are well received and highly valued by parents. The reviewers were advised that parents are very supportive, heavily involved in school activities and engaged in a range of endeavours including fundraising through an active Parents and Citizens' Association.

Parents emphasised the importance they place on the value of education and what Baynton West offers in this regard by pointing to the data that highlights the number of parents deliberately seeking housing in the school's catchment area to ensure enrolment for their children. The regular parent satisfaction surveys reinforce this positive attitude.

The school, as a whole, presented as a stimulating and positive learning environment providing a range of strategies and actions that are socially inclusive.

School Performance—Sustainability

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

The reviewers verify the staff have undertaken a rigorous self-review of performance against obligations and commitments outlined in the DPA and the 2013–2015 Business Plan. The staff provided a wide range of documentation to support the self-review. The reviewers affirm the school's direction for peer performance coaching to be the model for the performance management of staff as an exciting initiative to be featured in the next Business Plan. The school is very well placed to sustain improved student performance into the future.

The sustainability of the school's high level of performance will occur through the quality of the teaching and learning, which involves intensive collaborative activities across all teaching and learning areas. A dispersed leadership model engages all staff in the development of strategies, collaborative planning and interrogation of data. Teachers and education assistants are highly committed to their work of improving the learning outcomes for every student. Quality programs provide students with diverse options. Staff members embrace professional learning opportunities and the school uses staff expertise to mentor and support their colleagues. The school has clear structures in place to ensure optimum learning experiences for the students. On-entry testing, NAPLAN testing analysis, Australian (WA) Curriculum requirements, informed teacher judgements including moderation and internal testing, inform the teaching and learning programs across the school. The reviewers were able to verify that the Board, leadership and teaching teams and parent surveys are also integral to the school's culture of improvement.

The reviewers were able to verify that collaborative and dispersed leadership is embedded throughout the school. The Principal and the deputy principals, with the support of the staff, have developed and are continuing to drive a climate of teamwork and innovation in the school. This has contributed to a high level of staff morale and mutual support across teaching and non-teaching staff.

The reviewers verified that the Board is fulfilling its role effectively and that its schedule of annual presentations by the Principal and/or a deputy principal on student performance and achievement of targets remains a constant priority.

Within this the Board demonstrated its understanding of the need to continue to develop sound processes for: establishing and reviewing the focus areas and policies of the school; planning for and approving school budgets; evaluating the performance of the school in achieving the set targets; promoting the school within the community, and determining the satisfaction levels of parents, students and staff achievement. Further the Board demonstrated an understanding of the importance of the accountability function of the Business Plan and a commitment to the development of the next iteration. The Board and the Principal share a strong sense of mutual trust which is played out in their open and transparent approach to the analysis of the school's achievement of targets and outcomes.

The Principal and the Board Chair raised the possibility of board membership being more inclusive of the multicultural school population and the desire to appoint a parent who is representative of the local community.

Under the leadership of the Principal and Manager, Corporate Services, the one-line budget, including staffing and relief flexibilities, is efficiently managed. Workforce planning has a high profile in the management of the school in order to meet the challenges of maintaining and improving the delivery of quality teaching and learning; employment of staff who have the required knowledge and skills to meet the school's priorities, and to meet anticipated increased student enrolment requirements. In addition, careful consideration is given to ensure resources for initiatives such as specialist programs, IT throughout the school and support for students at educational risk are ongoing.

Conclusion

Baynton West Primary School uses a comprehensive, iterative, data-driven self-review process characterised by disciplined dialogue to analyse performance against its priorities and targets in the Business Plan and to meet obligations under the DPA. Formal self-review documents include detailed conclusions about performance against targets, standards of student achievement, progress made and actions to be taken for improvement.

Questions constantly asked by the staff and the Board: 'How are we going?' 'What have we done well?' 'What should we be concerned about?' and 'What do we need to do next?' ensure the school is involved in a continuous improvement process.

The school provides a highly effective learning environment for all students where decisions are grounded upon theory and research and are evidence-based.

The school is held in high regard by staff, students, parents and the wider community. There is a strong belief in the social inclusion policies of the school and the genuine manner in which they are played out by staff, students and parents alike.

The professional knowledge and enthusiasm of the staff in creating quality learning and teaching programs to maximise the educational opportunities for each student was evident throughout the review. This, along with effective school leadership, has resulted in the school having an excellent reputation in the local community.

The school has a well-informed and very capable Board that sets the strategic direction, oversees implementation and holds the school to account for its performance. This, when aligned with the team of competent staff, effective partnerships and targeted use of resources ensures the school's vision, purpose and values are evident throughout its operations.

Baynton West Primary School is serving the learning needs of its students and in doing so is meeting the aspirations of the community.

Commendations

The following areas are commended:

- the school's development and fostering of an outstanding, positive learning culture
- the policies, support systems and practices as initiated and implemented by staff, which demonstrate high level understanding and knowledge
- the high expectations for all resulting in bright, visually and intellectually stimulating classrooms that are true centres for learning excellence
- the outstanding engagement and commitment of all staff in professional learning to further develop and apply their knowledge and skill
- the capacity of staff to sustain school processes and procedures into the future
- the school's communication practices and procedures that efficiently provide parents and community members with high-level information regarding the school and the progress of its students
- the use of highly engaging school assemblies as a medium for communication to parents
- the outstanding strategic and high-level approach to leadership being displayed by the Principal and the Administration Team that is resulting in the development of a dispersed leadership model across the school; the outstanding leadership demonstrated by the teacher leaders and the engagement of the staff in detailed collaborative and collegial discussions
- the governance, leadership and support for the school by the Board.

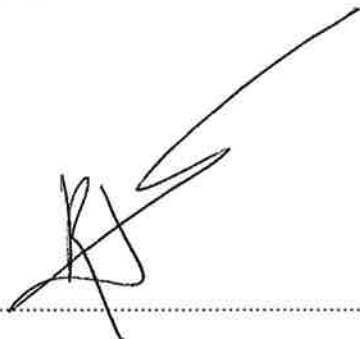
Areas for Improvement

The following area for improvement has been identified:

- enhancement of the Board's approach to inclusivity by appointing a member representative of the multicultural nature of the school's population.

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 Baynton West 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 Keith Newton, Lead Reviewer

18 December 2015

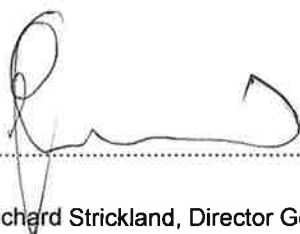
Date



Mr Michael Duncan, Reviewer

18 December 2015

Date



Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,
Department of Education Services

3/2/16

Date

