



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

Bunbury 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 Shane Doherty
Board Chair:	Mr Warren Turner
School Location:	2–18 Lovegrove Avenue, Bunbury WA 6230
Number of Students:	438
Reviewers:	Mr Bill Gibson (Lead) and Mrs Kerry Oliver
Review Dates:	2 and 3 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?

Bunbury Primary School is located in an attractive setting with well-designed buildings and carefully planned grounds. The whole campus is a reflection of the ethos of care and engagement. The school has a proud history going back to 1895 which is retained in the row of plaques that line the office corridor and are a visual reminder of the history and tradition of the school.

Student enrolment remains relatively steady at 438. The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is 1063 placing it in the second decile of schools in Western Australia. The ICSEA is very similar to that recorded in the last school review in 2013 (1062). The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Socio-economic quartiles table for 2015 places 63% of students in the top two quartiles compared to 64% in the same quartiles in 2013.

The school caters for an increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse student population with 13 nationalities and at least 19 different languages or dialects spoken. Forty-seven students (11%) are registered as having an additional language spoken at home either in addition to English, or as their primary language. In addition to the 18 (4.1%) students identified as English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D)—Stage 1 or 2 and in receipt of funding support, many more are closely monitored.

The enrolment includes eight (1.9%) indigenous students, one student under the care of Department of Child Protection and Family Services (DCPFS), 17 (3.8%) students receiving Disability Resourcing Services support and a much larger group (90) students identified as having a disability through the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data—School Students with a Disability initiative. The school administration indicated the number of students requiring extra support is growing. While some of this is due to improved identification measures, there is also an increase in anxiety and mental health issues. The school psychologist endorsed this claim.

The Principal advised the current staffing profile is 20.29 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers, 14.23 FTE education assistants and 6.26 FTE support staff. The staff is generally very stable with a mix of experience. A particular strength has been the stability of the leadership team. There are gaps in terms

of diversity in the staff, with few male staff and staff with different ethnic backgrounds. These gaps are acknowledged in the Workforce Plan. The need to tackle a backlog of leave is also recognised in the plan with a careful structure to enable leave to be taken in a timely manner, whilst minimising disruption to educational programs. The school benefits from the support of many volunteers in the library, the canteen and in classrooms.

The leadership team has been successful in developing partnerships with various government agencies, local schools, businesses and support organisations. These have impacted significantly on the provision of services and resources.

The School Board has a majority of parent members including a representative of the Parents and Citizens' (P&C) Association and has the capacity to co-opt a community member on a needs basis. The Board is fully engaged in assisting with the development of the Business Plan, monitoring the school progress against the Business Plan and the DPA, assisting with the development of policy and promotion of the school. The Board and the P&C work together and the school has strong community support.

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?

The Independent Review Findings (2013) highlighted *'the comprehensive monitoring, analysis and responsiveness to a wide variety of performance information in its rigorous self-review process'*.

In 2016, the process remains exemplary with high-quality data being collected on student performance (both academic and non-academic) and ongoing review of all the systems and processes in place to support the school vision of facilitating every child to be their best. The practice of self-review is embedded.

A documented review cycle ensures a consistent approach and the importance of collecting quality data is well understood by the leadership team and the Board. Every staff member is aware of the importance of evidence-based decision making and all have a role in collecting and analysing data. Documents such as the 'Student Academic Achievement Business Plan Targets' and 'Summary of School's Self-Review Conclusions' as well as the detailed 'Key Focus Areas 2014–2016 Overview Monitoring of Business Plan Targets' provide evidence of the extent to which the staff goes to monitor all aspects of the curriculum both academic and non-academic as well as rigorous reviews of teaching practice, adequacy of resources (including Information Technology) and community engagement.

The evidence provided shows judgements are made on each performance indicator and targets are reviewed annually. The commitment to evidence-based decision making is included in the Business Plan objective 'To employ measures outside of National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) to respond to student need and monitor progression'. Examples include Letters and Sounds Phases of Learning for Years K–2, Words Their Way Phases of Development for years 3–6, Maths and Literacy Tracker, Australian Council for Educational Research—Progressive Assessment Test (ACER-PAT), PM Benchmarking, On-entry Assessment and Running Records. These and several other measures have targets and are monitored and analysed.

Equally important is data gathered and analysed on the socio-emotional well-being of students. Attendance data is scrutinised and targets to reduce

students at risk are included in the Business Plan. The school-wide application of Positive Behaviour Support has provided a rich source of information about individual students and detailed records are kept of minor and major behaviour transgressions.

The quality, quantity and depth of analysis of valid academic, social and emotional records and information to guide teaching and learning improvement are commended.

Staff members are provided with a 'Summary of Key Strategies' from the school operational plans and this document is linked to Focus 2016. The stated goal of 'leading a culture of analysis in which staff routinely diagnose the impact of their teaching through the application of the Visible Learning program' characterises the school-wide consistency of programs and the focus on improvement through self-review. One of the key performance indicators in the Business Plan is 'the extent to which the school has captured data and analysed it to determine trends in student needs upon which forward planning has then been developed'. This has clearly been achieved with the range of data being expanded and more sophisticated analysis developed during the current DPA.

It was evident in discussions with the Board they were aware of the importance of monitoring the Business Plan. Board members understood that it was crucial the programs covered the full gamut of the curriculum and provided a 'wrap around' level of care to ensure children were safe, given every opportunity to succeed and were enabled to fully engage in all the school had to offer. The information provided to the Board was clearly more than just academic achievement with minutes highlighting the Board's engagement in workforce planning, National Quality Standard interpretation and the development of the ICT Overview 2014-16 document. As the newly elected Chair said, 'it is much more than NAPLAN results'.

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* describes the focus for an improvement agenda based on a detailed analysis of valid 2011–2013 data, consideration of the Department of Education Services' Independent Review (2013) and strategic aspirations. Six themes: Academic Achievement; School Culture; Technology; Operations; Facilities and Environment together with Community and Participation guide improvement. Goals, strategies, performance measures and academic targets support the focus on the themes.

Academic achievement targets were set based on:

- Readiness for learning
Assessed using the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) and Pre-primary On-entry Assessment
- Improvement in spelling and phonological awareness
Assessed using Letters and Sounds (K–2) and Words Their Way (3–6) measures
- Improved performance in all literacy domains
Assessed as performing above WA Public Schools and National student upper band distributions in NAPLAN
- Consolidation of numeracy performance
Assessed as consolidating above WA Public Schools and National student upper band distributions in NAPLAN
- Reading and numeracy stable cohort progress
Assessed using First Cut NAPLAN data.

Non-academic targets related to student attendance and behaviour standards. Attendance targets were set to exceed 93% and a reduction in the number of students in the 'At Risk' categories. The behaviour target focused on improving behaviour standards.

Reviewers were able to verify the school's assessment of progress towards the achievement of academic targets using NAPLAN data as summarised in Schools Online, School Performance Monitoring System (SPMS) and *My School*® together with the self-review analysis of a wide range of evidence

including AEDC, On-entry Assessment, NAPLAN First Cut, moderated teacher judgements and other assessments conducted by the staff.

The analysis of NAPLAN performance, as reported in SPMS overview, noted both 2015 Overall Relative Achievement and Overall Progress was 'within the expected performance range' with Year 5, 2014 reading commendably 'above expected'. Student Progress and Achievement for 2013–2015 when compared with like schools indicates Year 3–5 students demonstrated higher progress/higher achievement in spelling and writing and lower progress/higher achievement in numeracy, grammar and punctuation and reading. Typically, longitudinal results were in the right hand quadrants (positive gains) when compared to Australian Schools for the period of the current DPA. Schools Online Longitudinal Summary graphs support the intent of the Principal that, while the average scores compare favourably with like schools, high expectations for all students will continue to be embodied in future academic targets.

The attendance rate continues above the targeted 93% with the school achieving 94.3% in 2015 compared to WA Public Schools at 92.7%. The number of students in 'At Risk' categories continues to decline with all comparing favourably with WA Public Schools in 2015.

Behaviour standards continue to improve with school data indicating a reduction from an average of 1.2 minor behaviour referrals per student in 2014 to 0.8 referrals in 2015.

The leadership team indicated many academic and all non-academic targets had been met and remain confident of continuing progress within the current DPA. Reviewers affirm the analysis and conclusions drawn from the 2016 self-review. Performance in non-academic areas and other learning areas continues to improve as a result of the courses and pathways provided by the school.

Meetings with parents, students and the Student Services team highlighted an ongoing commitment to enhancing structures to support the learning for all students, including significant subgroups such as students for whom English is an Additional Language or Dialect and those requiring teaching and learning adjustments.

Students in receipt of Disability Resourcing Services' funding together with other students, including those below National minimum standards, have individual education plans (IEPs). All students requiring an adjusted

education plan receive support from the Student Services team. The team coordinates: input from outside agencies; staff professional learning; parent communication and collaboration; plan reviews; and if appropriate, the preparation of modified reporting documents. In addition, the team monitors tracking to minimise the impact of transition. Parents of students with an IEP spoke glowingly of the commitment of staff to support the learning of their children.

The commitment to improved learning outcomes and early intervention was demonstrated by the collaborative work of the early-phase team. In addition to continuous monitoring of student performance against readiness targets, staff are exploring key documents including the National Quality Standard, the AEDC, recent NAPLAN performance and the WA Curriculum to guide and align teaching and learning in the early years. Strategies including the annual semester 2 Pre-Kindergarten Café program for families of students enrolled to commence kindergarten in the following year, the development of a whole-school phonological awareness program and evidence-based classroom teaching are assisting to sustain student performance in literacy and numeracy in the early years. Progress against Business Plan goals and targets in early learning indicates the positive impact of embedded strategies.

The staff is commended on the effectiveness of whole-school, phase and year-level strategies that support the focus on enhancing the induction process for newly enrolled students. The success of strategies to support improved spelling and phonological awareness is illustrated by the Schools Online NAPLAN Progress Graph (Spelling—2013 to 2015) that indicates the Year 5 cohort included 16 students not assessed at the school in Year 3 yet the cohort outperformed the like schools stable cohort.

The reviewers commend the Principal and staff on developing a school improvement agenda through the development of realistic school-wide expectations, a focus on individual student growth in all learning areas, and productive collaboration between staff members.



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 continuing development of the learning environment is guided by Business Plan themes: School Culture; Technology; Operations; Facilities and Environment together with Community and Participation. The Plan includes strategies and performance measures to guide development. The 'Summary of Self-Review Conclusions' statement indicates significant progress against many of the performance indicators.

Discussions with staff, parents and students together with evidence from surveys confirmed an embedded culture promotes student learning and attainment of the recently collaboratively reviewed vision *'to work together to enhance our whole school community ensuring that every child at our school reaches their potential'*. The vision succinctly describes the ethos and approach of the school with values woven into the behaviour expectations of Be Responsible, Be Caring, Be Respectful and Be Your Best.

The leadership team, staff and broader community are commended for a nurturing learning environment with an individual focus that caters for the diverse student population. The environment is supported by:

- the embedded *Friendly Schools PLUS* bullying prevention program
- the embedded Positive Behaviour Support approach to behaviour management
- the *Bounce Back*  well-being and resilience program 
- the development of carefully planned play spaces guided by the 'Playground Initiatives and Grounds Overview 2014–2016' prepared in consultation with the community by a representative committee
- an orientation program to support newly enrolled students and their families
- an innovative trial to utilise a part-time social worker to work with identified students.

Feedback from surveys and meetings with parents and the Board supports the belief that the school provides a safe and inclusive environment. Students confirmed they felt safe at the school.

Whole-school and phase statements outline strategies and programs used to improve teaching and learning. After careful consideration of alternative strategies, programs and resources the staff has committed to strategies designed to enhance teaching and learning including:

- Data-driven early intervention using information including On-entry Assessment, AEDC trends, Screening of Communication Skills (SOCS) and NAPLAN
- literacy block to support differentiated learning
- the provision of Level 3 Teacher time to support collaborative processes to guide literacy, numeracy and early-phase improvement
- scope and sequence statements to guide skill acquisition
- a whole-school commitment to literacy and numeracy improvement using a range of programs and resources
- the ongoing implementation of the commendable Information and Communication Technology (ICT) School Overview 2014–2016 with appropriate focus on the Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) 'General Capability' progress map.

Classroom visits provided evidence students are engaged in meaningful learning activities with every opportunity to target their learning, develop their skills and achieve success through using technology and working co-operatively. The Leadership team is commended for supporting staff to focus on learning, their own as well as the students.

Board oversight of surveys and feedback through the newsletters gives parents confidence their views are being considered and acted upon. The timely response to survey feedback was demonstrated when, in response to feedback regarding traffic movement around the school site, the school collaboratively developed the 'Bunbury Primary School Parking and Traffic Strategy'.

A supportive parent body, as evidenced by 85% of parents making the annual voluntary contribution, and an active P&C assist the staff to achieve many of the Business Plan themes.

In addition, the staff has been proactive in developing strong working relationships with local secondary schools, Edith Cowan University (South West Campus), Murdoch University, Notre Dame University, South Regional TAFE, Hudson Road Community Health Services and DCPFS. The CSIRO's

Sustainable Schools Project, Kids Teaching Kids Program, Sporting School Program and Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc. initiative support the implementation of strategies to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve. Affiliations with the onsite OSH Club care program, local media, EdConnect Australia (Schools Volunteers Inc.), Hands Up For Kids, World Vision, Rotary Club of Bunbury and the City of Bunbury all enhance community connections.

A committed leadership team, engaged staff and supportive community continue to focus on further developing an environment to underpin student learning. Parents and members of the Board were very positive and believe the number of out of area enrolment applications suggest the school is a school of choice.

School Performance—Sustainability

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

In 2013, the school received a very positive report from the Independent Review Panel and it is a mark of the sustainability of the systems and processes that, in 2016, the reviewers found the situation to not only have been sustained, but had been taken to a new level.

Several factors contribute to the sustainability of programs, systems and processes. The school has a stable and very capable staff. The school organisation ensures leadership is distributed and all staff members have the opportunity to access professional learning linked to school programs and to performance management. An example of distributed leadership is the use of the Level 3 teachers who are encouraged to lead committees and to understudy the administration team. Leadership opportunity is extended to the students, including chances for the more senior students to mentor younger students through a well-organised buddy system (Kids Teaching Kids).

Professional learning is encouraged at all levels. A teacher is working to achieve Level 3 status and two of the education assistants are undertaking tertiary studies. All staff members spoke highly of the performance management processes underpinned by the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the opportunities to take up professional learning. Induction documentation and processes ensure new staff members are given adequate professional support to be able to support the school-wide programs and approaches.

The integrated and strategic approach that is applied to all aspects of the school operations has allowed everyone to understand the contribution they make to the continuation of the programs designed to enhance learning opportunities for each child. A striking example of this has been the introduction of Visible Learning as an across-the-school initiative. This, combined with the school's emphasis on the Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies and the embedded Positive Behaviour Support, provides a school-wide child-centred approach to both academic achievement and well-being. Feedback for students and teachers alike is a feature. Through translating the West Australian Curriculum into child friendly language, 'walk through' classroom observation and a multitude of collaborative opportunities

staff have created a culture of targeted teaching and learning where every person adopts high expectations and strives to achieve.

Another very important factor in creating a sustainable school has been the targeted and strategic use of resources. Every classroom is well resourced. The organisation of other resources from sports equipment to an exceptional range of playground equipment, enhances and enlivens programs. Management of resources is well documented and appropriately financed with a replacement schedule for key items. An outstanding example of the amount of planning applied to resource management is the 'Playground Initiatives and Grounds School Overview 2014 to 2016'. This overview covers both playground and class environments with two subcommittees. Parents comprise the majority of the committee and a large range of initiatives are described. Posters are displayed which not only set out the rules of the particular area (e.g., basketball or use of the nature playground) but also include an agreement about the appropriate behaviour expectations. Every classroom has responsibility for aspects of the outdoor activities with the range including giant chess, music jam, and a senior and a junior sandpit. Another example is an Aboriginal Mia Mia designed by an Aboriginal Elder and now being converted into a living structure which will incorporate student mosaics anticipated to be a useful teaching resource.

A commendably strong relationship with parents through positive and effective communication of the learning and social needs of students is evident with parents declaring their satisfaction and pride in the school. The P&C has made considerable financial contributions and when required, many community members volunteer to support events such as catering for the Bass Hill to Bunbury stage of the 2015 Variety WA Bash, and work to improve facilities including the upgrade of the comprehensive vegetable garden. Every effort is made to keep parents informed and engaged in the life of the school. The clever use of the *Skoolbag* school mobile application, the pre-kindergarten Play Café and regular emails from teachers have enhanced parent engagement. Targeted information sessions for parents on topics including cyber safety and the use of tablet technology are regularly provided. When the school held an open day designated as a Celebration of Learning, almost 200 parents attended. The range of brochures and information provided for parents is extensive and is translated into other languages as appropriate.

The Board is highly functional with a sound grasp of its obligations and responsibilities in relation to the DPA. Governance is well understood and the

terms of reference have made provision for the sustainability of the Board with half the parent members retiring each year. The Chair is elected by the parent members of the Board and sits for a one-year term. The Board is aware of the need to train new members and to self-review though this is done informally at the moment rather than through a survey. Interviewed parents indicated they were confident in the capacity of the Board though it was acknowledged that some challenges remain in publicising the work of the Board.

Confidential draft

Conclusion

The Bunbury Primary School community has invested in excess of a century in the development of a safe and inclusive learning environment capable of supporting the learning of a diverse student population.

A committed leadership team and engaged staff have collaboratively established teaching and learning programs underpinned by high expectations, innovative pedagogy, positive community relationships, evidence-based self-review processes and informed Board oversight.

Although some challenging targets and performance measures remain unachieved, academic attainment continues within the expected performance range. The leadership team and curriculum committees are confident of sound progress against remaining targets by the conclusion of the current DPA.

The parent body expressed a high degree of confidence in the leadership team and the Board and remain engaged and enthusiastic supporters of the school.

The Principal and Board Chair expect strategies and programs currently being implemented will continue to ensure effective teaching and learning and provide sustained improvement in outcomes for all students.

Commendations

The following areas are commended:

- the quality, quantity and depth of analysis of valid academic, social and emotional records and information to guide teaching and learning improvement
- the above expected Year 5, 2014 reading achievement
- the effectiveness of whole-school, phase and year-level strategies that support the focus on enhancing the induction process for newly enrolled students
- the Principal and staff on developing a school improvement agenda through the development of realistic school-wide expectations, a focus on individual student growth in all learning areas and productive collaboration between staff members
- the leadership team, staff and broader community are commended for embedding a nurturing learning environment with an individual focus that caters for the diverse student population
- the comprehensive Information and Communication Technology (ICT) School Overview 2014–2016 with appropriate focus on the Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority 'General Capability' progress map
- the Leadership team for supporting staff to focus on learning, their own as well as that of the students
- the strong relationship with parents through positive and effective communication of the learning and social needs of students.

Areas for Improvement

No areas for improvement are identified.

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 Bunbury 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.

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Mr Bill Gibson, Lead Reviewer
Date

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Mrs Kerryn Oliver, Reviewer
Date

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Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,
Department of Education Services
Date