



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

Dalyellup 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.

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

Principal:	Mr Gary Quinn
Board Chair:	Ms Suzi Carter
School Location:	14 Hartog Road Dalyellup WA 6230
School Classification:	PS Class 5
Number of Students:	723
Reviewers:	Mr John Iacomella (Lead) and Dr Lesley Payne
Review Dates:	24, 25 and 26 June 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. Additionally, the findings have the potential to inform school improvement.

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 wellbeing
- 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 review visit over three days was subsequently negotiated with the school to enable the gathering of evidence to verify claims made by the school. During these three 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. During the visit the reviewers also met with schools in the Dalyellup cluster for the cluster self-review discussion.

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?

Dalyellup Primary School commenced as Dalyellup Beach Primary School co-located with Adam Road Primary School in Semester 2, 2001. Dalyellup Beach Primary School relocated to Dalyellup Beach Estate and operated as a 'school in shops' until 2004 when it moved into purpose-built facilities on the current site.

Dalyellup Beach Primary School became Dalyellup College in 2009 catering for K–8 students with K–4 students on the current site and Year 5–8 students in a middle school on a new site in Wake Drive, 1.2 kilometres distant.

In 2012, three separate schools were established for the local area. Dalyellup College was split to form Dalyellup Primary School for K–6 students on the current site, Dalyellup College for Year 7–12 students on the Wake Drive site and the new Tuart Forrest Primary School for K–6 students, 2.2 kilometres from Dalyellup Primary School. All three schools formed a cluster and as such successfully applied to be IPS, commencing in 2013.

Dalyellup Primary School has undergone significant structural and location changes and has now established itself as a traditional K–6 primary school. It is currently a large primary school and is expecting its enrolment to decrease as the new primary school becomes established. Until this year, the school had three deputy principals due to the size of its enrolment.

Attendance rates at the school for 2014 were below its 2013 rates and below the Western Australian public school mean.

A consequence of the changes in school type and classification has been the loss of historical data such as the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) scores and the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA). There is no separate NAPLAN data pre-2013 for the school. Due to the changing nature of the school population, the ICSEA for the school is changing. Currently, it is 980. The Principal advised this is based on dated information and believes the actual ICSEA to be lower due to the nature of the community; further, in 2012, when the school was part of the college, the ICSEA was 1025.

The Principal indicated that the falling ICSEA also meant the like schools grouping is changing and hence less reliable than the Australian mean. For this reason, the staff have decided to use the Australian mean as the point of reference for setting NAPLAN targets.

The school facilities are adequate and well planned giving all students access to appropriate learning areas and space for recreational activities.

The student population is very diverse, with up to 19 different ethnic groups represented in the school population. One in ten students (73) have a disability and 10% (71) are indigenous. There are 24 students in care of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support. The school provides breakfast and lunch snacks for some students. The student transiency rate is 16.7%.

The Board currently comprises five parent and three staff representatives. Terms of reference for the Board have been developed. The 2013–2015 Business Plan was reviewed and endorsed by the Board. The Board is seeking to improve attendance at meetings and develop the necessary skills to understand data and to use this knowledge to set school priorities and directions. The Board is also seeking to include a community member.

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 school's self-review is based on the four key performance areas in the Business Plan: English, mathematics, Health Promoting Schools and ICT implementation.

Achievement targets for mathematics and English are based on NAPLAN data. The school has used other standardised testing programs such as Easy Mark Testing for mathematics and TORCH and PM Benchmark tests for English, to provide additional student achievement data.

Health Promoting Schools and ICT implementation targets involve respectively particular strategies to be implemented by staff and the extent to which students use technology to improve their learning. The school was able to indicate improvement in student behaviour and well-being as part of the Health Promoting Schools focus area but presented limited information as part of the self-review process. The school demonstrated whole-school use of iPads and MacBooks in the teaching and learning process. It is recommended that the next Business Plan include measurable student achievement targets for all focus or priority areas to be reviewed as part of the school's self-review process.

The *Whole-School Assessment Plan 2015* details the student assessment program at the school from K–6 for literacy and numeracy.

Staff have access to all the results from the standardised testing program through the 'Student Data Warehouse' on the school's shared drive.

Each year the staff analyse the extent to which students have achieved the literacy and numeracy targets. For example, in 2013 and 2014 the staff acknowledged they did not achieve the numeracy targets and realised that the targets were too ambitious. Consequently, the staff revised the targets and also conducted a more detailed analysis of the student achievement data to identify the specific areas of difficulty. A similar process was conducted for the literacy area.

School Performance—Student Learning

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

There are four key performance areas in the Business Plan focusing on a balanced educational environment incorporating academic, physical, cultural, emotional and social skills. There was evidence that staff members engage in a continuous process of data analysis and there are detailed operational plans for two of these key performance areas: Australian Curriculum Implementation—English and Australian Curriculum Implementation—Mathematics. The other two focus areas, Health Promoting Schools and ICT implementation, have operational plans which outline strategies and implementation but not how the targets are to be measured. There are no operational plans for other learning areas.

Targets were adjusted when the Business Plan entered its third year of operation and the targets from 2014 were not achieved. The school has undergone significant growth and changing demographics since its inception as an IPS School in 2013, including a fall in ICSEA, a significant increase in the number of indigenous students, students with special needs and students in the care of the State.

Year 5 targets

- For 75 % of tested students to be at or above the Australian mean in writing.
- For 65 % of students to achieve at or above the Australian mean in reading in 2014 compared to 67% in 2013.
- For 65 % of students to achieve at or above the Australian mean in spelling in 2014.

Year 3 targets

- For 85% of tested students to be at or above the Australian mean in writing.
- For 70% of students to achieve at or above the Australian mean in reading in 2014 compared to 67% in 2013.
- For 85% of students to achieve at or above the Australian mean in spelling in 2014.

The leadership team provided the reviewers with detailed documentation of school and student performance in NAPLAN and Easy Mark Testing. There is a whole-school assessment plan for literacy and numeracy which also includes PM Benchmarks, Maths Basic Facts Tests, TORCH Tests, Schonell Spelling and South Australian Spelling tests at appropriate year levels.

In addition to analysis of the school-generated data, the school used a commercial company to conduct an analysis of NAPLAN data so as to provide a deeper interrogation of the results for use by teachers. Targeted improvement areas were identified for each year level (Pre-Primary to Year 6) based on analysed data from NAPLAN and Easy Mark results. Discussions with school leaders and classroom teachers verified that the analysis was understood by staff and used to guide teaching and learning improvements for literacy and numeracy.

Reviewers were able to triangulate evidence tabled by the leadership team with information provided by the Department of Education School Performance Monitoring System (SPMS), Schools Online and Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) *My School*® to confirm performance against the NAPLAN achievement targets for literacy and numeracy.

The school's analysis of 2013 and 2014 NAPLAN comparative data, validated by the reviewers, indicates Year 3 students are achieving as expected for all domains. Year 5 results are below expectation for spelling, reading and numeracy and all students' performance results are falling against the Australian mean.

Literacy and numeracy targets form the basis of the school's annual numeracy and literacy operational plans. These plans detail the strategies to be implemented, timelines and resources to be used to achieve the Business Plan targets. The school is commended for the comprehensive and detailed literacy and numeracy operational plans that are focused on achieving the Business Plan targets.

A comprehensive tracking system with hyperlinks to documented plans, previous tests, personal circumstances and other important information has been developed to ensure individual student data is accurately maintained and annual handover files are complete. The school is commended for the development of the system for tracking individual students which was reported as extremely valuable by the teachers interviewed.

Discussions with the leadership team and classroom teachers highlighted a range of processes, programs and initiatives. These include:

- the iPad and ICT programs
- English and mathematics extension
- A whole-school commitment to programs such as *Diana Rigg, Smart Words, Guided Reading, Science Connections*
- Classroom Management Support (CMS).

Data on learning improvement for cohorts or sub-cohorts of students were not presented. It was reported that there was little difference in student achievement for stable cohorts compared to all students. It is recommended that the staff analyse the learning of sub-cohorts of students, such as indigenous students or students at risk, in order to identify whether particular cohorts of students' learning is impacting on school performance.

Performance data for achievement targets or identified areas of improvement for academic and non-academic areas other than literacy and numeracy were not presented to the reviewers. The reviewers noted clear evidence of an emphasis on a health promoting school and of teachers using information technology in the classroom. Discussions and observations confirmed the understanding throughout the school of the importance and strategies for improving these focus areas. An area for future improvement identified by the reviewers is for the school to develop operational plans that include student achievement targets for all learning areas, academic and non-academic.

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?

Discussions with parents, board members, students and staff provided evidence that the school vision and pedagogical beliefs about learning are articulated across the school. The vision for Dalyellup Primary School is for staff, in partnership with the community, to 'develop students as life-long learners able to participate successfully as active and informed citizens in our changing world'. Through discussions with teachers, parents and students, the reviewers were able to verify that the school values of fairness, respect and safe practices are evident in their dealings with colleagues, students and parents. The school has established an inclusive, caring and supportive learning environment where all students are valued, treated as individuals and have the opportunity to achieve.

The key area of Health Promoting Schools was identified as important to improving the quality of the learning environment. The aim was to provide students and staff with a range of resources and strategies which support the development of social and emotional health and well-being. Strategies implemented are:

- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)
- School Drug Education and Road Aware (SDERA)
- Virtues project
- BluEarth
- Changing Health Acting Together (CHAT)
- attendance
- inclusiveness
- individual education plans
- Rewarding Positive Behaviour.

The leadership team, committees or individual teachers oversee these strategies. Based on feedback and observation, the PBS committee determined it had reached the target to achieve 80% staff support for the program to foster staff knowledge and ownership of PBS and strategies to deliver the program.

Other targets were either implementation of strategies or not easily assessed. The reviewers were able to confirm a strong commitment to this key area of the Business Plan and that staff have an understanding that respectful relationships in an inclusive positive environment are essential to student learning, engagement and well-being. The implementation of strategies and commitment by the school community to achieve a health-promoting school learning environment is commended.

The Pastoral Care team is led by a deputy principal who liaises with the School Psychologist. All staff members are considered part of the team. School volunteers work with students needing behaviour or emotional support. Parents interviewed reported a high level of commitment by the school to student support and pastoral care. Students at educational risk are identified and monitored closely. Individual education plans (IEPs) are put in place for all these students and a special needs teacher has been employed to deliver intervention and extension programs. The comprehensive tracking system ensures individual student data is accurately maintained and annual handover files are complete.

School attendance rates have been falling from 93% in 2013 to 91.6% in 2014 compared to other public schools at 92.1%. The staff have determined to improve data quality so as to understand this trend further.

There are established strategies for communicating with parents. Discussion with parents and parent surveys confirmed satisfaction with the level of communication. Surveys of parents, students and staff were undertaken in 2014. Analysis of these surveys was undertaken but not reported in the Annual Report as required under the DPA. It is recommended that annual reports include the results of parent, student and staff surveys in future.

Parents have shown strong support for the ICT program evidenced by the purchase of iPads, with 90% of students owning their own individual device. A local company provides annual awards for students and Food Bank provides food for a breakfast and lunch program.

A range of strategies and resources is evident in meeting student learning needs. Physical and financial resources are sufficient and available to sustain current programs and support future initiatives. The staff members make effective use of resources articulated in the DPA for designated programs.

The reviewers affirm an environment that values and supports all students and leadership that promotes collaborative and respectful relationships.

School Performance—Sustainability

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

Discussions with staff confirmed there is a whole-school understanding of the need to improve student achievement, especially in literacy and numeracy. The school is using information and communication technologies to collect and analyse student performance data to assist teachers in their preparation of classroom programs. All teachers have ready access to student performance data and are able to modify their programs to suit the educational needs of all their students.

The school's committee structure for the four focus areas in the Business Plan does ensure there will be ongoing analysis of student learning, identification of areas of concern and a consistent motivation to improve student learning outcomes. Discussions with committee members confirm there is a shared ownership for implementing strategies that will give all students the opportunity to improve their learning outcomes. The Principal and deputy principals ensure the committees remain focused on their purpose to improve student learning. It was evident to reviewers that the school is making significant efforts to improve student achievement and general behaviour through the preparation of comprehensive operational plans for literacy and numeracy and implementation of multiple strategies for Positive Behaviour Support and ICT.

An example was given of some teachers initially being reluctant participants in implementing the Positive Behaviour Support program throughout the school. The program was presented to staff in 2013 as a strategy to achieve consistency in areas such as common teaching practice and student behaviour. Professional learning opportunities were provided and all staff had the opportunity to openly discuss their concerns. As a result, staff have now embraced the program. The staff participate in the process to analyse program effectiveness and make modifications when necessary. The program is now a fundamental element of the school's culture and operations.

The Principal provides shared and inclusive leadership that enables all staff to participate in the decision-making process and be empowered to propose and implement different teaching and learning programs that may better suit their students. Staff are supported and given the opportunity to join committees for the focus areas and are encouraged to further their professional learning.

The school has an established, comprehensive handover process for teachers at the end of each year. This process is based on the handover file comprising information and data for each student that includes all grades achieved to date, all standardised test results, any health issues, behavioural concerns and any special education issues. One teacher has responsibility for ensuring all handover files are completed. Teachers formally present and discuss the information in the handover file with their colleagues at the end of the year once new classes are formed to ensure important information is passed on.

The school's Workforce Plan is focused on managing retirements and staff leave arrangements. The IPS process has enabled the Principal to appoint staff that are supportive of the school's philosophy and directions and have the competencies to implement the school's teaching and learning program.

Discussions with current board members confirmed that they are very supportive of the school and keen to contribute to school improvement; however, members were not clearly able to articulate their role and responsibilities. The effectiveness of the Board has been affected by irregular attendance of members. The Board does review student achievement and participates in the school's self-review process. It assisted in preparing the current Business Plan and subsequently endorsed the Plan. The Principal and Chair are considering expanding the Board to include a community member to improve its effectiveness. The longer-term development of the Board, including implementing regular self-evaluation mechanisms and an understanding of Board roles and responsibilities, will assist in maintaining a sustainable school environment.

School and Cluster Performance

Has the cluster met its intended purpose and supported improved student learning?

Discussions with principals and board chairs confirmed that the purpose for Dalyellup College, Dalyellup Primary School and Tuart Forest Primary School forming the Dalyellup Cluster was to gain Independent Public School status. To that end, the cluster has achieved its purpose as all three schools did achieve IPS status in 2013.

At the same time, there were stated intentions for cluster schools to share resources, foster professional development of staff, establish a seamless K-12 curriculum and provide strong pastoral care through structured transition from primary to secondary school.

The cluster does not have in place any formal structures that enable an evaluation of the achievement of these intentions. There is no formal structure, no Cluster Business Plan and little documentation relating to the operations of the cluster over the period of the DPA. Evidence provided to the reviewers of cluster operations consisted of the minutes of two meetings that were held more than a year apart.

Discussions with the Principal, Board Chair and staff provided no evidence of any educational benefit in belonging to the cluster. There is a transition program for Year 6 students about to enter the college which the school describes as good practice to assist students commencing secondary education. Discussions with parents indicate students have successfully continued their education into the high school.

For the period of a new DPA, it is recommended the school determine the purpose of the cluster and participate with the other two schools in the development of a plan for the cluster that includes student achievement targets and outline the cluster management process.

Conclusion

Dalyellup Primary School is now at the stage of consolidation after a period of significant structural and classification changes. The school is responsive to the diverse nature of the local community and provides a positive, safe and caring learning environment for all students. Student health and well-being are priorities at the school.

Decision-making at the school is based on the analysis of student learning data and teaching programs are modified in response to that data so that all students have the opportunity to achieve at their highest possible level.

The school provides a comprehensive curriculum for all students with a strong focus on improving students' literacy and numeracy levels. There is willingness from staff to implement a variety of teaching strategies and to use the latest technologies that cater for the diverse nature of the student population and have the potential to improve student learning outcomes.

Commendations

The following areas are commended:

- the comprehensive and detailed literacy and numeracy operational plans that are focused on achieving the Business Plan targets
- the development of a comprehensive student tracking system for each student
- the inclusive, caring and supportive learning environment where all students are valued, treated as individuals and have the opportunity to improve their level of achievement
- the implementation of strategies and commitment by the school community to achieve a health promoting school learning environment.

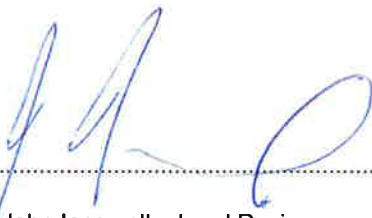
Areas for Improvement

The following areas for improvement are identified:

- include in the next Business Plan measurable student achievement targets for all focus or priority areas
- analyse the learning of sub-cohorts of students, such as indigenous students and students at risk
- develop operational plans that include student achievement targets for all learning areas, academic and non-academic
- include in the school's Annual Report the results of parent, student and staff surveys
- determine the purpose of the cluster and participate in the development of a plan for the cluster that includes student achievement targets.

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 Dalyellup 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 John Iacomella, Lead Reviewer

18 August 2015

Date



Dr Lesley Payne, Reviewer

18 August 2015

Date



Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,
Department of Education Services

2/9/15

Date