



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

East Kalgoorlie Primary School

2017

Review Findings



Independent Review of
Independent Public Schools

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Ms Judith King
Board Chair:	Ms Charli Guy
School Address:	4 Mafeking St, Kalgoorlie
Number of Students:	134
ICSEA¹	630
Reviewers:	Ms Kerry Oliver (Lead) Mr Graham Rixon
Review Dates:	13 and 14 June 2017

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the Department of Education Services' independent review is to provide assurance to the principal and school community, the board and the Director General of the Department of Education of the extent to which the school staff and board have met the commitments of the Delivery and Performance Agreement (DPA). The review verifies the degree to which there are effective processes in place bringing about improved student learning.

¹ The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is a scale of socio-educational advantage that is computed for each school. It allows for comparisons to be made between schools that are matched according to their socio-educational advantage, allowing fair comparisons of NAPLAN results between schools with students who have a similar ICSEA. The median ICSEA value is 1000.
http://www.acara.edu.au/resources/Fact_Sheet_-_About_ICSEA.pdf

Review Methodology

Underpinning the review methodology is the understanding that the principal is required to ensure the roles and responsibilities of the DPA are met; school performance and student improvement targets and priorities, as detailed in the school's business plan, are assessed, reviewed annually and an annual report made publicly available. The review seeks to determine the extent to which these commitments have been met.

In doing so, 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 (IPS) cluster of schools the review considers whether the purpose of the cluster has been met and the benefits to the school.

The evidence provided by the principal, along with information gathered by the reviewers prior to and during the review visit, was used as the basis for judgements made in verifying how well the school staff and board have met the commitments of the DPA and business plan.

Business Plan

How effective was the business plan in responding to the school's context and improving student learning (progress, achievement and engagement)?

Findings

- East Kalgoorlie Primary School, which commenced as an IPS in 2015, is located on the outskirts of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, primarily a mining and service city six hundred kilometres east of Perth. The school has an ICSEA of 630 and at the time of the review an enrolment of 134 students with 100% of Aboriginal descent. There is a high degree of transiency (currently 92%).
- Discussions with staff indicate a significant number of students have a home background influenced by poverty, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, and parents/carers involved with the judicial system. Many students come to school from a background of trauma and disadvantage. In addition, some students have been diagnosed with disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder. Other students have been identified by staff and health professionals as potentially displaying symptoms of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, yet there is no formal diagnosis at this point in time.
- During the period of the current business plan the school had a new principal commence in 2016, becoming substantive at the start of Term 2, 2017. She continues the strong emphasis on ensuring the students have access to emotional, behavioural, occupational therapy and other health and wellbeing and family support.
- The East Kalgoorlie Primary School Business Plan 2015–2017 was developed in consultation with school staff and the school board and complements the school's motto: *'nurture-grow-fly'*. The business plan outlines four key priority areas that are aimed at ensuring the ongoing educational and social growth of the students and their families. These are: education and engagement; transition and flow; health, wellbeing and family support; and teaching approach. The reviewers endorse the view of staff and the school board that these reflect the needs and context of this unique school and its Aboriginal community.
- The business plan is only one of several documents that the school uses to monitor performance. There is also a School Community Partnership Agreement (SCPA) which focuses on cultural connections, learning and engaged students. This agreement is regularly monitored by the school board. In addition, the staff has engaged in a full analysis of their performance against the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework and the National Quality Standard. There are also scope

and sequence documents and detailed operational plans in the areas of the early years, the arts, digital technologies, English, health and wellbeing, languages other than English, mathematics and physical education. The school is commended for the extensive and proactive methods used to monitor all aspects of the school's programs and community connections.

- The principal continues to honour the original 2015–2017 Business Plan and DPA and is focused on achieving the targets and implementing the strategies that reflect the school's context. There is evidence, through discussion with board members, of their understanding and regular review of the DPA's commitments. The school is to be commended on the development of a business plan that is relevant and accurately reflects its context.
- Under the guidance of the principal the school is developing a performance and development culture. Performance data review sessions, held twice per term with individual staff and the principal/deputy principal, have the objective of engaging staff in the interpretation of the data. Specific business plan self-reflection sessions are included in school development days and staff meetings. The main objective of these is the analysis and monitoring of business plan targets and strategies and determining the extent to which the school has met the targets.
- The business plan is available to the school community through Schools Online. During the visit the reviewers were advised that a new school website would be operational by the start of Term 3, 2017 and this would include copies of the school's annual report and the business plan.
- The business plan's scope is limited to literacy and numeracy outcomes, especially in the early years. This is a deliberate strategy which recognises that the Whole Child Learning Sequence (WCLS) allows for a broader curriculum (science, technology, history and geography etc.) to be delivered as the sequence is developed. The principal indicated that in planning for the next business plan the executive committee is clear that it will need to develop student achievement targets that relate to the school's Aboriginal context, are realistic, include a wider range of academic and non-academic targets and that also reflect the importance of specialist areas such as: information and communications technology (ICT), sport, music and family support.

Areas of strength

- The development of a business plan that reflects the demography of the school's Aboriginal community.
- The extensive and proactive methods used to monitor all aspects of the school's programs and community connections.

Area for improvement

- The East Kalgoorlie Primary School Business Plan 2018–2020 to include student achievement targets that while continuing to relate to the school's Aboriginal context and remain realistic, include additional academic and non-academic targets covering all years and specialist areas such as: ICT, sport, music and family support.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- Almost all the students at the school require adjustments to the educational program and this is achieved through the WCLS as well as extensive use of independent education plans (IEPs) and attention to behaviour modification and therapy requirements.

- The business plan sets a National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) target of 70% of students achieving at or above the minimum standards in literacy and numeracy by 2017. The results of NAPLAN testing indicate that the school has performed as expected or above expectations in all areas. The reliability of these results needs to be considered in the light of the school's high transiency rate, which may mean that the cohort was not stable and that those who have sat the assessments in Year 3 and Year 5 may well have spent considerable periods, in between, at other schools. The school recognises this and has devoted resources to improve retention and reduce transiency. In the last three years the cohort size has increased for Year 3 (10-14), enabling some longitudinal data to be gathered. The results in 2016 indicated that in all the NAPLAN areas the cohort fell into the high progress–high achievement range. The school performed above like-schools in all areas.
 - numeracy in Year 3 showed steady improvement in 2016 and while Year 5 did not show improvement over previous years it did show a large improvement in the cohort from Year 3 data
 - reading in Year 3 showed steady improvement in 2016 with no real improvement in the Year 5 group and few gains from the testing of the same cohort in Year 3
 - writing in both Year 3 and Year 5 showed steady improvement in 2016
 - spelling in Year 3 showed steady improvement and Year 5 showed a slight decrease in 2016
 - grammar and punctuation in Year 3 showed steady improvement and in Year 5 there was a decrease in 2016.

- The 2015-2017 Business Plan set challenging targets in academic and non-academic areas. Academic targets relate to On-entry testing, school based targets using the WCLS for literacy and numeracy, Teacher Assessment of Communication (TAC) and NAPLAN. Non-academic targets were set to reduce the number of students with ear health issues and to improve attendance of students once they transitioned to secondary school. Other targets included improving parent knowledge and engagement. In addition, the school undertook to analyse students' achievements as measured by the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework and to move to, or retain, a proficient rating.
- While data on each individual child is available for TAC and for the WCLS there is limited aggregated data due to the very high transiency rate making reliable aggregation and longitudinal data difficult to obtain. Some data published in the 2016 Annual Report indicated that WCLS targets set for Kindy 1 and Kindy 2 students were achieved or close to achieved. The target to have 100% of the Kindergarten students above the TAC benchmark was not achieved (83%).
- One area which has had limited attention is the extension of those students who are more able. This was raised by students from the Year 6 class during an interview with reviewers. There has been some extension provided through the music program for students with musical ability; however, in the academic program focus has almost exclusively been on students with learning deficits. IEPs are based on detailed data which may include therapy recommendations (several students have individual therapy plans and approximately 40 students are receiving speech and/or occupational therapy) and there are also several students with behaviour management plans.
- Over a long period and with the collaboration of staff members a school based WCLS in both literacy and numeracy has been developed. These WCLSs allow fine grained data on literacy and numeracy to be gathered for each student. The learning sequences incorporate outcomes based on the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline, and in the early years, use Teacher Assessment of Communication–Kindergarten (TAC-K) and the On-entry assessments. They are also cross-referenced to the Special Education Needs Assessment Tool. The WCLS uses a colour chart to distinguish Semester 1 and Semester 2 expectations of achievement going from pre-kindergarten through to Year 6. In effect, it provides an independent assessment tool which then goes a long way to providing an independent education plan in literacy and numeracy for each child. The collection of data and the delivery of curriculum are followed up by the principal with twice a term review meetings with each teacher.
- A thorough process of performance review is set-up for all staff members with appropriate strategies to assist in staff development and professional learning.

Meetings are held with the principal twice a term to discuss teaching and assessment and formal performance management meetings occur to allow the discussion of personal goals and professional learning requirements. The performance management meetings and feedback are based on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Staff are encouraged to have a buddy and to do 'walk throughs' and watch others work to facilitate collegiality and improve their own practice. The collaborative and collegiate nature of all staff interaction at the school was borne out by observation of and conversation with all staff members. The eagerness to improve and learn and the support for the performance management processes was universal.

- Parents are kept informed by twice yearly reports and in other ways including phone contact, communication books and electronic communication via Seesaw (student driven digital portfolios) and Facebook. Every effort is made to engage and inform parents and this will be further enhanced when the community room (currently under construction) is operational.
- Sustainability of teaching and learning programs remains a challenge. Some of the programs are dependent on grant funding and rely on the goodwill and dedication of staff members at all levels. One of the most significant challenges is recruiting staff that 'fit' with the ethos and approach used by the school. Despite these challenges the documentation, processes and expertise is embedded and the stable leadership provided by the executive team (principal, deputy and manager corporate affairs) means that sustainability is being addressed.

Areas of strength

- The development of a sophisticated assessment and teaching tool for literacy and numeracy.
- The emphasis on the collection of a range of data which is used to develop child centred and individual teaching programs.
- A relentless improvement focus and a school wide willingness to engage and share.

Areas for improvement

- Attention be given to providing extension for those students exhibiting academic achievement above that of their peers.
- Further develop ways to aggregate data showing student achievement based on the WCLS.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- The school regularly monitors the business plan with weekly staff meetings examining data and working on modifications to the teaching and learning program as well as engaging in professional learning. The school also has a SCPA originally signed in 2013. The school board has a regular cycle of review looking at progress under the partnership but not a cycle of review to examine progress on the business plan although frequent review does occur.
- The school has a regular and extensive number of meetings scheduled to examine all aspects of student progress and health and wellbeing. The deputy principal and school staff dedicated to health meet daily and the family support officer has weekly meetings with the principal and deputy principal. Curriculum leaders meet with the principal fortnightly and have two whole days of planning each term and the executive team (principal, deputy and manager corporate services) meet weekly. All meetings are minuted. While review of the teaching program and the support services is continuous and scheduled meetings plus the committee structure ensure this occurs, there is no documented cycle of self-review. Self-review, including collection of survey data from all the stakeholders, is limited.
- The emphasis on data and information about every child is comprehensive. Aside from the careful monitoring of literacy and numeracy using the WCLS, teachers use a variety of assessment tools including Letters and Sounds, Talk for Writing and Benchmark Reading Assessment Resource. By the end of the year each teacher, in collaboration with their education assistant, compiles a comprehensive profile of each child in their class. These profiles include extensive 'whole of child' information: details of health and wellbeing, family circumstances, attendance records and anecdotal information are included. Data informs all aspects of the school's educational and wellbeing programs. For example, attendance data is matched with academic data and information from medical and therapy professionals is used to modify programs.
- A detailed annual report is prepared which contains information about progress on targets outlined in the business plan. Information on the SCPA is also published in the annual report. The report is published on Schools Online and will appear on the school website which is due to go live by Term 3, 2017.

- The school has a well-established evidence-based approach to everything that the school implements. Teachers are aware of the need to monitor student performance and modify teaching programs according to the information collected. Education assistants are valued as part of the team and contribute to data collection both formal and anecdotal. The data collection and performance monitoring practices are sustainable.

Areas of strength

- The regular and documented cycle of meetings examining student data involving all staff members.
- A comprehensive annual report is prepared and made publicly available.

Area for improvement

- A documented cycle of self-review be established which includes surveys of all stakeholders (students, parents and staff).

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- East Kalgoorlie Primary School has an impressive array of programs designed to meet the needs of its students. These range from programs to improve academic performance to others aimed at improving health and wellbeing. Aside from the researched and supported academic programs that teachers employ such as Cued Articulation, Talk for Writing, and Letters and Sounds there are many extra programs employed at the school. Academic programs are supported by speech and occupational therapy. The school employs a therapy specialist to advise teachers and to develop individual therapy plans for use in class rooms.
- An example of these programs includes: Teach Learn Grow (TLG) tutoring which provides one-on-one tutoring to address identified knowledge gaps. TLG provides curriculum support and mentoring. Other programs concentrate on Kindergarten readiness with Kindilink and Spring into Learning. Both programs include parents and concentrate on providing support to enable students to make a positive start to their education. The Sports Connect and Music Connect programs involve staff members providing transport to rehearsals, training and games or events. A focus in the business plan has been to build parent capacity to take over the transport and attendance at events and this is proving successful with nine parents now taking on this role. The Music Connect program resulted in the choir working with Guildford Grammar School students and performing at Telethon in 2016. Behaviour management is supported by utilising the You Can Do It program and individual behaviour management plans.
- Health is a priority of the business plan and this has been supported by the University of Western Australia Rural Clinical School completing research projects at the school focused on the Ear Health and Self-Regulation programs at the school. Ear health is a particular priority and the results have been outstanding with the reduction in students displaying serious ear health issues from 35 in 2014 to 2 in 2016. The chief executive officer of the Earbus Foundation confirmed that the school is outstanding in the way it tackles health issues.
- The employment of a family support officer provides valuable links to the community and supports families in need. The business plan aimed to reduce the number of families needing support; however, this has proved unrealistic as the

transient nature of the population and the extreme need of many families mean a high level of ongoing support is required.

- Attendance is clearly a priority. Reaching the Council for Australian Government Schools target of 90% attendance for Aboriginal students is a challenge with high transiency and extended absences from school for cultural or health reasons impacting on attendance. Regular attendance is currently around 78%. Attendance procedures at the school are exemplary with immediate and personal follow up of all absentees. A member of the administrative staff has particular responsibilities in this area.
- The school is highly organised with efficient timetabling, excellent financial management, clear processes for professional support and learning and a pervasive commitment to the care of the whole child. Leadership is distributed with teachers assuming roles on many committees and leading curriculum development. The principal demonstrates leadership utilising a model with a continual focus on improvement based on 360-degree feedback.

Areas of strength

- The number and breadth of programs chosen to cover all aspects of the child's education providing a child centred approach and 'wrap around' care of every child.
- The example of leadership and self-improvement modelled by the principal and members of the executive team.

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 executive leadership team is commended on the proactive and creative management of staff, financial resources and the writing of grant applications to support the school's budget. The timetable is innovative and use of all staff is optimal. Finances are well managed with transparent reporting to the board. The acquisition of grants and the careful management of the school's finances indicate the school is in a strong position to sustain and improve the current levels of staffing and resourcing during the life of the 2018–2020 Business Plan. A current example of the school's ability to attract grant funding is the financial support given by Kalgoorlie Consolidate Gold Mines which is being used to build a community room.
- The school makes excellent use of education assistants, Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers and a therapy coordinator. In addition, the school employs a family support officer with a role in outreach assisting families in crisis and liaising between parents and the school.
- Resources are well managed with every classroom having interactive whiteboards. A large number of computers and iPads have been purchased and are gradually being introduced. Therapy facilities and a kitchen and storage room cater for student welfare such as the operation of a breakfast club and the provision of clothing and shoes as required. The grounds are well cared for though very small and although the infrastructure is old the buildings are well maintained.
- A comprehensive workforce plan has been developed and the principal is skilled in recruiting staff who are able to work in the unique environment of this school. Workforce planning has been an important element of the current business plan and the principal acknowledges there will be challenges in the future. These challenges include maintaining stability of the workforce and recruiting staff who are committed and have the required skills to work in a remote Aboriginal community. Transiency of staff has been a challenge during the cycle of the 2015–2017 Business Plan. Future planning by the executive team has also been considering the increased support of students with special needs with the employment of a chaplain (unfortunately at the end of 2016 the previous chaplain left the area) and the upskilling of education assistants. Specialist subjects, including art and music along with the introduction of a strong technology focus,

are seen as important opportunities for the students and have been followed up by appropriate recruitment.

Areas of strength

- The development of a comprehensive workforce plan aimed at retaining and recruiting skilled staff that meet the needs of students.
- Creative and proactive 'grant seeking' that adds additional resources in areas of need, enhancing the learning environment and improving the learning opportunities for all students.

School Board

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

Findings

- The school board includes the principal, representatives of the local community and elected staff; however, parents are reluctant to join the board. This is despite vigorous attempts to encourage membership from the parent body. In late 2016, a grandmother and grandfather joined the board and having the perspective of these respected elders has been a highly valued addition. The two community representatives strongly advocate for the school by assisting with grant applications, promoting the school in the community and in seeking input from Aboriginal parents. The board chair is a community representative from WANSLEA—a Western Australia family services organisation. The reviewers endorse the school's endeavour to include Aboriginal parent representatives on the board so that the board is truly representative of the school community.
- The board members are aware of their role and function and have a clear understanding of the separation of governance and management. Board minutes indicate a limited role for the board in reviewing the extent to which the requirements of the DPA and the business plan targets have been met. Data has been presented to the board and there is a regular review of the school Community Partnership. Discussions with the two community representatives confirm the board is satisfied with the quality of education and the health and wellbeing of students.
- Board members are passionate in their support of the school and through personal networks and commitment have successfully assisted the school to obtain grants and community recognition.
- Currently the principal presents a verbal report at board meetings. The reviewers endorse the principal's initiative in writing a principal's report and in reviewing the structure and content of the minutes of board meetings so that they reflect what is happening in the school, particularly with respect to student outcome data.
- The board has endorsed the DPA and the school's annual reports. The financial information presented to the board is concise and has allowed proper scrutiny of the budget. The board has had a part in developing/endorsing the business plan and had been presented with the school's self-review.

- Discussions with the board's community representatives indicated there was a need to review the board's own performance on a more regular basis, consider succession planning and hence sustainability of board membership and recruit appropriate Aboriginal members for the board. Sustainability of the school is related to the board developing sound processes for succession planning, ensuring accountability and oversight of the school's performance and determining the satisfaction levels of parents, students and staff.
- The school is to be commended on the board's evolving engagement in fulfilling its duties and providing good governance, support and guidance, particularly through the principal, and strong advocacy within the wider community. East Kalgoorlie Primary School has a high reputation in the community based on the education and care of its students and families. To fulfil its duties, and raise the board's profile, the reviewers would encourage the school to include a school board report and data from satisfaction surveys in the annual report as required by the DPA.

Area of strength

- The strong advocacy by the community board members in promoting the school in the wider community and for being proactive supporters of the operation of an Aboriginal school.

Areas for improvement

- That further measures be taken to ensure an adequate and representative parent voice on the board.
- To fulfil its obligations the parent, staff and student satisfaction survey data, and its interpretation, be included in future annual reports as required by the DPA.
- The board initiate a self-review processes to assess its effectiveness and as required by the DPA.

Conclusion

East Kalgoorlie Primary School sets very high standards in the education and care it provides for its Aboriginal population. The motto '*nurture-grow-fly*' is being realised through the outstanding commitment of everyone associated with the school.

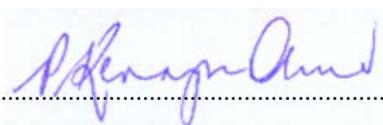
It faces enormous challenges; however, the dedication and commitment to improvement shown by everyone associated with the school gives the reviewers' confidence in the sustainability and future progress of the school.

During the visit the reviewers verified that the principal is highly respected by students, staff, school board and parents/carers. She is building on the work of her predecessor by developing a culture of continued school improvement and commitment to supporting a cohesive remote learning community. With the support of a developing inclusive school board, she is well placed to enable the school to sustain achievement and the health and wellbeing of 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 East Kalgoorlie Primary School for the Department of Education Services' independent review.

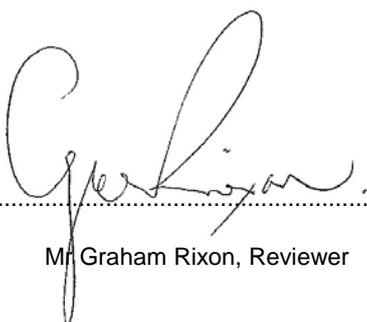
The principal and board chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Ms Kerry Oliver, Lead Reviewer

28 July 2017

Date



Mr Graham Rixon, Reviewer

3 August 2017

Date



Mr Ken Perris, Director,
Independent Public School Review

8 August 2017

Date