



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

Deanmore Primary School

2017
Review Findings



Independent Review of
Independent Public Schools

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Mr George Craig
Board Chair:	Ms Samantha Maddern
School Address:	21 Deanmore Road, Karrinyup WA 6018
Number of Students:	488
ICSEA¹	1123
Reviewers:	Mr David Carvosso (Lead) Lindsay Usher
Review Dates:	22 and 23 March 2017
Initial Review Year:	2014

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, the Director General of the Department of Education and the Minister for Education and Training of the extent to which the school staff and board have met the commitments of the Delivery and Performance Agreement (DPA). The review verifies the degree to which there are effective processes in place bringing about improved student learning.

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

Review Methodology

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

The principal forwarded the school self-review conclusions to the Department of Education Services one month prior to the commencement of the review.

The Department of Education Services' reviewers supplemented the information provided by the principal with information on the school's achievements, its processes and its student performance data from a number of sources which included:

- the *My School*[®] website
- the Department of Education's School Performance Monitoring
- Schools Online reports.

Reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school's self-review documentation to verify achievement of the DPA and business plan commitments, and developed lines of inquiry where further in-school verification was required.

An agenda for the site visit was negotiated with the principal to enable the gathering of evidence to verify claims made in the school self-review statements. During the review visit the reviewers sourced evidence to support the claims through observation and discussion with leaders, teaching and support staff, board members, parents and students where required. Where the school belongs to an Independent Public School (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)?

Deanmore Primary School has undergone considerable change over the past seven years commencing with a rebuild of the school buildings in 2010 and becoming an IPS in 2012. Staffing has also undergone a process where in the time of the current DPA there have been three principals, staff retirements and new staff appointed to cater for a growing enrolment and to refresh the staffing profile. The new principal was appointed from Term Two in 2016.

Student population has grown from over 400 to over 500 since 2015 in response to an increase in housing development in the area. Approximately 90% of students transitioned to Churchlands Senior High School for Year 7 in 2016. Student backgrounds are diverse and indicative of the school's ICSEA of 1123 with eight students recognised with a disability.

Notable in the change process has been a revisiting of the school's vision, values and beliefs in conjunction with the school board resulting in a new focus that reflects the school, its direction and community. The school has an engaged community, an active Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) and a school board formed at the time the school became an IPS.

Findings

- The Deanmore Primary School Business Plan 2015–2017 was developed by staff with school board involvement and ratification. The purpose of the business plan, that resulted from the 2014 Independent Review Findings and school self-assessment, was to 'assess our performance, plan for improvement and act on our plans in a continuous process that is central to effective school governance and ensuring our students have the opportunity to achieve excellence'.
- The plan used the framework from the *Strategic Plan for WA Public Schools 2012–2015* as the basis for addressing the areas identified for improvement both at a school and system level by incorporating key initiatives from the key Department of Education documents. Evidence of responding to the 2014 Independent Review Findings is not as evident in the 'Success for All Students' section which focuses on student academic performance. Targets have been used in relation to comparison to like-school performance but in many cases, are very generalised with broad statements such as 'close the gap' and 'increase the percentage'. The plan also describes an array of strategies for implementation across literacy and numeracy which have no evaluative basis and are more suited in an operational plan. Other areas of the plan are focused on delivery in

learning areas supported by strategies but without measurable targets or objectives that would encourage evaluation.

- In 2016/17, the plan was reviewed and after consultation it was decided that it had many elements that were pertinent to school improvement but it lacked the cohesive approach required to result in much needed improved student progress and achievement. The decline in student performance over time as evidenced in National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) performance was not adequately dealt with in the plan and a more explicit teaching and learning response was required. This was dealt with through changes to the operational plan, staff leadership appointments, targeted pedagogy improvements, better induction for new staff and in establishing common understandings and beliefs about teaching and learning. The plan was also put on hold rather than updated, particularly as the school had been advised of the early independent review in 2017 that would provide direction in commencing the next business plan.
- The Business Plan 2015–2017 was developed with staff and board endorsement. The plan did not adequately respond to self-assessment data which demonstrated negative trends in student progress and achievement; had few targets that could be measured to demonstrate improvement; was focused on strategies without any means of measuring their effectiveness; and, was operational and broad reaching in nature.
- Discussions with the principal, school leadership and board members indicates that there is a strong awareness of the inability of the plan to demonstrate improved student learning at a time when performance is below expectations in many areas. The reviewers acknowledge the focus placed on developing new operational planning to provide direction to staff particularly in whole-school literacy and numeracy plans. There is an evident understanding of ensuring that the next plan will include more strategic outcomes with links to operational and classroom level planning that will be able to demonstrate a targeted response with measurable outcomes.
- Recommendations on areas for improvement were made in the 2014 independent review. They focused strongly on the academic performance of the school including progressing students in the middle and upper bands of NAPLAN achievement; establishing targets for individual and cohort achievement in academic and non-academic areas; differentiating between operational strategies and business plan targets; and, examining longitudinal trends in performance to establish targets. The plan did not address the findings of the 2014 independent review in its focus areas in a manner that could be evidenced by improved student performance.

- The Business Plan 2015–2017 was made available to the community through the school website and was reviewed by the school with regular reports to the school board.

Area of strength

- The focus on operational planning to ensure that staff are able to deliver key strategies in literacy and numeracy in a consistent manner in 2017.

Area for improvement

- The next business plan has a strategic focus on the key academic and non-academic priorities identified by the school in review and self-assessment and sets measurable targets to demonstrate improvement in student learning (progress, achievement and engagement).

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- The business plan set 19 targets to demonstrate improvement in the period 2015–2017. Annual self-assessment processes determined the progress being made against the targets. Targets that could be supported by data generated in assessments and by like-school comparison were tracked up to the time of the 2017 independent review. Many non-specific targets were assessed according to trends and using professional judgement. The school used a four-point scale in assessing progress—achieved, implemented, making progress and not achieved. The implemented assessment is used for those areas that were expressed as strategies to be put in place. Four targets are considered to have been achieved (attendance, achievement standard in science, teacher set targets in spelling and On-entry writing); four strategies were considered implemented; one target was not achieved (top 20% in writing improvement) and the remainder were assessed as making progress. The difficulty for the school is in the gap between what the business plan is prioritising as key focus areas and what student performance is demonstrating. A clear example is demonstrated in literacy and numeracy. The plan's performance targets in NAPLAN were to increase the number of students in the top 20% of writing and close the gap between the school and like-school performance in reading, writing and numeracy. The data from 2015 and 2016 demonstrates that of the 10 assessments carried out in those years: Year 3 data was below the expected school mean in four of the assessment areas and Year 5 was below the expected school mean in six of the areas. Longitudinally, scores show an increasingly downward trend towards below expected performance levels. Student achievement and progress between Year 3 and Year 5 cohorts also demonstrated lower progress and achievement in the period 2014–2016.
- Since 2016 there has been a considerable focus on developing teaching and learning strategies, a more collaborative staff culture and consistency of practice as all staff respond to performance data that is less than expected when compared to like-schools. In the first two years of the DPA, student performance declined compared with like-schools. The situation is now being addressed with school-wide practice that has the potential to improve student performance for all students.
- Evidence provided in documentation and through discussions with leadership at all levels and staff, demonstrated the change that has occurred in the school in

second semester 2016 to the present. Leadership reported that staff are transitioning from a silo culture and have embraced a whole-school approach when it comes to monitoring student learning and planning for improvement. Staff are becoming more engaged in analysing data about their students; are collaborating in teams with colleagues about teaching and learning; and using instructional models that engage students in their own learning. Reviewers can verify through discussions that staff are supportive of the whole-school approach and recognise the necessity to change practice to improve student learning. While there is a considerable amount of work still to be undertaken, the reviewers affirm the direction being taken as likely to lead to improvement in student outcomes.

- Staff believe the poor performance in previous years may be attributed, in part, to low expectations of student performance, changes to staff, stability of tenure and a lack of consistent and understood planning implementation. In 2016 the leadership initiated, with staff participation, a review of the school values, mission and beliefs about teaching and learning. This strategy is evidenced by the development of common understandings and expectations about student learning and behaviour expressed in discussions with staff during the review. An explicit focus on higher standards of performance consistent with like-schools is evident in staff planning, classroom delivery and language.
- Following the implementation of a more defined and distributed leadership model, staff are engaged in decision-making through Phase of Learning Teams (PoLT) and collaboration with other staff on key teaching and learning strategy implementation and monitoring activity. Adoption of the goal, reality, options, will, tactics and habits (GROWTH) coaching approach is under consideration and should assist in professional learning conversations by leaders with staff and conversations with each other. The feedback from this process is centred on data collected via observation, professional growth and student improvement. While still developing, these practices have the potential to facilitate a significant change in the staff culture.
- Performance management practices focus on the business plan and curriculum implementation, classroom implementation of operational plan targets, professional standards and feedback from classroom observations. A key development is the concept of GROWTH coaching currently under consideration to develop coaching skills among its teachers, so that high level professional engagement takes place among staff and particularly between peers.
- The principal and staff are engaging in productive conversations about evidence-based decision-making and evaluation of strategies to ensure they are fit for purpose. There has been a change in staff culture and a developing acceptance of the need to ensure that strategies and programs are evaluated and that data

is used by staff to influence decisions about planning for student improvement. This has had a considerable impact in the early years with strong self-assessment of the National Quality Standard requirements, planning for improvement and sound outcomes from the On-entry screening focus to ensure students have the best possible start to schooling.

- The leadership team have engaged in a deliberate and staged process to establish a focus on team building and understanding of a shared direction for the school. While in the initial stages there is evidence of a positive change in staff culture and practice in teaching and learning, which was particularly noted among early years' staff. The evidence presented through documents, classroom visits and staff conversations provides assurances that the process is likely to continue once practices and understandings are embedded in a renewed staff culture.

Areas of strength

- The progress made in developing a shared understanding and application of beliefs about teaching and learning and the identified need to raise expectations of student performance.
- The improvement to the consistency of teaching practice, engagement of staff in collaborative teams and the focus on evidence-based decision-making.
- The strength of commitment and practice from early years' staff to ensuring students have enhanced learning opportunities.

Area for improvement

- Raise standards of student learning (progress, achievement and engagement) with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy to levels similar to like-schools and to meet community expectations of whole-school performance.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- Since the start of 2016 the school has focused on whole-school approaches to how they review the targets and priorities as set down in the business plan. Staff were given assistance to better interpret data and understand what the data was indicating. Because of this better understanding, there was a realisation by staff that things needed to change.
- There was very clear evidence from speaking with a range of staff that they now have ownership of the business plan and that a collaborative approach to, not only what and how they teach, but also in what data they collect and what the analysis of this data informs. Staff indicated they now undertake solution finding discussions in meetings rather than finding blame for students' poor performance.
- Following an audit by staff, the school has narrowed the range of monitoring tools they use. The literacy and numeracy committees identified research based monitoring tools for use across the whole school or phase of learning. In discussions with these committees and other staff, it was evident to the reviewers that staff were focused on improving student outcomes, appreciated the whole-school approach and were better equipped to make sound judgements based on their analysis of the data.
- The school has recently implemented the use of the National School Improvement Tool to enhance an array of self-assessment processes that were in place. This tool is proving effective in focusing the staff in their self-assessment of the performance of the school.
- The school's annual report is detailed and clearly indicates areas of strength and weakness. The report is very honest in its appraisal of both student and school performance and indicates this performance is not commensurate with the ability of the student cohort. It also indicates that teacher judgements, as reflected in the grades they allocate, have been inflated. The reviewers were confident after discussions with the school leadership group and staff that this discrepancy was being addressed.
- The school's annual report and the 2014 Department of Education Services' Independent Review Findings Report are available to the school community in

hard copy, on the school's website and on the Department of Education's Schools Online website.

- The whole-school focus and ownership by staff of processes in the school, will ensure the sustainability of student performance monitoring in the school. Teachers are understanding that a consistent and collaborative approach will ultimately reduce workload while assisting them to improve both the performance of the children in their class and the school's performance.

Area of strength

- The change in direction in the monitoring of student performance data from individual teacher level to a shared staff responsibility with ownership and action at the school, phase of learning and classroom level.

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- From the evidence provided the reviewers are confident that the programs offered by the school are designed and delivered to meet the needs of students in accordance with legislation and policy.
- The school has a specialist teacher in science after both parent and staff input into the specialist teaching areas in the school. The specialist science teacher has created a science blog where parents and students are updated with science news, facts and challenges. The school's other specialist area is physical education. In addition, this specialist teacher provides before and after school physical activities designed to not only improve skills but to engage children in their learning. Staff are offering an increasing array of activities for children both before and after school and at lunchtime.
- After an information session conducted at the school by The Fathering Project, the Deanmore fathers formed an organising committee and have commenced the Deanmore Dads. This has engaged fathers in the education of their children while the fathers act as a role model for children, especially boys, in their growth and development.
- The school presents as a safe and caring environment. This observation was supported in interviews held with parents, students and staff. There are clearly defined procedures in the school to maintain orderly conduct and the school is supported in these procedures by the board, parents and staff with parents stating 'we're all on the same page'. The school was seen, among other statements as 'friendly' and 'safe' by students interviewed.
- Structured activities prior to school and orderly lunchtime procedures followed by various planned activities, has resulted in a calm and orderly environment in the school. Parents and staff commented on the change they had noted as a result of these procedures, implemented by the current principal. The reviewers observed both the before school activities and the lunchtime structured arrangements and noted the calming influence the procedures were having on student behaviour in the playground. This in turn was having a positive effect on behaviour in the classroom.

- The reviewers received very strong feedback that the culture of the school had changed markedly with the implementation of PoLT meetings and the collaboration that was occurring within these teams. The school has moved from a pedagogy where individual classroom teachers worked independently, to whole-of-school and phase of learning approaches.
- There is evidence of a growing distributed leadership model with staff willing to step up and coordinate either curriculum areas or their PoLT. Teachers acknowledged a renewed awareness of their accountability for improving the performance of children under their care. There was acknowledgement that this accountability was made easier when staff expertise was shared.
- Program delivery in one of the phases of learning teams has led to teachers with strength in humanities and social sciences (HASS), music and art rotating between classes to offer these subjects. This has ensured more efficient delivery of the curriculum and improved student outcomes through the harnessing of teacher expertise or interest. It has also resulted in reduced workload for teachers and given students the opportunity to engage with different staff, something they will encounter when they move into secondary education.
- The school has a reputation in the community as a safe and caring environment for children. Because of this, parents have supported the school despite poor academic progress and achievement. The enhanced whole-school processes and evidence of a 'team spirit' building in the school will ensure the sustainability of program delivery to promote learning and wellbeing for all students.

Areas of strength

- The introduction of the role of science specialist and the process undertaken within the school to decide on this role.
- The further development of the clubs offered to students to engage them before and after school and during lunch breaks.
- The internal organisation of teacher expertise in PoLT to provide specialist teaching in HASS, music and art.
- The safe and inclusive learning environment.

Area for improvement

- Evaluation of programs to be built into every strategy/program based on clear objectives/goals/outcomes or expectations of implementation to ensure that at key points evidence-based decisions can be made to determine the extent of its impact on student learning and teaching practice.

Resourcing and Support

How well has the school established systems to monitor and review the allocation of resources to meet strategic and operational priorities?

- The management and application of resources to deliver programs is considered and reasonable given the increase in student numbers and the impact of poor student performance in literacy and numeracy. The greatest pressure has been on buildings and staffing requirements to meet expectations. The enrolment pressure is expected to plateau over the next few years and the reviewers noted the reversion to local intake students to minimise demands on facilities. Evidence provided indicated students and staff have access to a wide variety of programs that have been organised in an innovative manner and that an audit conducted in 2016 looked at classroom learning resources as well as other areas of inquiry.
- The workforce plan demonstrates the impact of staff change through long service leave provision and the varying modes of employment of staff that has led to instability in 2015 and 2016. The principal has recognised and acted to mitigate staffing instability. Key strategies for 2017 and beyond are to avoid the significant and constant staff changes and establish a stable staff profile that supports improvement to literacy and numeracy.
- From the evidence provided the school appears able to maintain current programs into the next DPA period.

Area of strength

- The principal for his leadership and focus on improving staff stability and performance through the management of the staffing profile, the strong performance management process, the move towards GROWTH coaching and the use of teacher expertise to provide support for teaching and learning.

School Board

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

Findings

- The school board comprises representation of parents and teachers. The board also has a community representative with educational expertise as part of its membership. The composition of the board is consistent with legislated requirements.
- It was evident to the reviewers during interviews with board members that they had a very good understanding of their role and responsibilities. The chair of the board exhibits very strong leadership. The board chair was a strong voice and an integral part of the selection committee for the new principal appointed in Term 2, 2016. The board chair is currently engaged in succession planning as she will cease her role at the end of the 2017 school year.
- Board minutes and discussions with board members indicate the board fulfils the functions as prescribed in legislation and in Department of Education policy. The board participates in the analysis of student performance data and oversees the allocation of funding to resources in support of student learning and welfare.
- The board minutes and agendas indicate they are engaged in the endorsement of the business plan, the annual report and the school budget. Discussions held with board members during the review visit indicate that the board receives and interrogates student performance data. The board also reviews the analysis of parent, staff and student surveys.
- The school's website indicates the membership of the board. The board's role and deliberations in the school would be better understood if enhanced with regular exposure in the school's newsletter, similar to that provided by the P&C.
- The board receives regular financial reports provided by the manager corporate services. Board members commented these reports were well presented and thoroughly explained to members at each board meeting.
- The board has recently undertaken a review of its performance although an analysis of the survey results is yet to be undertaken.
- In speaking with the school leadership team, the board members and P&C representatives, the reviewers are confident that there is a clear understanding

and distinction between the roles of the board and the management of the school. There is a similar clearly understood distinction between the role of the P&C and the board. There is; however, a close and cooperative working relationship between the three groups.

- The reviewers felt confident of the sustainability of the board in the knowledge that elections were required to select the most recent board members. The board has instituted strong processes and procedures in its meeting agenda and this will ensure sustainability of these practices.

Areas of strength

- The board's strong leadership and the members' understanding of their roles and responsibilities as board members.
- The board's engagement in whole-school planning and the development of the business plan.

Conclusion

Deanmore Primary School has the reputation in the local community of being a safe and caring school. These factors outweigh the very poor results displayed in student performance data and the school continues to attract strong community support.

A change in leadership together with a significant turnover in staff during the life of the current business plan has resulted in a changing school culture. Work undertaken by the staff and board late in 2016 to develop a new vision, values and belief statements about teaching and learning which better reflects the school community is having an influence on all school operations. Of note is the positive impact this focus is having on developing a united staff with a single, clear vision. It is evident that the whole school is moving towards a 'Deanmore Way'.

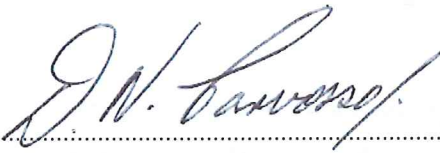
The supportive and collaborative culture being developed in the school; the introduction of literacy and numeracy blocks in the school's daily timetable; the consistent and common collection and analysis of data; the focus on effective and differentiated teaching supported through peer observation and strong performance management processes; the focus on programs that have been researched and demonstrated to work and used across the whole school, are all major elements that will raise expectations and standards in the school.

The reviewers share the belief with the school's leadership team, the board and staff that the significant changes implemented to embed the 'Deanmore Way', will result in improved student learning and this will be observable in student performance data that better reflects the capacity of the children.

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

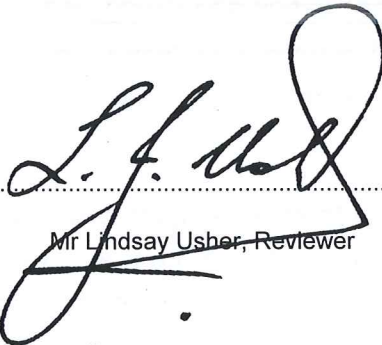
The principal and board chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Mr David Carvosso, Lead Reviewer

11 May 2017

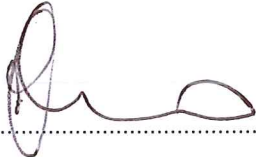
Date



Mr Lindsay Usher, Reviewer

12 May 2017

Date



Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,
Department of Education Services

18/5/2017

Date