



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

Winthrop Primary School

2017

Review Findings



Independent Review of
Independent Public Schools

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School and Review Details

Co-Principals:	Mr Mark Wirtz (0.6) and Ms Karina Meldrum (0.4)
Board Chair:	Mr Malcolm Tsang
School Address:	70–80 Jackson Avenue Winthrop WA 6150
Number of Students:	662
ICSEA¹	1147 (1)
Reviewers:	Ms Georgina Detiuk (Lead) Mr Rod Baker Ms Eirlys Ingram
Review Dates:	7 and 8 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.

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)?

Winthrop Primary School is situated on a well-maintained site close to the major community services of Murdoch University, Murdoch St John of God Hospital and Fiona Stanley Hospital. The ICSEA of 1147 is in the top decile and is an indication of the relative socio-educational advantage the majority of students at the school have in achieving educational outcomes. The school is enriched by its multicultural background with 46 per cent of students having English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) and as a Teacher Development School for science and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Findings

- The 2015–2017 Business Plan was developed collaboratively with staff and the school board and is reflective of the school's common goal to 'Learn and Grow Together'. Strategies, milestones and programs are documented in support of identified targets in the focus area of academic excellence and in aspirational targets in focus areas of social commitment.

Elements of the 2015–2017 Business Plan are:

- Building the Environment
 - Building Our Partnerships
 - Excellence in Teaching
 - Excellence in Learning.
- Academic targets have been developed in response to the school's self-review processes, including review of the previous business plan and information through interrogation of student performance data of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), and On-entry assessment. Comparison of student achievement with like-schools at a state and national level has addressed the recommendation of the 2014 Independent Review Findings Report which also commended the strategic approach to school improvement through a broad and encompassing process of self-review that is inclusive of school life, provides multiple perspectives and is focused on improving student learning.
 - This process is linked to the DPA and 2015–2017 Business Plan and is continuing as cyclical, multi-faceted, complex and formalised through clear and supported phases throughout the year. The biannual self-review of the business plan conducted collaboratively by staff is linked to school planning and programs

and reflected upon by the school board. Some strategies have been altered and targets reset. The business plan is referred to as a 'working document'.

- The school has in part acknowledged areas for improvement identified through the school self-review process and endorsed in the 2014 independent review. Implementation of these endorsements should continue with emphasis on recognition of the diversity of students through greater specificity of targets for identified cohorts. Continued adherence to this endorsement through setting of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited (SMART) targets in the next business plan should contribute to school monitoring and improving the engagement, progress and achievement of students and school performance.
- The 2015–2017 Business Plan is available to the school community at parent forums and through the school website. In response to a request from the school community for the business plan to be more user-friendly, a Community Outline of the 2015–2017 Business Plan was developed for distribution.

Areas of strength

- The biannual self-review of the business plan.
- Development and distribution of a Community Outline of the 2015–2017 Business Plan.

Areas for improvement

- Recognition in the next business plan of the diversity of students through greater specificity of targets for identified cohorts.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- The Excellence in Learning goal in the 2015–2017 Business Plan is for all students to be encouraged and supported to strive for excellence and to achieve their potential. Academic improvement targets have been documented for literacy, numeracy, science, and humanities and social sciences (HASS).
- Review of targets has been conducted throughout the life of the business plan. Analysis has provided feedback on areas for improvement, modification of instruction or change of strategy.

Early years English and numeracy targets

- *On-entry Assessment data to exceed 0.5 point expected progress in English and mathematics between Pre-primary and Year 1.* As a high proportion of students achieved or exceeded the 0.5 progression points in their Pre-primary year this target was reworked to retest identified students at educational risk who did not meet the target. The reworded target is for *On-entry Assessment data of the identified Students at Educational Risk (SAER) group to indicate a minimum of 0.5 point expected in English and mathematics between Pre-primary and Year 1.*
- Of the SAER group of 25 students, 63 per cent achieved the target for English in 2015 and 68 per cent in 2016.
- Of the SAER group of 40 students, 63.6 per cent achieved the target for numeracy in 2015 and 82 per cent in 2016.

Year 3 and Year 5 literacy targets

- Literacy and numeracy targets for Year 3 and Year 5 were set against like-schools and with reference to exceeding the school expected level.
- *The NAPLAN English test results of a stable cohort Year 3 2014—Year 5 2016 will equal or exceed expected achievement and was achieved by Year 3 and Year 5 in 2015 and in 2016.*
- *Reduce the gap between like-schools' results in all areas of literacy by 2017.* This was achieved by Year 3 in 2015 and 2016; and by Year 5 in 2015 but not in 2016.
- In 2016 there was a significant decline in Year 5 average reading score and a decline in writing scores when compared to like-schools.

- *Increase the percentage of students receiving A and B grades on semester reports by 2017* was not a target in 2015 and assessed as working towards in 2016 for Year 3 and Year 5. In 2016 when compared against Year 3 NAPLAN comparative grades in literacy, there was 100 per cent accuracy for 'A' grades supporting teacher judgement and moderation processes in literacy and of the 'B' grades allocated there was 41 per cent accuracy. In Year 5, there was a 73 per cent accuracy rating of 'A' grade allocation and 50 per cent for 'B' grade when compared to the NAPLAN distribution chart.
- *Improve the mean score for Year 3 and Year 5 on NAPLAN in grammar and punctuation, reading and spelling tests by 2017* has been achieved in 2015 and 2016. Analysis of average scores compared to like-schools in 2015 showed Year 3 performed above like-schools in reading, writing, punctuation and grammar and in 2016 performed just below in reading and writing, close to in spelling and above in grammar and punctuation.
- Comparison of mean scores in all areas of NAPLAN literacy in 2016 showed a decline for Year 5 compared to the 2015 mean. The most significant was in reading (-24) and grammar and punctuation (-20). There was a marginal decline (-1) in the spelling mean.

Year 3 and Year 5 numeracy targets

- *The NAPLAN mathematics test results of a stable cohort Year 3 2014–Year 5 2016 will equal or exceed expected achievement* was met by Year 3 and Year 5 in 2015 and Year 3 in 2016.
- *Reduce the gap between like-schools' results in all areas of mathematics by 2017.* This was achieved by Year 3 in 2015 and 2016 and by Year 5 in 2015. In 2016, the Year 5 target was not met. There was a 22-point difference to like-schools' test scores and 20 per cent below like-schools across the three highest bands.
- *Increase the percentage of students receiving A and B grades on semester reports by 2017* was not a target in 2015 and assessed as working towards in 2016 for Year 3 and Year 5.
- *Improve the mean score for Year 3 and Year 5 on NAPLAN mathematics tests by 2017* was achieved by Year 3 and Year 5 in 2015 but was not met in 2016.
- Although most of the business plan targets relating to literacy and numeracy have been met, an area of focus for the school is whether students are consistently achieving to their full potential. The school has identified through examination of NAPLAN Educational Assessment Reporting System (EARS) approximately 9 per cent over-representation of Year 3 students achieving at a satisfactory level compared to like-schools and 5 per cent of Year 3 students above like-schools in achieving at an excellent level. The 2014–2016 student

progress and achievement of comparable data with like-schools indicates students achieved higher progress, higher achievement in spelling only; higher progress, lower achievement in reading and writing; and lower progress, lower achievement in numeracy and grammar and punctuation.

- As a result of close analysis of data, the school self-review process has determined targeted planning for Years 3–5 numeracy, grammar and punctuation achievement, Years 5–6 grammar and punctuation progress and Years 3–5 reading and writing progress.

Year 3 and Year 5 science targets

- *The average score in science for Year 3 and Year 5 to match or exceed 'like-schools' on interschool moderated task was achieved by both Year 3 and Year 5 in 2016.*
- Interschool moderated tasks were undertaken with Brentwood Primary School from Year 4 through to Year 6. Winthrop students exceeded the like-school percentage of 'A' and 'B' grades. Value adding by the school was indicated by the percentage of 'A' grade assessments increasing from 8 per cent in Year 1 to 19 per cent in Year 6.
- *Improvement of results in Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) science test in all years 2015–2017. ACER baseline data was collected in all years in 2015 to support evaluation of student progress. The experienced science specialist teacher led the school in questioning the fairness and validity of the assessment when taking into consideration the tests do not closely reflect the content being taught through the Western Australian Curriculum. In 2016, the ACER and moderated task assessments were replaced by all students in Years 3–6 having their work assessed against the Brightpath calibrated scale. The school is expecting data in 2017 to show individual student improvement with access to school level comparisons.*

History/social sciences and humanities targets

- *Increase the average score across all year groups on mandated school-based history assessments and the average score on mandated history assessments to match or exceed average scores of like-schools on interschool moderated tasks.* These two targets are recorded as no longer relevant.
- The focus of this area was on the discreet history and geography disciplines. A history specialist teacher was appointed in 2015, resources purchased and developed and an explicit focus was made to link literature with history. The targets set within this area were documented prior to the introduction of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline.
- The role of the history specialist was discontinued in 2016. As teachers required time for them to become familiar with the HASS curriculum, and in lieu of the availability of standardised assessments; moderation processes were undertaken in learning teams.
- It is envisaged the school will adopt Brightpath exemplars for HASS when available and these will be used together with moderation assessments in this area.
- Excellence in Teaching is guided by a set of strategies and corresponding milestones documented in the 2015–2017 Business Plan. These have been reviewed during the biannual self-review of the business plan with a key focus on the underpinning goal and a commitment to quality teaching through building staff capacity to deliver quality learning opportunities.
- A purposeful approach has been applied to professional learning to build staff capacity and engagement in collection, analysis, understanding and use of data on school and student performance and development of data informed planning. There has been a focus on analysis of NAPLAN, EARS First Cut, Best Performance software, trialling ACER assessments and analysis and application of findings of On-entry data.
- Brightpath has recently been introduced for writing and science with identified application for teachers to verify their judgements on student performance, to track student growth over time, compare performances across year levels and to use comparative information of performance with that of other schools. There prevails a commitment by the co-principals to supporting a data driven culture, monitoring quality teaching and a high expectation that teachers will increasingly use their professional expertise of data informed instructional planning. This should be reflected in improved outcomes of student engagement, progress and achievement.
- Staff are encouraged to engage in quality evidence-based practices to develop high quality teaching and learning. Individual staff have adopted research-based

pedagogical practices such as visible learning strategies, explicit teaching maps, practical formative assessment strategies and dedicated literacy and numeracy blocks.

- A focus on identifying and implementing evidence-based whole-school pedagogical practices remains an area for school improvement and will address the recommendation of the 2014 independent review for continued development of common planning and teaching documents to ensure consistency of whole-school practice.
- Excellence in Teaching documentation identifies the strategy of collegiate-based performance and development processes. Two milestones are identified. The first is team-based collaborative sharing of performance and development goals. The second is the collegiate support in provision of feedback on performance and development goals in line with procedures supported by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. The 2014 independent review made recommendation for the analysis of the school's performance management model's effectiveness in monitoring and supporting teachers and the consistency of procedures across the school. The co-principals are aware that while there are some effective outcomes of this process, it is an area of school improvement to be addressed.
- The school is commended on providing learning programs which contribute to pathways leading to meaningful and externally recognised outcomes beyond school. The school supports the gifted and talented program with students encouraged to pursue interests and develop expertise in fields of drama, music, science and environmental studies. Many students are awarded specialist scholarships to secondary schools. Teachers of upper primary classes support students in developing higher order thinking and habits of problem-solving and life related skills.
- The School of Instrument Music complements private music tuition and the school's music specialist program. Students participate in the school band, string ensemble and choir. The appointment of a specialist teacher of drama during the current business plan has had a significant impact on student confidence to participate in drama. A Winthrop Drama Troupe has been established. Students are encouraged to audition to take on roles and these have included success in professional production and off-campus presentations.
- The specialist health teacher provides guidance and opportunities to broaden responsibilities for student leadership through the 'Blue Earth' program. Explicit leadership skills are taught and opportunities planned for students to demonstrate these qualities including sportsmanship and resilience.
- Leaders from Year 5 have an active leadership role in the school's 'Roots and Shoots' program. 'Be the Change' is being implemented as a whole-school focus

and is providing student insight into and responsibility for caring for the environment. Student councillors and faction captains are guided in their school responsibilities.

Area of strength

- Providing learning programs which contribute to pathways leading to meaningful and externally recognised outcomes beyond school.

Areas for improvement

- A focus on identifying and implementing evidence-based whole-school pedagogical practices.
- The analysis of the school's performance management model's effectiveness in monitoring and supporting teachers and the consistency of procedures across the school.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- As defined in the school's Annual Self-assessment Review Process, school performance and assessment targets are closely monitored. Evidence provided to the reviewers was extensive and detailed. A key for target assessment has been applied as 'achieved', 'working towards', 'no longer a target' or 'not achieved' and aligned to a colour coded system. Documentation was available to show how each stage of the school's review process is managed, the staff contribution to the process, how the findings influence the school's improvement program, and how the information gathered is shared with the school board as well as the school community. This was an area of acknowledgement in the 2014 independent review and continues to be a strength, particularly evident in the leadership demonstrated by the co-principals.
- A key component of the school's review process is the monitoring of student performance. All teachers are expected to meet assessment requirements set out in the Annual Documentation and Data Collection Schedule. The data collection cycle is designed to provide comprehensive baseline data to show the performance and progress of individual students and cohorts over time.
- A variety of assessment tools are used to assess standards including diagnostic tests Intervening Years NAPLAN, NAPLAN, On-entry assessments, Brightpath, ACER, PreLit, MiniLit and MacqLit.
- The collection and monitoring of data is led by the co-principals who demonstrate a strong commitment to the school's improvement program being based on the effective analysis of the programs in place. It is evident they have a clear understanding of the school's progress against the business plan targets, use the analysis of quality data to guide planning to improve student and school performance and strive to have all staff involved in the review process. They are assisted by the two deputy principals who, together with members of the curriculum leadership team, have a shared responsibility to ensure that the review process is effective in the three learning teams and the Student Services/Learning Support team.
- Discussions with many staff members indicated to reviewers that the staff acknowledges the value and recognition of the need for quality data but that not all are aware of the overall performance levels at the school. While it is a school with many fine attributes, including the reference to outstanding academic performance evidenced by the school's position of thirtieth of the top 40 primary

schools in the 2016 NAPLAN results in Western Australia, this does not necessarily reflect the true potential of the school and suggests an area of school improvement on developing the common whole-school focus of students reaching their full potential.

- A comprehensive report of the school's progress is prepared each year and endorsed by the school board. The information presented is wide ranging and includes detailed information about all areas of the school's curriculum, both the identified priority areas and the progress in special programs. While describing progress in academic areas and making reference to the school's position in relation to like-schools, progress against targets set out in the business plan is not included. In accordance with the very open approach to providing information to the school community, the 2014 Annual Report and 2015 Annual Report were made widely available to the community.
- The reviewers share confidence that the present high focus placed on the monitoring of student progress will continue under the current leadership structure. The co-principals who share the relieving position at present, and supported by the substantive principal, place a high value on the evaluation of programs and teacher effectiveness and are working in accordance with a planned change agenda to ensure all staff are involved and have ownership of the school's performance.

Areas of strength

- The comprehensive process of self-review and links to both the DPA and the school business plan.
- The leadership focus on maintaining a school review process that is systematic, collaborative and rigorous with purposeful data collection and analysis.
- The planned change agenda of the leadership team to ensure all staff are involved and have ownership of the school's performance.

Area for improvement

- A broader engagement of staff with the school's performance data and development of common understandings relating to school performance.

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- There is strong evidence to show that Winthrop Primary School continues to place high importance on providing extensive opportunities for its students and that this is done in an environment of support and safety. Staff, students and parents share a sense of pride in the school and a belief that it is successful, with the school community taking a collective approach to ensure the safety of all.
- The co-principals ensure that teaching programs are not only in accord with system expectations but that they are genuinely aimed at meeting the needs of the school's diverse student enrolment. The school is 'on track' to meet the implementation schedule of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline.
- Support for students is provided through a range of programs, implemented to ensure that students have every opportunity to succeed. Evidence of this can be seen in:
 - *The promotion of resilience.* Rigorous and frank discussion by staff on observed student behaviour, examination of attitude, behaviour and effort data from formal reports, Integris records and student and parent surveys has determined the direction of an element of social commitment during the current business plan to developing student resilience. Staff identified that many students influenced by the school and community focus on 'perfectionism', were reluctant to 'have a go' and take risks and that this was affecting their performance. Addressing this issue has underwritten much of the school's planning in the current business plan and also in the next, with several strategies implemented at the school to develop student potential, including appointment of a health specialist teacher conducting weekly Health and Wellbeing lessons. Parents have been fully informed of this work and have been encouraged to factor it in when discussing expectations with their children.
 - *English language support.* With the enrolment of a significant number of students with a language background other than English and students identified as EAL/D, the school acknowledges how critical it is to give these students the best possible support. A change in the staff profile has enabled employment of two additional education assistants who are guided by an EAL/D coordinator to work with small groups of students in the early years.

An area of strength of the school is the strong link maintained with parents of EAL/D students.

- *The assistance provided to teachers through the Student Services/Learning Support Team.* A school structure is in place to implement the school's effective and consistent three wave process in identifying, planning for and supporting students who have either learning or behavioural needs which place them at educational risk. The learning support coordinator role has been re-introduced and funds allocated to purchase additional school psychologist time on a weekly basis. The initial role of teachers is recognised as fundamental in the initial observation, assessment phase and in developing independent education plans when required.
- The school is supportive of the development of staff leadership and recognises the achievements of Level 3 classroom teachers. The distributed leadership model provides opportunities for staff to engage in a range of leadership roles. Some have supported this, taking on a role as a team leader of a year level learning team which is a key component of the school management structure with responsibility for implementing operational planning, data review and analysis, and supporting professional learning. However, it is evident that a number of experienced teachers with a broad range of skills are reluctant to commit to leadership roles or to participate in the mentoring of less experienced teachers.
- The recently formed curriculum team has a representative from each school team, each of whom have a shared responsibility for leading the learning teams in curriculum. Other teachers have taken a leadership role in specialist areas using their expertise to provide collegiate support and curriculum guidance and to lead staff professional learning sessions.
- A feature of the staff's willingness to promote school improvement is seen in the Formative Assessment Team, a group of teachers who meet out of school time, to research, discuss and plan strategies and often subsequently present their research findings to the whole staff. Teams are trusted to identify areas for focus within their area, identify strategies to address them, manage resources within their area and have the opportunity to request financial support for initiatives. Leadership of the teams is in the hands of curriculum team members who are supported by a deputy principal. The intention to provide leadership opportunities is commended but there is a lack of clarity around how this model is aligned to the performance management of staff and the role/s of each of the deputy principals. An area for school improvement is for leadership roles to be clarified.
- The reviewers met with many of the teaching staff and visited a number of classrooms, confirming there are exemplary teachers with extensive experience and commitment to their role. The reviewers endorse the acknowledgement of the co-principals that an area of school improvement is the engagement of staff

in whole-school pedagogy practice and program implementation as part of the school's approach to raising student and school performance. An aspect that should be considered is the introduction of structured blocks of time for the teaching of literacy and numeracy which, together with collaborative planning time where possible, would provide the school leadership with an opportunity to more closely monitor the student progress and classroom practice.

- The staff acknowledge the role information and communications technologies (ICT) will play in the lives of its students and have ensured that its use is prominent in the school in the delivery of programs. Teachers are making extensive use of electronic white boards and students regularly use a computer to assist their learning. For six years the school has also had a '*Bring Your Own Device*' policy, supported by the parents and the school board, encouraging students in Year 4 and above to purchase their own laptop computer and take it to and from home on a daily basis. A significant price rise in suitable computers is now causing parents who are unclear about the program's educational benefits to question the policy. Acknowledging the significance of this issue, the co-principals and school board have commenced a comprehensive review of the policy involving all stakeholders in a focus on pedagogical merits as well as the financial issues of the policy.

Areas of strength

- The inclusive school culture where students are provided with opportunities to progress in a safe environment.
- The strong link maintained between the school and parents of EAL/D students.

Areas for improvement

- Clearly identify the roles of the leadership team to ensure accountability.
- Support the improved teaching of literacy and numeracy through the introduction of structured 'blocks' of time.

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 school self-review process established at Winthrop Primary School consistently informs school improvement through evidence-based decision-making. This process is directly linked to the DPA and the 2015–2017 Business Plan to ensure review, adjustments and improvements are made as required based on performance and identified changes in context.
- Allocation of resources is linked to operational plans and includes resourcing for special projects to ensure enriched learning opportunities for students. This is a relatively new school process, with teachers through team leaders, taking on increased responsibility linked to learning team cost-centre management. Operational planning and data-based project funding submissions have ensured that resourcing is evidence-based. Evidence of this comprehensive process was verified and supported through discussions with staff, the manager corporate services and school board members.
- Workforce planning is functional and includes key workforce targets, strategies, resourcing and measures of success. It has been designed to ensure that the structure and composition of the school staff profile supports the current and future needs of the educational and social needs of the students. The planning considered the reclassification of the school in 2015 from a Level 6 to a Level 5 school which led to a staff reduction, the significant changes in the leadership team 2015–2017, the challenges created by the large number of staff employed part-time (currently 47 per cent of the teaching staff and 50 per cent support staff) and the profile of Winthrop Primary School as a 'school of choice' with parents moving to take up residence in the local-intake area.
- The principal identified and selected a balance of experienced and graduate teachers to replace staff as required. At this stage it appears that staff retirements will balance staff requirements. Resource allocation supports professional learning, aspirations of staff and succession planning. Based on staff and community survey data, the changing profile of the school and the needs of the students the principal made some hard decisions in 2015 relating to the workforce profile of the school and selection of specialist support staff. This created some anxiety among staff and the co-principals continue to provide support to assist some staff accept and adapt to change.
- A renewed staff profile is reflected in the Workforce Plan 2017–2018 and aims to ensure the structure and composition of the school workforce supports the

current and future needs of the school. The co-principals are aware of the impact of this staffing profile in the areas of communication, professional learning and performance management.

- The school is well-resourced and the school environment is welcoming. All classrooms appear well-equipped and there is a good range of playground equipment including developing a second nature playground for students in the early years.
- A recent upgrade of the school library now provides for a library facility and an ICT resource centre equipped for individual students and whole-class computer assisted learning. Two ICT technicians have been employed to problem-solve and maintain systems throughout the school.
- The support of the community is outstanding and parents work with the school to assist with fundraising to support school initiatives and projects to support the learning and physical environment. A community liaison officer manages the website, some aspects of communication and assists with the uptake of 'Connect' with staff and parents.

Area of strength

- Resources are well managed to ensure sustainability.

School Board

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

Findings

- The reviewers determined that the board was highly effective, active and representative of the school community. The commitment and leadership of the board chair in maintaining a strong focus on the strategic direction of the school is commended. The board membership is diverse with a range of expertise contributing to effective involvement in decision-making.
- There is a clear understanding of the role of the board and its separation from the operational management of the school. New members are inducted through 'on-the-job' training each year and the board membership is fully compliant. Annual reviews have been conducted ascertaining role and process effectiveness with action taken in areas for improvement.
- The board was an active partner in the review of the previous business plan and in the drafting of the 2015–2017 Business Plan. Biannual reviews and regular co-principal reporting at board meetings ensures the board is informed on the work of the school towards meeting business plan targets. Discussion with board and reviewers verified the board endorsement of the DPA, the annual report, the budget and has reviewed the processes the school uses to review school performance.
- Communication between the board and the parent community is effective and highly regarded by the school leaders, the staff and parents. Parents are very supportive of the board and its role within the school.
- The board is able to discuss and contribute to policy direction of the school and works collaboratively with the leadership team to resolve contentious issues such as review of the 1:1 laptop program.
- Reviewers encourage the board members to fully interrogate data presented by the school leadership relating to school performance and student progress and achievement.
- Areas of sponsorship have been explored and are to be revisited by the board in the future.

Areas of strength

- Strong school communication processes and structures.
- A well established, compliant, committed and functional board.

Area for improvement

- Through interrogation of data presented by the school leadership, the board draw conclusions that support school improvement strategies relating to school performance and student progress and achievement.

Conclusion

Winthrop Primary School has embedded a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment for its culturally diverse student population reflective of its common goal to 'Learn and Grow Together' complemented by an aesthetically pleasing physical environment.

The school self-review process is directly linked to the DPA and the 2015–2017 Business Plan. Adjustments and improvements are made as required based on performance and identified changes in context. There is a consistent and functional process for identifying, planning and providing for students with learning and/or behavioural needs.


Communication between the board and the parent community is effective and highly regarded by the school leaders, the staff and parents. Parents are very supportive of the school and the board role within the school.

Essential elements identified as part of the school agenda for improved student learning include promotion of an accountable distributive leadership model, collaborative planning and consistent approaches to pedagogy. The co-principals are committed to developing with staff, enhanced consistency of teaching practice in agreed whole-school strategies.

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

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



Mrs Georgina Detiuk, Lead Reviewer

31 May 2017

Date



Mr Rod Baker, Reviewer

31 May 2017

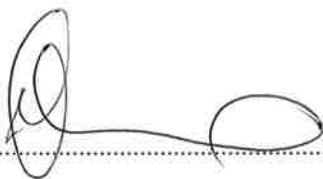
Date



Ms Eirlys Ingram, Reviewer

31 May 2017

Date



Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,
Department of Education Services

6/6/17

Date

