



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education

Goollelal Primary School

2017

Review Findings



Independent Public School Review

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Ms Lynne Anderson
Board Chair:	Ms Jo-Dee Mansell
School Address:	30 Cadogan Street, Kingsley WA 6026
Number of Students:	235
ICSEA¹	1072
Reviewers:	Ms Su Wilson (Lead) Ms Denise Hilsz
Review Dates:	6 and 7 November 2017

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this 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.

The principal provided the school self-review conclusions to the reviewers one month prior to the commencement of the review.

The 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
- School Performance Monitoring
- Schools Online reports.

Reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school 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)?

Goollelal Primary School is located 20 kilometres north of Perth in the suburb of Kingsley. The Level 4 school is in the North Metropolitan Education Region and caters for 235 Kindergarten to Year 6 students. The levels of student attendance are high at 95.7%, compared to 94.4% in like-schools.

The staff includes 16 teachers (11.2 full-time equivalent [FTE]), 13 support staff (8.5 FTE), a principal (1 FTE) and a deputy principal (1 FTE).

The school has had three principals during this DPA period. The previous substantive principal led the school for 10 years, leaving to take up a new position in Semester 2 of 2016. The deputy principal was appointed to the acting principal role during Semester 2. The current principal commenced in January 2017.

The school has an ICSEA of 1072. The community includes 11% of students from language backgrounds other than English and 2% are Aboriginal students.

Enrolment trends are steady with low student movement levels. Initiatives to maintain and increase the enrolment rate include the development of the Goollelal Primary School Playgroup and the provision of on-site out-of-hours school care.

The school is strongly supported by its board, parents and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C). The school is an important part of the local community and there are active and ongoing partnerships with local businesses and the wider community.

Findings

- The Business Plan 2015–17 outlines the long-term strategic approach for the school and describes key areas detailing aspirations, strategies and evidence.
- The school's vision of "providing all students with a quality education; one that promotes a respect for self and others, embraces the pursuit of personal excellence and inspires a love of lifelong learning" is reflected in the goals and objectives which are articulated in the business plan.
- Key focus areas include:
 - high quality teaching, learning and leadership
 - successful students
 - community, culture and care.

- The business plan in the most part details aspirations rather than targets and these are set out as broad statements of areas of improvement in the three key focus areas. Discussions with the principal, deputy principal and board confirmed that the development of targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited will strengthen the next business plan.
- A diverse range of strategies and evidence is set out within the three focus areas and these form the basis of annual operational plans.
- Annual operational plans, review documents and discussions with staff confirmed that the content of the business plan directs learning area and classroom planning, teaching and assessment.
- The business plan has been reviewed annually by staff and the school board. The 2015 Annual Report was not aligned to the business plan; however, the 2016 Annual Report includes a thorough assessment and report of the business plan to the community.
- The principal, board and staff confirmed that the business plan was developed after extensive research, analysis and consultation in 2015.
- Endorsement of the business plan by the board was confirmed and the plan is available to the public on the school and Department of Education websites.

Area for improvement

- Develop a set of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited targets for the next business plan.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- In citing evidence to demonstrate the achievement of aspirations described in the school's business plan, one target was set to measure performance in the focus area of high quality teaching, learning and leadership. This target was designed to measure student achievement in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in Year 3 and Year 5, with performance evaluated as part of the school's self-review.
- Evidence collected against this target indicates performance over the term of the business plan has been inconsistent. While NAPLAN 2017 data for Year 3 shows strong performance in numeracy, complemented by steady performance in reading, spelling, grammar and punctuation and to a lesser extent writing, a downward trend is evident in Year 5 writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation.
- Specifically, the single target articulated in the school's business plan stated: "Maintain or increase the % of students at or above the Australian Mean (Year 3 and Year 5 NAPLAN data)". Performance against this target is as follows:
 - for Year 3 the target was achieved for numeracy, reading, spelling and grammar and punctuation, but not achieved for writing
 - for Year 5 the target was achieved for numeracy, spelling, grammar and punctuation and writing, but not achieved for reading.

Discussions with school leaders raised questions regarding the value of setting targets which use the Australian mean as the standard against which performance is measured when considering the potential of students attending a school with an ICSEA of 1072. These concerns were raised by staff once implementation of the business plan was under way and led to the development of targets which aligned with operational plans. School leaders believed these annual targets would provide information they considered to be more relevant for use in planning for ongoing improvement. These targets were designed to compare both progress and achievement against that of like-schools as well as Australian schools, and performance was published in the 2016 Annual Report.

- Discussions highlighted a number of points:
 - the quality of the targets set in the business plan provided limited information that was of use, particularly as the Australian mean was not well suited as the standard against which performance was being measured
 - setting targets which aligned with operational plans was a positive step although care still needs to be taken in ensuring the information gained is of use
 - future target setting needs to be both strategic and purposeful to provide information which will inform future planning.
- Non-academic targets were not set for the school's business plan.
- Also significant is the progress of the Year 3 to Year 5 stable cohort from year to year. Progress of students who were in Year 3 in 2015 and in Year 5 in 2017 exceeds like-schools in numeracy, reading and spelling but declines well below in writing and grammar and punctuation. This performance differs from the performance of the Year 3 to Year 5 stable cohort from 2014 to 2016 which declines well below like-schools in reading and spelling, yet exceeds them in writing and is close to their performance in numeracy and grammar and punctuation. This lack of consistency in performance is providing the school with evidence to drive decisions which will impact on teaching practice. While staff acknowledge the responsibility for performance is shared, consistent and connected teaching practice is essential for improvement to be sustained.
- Students with special needs or at educational or emotional risk receive extensive support through a Students at Educational Risk (SAER) program led by the deputy principal. Detailed policies, procedures and planning underpin the individual planning, case management and delivery of programs. Students are placed on documented plans developed by teachers in collaboration with the deputy principal, parents/carers and, where required, the school psychologist and support agencies external to the school. Class teachers are confident in differentiating their teaching to meet the needs of these students with the assistance of highly trained special needs education assistants who provide additional support to ensure learning opportunities meet their varying needs.
- The deputy principal also leads processes in place for students in receipt of disability funding through coordinated case conferences to review student progress, the provision of professional learning for staff, coordination of external support, as well as ensuring regular communication with parents. Parents interviewed confirmed that they highly value the programs for students with special learning needs and the level of care and support provided. Of note is the school's commitment to these students through the provision of

additional funding to provide a high level of support, as well as establishing processes to ensure all special needs education assistants (EAs) are provided with training to support every child with a disability who attends the school.

- Collaborative teams meet twice each term with meeting agendas determined by team leaders, school leaders and teaching staff. While this practice is effective, formalising the purpose of collaborative teams by strengthening the role that team leaders play in the school's decision-making processes will further contribute to a culture where teachers work together to implement coordinated, evidence-driven planning for improvement. Once teachers see their efforts in collaborative planning and teaching are valued in contributing to school improvement, their focus will shift to one of collective ownership of whole-school learning goals and outcomes. This growing importance of collaborative team structures should also influence the operation of the collaborative team in place for special needs EAs.
- All staff participate in a formal, documented cycle of performance development which encompasses personal reflection and goal setting, co-coaching and observations of practice. The cycle commences with each teacher's self-reflection of their performance against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the school's needs as outlined in the business plan and learning area targets and priorities. It then progresses through a number of steps with each providing some degree of feedback to the teacher. These include co-coaching with a peer, peer shadowing and observations by the principal or deputy principal. While this process is valued by teaching staff, discussions with school leaders acknowledged the different ways in which teachers operate in the middle and senior primary classes. Reviewers support their intention to focus the next cycle of performance development on the need for connected practice, possibly with 'Talk4Writing' as a starting point. Strong processes are also in place for the performance management of special needs EAs.
- Supporting the teaching and learning program is a strong shared purpose exemplified through the school's motto of 'sharing, caring and learning' and evidenced by the way in which the teaching and support staff, students, parents and the board speak of how much they value being a part of the school community. This passion is key to ensuring improvement is ongoing and sustained.

Areas of strength

- The creation of a caring and supportive environment where the whole-school community joins together to engage students in learning.
- The strong, united leadership of the principal and deputy principal in building a cohesive learning environment that is valued by staff, students and parents.
- The commitment, expertise and determination of the deputy principal in working with staff to sustain high quality support for students with disabilities or at educational risk.
- The professional and skilled standard of support for students and teachers provided by the special needs EAs.

Areas for improvement

- Investigate the use of non-academic targets to measure performance as per the requirements of the DPA.
- Continue with the intention to focus on the need for connected practice in all classrooms in the next performance development cycle.
- Strengthen the collaborative team structure and the role played by team leaders in contributing to decision-making processes.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- Assessment of performance against areas of focus in the business plan has been conducted over the three years of implementation. School leaders also provided reviewers with documented self-assessment of the key areas of teaching and learning, school performance monitoring, and resourcing and support outlined in the DPA.
- Evidence of processes for the review of school performance and targets and priorities as outlined in the business plan is documented in the Annual Report 2016 and the school review document which links to additional evidence of performance collected by staff. Operational planning also includes an annual schedule for whole-school data collection as well as details on how performance in each operational plan is to be monitored by staff. While this information is useful, a schedule which supports the whole-school data collection document by outlining how the information is to be collected, analysed and reported at whole-school, collaborative team and classroom levels, would ensure everyone is aware of the role they play in the process of school review. The principal shared with reviewers that it was her intention to develop a policy and schedule for assessment to coincide with the new business planning cycle.
- The annual report now plays a key role in the process of self-review, providing information on progress in aspirations, strategies and targets contained in the business plan. In addition, the 2016 Annual Report also outlines performance against targets appearing in operational plans for literacy and numeracy. This inclusion was valuable given the limited worth of information gained from evaluating performance against the business plan's targets.
- The school's self-review process has been enhanced by use of the National Quality Standard (NQS) as a tool for self-reflection. This work has led to positive outcomes for everyone given the strong focus on improving outdoor learning spaces which are shared by students across all year levels. This recognition of the impact of the NQS by all staff not only supports the engagement of staff in regular and ongoing reflection of their practice but is leading to evidence-based decisions on the quality of the learning environment.

- The absence of non-academic targets in the business plan was noted. School staff review progress in areas of focus from the business plan not measured by academic performance through the achievement of milestones and the successful implementation of strategies. While attendance is not a concern at the school and so has not been included as an area of focus in the current business plan, the use of non-academic targets to measure student behaviour or the achievement of personal goals would provide valuable data for use as evidence to measure performance in aspirations such as “students adopt increasing responsibility and accountability for learning.” Strategically designed targets will provide valuable information to inform future planning.

- Having worked through the term of the current business plan, school leaders are putting in place strategies to build on existing processes to monitor performance against the DPA and associated business plan. The benefits of stable school leadership are already being seen through:
 - intentions to build on the existing model of distributed leadership ensuring opportunities are available to adopt leadership roles and training provided
 - an evolving culture of shared data analysis and evidence-based planning for improvement
 - workforce planning that considers the needs of the school when future appointments are made
 - acknowledgement of the need to review the quality and usefulness of assessments
 - the developing skill of members of the school board in working with data to ensure governance is strong.

Given these intentions, the school is well placed to ensure that future student performance monitoring is sustained.

Area for improvement

- Continue with the intention to develop a policy and schedule for assessment which will outline how data and information used to determine student progress and achievement is to be collected, analysed and reported to ensure everyone is aware of the role they play in the process of school review.

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- Education programs are designed and delivered to meet the needs of students in accordance with the requirements of the *School Education Act 1999*, *School Education Regulations 2000* and the *School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act 1997*.
- The school's organisational structure includes collaborative teams: Years K–2, Years 3–6 and special needs EAs. The teams meet regularly to plan, moderate and share strategies. Discussions with staff reflected professional commitment to the team approach in supporting school improvement and student learning.
- It was evident that the school places high importance on providing extensive opportunities for all students in a safe and supportive environment. Staff, students and parents share a sense of pride and confidence in the quality and safety of the school.
- Research and training undertaken by the deputy principal has led to the development of a sensory room to further provide for the needs of students at risk. Special needs EAs are actively involved in supporting students in this area. Parents and staff spoke positively of the value of the sensory room in assisting students with anxiety and engagement issues.
- A comprehensive behaviour management policy and set of procedures has been developed to support students and staff. The behaviour of students is of a high standard and supports a positive learning environment. Management of students with significant behavioural issues is supported effectively by individual behaviour plans and the positive approach by teachers and special needs EAs.
- An innovative program, the Resilience Doughnut, assists with the growing needs of students displaying anxiety and low resilience. The research, professional learning and consistent use of the program across the school supports students and builds social and emotional skills.
- A distributed model for student leadership was introduced in 2017 which provides leadership roles for all Year 6 students and engages students in leadership in the areas of sport, community, information and communications technology (ICT) and environment. Feedback from students, parents and staff indicated this model had

a positive impact in building confidence, teamwork and responsibility in all students.

- Specialist programs in physical education, digital technologies and science, technology, engineering and mathematics enrich the school. In 2018, the online Indonesian program Ketwa will be introduced as part of the school's languages other than English program. Science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics specialisation is an outstanding feature of the school and is effectively led by the science specialist. The level of student engagement and achievement is reflected in Progressive Achievement Tests, science test results, success in science competitions and feedback on those students subsequently attending the local secondary school.
- ICT is integrated across the school. Features include interactive whiteboards in all learning areas, a computer laboratory in the library, classroom computers and access to iPads. The plan to lease additional iPads will increase the accessibility to support teaching and learning. The P&C has a strategic fundraising plan that includes an ongoing commitment to fund the leasing of hardware. The specialist digital technology teacher provides expertise and professional learning with external providers assisting with technical support.
- The school offers a broad range of enrichment activities. Students in Years 2–6 have choir and musical theatre as an option. Lunchtime activities include robotics, modelling, art and chemistry. The commitment to provide these programs is evidence of the professionalism and dedication of staff. Feedback from students and parents was enthusiastic about the value of these opportunities to cater for a range of learning styles and talents.
- Attendance levels at the school have improved and are now higher than like-schools. Staff believe the improvement has been the result of a positive culture of care and respect, quality teaching, the diversity of high interest options and an inclusive approach to students and parents. National survey data and feedback from students and parents throughout the review visit confirmed high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the school programs.
- After extensive research and feedback from parents a school playgroup commenced at the school in 2017. The program is provided through Playgroup Western Australia and supports readiness and transition to school.
- A chaplaincy program effectively supports the school's pastoral care strategies and provides individual and group work for one day each week. The school has plans to extend the program to two days to provide additional support for students.

- A range of policies and procedures is in place to ensure the safety and welfare of students during school and excursion activities in accordance with Department of Education policies.
- Day-to-day management of the school is efficient and ensures a productive learning and work environment. The principal's leadership style is one of empowering staff and value adding to the quality of the existing programs. There is effective collaboration and shared leadership with the deputy principal and this will strengthen the sustained improvement of the school program.
- The 2016 National School Survey was completed by students, staff and parents. The school board and staff have considered the results of the surveys. Data and analysis were published in the 2016 annual report. Details of actions in response to the survey analysis would provide further direction for improvements and feedback to parents.
- Reviewers are confident that the school can sustain educational programs that are designed and delivered to meet the needs of students.

Areas of strength

- The development of a sensory room which provides an area for activities which calm and focus students who have anxiety and engagement issues.
- The professional commitment of staff in providing an innovative range of clubs and optional lunchtime activities which enhance engagement, extension and challenge for students.

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

- Resourcing decisions are considered by the principal, manager corporate services, finance committee and board. Allocations are linked to the business plan and operational plans and are targeted to support identified programs, projects and intervention strategies.
- The effective use of resources is reflected in the school environment which is conducive to learning, safety, play and positive relationships. Most classes are in double rooms that have been developed into spacious and flexible learning areas.
- Additional resources are allocated to support SAER. Funds are directed towards providing additional time (0.4 FTE) for special needs EAs. The assistants deliver highly effective specific programs and support for students and teachers.
- A workforce plan details the current workforce, a description of their role and FTE status. A workforce analysis and action plan are included; however, there is no evidence of future planning for leadership development, sustainability and the strategic needs of the school.
- Community support for the school is outstanding and parents work with the school to help with fundraising and working parties to continue to develop the learning and physical environment. The P&C strategic fundraising plan includes a strong focus on maintaining the school's positive community culture.
- Additional funding is acquired through the leasing of building space and an after-school care program. The school board has developed and implemented a successful sponsorship program which has attracted 13 sponsors who have provided more than \$8000 to improve school resources. The sponsorship agreements and procedures are compliant with Department of Education policy.
- Effective monitoring of resources and replacement plans ensure high standards in school programs and facilities. The age of the school has led to an ongoing commitment to maintenance and upgrading buildings and grounds to ensure an attractive appearance. The school's buildings and grounds are well-maintained by the support staff.

- School premises and grounds are expansive and provide specialised areas for science, library, music, playgroup, a sensory room and an area for parents to read with their children each morning. Students can select from a wide range of play areas and equipment which contributes to a safe and happy atmosphere of the outdoor areas.
- The reviewers confirmed that the school is structured and managed to sustain resourcing and support to continue to provide an engaging and relevant learning environment for all students.

Area of strength

- The high level of community and local business support for the school to provide a range of resources and activities which benefit all students.

Area for improvement

- Develop workforce plans to include future planning for leadership development, sustainability and the strategic needs of the school.

School Board

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

Findings

- The board is made up of a representative group of the school community and complies with the *School Education Act 1999* and *School Education Regulations 2000*. The principal, three parents, two staff representatives and a community representative work together to fulfil the obligations of the DPA.
- Board members come from a wide range of professions associated with finance, accounting, local government, strategic planning and management. This skill set provides valuable and constructive input into the endorsement of the DPA.
- Under the consistent leadership of a parent representative chair the board makes a significant contribution through analysis and feedback relating to student achievement, surveys, policy development and ratification of the business plan, budgets and annual report.
- Board meetings are held regularly and one of these meetings is a public meeting that members of the wider school community can attend. Board meetings are detailed in minutes that have previously been made available through the school website and a parent representative regularly updates parents at P&C meetings about board business. Board members try to make contact and to have informal conversations with members of the wider community at school events and before and after school.
- A meeting with a group of parents indicated limited understanding of the board activities, roles and responsibilities. Discussions with the principal and board members confirmed the need to improve visibility and communications with parents through an updated board presence on the website, regular information from the chair and further opportunities for board members to be presented to parents.
- Meetings with board members demonstrated that they had a clear understanding of the separation between governance and operations. The chair has provided consistent support to the principals during the changes in school leadership and was the board representative on the selection panel to appoint the new principal.

- The board understands their roles and responsibilities in fulfilling the requirements of the DPA. The principal and the board chair ensure that all relevant data and information relating to these items is presented throughout the year.
- Board effectiveness surveys have been completed and discussions with the board demonstrated a reflective and improvement focused approach to their work.
- The community representative is involved in investigating a 'fathering' project for the school and has assisted the school to involve students in presenting a radio show.
- A successful sponsorship program has been developed and implemented by the board. This initiative is providing significant additional funds for school resources.
- The board chair received training when the school became an IPS. Board representatives receive relevant background documentation when they are appointed and there is an informal induction process. Board training modules have been provided to all representatives. Further discussion of the modules will enhance awareness.
- Constructive collaboration between the chair, board representatives and principal has been maintained throughout the period of the DPA. The reviewers are confident that the board will continue to provide quality governance at the school.

Area of strength

- Strong leadership and advocacy for the school by the chair throughout the duration of the DPA. The collaboration and support provided consistently for three principals during this cycle is commendable.

Area for improvement

- Explore additional opportunities to communicate with the broader community regarding the activities and responsibilities of the board.

Conclusion

Goollelal Primary School staff, together with members of the board, have used the review process as an opportunity to reflect on the school's performance against aspirations and targets set in the Business Plan 2015–17 and demonstrated that these commitments, as outlined in the DPA, have been met.

The school has established high quality relationships with its parents and wider community, which has led to a positive and purposeful environment where staff and students are happy, parents feel welcome and all parties are valued and respected.

Alignment of planning at business, operational and classroom levels provides staff with purposeful strategies which support whole-school direction while helping teachers focus on ensuring every child's needs are met.

While performance in some areas could be stronger there is evidence of positive change, particularly in the early years, to support ongoing improvement. A growing culture of collaboration, shared leadership and a commitment to reflective practice should place the school in a stronger position to build on these achievements.

This commitment to ongoing school improvement will be further strengthened by the board's intention to continue developing its governance capacity to maintain effective oversight of school planning and accountability processes.

The board, school leaders and staff are proud of the school and are committed to ensuring it is well placed to sustain and improve its performance.

Declaration

We confirm the information in this document is, to the best of our knowledge and based on the verification of the evidence provided by Goollelal Primary School, true and correct.

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



Ms Su Wilson, Lead Reviewer

15 January 2018

Date



Ms Denise Hilsz, Reviewer

15 January 2018

Date



Mr Ken Perris, Director
Independent Public School Review

24 January 2018

Date