



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Education**

# Kyilla Primary School

**2017**  
**Review Findings**



Independent Public School Review

## Disclaimer

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## **School and Review Details**

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Principal:</b>          | Ms Jo Hine                              |
| <b>Board Chair:</b>        | Mr Campbell Baird                       |
| <b>School Address:</b>     | 4 Selkirk Street, North Perth WA 6006   |
| <b>Number of Students:</b> | 312                                     |
| <b>ICSEA<sup>1</sup></b>   | 1134                                    |
| <b>Reviewers:</b>          | Mr Tom Campbell (Lead)<br>Mr Mark Brown |
| <b>Review Dates:</b>       | 1 and 2 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](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*<sup>®</sup> 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 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)?*

Kyilla Primary School accepts students from a small local-intake area within the suburbs of North Perth, Coolbinia and Joondanna. Within the school's intake area there has been a change in the demographic with more school-age children living within the boundaries.

The learning environment at the school is very well presented with evidence of all classrooms being attractive and promoting student participation. The external environment is a mixture of buildings ranging from the original structure built in 1945, demountable classrooms of varying age and condition and recently constructed facilities. Due to increasing numbers, three early childhood transportable classrooms have been added to the buildings with an additional demountable used for music and another scheduled for classroom use in 2018.

The school's ICSEA (1134) has remained stable in recent times. A number of enrolments have been accepted from outside the local-intake area from parents seeking the relatively small school size and sense of community for their children. Of the 312 students attending the school there is a variety of cultures represented with 56 students speaking a language other than English at home.

## Findings

- The business plan includes the required key elements with an overview, school vision and values articulated. Six focus areas have been identified. These are:
  - improving standards in literacy and numeracy
  - providing a safe environment
  - productive relationships with the community
  - strengthen early childhood education
  - develop staff practice
  - student achievement improvement targets.

Within all but the last of these focus areas broad strategies and milestones have been set. In the last focus area, specific targets for attendance and student achievement have been determined.

- In discussions with the leadership team, staff and board chair several concerns with the business plan were noted. The school has recognised in its self-review that while the broad strategies and milestones provide guidance for the leadership team and staff, not all strategies impact on improving school performance. In some instances the milestones focused more on what had been done in relation to the strategies rather than what progress had been made in the achievement of them.
- The achievement targets, given the students' backgrounds and conducive learning environments are realistic; however, it is clear from the trend data they will not be achieved. The leadership team made it clear that the intention is to address this concern.
- Despite these concerns it was noted in the documentation and through classroom visits that there are strong links between the focus areas of the business plan and classroom practice.
- Staff were involved in the formulation of the business plan and while the school board did not have as active a role, members have been kept informed of progress during the current cycle and are adept at discussing the issues.
- The leadership team, staff and board have begun discussions on the new business plan and have articulated intentions which are likely to result in improvements. This will include setting fewer targets which are clearer and more easily measured. It is also intended to reduce the number of milestones. Clearer links between the business plan targets and operational plan targets will also be a focus.
- The business plan is readily accessed on the school website although discussions with the parent group revealed that knowledge of the plan is limited.
- Although areas of concern have been identified in the current business plan it was noted that the leadership team, staff and school board have reviewed and discussed it on a regular basis during this cycle. The reviewers are confident that with the direction being taken with the new business plan, the school and board will successfully meet their obligations.

### **Areas of strength**

- The leadership team, staff and school board have remained focused on the intent of the current business plan which has been to improve opportunities for the students.

- Discussion relevant to the formulation of the new business plan has been productive and outcomes are likely to be positive.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Develop realistic, measurable targets that have an impact on school improvement and student performance in the next business plan.
- Reduce the number of strategies and milestones for priority areas of school performance in the next business plan.

## Teaching and Learning

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

### Findings

- A priority in the Business Plan 2015–17 has been to “improve standards in literacy and numeracy.” Analysis of documented literacy and numeracy operational plans, discussions with school staff and classroom observations confirmed that whole-school learning and assessment processes in English and numeracy have been developed and are being implemented. However, improved literacy and numeracy standards have not been achieved during the life of the business plan.
- The school’s self-assessment of student performance against the “student achievement improvement targets” in the business plan states it is not as high as expected. The staff analysis and conclusions made using a disciplined dialogue approach were verified by the reviewers, noting that:
  - in 2017, National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) performance was below the expected school mean in numeracy, writing and spelling for Year 3 and numeracy for Year 5
  - the average NAPLAN score for students in Year 3 and Year 5 is below that of students in like-schools
  - in most areas, there are fewer students in the middle and upper NAPLAN proficiency bands when compared to like-schools
  - the NAPLAN results from Year 3 in 2015 to Year 5 in 2017 indicate lower student progress and lower achievement was made than like-schools.
- In discussion with the principal and board chair it was noted that school leadership changes during 2015–17 had a significant impact on the development and implementation of whole-school approaches to literacy and numeracy.
- In 2017, leadership stability has returned within the school with a substantive principal being appointed, enabling greater consistency in decision-making along with support (professional learning and resources) for implementation of whole-school programs. The principal outlined how she has implemented a distributed leadership model to ensure teachers monitor student learning for purposes of making evidence-based planning, teaching and assessment decisions at individual, classroom, cohort and school levels.



- Discussions with curriculum and network leaders and classroom teachers confirmed that the specific needs of students at all levels are being identified and appropriate teaching strategies are being implemented to address them. Documented plans exist for students requiring specific attention and the school's Students at Educational Risk (SAER) policy outlines procedures for intervention and referral where required. Students in middle and upper NAPLAN proficiency bands are also being targeted using a case management approach to provide extension opportunities.
- Greater collaboration among staff in 2017 was evident. The business plan priority to strengthen early childhood education has been embraced by the Years K–2 teachers. They have developed a K–2 Handbook which reflects an improved evidence-based culture and greater consistency in implementation of research-based teaching programs. A similar theme is evident among Years 3–6 teachers.
- On-entry testing and analysis by the Years K–2 team in 2017 indicated students were coming to school with less well-developed oral language skills. In response, the team is implementing an evidence-based approach to oral language and writing known as Talk for Writing.
- Annual performance management involves peer and classroom observation with professional learning being provided to support implementation of teaching and learning strategies. In the next business plan proposals are being developed by the leadership team to focus on whole-school improvement, use of an instructional model and coaching and using theories of action for teaching to investigate classroom practice.
- The reviewers are confident that sustained implementation of whole-school plans will attend to current issues in literacy and numeracy and demonstrate improvement in proficiency across the school.

### **Areas of strength**

- The development and implementation of whole-school teaching and learning approaches in literacy and numeracy.
- The engagement of staff in distributed leadership roles and responsibilities and the discernible improvement it is making to teaching, learning and assessment practices.
- The stability, enthusiasm and confidence among staff about the policies and processes being implemented currently and into the foreseeable future.

**Areas for improvement**

- Ensure that newly developed approaches to literacy and numeracy are implemented in classrooms throughout the school.
- Extend middle and upper proficiency band students to improve their performance.
- Continue to develop a collaborative culture across the whole school.

## Student Performance Monitoring

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

### Findings

- Analysis of school performance priorities and student improvement targets is conducted annually. The self-assessment conducted in April 2017 focuses mainly on the strategies being implemented to address school performance priorities, with less of an emphasis on the progress being made towards achievement of anticipated outcomes. However, analysis of student improvement targets in the business plan does have more of a focus on achievement and what needs to be done to improve.
- A detailed assessment schedule is implemented across the school and data is analysed and presented to teachers to focus attention on areas for improvement. The distributed leadership implemented in 2017 is contributing to this detailed analysis and promotion of research-based improvement strategies. Team leaders provided the reviewers with details on the processes they are employing and samples of the documents they are producing to support staff.
- Implicit in the whole-school literacy and numeracy programs being implemented are assessment strategies that provide teachers with information on what has been successfully taught and where student performance needs to improve. Consistent implementation of these programs is required to ensure data analysis not only occurs at the individual and classroom level but can also be aggregated to provide cohort and school-level information required for monitoring and future planning.
- Self-assessment processes are in place but it was noted by curriculum leaders and teachers that at times variations occur between their own teacher judgements and assessment information provided by standards-based external assessments such as Brightpath, NAPLAN, School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) judging standards. Staff are investigating why such variations occur given their internal strategies for consensus and moderation using common tasks and collaboration with staff from nearby schools.
- Grade distribution data indicates that significantly more students in Year 3 and Year 5 at the school are judged at a C grade when compared to like-schools. For example, in Semester 1 of 2017 in Year 3 numeracy, only 13.6% received an A or B grade with 79.5% receiving a C, while 53.3% of students in like-schools received an A or B grade. A similar grading pattern was evident for Year 3

reading but for Year 5 numeracy, no students received an A grade, compared to 22% at like-schools. The school leadership team has interrogated the data using a disciplined dialogue approach and a range of strategies has been identified for the remainder of 2017 to improve teacher judgement and grading accuracy.

- Annual reports for 2014–16 were available to the school community and in 2015 and 2016 they included a section reporting on the school business plan priorities and targets. The 2016 report included feedback from an online survey of parents conducted under the direction of the school board. Two issues raised by parents were: communication from the board to inform the school community about what was going on within the school, and more teacher/parent communication to provide feedback on individual student performance and what was going on in their child's classroom. Various strategies to address this feedback were identified for action in 2017. In discussions with parents during the review visit it was evident that some progress has been made with these issues, with implementation of the See-Saw application in some classrooms being regarded very favourably.
- Reviewers are confident that a stronger culture of monitoring student performance is developing, as the school leadership team is currently engaged in the Department of Education's Improving School Leadership program and are implementing many of the principles and strategies it promotes.

### **Area of strength**

- The use of a disciplined dialogue approach to interrogating issues raised in monitoring of student performance and the comprehensive strategies employed to address what needs to be improved.

### **Area for improvement**

- Continue to refine the accuracy of grading against SCSA judging standards and alignment with other assessments such as Brightpath and NAPLAN.

## Program Delivery

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

### Findings

- The documentation provided to reviewers, as well as discussions with the school leadership team, confirms that all programs are designed and delivered to meet the needs of students in accordance with legislation and policy.
- Whole-school programs are being implemented in literacy (Promoting Literacy Development [PLD], PM Benchmark Reading, Brightpath and Talk for Writing) and in numeracy (ORIGO Mathematics).
- SCSA curriculum outline requirements in humanities and social sciences, health and physical education, and design and technology are planned under whole-school operational plans but teaching programs are developed at each year level with teachers using real-life contexts and inquiry-based learning experiences.
- A detailed SAER policy and procedures was outlined to reviewers under the umbrella of the school's 'CARE' values – cooperate, achieve, respect and engage. The SAER policy is supported with URSTRONG resources from Pre-primary to Year 6, the school chaplain and a referral process and documented plans for students at risk.
- Day-to-day management in 2017 is instilling greater confidence among the school community. Parents indicated a clearer sense of vision is emerging, staff spoke with enthusiasm about the stability in the school and how they are realising the benefits of increased collaboration and students spoke from the heart about the sense of security they feel at the school – “it feels like being at home.”
- Three specialist teachers in music, art/science and physical education provide programs across the school with staff, parents and students consistently commenting to reviewers on the outstanding quality of the programs and outcomes being achieved by these teachers. The enthusiastic and dedicated education assistants employed at the school proudly work with small groups or individuals depending on student needs.
- Programs being delivered are well researched to ensure they meet the needs of students. For example, On-entry testing identified issues with oral language in the early years which led to staff trialling the Talk for Writing approach for

implementation across the school. The PLD Literacy and Learning Program has also been introduced across the school in response to expected results not being achieved from the previous program. Staff, teachers and education assistants, when questioned, could rationalise the shift from one program to the other and the results expected from PLD.

- Implementation of new programs is supported fully with professional learning, resources and any additional support from the leadership team. Implementation is not progressed without this support and the commitment of staff to consistent implementation across the school.
- The introduction of a distributed leadership has also contributed strongly to the rigour and enthusiasm with which programs are being delivered. Teachers undertaking these new roles are being provided with professional learning to support their development.
- A master plan is being developed for the site including a focus on upgrading the early childhood premises and facilities. Fencing of the school is open in many areas and gates have locking mechanisms at child height. The school community has varying opinions on whether more secure fencing should be installed but given the increasing density of population and traffic in the confined area in which the school is located, as well as heightened community child protection concerns, it is considered by the reviewers that the school should investigate the issue and undertake a risk assessment.
- Policy and procedures for the welfare of students are outlined in the school Student Wellbeing policy. This policy focuses predominantly on behaviour management and bullying. Student engagement is a concern at Kyilla and a service agreement with the Department of Education's School of Special Needs: Behaviour and Engagement has been made for teacher professional learning in behaviour and engagement.
- Raising standards of child protection in schools has been highlighted by the recently updated Department of Education policy. The documentation viewed by reviewers, including the Student Wellbeing Policy 2016, makes minimal reference to child protection except for the Keeping Us Safe program which is provided by an external agency to students from Pre-primary to Year 3. Further information on protective behaviours is delivered through the health and physical education curriculum.
- The reviewers are of the view that considering the Department's policy, school policies and procedures for child protection should be reviewed, updated and made more explicit in documents such as the staff handbook with professional learning and training to be provided.

- Communication between the school board and the community, teachers and parents has been identified as an area for improvement. Some evidence of this occurring was identified by the leadership team, staff and parents but consistency of approaches across the school is still a work in progress.
- The early childhood education team has conducted a thorough review against the National Quality Standard (NQS) and a verification audit was recently completed. The 2017 NQS Reflection Tool completed by staff highlights areas for improvement which the Years K–2 team are implementing.
- Program delivery in 2017 has been enhanced through greater stability of staffing at the school and more consistent implementation of whole-school approaches. The resulting consolidation of programs and practices along with plans to embed a culture of coaching, peer observation and feedback should ensure the sustainability of program delivery to promote learning and wellbeing for all students.

### **Areas of strength**

- The sense of community and wellbeing lived by all who are associated with the school.
- The devolved leadership being implemented which has promoted greater collaboration and enthusiasm among staff.
- The sense of stability emerging in program delivery and ongoing continuity among staff.
- The support provided by the school leadership team to teachers for effective implementation of programs.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Review and update school policies and procedures for child protection and consider making explicit reference in documents such as the staff handbook, and providing professional learning and training.
- Consider conducting, in conjunction with the relevant Department of Education directorate, an audit or risk assessment of the fencing around the school, especially for early childhood 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

- Although the instability in leadership has impacted on the school, the documentation provided and school-based observations confirmed that there is a commitment to effective self-review processes. The school's response to the obligations of the DPA is informative with a focus on future actions and the self-assessment of April 2017 is detailed. The newly appointed substantive principal has established processes involving staff and board members that should ensure the self-review process in the forthcoming cycle is thorough.
- A finance committee that sets the budget and scrutinises expenditure is in place. Cost centre managers present annual submissions to be considered for the forthcoming budget and learning area teams are responsible for monitoring teaching resources. Support staff closely monitor school assets.
- A detailed financial training manual has been provided for board members, the finance committee and staff. Information focuses on the roles of the cost centre managers, the board, involvement of the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) and responsibilities of the finance committee.
- The manager corporate services and the finance committee manage extremely efficiently and effectively the resourcing required to support programs being delivered at the school. The spreadsheet developed by the manager corporate services to link the priorities and strategies of the school business plan with the resources and funding required to ensure they are successful was very impressive and informative for the school leadership and the school board.
- The principal has taken a strategic approach to workforce planning considering the future intentions of staff and filling vacancies which will enhance the opportunities for the students and have a positive impact on the balance of staff employed at the school. A current policy of selecting staff from the fixed-term graduate pool who have had professional learning relevant to the school's programs is in place. This variety of experience of staff has been positive with there being a willingness to share ideas and implement whole-school approaches.



- The appointment of curriculum leaders who have been provided with out-of-class time and the formation of learning area committees has had a positive impact on program delivery.
- In discussions with learning area committees and specialist staff it was confirmed that efficient resourcing was a priority for the school. Staff were appreciative of the fact that the leadership team considers effective professional learning associated with the implementation of new programs to be of critical importance.
- The State Government has provided the P&C with \$100 000 for the installation of a nature playground. Approximately \$40 000 annually is also distributed by the P&C for the purchase of resources. These funds come largely from the Kyilla weekend markets that the P&C coordinates.
- With the sound financial management processes in place, the reviewers are confident that the plans for the continued implementation of evidence-based programs, professional learning commitments for staff and other initiatives is sustainable.

### **Areas of strength**

- The thorough financial management processes in place.
- The focus on strategic workforce planning.
- A supportive P&C.

## School Board

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

### Findings

- The school board consists of a proactive group of members who acknowledge the importance of their role. During the current business plan cycle there have been some difficulties faced by the board, not the least of which has been the ongoing change of school leadership. Board members expressed their satisfaction in having a substantive principal appointed to the school.
- Although there is a good balance of expertise among the membership, to date a community member has not been enlisted. The reviewers were assured that the intention is to rectify this soon. A review of the board's own performance has not been completed but will be undertaken before the end of the current cycle.
- The board has endorsed the DPA, annual reports, business plan and budgets. A full analysis and discussion of a parent survey distributed in 2016 has been completed.
- An effective induction process is in place. Advertising for new members will occur in Term 4 of 2017. The board has a documented code of conduct, role statements and terms of reference.
- The principal and manager corporate services present regular school achievement and financial reports to the board. Board members have enthusiastically engaged in the interrogation of the data and scrutiny of the financial records. The minutes revealed that the principal and other key people also provide the board with updates on a variety of other school initiatives.
- Members of the board expect increased involvement in the formulation and ongoing review of the new business plan. This will include an in-depth interrogation of the data and review of the targets.
- While parents were not fully aware of the board's functions it was agreed that there are opportunities for them to interact with members and this does occur. The reviewers concur that there is scope for improved communications between the board and school community. The board will investigate strategies for lifting its profile in the forthcoming cycle.

- The current board chair who has diligently served the full term of this cycle will be vacating the position at the end of 2017. Discussions have begun on finding a suitable replacement but at this point the vacancy is open. The reviewers are confident that a new chair and current members will successfully contribute to the formulation of the new business plan and meet the necessary ongoing obligations.

**Area of strength**

- A proactive and knowledgeable board membership with a willingness to be fully involved in the formulation and ongoing review of the new business plan.

**Areas for improvement**

- Enlist the services of a community member.
- Complete a review of the board's performance.
- Implement strategies to lift the profile of the board to better communicate with and inform the community of its functions and activities.

## **Conclusion**

The uncertainties associated with frequent leadership changes has had an impact on the school. The appointment of a substantive principal and a deputy returning from leave at the beginning of 2017 have resulted in positive change to the culture, curriculum delivery and the self-review process. The reviewers noted there was an increasing willingness for collaboration among staff and an appreciation of the fact that curriculum leaders had been appointed and were having an impact on the implementation of good teaching practice.

Although the historical trend in the data is of concern the literacy and numeracy committees have been proactive in promoting evidence-based whole-school approaches. These are becoming embedded in classroom practice. The provision of effective professional learning has been an important factor in the successful implementation of new programs.

The wellbeing of students is a high priority with parents appreciating the efforts of the leadership team and staff in ensuring their children are in a safe and inclusive environment. However, there is scope for the school to provide challenges for the students to raise expectations and enhance resilience.

There is a strong sense of community at the school with many opportunities for parents to be involved in activities including the very successful Kyilla markets, the strong P&C and other whole-school events. The interaction between parents and staff are positive with it being acknowledged that opinions are valued and action is taken when concerns are expressed.

With the proactive leadership team and committed staff and school board the reviewers are confident that the school is well-placed to successfully meet its obligations in the next cycle. Discussions on the new business plan have begun with a commitment to informing appropriate targets, improved monitoring of student progress and effective self-review processes.

## 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 Kyilla Primary School, true and correct.

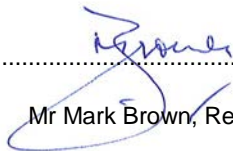
The principal and board chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Mr Tom Campbell, Lead Reviewer

24 November 2017

Date



Mr Mark Brown, Reviewer

24 November 2017

Date



Mr Ken Perris, Director  
Independent Public School Review

11 December 2017

Date