Camboon Primary School

2014

Independent Review Findings

Independent Review of Independent Public Schools
Disclaimer

This document reports the findings of the Department of Education Services' review and verification of the school's self-review. The school's self-review has been complemented by information provided by the Department of Education and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

The findings of the independent review are forwarded to the School Principal, the Board Chair, the Director General of Education and the Minister for Education.

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School and Review Details

Principal: Mr Josh Jashari
Board Chair: Mrs Filomena Piffaretti
School Location: Forder Road, Noranda WA 6002
School Classification: PS Class 5
Number of Students: 443 (Kindergarten–Year 7)
Reviewers: Mr Bill Gibson (Lead) and Dr Lesley Payne
Review Dates: 18, 25 and 26 August 2014

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the independent review is to provide assurance to the school and its community, the Director General of Education and the Minister for Education on the extent to which the school has met its commitments as outlined in its Delivery and Performance Agreement (DPA) and associated Business Plan. Additionally, the findings inform school improvement.

The focus of the review is on:

- how well the school has implemented self-review
- how well the school has improved student learning (achievement, progress and engagement) for all students
- how well the school has created an environment that promotes learning and student wellbeing
- how well the school is placed to sustain and improve its performance.
Review Methodology

The school has been required, under the DPA, to undertake annual self-assessments of its performance. The outcome of these assessments formed the basis for the school's self-review which was presented to the reviewers at the commencement of the review.

Prior to the presentation of the school's self-review conclusions, reviewers were provided 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 School Performance Monitoring System
- Schools Online reports.

Department of Education Services reviewers met with the Principal, the Board Chair, members of the school leadership team, curriculum leaders and a board parent representative on day one to determine the school's conclusions from its self-review. Subsequently, reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school's self-review documentation and developed lines of inquiry where further verification was required.

An agenda for days two and three was then negotiated with the school to enable the gathering of evidence to verify claims made by the school. During these two days the reviewers sourced evidence to support the school's self-review claims through observation and discussion with teaching and support staff, board members, parents and students.

The evidence provided by the school, along with information gathered by the reviewers prior to and during the review visits, was used as the basis for the verification of how well the school has met its commitments as outlined in the DPA and Business Plan.

This document reports on the findings of the independent review.
School Context

What are the important features of this school’s context that have an impact on student learning?

Camboon Primary School is situated in the metropolitan suburb of Noranda with its catchment area drawing students from the local authorities of Swan and Bayswater. The school was established in 1971 and became an Independent Public School (IPS) in 2012.

The school, with an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) of 1044, caters for 443 Kindergarten to Year 7 students. Over the duration of the current DPA the Principal has noticed a trend from owner-occupier to rental accommodation within the school’s catchment.

While the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) My School Student Distribution table indicates a steady increase in the ICSEA from 1017 in 2010 and a shift in the percentage of students in the top quartile from 16% in 2010 to 25% in 2014, the school continues to enrol students from across all quartiles.

The socio-economically and culturally diverse enrolment includes 227 (51.2%) male and 216 female students, 10 (2%) Indigenous students and 25 (5.6%) students receiving Schools Plus support. Significantly, ACARA My School 2010–2013 data indicates that over the most recent four years, in excess of 30% of students have a Language Background other than English (LBOTE) with, according to school records, both the Vietnamese and Arabic languages prominent. Currently, the school enrolment includes 37 (8.3%) students identified as English as a Second Language (ESL) stages 1 to 3. The teaching and learning program for these students is supported by the allocation of a 0.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) specialist.

The 2012 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) identified 30% of the 50 assessed students as being developmentally vulnerable in two or more domains with significant deficits in social competence (18 students) emotional maturity (13 students) and language and cognitive skills (10 students).

Overall attendance rates (93.5% in 2013) are consistent with like-schools (93.9%) and above WA public schools (92.6%). Aboriginal attendance
(96% in 2013) is above both like-schools (87.9%) and WA public schools (80.7%).

Recent building programs and capital works upgrades have provided the school with new undercover area, canteen, library, arts, science and administration facilities. Ageing classroom blocks are maintained by an ongoing maintenance program. Electrical and connectivity upgrades have enabled the school to establish a stable information technology (IT) network to support teaching and learning. The adequately resourced school offers specialist programs for Year 1 to 7 students in performing arts (music and drama) and physical education while Italian language is delivered to students from Years 3 to 7. An instrumental specialist funded by the School of Instrumental Music enhances the music program with sessions in classical guitar for selected students.

The Workforce Plan has identified enrolment fluctuations, leave liability and staffing profiles as potentially impacting on the education program. The plan details strategies to support the ongoing delivery of the teaching and learning program.

The School Board made the transition from School Council when IPS status was attained in 2012. The ten-member Board includes four members of staff, five parent representatives and one community representative. The parent chairperson provides leadership and members bring contextual understanding and a range of expertise to their roles and responsibilities.

Significant educational partnerships strengthen teaching and learning for students while other partnerships boost the school’s vision to assist all students ... to make positive contributions to society. The school also enjoys the support of an active Parents and Citizens’ Association, the broader school community and some local businesses.

A committed leadership team, engaged staff, supportive community and embedded school culture underpin Camboon Primary School’s response to a range of contextual factors including cultural diversity, resource adjustments and enrolment fluctuations.
The School’s Self-Review Process

How effective was the school’s self-review in accounting for its performance during the period of the DPA and Business Plan?

Written documentation and meetings with the school leadership team, curriculum leaders, staff and board members highlighted the use of evidence-based, critical self-assessment to review school performance against Business Plan targets. Meetings confirmed the Board, the leadership team, the leaders of learning areas, Phase of Learning teams, year-level and classroom teachers continue to monitor standards of student learning. The detailed reports to the School Board and the comprehensive annual reports provide the community with an accurate assessment of performance against targets and milestones.

Regular collaborative reviews are conducted on a wide range of data. Like-school and State comparisons of valid evidence including NAPLAN, West Australian Monitoring Standards in Education (WAMSE), On-Entry assessment and teacher judgements are used to determine standards of achievement and progress. The review cycle also includes an analysis of non-academic performance information relating to social and emotional development and attendance. In meetings with reviewers the school leadership team, the Board and learning area leaders independently demonstrated an understanding of strengths and areas for improvement.

The Camboon Primary School Business Plan (2012–2014) retains the original targets, with some modifications and an additional focus on supporting the implementation of the Australian Curriculum—History learning area across all phases of learning. Operational plans demonstrate the staff act upon the outcomes of the self-assessment through considered, appropriate and timely teaching and learning adjustments.

The critical approach to self-assessment is exemplified by the school’s Operational Plan (2014) Phase of Learning response to an identified whole-school concern in numeracy. The detailed analysis of student performance in numeracy resulted in the development of learning phase appropriate dictionaries of mathematical terms and phrases to enhance student understanding of mathematical language.

Reviewers concluded the school utilises embedded self-review processes to guide teaching and improve the standards of learning for all students.
School Performance—Student Learning

*How well has the school performed in improving learning (achievement, progress and engagement) for all students?*

The Business Plan (2012–2014) outlines the school’s vision, beliefs and associated strategies. It includes student improvement targets for the school focus areas of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Pastoral Care, Early Childhood Education, Literacy, Numeracy and Science. The targets, although broad generally, were identified through the staff’s analysis of student achievement and performance trends in NAPLAN and WAMSE data from 2010–2013 with comparisons to like-schools.

The leadership team and Board Chair acknowledged that improvement targets were mostly non-specific with academic targets based on school performance being at or above like-school averages nationally in NAPLAN and in the middle 60% and top 20% of students in the WAMSE testing for science.

The Principal provided the reviewers with a detailed, collaborative assessment of success in meeting the targets. Discussions between reviewers, school leadership, leaders of learning areas and teachers verified that this analysis had been conducted at all levels of the school including curriculum and phase of schooling groups.

*Business Plan Target Analysis 2012–2013* shows the literacy target of ‘School Performance in Literacy to be at or above like-school averages’ was achieved for Year 3 and Year 5, except for writing. Year 7 performance was mostly the same as like-schools, although trending below in spelling and grammar and punctuation.

The school used a commercial company to conduct an initial analysis of the specific areas of strengths and concern from the NAPLAN literacy results. The analysis identified a downward trend of progress in the Relative Assessment Performance of Year 3 to Year 5 and Year 5 to Year 7 in several literacy domains. The staff then reviewed the NAPLAN analysis in-house and after consideration of valid data from school-based assessments such as Literacy Net, identified a need to focus on students whose results place them in the lowest percentage groups. *Words Their Way* was adopted for spelling and *Guided Reading* across the school. Staff indicate these strategies are being monitored but claim it is too early to judge their effectiveness.
The numeracy target of 'School Performance in numeracy to be at or above like-school averages' was achieved for all NAPLAN year levels. However, following a detailed analysis of individual students whose results place them in the lowest percentage groups, as well as the need to improve student progress in the Relative Assessment Performance of Year 3 to Year 5 and Year 5 to Year 7 for girls, the staff adopted a focus on the language and vocabulary aspects of numeracy and introduced 'meta' language strategies across the school.

The science target in the Business Plan 'to have school performance at or above like-school averages in the middle 60% and top 20% of students in the WAMSE testing' was achieved for Year 5 and Year 7, although the numbers in the bottom 20% rose overall for Year 5 and fell slightly for Year 7. The WAMSE testing will not be available in the future but the school plans to use tests from past years in the short term and is exploring options for appropriate data collection programs in the future.

The ICT target of 'all staff and students integrate technology into classroom practice' has been supported by adding interactive whiteboards into every classroom while Cyber Smart workshops were conducted for parents, teachers and students. New computers have been purchased and the school server updated. There are plans to investigate the purchase of banks of electronic tablets and laptops for classroom use.

The student cohort continues to include a high percentage of students, currently 39%, with a language background other than English. There is an embedded program for improving the learning of these and other cohorts and sub-groups of students. On-entry, AEDI and Literacy Net testing is used to identify students requiring teaching and learning adjustments. A range of strategies is put in place to support and monitor identified students.

The EAL/D Program, under the guidance of a specifically qualified part-time (0.8 FTE) support teacher, aims to develop English competence and improve learning outcomes to a level where identified students no longer require specialised support. The program uses a blend of in-class and intensive withdrawal sessions, a range of support resources and individual tracking, assessment and monitoring. The staff is commended on the strength of this program to support students with English as an additional language or dialect.

Students requiring teaching and learning adjustments are placed on individual educational plans (IEPs) or group education plans which are monitored.
regularly and students are provided access to appropriate programs such as the Meta-language program or the Multi-lit program. They receive extra support from educational assistants if required and are monitored by the Students At Educational Risk Coordinator through the IEPs and benchmark running records. Students identified on entry as achieving above expectations are directed to the North Metropolitan Education Region's Junior Extension for Talented Students (JETS) program or the Lexile Extension Reading Program. The handover of knowledge of students, academic or non-academic, from one year group to the next is a clear process for transitioning which involves a session at the end of the year with a follow up the next year, if needed, when teachers have had the opportunity to engage with their new students.

Reviewers were able to verify through observation, additional documentation, interviews and discussion that the tenure stability of the leadership team over the period of the DPA had contributed positively to the whole-school collaborative approach to strategies for improvement. In addition, the reviewers were able to verify the school offers a broad curriculum aimed at providing a range of opportunities for students in a positive and inclusive environment.

With continuing clear, strong, collaborative leadership from the school administration and leaders of the learning areas, the reviewers consider the school will be able to build on progress so far and move towards realising the more specific student learning targets of the next Business Plan.
School Performance—Quality of the Learning Environment

How well has the school performed in creating an environment that promotes learning and wellbeing for all students and the attainment of the school vision?

Through discussions with teachers, parents and students, the reviewers were able to verify there is a safe, positive and collaborative learning environment at the school that supports the vision:

To assist all students to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their individual potential and to make a positive contribution to society.

The reviewers were able to affirm an inclusive environment that values and supports all students with a constructive approach to making a difference. The school has a culturally diverse cohort, with around 38 different languages spoken at home, and a harmonious and integrated student body.

Pastoral care is a high priority and the school is inclusive and accepting of difference. The pastoral care team is led by an associate principal and includes the School Chaplain, the Psychologist and other specialists as needed. Parents interviewed, reported a high level of commitment by the school to pastoral care and student support.

A range of strategies and resources is evident in meeting student learning needs. The staff make effective use of resources articulated in the DPA for designated programs. Effective strategies focus on literacy and numeracy and include the provision of Italian language, specialist physical education and performing arts (music and drama) programs. The school choir regularly performs at events in the local community. The school's focus on these programs and strategies together with the consistent approach to behaviour management was rated highly by parents interviewed.

The leaders of learning and phase of schooling teams have also reviewed pedagogical approaches and instigated the innovative Inform—Inspire, Show—Share, Try—Transfer, Apply—Act and Review—Revise (iStar) model of lesson implementation to support explicit teaching, and the Pairwise approach to support teacher skill development. Professional development provided has included the Australian Curriculum, guided reading, explicit teaching, anaphylaxis, asthma, autism, iStar, higher order thinking skills and
the writing of IEPs. To support a collaborative approach, the school has partially aligned duties other-than-teaching (DOTT) time to allow regular team meetings, curriculum development and literacy blocks across the school.

Common assessment tasks are conducted across year levels and through the ACORN network. This network of Camboon, Hampton and Noranda primary schools was established to support teachers in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and has become a very important means to moderate teacher judgements, support learning area leaders, give teachers opportunities to take on leadership roles and share resources. The staff are commended on their support for and involvement with the ACORN network.

A commendable teacher initiative, the Education Assistants' Club, has been adopted by the area network including ACORN partner schools. It provides opportunities for support and development to education assistants.

Discussions with parents and carers indicated the parent community identifies strongly with the school and conveys a sense of pride in the school to the children. They provided additional anecdotal evidence that communication with parents was timely and that they value the programs offered to their children. Year 6 and 7 student councillors interviewed were similarly positive about their preparation for high school. Parents, carers and students reported teachers and school leaders were approachable and accessible and set high expectations for the students while knowing them as individuals and promoting a high level of acceptance across the community.

The Principal has determined the level of parent satisfaction through regular surveys with the results published in the Annual Report. In the 2013 report, the results indicated a high level of satisfaction with greater than 75% satisfaction over 41 items. The school has a supportive parent body that is active in supporting school events and the Parents and Citizens' Association.

Effective educational partnerships exist with the ACORN network, John Forrest Senior High School, Morley Senior High School, the North Metropolitan Language Development Centre and Edith Cowan University. Co-operative partnerships with Ngala Family Centre, the City of Bayswater's Noranda Childcare Centre and the on-site out-of-hours Care For Kids Centre support the school's focus on early intervention. Other community partnerships that support its vision include the Ella Williams Residential Care Centre, the Noranda Toastmasters Club and a number of local businesses.
The positive reports across the school community affirm the manner in which the Principal, Board and staff work together in a mutually supportive way. There is a strong sense of belonging to, respect and trust for the school to ensure a supportive and successful learning environment. This has been achieved through the strategic selection of staff, the structuring of leaders of learning and phase-of-schooling teams, as well as the adoption of whole-school and collaborative planning.
School Performance—Sustainability

*How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance into the next planning cycle?*

The Camboon Primary School Business Plan 2012–2014 highlights the school’s vision and shared community beliefs that guide improved student learning. The Business Plan also details targets and milestones to focus teaching and measure student improvement; however, present targets are broad and lack specificity. In considering the priorities and targets of the 2014–2016 Business Plan the staff should review priorities and set specific, measureable targets across learning areas. The Strategic Plan (2012–2014) and the detailed 2014 Operational Plan provide staff with a framework to guide teaching and learning. The school leadership team and the Board Chair indicated a commitment to utilise valid performance data to identify appropriate targets to guide and measure student learning.

The staff use a multi-layered, cyclic approach to analyse student learning and compare standards against like-schools. A range of information including NAPLAN, WAMSE, AEDI, On-entry Assessment, teacher judgements and surveys is analysed by the leadership team, the leaders of learning, the phase-of-learning teams, curriculum committees, individual teachers with a further analysis provided by a commercial company. The embedded collaborative and informed analysis that continues to identify areas requiring improvement is scrutinised by an informed Board.

Analysis of sub-group performance is evident in the current Business Plan with targets focused on gender and early years phase-of-learning achievement. During the external review the Principal provided a detailed analysis of EAL/D student achievement.

After meeting with members of the School Board, the reviewers concluded that, in accordance with the DPA, the school has embedded an effective governance process that continues to provide the community with an assurance that it delivers a teaching and learning program of high standard. The staff are commended for the establishment of a transparent strategy that uses members of the staff, including the leadership and leaders of learning teams, to provide the Board with an understanding of the standard of teaching and learning at the school. In a meeting with reviewers, parent and community representatives on the Board indicated a developing level of confidence in their collective capacity to examine data and ensure an alignment of the
school Business Plan and budget. It is recommended the Board continue to explore opportunities to enhance the school community's understanding of its function and activity.

Distributed leadership is well established and supported by a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement at the school. Meetings with teaching and support staff demonstrated the high level of expertise, collaboration, enthusiasm and commitment at the school. The school is commended on the establishment of an innovative approach to both individual and school improvement. Sustainable improvement is underpinned by a number of highly valued and enthusiastically supported initiatives including its ACORN local schools partnership and the innovative iStar model for connected practice within classrooms.

Staff reflect against the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards to identify areas requiring additional attention in performance management sessions. The Principal tabled a snapshot of the staff self-reflection against the seven AITSL standards to highlight a growing awareness of and commitment to sustainable teacher development.

The comprehensive Workforce Plan guides decisions relating to human resources. The Plan has identified significant factors including enrolment fluctuations, staffing profiles and leave liability as requiring careful management to ensure the teaching and learning program is sustained. Through the use of a range of strategies, including collaborative distributed leadership and IPS flexibility to identify staff matching school ethos and beliefs, the school continues to sustain its embedded teaching and learning culture.

Commendably, prudent maximisation of community use of the school facility together with significant ongoing Parents and Citizens’ Association support continues to enable the leadership team to supplement established funding sources to sustain and enhance teaching and learning opportunities for all students. Meetings with parents and teachers indicated that the school continues to enhance and refresh physical resources with recent ICT and reading acquisitions showing a considered approach.

The reviewers concluded the school has embedded a sustainable learning environment guided by committed and engaged staff, an informed Board and supportive community in which all students are provided with contextually appropriate learning opportunities.
Conclusion

Camboon Primary School has embedded a safe, positive, inclusive and collaborative learning environment that supports its vision:

*To assist all students to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their individual potential and to make a positive contribution to society.*

Shared community beliefs ensure relationships between students, parents, community and staff are positive and supportive. The positive culture will enable the school to continue to deliver a contextually appropriate teaching and learning program for all students.

A highly professional leadership team and committed staff have collaboratively established a positive learning environment with an emphasis on the development of staff capacity, a culture of high expectations, innovative teaching and ongoing evidence-based self-review. The school’s capacity to sustain and improve is strengthened by Board participation in maintaining oversight of school planning and accountability processes.

The school has achieved a number of Business Plan targets and is well positioned to demonstrate significant progress against the remaining targets by the conclusion of the current DPA. Academic and non-academic standards continue to compare favourably with contextually like-schools.

**Commendations**

*The following areas are commended:*

- the establishment of a transparent strategy that uses members of the staff including the leadership and leaders of learning teams to provide the Board with an understanding of the standard of teaching and learning at the school
- the innovative approach to both individual and whole-school improvement including support and involvement with the ACORN network
- the establishment of the innovative Education Assistants’ Club to provide participants with a forum for professional growth
the strength of the school’s program to support students with English as an additional language or dialect

- the strategic approach to community use of the school facility to supplement established funding sources in order to sustain and enhance teaching and learning opportunities for all students.

Areas for Improvement

The following areas for improvement are identified:

- the setting of targets which relate to specific, measurable outcomes of student learning across learning areas
- the Board continue to explore opportunities to enhance the school community’s understanding of its function and activity.
Camboon Primary School

Declaration

We, the undersigned, hereby confirm that the information provided in this findings document is to the best of our knowledge true and correct and is based on the verification of the evidence provided by Camboon Primary School as part of the Department of Education Services' independent review process. The Principal and Board Chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.

14 October 2014
Mr Bill Gibson, Lead Reviewer

14 October 2014
Dr Lesley Payne, Reviewer

21.10.2014
Mr Terry Werner, Acting CEO, Department of Education Services

Date
Date
Date