



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

Como Primary School

2017
Review Findings



Independent Public School Review

Disclaimer

This document reports the findings of the review of Como Primary School.

The Department of Education does not endorse any commercial organisation, product or service mentioned in this report.

The Department of Education can only guarantee the authenticity of original documents. This document is uncontrolled once printed.

To help people with disabilities obtain access to information, this document can be provided in alternative format on request. Please contact jpsreview@des.wa.gov.au with specific requests or telephone 08 9441 1900.

School and Review Details

Principal:	Mr Andrew Malcolm
Board Chair:	Ms Ingrid Meyer
School Address:	29 Thelma Street, Como WA 6152
Number of Students:	388
ICSEA¹	1127
Reviewers:	Mrs Kerry Usher (Lead) Ms Eirlys Ingram
Review Dates:	28 and 29 August 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)?

Como Primary School is an inner suburban school situated near the Swan River that caters for students from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school celebrated its centenary year in 2016. It has a mix of modern and historic design with classrooms set in pleasant grounds that cater appropriately for the delivery of the curriculum. A feature of the school is the 'Old P&C Hall' built by parents in 1947 that provides space for a range of school activities.

The current enrolment includes a multicultural student population from 42 countries with 34% born outside Australia and 50% identifying as coming from culturally diverse backgrounds. Over 35% of the total enrolment is identified as having English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). It also has a small enrolment of four Aboriginal students and 13 students whose parents are temporarily resident in the Esther House Program, a health and leadership program for young women.

Enrolments have shown steady increases from 2013 requiring planning for an additional classroom. Student attendance at 94.9% is similar to like-schools and above the mean for Western Australian public schools. Student transiency is at 19.6% and reflects changing economic conditions and the temporary residency of some parents.

Findings

- The Business Plan 2015–17 outlines a strategic approach for the school and describes the key focus areas with strategies, targets and milestones to positively support identified improvement in school performance. The business plan articulates the school vision “building an inclusive community where all are inspired to learn and empowered to excel.” Reviewers noted the reinforcement of the school's vision by staff, parents and students in their discussions on school performance. The school motto “only our best” is also evident in the business plan and in the three focus areas: “excellence in teaching and learning”, “partnerships” and “environment”.
 - “Excellence in teaching and learning” has five strategies: digital fluency, staff capacity, professional standards, State and national initiatives, and student accountability.
 - “Partnerships” has three strategies: relationships, branding and marketing, and inclusivity and diversity.

- “Environment” has two strategies: school site and personal and social capability.
- Each of the three key areas in the business plan are reviewed and reported against annually in the Target and Milestone School Self Review. Reporting on targets and milestones identifies the performance of subgroups within the school and is inclusive of students with EAL/D backgrounds, Aboriginal students and students at educational risk. In addition, reporting includes the performance of students engaged in gifted and talented and specialist programs. These are outlined in the school’s annual reports. The 2016 Annual Report provides a detailed analysis of school performance with an executive summary and intended future actions.
- The business plan is well-publicised and known within the school community through the annual report, regular updates in the school newsletter, and on the school website. The business plan is a regular agenda item at school board meetings. Targets and milestones are reviewed annually as part of the school’s data collection and self-assessment cycle. The annual report contains information and analysis on progress towards meeting business plan targets.
- In discussion with school leadership it was acknowledged that there were issues associated with the effectiveness of the first business plan. Student performance targets were measurable and could be reported against using readily available data, but many of the other targets and milestones were actually written as strategies or operational inputs that could not be measured or analysed. The school provided evidence that many of the targets and milestones had been implemented; however, the connection to improved student learning was not as easily demonstrated in some cases.

Area of strength

- The progress made in engaging staff and the school board in establishing a planning model that is creating a focus on improving learning to enable success for all students.

Area for improvement

- Progress the development of the next business plan so that improvement priorities identified in the self-review process are set with achievable performance targets or goals that are measurable.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- The “excellence in teaching and learning” focus in the business plan has the following National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) targets:
 - progress in the Year 3 to Year 5 NAPLAN will demonstrate positive trends in the percentage of students in the moderate and high progress areas in numeracy, reading and writing
 - from 2015–17 establish a positive trend in NAPLAN results for Year 3 and Year 5
 - achieve 30–40% of Como Primary School student achievement for each cohort in the top 20% of Australian student achievement for NAPLAN test results.
- The reviewers were able to verify student progress in the Year 3 to Year 5 target. The data demonstrated that the school had added value to student progress and achieved a high standard in all assessments being placed in the ‘higher progress – higher achievement’ category against like-schools. Year 3 data 2015–17 demonstrated achievement of the target of a positive trend with all assessments progressing from ‘expected’ level in 2015 and 2016 to ‘above expected’ level in 2017. Year 5 data demonstrated the same positive trend in numeracy and reading with other assessments not showing the same trend but still performing at ‘expected’ and ‘above expected’ performance in 2017. School self-review analysis for 2015–16 demonstrated that apart from one NAPLAN assessment in Year 5 reading, all other assessments exceeded the target of 30–40% in the top 20% of students when compared to Australian schools. NAPLAN data in 2017 demonstrated that the top 20% target was exceeded in all assessments when compared to Western Australian public schools.
- In discussion with reviewers, the deputy principal, students at risk coordinator and learning support coordinator outlined the actions the school has taken in improving the performance of those students requiring additional support to access the curriculum. A number of targeted intervention strategies and programs are in place to monitor the performance and progress of individual students who require assistance with their learning. The interventions include the students at risk coordinator working with staff to establish and monitor individual

education plans for students requiring additional support. The learning support coordinator focuses on intervention strategies by working with teachers and specialist staff to support curriculum delivery to students with special needs.

- The principal and leadership team have ensured that staff are engaged closely in monitoring student progress. On-entry testing and NAPLAN are part of a suite of assessment tools staff use to gather data and analyse performance to assist planning for improvement in teaching and learning at a whole-school and classroom level.
- Discussions highlighted the strong collaboration that exists between staff members who are engaging with and learning from colleagues about teaching practice. Teachers are organised into junior and upper learning teams and with year group colleagues to support each other in curriculum planning. Staff conduct moderation meetings in collaborative time each semester. Staff also participate in assessment of school performance against the DPA and are informed and involved in the assessment of progress of business plan milestones articulated in the self-review process. All staff are positive about their roles and working in an environment that enables them to be participants in planning and decision-making for improved student learning.
- A key component of the “excellence in teaching and learning” focus in the business plan is professional standards. Teaching staff are engaged in self-reflection and assessment using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. The process forms a part of the performance management discussion linked to meeting business plan outcomes. Staff indicated a positive approach to the performance management process and their opportunities to be engaged in professional dialogue with school leaders and colleagues. In addition, staff have participated in peer observation and coaching. Education assistants (EAs) feel well supported in the school and engage in performance management with the principal. They are encouraged and supported to access professional learning activities relevant to their roles.

Areas of strength

- The value adding to student learning by staff that results in high achievement and progress evidenced in performance assessments over the period of the DPA.
- The establishment and embedding of practical and well-understood professional practices to support a rigorous teaching and learning environment which benefits staff and students.
- A focus on continuous improvement in teaching and learning based on supporting each student making progress suited to their ability.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- The school has completed an extremely thorough school self-assessment with findings outlined in the school's DPA/School Self Review 2015/2016. The school self-assessment process was presented in a thoughtful, honest and meaningful way drawing upon a collaborative process reflecting staff and school board input. The 2016–17 school focus areas have clearly been established with documented evidence presented, to ensure the sustainability of monitoring processes within the school.
- A large number of targets/milestones are included within the business plan. Evidence presented to the reviewers in both written format and through ongoing discussion left no doubt that the school had achieved its documented targets and milestones. The school acknowledged its targets required refining, fine-tuning and consolidation with the next iteration of the business plan. The reviewers noted that staff were very familiar with the school's targets/milestones and used both the business plan and operational planning documents in a functional day-to-day manner.
- Extensive interrogation of data, data analysis and deliberation relating to continuous improvement is embedded within the culture of the school. This is highly commendable, and it was evidently occurring at all levels across the school. Student performance in NAPLAN testing is on an improvement trajectory and this has been consistent over the past three years. Student progress and achievement is strong. Information from a range of other data sources confirms this conclusion.
- Teachers participate in a variety of collaborative meetings. These meetings enable staff to review student achievement, adjust operational plans, identify students who are at educational risk and discuss the effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategies. Discussions with teachers confirmed collaborative meetings provided the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of their classroom teaching program and the extent to which they have improved learning outcomes for all students. Teachers believe strongly that they have a range of opportunities to raise issues or concerns and are genuinely listened to. The focus on improvement for all children and the creation of a high quality learning environment through a differentiated curriculum appeared as a common thread throughout the discussions.

- It was apparent that student assessment was integral to the teaching and learning cycle at the school. An updated curriculum and reporting document was implemented in 2015 to guide teachers on expectations, timelines and quality assessment practices. Teachers use classroom or teaching block-based formative, summative and diagnostic assessments to inform progress, achievement, knowledge, skill, understanding and future teaching direction. Teachers set performance targets for children within their class which are monitored and reflected upon.
- Recent annual reports are comprehensive with a section focusing on key student outcomes. Data is presented in graphical form followed by an analysis as well as strategies to improve student performance. The executive summary section of the annual report is very clear and provides parents with indicators relating to the achievement of performance targets. The school is also proactive in providing recommendations for future direction within the annual report. The school board and parents interviewed throughout the review were familiar with and understood the function of the annual report.
- Parents indicated that discussions with the classroom teachers enabled them to understand the progress of their children and of the school in general. Parents and students spoke positively about the personalised approach provided for each student and the positive relationships between students and teachers. The reviewers were able to confirm that this is a key element of the learning environment and that strategies to develop a positive, calm and purposeful environment were consistently demonstrated across the school. Students and their families receive regular feedback on student performance and progress including the provision of an interim report at the end of Term 1 in literacy and numeracy, formal reports at the end of Semester 1, and at the end of Semester 2. Students enrolled in the Kindergarten program receive a portfolio in both semesters, plus a teacher reflection and developmental checklist. Discussion with a range of parents indicated positive responses relating to both the quality and quantity of feedback received relating to their child's progress. Students enthusiastically commended the personal approach by all staff to ensure regular and timely feedback was provided to the children in a positive manner.

Area of strength

- The focus on improvement for all children and the creation of a high quality learning environment through a differentiated curriculum.

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- The principal has ensured education programs are designed and delivered to meet the needs of the students and in accordance with the requirements of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline. The school has fully implemented Phase 1 and is working towards full implementation of Phase 2 and Phase 3. All teaching staff report against Phase 1 and a range of Phase 2 and Phase 3 requirements. The school is well-positioned for full implementation of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline by 2018.
- Based on discussions with teaching staff, the reviewers were confident that the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority General Capabilities and Cross-curriculum priorities were being implemented in classroom teaching and prominent in student learning.
- As a strategy within its business plan, the school determined to strengthen digital fluency across all year levels and learning areas. Intentional teaching to develop skill, competency and applications became a focus with built-in sustainability for future information and communications technology needs. Student access to technology is supported through a 'Bring Your Own Device' strategy. A Robotics program for Years PP–6 has been implemented and is well-resourced. A Gifted and Talented science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics group, alongside the introduction of science, technology, engineering and mathematics teaching support is adding richness to the curriculum.
- Specialist programs provide support for the implementation of a broad and enriching curriculum. Evidence from discussion with all stakeholders verified the delivery of quality programs in music, physical education, art and French. These programs add considerable value to the cultural and academic life of the school and are highly valued by students and their parents.
- The school has been highly successful in creating a culture of care and support for all students. It was obvious to the reviewers that students were fully engaged, valued the opportunities provided and enjoyed coming to school. All students and parents interviewed throughout the review process expressed their views on feeling safe, welcome and cared for.

- The school is culturally diverse with a well embedded environment of inclusivity. Intercultural understandings and the provision of learning experiences that celebrate diversity are incorporated seamlessly into classroom practice.
- The school has established a culture of high expectations and high levels of student engagement alongside early intervention and support. Discussions with staff, students and parents overwhelmingly supported this conclusion.
- There are a variety of different programs established within the school. These have been arrived at with careful consideration of the diverse needs of the students, the importance of early intervention, the social and emotional aspects of learning, and academic extension.

Areas of strength

- The variety and appropriateness of programs offered by the school to stimulate and enrich curriculum delivery and learning.
- The manner in which cultural diversity is recognised and celebrated at a school and classroom level.

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

- Workforce planning is functional and includes key workforce data, trends and analysis. The leadership team has developed and is progressing the workforce plan which is designed to ensure the structure and composition of the staff profile supports the current and future needs of the students. Staff changes have proactively occurred over the past two years and a number of key staff have been made permanent. This has supported the positive culture developed at the school. The leadership team balances the expertise of staff with student and school priorities. The school acknowledges further development of the workforce plan to ensure future succession planning will be necessary. Strategies to ensure succession planning and leadership development are well established within the school, but are not fully articulated within the workforce plan.
- The school provides a significant array of programs supporting both academic and non-academic domains for students. Targeted funding enables the employment of EAs to support students with special needs, students involved in literacy support programs and students with an EAL/D background. Resourcing for special projects to ensure enriched learning opportunities for students is well-targeted. The reviewers particularly noted the resources applied to evidence based literacy intervention programs such as PreLit, MiniLit and MultiLit and the support provided through training for staff. The comprehensive intervention process was verified through documentation and discussions with the principal, staff and the school board chair. The reviewers acknowledge the school's management of its resources to ensure student needs are provided for comprehensively. School expenditure supports the business plan and areas of focus. Allocation of resources is tracked closely to focus areas and targets.
- The school is well-resourced and the environment welcoming. Classrooms support student learning and there is a good range of playground equipment including a nature playground for students in the early years. Information technology and use of appropriate devices is well-resourced and encouraged by the school, the board and parents. The Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) raises funds for school priorities, school facilities are used for after school care and the rate of collection of voluntary parental contribution fees is high. These additional sources of funding support the school in a range of ways relating to student learning and school facilities. Locally raised funds are managed within legislation and policy.

Area of strength

- The school's capacity to resource priority areas to ensure programs and strategies are able to meet student needs.

School Board

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

Findings

- An initial meeting with the principal, the current board chair and the previous board chair provided valuable context in relation to the former school council's efforts in supporting the school becoming an IPS. It also provided insights into board involvement in developing the business plan and in the sustainability of membership.
- The school board consists of the principal, deputy principal, two elected staff representatives and five community members who are current or past parents of children in the school. The membership complies with the *School Education Act 1999* and *School Education Regulations 2000* which specify the membership categories and composition.
- A review of board minutes and discussion with members verifies the board is fulfilling its functions as prescribed in the *School Education Act 1999*, *School Education Regulations 2000* and Department of Education policy.
- Board and school documents, minutes and agendas of board meetings verify board participation in the endorsement of the DPA, the development and endorsement of the school's annual report and business plan, the review of the school budget and business plan, reviews of school performance and the analysis of National School Opinion Survey responses from parents, staff and students.
- The board communicates with the broader school community regarding the board's functions and activities through the annual report where it provides a report on its actions. Board minutes and member profiles are available on the school website and a board open meeting is held annually with student prefects also invited. Board members attend assemblies and are present and acknowledged at significant school events such as speech night. Other forms of communication are fostered via the Skoolbag application, P&C meetings and through the school newsletter.
- The board receives financial reports, results of audits and reviews and data on progress and achievement in meeting business plan targets. It also is proactive in its involvement in reviewing school policies in a range of areas that are of significant interest to parents and endorsing initiatives including the Fathering

Project and Loose Parts Play. The centenary celebrations were a focus for the board and led to improvements in the school environment and infrastructure.

- The school board participates effectively in the school self-review process including reviewing and tracking the progress of business plan targets annually and reviewing the school's capacity in meeting DPA requirements. It also monitors progress in operational planning in core areas because of links to school performance improvement and the business plan targets. Discussion with members provided evidence of robust questioning and examination of performance information provided by staff. Reviewers noted the positive and supportive attitude displayed by members who demonstrated a reflective and forward thinking approach in supporting a common goal of school improvement.
- The school board reviews its own performance through an anonymous board effectiveness survey conducted annually since 2012. Analysis of the feedback is used to further discussions and initiate actions.
- Board sustainability of its membership and practices is enhanced by the active role that parents play in the school including supporting the P&C who receive updates from board meetings. Replacement of board members, while not frequent, is characterised by applications exceeding vacancies and provides evidence of the positive perception of the board's role. Meetings with parents provided verification of strong engagement in the school and the role that they play in all aspects of the school's operations.

Area of strength

- The effective school board that is representative of the school community and provides support for the principal and staff in improving student learning and in meeting the requirements of the DPA.

Conclusion

The principal and staff of Como Primary School have an ongoing focus on supporting students to achieve their full potential. There is a clear emphasis on providing comprehensive and engaging programs designed to meet each student's needs.

A cohesive staff led by a forward-looking principal is engaged in professional learning and moderation of standards to ensure that their practice is maximising learning opportunities for all students. They use evidence-based research in selecting proven strategies and approaches to ensure teaching and learning meets high standards in classroom practice.

During the period of its DPA, staff has focused on the achievement of academic and social excellence for students. The school has built on its academic success as evidenced by the improvement in literacy and numeracy performance over time demonstrating continuing high progress and high achievement.

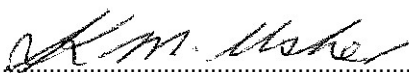
A professional school board is proactively engaged in processes to improve school performance and in supporting the principal and staff in providing educational opportunities to benefit all students. A highly involved parent body and an active P&C provide support to school events and contribute substantial funding to resource school initiatives.

A collaborative school culture exists inclusive of all students and staff and evidenced by the creation of a safe, positive and stimulating environment that supports student learning.

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 Como Primary School, true and correct.

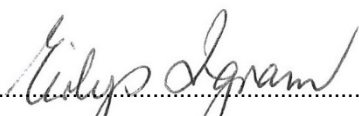
The principal and board chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Mrs Kerry Usher, Lead Reviewer

12 October 2017

Date



Ms Eirlys Ingram, Reviewer

12 October 2017

Date



Mr Ken Perris, Director
Independent Public School Review

16 October 2017

Date