Attadale Primary School

2014

Independent Review Findings
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.

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

The Department of Education Services 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 ips@des.wa.gov.au with specific requests or telephone 08 9441 1900.
School and Review Details

Principal: Mr Scott Harris
Board Chair: Mr Nigel Tinley
School Location: Wichmann Road Attadale WA 6156
School Classification: PS Class 5
Number of Students: 345 (Kindergarten—Year 7)
Reviewers: Dr Lesley Payne (Lead) and Ms Kerry Usher
Review Dates: 8, 17 and 18 September 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?

Attadale Primary School was established in 1953 and became an Independent Public School (IPS) in 2012. It is situated within the City of Melville along a southern section of the Swan River between Bicton and Applecross.

The school has an enrolment of 345 Kindergarten to Year 7 students and an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) of 1152.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) My School® data indicates the ICSEA has been consistently around 1150. Since 2010, there has been a slight shift in the Student Distribution table with the percentage of students in the bottom quartile ranging from 6% to a low of 0% in 2011. The largest change has been the increase in the middle quartiles from 19% to 43% in 2011 and currently at 34%. The top quartile has fluctuated but is currently over 60%.

Primary enrolments have declined from 330 in 2010 to 306 in 2014 with a higher percentage of boys (58%), 0% indigenous students and 14% with language backgrounds other than English.

The 2012 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) identified only 8% of the 45 assessed students as being developmentally vulnerable in two or more domains. Significant deficits for three students were identified in social competence and for two students in emotional maturity.

Overall attendance rates (95.6% in 2013) are similar to like-schools (95.3%) and higher than WA public schools (92.7%).

The school enjoys the support of an active Parents and Citizens’ Association alongside a School Board established when IPS status was attained in 2012. The 14-member Board includes seven members of staff and seven parent members. At present there are no community representatives. The Board is led by a parent chairperson and members bring an appropriate range of expertise to their role and responsibilities.

Building programs and capital works upgrades have provided the school with a library, arts, science and classroom block. The other older classrooms are
Attadale Primary School

maintained through an ongoing maintenance program. The school is adequately resourced and the IPS option of staffing flexibility has, in addition to the one-line budget, enabled the appointment of specialist and IT support. The school offers specialist programs for Year 1 to 7 students in music, art and physical education.

A committed, stable leadership team focused on a commitment to strong, collaborative relationships has involved staff and a supportive community in the development of Attadale Primary School's whole-school approach to strategies for improvement.
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?*

The reviewers were able to verify, through written documentation and meetings with the school leadership team, phase-of-learning leaders, staff and board members, a commitment to review and evaluation of data as part of an ongoing improvement cycle at Attadale Primary School.

The Principal and deputy principals are commended on the comprehensive and clear documentation of a school-wide review of operations, overall performance, and performance against the DPA and the Business Plan key focus areas and targets.

The Board, staff members and phase-of-learning leaders independently demonstrated an understanding of educational strengths and of the areas for improvement. Evidence was presented of regular collaborative reviews conducted on a range of data, including NAPLAN, West Australian Monitoring Standards in Education (WAMSE) and On-Entry Assessment (OEA) to evaluate standards of achievement and progress. The school’s self-review process was ongoing, not just for the purpose of the independent review; reports to the School Board and annual reports to the community provide an accurate assessment of performance against targets and milestones.
School Performance—Student Learning

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

The Attadale Primary School Business Plan (2012–2015) outlines the school’s vision, beliefs and key focus areas, including details of strategies and milestones. A detailed operational plan underpins the Business Plan at the school level articulating more strategies and actions, along with resources and monitoring tools.

Performance targets in the Business Plan are based on national testing triangulated with school-based information. The aim is to match like-schools means for reading and numeracy in NAPLAN. The targets are not explicit with regard to the size of any improvement. Science, and society and environment targets are for 40% of Year 5 and Year 7 students to perform in the top 20% of the State in WAMSE testing. When averaged over the three years, the WAMSE targets were met for Year 5 but not Year 7.

The leadership team and Board Chair of the school indicated a planned review of the Business Plan and targets with the articulation of specific, measurable targets to provide greater support to school and teacher planning and to assist evaluation of the success of improvement strategies.

The Principal provided the reviewers with a comprehensive assessment of success in meeting the targets and school improvement milestones based on collaborative review and analysis. Discussions with school leadership, phases-of-learning leaders and teachers verified that this analysis had been conducted at all levels of the school.

Academic results, as represented by NAPLAN data, indicate longitudinal improvement in the number of students achieving at or above Western Australian Government State schools in literacy and numeracy overall and the number of students in the top 25% when compared to like-schools. However, it is in the area of adding value to students that the school has excelled, receiving a letter of recognition from ACARA for ‘achieving gain over time that has exceeded what would otherwise be predicted’. The staff members of the school are commended for this recognition.

School NAPLAN performances in numeracy for Year 5 and Year 7 in 2013 were above expected levels and while the Year 3 results were at expected
levels, school analysis indicated significant value adding for this cohort, acknowledging at the same time a large number of students with learning difficulties were included in this measure.

The NAPLAN reading results are at expected levels for Year 3 and Year 7 with Year 5 students performing above expected levels. For grammar and punctuation, Year 3 and Year 5 are at expected levels with Year 7 students performing above expected levels. Writing and spelling NAPLAN results show Year 3 at below expected levels of performance and Year 5 and Year 7 at expected levels of performance. The generally poorer Year 3 performance is as a result of the significant number of students with learning difficulties. In all year levels, however, higher progress and higher achievement was achieved in most areas compared to like-schools.

The science and society and environment targets in the Business Plan ‘for 40% of Year 5 and Year 7 students to perform in the top 20% of the state in WAMSE testing’ was achieved for Year 5 (average of 44% in science and 39% in society and environment). However, Year 7 results did not meet the target with an average of only 21% in science and 34% in society and environment. 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.

Although there has been some analysis of data for sub-groups, with a higher percentage of boys (58%) enrolled, the reviewers noted that their performance was not analysed. The school may like to consider reviewing the performance and the extent of improvement for boys specifically to provide information on how well their needs are met in the school.

The staff triangulate data from NAPLAN with school-based information from a variety of other sources such as Progress Achievement Tests (PAT), school-moderated assessment tasks and community surveys, On-Entry Testing, AEDI information, Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) and phase-based diagnostic tools. There is a comprehensive school-wide reporting schedule aligned to the Australian Curriculum.

The school received funding under the Literacy and Partnership Program which has allowed the development of extensive and well organised literacy resources such as levelled books for Guided Reading.

There are no articulated non-academic targets but attention to students’ broad development and the health and wellbeing of the children is evident in the
school through the specialist programs provided for students in music, art and physical education and the provision of information, media and technology support to teachers. The school has an embedded emphasis on the use of communication technologies to extend and support teachers and programs throughout the school.

The leadership and teachers are also commended for the emphasis on promoting thinking skills and problem solving across the student body. The detailed scope and sequence matrix sets minimum skills and strategies to be developed at different year levels and is encouraged by teacher diaries which provide further support.

Reviewers were able to verify through observation, the comprehensive review documentation, interviews and discussion that the stability of the leadership team over the period of the DPA has contributed positively to the focus on improvement. The dedicated approach taken by all staff members and allocation of resources allows provision of a broad curriculum aimed at providing a range of opportunities for students in a positive and inclusive environment.

With continuing stable, collaborative leadership from the school administration and leaders of the phases of learning, the reviewers consider the school will be able to continue progress and achievements, maintain enrolments 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?*

The vision for Attadale Primary School 'to equip students with and develop the necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes and values to achieve their individual potential and contribute positively in an ever-changing world' is evident in all facets of the school's operations. Discussions with staff, parents and students provided supporting evidence that the school has developed a stimulating inclusive learning environment. It offers opportunities for all students to succeed with a school culture that promotes high expectations of achievement, progress and engagement.

The *Attadale Primary School Business Plan 2012–2015* contains three key focus areas that aim to enhance the learning environment for its students:

- Successful students
- A safe healthy and sustainable environment
- Strong sustainable partnerships.

Key elements and strategies of the 'Successful Students' area includes early intervention and the application of a differentiated curriculum. The staff identify students in need of support or extension who are tracked to ensure they receive the resources and support to achieve. The school has a focus on ensuring students at risk are identified as early as possible so that their educational, social and emotional progress is closely monitored.

The school collects early years on-entry baseline data to identify areas of weakness and strengths in student learning. The student database includes information from the AEDI, PIPS and OEA. Under the leadership of a deputy principal, students requiring additional support are identified and supported through individual planning and targeted teaching and learning programs. The reviewers noted the comprehensive data analysis carried out by the Deputy Principal to ensure that early intervention is a major feature of improving student learning at the school.

The reviewers met with the school's learning support team which includes the Learning Support Coordinator, School Psychologist, Chaplain and pastoral care coordinators. This team works closely in cooperation to ensure that
identified at-risk students are tracked and supported through individual and group educational plans to assist their learning. There was evidence through documentation, data analysis and discussion with leaders and teachers that the school is very focused on identifying and deploying strategies and resources to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing.

Reviewers commend the work of the learning support and pastoral care teams which are dedicated to making a difference for all students through supporting staff to differentiate the curriculum and assist the learning of all students.

Detailed student information profiles record each student's progress and are used by teachers as a seamless record of performance as the students move through the school. This is a coordinated process to enable the smooth transition for each student. Data and information is accessible and updated regularly to reflect student progress. Staff meet at key times to share student learning information and support the transition of information between staff.

In promoting 'a safe and healthy and sustainable environment', the school has introduced *Kids Matter*, a mental health and wellbeing program which focuses on social and emotional wellbeing and promotes student resilience. Four key values are features of the culture and values program: take care; give your best; stand up; fair go. These are supported by the School Chaplain and pastoral care leaders who work with staff and students to promote and link them to school activities and operations.

Leadership development for students focuses on a student parliament with an elected premier and student ministers who take on leadership roles within the school and promote activities which also support student social and emotional development. In discussion with student leaders and representatives, the reviewers acknowledged their leadership skills and knowledge of the school's operations, learning and physical environment.

The development of 'strong sustainable partnerships' is a key outcome of the Business Plan. The strategies involved seeking family and wider community involvement in providing support at home, the classroom and across the school for student academic and social development. Surveys have been conducted to seek feedback on the strategy. The most recent information indicates student, staff and parent satisfaction with the school is comparable or improved when compared to 2012 survey results. Areas surveyed included leadership, pastoral care, safety, reporting, inclusion, behaviour, communication, staff and performance of the school.
The school is continuing to focus on engaging parents in the life of the school. Documentation and discussions point to an increasing effort by the school and the Board to ensure parents and the community are well informed of the activities of the school and the progress being made by students. Parents are also provided with opportunities to be involved in school activities. This is particularly evident in the development of the Edible Garden where parents take a coordinating role to ensure classes are able to use the resource as a part of the curriculum. Parents interviewed were strong advocates of the school and commended the Principal and staff on their professionalism. Parent partnerships have been developed and will continue to be a focus for the future to strengthen the environment and support student learning.

An open night, where parents were invited to visit classrooms and view student work, took place during the IPS review. Reviewers visited the classrooms and witnessed the excellent displays which highlighted student work samples and programs delivered in the classroom. This event was very well attended with parent interest reflected by the number of people visiting classrooms in the evening and the next morning when classrooms were once again opened for viewing.

The school has developed partnerships with the Riverside Network of Schools with cell groups established to support teacher development. The school also works in close liaison with its in-area government secondary school, Melville Senior High School. In addition, the school has a cooperative commercial partnership with an out-of-school care group ‘Ready Set Grow’ which operates on the school site.
School Performance—Sustainability

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

Attadale Primary School provided the reviewers with evidence to confirm it has embedded self-review practices that demonstrate how it analyses student learning and identifies areas for improvement. Planning documents viewed and discussed included:

- the Attadale PS DPA Accountability Framework: 'assess, plan, act' cycle
- the Accountability Rubric—relating to analysis, conclusions and intent—a detailed analysis of the progress the school considers it has made involving all staff and including intentions for the future
- the Analysis of PIPS, OEA and AEDI information—detailed conclusions to assist development of programs in the early years.

The school is commended on its assessment processes that identify areas for improvement and the development of targeted teaching and learning practices for improved student learning.

The school has a well-established School Board with strong leadership from the Chair. The Board is focused on the implementation of the Business Plan to ensure best outcomes for students. The role of the Board in providing strategic oversight of school performance should continue to assist in sustaining and strengthening future school planning. It has been engaged in the self-review cycle particularly in gaining feedback from parents to assist in developing strategies for future planning. A marketing strategy is being pursued to ensure the school is widely promoted to publicise school achievements and strengthen future enrolments. Two new members with experience and skills in marketing have been appointed to the Board to support the initiative.

Leadership, under the direction of the Principal and deputy principals, has worked towards developing a distributed leadership model through the establishment of phase-coordinators/curriculum leaders who are encouraged to work with their colleagues to enhance the quality of teaching in the school. Leadership and staff are engaged in the school self-review process evaluating the achievement and progress of students and contributing to the planning cycle. The school also promotes professional development and networking through the Riverside Network of local schools.
There is a particular focus by leadership and the Board on an evaluation of the resources required in sustaining programs and future initiatives. The reviewers affirm the analysis of areas for improvement in leadership of the teaching and learning process to:

- extend staff collaborative activities to evaluate teaching and learning and promote consistent practice
- develop consistent moderation of standards in curriculum assessment and reporting
- further develop evidence-based decision-making for evaluating teaching programs and for future planning.

The school has a comprehensive Workforce Plan which identifies issues to be managed in the future, such as numbers of part-time staff, aging workforce, low representation of males and leadership succession. A workforce gap analysis is comprehensive and aims to address the issues through a set of suggested strategies. This area is crucial to the sustainability of the school as it moves to the next Business Planning cycle. Reviewers affirm the directions identified by the school for future staff selection to:

- differentiate the staffing skill set
- cater for the changing demographic with increasing numbers of students who require support for learning and the acquisition of English
- cater for the significant number of students identified as Gifted and Talented
- enhance and develop a sustainable executive leadership team and distributed leadership model.

The staff are commended on the thorough analysis of the business planning and the focus on accountability. The leadership of the Principal has been crucial in this work and is acknowledged by staff and parents.
Conclusion

The reviewers were able to verify, through written documentation and meetings with the school leadership team, phase-of-learning leaders, staff and board members, that the Attadale Primary School leadership has a commitment to review and improvement. The Business Plan (2012–2015) outlines the school’s vision, beliefs and key focus areas and allows provision of a broad, stimulating curriculum aimed at providing a range of opportunities for students in a positive and inclusive environment. It offers opportunities for all students to succeed with a school culture that promotes high expectations of achievement, progress and engagement.

The leadership of the Principal and a highly professional educational team has been crucial to promoting shared community beliefs and ensuring relationships between students, parents, community and staff are positive and supportive. The reviewers verify that the school has a positive learning environment with an emphasis on the development of staff capacity, a culture of high expectations and ongoing evidence-based review. The capacity for student learning to be sustained and improved is strengthened by the Board’s commitment to maintaining oversight of school planning and accountability processes.

Commendations

The following areas are commended:

- comprehensive and clear documentation of school-wide review of operations, overall performance and performance against the DPA and the Business Plan key focus areas and targets
- the work of staff members in receiving formal ACARA recognition for achieving student gain over time that has exceeded what would otherwise be predicted
- the detailed scope and sequence matrix promoting thinking skills and problem solving across the student body
- learning support and pastoral care teams in making a difference for all students by differentiating the curriculum assessment processes that identify areas for improvement and the development of targeted teaching and learning practices thorough analysis of business planning with a focus on accountability for improved student performance.
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 Attadale 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.

Dr Lesley Payne, Lead Reviewer 31 October 2014

Ms Kerry Usher, Reviewer 31 October 2014

Mr Richard Strickland, CEO, Department of Education Services 13/1/15