



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Education Services

# Allendale Primary School

2017

Review Findings



Independent Review of  
Independent Public Schools

## Disclaimer

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## School and Review Details

<b>Principal:</b>	Mrs Lisa Criddle
<b>Board Chair:</b>	Mrs Lilly Robson
<b>School Address:</b>	52 Wittenoom Street, Geraldton 6530
<b>Number of Students:</b>	370
<b>ICSEA<sup>1</sup></b>	898
<b>Reviewers:</b>	Mr Bill Gibson (Lead) Mr Noel Strickland
<b>Review Dates:</b>	2 and 3 May 2017

## Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the Department of Education Services' independent 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 forwarded the school self-review conclusions to the Department of Education Services one month prior to the commencement of the review.

The Department of Education Services' 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
- the Department of Education's School Performance Monitoring
- Schools Online reports.

Reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school's 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)?***

Established in 1962 in the coastal city of Geraldton 420 kilometres north of Perth, Allendale Primary School became an IPS in 2015. The spacious well-maintained grounds and visually engaging buildings support teaching and learning for a culturally diverse enrolment which, in addition to 105 (28.3%) Aboriginal students, includes students from Asia, India and the Philippines.

The school, with an ICSEA of 898, provides for 204 male (55%) and 166 female (45%) Kindergarten to Year 6 students. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) socio-educational advantage quartiles table for 2016 places 17% of students in the top two quartiles compared to 12% in the same quartiles in 2014.

The enrolment includes 12 students under the care of the Department for Child Protection and Family Services, 10 students receiving Disability Allocation support and 46 (12.5%) registered as part of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability.

The 2015 Australian Early Development Census identifies a significant number of the 38 children with valid results are developmentally at risk in the social competence (23.7%) and language and cognitive skills (21.1%) domains.

Student transiency (37% in 2016, up 4.6% from 2015) and the increasing number of developmentally at risk students provide an additional focus for teaching and learning.

## Findings

- The publicly available *Business Plan 2015–2017* developed in consultation with the staff, board and parents describes the focus for an improvement agenda based on an analysis of longitudinal performance data, consideration of Department of Education strategic directions and the collaboratively developed vision statement—'*Allendale Primary School is a place where we work together to develop independent and collaborative learners preparing them as future citizens.*'
- Six focus areas: Positive Learning Environment; Excellence in Teaching; High Quality Teachers and Successful Students; Relationships – Strong Partnerships; Leadership – Committed and Innovative; and Resources – Targeted with Capacity Building guide improvement. Targets based on high expectations for all

students, milestones and broad strategies provide an effective scaffold for the plan and comply with the requirements of the DPA.

- In addition the plan outlines the school's workforce development focus, together with the school's purpose, core beliefs, values and self-assessment philosophy.
- The commitment to improved academic performance of all students is evidenced by the inclusion of targets to:
  - reduce the percentage of students achieving below the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) national minimum standard
  - guide improvement in Pre-primary
  - increase the number of students achieving in the higher NAPLAN proficiency bands.
- Non-academic targets emphasise improvement in attendance and engagement with contextual issues including punctuality, attitude, behaviour and effort identified for attention.
- In Semester 2, 2016 an extensive review of targets by the leadership team, curriculum leaders, staff and the board identified limitations with some targets. After extensive consultation, the board endorsed a revised set of business plan targets which, while aligned to the intent of the initial targets, were more specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused and time-bound.
- Staff and board members reported the amended business plan is an effective document that guides whole-school approaches and classroom practice.

### **Area of strength**

- The commitment of staff and board to develop, review, refine and implement an effective business plan that includes the revised *Student Achievement Improvement Targets 2016–2017*.

## Teaching and Learning

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

### Findings

- Central statements including the business plan, annual reports and development plan all demonstrate a strong commitment to the recently developed vision with an emphasis on staff collaboration, student engagement and the establishment of a positive learning environment.
- The plan includes literacy, numeracy and early-years academic targets together with contextually appropriate non-academic targets focused on attendance and engagement. Literacy and numeracy targets were set against the national minimum standard in NAPLAN testing. Additional targets focused on proficiency band improvement between 2015 and 2017. Conversations with staff and the board confirmed the targets were identified following a review of student performance.
- The leadership team, staff and board have reviewed performance data in 2015 and 2016 and have determined the extent to which targets have been met. The comprehensive self-review highlighted the level of academic performance achieved across all NAPLAN domains using proficiency band tables together with an assessment of Pre-primary student achievement using data gathered in both On-entry assessment and the Kindergarten Assessment Tool (KAT). It is noted that this review is taking place early in the third year of the DPA and hence assessments against the revised targets have not yet been made.
- The self-review recognised no academic target had been fully achieved, with the leadership team suggesting that while realistic, the construction of some targets limited the potential for achievement. Reviewers affirm the commitment to develop well-crafted measurable targets that ensure high expectations for all students in the next business plan.
- Reviewers triangulated evidence tabled by the leadership team and learning area leaders with information provided by the Department of Education's School Performance Monitoring (SPM) and Schools Online. The analysis verifies self-review findings indicating most academic targets detailed in the business plan have not been fully achieved.
- While academic targets remain unachieved, commendably improved academic performance is summarised by:

- Comparative performance that closely reflects expectations as defined by the school's ICSEA and the previous achievement of students in all domains in 2015 and 2016. Commendably the 2016 Year 5 numeracy, reading and grammar and punctuation were all 'above expected'.
- The ACARA 2016 *My School* data that indicates performance 'close to' the 'statistically similar schools' average in all domains with Year 3 grammar and punctuation commendably above other schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds.
- SPM Overall Progress data indicates significant improvement from minus 0.54 in 2015 to 1.35 in 2016.

The leadership team, board and curriculum leaders are confident strategies and programs such as explicit teaching, synthetic phonics and First Steps will sustain recent improvement.

- While the self-review of non-academic targets indicates that most attendance targets remain unachieved, contextually relevant Aboriginal attendance rates are above both 'like-schools' and Western Australian Public Schools. Apart from 2016 where the total attendance rate was 0.2% below 'like-schools', overall attendance remains above 'like-schools'. This indicates that the Allendale attendance team's contribution and focus on the philosophy of the *It's Not OK to Stay Away* concept/initiative has improved student attendance rates.
- A summation of targeted attitudes, behaviour and effort teacher judgements indicated in excess of 70% of students consistently or often work to the best of their ability while in excess of 50% consistently make positive behaviour choices. Parents, the board, teachers and students highlighted the introduction of the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) framework as a significant strategy.
- Operational planning reflects an ongoing commitment to establishing structures to support the learning for all students including significant subgroups such as those at or below national minimum standards. Parents and staff highlighted the benefit of initiatives including Reading Rockets, Rainbow Readers and Numero in improving student achievement along with the targeted use of MultiLit.
- Ten students in receipt of Disability Allocation funding and students below the national minimum standard have Individual Education Plans or are included in Group Education Plans. All 84 students requiring an adjusted education plan receive support from the student services team. The team coordinates input from outside agencies, staff professional learning, parent communication, plan reviews and if appropriate, the preparation of modified reporting documents. The team tracks students to ensure smooth transition between years. Parents of students requiring an adjusted learning program spoke of the commitment of staff to support the learning of their children.



- Meetings with parents, the board and the student services team highlighted an ongoing commitment to enhancing structures to support the learning for all students including those requiring teaching and learning adjustments. The commitment to the highly regarded MultiLit intervention program exemplifies staff preparedness to provide targeted support for identified students.
- Specialist teaching occurs in the arts (visual arts, music), digital technologies, and health and physical education. Analysis of performance largely relies on teacher judgements with program highlights included in the annual report. The commitment by specialists to examine additional measurement strategies to support their judgements, inform program adjustments and support data-driven reporting is affirmed.
- Conversations with the leadership team, curriculum leaders and classroom teachers highlighted the high level of professional collaboration that is supporting the development of high-quality teaching and learning. Ongoing collaboration between teachers has been assured through the weekly collaborative planning sessions, in which teachers work together to develop shared goals and common teaching language and practices.
- Purposeful performance management processes aligned to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers complement professional collaboration. These processes are linked to both individual professional growth goals and effective implementation of the business plan.
- Teachers receive ongoing feedback through conversations about their teaching, peer observations, class walk throughs and lesson observations by members of the leadership team. Professional learning is organised in areas of need to develop staff capacity and high-quality teaching that will lead to improved student learning. Graduate and newly appointed teachers are provided with a comprehensive package and supported to develop an understanding of key strategies, programs and pedagogical practices.
- In addition to engagement with the Geraldton Network, the school has embraced its role as a regional Teacher Development School (TDS) in literacy, numeracy and early childhood education with commendable enthusiasm. Conversations with the leadership team highlighted the significant impact high-quality professional learning accessed as a TDS and through the Geraldton Network has on teaching and learning. It drives the common language and approach used throughout the school. All staff (teaching and non-teaching) spoke very highly of the impact of being a TDS has had on the school.

- Parents and the board expressed the belief that continuing high-quality leadership and teaching, improving student engagement and developing community partnerships will continue to support the development of all students.

### **Areas of strength**

- The improved academic performance as exemplified by SPM Overall Progress data which highlights significant improvement from minus 0.54 in 2015 to 1.35 in 2016.
- The high level of collaboration between staff characterised by a commitment to professional growth focused on improved teaching and learning.
- The school has enthusiastically embraced its role as a regional TDS to maximise teaching and learning opportunities for both the school and the Geraldton Network.

## Student Performance Monitoring

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

### Findings

- The school has developed a very comprehensive self-review process focusing not only on performance against 'like-schools' but also individual student needs. The self-review process is documented in the assessment schedule which outlines which data is to be collected, when it is collected and who is responsible for collecting the data. Data collected and analysed includes: First Steps Diagnostic Number Assessment (Years 1–6), Letter and Sounds assessment (Years 1–2), Early Numeracy Screen (K–PP), On-entry assessment (PP–2), KAT, Oxford Maths (P–6), Brightpath oral narrative (Year 1), Brightpath narrative writing (Years 2–6) and NAPLAN (Year 3 and Year 5). The self-review is very comprehensive with, in addition to the business plan targets, consideration of other aspects of teaching, learning and engagement.
- The assessment schedule outlines processes to be used throughout the year and ensures teachers use a variety of monitoring tools continuously and as part of their usual teaching practices.
- Staff members have developed a practical student profiling system used to identify and monitor students who require a differentiated teaching and learning program.
- Annual reports are made available in hard copy, electronically and on the website. While the 2016 annual report comprehensively outlines performance it does not specifically report progress against targets described in the business plan. The board and leadership team identified limitations with some initial targets and modified the targets at the end of 2016. It is recommended future reports include consideration of priorities and targets described in the business plan.
- The well-developed assessment schedule together with embedded school practices and the monitoring of these practices by a distributed leadership team give confidence these practices are sustainable. A system of planned weekly collaborative meetings supports the monitoring practices established.

**Areas of strength**

- The comprehensive student monitoring processes which drive the teaching and learning practices.
- The systematic analysis of a broad range of data which is used to inform school planning.

**Area for improvement**

- More closely align the annual report with the priorities and targets described in the DPA.

## Program Delivery

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

### Findings

- There is an established program of education delivery based on the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline. Staff members have been very selective when choosing whole-school programs and procedures. First Steps procedures continue to be integral to classroom teaching and the Letters and Sounds program is used throughout the early years. Teaching staff have made a conscious decision to not rely on commercial programs. Instead, collaborative teams develop programs of work. Where it is believed necessary the staff have developed scope and sequence documents to guide programs of learning. An example provided was the Spelling Scope and Sequence Chart developed using a synthetic phonics approach. Learning area plans are available in all areas.
- Safety and welfare of students is prominent within the school. Staff, student and parent surveys all confirm the school is safe and welcoming. Programs or initiatives such as PBS, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies, KidsMatter and Friendly Schools Plus together with the employment of a school chaplain and Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers support student wellbeing. Discussions with the student services team gave insight into the lengths the school goes to support the children.
- A commitment to the establishment of significant community partnerships including YouthCare, Midwest Aboriginal Education Centre, Midwest Language Centre and the Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service supporting student engagement is commendable. A meeting with representatives from the Western Australian Police Youth Crime Intervention Team, the Clontarf Foundation and the Geraldton Buccaneers State League Basketball Club highlighted the impact of these community partnerships in supporting students beyond their schooling years.
- The school has established an action plan to embed the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework within the operations of the school.
- Routines, such as gathering all students in the covered area before school with staff supervision, ensure the safe and orderly environment of the school.

- School documentation including parent and staff information booklets and the excursion policy outline school policies and procedures for the school community to use to ensure the safety of students.
- The National Quality Standard report in 2016 indicates the school is progressing well in meeting the standard. The school demonstrated progress being made towards implementation of recommendations made in Quality Area 2 (Children's Health and Safety) and Quality Area 6 (Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities).
- Day-to-day management of the school's program delivery is of a high standard. Well-documented school statements inform the community of school operations and procedures. These documents include operational plans and scope and sequence charts, assessment schedule, executive team roles and parent and staff handbooks.
- Well-documented and embedded processes, owned by the school community, will ensure the sustainability of program delivery.

### **Areas of strength**

- The commitment of the whole staff to the development of a team approach within the school where all staff are responsible for the learning of all students in all areas.
- The establishment of significant community partnerships to support student engagement.

## 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

- The principal, in consultation with the finance committee and school board, uses a transparent, evidence-driven process to support progress and improvement. Allocations of financial and human resources are linked to identified needs, planning and priorities.
- Meetings with the finance committee and board confirmed resourcing decisions are considered by the principal, manager of corporate services, finance committee and the board. Allocations are linked to the business plan and targeted to support identified programs, projects and intervention strategies. Leaders ensure research is undertaken prior to major decisions for expenditure.
- Both the finance and student services committees verified additional targeted funding including Disability Allocation support is directed to the achievement of improved outcomes for identified students.
- Resources are used effectively to support programs and initiatives. Contextually appropriate support for the student services team, including the appointment of a learning support coordinator and an additional allocation of one day a week to the role of the chaplain, is commended.
- Workforce planning is guided by the staffing profile package and acknowledged in the business plan. Future workforce planning and recruitment will consider the potential impact of enrolment instability while addressing profile imbalances.
- The school receives significant support from the committed Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C), continuing revenue from community usage of the school facilities and parent voluntary contributions. The considerable support provided by the P&C, principally through its highly regarded canteen, is exemplified by a commitment to fund the planned development of a nature playground to further enhance the physical environment.
- Distributed leadership is a feature with many staff engaged in leadership roles. Staff members demonstrate professional knowledge, critical self-reflection and the ability to provide professional learning, support, mentoring and review within their areas. The distributed leadership model is strategically managed to drive

succession planning and multiskilling, and has supported the ongoing professional satisfaction of staff.

- The finance committee indicated confidence that, with stable enrolment and ongoing support from traditional funding sources including the P&C and local businesses, key initiatives and specialist programs will be sustained.

### **Areas of strength**

- The commitment of the parent body to sustain financial support to ensure the ongoing quality and breadth of activities.
- Contextually appropriate assistance for key priorities including the appointment of a learning support coordinator and an additional allocation to the role of the chaplain to support wellbeing and engagement.
- The distributed leadership model which guides succession planning and supports the ongoing professional growth of staff.
- The high level of collaboration between the principal and the board to ensure effective governance.



## School Board

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

### Findings

- While the school board complies with the requirements of the *School Education Act 1999* (Act), the board's intention to invite community members who would represent a broader range of families within the school community is affirmed.
- Discussion with the board members and board minutes indicated an understanding of their role and responsibilities as outlined in the Act.
- The board participates in the endorsement of the DPA and development and endorsement of the annual report and school budget. It has processes to review school performance and satisfaction levels of staff, parents and students and participated in this review. Board members agreed that the Department of Education module-based training currently being undertaken was improving their ability to hold the school to account for its performance through the school's self-review process.
- Board communication with the school community is through the school newsletter and school Facebook page. Discussion with parents indicated that the parent community understands the role of the board and who its members are. An 'open meeting' is planned for later in the year.
- The board took part in the school's review of its progress towards meeting the requirements of the DPA. Part of this involved reviewing the school board. Apart from this, the board has not reviewed its own performance but intends to do so before the end of the DPA.
- Discussion with the board and leadership indicated that, while there were a limited number of parents prepared to join the board, members are very committed. At times, the replacement of members has been difficult but the principal and chair are confident that high calibre members will continue to come forward and the strategy of approaching community members with specific skills would be used to benefit the school.

**Area of strength**

- Board members use their significant contextual understanding to support governance processes including the collaborative 2016 review and subsequent revision of business plan targets.

**Areas for improvement**

- The board strategically aligns its agenda and processes to ensure requirements of the DPA are routinely addressed.
- The board seeks representation within its membership of the broader range of families within the school community.
- The board regularly reviews its own performance.

## Conclusion

Allendale Primary School has an embedded safe, positive, inclusive and collaborative learning environment that supports its vision as *'...a place where we work together to develop independent and collaborative learners preparing them as future citizens.'*

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.

Although performance against the recently revised, board endorsed targets is yet to be assessed, academic achievement is within the expected performance range. The leadership team is confident of continuing progress during the current DPA and buoyant that programs currently being implemented should provide improved academic outcomes.

The leadership team is committed to the ongoing development of a learning community exemplified by a culture of high expectations for all students, collaborative practice, professional and innovative teaching and ongoing evidence-based self-review.

## Declaration

We confirm the information provided is, to the best of our knowledge, true and correct, based on the verification of the evidence provided by Allendale Primary School for the Department of Education Services' independent review.

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



Mr Bill Gibson, Lead Reviewer

7 June 2017

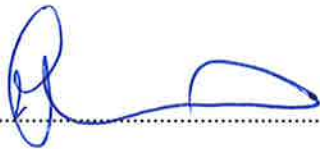
Date



Mr Noel Strickland, Reviewer

7 June 2017

Date



Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,  
Department of Education Services

20/6/17

Date