



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Education

# Harrisdale Primary School

2018

Review Findings



Independent Public School Review

## Disclaimer

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### School and Review Details

<b>Principal:</b>	Ms Karen Duncan
<b>Board Chair:</b>	Mr Ben Foster
<b>School Address:</b>	7 Fairhaven Ave, Harrisdale WA 6112
<b>Number of Students:</b>	1032
<b>ICSEA<sup>1</sup></b>	1047
<b>Reviewers:</b>	Ms Kerry Usher (Lead) Mr Rod Baker
<b>Review Dates:</b>	10 and 11 April 2018

### Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this review is to provide assurance to the principal and school community, the board and the Director General of the Department of Education of the extent to which the school staff and board have met the commitments of the Delivery and Performance Agreement (DPA). The review verifies the degree to which there are effective processes in place bringing about improved student learning.

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<sup>1</sup> The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is a scale of socio-educational advantage that is computed for each school. It allows for comparisons to be made between schools that are matched according to their socio-educational advantage, allowing fair comparisons of NAPLAN results between schools with students who have a similar ICSEA. The median ICSEA value is 1000.  
[http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/About\\_icsea\\_2014.pdf](http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/About_icsea_2014.pdf)

## Review Methodology

Underpinning the review methodology is the understanding that the principal is required to ensure the roles and responsibilities of the DPA are met; school performance and student improvement targets and priorities, as detailed in the school's business plan, are assessed, reviewed annually and an annual report made publicly available. The review seeks to determine the extent to which these commitments have been met.

The principal provided the school self-review conclusions to the reviewers one month prior to the commencement of the review.

The reviewers supplemented the information provided by the principal with information on the school's achievements, its processes and its student performance data from a number of sources which included:

- the My School<sup>®</sup> website
- School Performance Monitoring
- Schools Online reports

Reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school self-review documentation to verify achievement of the DPA and business plan commitments, and developed lines of inquiry where further in-school verification was required.

An agenda for the site visit was negotiated with the principal to enable the gathering of evidence to verify claims made in the school self-review statements. During the review visit the reviewers sourced evidence to support the claims through observation and discussion with leaders, teaching and support staff, board members, parents and students where required. Where the school belongs to an Independent Public School (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)?*

Harrisdale Primary School commenced in 2016 catering for students in Years K–6. The school is located in the south-eastern suburb of Harrisdale approximately 30 km from the Perth central business district. The rapidly growing suburb has a student population comprising a diverse multicultural demographic with many nationalities represented. The local population includes parents with occupations including fly-in fly-out workers and professionals, many of whom have migrated to Australia and make up a significant proportion of the community. Over 50 languages other than English (LOTE) are spoken within the community, particularly Hindi, Mandarin and Malay with the school enrolment having representatives from 37 nationalities. The school ICSEA of 1047 is indicative of the socio-educational advantage of the school.

The school is the most rapidly growing of all primary schools in Western Australia having started with an enrolment of 520 in 2016 and reaching 1032 at the commencement of the 2018 school year. In Years 1–6 there are 156 English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) students, 20 students with an identified disability and 21 Aboriginal students. Further growth is anticipated in the community through to 2021. Staff numbers are aligned with the enrolment with a full-time equivalent of 85.5 staff.

The school was established with 'state of the art' purpose built facilities including specialist teaching areas and interactive play areas. Digital technologies are a feature of the learning programs. To accommodate enrolment, the school's permanent facilities are supplemented by 26 transportable buildings on site.

### Findings

- The school initially invested considerable time with Creative Communities, a community consultative group, and the local community to determine future directions. The DPA was signed to operate from the commencement of the school in 2016 to the end of 2018. However, the school's business plan was developed during 2016, the first year of the school's operations, by the staff and school board. This was done to ensure staff and community engagement and ownership of the plans to improve student learning and support the ethos and purpose of the school. Therefore, the business plan being three years in length was designed to operate over 2017–19. This will be reviewed at the end of 2018 and aligned with the next DPA which is expected to run over 2019–21.
- The Business Plan 2017–19 contains vision and mission statements and beliefs that focus on developing student potential, placing students at the centre and

building a culture for the school. Academic success, development of the whole child, early childhood education, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking along with staff health and wellbeing are key elements of the culture building. The business plan outlines key areas for development:

- building and empowering the community
- effective leadership and high quality teaching
- civic and environmental responsibility
- attendance
- behaviour
- school focus areas – literacy and numeracy, digital technologies, early childhood education.

Key areas have specified targets that are measurable and with progress reported to the board at their meetings and to the school community through the annual report. The business plan is made available to the community through board representation and their review of school performance on the progress towards meeting targets. The business plan is also available on the school website.

- The business plan is effective in developing the appropriate teaching and learning culture in a new school environment with a rapidly expanding enrolment. It provides the basis for developing school/community relationships and the necessary structures to support children in their learning and achieving the vision and mission of the school.

### **Areas of strength**

- Leadership in establishing and implementing a business plan incorporating strategic, high level structures for student learning and to provide staff direction and support in the context of a rapidly expanding student enrolment.
- The engagement and commitment by leadership and staff in implementing the key areas in the business plan to support the development of a student-centred focus for the school and its community.

## Teaching and Learning

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

### Findings

- Discussions with parents and staff members representing most areas of the school confirmed that the principal and her leadership team constantly promote the belief that all students are capable of strong progress. This is supported by the whole-school processes that have been established to cater for mainstream students, those with special needs and the academically talented, together with inclusive programs that acknowledge the ethnic diversity in the student enrolment.
- The school's leadership structure has been established in a way that best supports and promotes effective teaching and learning and ensures consistency across year levels and the whole school. While the principal has an involvement at all levels, each of the deputy principals have clearly designated roles as leaders of one of the sub-schools (Years K–PP, Years 1–2, Years 3–4, Years 5–6, and Specialists), bringing particular skills and expertise to their areas of responsibility. They work closely with staff members as an expert teacher, guide and mentor, maintaining close oversight of the operations of classrooms. In addition, each leader has responsibility for other areas linking closely to teaching such as EAL/D, behaviour, attendance and students at educational risk.
- A major strength of the teaching and learning program is the implementation of literacy and numeracy blocks that apply across the school. Teachers receive guidance on the breakdown of time that should be allocated to each subject within the block. Common duties other than teaching (DOTT) time has been arranged so that teachers have at least two hours per week when they are able to meet with the others in their year level. To facilitate this a lead teacher has been selected within each year level that guides the collaborative activities and acts as a link with the school leadership team. The collaborative time is used effectively, with teachers describing how they share planning and lesson preparation, easing individual workloads and ensuring consistency of approach. When asked by the reviewers about strengths of the school, several teachers rated the opportunities for collaboration as among the most effective strategies in place.
- Recognition of the need to support teachers, all of whom are quite new to this school and many new to teaching, can be seen in the school's operational plans in literacy and numeracy, and the scope and sequence charts. These are

comprehensive and clearly show teachers what they should be focusing on at stages during the year. A further, innovative approach to support can be seen in the employment of coaches in literacy, numeracy and digital technologies. The coaches, who have a part-time teaching role, are available for three days each week to work alongside teachers in classrooms to support the development of skills and understandings and the implementation of best practice.

- The school places high importance on successful practice in the early years, evidenced by this being one of the priority areas in the business plan and the dedication of a deputy principal with extensive early childhood experience to guide teaching practice. The staff has developed an early years philosophy that aligns with the business plan and reflects the school's core beliefs and philosophy that young students learn best when they feel happy, safe and excited about school.
- Effective teaching and school-wide consistency has been further enhanced by the implementation of the Harrisdale Primary School Lesson Design which staff have developed based on available research. There is now an acceptance among all teachers that the key elements of the design (hook, purpose, explicit teaching, guided practice, independent learning and review) include all the acknowledged best practices for successful teaching and it is used almost without exception.
- Practices have been developed to manage students who have been identified with a disability, or whose performance suggests that they may need additional support and a modified learning program. To assist in identifying them, one of the deputies has developed an online tool, the Whole School Data Profiling Tool, where all assessment outcomes are entered by teachers at the time of testing. With some of the information appearing in a colour code, the identification of students facing difficulties is made easier. This information can lead to a referral to the student services team, comprising a deputy principal, the school psychologist and the school chaplain, and the implementation of an individual education plan. This team plays a significant role in supporting those students already identified as at risk and assists in the management of newly enrolled students through family contact.
- Extension classes are in place to cater for academically talented students who are at risk of not being fully catered for in their mainstream class. An Australian Council for Educational Research assessment has been used to identify students with above average intelligence and the ability to work collaboratively. A group of approximately 20 students in Years 3–4, and another in Years 5–6, have one session a week working with a teacher who has skills and an interest in this area.



- Acknowledgement has been given to the cultural diversity of the student population and the language difficulties that some students have when attempting their classroom work. A teacher has been employed to work a day each week supporting the work of the deputy principal who oversees the progress of students who do not have English as a first language. In addition, two education assistants who are bilingual have been employed to work closely with those who require assistance, often in a one-on-one arrangement in the classroom. Significant, and at times remarkable, progress has occurred as a result of this intervention.
- The reviewers had the opportunity to visit classrooms, observe teachers in action and to interact with them and their students. Students were actively engaged with their teachers who modelled explicit teaching techniques, and in many classrooms teachers and students were using digital technologies as part of their work. Rooms had attractive displays of students' work together with the teachers' charts, guidelines for learning, word walls and print walks and presented as positive places in which to work and learn.
- All staff participate in performance management. The focus for support staff is linked to the specific nature of their role and is managed by a range of staff members. While some report to the manager corporate services, others are supervised by the teacher or school leader that they work closely with. The focus for teachers is on the improvement of teaching skills and is linked directly to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, with the supervision of this process being undertaken by one of the school leaders. In 2017 an additional dimension to this has been added with the implementation of peer observation and feedback. The school model has been developed by the peer mentoring team, a group of staff members who were keen to take on leadership in this area. Their preparations included a visit to another school to observe the practice in operation there, before designing and gaining staff support for the school's model. This is now a mandated practice at the school.
- Staff in all interviews presented as hard-working, skilled and competent and demonstrated a belief in the work that they are doing. This, together with the distributed leadership structure and whole-school programs that have been implemented suggest to the reviewers that the present levels of student progress will be maintained, if not improved upon.

### **Areas of strength**

- The whole-school practices in literacy and numeracy, including blocks of time, operational planning, scope and sequence charts, and the Harrisdale Primary School Lesson Design that ensure consistency of approach in all year levels.

## Harrisdale Primary School

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- The opportunities for collaboration within year levels.
- The guidance provided to teachers through an effective leadership structure and in-class support.

## Student Performance Monitoring

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

### Findings

- An exemplary self-review process is in place with high quality data being collected on each student's performance, both academic and non-academic. The analysis of data is thorough and occurs at several levels including individuals, classes, year levels and whole school.
- The school has developed its own Curriculum and Assessment Policy that outlines the processes that will be undertaken to monitor and improve student performance. Teachers are inducted on this upon appointment to the school, with a focus on the Whole-School Assessment Schedule which clearly sets out for them the timeline for assessment and the tools that will be used.
- An impressive array of assessment tools is used at the school to gather quality data on student progress. These include teacher made assessments, standardised assessments, interviews, work samples, observation notes, photographs and video evidence, and peer and self assessments. To assist teachers to make the best use of their data, collaborative meetings often include a focus on moderation of work samples and the effective use of data in planning for improvement. Individual education plans play a significant part in the assessment of students with identified needs, providing an excellent opportunity for parents to participate in the assessment process.
- Discussions with parents confirmed that the school has effective reporting practices in place and that they feel fully informed of the progress of their children. In addition to the required formal reports, issued twice each year, teachers use digital technologies daily, particularly the Seesaw application, to provide families with regular updates on the progress of their children. Information is also passed home through the school's Facebook site, SMS messaging and telephone conversations.
- With the school being in just its third year of operation there is limited longitudinal data available to assist the principal and her staff to make judgements over time about student progress. A quick analysis of 2016 and 2017 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data would suggest that the performance of Year 3 and Year 5 students at the school is similar to that of like-schools. However, the school has conducted a comprehensive assessment of progress against academic targets in the business plan as part of its review

process and concluded that it has only achieved partial success. The targets in the literacy and numeracy priorities are linked to NAPLAN results (eg “align to or better Year 3 NAPLAN performance against like-schools” and “in Year 5 35% of students will achieve proficiency Bands 7 or above”). Year 3 students met all business plan targets in 2017, while Year 5 students met the targets for spelling and numeracy but did not meet the targets for reading, writing, and punctuation and grammar. The school has balanced this against the fact that, at the time of testing in 2017, the stable cohort of students would have attended the school for just five terms while others had been there for much less time. The reviewers support the school’s judgement that, while structures are in place to ensure a quality learning program, it is too early to gauge its effectiveness at present.

- The business plan also includes the priority “early childhood education K–2” with the targets set in this priority forming part of the self-review process. The reviewers engaged in an in-depth discussion with the school leader in this area and representatives of the early childhood education teachers about the procedures and practices in place and are happy to support the school’s judgement that both targets, “80% of Pre-primary students are achieving the On-entry assessment national standard in numeracy” and “school self-assessment identifies seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard as progressing from amber to green”, are being met.

### **Areas of strength**

- The detailed Whole-School Assessment Schedule that provides clear guidelines for teachers to follow when gathering data on their students.
- The effective analysis of the data that is collected to measure the progress of individual students, classes, year levels and the whole school.

## Program Delivery

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

### Findings

- From the evidence provided, the reviewers are confident that the programs offered by the school are designed and delivered to meet the needs of students in accordance with legislative and policy requirements.
- School practices reflect the cultural diversity of the intake area and the need to have parents feeling welcome and confident that their children's needs are being catered for. Effective strategies supporting this approach include pre-enrolment questionnaires, the use of interpreters, parent classroom representatives, EAL/D teaching strategies, the employment of bilingual education assistants who work side by side with students who speak little or no English, parenting classes run by the school psychologist and an annual harmony day where families are encouraged to display their heritage at school. Parents who met with the reviewers were extremely appreciative of the support they have received and the interest they see teachers have in the welfare of their children.
- The principal has established a cohesive leadership structure that ensures the school operates effectively. Each deputy principal has a clearly defined role managing a sub-school that sees them closely involved with teaching and learning, while also taking on other key areas of operation. Their work is supported by team leaders at each year level who oversee the management and implementation of collaborative practices. Additional leadership roles that include literacy, numeracy and digital technology coaches; graduate teacher mentors; responsibility for the areas of health, science, and digital technologies; and leading the practices as a Teacher Development School all make a significant contribution to the school's ability to achieve its targets.
- The rapid increase in enrolments has resulted in the ongoing need to recruit additional staff. To ensure that this goes smoothly, and that teachers can quickly become accustomed to the teaching practices of the school, a detailed induction policy has been developed with new staff invited to participate before the beginning of the school year. Graduate teachers, 12 being in their first or second year of teaching in 2018, receive additional mentoring and support. Relief teachers, who can often have a significant presence in this large school, are also provided with a similar induction file that provides them with guidance on the school's daily operations.

- The school presents as a safe and caring environment. Students were observed to play happily and sensibly during breaks and before and after school, under the close supervision of staff. It was noted that the leadership team play a role in this as well. While behaviour of students is rarely an issue a whole-school approach to behaviour management, based on 1-2-3 Magic, has been introduced to ensure there is a consistent approach across the school. In interviews with the reviewers, teachers confirmed that they were very clear about the steps they were required to take in the management of an issue, before moving it on to a deputy principal for further action and resolution. Students who met with the reviewers understood the consequences for them should they get to Step 3.
- The focus on behaviour management is balanced by a strong rewards program in classrooms where teachers use a variety of approaches to acknowledge and reward good behaviour. Recently, staff agreed that this needed consolidation and have established a positive behaviours team. The team is in the early stages of implementing a whole-school approach to encouraging positive behaviour, building on the present practice of class, assembly and whole-school rewards and promoting the values that are significant to the school.
- The school has specialist support in physical education, art, music, LOTE and science. Timetabling expertise has enabled timetables to be set-up so that support teachers provide classroom teachers with at least two hours of common DOTT time each week. It was evident to the reviewers that there is a strong liaison between class teachers and specialists.
- An impressive feature of the school's operation is the number of staff who volunteer their time, either during the lunch break or before and after school, to run additional activities and clubs. These include the running club before school; 'drop in' art activities at lunch time; Arts Splash; gardening club; science, technology, engineering and mathematics and coding club; basketball and netball club; gymnastics club; choir and drumming; and a boy's club after school. While these activities develop skills, and respond to the interests of students, there is also a recognition by staff that some students may not otherwise be provided with the experiences out of school that are regarded as essential for their development.
- The school is developing a strong reputation in the community as a safe, inclusive and caring environment for children. The reviewers are confident that the effective leadership, together with whole-school processes and a strong self-belief among staff, will ensure the sustainability of program delivery to promote learning and wellbeing for all students.

**Areas of strength**

- Inclusive school practices that acknowledge each student's cultural background.
- The safe learning environment that allows staff and students to focus on the core business of teaching and learning.
- The willingness of staff to give their time to run activities out of school time.

## 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 school has documented evidence of the allocation of funding and resources to meet strategic planning needs, delivery of the curriculum and for all operational requirements for a rapidly increasing school population. Budgets are signed off by the board and regular updates are provided for analysis and discussion of progress in expenditure on programs and resources to meet planned outcomes. In its third year of operation, with the manager corporate services a part of the leadership team, evidence verifies effective monitoring and management of human, physical and financial resources. A reserves plan provides evidence of the management of future expenditure on capital items. Decisions on implementing and funding for programs are evidence based and inclusive of staff input. Cost centre managers provide annual submissions to support funding requests with a finance committee responsible for approving submissions and monitoring budget expenditure.
- The school operational plan allocates funding for the implementation and monitoring of programs to support improvement and in meeting targets and priorities in the business plan. There is evidence of funding and learning support for specific programs and interventions for students at risk. The school has also ensured that there is a focus on the allocation of funding to the early years, including the appointment of a deputy principal early childhood. The business plan supports staff capacity building by enabling all staff to participate in professional learning opportunities to enhance their skills and ensure consistency of learning program delivery.
- The school workforce plan responds to the dynamic staff profile required to meet an increasing enrolment with a diverse student profile. Each year as enrolments have increased new staff are appointed to meet enrolment requirements, the student needs context, key business plan focus areas and to provide expert support in the following areas:
  - leadership of teams (teaching and support staff) and priority areas of literacy, numeracy and digital technologies
  - support for EAL/D students and families including the appointment of ethnic education assistants
  - early years education.



In addition the workforce plan supports processes to manage long service leave for staff. Key to meeting the school profile is the development of opportunities for staff to participate in a distributed leadership model, provide graduate support and develop an experiential and gender balance in new appointments. There is also a drive to support a diverse workforce, a focus on improving staff capabilities in using digital technologies and growth coaching training for aspirant leaders.

- Resourcing and support maintenance is sustainable based on the quality and thoroughness of planning evidenced in documentation and through discussion with staff and board members. As the school is only at the beginning of its third year of operation and given the rapid escalation in enrolments, the reviewers were able to verify that the management of resources is ensuring that student and staff needs were being met, were aligned with the mission for the school and the key outcomes described in its business plan.

### **Area of strength**

- The quality of self-review and planning that supports the distribution of resources to meet student needs.

## School Board

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

### Findings

- Board composition allows for a parent/community member board chair, three parents, two community members, Parents and Citizens' Association representative, the principal and three staff members. The manager corporate services acts as the executive officer. Board members are appointed for terms according to a schedule that supports continuity and refreshment of membership. The membership complies with the *School Education Act 1999* and *School Education Regulations 2000* which specify the membership categories and composition.
- It was determined from an examination of the board minutes since inception and discussions with the board chair and members that the board is operating effectively. This demonstrated that the board understands and fulfils its functions as prescribed in the *School Education Act 1999*, *School Education Regulations 2000* and Department of Education policy.
- Evidence presented for the review verified the board's endorsement of the DPA and annual report. The 2016 and 2017 school annual reports included reports from the board chair to the community. The reports outlined the board's involvement in approving the school budget and business plans. Minutes and the annual reports verified the board's involvement in reviewing school performance and the progress in achievement of targets in the business plan. Parent, staff and student satisfaction survey data is also reviewed with the analysis and outcomes reported in the school annual reports.
- The board communicates with the community through the annual school report, by providing the community with the means to make contact through information on the school website, and through an annual open meeting for community members. The board has undertaken an investigation into using technologies to better communicate directly with the parent community.
- Board minutes indicate that financial reporting to the board is a standing item with detailed analysis of expenditure against budget projections. The full results of the school audit were provided to the board for consideration. Reports to the board include progress in meeting business plan targets and NAPLAN analysis of school performance.

- The school board was provided with notification of the timing and scope of the IPS Review and with information relating to the school meeting DPA requirements. The board members indicated that they were well informed and provided with opportunities to discuss and analyse school performance data and progress towards meeting business plan targets.
- The board has not as yet reviewed its own performance and plans to do so in 2018 after three years of operation.
- The board has good processes and is in a development phase with a major focus on connecting with the school community. It recognises that tenure and stability of membership is important and has developed induction and selection processes to ensure sustainability. Its strength lies in the experience and dedication of core members and the commitment to seek training to improve the governance knowledge and understanding of all members.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Ensure access for all members to suitable board training.
- Ensure that the board evaluates its own performance as a regular part of its operations.

### Conclusion

The challenges of developing a new school with a rapidly increasing student enrolment with diverse student backgrounds have been met by the leadership and staff of Harrisdale Primary School in an exemplary manner. The student-centred vision, mission, beliefs and values developed for the school are evident in all aspects of school, teacher, student and community relationships and actions.

The focus on developing the whole child through the development of contemporary, consistent, well researched and collaborative practice by committed staff is highly evident. The comprehensive business plan provides the foundation for the goals and strategies to enhance and improve student learning and establish connections between students, community and school.

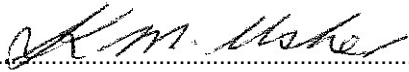
The school has utilised its resources to ensure access for students to an education that meets their language backgrounds and learning needs. Contemporary practice is evidenced by the use and teaching of digital technologies as a feature of learning processes that respond to the context of the students and their expectations for the future.

The leadership and staff of Harrisdale Primary School are commended for the development of a safe, calm and inclusive learning environment; for the strategies to involve and engage the community; and for the high level recognition and ownership by students and the community of it being 'their school'.

## 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 Harrisdale 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.



Ms Kerry Usher, Lead Reviewer

11 May 2018

Date



Mr Rod Baker, Reviewer

10 May 2018

Date



Mr Ken Perris, Director  
Independent Public School Review

15 May 2018

Date