



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Education

# Scarborough Primary School

2017

Review Findings



Independent Public School Review

## Disclaimer

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### School and Review Details

<b>Principal:</b>	Mr Jason Crofts
<b>Board Chair:</b>	Ms Trisha Lee
<b>School Address:</b>	Hinderwell Street, Scarborough WA 6019
<b>Number of Students:</b>	175
<b>ICSEA<sup>1</sup></b>	1060
<b>Reviewers:</b>	Ms Su Wilson (Lead) Mr Bill Gibson
<b>Review Dates:</b>	18 and 19 September 2017

### Purpose of the Review

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

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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 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 several 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)?*

Scarborough Primary School, located in the coastal suburb of Scarborough within the City of Stirling, became an IPS in 2015. The school has a proud history going back to its opening in 1934 with the Heritage Room a visual reminder of its past. The well-maintained grounds and adequately resourced buildings support teaching and learning for a culturally diverse enrolment of 175 Kindergarten to Year 6 students.

The ICSEA of 1060 places the school in the second decile of Australian schools with 72% of students in the top two socio-educational quartiles compared to 65% in the same quartiles in 2014.

The enrolment includes 13 (7.4%) English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) students and 19 (10.8%) students registered on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability.

The 2015 Australian Early Development Census indicates an increasing percentage of children are developmentally 'at risk' in the social competence and emotional maturity domains.

Contextual challenges including student transiency (28.9% in 2016), projected enrolment growth, an increasing number of students with a language background other than English (25% in 2016), the number of students with 'at risk' attendance and the increasing number of developmentally 'at risk' students provide a focus for the next business plan.

## Findings

- The publicly available 2015–17 Business Plan developed in consultation with the staff and community 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 “we strive to achieve the highest standard of learning possible to develop students’ knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their individual potential.”
- Three key drivers reflect community beliefs and guide improvement: excellence in teaching, learning and leadership (strive); strong partnerships (nurture); and a positive learning environment (protect). The business plan includes 17 academic and non-academic targets based on high expectations, broad ‘what and how’ strategies and a brief overview of the self-assessment philosophy to support compliance with the DPA.

- The inclusion of explicit links to the priorities in operational plans verifies alignment with the business plan. Staff report the business plan continues to guide the development of whole-school approaches and classroom practice.
- Twelve academic targets have been cited, demonstrating a commitment to improved academic performance across all areas of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), while five non-academic targets focus on improvement in student attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.
- The leadership team, curriculum leaders and board are aware target development in the next business plan will be enhanced by an understanding that the relatively small number of students in year cohorts often impacts on whole-school indicators of progress and achievement. Small cohorts often mean performance can best be assessed through individual progress and achievement in student learning rather than in the potentially more volatile aggregated data.
- Reviewers affirm the commitment to develop specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited academic and non-academic targets informed by rigorous interrogation of the whole-school and significant subgroup performance to ensure high expectations for all students in the next business plan.

### **Area of strength**

- The commitment of leaders, staff and board to develop and implement a business plan that outlines a long-term strategic approach to improvement.

### **Area for improvement**

- Include achievable and measurable school performance and student improvement targets intended to have maximum impact on overall school performance in the next business plan.

## Teaching and Learning

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

### Findings

- The school's move to IPS status coincided with long awaited stability in leadership. As a result, both staff and community members welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the development of a business plan which identified areas for improvement and provided clear direction for the school.
- Evidence collected against student achievement targets indicates performance over the term of the business plan has been inconsistent. Data from 2017 NAPLAN shows a downward trend in reading and numeracy for Year 3 while, for Year 5, strong performance in grammar and punctuation and gains in numeracy are countered by a significant decline in spelling.
- Progress towards the achievement of targets, both academic and non-academic, measured student progress and achievement in NAPLAN, attendance, behaviour and information collected in student satisfaction surveys. Twelve targets were designed to measure academic performance.
- The first numeracy target: "The mean performance of males and females in Year 3 to be at or above like-schools" was also used to measure performance in reading and writing. While designed specifically to measure the performance of male students when compared to that of female students, school leaders confirmed with reviewers that they were unable to filter data available to them to determine the performance of males and/or females attending like-schools. Attempts by the school to measure performance of males and females using the mean of all students attending like-schools shows targets for numeracy, reading and writing were not achieved, with the exception of Year 3 females in writing. The issue remains in that the comparison is with the performance of Year 3 students in like-schools and not with females. School leaders shared with reviewers that, while the information provided in measuring achievement of the target was questionable, they were able to draw conclusions in analysing the performance data for males and females tested. Importantly, the exercise has reinforced with school leaders the need to review the quality of the target to ensure the information gathered is both accurate and purposeful.
- The second numeracy target: "The percentage of students in the top two NAPLAN achievement bands to be greater than like-schools" was also used for reading, spelling and grammar and punctuation.

- For numeracy the target was not achieved. The surprising result when comparing performance against the target over the three-year term of the business plan is that the target was achieved for Year 3 students in 2015 with 0% of students performing in the top band, while the target was not achieved when 11% and 10% of students performed in the top band in 2016 and 2017 respectively.
- The target was also not achieved for reading; however, the improvement of students from Year 3 in 2015 (23% difference) with students in Year 5 in 2017 (9% difference) was noted.
- For spelling, the target was achieved by Year 3 students.
- Performance in grammar and punctuation did not reach the target for either year level.

Once again the information obtained through analysis of data in measuring performance against the target is prompting school leaders to consider the need to refine the target to provide more meaningful information to inform future planning. Specifically, a target based on the performance of the stable cohort would have provided valuable evidence in determining the value of strategies and programs in place.

- The third numeracy target is based on student progress, stating: “The percentage of students with moderate, high or very high progress to be above 80%.” This target was also used for reading and writing with an adjusted measure of 85%.
  - While this target was achieved for numeracy, the results lack significance given the focus was not on the stable cohort. As it stands, the target is impacting on the value of the information which could otherwise have been used to measure the success of specific programs and/or the quality of teaching.
  - The target was not achieved for reading or writing. Again these results lack significance given the focus was not on the stable cohort.
- A new target was introduced for grammar and punctuation: “The percentage of students in the bottom two NAPLAN achievement bands to be less than like-schools.” This target was achieved for both year levels with Year 5 performance having ranged from a significant 2.3–2.6 standard deviations above the mean over the term of the business plan.
- The target set for science: “The mean performance of students to be at or above that of like-schools was not measured.” Reviewers were informed the school had

intended to use the Western Australian Monitoring Standards in Education test for science; however, this program ceased in 2013 and no other source was found to monitor performance. The school introduced the Progressive Achievement Tests in science in 2016 and plans to work with network and Teacher Development Schools to identify appropriate data sources for use in setting future targets.

- Two non-academic targets were set for attendance.
  - The first target stated: “Attendance rates for compulsory aged years (PP–6) to be at a minimum of 94% in each year level each semester.” While the use of overall attendance rates is questionable given the percentage is based on an algorithm that may be skewed by the attendance of a small group of students, the school’s analysis of available data for each year level did highlight trends of poor performance in the early years. No data was available for 2017.
  - The second attendance target was: “The percentage of students attending in the regular and indicated categories to be 95% or above each semester.” Analysis of this target again showed varied results for different year levels across 2015 and 2016, but discussion with school leaders highlighted the fact that including students at ‘indicated risk’ meant they were accepting attendance levels of 80% which equates to being absent one day each week. School leaders agreed that future targets should focus on the achievement of attendance that is ‘regular.’
- The non-academic target measuring behaviour: “For 98% of all students to achieve good standing reward each term” was based on behaviour recorded on the School Information System. As such the target has been achieved in Term 1 of 2017, fell just short at 97% in Term 2 and Term 3, and with Term 4 data still to come. The target was achieved for 2015 and 2016.
- Two non-academic targets were used to determine the effectiveness of strategies used to enhance the wellbeing of students, both of which related to information obtained from a student survey adapted from the National School Opinion Survey.
  - The first target: “For males and females to have a comparable level of satisfaction using the school Student Satisfaction Survey” is a little difficult to judge, given the interpretation of ‘comparable’. Scores are as follows:  
Term 1 of 2017 – Male 75%, Female 82%;  
Term 2 of 2017 – Male 85%, Female 78%;  
Term 3 of 2017 – Male 77%, Female 81%.  
Given the relatively small variance, particularly as the cohort is also small, the reviewers believe the target has been achieved.

- The second target relating to the wellbeing focus: “For the mean of all year level data sets to be greater than 3.0 using the school Student Satisfaction Survey” has also been achieved for the first three terms of 2017.
- Overall, discussions with school leaders highlighted the need to ensure future targets measure the impact of programs and strategies on student learning, to provide evidence for use in planning for improvement. A positive outcome of the work of staff in reviewing their performance against the targets was the quality of the strategic analysis of performance which provided staff with meaningful direction in making needed adjustments to learning programs and areas of focus. In addition, school leaders acknowledge the complexities of setting meaningful targets for small cohorts of students and shared their intentions to ensure some targets relate to specific student cohorts who remain in the school over the term of the business plan. These targeted students will be identified in operational planning.
- Close attention is given to meeting the needs of students who require teaching and learning adjustments with comprehensive processes in place at each year level for the identification of students who require additional support. Students are placed on individual education plans (IEPs) or group education plans developed by teachers and support staff in collaboration with the deputy principal, parents/carers and, where required, the school psychologist and support agencies external to the school. Intervention is tracked, providing a comprehensive record of each child’s learning history as they move through the year levels. This electronic tracking of progress is used for all students attending the school, providing valuable information as students move from one year level (or teacher) to the next.
- Teachers also work closely with EAL/D students. Progress maps are used, IEPs developed and, where available, additional support provided by education assistants until learning and teaching adjustments are no longer required.
- Discussions with teachers highlighted the value placed on meeting one-on-one with the deputy principal and with other teachers at staff meetings to examine information on their students’ progress. In turn they also valued the opportunity to meet with their Professional Learning Community (PLC), a school-based initiative developed by school leaders to support teachers in collaboratively building their professional knowledge and capacity. The logical next step would be the provision of opportunities to engage in collaboration at whole-school, phase-of-learning, year level and in curriculum or learning area teams. School leaders are keen to investigate opportunities for this as the school continues to grow.

- A strength of the school is the comprehensive process in place for the performance management of staff, a key strategy supporting “Strive – excellence in teaching, learning and leadership” as outlined in the business plan. Reviewers suggest that this process could now be used to further develop teachers’ skills in curriculum leadership, which will not only enhance their professional growth but strengthen decision-making processes.
- Sustainable practices in teaching and learning have been further enhanced through the school’s workforce plan which has led to an increased number of full-time teachers working in classrooms. This focus has led a change from only one full-time class teacher in 2015 to all classes having a full-time teacher in 2017.

### **Areas of strength**

- High quality performance management processes which underpin professional growth that is both encouraged and supported.
- The individualised student tracking system that informs the development of differentiated learning programs and supports the annual transition of cohort information.
- The comprehensive procedures in place for the early identification of, and ongoing support for, students at educational risk.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Expand existing collaborative practice to provide opportunities for staff to work together to implement whole-school plans, interrogate data on student progress, contribute to self-review processes and engage in opportunities for ongoing professional growth.
- Continue to establish recently introduced whole-school programs and strategies to consolidate and embed focused practice across the school leading to whole-school improvement.

## Student Performance Monitoring

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

### Findings

- Assessment of performance against areas of focus in the business plan has been conducted over the three years of implementation with progress against the student improvement targets and recommendations for improvement included in the annual report each year.
- School leaders also provided reviewers with documented self-assessment of the key areas of teaching and learning and school performance monitoring of the DPA.
- Following an in-depth audit of testing in 2015, an assessment planner now lists a carefully selected bank of assessment tools, arranged according to a school-based timeline for testing, and designed to ensure effective tracking of students using formative, summative and standardised measures. While this document is highly valued and closely followed, an overview that articulates the role played by staff in the school's annual cycle of self-review would clarify an expectation that the staff not only implement testing as per the planner, but contribute regularly to collaborative data analysis and planning for improvement. This would help ensure teachers both play a key role in the process of whole-school improvement and routinely measure the impact of their teaching.
- Early learning staff were trained in 2016 to review the school's progress against the implementation of the National Quality Standard (NQS) in early childhood education. Internal assessments were then conducted to review progress against the quality areas which were all met except for Quality Area 3, Physical Environment. The school is currently awaiting NQS verification to confirm judgements made.
- Self-assessment of student performance has highlighted the impact poor attendance is having on student learning despite strategies in place to address this. School leaders are keen to arrest ongoing trends of poor attendance through focusing efforts on students at 'indicated risk,' aiming for 'regular' attendance.

- Student performance in numeracy has also been identified as a concern. School leaders shared with reviewers planning under way to resource initiatives to support teachers in their work to improve students' numeracy performance.
- School-based reflection on the quality of reporting processes has led to the introduction of a three-way interview to accompany the formal school report, an initiative received positively by parents.

### **Area of strength**

- The development of an assessment planner that uses a variety of assessment tools to provide strong evidence to inform planning, enabling teachers to be responsive to the needs of their students.

### **Area for improvement**

- Develop a structured, cyclical process of self-review involving staff in the systematic collection and analysis of data to determine student progress and achievement, draw conclusions on the impact of their teaching and guide evidence-based planning for improvement.

## Program Delivery

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

### Findings

- The school's self-review confirms that curriculum programs, initiatives and strategies are developed in accordance with the requirements and schedule of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline with focused differentiation to ensure the needs of students requiring teaching and learning adjustments are met.
- Planning to ensure each student's safety and welfare is also critical to programs undertaken, supporting the school's focus on "Protect – the creation of a positive learning environment."
- Attention to each child's social and emotional needs is through the business plan focus of "Nurture – strong partnerships." Partnerships in support of this include the provision of a chaplain supported through YouthCARE, the Scarborough Baptist Church provides student mentors and volunteers, the Scarborough Returned and Services League of Australia in supporting days of significance and Scarborough Lions in participation in events and programs and support for projects to improve the school grounds. Corporate partnerships include the provision of before and after-school care, an after-school music program and a cost-free surfing program. Running in parallel is the school's strong values program and behaviour management policies and processes. Meetings with both parents and students confirmed the school's strong focus on ensuring children feel safe and families feel welcome.
- Documentation on all aspects of the school's strategic directions and operations including plans, policies, processes and structures is clear. Schedules and planners for students, staff and the board ensure processes are sound and communication effective. Rigorous analysis of NAPLAN data and the implementation of strategies to monitor the progress of student learning is in place for all learning areas. The staff responds to the analysis and tracking to identify students 'at risk' and those in need of extension. This evidence informs strategies and classroom practices.
- Specialist programs operate for visual art, physical education and science. While a variety of tools are used in assessing student performance, specialist teachers show a commitment to ensuring judgements are made in accordance with achievement standards and moderated where possible.

- Education partnerships in place include the Churchlands Network encompassing a network of principals, deputy principals, students at educational risk coordinators and curriculum networks for physical education, languages and the arts. A network of schools in close proximity known as OceanNet is also highly valued in localising issues such as student transiency, working together in applying for grants and projects, as well as collaborating in staffing, moderation and support for the professional growth of staff.

### **Areas of strength**

- The role of the chaplain, strengthened by his stability in the position, ensuring the chaplaincy program is highly valued by students, staff and the parent community.
- The attention given to building the OceanNet network to both provide and receive support specific to schools in Scarborough and surrounding suburbs.

## 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

- Meetings with the finance committee and board confirmed resourcing decisions are considered by the principal, manager corporate services and finance committee with the principal providing a summation at each board meeting.
- Processes to enable the effective allocation and management of resources are well established and show alignment with business plan targets and strategies. An integral part of the process is the critical evaluation by staff of the effectiveness of the range of resources allocated to effect improvement.
- The principal, the manager corporate services and the student services leader verified student characteristics funding including disability allocation support is directed to the achievement of improved outcomes for identified students.
- The Workforce Plan 2017–19 is guided by staffing profiles, the Strategic Plan for WA Public Schools 2016–19, the business plan and the Department of Education’s Focus statements. Future workforce planning and recruitment will consider enrolment trends including the increasing number of EAL/D students and staffing profile imbalances.
- The school receives support from the committed Parent and Citizens’ Association (P&C). The significant assistance provided by the association is exemplified by a commitment to support the development of the nature play area to enhance the physical environment.
- In addition to literacy and numeracy, the school is well resourced in other learning areas. Of note, is the area of digital technologies which features a range of computers, tablets and peripherals to enhance learning and teaching. The commitment to enhancing digital capacity is evidenced by the decision to give half a day each week to support the development of a whole-school operational plan and scope and sequence statement and provide oversight of infrastructure, hardware and software effectiveness.
- Staff members demonstrate professional knowledge, critical self-reflection and the ability to provide professional learning, support, mentoring and review within their areas. Further distribution of responsibility through the establishment and expansion of learning area teams to drive curriculum development and support

initiative and program sustainability will ensure whole-school approaches are sustained through and beyond the projected period of growth.

- The finance committee indicated confidence that, with ongoing support from traditional funding sources including the P&C and local businesses, key initiatives 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.
- 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

- Following an examination of board minutes and a meeting with members, reviewers concluded the board has provided stable governance for the duration of the DPA. Six parents and one community representative work with the principal and two staff representatives to fulfil obligations outlined in the DPA.
- Active parent and community representation, characterised by wide ranging skill sets and experience together with contextual understanding of both the redevelopment of the suburb and planned adjustments to western suburbs secondary education delivery supports the oversight of the board.
- Under the committed leadership of a parent representative as chair, the board continues to make a valuable contribution through insightful analysis of student achievement and survey feedback, policy development including sponsorship, dress code and healthy food and drink and ratification of the business plan, budgets and annual reports.
- Subcommittees are established as required to enable a more detailed focus on specific themes such as marketing of the school within and beyond its local-intake area.
- The board provides updates through the newsletter, the website, P&C meetings and many school activities including open days, orientation sessions and assemblies. A meeting with a representative group of parents indicated some understanding of board activities, role and responsibilities. A newsletter item drawing attention to National School Boards Week exemplifies the board's commitment to elevate community understanding of its roles and responsibilities.
- The chair and the principal have embedded a clear understanding of the separation between governance and operations. The collaboratively developed board planner that provides strategic alignment for the agenda could be extended to reflect the responsibilities outlined in the DPA.
- The collaboration between the chair and principal, continuing engagement with other IPS boards in the OceanNet and the tenured membership for elected and nominated positions provides confidence the board will remain strong, strategic and decisive in its governance role.

**Areas of strength**

- The governance provided by an engaged board under the strong and committed leadership of the board chair.
- The contextual understanding demonstrated by the board will enable it to support the development and delivery of the next business plan.

## **Conclusion**

Scarborough Primary School strives “to achieve the highest standard of learning possible to develop students’ knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their individual potential.” A commitment to this vision is integral to future success in accommodating growing enrolments and increasing cultural diversity in the school’s population. Staff have reflected on the school’s performance over the term of the 2015–17 Business Plan and are prepared for positive action.

An emerging culture of rich, collaborative practice will see staff working in teams to implement whole-school programs, routinely interrogate data then analyse results to measure the impact of their teaching. These practices are essential to effective self-review and will help ensure student performance lifts to consistently be at a level commensurate with the school’s ICSEA.

Supporting this shift is the intention to continue providing teachers with opportunities to adopt leadership roles. A culture of distributed leadership, committed and innovative teaching and an embedded self-review process means the school is well placed to improve the performance of all students over the term of the next business plan.

This capacity for school improvement is further strengthened by the support and strong governance of an informed and proactive board.

## 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 Scarborough Primary School, true and correct.

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



Mrs Su Wilson, Lead Reviewer

15 November 2017

Date



Mr Bill Gibson, Reviewer

15 November 2017

Date



Mr Ken Perris, Director  
Independent Public School Review

15 November 2017

Date