



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

Leda Education Support Centre

2017

Review Findings



Independent Review of
Independent Public Schools

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Ms Tina Howorth
Board Chair:	Mr Jason Biffin
School Address:	1–25 Feilman Drive, Leda WA 6170
Number of Students:	53
Reviewers:	Professor Chris Forlin (Lead) Ms Georgina Detiuk
Review Dates:	19 and 20 June 2017

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the Department of Education Services' 2014 Independent Review Findings Report 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.

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*[®] 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)?

Leda Education Support Centre is an IPS for students with special educational needs. Enrolment of students is from Kindergarten to Year 6. The centre is in the South Metropolitan Education Region on the same campus as Leda Primary School and staff actively participate in the Kwinana Federation of Schools (KFS) and the Peron Education Support Alliance (PESA) networks. The vision for the centre is to advance each child's personal development and increase their community participation. Parents and families are recognised as pivotal partners in meeting the educational needs of students and each child has an individual education plan (IEP) developed in consultation with parents, therapists and centre staff.

Findings

- The 2015–2017 Business Plan was developed collaboratively with staff and endorsed by the school board. Documented within the plan are strategic directions, priorities and corresponding strategies reflective of the planning to implement practices which will embed the centre motto *'Every child, every opportunity.'*
- Four priorities were documented as:
 - ensure all students attend school regularly
 - improve communication skills
 - develop increased Independence
 - embed protective behaviours.
- The principal and board have acknowledged that preparing the first business plan and setting targets was a new and challenging experience and that the targets set do not accurately reflect the centre's focus on improved student learning.
- It became evident to reviewers nevertheless that processes are in place to establish targets that are measurable and linked to improved student learning for the next triennium.
- Staff have a clear understanding of the business plan and demonstrate a commitment to engage in ongoing self-review processes that ensure targets,

strategies and milestones are scrutinised. Consistent recording of corresponding data as part of the review processes provide the information for identifying relevant centre priorities and specific student learning goals.

- Documented evidence was provided to reviewers verifying the centre leadership has undertaken reflective self-review. Achievements have been recognised and substantiated, and areas for improvement identified for future planning.
- The 2015–2017 Business Plan can be accessed by the school community on the centre website.

Area of strength

- The centre's leadership supported by the board chair acknowledge the need for a change in the framework of the next business plan.

Areas for improvement

- Develop a business plan that provides the strategic direction of the centre and incorporates specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited (SMART) targets.
- Develop a process for reviewing business plan targets and progress against the DPA.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- All students in the centre require teaching and learning adjustments. Teachers monitor progress of these adjustments against IEP outcomes for consolidating or achieved status. These are then collated across all year groups to obtain an overall whole-school percentage of student achievement for IEP goals. Analysis of data indicates in 2016 that 87% of students achieved the target in the business plan of achieving greater than 70% of their IEP goals in maths; 76% in English; and 71% in health. The principal confirmed that performance had improved although acknowledged the challenges in ensuring that while targets were used to raise standards and provide opportunities for inspirational goals, they also needed to be realistic and achievable. It was clear to the reviewers that all programming was individually focused and that there were high expectations for all students to achieve to their potential.
- Designated teacher days are used to discuss student achievement and to monitor student progress. These days are considered by teachers to be invaluable in reviewing progress across the whole school and in planning for improved student learning.
- Implementation of the National Quality Standard in the early years is being addressed. Staff at the centre worked with PESA colleagues throughout 2016 to review the process. The staff has acknowledged that achievement remains a work in progress for all the standards. Staff are working towards implementing a quality improvement plan and will report against the standards in 2017.
- Since 2008 the centre has offered an intensive early intervention program for students who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Although the centre has withdrawn from the formal Department of Education early intervention program, in 2017, there are eight students in Kindergarten and 11 in Pre-primary who are participating in a similar program. The teachers and education assistants involved in this are fully trained and use Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) approaches to teaching. Regular sessions per day are devoted to intensive 1:1 ABA intervention which are then supported by the informal use of the strategies throughout the day to improve student engagement. The principal reports that this complements external programs being delivered in the students' homes and that the staff liaise directly with external agencies to ensure generalisability of strategies across both home and school.

- The target to *'increase the number of students attending integration classes'* was not met in 2015–2016. There has; however, existed a strong collaborative arrangement between the centre and the on-site Leda Primary School. Together they have developed an integration and inclusion policy providing opportunities for children from the centre to participate in various academic and non-academic sessions in the primary school. The centre has found, nonetheless, that integration has become more challenging in 2017 with the large increase in student numbers at the primary school and the continual change of leadership resulting in fewer opportunities for inclusion in academic subjects. The number of integration opportunities has reduced from 78 in 2016 to six in 2017. While this is a cause for concern for the centre principal, the students of the centre have continued to be involved in a range of non-academic activities including sports carnivals, senior camp, swimming lessons and graduation. All students share the same play areas and break times and attend the same assemblies.
- The target to *'increase the number of students attending school for 98% of the time'* has not been met. The centre staff has identified that the attendance rate over the triennium has been below that of Western Australian public schools. It was evident; however, that the staff were closely monitoring this and had initiated a number of interventions to increase student attendance. Even though the staff acknowledge that this may be related to many of the students experiencing medical issues and anxiety disorders, they have still initiated a wide range of support structures to monitor individuals with interventions based on a case by case basis. The centre staff has developed positive relationships with parents and engage in one-to-one case conferences, home visits and involve parents in engagement activities. These all help to reinforce the importance of school attendance.
- The centre has six Aboriginal or Torres Islander students. Attendance is lower than non-Aboriginal students although with improved transport to school in 2017 it is expected that this should improve. The staff report very good relations with parents and guardians and they have implemented individual strategies to support each child. The centre staff has not yet implemented the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework but the principal reports that many areas are covered by the humanities and social sciences curriculum at a whole-school level and that this will be prioritised in 2018.
- The centre has 8.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers plus 24.3 FTE education assistants. All staff have opportunities for leadership and positions with added responsibility depending upon their expertise. All education assistants are at Level 3 and many have been trained to implement direct instruction, ABA and to consolidate ongoing therapies developed by the occupational and speech therapists. The education assistants are monitored and supported by teachers

and visiting therapists. The centre liaises with the School of Special Education Needs involving consultant teachers and receives behaviour support services to address student needs for extreme cases. Collaborative planning occurs across the junior classes and staff are working towards implementing this in the senior classes.

- A highly effective and positive performance management process is in place to support teachers and education assistants. Formal assessments occur annually where teachers complete a reflection process rated against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. This is followed by individual interviews with the principal who confirms or advises on achievement of the standards. Goals are identified and progress monitored annually. Informal sessions occur regularly with walk through observations and class visits by the principal. Peer to peer observations were introduced in 2016 and in 2017 the centre has commenced instructional rounds across the PESA network. Staff report that they find the performance reviews supportive and the feedback very useful. Education assistants are performance managed by the manager corporate services and their line manager. Professional learning is available for staff on a needs basis. Education assistants report that there are many leadership opportunities for them and their longevity in the centre confirms their appreciation of this.
- The two local school networks of KFS and PESA appear to be active with the leadership team from the centre participating in bi-termly meetings leading to opportunities to share resources, support best practice, engage in moderation and professional learning. The centre has been a Teacher Development School since 2016 and has supported 432 school staff in 207 schools.

Area of strength

- Student focused individualised programs designed to provide high expectations for all students to achieve to their potential.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- The centre has established a data collection schedule to monitor achievement against the targets in the business plan. A systematic data collection and analysis procedure to map student progress against measurable business plan targets for academic and non-academic subjects will allow this to occur in a meaningful way.
- Several measures are used by the whole school to track students' learning across all year levels. It was apparent that data is used to inform decision-making about student progress and to provide areas for professional learning of staff. The main one is the use of student IEPs. These are developed by teachers in Term 1 and Term 3 in collaboration with parents, support staff and other stakeholders. The IEPs are reported on in Term 2 and Term 4. Goals are reviewed regularly and adjustments made according to the rate of progress. Other assessments include the Waddington Diagnostic Reading and Spelling Tests which have been used since 2010 to place students in direct instruction groups. The principal reports that the target to achieve improvement of three months or more on the Waddington tests has been met.
- Two tracking documents in maths and English employ scope and sequences to map student progress against the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline. These have been developed by the centre in collaboration with schools in the PESA network and are now used from Kindergarten to Year 6 to monitor student achievement. In 2017, these documents are being reviewed for mapping against the revised Special Education Needs Assessment Tool (SENAT) and Abilities Based Learning Education, Western Australia (ABLEWA). Specific staff take responsibility for collecting data from teachers and recording it at a whole-school level. Involvement with the PESA network has also provided teachers opportunities for moderation across schools in the alliance regarding the setting and monitoring of IEP goals.
- For reporting and tracking of individual students' learning the centre also uses the Special Education Needs framework, SENAT and the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline. In 2015, the centre participated in trialling the use of the Abilities Based Learning Education assessment tool in one class but have elected not to use this to monitor student achievement as it does not meet the needs of the students enrolled at the centre.

- Two teachers use class DoJo programs to report to parents on student learning. The centre has also initiated an interesting 'postcard' system whereby parents and children receive surprise postcards sent from the centre to recognise achievement. These have been well received by families and students. Students have recently been involved in designing new postcards which are currently at the printers. These will have greater significance to the students and enhance the value of student achievement and subsequent recognition from the centre staff.
- Annual reports are provided for parents and the school community and are published on Schools Online and on the centre's website. These detail program delivery, student achievement and broad issues associated with the operation of the centre. Specific reporting to the community on achievement of the business plan targets is not included. The annual reports contain welcoming letters from both the principal and board chair.

Areas for improvement

- Develop systematic data collection and analysis procedures to map student progress against measurable business plan targets for academic and non-academic subjects.
- Ensure the annual report includes information on the achievement of business plan targets.

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- Leda Education Support Centre is committed to providing extensive learning opportunities for students within a supportive, safe and inclusive environment. Staff, students and parents share a sense of pride in the centre and a belief that it is successful. A strong element of the centre identified by staff and parents is the proactive communication strategies whereby parents are kept informed of student challenges and specific issues so that they can be addressed promptly and effectively. Proactive communication is used in a positive way to engage parents through a variety of strategies, including student communication books, telephone calls, emails, letters, formal and informal meetings and the surprise postcards. Although 2015–2016 parent surveys indicate an increase of 1% in the number of parents responding to the annual parent survey, the business plan target to increase this by 10% has not yet been achieved.
- An aspect of the strategic direction of the centre is to build staff capacity to meet the changing and diverse needs of students. In 2015 the centre was recognised as a Distinctive School through the More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative and in 2016 the centre also became a Teacher Development School. The reviewers met with most teachers and education assistants who expressed enthusiasm for their roles in the centre. The centre refers to the teacher and education assistant teams who in turn feel empowered to approach their role creatively. They are offered professional learning opportunities, support and feedback to ensure initiatives are evidence-based and provide the best learning experiences for students. Collaborative processes with therapy based personnel are also evident.
- Staff members are enthusiastic, motivated and skilled in supporting students to develop through a range of life skills programs. KidsMatter is implemented to support the social and emotional wellbeing of students and families. Promoting Alternative THinking Skills explicitly teaches protective behaviours and social skills. Protective behaviour skill development for individual students is tracked and records maintained on a whole-school spreadsheet not only to assess individual student needs but also to enable use of the information to identify trends and ascertain future planning.
- An Annual Leda Schools Expo is organised providing opportunities for students, staff, parents and community members to share information about the programs

and to obtain information about the support agencies who work in the Kwinana area to support families.

- Programs delivered by the centre include community access programs to enable students to develop skills beyond the classroom into the wider community. These may include travel training, road safety skills, shopping, swimming, horse riding and various excursions. The centre ensures the safety and welfare of students on school premises and away from school premises, in accordance with Department of Education policies. Documentation details roles and responsibilities of staff and risk management processes in meeting duty of care for students.
- The target to *'achieve a 50% reduction in the number of suspensions'* was not met in 2015–2016. A whole-school behaviour management policy is implemented which supports positive student behaviour. When required, individual behaviour management plans and risk management plans are developed in consultation with parents and guardians. Visual cues, social stories and 1, 2, 3 Magic strategies are adopted to assist students in the development of self-regulation and in the making of good choices for themselves. Two staff have been trained to conduct the behaviour intervention program Drumbeat which supports other programs to build resilience and further the wellbeing of students.
- Through the Kwinana Schools Community Network, the centre has been successful in obtaining funding for a part-time parent/liaison officer to promote community activities and encourage parents to come to the centre and share special activities and events with their children.
- Education policies and programs are designed and delivered to meet the needs of students in accordance with the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline; Kindergarten Guidelines; Belonging, Being and Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework and the Department of Education requirements. Reviewers discussed the need to regularly review policies to ensure they reflect current best practices.

Areas of strength

- The caring environment and support for the safety and welfare of all students.
- The cohesive staff fully committed and dedicated to the enactment of the centre's vision.

Area for improvement

- Review policies regularly to ensure they reflect best centre practices and Department of Education requirements.

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

- Financial and human resources systems are well established and effectively monitored to ensure the best opportunities for program delivery for all students. All staff are involved in committees and have roles in cost centre management. Staff were pleased with the opportunities to be directly involved in financial decision-making and the leadership prospects this offered. The allocation of resources appears equitable and it was evident that decisions on funding for materials and professional learning are very closely linked to evidence-based needs to enact the centre's vision.
- Twenty per cent of centre teachers resigned in 2016 and there are anticipated retirements of senior staff over the next triennium. The leadership team is focusing on sustainability of skill levels to ensure effective continuity of programs. To ensure this is operative they have established succession planning processes which will allow for gradual transition of leadership roles to confirm continued support for all programs. In particular, the principal appointed an associate principal in a part-time role for 2017 in preparation for her upcoming long service leave.
- The centre is well resourced to sustain programs over the next triennium.

Area of strength

- Effective monitoring of resource allocations closely linked to evidence-based decision making to meet strategic and operational priorities.

School Board

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

Findings

- The board comprises five parent representatives, three staff representatives, the principal and three community representatives. Discussions with the parent representatives showed a strong commitment by the board to ongoing support for improvement of effective and sustainable practices within the centre.
- The board fulfils functions as prescribed in the *School Education Act 1999*, *School Education Regulations 2000* and Department of Education policy by endorsing the DPA, the business plan, the annual budget and in receiving regular financial reports from the principal. The annual report is endorsed by the board and includes a 'message from the board chair.' Results of surveys are published in the annual report indicating the level of satisfaction of parents and staff, parents with centre performance. The board acknowledged the low response rate to surveys and are investigating ways to improve these.
- The principal reports regularly to the board on targets and implementation of strategies and milestones identified in the business plan. Board members have participated in significant discussions, reporting an increasing confidence to ask questions on centre performance and to understand the process of reviewing the business plan. For development of the 2018–20 Business Plan, it is the intention of the centre leadership, staff and board members to include SMART targets.
- A record of board membership between 2015 and 2017 indicated only two staff, the principal and one community member had participated in board training. Parent members said that getting access to training has been problematic due to the location of the training as well as family and work commitments. Online training is being investigated to enable all board members to further develop their understanding of the functions of a board, and the roles and responsibilities of board members.
- Review of board minutes and discussion with members indicated the need to refer to the Terms of Reference for member tenure to ensure continuity of board membership. Parents indicated they were extremely happy with the provision of care for and the progress of their children, saying they knew of the board but were unsure of its role. The board has become cognisant of the need to communicate with the centre and wider community.

- The board has undertaken a review of its own performance with responses indicating satisfaction with board effectiveness in transitioning from a school council to a board. Identified foci for improvement include greater participation in planning the next business plan, improved monitoring of the plan and the need to discuss centre policies.
- The board expressed appreciation of the dedication and expertise of the centre leadership and staff.

Area of strength

- Positive attitudes and intense focus of board members on ensuring the centre provides the most effective teaching and learning opportunities and experiences for all students.

Area for improvement

- Facilitate board members to participate in board training as a matter of urgency.

Conclusion

Evidence provided throughout the review demonstrated the Leda Education Support Centre's reputation as a supportive and committed school with high expectations for all students.

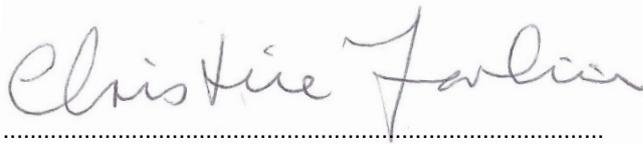
The centre staff are dedicated to the support of all students and provide a caring and enabling environment. Reviewers verify that there is a positive culture within the centre which is appreciated by all staff, students and families. The staff endeavour to regularly involve parents and carers in decision-making through the IEP process.

Parents and carers said that they feel genuinely supported and appreciate the communication and information available to them. With all decisions being student focused it is evident that effective processes are in place to improve student learning.

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 Leda Education Support Centre 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.



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Professor Chris Forlin, Lead Reviewer

5 September 2017

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Date



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Ms Georgina Detiuk, Reviewer

6 September 2017

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Date



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Mr Ken Perris, Director
Independent Public School Review

6 September 2017

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Date