



Government of Western Australia
Department of Education Services

Leinster Community School

2017

Review Findings



Independent Review of
Independent Public Schools

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Mr Brendon Wade
Board Chair:	Ms Jodie Copping
School Address:	Gledden Drive, Leinster WA 6437
Number of Students:	90 (77 K–6 and 13 Secondary)
ICSEA¹	958 (7)
Reviewers:	Mr Kevin Pilkington (Lead) Mr Phil de Garis
Review Dates:	20 and 21 June 2017

Purpose of the Review

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

¹ 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

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)?

The review of Leinster Community School requires careful consideration of the recent history of the township, school and the current context within which the school leadership, teachers and support staff operate. The school operates in a company town serving the mining industry. It is located in a remote area of the State, 370 kilometres north of Kalgoorlie. Leinster is a closed town, one of only three in Western Australia, meaning residents must either be employed directly by the parent company, or a company servicing the mining industry, and further authorised by the parent company to have employees and their families reside in the town. Most workers are fly-in-fly-out and there are approximately 300 persons who live permanently in Leinster. The student numbers at the school have varied in direct response to the economic state of the mining industry. They have varied from 134 in 2014 to as few as 54 in 2016 due to a downturn in the industry and the preference for a fly-in fly-out work force. The current enrolment is 90 students comprising 77 in Years K–6 plus 13 in secondary (Years 7–12) who complete their studies through the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE). Enrolments are slowly building again following a low period but are not stable as the school has one of the highest transiency rates in the State (46% in 2016).

The school has had to reduce staff in times of decreasing enrolments. Alternatively, when enrolments increased there was a need to recruit new staff. Except for the principal, teaching staff are all in the early stages of their career. The principal has been at the school for six years and this has provided stability and direction and helped to maintain purposeful relations with the community. The attraction and retention of quality staff remains a challenge but current indications are that the teaching staff will be stable from 2017 to 2018.

Findings

- The 2015–2017 Business Plan was collaboratively developed in 2015 with input from staff, the newly formed board and the parent body. It is an all-encompassing document of nine focus areas, each with strategies to bolster implementation and an appropriate allocation of resources. Five areas have targets to be achieved in the three-year period focused on literacy and numeracy (progress and achievement), information communications technology (ICT), early childhood and attendance (engagement). The plan has been effective in consolidating the strategic direction of the school and providing guidance to teaching staff. It is well supported by a detailed operational plan for each learning area.

- The 2015–2017 Business Plan has nine focus areas: (1) High Quality Teaching and Leadership, (2) High Standards and Responsive Organisation, (3) Attendance and Behaviour, (4) English Education-School Priority Area (Reading Comprehension), (5) Mathematics Education-School Priority Area (Operations), (6) Information Communications Technology Education-School Priority Area, (7) Early Childhood, (8) Community Relationships, (9) Buildings and Grounds. Continued effort in these areas allows the school to strive towards its stated vision to:
 - implement strong educational programs
 - develop strong collaborations and partnerships
 - build staff capacity and leadership
 - provide students with opportunities comparable or better than those available in Perth
 - do everything we can for our students.
- The scope of this initial business plan for the school is broad and, as discovered by the board and leadership team when conducting the annual cycle of self-review, it is difficult to report on progress in areas that lack specific targets. Only Focus Areas 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 have specific and measurable targets that relate to student outcomes. The other focus areas have indefinite statements of planned actions, activities, strategies and relationships with community but do not specify any measure of success. The board and school leadership said that priority areas for the 2018–2020 Business Plan will be confined to those directly affecting student academic and non-academic outcomes and will have specific measurable targets. This has been a learning process for the leadership and board and both have indicated a strong desire to improve on the present plan.
- The 2015–2017 Business Plan has nevertheless provided a focus for whole of school planning and is reflected in learning area operational plans, staff development and performance management, National School Improvement Tool (NSIT) planning, strategies and programs to improve student learning and engagement for all students.
- The business plan is available on the school website and in hard copy from the office. Copies were sent home with students when the plan was first published. The principal has indicated this 2017 Independent Review Findings Report will be made available on the school website.

Areas of strength

- The 2015–2017 Business Plan provided a broad platform for school improvement planning and was underpinned by detailed learning area operational plans.
- The annual cycle of self-review was conducted in an open and transparent manner and led to realisation of the shortcomings of the structure of the current business plan.
- The desire of the leadership team and the board to constantly improve their practice.

Areas for improvement

- Determine in all focus areas of the 2018–2020 Business Plan unambiguous, clearly measurable success indicators (targets) towards which progress can be indicated by analysis of a dataset(s).
- Narrow the spectrum of the 2018–2020 Business Plan, compared to the previous plan, to focus on student academic and non-academic outcomes.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- During the period of the current business plan the school has actively engaged in monitoring student performance and establishing operational plans that have resulted in improved student outcomes. The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results have improved from a low base over the life of the plan. The school has an annual transiency rate of 46.5% and as such it is difficult to establish trends for a cohort of students or to rely on like-school or same-starting-point comparisons when setting targets within the business plan.
- To enable an effective support to teaching staff (especially to the recent graduates), the school leadership has introduced the Kagan Cooperative Learning Strategies across all phases of learning. The staff enthusiastically implement this approach and have received appropriate professional learning. The reviewers confirm that there is a strong commitment to these instructional strategies in the classroom.
- The school has implemented a program-based approach to teaching and learning, student assessment and feedback on progress with suitable professional learning support. Adoption of this approach is understandable given the school's location and the experience levels of the staff. The programs that have been established include International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS) mathematics assessments; Jolly Phonics; Fountas and Pinnell word analysis, vocabulary development and assessment; Origo Stepping Stones in mathematics; Comprehension and Reading Strategies (CARS) and Strategies to Achieve Reading Success (STARS). The monitoring of student progress is built into the modules of these programs and the reviewers identified that the linear structures could be an issue for new students given the transiency rate across the school. Teachers have identified this as a risk and testing and introductory processes are in place to ensure that new students are placed accurately and inducted into the programs.
- The school has developed a very effective data tracker that is populated with students' achievements from all classroom assessments along with their On-entry and NAPLAN results. The tracker enables teachers to monitor individual progress and to identify any learning trends despite the low numbers in each cohort. The school is implementing a Bring Your Own program for iPads

and the use of applications such as See Saw, Class Dojo and Skoolbag allows parents to keep abreast of school activities and to monitor student development as part of the effective feedback processes in the school.

- The school seeks to embed a teaching approach that embodies high expectations of all students and consistent assessment of progress. Common assessment tasks are being implemented in writing and are planned for science while some use of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority work samples enable greater consistency in reporting and feedback to students and parents. Individual education plans (IEPs) are in place for students with identified learning needs and the structured learning environment with well-established routines is valuable for these students. The reviewers were not able to see the same level of teaching adjustments for students who require extension programs to enable them to achieve to their full potential.
- In establishing non-academic targets for the school, the business plan identified regular attendance as an issue that is related in part to the context and isolation of the school. A very effective attendance program has been implemented and the school monitors the figures closely. In 2014 the whole-school attendance rate was 87.5% and by 2016 this had improved to 91.9% which is close to the State average.
- Performance management processes are in place for all teaching and support staff. For teachers the focus is the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the deputy principal has implemented a well organised program based on identified improvement goals, class visits, demonstration teaching and wide discussion. Peer coaching will be considered for an extension of this approach as the experience and confidence levels of the staff grow. The school has a significant percentage of graduate teachers who confirmed for the reviewers that there is advocacy and support to assist their development as teachers and enable their full registration requirements to be achieved.
- Leadership is distributed across the staff as is reasonable given their experience levels and the context of the school. The deputy principal takes responsibility for early childhood while other staff develop their interests and take some responsibility for programs such as ICT and the kitchen garden. The teaching and support staff have a strongly collaborative approach to planning and monitoring achievement against the business plan and the operational plan; however, much of this work takes place outside school hours and is voluntary due to a lack of common duties other than teaching (DOTT) time.
- The school has undertaken an extensive self-assessment of their processes and achievements using the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) NSIT. The resulting assessment of a high level of achievement in all areas

reflects the very positive approach and the high level of collaboration and teamwork across the school. However, this also underlines the experience levels and lack of exposure of the staff to outstanding programs in other schools across the State against which they need to make these assessments. It will be important for the leadership to enable staff to experience and observe this level of expertise and achievement as part of their professional learning as opportunities arise.

- The secondary students' learning programs are provided, monitored and reported on by the SIDE. The students are supervised in a suitable, well maintained environment with excellent online access to their learning program and the teachers at SIDE. The school provides access to additional programs in physical education, woodwork and home economics using facilities built for the original Leinster District High School on site. The reviewers could observe an organised, well supported and professionally supervised learning program for these students.
- The teaching and learning approach based on programmed structures in Years K–6 is sustainable provided induction processes are clear and consistently implemented. The school board will need to ensure that the business plan strategically embeds this approach across the school as currently the sustainability of the approach is highly reliant on the leadership team.

Areas of strength

- The staff commitment to the teaching and learning programs that operate across the school and the collaborative approach to their implementation.
- The 2017 Operational Plan is a good example of the planning and thought that goes into the teaching and learning across the school.

Areas for improvement

- Increase the focus on the teaching adjustments needed to ensure that learning needs of all students are addressed.
- Develop detailed induction documentation that will assist the school to manage the high student transiency and staff turn-over in a consistent manner.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- The school has developed a School Self-Assessment Policy that covers a wide range of assessments including student performance, staff performance management, school performance against the National Quality Standard (NQS) and the NSIT, the national opinion surveys of parents, staff and students and the school board survey and feedback. There may be value in considering individual policy statements about student achievement and staff professional learning to ensure that all these important school evaluation tools effectively monitor the school's performance and inform improvement planning.
- The K–6 teaching and learning programs have built-in assessment tools and processes that all staff use for reflection on student performance. As examples Fountas and Pinnell provide a pre-test for vocabulary development and word analysis with ongoing developmental checks and a final assessment package. Origo mathematics tracks the Australian Curriculum in mathematics with a quarterly test regime. The Origo and CARS and STARS programs are used to assess students and group them according to level and across classes during set teaching blocks for literacy and numeracy.
- This programmed approach to teaching and learning with ongoing assessment of student progression enables inexperienced staff in an isolated location to have a well-managed approach to assessing individual achievement in literacy and numeracy. The reviewers could see that this approach is embedded and supported through the performance management program. The staff review the impact of all programs used across the school to assess their impact on the goals of the business plan and the operational plan. The reviewers noted that a sight words program had been replaced with a program with a greater focus on reading comprehension while the You Can Do It program has been enhanced with the Friendly Schools approach.
- Given the small numbers of students in each cohort the review of school data along with NAPLAN and On-entry results is comprehensive but generally based on individual performance. The school has developed a whole-school data tracker to monitor the performance of all students K–6 against standard assessment data, the results of the assessment of student skills and knowledge in the learning programs and school attendance. These results are entered centrally and then become the focus of the school's analysis of student progress

and engagement while enabling the results of NAPLAN to be compared to the results of the assessments using ICAS, Origo and CARS and STARS. One outcome of this analysis has been the decision to appoint a students at educational risk (SAER) coordinator in the second semester of 2017.

- All staff at the school, including support staff, meet regularly to review student progress against operational plan targets. A notable feature of these meetings is their collaborative nature. The reviewers could see that staff analysis and planning was based on the identification of learning trends and patterns that are easily identified using the data tracker information. The program enables comparison between multiple data sets but does not include comparison to like-schools or all schools due to the small student cohorts and the constant turnover of students. The system does enable initial assessment of transient students for placement into the learning programs used in the school and evaluation against NAPLAN results.
- The principal has undertaken an audit and reported on the school's progress in meeting the seven quality areas of the NQS for Years K–2. An external audit by the Department of Education has verified the school's analysis and confirmed that the school is meeting the standard required. The external audit identified Quality Area 2 and Quality Area 3 as 'working towards' in 2015 and confirmed that they had been addressed in 2016.
- The school demonstrated that the targets of the business plan and the operational plan are reviewed on a regular basis and adjustments made as necessary. While the annual report is prepared and made publicly available, the requirement for the school to report on progress against the goals and targets of the business plan in the annual report has not been met.
- The school has established a valued set of data related to individual student progress and uses this to analyse the On-entry and NAPLAN test results. The school also plans to enhance its science and ICT data set as these areas are developed as school priorities. This approach is successful while the student enrolments remain relatively low and the current school leadership remains in place. If enrolments increase to the pre-2014 levels, it will be important to add the capacity for the school to monitor students' achievement levels with greater use of baseline data and to include comparative assessments to enable a more comprehensive self-assessment program.

Areas of strength

- The school developed data tracker provides a valuable information source for the assessment of student progress and the school's achievements against improvement targets. The data tracker is well maintained centrally, easily accessed by staff and widely used in the review of school and student performance.
- The staff are very aware of the value of data driven decision-making in relation to student progress and classroom planning. All staff participate willingly in regular review meetings, often outside school hours.

Areas for improvement

- Consider working with SIDE to enable the establishment of longitudinal data for students who remain at the school across the primary and secondary years. The progress of students once they are studying through SIDE and their results in Year 7/9 NAPLAN and in achieving proficiency in the Online Numeracy and Literacy (OLNA) assessment can provide valuable information in relation to the teaching of literacy and numeracy in the primary years.
- Include the progress the school has made towards meeting the targets of the business plan in the annual report for the school.

Program Delivery

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

Findings

- The school demonstrated a highly structured and effective approach to the coordinated implementation of the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline. Planning documents for all learning areas K–6, mapped to the curriculum and supported by strategic operational plans, have been developed by the deputy principal who has then collaborated with and guided the teaching staff in their implementation. Due to there being only five teachers it is not possible to have shared DOTT time for collaborative planning so most of this planning has occurred outside of school hours. The attention to detail in the planning documentation is commendable and this has resulted in a coordinated scope and sequencing across the primary school. Teachers affirmed their appreciation and approval of this strongly supportive process. The school has reported to parents against the Western Australian Curriculum in English, mathematics, science, humanities and social sciences and health and physical education at the end of first semester.
- Kagan Cooperative Learning Strategies (KCLS) has been adopted as the school-wide approach to pedagogy. The value system associated with KCLS places emphasis on respect for others and their individuality as well as fostering personal growth. The keys to success, prominently displayed and constantly referred to by staff, emanate from the 'You Can Do It' program and the 'Way to Go' rewards system which are confidence; persistence; getting along; organisation; and resilience. A reward system of house points reinforces these attributes for students demonstrating them in their attitudes and behaviour. Friendly Schools is a program that has recently been introduced and has an emphasis on encouraging cooperative behaviours and a no-tolerance approach to bullying. Structured lessons are aimed at embedding the values of this program across the school.
- The school is well organised and presents a safe and orderly environment in all areas utilised by students. Classrooms are spacious and well equipped. The principal has ensured staff diligently perform their duty of care to students and has in place relevant supervision rosters, expected behaviours and school policies relating to student safety both on and off school premises in line with Department of Education requirements. Emergency management planning has been carried out and drills are regularly practised. Parents and students affirmed with the reviewers that they feel the school is a safe place. This was also

confirmed by the feedback gained from the National School Opinion Survey conducted in 2016. Teaching staff complete online training in child protection and the mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse. This needs to be monitored to ensure every staff member completes relevant training in a timely manner upon commencement at the school.

- Due to the relatively small size of the school, leadership can and does visit classrooms daily and as a result have an informed appreciation of the effectiveness of program delivery. Classes comprise of the following: Kindergarten; Pre-primary and Year 1; Year 2 and Year 3; and Year 4, 5 and 6. Secondary (Years 7–12) students work independently, in a supervised classroom, connecting with their SIDE teachers through ICT. The detailed knowledge of classroom practice held by the leadership coupled with a well-structured performance management process is supportive of teaching staff and ensures students are receiving an appropriate standard of education.
- Interviews conducted with representative parents affirm their belief that the school is inclusive and generally meeting the needs of their children. Many students are on group education plans and some are on IEPs. Parents expressed appreciation of the small class sizes and the approachability of staff. Extension programs for academically strong students is an area of weakness and the leadership team acknowledges this. Most of the programs in use such as CARS and STARS and Origo are self-paced so talented students can progress quickly, but there is not a coordinated approach to extension.
- Considerable investment in the provision of extra full-time employees to support student learning and social/emotional wellbeing is a sustainable cost. The school has the resources and embedded practices in place to maintain high standards of program delivery.

Areas of strength

- Embedded safe school practices and programs that foster and promote inclusivity and mutual respect between students and between students and staff.
- Responding to areas of identified need by developing strategies that are in turn adequately resourced and sustainable.
- Well-developed emergency management plans that are regularly practised.
- Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or gaps in their learning.

Area for improvement

- Provide extension programs for students who are identified as requiring adjustments to their learning programs.

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 a systematic self-review cycle to inform evidence-based decision making in relation to the planning and resource allocation across the school and in individual classrooms. The high transiency rate and the small student cohorts require and enable school improvement planning based on individual achievement levels and the identification of learning trends identified using the data tracker. The school improvement targets of the business plan and the operational plan are currently aligned and regularly reviewed by staff as part of this process. The school has recognised the need to establish specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited targets for academic and non-academic goals in the next iteration of the business plan and these will sharpen the data collection and analysis to inform future operational plan milestones and classroom practices.
- The school demonstrated that 96% of funds had been spent on the students in the year provided, that suitable reserves are in place and there is a focus on early childhood education. A good example of the latter is the payment for additional On-entry testing in fourth term to enable the staff to monitor the development of these students and plan classroom activities accordingly. The school has identified that special purpose funding provided through the Student-Centred Funding Model (SCFM) is directed to meet the needs of identified students. This includes additional DOTT time for graduate teachers, additional school psychologist time, education assistant time and the development of a sensory room. The planned appointment of a SAER coordinator is another example of targeted use of the school's funds.
- The school receives funding for the 13 secondary students who are enrolled with SIDE. The reviewers could see that these funds have been directed to the needs of these students with a well-established learning area, updated information technology and a social centre. The students are fully supervised and have access to additional activities in sport, woodwork and cooking to extend their SIDE curriculum and encourage social development.
- The school has unique access to resources to assist in managing the impact of isolation and transiency. The mining company provides an attractive accommodation package and access to the daily flights to and from Perth for school and staff use. This enables teaching and support staff to attend courses in

the city and visit other schools to assist their professional growth and understanding. It also allows the school to bring in experienced relief teachers as needed and to arrange incursions and excursions that improve the quality of the school's teaching and professional learning programs. The school has successfully applied to mining companies operating from the town for assistance for specific learning programs and one example showed an allocation of \$29 000, a significant resource for a small school. The school deploys these resources to build staff capacity and induct new staff into the teaching programs and cooperative learning approaches that are in place. Examples include bringing presenters to the school for Kagan Learning, ICT in the classroom, numeracy support, Origo mathematics professional learning and a visit by Scitech. This access also allowed the North Country Network to have a meeting in Leinster with high profile presenters flown in for the occasion.

- The school has a workforce plan in place; however, it does not fully address the needs of the school in the current format. Given the context and location of the school any goals for changing the staff profiles in experience, age and gender are overshadowed by the need to attract capable staff and manage the transiency issues. The workforce plan needs a focus on how the school deploys the staffing resources to develop the most effective programs to address the priority areas of the school's planning for student improvement. The plan would be improved by identifying the resourcing for the current teaching and non-teaching allocations, the additional DOTT time provided to all teaching staff, the increase in school psychologist time and the plan to appoint a SAER coordinator. The basis for the decision-making in the use of these resources should be clear and the impact on student learning evaluated. The budget to enable the implementation of workforce planning needs to go through the normal approval processes in the school.
- The school's current resourcing, including access to flights to enrich the curriculum, professional support and relief staff, is sustainable provided the mining operations remain viable. The school leadership has sensibly ensured that the additional funding that is available to the school is used to extend and enhance the teaching and learning.
- The school's use of available resources to support the operations of the school, address the professional learning needs of staff and to enrich the curriculum provided by the school.

Area for improvement

- Ensure the workforce plan identifies how the staffing resources provided through the SCFM are applied and monitored to achieve the goals of the school's improvement planning.

School Board

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

Findings

- The board membership is compliant with the requirements of the DPA. The skill set that each member brings to the board collectively provides a sound basis for governance of the school. The terms of reference clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of the board. The community and parent members interviewed by the reviewers demonstrated an evolving understanding of these. The chair is keen for the board to function well and meet all expectations of it, particularly in setting strategic direction of the school. The board suffers from the same contextual difficulties that impact on the school, namely high transiency due to members moving for the requirements of work. This has made it difficult to attract and retain quality members.
- The principal and board chair have accessed board training provided by the Department of Education. The principal has recently commenced delivering modules of training on the roles and responsibilities of the board and its functions. While the board has enthusiastically endeavoured to fulfil all the functions required of it as per the DPA some components have not been completed with the rigour that would be expected.
- Minutes of meetings held between 2015 and 2017 include reference to the board being engaged in the endorsement of the DPA, endorsement of the budget and business plan, sighting the annual report prior to publication, regularly receiving data sets and analysis regarding student performance and attendance, fiscal updates and the conduct of surveys to determine the level of satisfaction of parents, students and staff, the latter being reported in the annual report. The level of interrogation of the data and information presented to the board is not evident in the minutes but discussion held with the chair leads the reviewers to conclude it is accepted at face value. There is compelling evidence for the board to complete the development of an induction package and for the chair and/or school principal to conduct one-on-one induction. The annual report is not compliant with the requirements of the DPA as it does not provide information regarding progress towards the targets of the business plan.
- The board has a presence on the school's website where information about its purpose and a brief biography of the chair is included. Minutes of meetings are published on the website. The board has a presence at special occasion assemblies. The chair agrees the profile of the board could be improved by

including information in school-based communications such as the newsletter and Skoolbag.

- To this point the board has not conducted a formal review of its own performance. The chair has been advised on how to introduce this practice and how to use the results to improve board performance.
- The board has been involved at a superficial level in the interrogation of data to determine progress towards targets of the business plan, identification of areas of strength and weakness and in strategically planning to address issues arising. The annual cycle of self-review is school-based with the board receiving analysed data and conclusions. The chair expressed great respect for and trust in the principal and deputy principal who are the main conduits of information to the board. The board members interviewed indicated a commitment to become much more involved in the cycle of self-review. The development of the new 2018–2020 Business Plan will be a collaborative process involving school staff, parents and the board. The board expects to play an active role in the development of the plan and its strategic direction.
- The board is enthusiastic, willing and keen to grow its capabilities. The chair and members interviewed as part of the review indicated they had been enlightened as to what is required of an effective board and look forward to meeting the challenges ahead.

Areas of strength

- The board has been diligent in monitoring the school's financial position and ensuring priority areas are resourced adequately.
- The board's resolve to continue to meet its roles and responsibilities and requirements of the DPA in a highly transient environment.

Areas for improvement

- Complete the development of an induction process for new board members.
- Improve its oversight of the annual report to ensure it is compliant in reporting all the requirements as detailed in the DPA.
- Enhance communication strategies to better advise the school community and parents of student progress towards and achievement of business plan targets and to make public information about its own functions and activities.

- Review the board's performance and act upon the findings.
- Develop procedures for the board to be more closely immersed in the process of the annual cycle of self-review in order to more effectively meet its roles and responsibilities.

Conclusion

The school context is unique in that it provides education from Kindergarten to Year 12 in an isolated, small community with a relatively low ICSEA (958). All buildings and facilities are owned by a third party and the Department of Education has responsibility for the provision of staff, resources and the teaching and learning program. Secondary students complete their studies wholly online through the SIDE.

It is difficult to draw valid whole of school conclusions about the progress in student learning outcomes in the life of the current 2015–2017 DPA due to the uniqueness of Leinster Community School. The cohort sizes of three or four students in a year group means the performance of an individual can unduly influence overall results. What can be said is that every student is known at an individual level and every attempt is made by the school to support that student's learning, often at a high cost in terms of resource allocation. Some students have made dramatic improvement and this can be demonstrated on the school's self-developed data tracker. Standard comparisons to like-schools, Western Australian schools or Australian schools currently lack validity and reliability due to the small cohort sizes. Nor are in-school progress charts valid as the transiency rate of 46.5% invalidates progress and achievement mapping.

Leinster Community School is a caring school and is able to demonstrate this by the implementation of a range of programs and strategies that support each student to progress academically and develop socially and emotionally. Affirmed by both students and parents as being a safe and orderly environment its reputation within the town is on an upward trajectory. Parents who could have chosen to educate their children in Perth have opted instead to enrol at Leinster Community School.

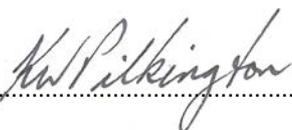
Staff are mostly 'early career' and as such require high levels of support and induction. The leadership team is held in high regard by all staff and provide direction, modelling and counsel. Despite the isolated location of Leinster all staff confirmed they are able to access relevant professional learning and felt they were in a fortunate position to commence their careers in such a supportive environment.

The board chair is determined to lead a board that is clear in its understanding of the roles and responsibilities it is required to perform. With induction, training and an active role in the cycle of self-review the board is keen to make a difference to the outcomes of students. Both the chair and the principal look forward to leading the collaborative development of the 2018–2020 Business Plan and setting the strategic direction of the school.

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 Leinster Community School for the Department of Education Services' independent review.

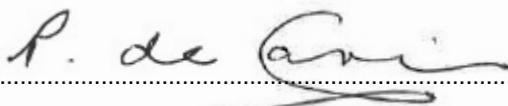
The principal and board chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Mr Kevin Pilkington, Lead Reviewer

14 August 2017

Date



Mr Phil de Garis, Reviewer

14 August 2017

Date



Mr Ken Perris, Director
Independent Public School Review

22 August 2017

Date