Warnbro Community High School Education Support Centre

2016 Independent Review Findings
Disclaimer

This document reports the findings of the Department of Education Services' review and verification of the school's self-review. The school's self-review has been complemented by information provided by the Department of Education, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

The findings of the independent review are forwarded to the school principal, the board chair, the Director General of the Department of Education and the Minister for Education.

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School and Review Details

Principal: Ms Kim McCollum
Board Chair: Ms Anne Bjerregaard
School Location: 2 Swallowtail Parade Warnbro WA 6169
Number of Students: 87
Reviewers: Ms Kerry Usher (Lead)
Professor Marion Milton
Review Dates: 31 October and 1 November 2016
Initial Review: 2013

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the independent review is to provide assurance to the school and its community, the Director General of the Department of Education and the Minister for Education on the extent to which the school has met its commitments as outlined in its Delivery and Performance Agreement (DPA) and associated business plan.

The focus of the review is on:

• how well the school has implemented self-review
• how well the school has improved student learning (achievement, progress and engagement) for all students
• how well the school has created an environment that promotes learning and student well-being
• how well the school is placed to sustain and improve its performance.
Review Methodology

The school has been required, under the DPA, to undertake annual self-assessments of its performance. The outcome of these assessments formed the basis for the school’s self-review. The school sent its self-review documentation to the IPS review team, Department of Education Services one month prior to the commencement of the review.

The IPS reviewers supplemented the information provided by the school 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 School Performance Monitoring System
- Schools Online reports
- School Curriculum and Standards Authority Year 12 Student Achievement data.

Reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school’s self-review documentation to verify achievement and developed lines of inquiry where further verification was required.

An agenda for the review visit was subsequently negotiated with the principal to enable the gathering of evidence to verify claims made by the school. During the review visit the reviewers sourced evidence to support the school’s self-review claims through observation and discussion with leaders, teaching and support staff, board members, parents and students.

The evidence provided by the school, along with information gathered by the reviewers prior to and during the review visits, was used as the basis for the verification of how well the school has met its commitments as outlined in the DPA and business plan.

This document reports on the findings of the independent review.
School Context

What are the important features of this school's context that have an impact on student learning?

Warnbro Community High School Education Support Centre is located 57km south of Perth in the Rockingham coastal corridor. It is a school providing education for students with an intellectual disability and high educational needs. Its collocation with Warnbro Community High School facilitates high-level collaboration regarding shared resources and expertise to support a diverse community. The collaboration ensures that inclusion is a feature of school life and is exemplified by students from both schools participating in option classes, assemblies, excursions and events.

Students are drawn from the immediate Warnbro area and surrounding suburbs indicating a diverse socio-economic background of families with special needs being the major determinant in delivering programs to improve educational outcomes for students. The increase in enrolments from 69 in 2014 to the current 87 students reflects the transition of Year 7 students to secondary education, an increase in the number of students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and the growing number of students with complex needs. Recognition of students experiencing anxiety and trauma, responding to the increased communication requirements of students and developing strategies to support them are features of the actions taken to respond to the diversity of the student population.

The leadership team has also responded to the needs of students through the appointment of additional staff, building staff capacity, targeted interventions and through employing specialist therapy staff. Educational programs are implemented through the business plan with complementary human resources to support interventions, outlined in the workforce management plan. The staffing profile is predominantly stable, female and rising in line with increased enrolments and complexity. Education assistants are the largest single group at 28.2 FTE followed by teachers at 14.5 FTE. Specialist staff to support student learning, health and welfare have also been increased in response to the complexity of student needs.

To support teaching and learning the leadership team has developed a wide range of collaborative arrangements and partnerships. The development of positive relationships with parents ensures they are engaged in activities and able to participate in the parent network group to promote connections.
between each other and the centre. The ongoing partnership to develop an inclusive school environment with Warnbro Community High School has resulted in development of a range of common professional learning, practices and policies underpinning collaboration in the learning environment. Partnerships with the wider community, business and other schools is a key focus for the centre in supporting workplace learning, delivery of vocational education and training (VET) courses and identifying future employment opportunities for students. Staff and leadership professional practice is also enhanced through engagement in the Peron Alliance of Curriculum and Teaching (PACT) and the Peron Education Support Alliance (PESA).

Additionally, the centre is a Teacher Development School (TDS) for transition collaboration in professional learning with schools, which has resulted in the sharing of expertise with staff from 28 schools.

The active school board has broad representation with three staff, three community and five parent members. Community representatives have research, counselling and training backgrounds that provide opportunities and support to the school. Board members have specific portfolio responsibilities including: board community liaison; academic research in special needs; building community partnerships; cultural development; and, the parent network group.

The centre has developed an organisational structure and a range of highly specific programs to meet the diverse learning needs of students in an environment offering innovative programs designed to support improved learning and an independent life post school. The management of the flexible/one-line budget has ensured that resources are available to support staffing, programs and exceptional outcomes for students and their parents.
The School's Self-Review Process

How effective was the school's self-review in accounting for its performance during the period of the DPA and business plan?

The leadership team review the business plan targets and milestones on a regular basis and report progress to the board using a traffic lights system. The red, orange and green indicators provide staff and board with progressive achievement against the targets. The annual report provides the opportunity to report student achievement more widely with updates on progress towards targets and student performance in assessments including PM Benchmark, NAPLAN, and Waddington Spelling. Additionally, the attainment of VET certificates, WACE completion and Workplace Learning program success provide evidence of standards of progress and achievement for students on the pathway to meaningful employment.

An annual school assessment schedule, detailed analysis and reports by collaborative teams and leadership and operational planning that links analysis of performance and forward planning, are key elements of the self-review process. Staff members have the opportunity for input and feedback on performance through working parties and the leadership team. Teachers participate in a disciplined dialogue process particularly in literacy and numeracy that focuses on responding to critical questions that support evidence-based decision making.

The National School Improvement Tool has been used as a framework for reflection by leadership and staff and highlights areas of strength and areas for improvement to influence future planning. The detailed and critical analysis by staff and leadership using the framework is typical of the quality of self-reflection that occurs in all areas to ensure that student learning is improved, through:

- an innovative curriculum
- the setting of high standards and expectations of staff and students
- the creation of a secure learning environment with pathways into the community.
School Performance—Student Learning

How well has the school performed in improving learning (achievement, progress and engagement) for all students?

A key focus of the business plan for the centre is 'Excellence in teaching learning and student achievement' and links directly to the vision statement:

Our students are sure of whom they are and take pride in their qualifications and achievements. They confidently work towards their education and life goals and create a future for themselves as hard working to and as participants in their community.

To support this vision, the centre delivers inclusive academic and vocational programs for students with an intellectual disability. These programs are designed to meet individual, social, emotional, sensory and physical needs and to maximise each student's ability to take their place in the wider community. To meet the highly individualised needs of each student an action plan is specifically designed for each learner (years 7–9). The individual education plan (IEP), which is dynamic, involves ongoing planning, monitoring, evaluation, documentation and recording and is the basis for reporting to parents. Planning also reflects the relevant outcomes of the WA Curriculum.

Individual transition plans (ITPs) are designed for students in the senior school (years 10–13) and are focused on the skills required for each student to be able to transition from school to post-school destinations. These plans focus on School Curriculum and Standards Authority courses, VET qualifications, workplace learning, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) modules and career and transition priorities.

The IEP/ITP process provides assurance that appropriate strategies and planning are in place for each student to work towards achieving their potential. The process ensures levels of accountability with the principal and deputy principals who oversee the planning, staff who deliver programs, the parents and caregivers who are involved formally and informally, specialists who offer additional expertise and students who provide feedback on their learning. Parents and carers who met with reviewers affirmed their active involvement in planning for the education of their child. In particular, the parents of students transitioning to employment and further training
commended both the process and the commitment of staff to achieving realistic life outcomes for their child.

The middle school curriculum has an academic and well-being focus designed to meet the diverse needs of the cohort. A teacher and education assistant work with small groups of students to improve literacy, numeracy, health, self-management and social skills. The teaching programs are aligned to the WA Curriculum and are delivered in a hands-on, cross-curricula approach with middle school students spending 30% of class time in integrated mainstream classes alongside their peers.

Senior school students participate for four hours per week in integrated mainstream classes as well as engaging in the Building Equitable Links in Enterprise and Vocational Education (BELIEVE) program. This program prepares students for entry into further study, workforce or transition to the next stage of their life. The BELIEVE program is under review due to changes in WACE requirements and is now being aligned with the Australian Core Skills Framework. A feature of the program is the work undertaken by staff to source alternative pathways for students through the Directions program. Reviewers were able to verify the outcomes being achieved by students in their training and observed students engaged in enterprise programs designed to achieve tangible progress towards employment and training pathways. Additionally, as a TDS for Transition for 2016/17 the centre shares the person-centred planning model 'My Future My Life' with schools across the State.

Staff involved in the self-review process set key outcomes to be achieved in the 2014–2016 Business Plan. Targets were set to improve student learning consistent with the curriculum designed for middle and senior school students. They included achievement of skill sets, more traineeships, completion of training modules, and, achievement of IEP/ITP priorities. In addition, four targets were set to enhance practice and understanding for staff development. The staff and board amended one target by raising the standard of achievement in IEP/ITP priorities because the target of Consolidating was easily met and was replaced with Achieved, being 80% achievement of priorities.

Leadership and staff demonstrated, through analysis of data that progress was being made towards achievement of the targets by the end of 2016. Data collected up to the end of first semester 2016 was verified and demonstrated the following:
Target 1.1 Year 10 cohort to achieve skill sets in two or more industry areas by Year 12. This was rated as Achieved with 10 of the 11 students achieving two or more certificates and eight achieving three certificates in different industry areas.

Target 1.2 80% of students to achieve IEP/ITP priorities with A (Achieved). Sixty-two per cent of students attained the Achieved rating. Staff rated achievement of this target as Emerging and identified areas in which practice could be improved.

Target 1.3 Continue upward trend in students completing traineeships in Years 11 and 12. Staff have increased the number of students (from four to seven) completing traineeships and rate the target as Achieving.

Target 1.4 Continue the upward trend in the improvement of student reading ages from Years 8 to 12. Staff rated this target as Achieving. Literacy and numeracy reports using assessments including NAPLAN provided verification of improvement which was attributed to the strategies employed and professional learning for staff.

Target 1.5 85% of students enrolled in ASDAN complete ASDAN. In 2016, 100% of students enrolled in ASDAN completed modules. This was an increase from 65% in 2014. The target was rated as Achieved and verified through reports and discussion.

The ‘My Future My Life’ transition planning process ensures that a sound academic, social and emotional curriculum in middle school provides the necessary basis for senior school programs to prepare students for entry into further study, training and the workplace with independent skills. Evidence of the success of these pathways is demonstrated in the data collected to verify the achievement of a target for a ‘high percentage of students moving directly into employment or training’. Data for 2016 clearly demonstrated achievement with 11 out of 13 Year 13 students employed in part-time, casual or open employment. All of the employed students are working in the retail or hospitality industries. Five of the 11 students are also engaged in further training at TAFE in Certificate II and III courses. Of the 14 Year 12 students, 93% are participating in VET qualifications with engagement in work experience high, also at 93%.

In discussion with the leadership team and classroom teachers it was evident that there is planned collaboration to identify student strengths and abilities and build on best practice quality programs to meet their needs.
School Performance—Quality of the Learning Environment

*How well has the school performed in creating an environment that promotes learning and well-being for all students and the attainment of the school vision?*

The culture in the centre is one of support, mutual respect and striving for excellence. The school vision aims for students to know themselves and be proud of their achievements; for staff to collaborate, strive for excellence and build pathways into the community, and for the community to value and welcome students. Stated values are: Inclusion and celebration of difference; Community, Collaboration, and Respect.

The key focus areas and values identified in the *Business Plan 2014–2016* directly reflect the school vision. The key focus areas of the business plan are:

- excellence in teaching and student achievement
- health and well-being
- pathways and community partnerships.

Strategies to develop and enact the focus areas and values are discussed at whole-school and collaborative team levels, integrated into the curriculum and implemented in all classrooms. Documentation, posters and classroom visits confirmed the embedded nature of a culture that promotes the vision and student learning.

The physical campus is spacious, well set out and attractive. The new, modern administration block adds a welcoming and professional space for staff and visitors. A safe and inclusive environment has been created for staff and students. There are separate centre-dedicated classrooms for middle and upper school students, but also some classrooms are interspersed around the mainstream campus. Centre students can access the main library, oval and other common areas, and there are safe, carefully monitored areas for centre students only. Parents, staff and students expressed positive statements about the school environment.

A strong focus on health and well-being was identified as a need in the *Business Plan 2014–2016*. There is a positive behaviour support team and a health and well-being team. Both teams have input into the implementation of a whole-school positive behaviour framework to prevent poor behavioural choices and their escalation. Students are taught social skills through the
PATHS program, TRIBES process and positive behaviour strategies in alignment with the Social Capabilities. Protective behaviours are also explicitly taught across the school. Through the plan, students practice positive behaviours and learn how to self-monitor via a range of programs that fit within the overarching HAPEER model. This model aims to build character strengths and resilience through six well-being domains of positive health, accomplishments, purpose, emotions, engagement and relationships, so that students flourish. Posters of the HAPEER model are visible in classrooms and around the school. To support the model, staff have implemented an anti-bullying program that incorporates the positive behaviours of ‘be responsible, be respectful, and be your best’.

Staff are passionate and actively embrace opportunities for innovative change through a whole-school approach to improve student learning. Peer observation, one-to-one, in-class teacher coaching, professional learning and performance management contribute to ongoing improvement in the quality of teaching and learning outcomes. The implementation and close monitoring of the outcomes of new literacy and numeracy programs adds to student learning in basic skills. The depth and breadth of the learning experience for students was evident in the range of learning programs available and the expertise of staff. For example, an enterprise initiative, in which students run a small money-raising venture for charities sees students develop responsibility through teamwork, money handling and communication with adults.

Many of the initiatives aim to prepare students for the future and lead to employment. This often results from the work experience with community partners that was organised by the school.

A large proportion of the centre staff are education assistants whose roles and contributions are highly valued by the teaching staff and students. They make a major contribution in supporting students to achieve IEPs. Some education assistants sit on the board and some on the positive behaviour and health and well-being teams. Discussions with education assistants confirmed that they felt valued and that their contributions were making a difference.

Inclusion is considered an important contributor to the quality of the learning environment and centre students are included in mainstream classes for 30% of their program. These are in their elective areas such as dance, visual arts and design. There is a harmonious relationship between the staff of the two schools with a shared staffroom and professional development when relevant.
The leadership team have noted changes in student cohorts recently and the need to train staff in dealing with students with autism or who have experienced trauma. They have provided increased opportunities for staff to engage in professional learning in these areas as well as in more effective ways to deliver literacy and numeracy.

The centre is well resourced and provides current technology in the form of tablets and assistive communication devices. Classrooms have smartboards and computers. Through a partnership with a technology firm, a technician assists regularly and a skilled administration assistant installs and updates programs selected by the teachers on the tablets.

During visits to classrooms, the reviewers found students were engaged in meaningful learning activities. The class visits and discussions with students and parents confirm that students enjoy school, and in many cases they are learning more than their parents had anticipated, especially in the areas of work-ready skills, self-reliance and independence. A focus on ‘My Future, My Life’ from years 7–13 develops a comprehensive approach to learning independent living skills through the transition process.

Students and parents commented on the value of the transition to the workplace programs for years 11, 12 and 13. In the transition programs, virtually all students are accepted into employment or further training during or following Year 13. Two parents of transitioned students told the reviewers their children had been extremely well prepared and supported and were enjoying being in a workplace that valued them. Coordinators who oversee transition, VET and ASDAN in the senior school have established a consistent approach to transition and the ability to establish and cement strong relationships with community providers.

Communication with parents is comprehensive. Parents who met with the reviewers all commented positively on the frequency, timeliness and ongoing nature of communication. As well as regular newsletters, student reports, annual reviews and website, there are regular face-to-face meetings, a school app and phone calls. Through the Family School Partnerships Framework, parents are given opportunities to be involved in decision making and to act as volunteers. Parental education is enabled through the establishment of the parent network group that meets twice each term, usually with around 10 to 12 participants. At meetings, they listen to an invited speaker and network with other parents. Parents confirmed all of those measures keep them well informed. A recent parent survey resulted in positive findings. In discussion
with reviewers, parents indicated they find the staff very supportive and feel comfortable about contacting teachers and the administration. They stated that whenever they express concerns they are acted on and resolved quickly.

The leadership team is proactive in seeking out and maintaining mutually beneficial partnerships with the local council and businesses as well as a range of agencies, community services and facilities in the Warnbro/Rockingham areas. There are also strong partnerships with local schools, as well as with schools across the State, through the school’s role as a TDS.

The centre provides a high-quality and stimulating learning environment that promotes ongoing learning and student well-being. There is a strong focus on continuous improvement in teaching quality, monitoring of program effectiveness, teacher performance and student learning outcomes. Those factors alongside the health and well-being and positive behaviour programs, and future-focused initiatives through strong partnerships with local businesses, ensure an optimum learning environment.
School Performance—Sustainability

How well placed is the school to sustain and improve its performance into the next planning cycle?

Sustainable practices are in place across programs and processes. Self-reviews are ongoing, thorough and well documented. They include analysis of student learning, teacher self-reflection and the aggregation and interrogation of data relating to student behaviour and attendance. The self-review processes are embedded across the school, improvement plans documented and appropriate action taken to continue or adjust programs and processes and to train staff when necessary.

There is an active school board that provides good governance, including critical reflection on school performance and input for forward planning and developing partnerships. Board members come from a range of backgrounds, including community members with specialist knowledge and skills in relevant fields. All board members have received board training, conduct regular self-reviews and act on the results. Succession of board members is on a rolling three-year basis such that sustainability of collective knowledge and understandings are assured.

There is very strong leadership from the principal and the two deputy principals. The distributed leadership structures and processes already in place, along with the collaborative teams and commitment from teaching and non-teaching staff, will ensure effective programs and partnerships are sustainable. There is an ongoing improvement agenda enacted through the continuous collection and thorough analysis of data, as evidenced in the business plan, self-review documents and through staff discussions.

All staff are appropriately trained for their role in an education support centre, with many having longevity of service at the centre. It was evident through operational plans, IEPs, class visits and discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff that they have the capacity to implement effective programs adapted to each student’s unique needs. A philosophy of ‘building our own experts’ has led to specific professional development, individual mentoring and an in-class teacher coach. As a TDS, the school’s staff share and further develop expertise. The innovative practice of learning about and trialling any new program for one year before implementing it, gives teachers a good opportunity to know the content and strategies well, so that implementation is more likely to succeed and be sustainable. Further, no program will fail if one
person leaves, due to forward planning, professional development and a clearly documented workforce plan.

The school is well resourced and the physical, financial and human resources are very well managed. There is a strong focus on forward planning, such that funds and resources are available for the priorities listed in the business plan and future changes in student cohort size, staffing and technology will be able to be addressed.

Planning sets targets, milestones and strategies to improve student learning. This includes the current focus on health and well-being across the school, which has already seen a documented improvement in attendance and behaviour, which can then lead to improved learning outcomes. In the middle school there is a focus on literacy and numeracy development and the Australian Curriculum. In the senior school, the focus is on student need and future work/life. The majority of students leave the school with several TAFE certificates and a number of relevant workplace learning experiences. The existing network of community partnerships has been substantially extended since the last review. These partnerships ensure sustainability of workplace learning in preparation for post-school life. Another process to make the workplace programs meaningful and sustainable is through the excellent transition programs for high school exit, that teachers currently 'backward map' from Year 13 to identify skills to develop in earlier years, such as functional literacy.

Overall, the reviewers verify the staff have embedded excellent structures, processes and programs and developed and maintained numerous beneficial partnerships such that sustainability is assured.
Conclusion

The leadership team and staff at Warnbro Community High School Education Support Centre have created a stimulating educational environment to develop each student's potential. The range of programs offered enables students to be engaged in a wide variety of learning activities that support them as they transition to the next phase of their life.

Each student's abilities are maximised with comprehensive planning processes evident for each student to ensure continuous development throughout their secondary schooling to enable them to build on their skills and confidence for post-school life.

The leadership of the centre has created an environment that fosters involvement of parents and carers, engages agencies in providing support and has developed strong partnerships with business and the community to enhance the transition pathway for each student.

The quality of self-review processes and well considered evidence-based action and operational planning directly influences the high level of student engagement in programs.
Commendations

The following areas are commended:

- leadership team and staff for the comprehensive self-review processes that are well planned and demonstrate a detailed approach in developing the annual self-assessment of the business plan targets conducted in consultation with key stakeholders
- leadership team and staff for their deep understanding of the teaching and learning processes required to meet the complex needs of their students and the strategies they have employed to make a real difference to student learning
- staff for their commitment to quality teaching, ongoing improvement and striving for excellence in student outcomes
- staff for the well-organised and highly valued transition programs
- leadership team and staff for their innovative planning and alliances made to maintain a positive and vibrant network of partnerships
- board members for their active involvement, sound governance including critical reflection on school performance and focus on forward planning
- leadership team for the strong sense of purpose, direction and targeted support given to staff
- outstanding leadership of the principal, the vision established by the leadership team and staff and the commitment and support of the school board, all of which ensure that students are receiving a quality education.
Declaration

We, the undersigned, hereby confirm that the information provided in this findings document is to the best of our knowledge true and correct and is based on the verification of the evidence provided by Warnbro Community High School Education Support Centre as part of the Department of Education Services’ independent review process. The principal and board chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.

Ms Kerry Usher, Lead Reviewer

6 December 2016

Date

Professor Marion Milton, Reviewer

6 December 2016

Date

Mr Richard Strickland, Director General,
Department of Education Services

Date