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Disclaimer

This document has been based on the findings of the independent reviewers’ verification of the school’s self-review. The school’s self-review has been complemented by information provided by the Department of Education and the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority.

The findings of the independent review are forwarded to the Minister for Education, the Director General of Education, the Principal and the Board Chair.

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East Beechboro Primary School

School and Review Details

Principal: Mr Gary Brown
Board Chair: Ms Sharon Ashton
School Location: Brockmill Avenue, BEECHBORO, WA, 6063
School Classification: PS Class 5
Number of Students: 395
Reviewers: Dr Lesley Payne (Lead) and Mrs Megan Phillips
Review Dates: Self-review presentation: 11 March 2013
Review visits: 11 and 12 April 2013

1. About the Independent Review

The purpose of the independent review of East Beechboro Primary School is to provide an assurance to the Minister for Education, the Director General of Education, the Principal, Board Chair and the school community 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 improved the standards of student learning (achievement, progress and engagement) for all students
- how well the school has created an environment that promotes student learning
- how well the school is placed to sustain and improve its performance.

The school has been required, under the DPA, to undertake regular self-assessment. The outcomes of these assessments formed the basis for the school's self-review which was presented to the reviewers for verification at the commencement of the independent review.
Prior to the presentation of the school’s self-review, reviewers were provided with information on the school’s educational achievements, its processes and its student performance data from a number of sources which include, but are not limited to:

- the My School™ website
- the Department of Education School Performance Monitoring System
- Schools Online reports

Reviewers visited the school for a half-day presentation of the school’s self-review by the Principal, the Board Chair and other key stakeholders chosen by the school. Subsequently the reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school’s self-review documentation and developed lines of enquiry where further verification was required.

An agenda for a two-day review visit was then negotiated with the school to enable the gathering of further evidence to clarify or confirm the claims made in the school’s self-review. During these two days the reviewers sourced information and evidence to support the school’s self-review claims through observation and discussion with teaching and non-teaching staff, board members, parents, students and the school leadership team.

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

This document reports on the findings of the independent review.
2. Summary

East Beechboro Primary School is an established school located in the north metropolitan suburbs that provides quality educational experiences and opportunities for its students and the school community. Its infrastructure is adequate for the delivery of appropriate teaching and learning programs with a newly constructed early learning teaching area adding to the high standard facilities.

The independent review of the school verifies the self-review of its own performance against obligations and commitments outlined in its DPA and Business Plan. East Beechboro Primary School presented a wide range of documentation to support its self-review. The reviewers found it was detailed with a strong focus on strategies and inputs to improve student learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy requirements of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

All members of the school community involved in the review agreed that the performance of the students at East Beechboro Primary School continues to improve. There is respect for the leadership team and appreciation of the way in which the whole staff work together to support the students.

The reviewers were able to verify that the school offers a curriculum aimed at providing opportunities for students with different needs and abilities. The dedicated approach taken by all staff members and allocation of resources ensures all children are given the chance to learn at their own pace whilst still being challenged in their skills development. NAPLAN results indicate the strategies implemented are resulting in literacy and numeracy improvement. This is reported to be increasing confidence in the structures in place to raise the standards achieved by the students and assist the school in reaching targets.

The positive reports across the school community affirm the manner in which the Principal, Board and staff work together in a supportive way with a strong sense of belonging to, respect for and approval of the school to ensure a supportive and successful learning environment.

The school should further sustain and improve its performance as the strong leadership in the school, together with the Board, reflects on student performance and focuses on future targets and strategies for improvement, in the development of the next Business Plan.
The following **commendations** support the school’s claims of significant strengths and areas of improvement:

- The focused utilisation of Literacy and Numeracy Partnership Project (LNPP) funding, with the provision of numeracy and literacy coaches and the employment of additional education assistants to support the literacy and numeracy programs.
- The decision to employ a speech therapist to assist with the development of early listening and speaking skills.
- The team leadership model and Phases of Learning structure that enables staff to collaborate in developing high quality learning programs, with consistent approaches to curriculum delivery and teaching.

The following **affirmations** support continued implementation of strategies and initiatives or areas for improvement already identified by the school:

- The strategy of establishing a literacy block to address the needs of the students in this area promotes confidence, in both staff and parents, that basic elements of the learning program are given priority.
- The school’s proactive approach to maintaining and improving its standing in the community.
- The manner in which the Principal, Board and staff work together in a supportive way with a strong sense of belonging to, respect for and approval of the school to ensure a supportive and successful learning environment.
- The strategy of matching inexperienced teachers with mentors and developing the talents of teachers through a team model.
- The ongoing engagement in evidence-based self-review; analysing all data from learning areas in conjunction with all staff and sub-school leaders.
- The effective resourcing, developing and enhancing of the productive pedagogies demonstrated by staff.
- Student behaviour management constantly motivated and managed through a clear, embedded, positive reinforcement strategy based on the Virtues Program.
The following **recommendations** are made to add value to the school’s improvement and review processes:

- In the development of the new Business Plan for 2014-2016, the school considers the articulation of specific, measurable targets to provide greater support to school and teacher planning and to assist evaluation of the success of improvement strategies.
- The school continues to monitor and improve communication between the school and parents, paying particular attention to the inclusion of parents challenged by cultural and language differences.
- The Board undertake a formal self-review to assess the effectiveness of board processes with regard to: succession planning; induction training; identification of required expertise of members; understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Board, and a formal self-evaluation and assessment of its own effectiveness.
- That the Board develops a communications strategy to ensure that the wider community is aware of its function and accountability role in supporting the school.
3. **School Context**

East Beechboro Primary School is located in the north metropolitan education region of Perth. It began operation as an Independent Public School in 2011. At the time of the review, the school had a population of 395 students from Kindergarten to Year 7. East Beechboro Primary School’s multicultural student population is evident with several ethnic groups being represented; a significant number from the Middle East. Aboriginal students make up approximately 10% of the student population. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) index of 931.

The enrolments at the school show a small upward trend, especially in the Early Years Phase of Learning. With new housing developments now under construction in the school’s outer catchment areas, there is an expectation that the numbers will continue to increase in the near future.

During the term of the current Business Plan and with the addition of the Building the Education Revolution (BER) funding the school has added purpose-built early childhood classrooms to its infrastructure. School facilities are generally well maintained and sufficient to cater for a range of Kindergarten to Year 7 learning and cultural opportunities.

The school staff profile comprises a blend of very experienced teachers through to recently graduated teachers. Human resources are the main focus of the Independent Public School (IPS) capacity to use the one-line budget to access best-available staff to meet school needs. The ability to establish a staffing selection pool provides opportunities for attracting highly competent teachers to meet the objectives of the workforce development plan and address strengths and weaknesses in the school-wide team.

The school vision is to work in a partnership of mutual respect and purpose to optimise learning and child development. The school has developed an appropriate range of programs, resources and teaching strategies to support the vision and expectations for student learning while taking into account the factors that impact on achievement, participation, and engagement. Opportunities are available to all staff to take on leadership roles outside the classroom.

East Beechboro Primary School is part of the Improving Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership (ILNNP), receiving additional funding as a part
of this program. The program targets improving NAPLAN results for students identified as being able to improve two NAPLAN bands.

The school has developed a coordinated approach to assisting and managing students at educational risk through the establishment of a Students at Educational Risk (SAER) team. The SAER team works with a variety of students for a variety of educational and social factors.

The reviewers met with parents, students and the Board. The reviewers noted that Board members interviewed lacked clarity about their role, indicating that their former School Council, which included staff and Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) members, had become the School Board when the school was awarded IPS status.

Although board members had attended the training provided for IPS schools by the Department of Education, they acknowledged the need for further training as the school continues to come to terms with Governance responsibilities. With the new Business Plan and DPA to be devised for the commencement of the 2014 school year, this is recognised by the Board as an appropriate time to undertake a self-evaluation of its own effectiveness.

East Beechboro Primary School provides quality educational experiences and opportunities for its students and the school community. Its infrastructure is adequate for the delivery of appropriate teaching and learning programs with a newly constructed early learning teaching area adding to the provision of a high standard of facilities.

All members of the school community involved in the review agreed that the performance of the students at East Beechboro Primary School continues to improve. There is a respect for the leadership team and appreciation of the way in which the whole staff work together to support the students.
4a. School Performance - Student Learning

In the Business Plan for the period 2011-2013, East Beechboro Primary School set targets across a number of areas of the curriculum, with the main focus being an improvement in literacy and numeracy and early childhood education. Targets in the Business Plan are generally broad and not explicit with regard to size of any improvement. For literacy and numeracy they are based primarily on upward trends in NAPLAN data by comparisons with like schools at Years 3, 5 and 7 and general improvement in standardised tests. The school also has a detailed operational plan which underpins the Business Plan at the school level and articulates the outcomes, indicators, strategies and actions, personnel, resources and monitoring tools.

It is recommended that in the development of the new Business Plan for 2014-16, the school considers the articulation of specific, measurable targets to provide greater support to school and teacher planning and to assist evaluation of the success of improvement strategies.

The introduction of the literacy block as a strategy to address the needs of the students has given rise to a more confident and targeted approach by teachers in a concerted effort to meet the needs of the students and raise the standards of literacy and numeracy throughout all levels from K-7 and NAPLAN results in particular. It has the approval and support of the parent body which sees the improvement in the outcomes of the children as a direct result of this strategy.

East Beechboro Primary School is part of the ILNNP, receiving additional funding as a part of this program. The school is commended for directing resources to the employment of literacy and numeracy coaches and additional Education Assistants to support the literacy and numeracy programs in place and to assist the school to reach set targets.

Academic results as represented by NAPLAN data indicate students consistently achieve at or above state average levels and as expected when compared with schools of similar socio-economic status in the areas of literacy and numeracy. There has been significant improvement in Year 5 Reading, Year 3 Numeracy and Year 7 Writing and Numeracy results in NAPLAN 2012. Western Australian Monitoring Standards in Education (WAMSE) results for 2012 also indicate above-expected performance results.
The Business Plan set targets for improvements in behaviour management, engagement and attendance. There are no articulated non-academic curriculum targets, however attention to the health and wellbeing of the children is evident through the uptake of the Australian Fitness Education Survey undertaken by the Physical Education specialist and the engagement of the School Chaplain. Music has a strong emphasis throughout the school, providing students with experiences in singing and instrumental music. The school choir regularly performs at events in the local community.

The school has developed a coordinated approach to assisting and managing students at educational risk through the establishment of a Students at Educational Risk team, who along with the School Psychologist, School Chaplain and the Associate Principal heading up the team, comprise the group addressing the needs of students at risk. The school also has the services of an Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer who liaises with Aboriginal parents about the needs of their children.

The school is commended for its decision to employ a speech therapist to assist with the development of early listening and speaking skills of the youngest children, enabling progress to be made towards age-appropriate literacy and numeracy targets.

It was clear to the reviewers that due to the stability of the leadership team and staff in general over the period of the Business Plan, the focus on improvement to the literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students and for targeted students in particular, that both internal and external assessments are indicating sound progress in most areas of the curriculum. This was verified through observation, additional documentation, interviews and discussion. In addition, the reviewers were able to verify that the school offers a well-thought-out curriculum aimed at offering a range of opportunities for students with different needs and abilities.

The dedicated approach taken by all staff members and allocation of resources ensures all children are given the chance to learn at their own pace whilst still being challenged in their skills development. NAPLAN results indicate the strategies put in place are resulting in literacy and numeracy improvement, increasing confidence in the structures in place to raise the standards achieved by the students and assist the school in reaching targets.
4b. School Performance - Quality of Learning Environment

The independent review process was able to verify through observation and interviews that school vision, ethos and values are being collaboratively developed across the school with the support of the leadership team. The articulation of the vision at different levels of the school by students, teachers, administrative staff and parents indicates a sound level of understanding and a commitment to a safe and happy environment that supports student improvement. The reviewers were able to affirm an inclusive environment that values and supports all students with a positive approach to making a difference for all students.

A range of strategies and resources is evident in meeting student learning needs and makes effective use of resources articulated in the DPA for designated programs. Effective strategies include Running Records across all year levels, Diana Rigg Spelling program, Health and Wellbeing initiatives, Languages and Music (Choir). The behaviour management strategy tied to the Virtues Program incorporates a cumulative record and distribution of rewards for positive behaviour for the whole of students' life at the school. This is widely accepted and valued by the whole community.

The division of staff teams into phases of learning year levels has enabled teachers to work collaboratively with the literacy and numeracy coaches and education assistants. Professional development provided has been in areas of the Australian Curriculum, oral language, phonics and foundation skills for spelling and writing. Key early childhood staff members have also accessed professional learning in data analysis of on-entry assessment. Improvement in student outcomes resulting from these strategies was asserted by teachers who have found this approach supportive and productive.

Among the positive strategies in place at East Beechboro Primary School is the allocation of duties other than teaching time given to teachers for regular collaborative team meetings, curriculum development and the budgetary provisions to support programs. This is valued highly by the staff and parents.

Non-academic data, such as attendance (which is above state levels for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students alike), behaviour management records and parent and student satisfaction results are analysed. Satisfaction levels remain high with some positive movement noted between 2010 and 2012 on a number of items. Student behaviour management is motivated and
managed through a positive reinforcement strategy based on a clear and well-implemented program focused on the Virtues Program.

The school’s individualised approach to teaching and learning was rated highly by parents and indicates the developing agenda for improvement in partnership with parents and the community. The P&C is very supportive of the school although it is reportedly difficult to involve many parents in the association.

The positive reports across the school community affirm the manner in which the Principal, Board and staff work together in a supportive way with a strong sense of belonging to, respect and approval of the school to ensure a supportive and successful learning environment.

4c. School Performance - Sustainability

The knowledge and expertise of the leadership team is being developed and supported by the East Beechboro Primary School strategies under the direction of the Principal. Whole-school planning is clearly reflected in planning documents and assessment cycles. The development of leadership is valued by staff and parents alike. There is an emphasis on working with staff members to build quality in teaching practice, engage in professional learning and up-skill staff members to improve their teaching practices where needed. The school’s leadership team has ensured that quality processes for self-review and continuous improvement in the school’s operations will enhance future development and sustainability.

The school has developed its collaborative teaching model over a considerable period of time. The staff mix of experienced and less experienced teachers has enabled the development of strategies that provide an inclusive and highly productive environment that meets the needs of all students. Capacity building and development of the leadership groups and staff in general has established a culture of shared responsibility across the school. Several senior staff members have acted for periods of time as Deputy Principal. Opportunities are provided for all staff to take on leadership roles in the phases of learning framework within the school structure.

The school’s self-review process was thorough. Relevant school-based data was analysed to identify strengths, establish patterns and trends in student achievement and identify areas for improvement to be carried forward into
future planning. Programs and strategies were reviewed to ensure their
effectiveness and the self-review documentation prepared by the school was
supported by a clearly outlined Review Report. With the planned removal of
the Year 7 cohort during the life of the next Business Plan, the school
leadership team and Board will need to consider the financial and physical
implications when drawing up the 2014-2016 Business Plan.

The school has already commenced a re-imaging process through a new logo
and website to raise its profile in the community and ensure the upward trend
in enrolments can be sustained. The role and profile of the School Board will
be accessible through the website.

The school is commended for the team leadership model and phases of
learning structure that enables staff to collaborate in developing high quality
learning programs, with consistent approaches to curriculum delivery and
teaching which supports transition throughout the school. The team structure
has created smaller cohorts of teachers and students within the larger school,
leading to a focus on the needs of those students requiring assistance or
adjustments to their learning. The school’s strategy of matching inexperienced
teachers with mentors and developing the talents of teachers through the
team model is affirmed in maintaining the quality of teaching and learning.

Phases of learning leaders, curriculum leaders and classroom teachers
asserted that the school should continue to engage in evidence-based
self-review, analysing all data from learning areas in conjunction with staff and
sub-school leaders. This process facilitates the concentration on the specific
requirements of focus students and evaluation of the success of strategies
implemented for improvement. The process identifies strengths and areas for
improvement to be carried forward into planning.

The school includes all staff in the development of plans for improvement and
this in turn links to their performance management and accountability. It
provides the opportunity to use performance information, collected by the
school, to assist teachers in teams to identify areas for reflection in teaching
and to identify areas requiring further guidance and support.

Meetings with the School Board and perusal of board minutes indicated that
members were not clear on their role. The East Beechboro School Board has
been stable since its inception, having been the former School Council,
however it has not yet developed structures and measures to manage its
business agenda. The longer-term development of the School Board will
assist in maintaining a sustainable school environment. With the current constitution about to be revisited in line with the development of the 2014-2016 Business Plan, the Board will be better placed to assure the community of long-term stability and in maintaining oversight of the outcomes of teaching and learning. While the Board reviews NAPLAN results once a year, there is little analysis of student learning overall as evidenced in the Board minutes.

The Board has now been in operation for three years and with a new Business Plan and DPA to be devised for 2014, it is recommended that as part of this process the Board undertake a formal review of the following:

- succession planning
- induction training
- identification of required expertise of members
- understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Board
- formal self-evaluation and assessment of its own effectiveness.

The school's targets for increased involvement of the parent body have only partly been met. It is recommended that the school continue to monitor and improve communication between the school and parents, paying particular attention to the inclusion of parents challenged by cultural and language differences.

The sustainability of the school's performance is achievable through the quality of the teaching and learning collaborative activities of the school together with teachers committed to their work and to the improvement of learning outcomes for students.

The school programs are well supported by specialist teachers offering quality and often exceptional programs; (for example, the Health and Physical Education Program) that provide students with diverse options. It is affirmed that the school is effectively resourcing, developing and enhancing the productive pedagogies demonstrated by staff. The supportive, collaborative structure and leadership provides a stable environment with long-term benefits for students, with evident sustainability through embedded practice.

The school should further sustain and improve its performance as the strong leadership in the school, together with a more informed and trained Board, reflect on student performance and focus their deliberations on future targets and strategies for improvement.
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 our assessment of the evidence provided by East Beechboro Primary School 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.

(Signature of Lesley Payne, Lead Reviewer) 11 June 2013

(Signature of Megan Phillips, Reviewer) 13/6/13

(Signature of Richard Strickland, CEO, Department of Education Services) 20/6/13