Mount Hawthorn Primary School

2017

Review Findings

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School and Review Details

Principal:	Mr Dale Mackesey
Board Chair:	Mr Michael Jenkin
School Address:	1 Killarney Street, Mt Hawthorn WA 6016
Number of Students:	820
ICSEA[1]	1137
Reviewers:	Ms Margaret Banks (Lead)
	Ms Denise Hilsz
	Ms Maureen Lorimer
Review Dates:	15 and 16 November 2017
Initial Review Year:	2014

Purpose of the Review

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

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[1] The Index of Community Socio-Educational Ahdvantage (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 provided the school self-review conclusions to the reviewers one month prior to the commencement of the review.

The reviewers supplemented the information provided by the principal with information on the school's achievements, its processes and its student performance data from a number of sources which included:

- the *My School*® website

- School Performance Monitoring

- Schools Online reports.

Reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school self-review documentation to verify achievement of the DPA and business plan commitments, and developed lines of inquiry where further in-school verification was required.

An agenda for the site visit was negotiated with the principal to enable the gathering of evidence to verify claims made in the school self-review statements. During the review visit the reviewers sourced evidence to support the claims through observation and discussion with leaders, teaching and support staff, board members, parents and students where required. Where the school belongs to an Independent Public School (IPS) cluster of schools the review considers whether the purpose of the cluster has been met and the benefits to the school.

The evidence provided by the principal, along with information gathered by the reviewers prior to and during the review visit, was used as the basis for judgements made in verifying how well the school staff and board have met the commitments of the DPA and business plan.

Business Plan

How effective was the business plan in responding to the school's context and improving student learning (progress, achievement and engagement)?

Mount Hawthorn Primary School is in the inner-city suburb of Mount Hawthorn. The Level 5 school is in the North Metropolitan Education Region and caters for 840 students in Years K–6.

The school is part of an IPS Cluster with Mount Hawthorn Education Support Centre (ESC), which shares the same site. The Kindergarten is off site, two kilometres from the school. The land area of the school is limited at 2.39 ha and this presents challenges for some operations of the school program.

The school staff comprises 95 full-time and part-time staff members, to a total of 64.47 full-time equivalent (FTE). It includes teachers (38.7 FTE), support staff (22.37 FTE), a full-time principal and four associate principals (2.4 FTE).

There have been three principals during this DPA period.

Since 2012 the student population has increased from 640 to 840 placing pressure on the campus programs and facilities. The opening of a new building in 2018, designed to provide seven additional learning areas, should alleviate the immediate and long-term accommodation and program issues.

The school maintains an outstanding reputation as a school of choice and is strongly supported by its board and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C). The school maintains active and ongoing partnerships with local businesses, community groups, educational institutions and the wider community.

Findings

- The 2015–17 Business Plan outlines the long-term strategic approach for the school and describes key areas detailing priorities, targets, strategies and evidence that reflect the vision and needs of the school.

- Implementation of the business plan is clearly set out detailing:
    - operational plans
    - strategic plans
    - classroom plans.

- The school's vision to "provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment where all of our students are supported and challenged to achieve their potential" is reflected in the goals and objectives articulated in the business plan.

- The business plan outlines four priority areas for the school:

  o curriculum differentiation

  o connection, challenge, community

  o high quality teaching and leadership

  o the school will be responsive and managed against outcomes, priorities and targets. Technology, research and innovation will be used to drive change.

- The four priority areas for the school are aligned to Department of Education priorities of:

  o success for all students

  o distinctive schools

  o high quality teaching and leadership

  o a capable and responsive organisation.

- Targets are set in each of the priority areas and include academic, non-academic and cluster targets. Discussions with the principal, board chair and staff confirmed that they were not satisfied that all the targets were effective and further refinement of target setting will strengthen the next business plan.

- Progress towards the achievement of targets was evaluated as part of the school's self-review and is discussed in more detail in the other sections of this report.

- The business plan includes a diverse range of strategies and evidence within the four priority areas and these have guided the annual operational, strategic and classroom plans. Meetings with staff confirmed that their application of school plans, targets and data analysis was directed by the business plan.

- The context of the school underpins the business plan with the priority areas and strategies catering for the full range of student learning needs. Commitment to the whole-child with an emphasis on their academic, social, creative, civic and behavioural development is evident in the strategies and programs detailed in the plan.

- The 2014 IPS Review findings detailed the following areas for improvement:

  o "The next business plan includes targets that are measurable and achievable and include both the academic and non-academic student achievement."

The business plan includes targets as recommended; however, the school does recognise the need for refinement of targets to make them specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited.

o "The next business plan includes the purpose of the Mount Hawthorn Schools Cluster, along with any targets set for the cluster and the expected educational benefits to the students of the school."

Joint cluster targets have been set in each of the priority areas. The purpose and the expected educational benefits of the cluster still requires greater clarity in the business plan and formalised procedures to ensure sustainability.

- A review of the business plan is conducted annually by the leadership team, staff and the board. Meetings with each group confirmed their understanding, commitment and critical self-review of progress and improvement.

- The principal, board and staff confirmed that the business plan was developed after extensive research, analysis and consultation in 2015. The business plan was endorsed by the board and is available to the public on the school and Department of Education websites.

Area of strength

- The high level of professional commitment and understanding of the school's business plan and associated planning documents and procedures by the staff and board members.

Teaching and Learning

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

Findings

- The reviewers verified a shared school vision with staff, students and parents through classroom visits, meetings with diverse groups of staff, and discussions with board members and parents. The school motto, "Together towards the future" is reflected in a whole-school commitment to providing a dynamic learning environment that engages and inspires students to achieve their personal best.

- A strong focus on curriculum planning and analysis of school performance data is evident in meetings for year levels, learning area groups, priority subcommittees, leadership team and board. There is regular analysis of data to identify individuals and groups of students and the formulation of individual and group education plans to meet their needs. Case management of identified groups of students is applied across the school including strategies to lift performance levels of the middle range of students.

- Comprehensive analysis of data guides classroom teaching and this has been linked to the performance management process to support accountability and a stronger curriculum improvement focus by each teacher.

- Each year level develops an annual operational plan and there are strategic plans for the six specialist learning areas. Plans are directly linked to the business plan targets, strategies and evaluation. Discussions with teachers and classroom visits confirmed a clear understanding of the focus of teaching and learning to achieve the required targets.

- Collaboration was evident at all levels of the school and included year level and specialist teams, learning area committees and a curriculum leadership team. The curriculum demands of the school, which have undergone rapid growth, have been managed strategically and effective distributed leadership has shared the workload.

- In the priority area "success for all students," targets addressed progress and achievement in National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), Pre-primary On-entry assessment and report data on attitudes to learning.

- The first target to "maintain our performance with like Western Australian schools in NAPLAN and student achievement data to be the same and above" was not met and this was confirmed in the school's analysis. Review of the data and discussions with staff demonstrated that despite not achieving the target, the school was on track and sustainability was evident. Increased numbers of students were achieving in the top 20% and top two proficiency bands, and there had been a decrease in student numbers in proficiency Bands 1–3. In addition, the stable cohort had shown greater progress against like-schools in grammar and punctuation and spelling, the same progress for writing and reading and only slightly below in numeracy.

- Performance against the second target to "continue to maintain the NAPLAN reading and numeracy school means at 15% above the Australian mean" was not met. Review of the data and discussions with staff showed that the school had maintained a good level above the Australian mean, ranging between 6–8% over the period; however, it had not attained the 15% level stated in the business plan target. Staff confirmed that the target had not been a realistic and achievable target.

- The third target, "students in Pre-primary progress 0.5–1.0 progression point in the year" has been achieved. The data shows that 85% of the stable cohort have made moderate (0.5 progression point) to very high (>1.0 progression point) progress against like-schools using the NAPLAN 2017 data. Early childhood staff effectively use On-entry data to inform Kindergarten, Pre-primary and Year 1 planning and programs.

- The fourth target relates to attitudes to learning and was to "raise the percentage of students who achieve 'consistently' to 85% for perseverance". The target was not met as the analysis of data revealed the average for the period was 71% across the year levels.

- The fifth target was to "raise the percentage of students who achieve 'consistently' to 80% for working to the best of their ability." The target was not met as the analysis of data revealed the average for the period was 75% across the year levels.

- Discussions with the leadership team and staff confirmed that the two targets set to focus on attitudes to learning were aspirational and heavily reliant on the validity of the report data. The development of consistent judgements and shared understandings in the use of the attitude and behaviour areas of report data should provide the opportunity to gather valid and useful information for future targets. Staff are investigating a case management approach to identify and target students who have the capacity to improve their attitudes to learning.

- In the priority area "distinctive schools", a target was set to "maintain and improve student, parent and staff satisfaction at 80%." The target was met with the overall satisfaction rates of 85% for students, 83% for parents and 95% for staff. Meetings with all stakeholders confirmed that there is a high level of satisfaction with the quality and standard of the education program provided by the school.

- High levels of differentiation and resourcing supports the needs of all students. A targeted intervention system led by one of the associate principals and supported by curriculum leaders and the school psychologist provides case management, individual education plans (IEPs) and liaison with external services, parents and class teachers.

- Extension and enrichment opportunities are a strong feature of the school with the integration of a Years K–6 scope and sequence of instructional intelligences applied in all classes and professional learning for teachers. A wide range of enrichment activities including 'HOTSHOTS' for science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics (STEAM), Young Innovators Awards, Speak Up Awards and Young Writers Workshops cater for a range of talents and learning styles.

- All staff demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement and this is underpinned by a dynamic performance management process. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers are the basis for self-reflection and guide the performance management process. The standards are applied in manageable sections and align with a professional delivery model. The use of student data and the Student Achievement Information System (SAIS) dashboard is a feature of the process and ensures accountability for student progress aligned to the school's academic targets.

- High quality, innovative teaching is supported by the leadership team and set out in all areas of planning. Weekly professional learning has focused on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, STEAM, digital technologies, 'Talk4Writing' and data literacy. Staff show high standards of teaching, professional knowledge and a commitment to improvement in all areas of the school.

- The school has invested in information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and professional learning for staff and ICT is a learning tool regularly used by students and staff. A coding scope and sequence has been developed to guide staff and an after-school coding club, supported through the Scientists in Schools program, extends students' skills and experiences.

- The professional calibre of staff, effective collaboration, distributed leadership and the support from the board will ensure the sustainability of the delivery of an appropriate curriculum and ongoing improvements in student performance.

Area of strength

- The broad range of extension and creative learning programs, activities and events which enhance and diversify the range of learning opportunities for all students.

Area for improvement

- Develop specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time limited targets in the business plan to effectively guide and support student progress and achievement.

Student Performance Monitoring

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

Findings

- From the evidence provided, reviewers verify the school has monitored and self-assessed progress against achievement of the targets of the business plan. Self-review is conducted annually as required by the DPA.

- Plans for self-review and documentation of results indicate detailed analysis of the priorities from longitudinal and comparative data and frameworks. Involvement of curriculum teams, the leadership team and whole-school staff meetings are features of the processes implemented for review.

- Discussions with teachers and leaders confirmed their involvement in analysing targets. A 'traffic light' system shows the results of the review process including the extent to which the targets have been achieved. The document 2015–17 Business Plan Self-Review summarises achievements against the target, analysis of the data and either a green, amber or red rating.

- The whole-school 2017 Operational Plan summarises school structures, committees, processes and the schedule for planning, meetings and conduct of reviews. This document provides clarity on all organisational and operational matters across the school.

- The self-assessment cycle is outlined using headings of "teaching and learning", "leadership", "learning environment", "resources" and "relationships". On a term-by-term basis the data is systematically analysed. Reviews of academic performance data, behaviour data, survey results and audits of resources are conducted as part of the self-assessment cycle.

- Documentation of the school review processes used by the school since 2013 demonstrates continuous use of accountability tools and evidence-based processes to evaluate the school's performance and to identify areas for improvement.

- The National Schools Improvement Tool (NSIT) was administered in 2013 and two of the nine elements revisited in 2017. On a school development day, all staff reflected on and rated the broad strategies of the business plan and the school's performance against NSIT indicators related to teaching and learning. The changes to the indicators of "a culture to promote learning and differentiated

teaching" provided evidence of improvements. Teachers reported that through professional learning they had developed deeper understandings of these two areas since the 2013 ratings.

- Evidence was provided of the application of the National Quality Standard (NQS) for Years K–2, through the NQS Improvement Plan. Self-ratings, evidence to support the ratings and a commentary on "what we still need to do" to fully meet the standard showed school-level audits had been conducted in addition to the NQS audit by the Department of Education.

- A matrix shows the relationship of the business plan to the NQS, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and NSIT frameworks and standards for improvement and progression.

- At the commencement of the year, teachers are provided with handover information for each student, collated by previous years' teachers. The data provides a base for the new teacher to continue monitoring the performance of each student, to plan and modify teaching and learning for the class and respond to the needs of individual students.

- Teachers also access the SAIS data provided online by the Department of Education. This data is comparative and provides tracking of the school's performance over time.

- During Term 1, Pre-primary teachers conduct On-entry testing with the data being used effectively for tracking to Year 3 along with NAPLAN data to inform planning. All teachers are encouraged to use SAIS data to inform their performance management goals and choices for professional learning and support.

- Operational plans for each year group or 'hub', specify the agreed assessments and monitoring tools. For example, in Year 1 the following are used: Brightpath Ruler; moderation for writing; Oxford Literary Assessments for reading; the Literacy Shed for viewing; common assessment tasks for moderation in all learning areas; and Year 1 Maths Assessment Pack. In Year 6, the school uses: Brightpath Ruler moderation; common assessment tasks; Progressive Achievement Tests in science and reading vocabulary; Schonell Spelling Test; Western Australian Monitoring Standards in Education tests; and Year 6 'NAPLAN-style' commercial resources.

- The annual reports are available on the school website. The reports include statements from the principal, information on membership and the role of the board and issues being addressed. Activities of interest to parents are reported including photographs resulting in an attractive presentation of a wide range of

snapshots of the school's activities during the year. One page provides tables of NAPLAN results with a short paragraph stating further information would be available the following year. National reporting requirements on staff details and destination secondary schools for students were included but attendance rates were not available. The school did not meet the requirement of the DPA for the annual report to detail the performance and achievement of the school including consideration of the priorities and targets described in the business plan.

- The 2014 IPS Review report was available on the website and recommendations used to inform the development of the current business plan.

- The use of data from a range of sources is embedded, and used in planning to comprehensively inform the school of its progress against the business plan. The school is focused on improvement, ways of engaging teachers with the available data to inform their practice and how to lift the performance of all students.

Area of strength

- Highly organised, well-structured and systematic monitoring of the progress of individual students and whole-school performance.

Area for improvement

- Ensure annual reports adhere to the requirements of the DPA.

Program Delivery

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

- Interviews with staff, observations in classrooms by reviewers and documentation shows the school is compliant with the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline, the Early Years Learning Framework and the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework.

- In the "high quality teaching and leadership" priority area of the business plan, the target "National Curriculum implementation aligns with recommended timelines from the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA)" was met. It should be noted it is the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline and not the Australian Curriculum which is mandated for Western Australian schools. Interviews with curriculum leaders verified implementation, use of SCSA assessments and moderation of teacher judgements.

- Policies and processes related to positive behaviour, positive learning environment and behaviour management are informed by data including surveys and policy review, trialled and established with defined strategies and uniformly implemented across the school.

- Positive behaviours and social and emotional development are promoted through a virtues program and reported as creating a positive school ethos embedded into school and class practices. The values program promotes explicit behaviours in classrooms, during breaks, during transition between classes, in the playground and other settings with ongoing monitoring and recognition of the behaviours through awarding of tokens and certificates. The behaviours expected for being respectful, responsible, safe and caring and 'being your best' provide the framework for data collection for minor infringements and tracking of concerns and issues.

- Further strategies back up the positive approach such as the buddy system across year levels, friendship and 'pirate gardens' in the playground where peer support for friendships and inclusion in play are facilitated.

- Students at Educational Risk (SAER) documentation sets out procedures and support arrangements for students identified as being at risk of non-achievement or in cases where a student's rate of progress or behaviour differs from their past performance or their peers. SAER includes responding to students with special needs, learning difficulties and/or those who are gifted and talented. Guidance for support is provided through a set of strategies or adjustments according to four

categories or 'waves' ranging from Wave 1, which involves consultation with parents, curriculum adjustments and monitoring, through to Wave 4 which calls for significant additional resourcing and extensive adjustments. With strong leadership and a team approach, structured arrangements and training of staff, support is provided to students according to their needs.

- Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure a safe, positive and inclusive learning environment is maintained. This is achieved through Behaviour Management in Schools, bullying prevention and a student-centred approach to learning. Results from parent, staff and student surveys provide positive responses on student safety with further confirmation from interviews with students and parents.

- The Managing Student Behaviour 2017 policy, endorsed by the board, provides clarity and detail on targets: support for student care, wellbeing and safety; and raising the percentage of students who achieve "consistently" to 85% for perseverance and 80% for working to the best of their abilities. The policy is presented as a detailed package including rights and responsibilities, code of conduct, roles, rules, procedures for managing inappropriate behaviour and a draft anti-bullying policy. Teachers advised the behaviour targets are being considered for inclusion in the next business plan.

- The health program is managed by teachers in the classroom and supports care and wellbeing with case management of students with specific needs including referral to the school psychologist. Action plans are in place for students with medical needs. Through interviews with staff, parents and students, reviewers verify the school is providing procedures to ensure a caring and supportive environment for all students.

- The operational plan identifies structures, processes, roles and schedules to guarantee regular attention to all routine matters. Managing the school breaks as separate junior and senior sessions, expectations of behaviour, rosters, schedules and planning ensure the routines support the teaching and learning and social and play needs of students.

- Attendance rates show the maintenance of high standards at 95.2% as compared to Western Australian public schools at 92.7%. Follow up procedures including case management are implemented for students with attendance rates of severe or moderate risk.

- In addition to the engaging programs provided by specialist teachers for Italian, physical education, music, visual arts and digital technologies, the school provides activities of interest to students before and after school allowing for high quality experiences and development of talents of individuals and groups.

- The music program forms a special feature of the school with band, orchestra and choir providing a range of opportunities for development of skills and interest with performances in the school and community. All students participate in percussion, recorder (Years 4–5) and ukulele (Year 6).

- The extensive range of enrichment opportunities provided through the library, 'Edu-dance', debating, excursions and incursions, special events and assemblies ensures all students are engaged and able to pursue areas of interest.

- School sports held before school, parent-run activities such as weekend sports teams, clubs such as coding and school banking provide further opportunities for student engagement. The operation of the canteen and uniform shop by the P&C adds to school's resources. An out of school care program is provided before and after school with 39 senior students off site and 60 junior students on site.

- Partnerships include those with the University of Western Australia through Uni-Active; Anzac House; the City of Vincent in the development of an Aboriginal plaque project; and AdoptASchool Association with a sister school in Bali, and provide further examples of the school's interaction with the community for the benefit of students.

- Leadership for Year 6 students is achieved through a rotational approach to positions as student counsellors and in faction captains. Integrated learning and innovation challenges, tests and exams, extension activities, running assemblies and fundraising for the AdoptASchool Association and charity groups assist their preparation for secondary school.

- With extensive opportunities for students to participate in activities to meet interests, talents and needs, students are engaged and enjoy coming to school. Documented policies, procedures and structures provide the basis for all activities to be conducted within the boundaries of child protection, safety and student wellbeing.

Areas of strength

- Extensive opportunities for students to engage with academic, creative, sporting, cultural and linguistic activities to extend their learning and to develop a sense of belonging, enjoyment and achievement.

- Policies, programs and plans ensure support for all students within a safe and caring environment.

- Interactions of parents, partners and community with the school contribute to rich learning experiences for students.

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

- Management of the site is complex due to layout of the buildings and levels of the terrain, limited space, student enrolment and consequently staff numbers. Interviews with the principal, associate principals and manager corporate services confirmed effective site management. Planning and monitoring are key features of effective use of resources and efficient operations of this complex school. Planning has commenced for a building program to accommodate the continued enrolment growth over the next few years.

- Financial and management decisions are driven by student enrolments hence the class configurations, resourcing for curriculum and student services, implementation of priorities of the business plan and day-to-day management of the site including facilities maintenance and replacements. In the last 12 months, significant resources were directed at supporting whole-school professional learning of teachers and where appropriate education assistants for the school priority of the 'Talk4Writing' program.

- Decisions related to allocation of resources for specialist staff has ensured a broad range of opportunities for curriculum depth and progression as well as the development of talents, interests and achievements for students.

- The comprehensive workforce plan provides details of all staff and is used for planning for current and future human resource needs. The workforce plan is being implemented to achieve a balanced staff profile including graduates and a mix of ages, gender and specialisations. The workforce plan is focused on effective arrangements including early childhood trained teachers for the Years K–2 classes, management of permanency, retirements and leave. Succession planning is managed through the building of distributed leadership with increasing responsibilities taken on by Level 3 classroom teachers and senior teachers. Staff resignations and retirements are tracked and leave liabilities are controlled. Relief teachers are drawn from a pool shared by other local schools.

- Parent expertise and time is shared with students through clubs and in classrooms. Their contribution through committees and events such as the two yearly school fair strengthens the involvement of the community with the school. Significant funds raised by the P&C provide additional financial resources to the

school and facilitate targeted projects for improvements to the learning environment.

- Documentation of the school's assessment cycle shows the planning for monthly budget reviews, meeting of the finance committee, financial self-assessment audit and the annual report. Reviewers verify that the school's financial and human resources are used to deliver quality education programs that provide for all students with efficiency and effectiveness.

- The school operates with separate committees for finance and grounds and gardens. Input and expertise from parents and the board assist with planning.

- The school has established processes guided by the business plan, curriculum and operational needs. Experienced staff and effective leadership continue to ensure use of resources meets the needs of all students and maintain effective management of human resources, buildings, facilities and grounds.

Areas of strength

- Capable and experienced leadership of the school ensures effective decision-making processes and management of resources to meet the school's mission.

- Contribution of parents and community enhance the learning environment and learning opportunities for students.

School Board

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

Findings

- The board membership is representative of both schools and complies with the *School Education Act 1999* and *School Education Regulations 2000* which specify the membership categories and composition. The board members display a good understanding of their functions and role, as prescribed in the *School Education Act 1999, School Education Regulations 2000* and Department policy. An open meeting is held each year.

- Board representatives come from a wide range of professions associated with education, strategic management, science, law, local government and business. This strong skillset is recognised by the principals and provides valuable input into the endorsement of the DPA and the broad range of board activities.

- The board chair has provided consistent and highly effective leadership over five years. This has provided strong advocacy and support for the leadership of both schools and clarity relating to governance and operations.

- Board members receive, analyse and provide advice on:

  o financial reports

  o results of school audits and reviews

  o principal's reports

  o school policy review and development

  o performance and student improvement targets as detailed in the school's business plan

  o results of surveys of parent, staff and student satisfaction.

- Board communications with the broader school community are effective. Ongoing review and improvement strategies have been implemented to ensure parents and staff are aware of the role and functions of the board.

- Terms of reference and a code of conduct have been developed and are set out in a school board section of the school website which includes board membership, minutes of meetings, reports and the role of the board.

- Discussions with board members, and the review of board minutes, confirmed rigorous analysis of school assessment data, program reports and anecdotal evidence in identifying what is working well and what needs to be improved. Members recognise their role in explaining and supporting decisions made by the board to members of the wider community.

- The structure of the board includes subcommittees that are aligned with the four priority areas of the business plan and the ESC subcommittee. Representatives from these committees work with staff to review annual plans, evaluate data and report back to the board. This effective model ensures that board members are fully aware of the school's plans, implementation process and progress.

- The ESC is currently represented on the board by the principal and one parent representative. A subcommittee made up of parent and staff representatives receives regular reports from their board representative and the principal and can provide feedback to the board on all matters currently under consideration by the board.

- The majority of board members are staff and parent representatives of the primary school. The partnership between the schools is evident; however, strategies to strengthen the profile of the ESC could be considered as part of the board's self-review and commitment to ongoing improvement.

- A parent survey has provided the board with feedback on their performance, community understanding and communications. The board has not conducted a board self-review and this process would provide further direction for ongoing improvements.

- Board members are active in many of the school programs and initiatives including the Scientists in Schools program, the Commendations Scheme, Building Program and Welcome to Country Project.

- Board membership has been stable and induction processes have ensured that new members are supported to fulfil the functions of their role. A new board chair will be appointed in 2018 and work is under way to ensure a smooth transition.

- Constructive collaboration between the board chair, board members and principals has been maintained throughout the period of the DPA. The reviewers are confident that the board will continue to provide quality governance for both schools.

Areas of strength

- The strong sense of purpose and awareness of board members to address the ongoing needs and progress of the school.

- The highly effective and strategic leadership of the board chair over the period of the DPA and his advocacy and support for the principals and staff of the schools.

Area for improvement

- Implement a board self-review process to gain additional feedback from the board representatives to complement ongoing self-reflection and improvement.

Cluster

How well has the cluster met its purpose for this school and supported improved student learning?

Findings

- In the 2014 IPS Review reports for both schools, recommendations were made for the next business plan to include the purpose of the Mount Hawthorn Schools Cluster with targets and educational benefits. Both schools responded separately to this recommendation making it difficult for reviewers to verify the achievement of cluster targets. Interviews with the principals provided evidence of collaboration and a mutually beneficial arrangement existing for the cluster.

- The benefits of the cluster were described by the principals as: improving teaching and learning by sharing resources, expertise and experience among staff; inclusion of students into programs, activities and playgrounds; and facilitating administration and resource management across the site. To ensure the benefits of the cluster are sustained, explicit and shared documentation on the purpose, objectives, areas of agreement, management and review need to be developed and implemented.

- A shared board is a key feature of the cluster arrangement. It operates effectively on behalf of both schools ensuring the requirements of the two DPAs are met. Further consideration of the ESC profile within the board and improvement target is encouraged.

- The purpose of the cluster is defined in the ESC business plan with targets and objectives. These were evaluated as part of the self-review process and shown to be an important strategy for inclusion of all students in the cluster. Integration of students from the ESC into mainstream classes occurs through a case managed approach but generally includes specialist programs and whole-school activities and events such as assemblies, sports days, incursions and the Anzac Day service.

- The business plan includes joint targets with the ESC. These targets focused on the common practices in the areas of the progress of students on IEPs, teachers using the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and achievement of excellence in the Department of Education audits. No evidence was provided on the implementation or analysis of these targets.

- Agreement has been reached on management of the site conducted through the primary school with shared costs for power, water, cleaners, gardeners and internet service provider. Collaboration on arrangements for building placements, playground, parking and tree issues was shown by principals to be strong. Two-way sharing of expertise is of mutual benefit and evident: on placements and integration of students with special needs; between office staff; and between teachers on student behaviour management. The informal nature of these agreements makes them reliant on individual cooperation. The culture of collaboration within the cluster benefits all students and should be secured for the future.

Area of strength

- Collaboration between the two schools aimed at inclusion of all students, building teaching and learning practices and efficient resource management.

Area for improvement

- Formalise a shared agreement on the common purpose of the cluster including the educational benefits, expected outcomes and processes or strategies, including endorsement by the board, to ensure benefits are sustained.

Conclusion

Mount Hawthorn Primary School is a high achieving school offering an extensive range of opportunities for students to engage with learning and achieve to the best of their abilities; however, the school continues to look for ways 'to be better' and has developed a culture of ongoing improvement. Through effective use of data, adoption of whole-school strategies and clarity of expectations through planning, professional learning by staff and documentation of processes, the school continues to ensure it is working to achieve its mission: "We will provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment where all of our students are supported and challenged to achieve their potential."

The school is focused on improving literacy outcomes for students while ensuring quality specialist programs and new opportunities for STEAM in keeping with the anticipated skills needs of students and society into the future. The school maintains wide choice in academic and non-academic areas of the curriculum providing opportunities for interests and talents of all students to be extended.

The challenges arising from the large numbers of students and limited space including coordination and logistics are well met by the hardworking leaders and staff. Effective communication and efficiently managed routines contribute to student safety, care and wellbeing in classrooms, playground and during offsite activities.

The partnership with the ESC through the cluster arrangements brings positive outcomes for students. The positive relationships between staff with sharing of expertise, resources and with the oversight of a single board brings governance, efficiencies and benefits to both schools. Opportunities exist to further enhance this partnership.
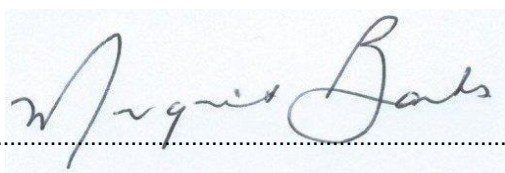
With extensive involvement and commitment of parents to a range of activities and through partnerships with local groups and businesses, the school has worked towards and identifies with being a 'community school'. This involves sharing of professional knowledge, skills and experiences with students and contributing time and skills to the board, P&C, committees, classrooms, sports activities, excursions, canteen and uniform shop. Through these and in other ways, parents, carers, grandparents and community members contribute to the distinctive qualities of the school.

"We know we've done our job when our kids skip to school" is the motto written on the first page of the business plan. Evidence was provided to show staff work hard, model behaviours and plan extensively to achieve this motto.

Declaration

We confirm the information in this document is, to the best of our knowledge and based on the verification of the evidence provided by Mount Hawthorn Primary School, true and correct.

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

....   13 January 2018
....

Ms Margaret Banks, Lead Reviewer   Date
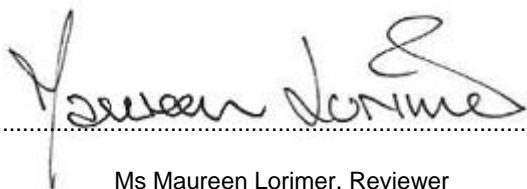
....   12 January 2018
....

Ms Denise Hilsz, Reviewer   Date

....   12 January 2018
....

Ms Maureen Lorimer, Reviewer   Date

....   24 January 2018
....

Mr Ken Perris, Director,   Date
Independent Public School Review