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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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School and Review Details

Principal: Mr Craig Ashby
Board Chair: Ms Tanja Pope
School Location: 20 Purley Crescent, Lynwood WA 6147
School Classification: PS Class 5
Number of Students: 540 students
Independent Reviewers: Mr John Iacomella and Mr Kevin Pilkington
Review Dates: Self-review presentation: 1 March 2013
Review visits: 21 and 22 March 2013

1. About the Independent Review

The purpose of the independent review of Bannister Creek Primary School is to provide an assurance to the Minister for Education, the Director General of Education 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 MySchool™ 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

Bannister Creek Primary School is a recent amalgamation of three former primary schools in the local area. The school community is to be applauded for its efforts to present their students with a new school of which they can be proud. A shared vision and common sense of purpose is evident throughout the school. Coupled with this vision are the high expectations the school has for all students in academic and non-academic areas.

Bannister Creek Primary School caters for a multicultural student population. The school has embraced this diversity to enrich its learning environment. Students are learning in an inclusive environment and the curriculum is being adjusted to cater for their diverse needs.

The school has demonstrated through its review processes, analysis of data and implementation of strategies to improve learning for students that it aspires to all students achieving to their potential. The implementation of appropriate strategies is carefully planned and resourced by the school which enables specific intervention for individual students, groups and cohorts. The presentation of data analysis as measured against the endorsed targets of the Business Plan, discussions held with school leaders, teachers, parents and students has led the reviewers to conclude that Bannister Creek Primary School caters for individual learning needs and is inclusive of all students. The school delivers a balanced curriculum which is complemented by specialist and extra-curricular opportunities in an environment that promotes student learning.

The leadership provided by the student services team ensures a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of the students. All students are encouraged and supported in their learning in both academic and non-academic areas. Staff provide a differentiated curriculum and through their operational plans, use strategies that cater for the diverse needs of the students. The staff at the school expect high standards in student outcomes and student behaviour. There is continual monitoring of student outcomes to determine the effectiveness of the strategies.

Bannister Creek Primary School has, in a relatively brief period, managed to establish sustainable education practices that allow it to deliver a quality academic curriculum meeting the needs of its community. Strong and positive leadership at all levels has allowed teachers and support staff to focus on professional engagement and development that improves the learning of all
students. Improving student outcomes by improving the quality of teaching is the model in place. The School Board is active in its support of the school, particularly in planning and review. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in their child’s education by engagement that is inclusive, builds their capacity and knowledge, invites them onto school grounds and into the classroom and is intent on building a positive shared relationship with the school.

The following **commendations** support the school’s claims of significant strengths and areas of improvement:

- The establishment of teaching teams and curriculum leaders with the focus on improving outcomes in literacy and numeracy.
- The programs in place to support student learning exemplified by the coordinated process of developing, implementing and monitoring of individual learning programs to meet the specific needs of students.
- The interrogation by school leaders, teachers and the Board of the evidence gathered.

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

- The school’s review of data and resultant strategies implemented to improve learning outcomes including the school’s review of the Science Specialist program.
- The strategies being employed to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.
- The current curriculum leadership structure as a feature in the school’s improvement process and the practice of broad phases of learning representation on curriculum teams that include members of administration.
- The school practice of self-reflection based on data related to student performance, attendance and behaviour.
- The range of programs and strategies employed to engage parents and the community with the aim of building relationships between parents and the school.

The following **recommendations** are made to add value to the school’s improvement and review processes:

- The targets relating to student performance in the Business Plan or the Operational Plans be revised and reflect challenging and specific targets relevant to the particular year group.
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- The school develop an evaluation plan to measure the effectiveness of the ICT program on student learning.
- The Board continue to avail its members of training opportunities offered by the Department of Education.
- The Board develop a strategy to ensure the wider community is aware of its pivotal role in supporting the school.
3. School Context

In 2007 the (then) Minister for Education and Training announced the amalgamation of Kinlock, Lynwood and Ferndale Primary Schools. The resultant school is Bannister Creek Primary School. The new school was built on the old Lynwood Primary School site. In 2008 and 2009 students were located on the Ferndale site while construction was taking place until 2010 when the new facilities were ready for occupation.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value of 977. At the time of review there were 35 Aboriginal students, 144 students with Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE), 11 students under the care of the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Child Protection and 7 Special Needs Students in receipt of funding by Schools Plus.

The new “state of the art” school comprises 15 classrooms, 5 early childhood classrooms, a contemporary library resource centre, an art/science specialist room, music room and a fully-enclosed sports undercover area. All classrooms are air-cooled.

The school utilised Building the Education Revolution funding to transfer the off-site kindergarten to provide a comprehensive K-7 education on the one site. The school presents a modern and well-maintained physical learning environment for its students. The pride demonstrated in the school by the students, parents and staff is self-evident.

The school vision is to provide:
- **excellence in education through a range of inclusive and contemporary programs across all learning areas**
- **a learning environment that is safe, positive and stimulating: a place where everyone is encouraged to develop resilience and reach their full potential**
- **opportunities for open communication by all members of the school community that supports an environment where courage, wisdom and happiness are embraced.**

Following amalgamation of the three schools Banister Creek Primary School is now one new school with a shared vision. The school has developed policies and implemented procedures and practices to successfully unite the three previous schools in a comparatively short time, at the same time catering for a diverse school community.
Teachers are actively engaged in a cell group with local primary schools and the neighbouring secondary school. Staff utilise this group to enhance their own professional learning and to enrich the curriculum. Staff value highly the support and expertise provided by this cell.

The teaching staff is a mix of young and more experienced teachers. Most were drawn from the original three schools. Additional new staff have been appointed using the IPS flexibilities to best fit its profile. Despite the amalgamation of three schools into one, there is a unity of direction and purpose amongst the staff. This was confirmed with discussions with staff, parents and students.

The student population comprises students from over 30 different countries. The school estimates there are 33 different languages spoken at home. Mandarin and Indonesian are the largest cohorts of LBOTE students and families. Mandarin is the Language Other Than English taught. Activities such as multi-cultural days and Harmony Day are conducted to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of the school community. The school has utilised the diversity of its student population to enrich the curriculum.

The School Board of 12 comprises community members, parents and staff. Discussions with the board members indicate an understanding of the Board’s role. Members have received the appropriate training and have a key role in determining the school’s policies and direction. The review of a sample of board minutes indicates the Board critically analyses school information such as student outcomes data and the school budget. This information is then used by the Board in its recommendations to the school.

A shared vision and common sense of purpose is evident throughout the school. Coupled with this vision are the high expectations the school has for all students in academic and non-academic areas.
4a. School Performance - Student Learning

Through observation of classrooms, discussion with teachers, curriculum leaders, students and parents it is evident that Bannister Creek Primary School is delivering an engaging and relevant curriculum that caters for its diverse cohort of students. A strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy underpins the school-wide pedagogy that has been developed.

Priorities identified in the endorsed Business Plan relate to student learning: literacy; numeracy and science. The school has not changed priorities during the course of 2011-2013 but has reviewed student performance targets. In the first version of the Business Plan targets connected to literacy, numeracy and science were stated in relation to Bannister Creek Primary School student performance in the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) and Western Australian Monitoring Standards in Education (WAMSE) 2011 results. Targets were specific, numerous, detailed and measurable against the data available. The reviewed Business Plan has kept the NAPLAN and WAMSE results as the indicators of success but simplified the targets to fewer, less specific, broad-stroke targets. Current targets are:

- **Show sustained improvement in achievement in Year 3, 5 and 7 NAPLAN (Literacy and Numeracy).**
- **Year 3, 5 and 7 mean results and Year 5 and 7 student progress data to be equivalent or greater than “like” schools.**
- **Increase the percentage of students achieving in the top 40% of the NAPLAN bands.**
- **Show sustained improvement in WAMSE Year 5 and 7 assessments (Science).**

Focused teaching, implementation of effective strategies and allocation of resources has enabled the school to make steady progress toward achieving some of these targets. Targets achieved at the time of review include:

- **Year 3 and 5 NAPLAN results in Grammar and Punctuation.**
- **Year 5 results in Spelling**
- **Year 3 Results in Numeracy**
- **Student progress Year 5 to 7 is marginally better than like schools in Reading given that Bannister Creek students have a slightly lower mean score in Year 5.**
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- Year 7 WAMSE results in Science show an increase in students performing in the top 20% of the State, from 7% in 2010 to 22% in 2012.

Some of the targets yet to be achieved include:
- Year 7 results for Reading and Numeracy
- Year 5 results for Writing Reading and Numeracy

It is recommended that the targets relating to student performance in the Business Plan or the operational plans be revised to reflect challenging and specific targets relevant to the particular year group.

Honest and reflective analysis of data has identified areas of concern that the school is addressing in future planning. Year 5 results from 2012 in NAPLAN and Year 5 and 7 WAMSE Science results are of particular concern. A number of strategies have been implemented to give whole school focus to support teachers in improving outcomes for students. The creation of literacy and numeracy committees, teaching teams in Early Childhood Education, Middle and Senior Primary and the appointment of team leaders has been a key strategy in supporting staff to achieve a student focused emphasis and collaborative approach to explicit teaching toward achieving the targets. The whole school explicit teaching of writing has had a dramatic effect on improving student results in that area with Years 3, 5 and 7 all raising performance. Explicit teaching of literacy skills in the early years resulted in outstanding NAPLAN results for current Year 4’s and it is expected that 2013 NAPLAN results for Year 3 will affirm the effectiveness of this practice. Streaming in reading for all year levels and numeracy in Years 4–7 has enabled differentiation of the curriculum in order to extend the more talented students and provide appropriate intervention for those in need. This initiative is supported by the timetabling of uninterrupted literacy and numeracy blocks. The interrogation by school leaders, teachers and the Board of evidence gathered is commended.

In addition to NAPLAN and WAMSE the school reviews a range of available data to make judgements on its performance. On–Entry testing in Kindergarten and Screen of Communication Skills provide baseline data for early childhood. Across the whole school an annual cycle of review includes South Australian Spelling Test, Sight Word, Mathematics Today Series (MTS) moderation exercises and teacher judgements to provide data for mapping individual, group, cohort and whole school performance. Teacher representation on the operational committees allows for input to the analysis of data and planning of strategies. The reviewers acknowledge that the Operational Plan details more specific
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analysis of student achievement and that it is reviewed in an ongoing manner. Student performance is closely monitored by classroom teachers and the student services team. Individual and group education plans are developed in consultation with parents and relevant external agencies (if required) to ensure all students' academic needs are being met. Currently 120 students are on Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The reviewers were able to view several examples of IEPs and were impressed with their detail and concise nature. Discussion with a parent of a student on an IEP confirmed the effective communication between the school and home and the appreciation of the support in place for their child.

The school's review of the data and the resultant strategies implemented to improve learning outcomes, including the review of the Science Specialist program, are affirmed.

The school is commended on the establishment of teaching teams and curriculum leaders with the focus on improving outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

The diverse nature of the Bannister Creek Primary School student population and the large number of LBOTE students means that emphasis on every individual's entitlement to respect and being supported to learn to potential is of critical importance. A range of specialist programs support student learning in Performing Arts, Science (Years 1-7), Physical Education (Years 1-7) and Music (Years 1-7). The establishment of a school garden in 2010 has provided an outlet for students interested in sustainability and the outdoors. Performance Club which is extra-curricular provides for students interested in the Performing Arts. The school has established a safe and supportive learning environment in which a balanced curriculum reflecting all eight learning areas of the Western Australian Curriculum are addressed. The school is commended on the programs in place to support student learning as exemplified by the coordinated process of developing, implementing and monitoring of individual learning programs to meet the specific needs of students.

Evidence of the phased implementation of the Australian Curriculum was presented. Detailed scope and sequencing led by the Curriculum Deputy and team leaders in phases of schooling demonstrated advanced engagement with the introduction of the Australian Curriculum across all years. Joint planning with cluster primary schools and Lynwood Senior High School has given cohesion and focus to the staged implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Through discussion with curriculum leaders and teachers, classroom visits and viewing
relevant documentation the school was able to clearly demonstrate it has established sound foundations for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. The strategies being employed to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum are affirmed.

Comparison of school performance with like schools is undertaken and is a key measure of how the school rates its own performance. Moderated testing is conducted across local schools, Years 1-7, to ensure accuracy of comparisons and standards.

Bannister Creek Primary School has demonstrated through its review processes, analysis of data and implementation of strategies to improve learning for students that it aspires to all students achieving their potential. The implementation of appropriate strategies is carefully planned and resourced by the school which enables specific intervention for individual students, groups and cohorts. The presentation of data analysis as measured against the endorsed targets of the Business Plan, discussions held with school leaders, teachers, parents and students has led the reviewers to conclude that Bannister Creek Primary School recognises individual learning needs and is inclusive of all students. The school offers a balanced curriculum which is complemented by specialist and extra-curricular opportunities.

4b. School Performance - Quality of Learning Environment

Discussions with students, staff, parents and community members confirm the school does provide a learning environment that is inclusive of all students and has high expectations for all students. Appointing a Level 4 Associate Principal to lead the Student Services Team signals the importance the school places on student welfare.

Classroom visits confirm an inclusive and high quality learning environment. Learning areas provide a prepared environment which facilitates quality learning where students are encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills. The learning areas are well resourced with nearly all classrooms having interactive boards.

The school has developed the 2013 ICT Hardware Distribution Plan to improve student access to computers. $140 000 has been budgeted to provide tablets and classroom banks of laptops. The plan aims to gain maximum benefit from money spent and to increase student engagement in utilising ICT. There is
acknowledgement the plan is still developing as a distribution plan. However, in discussion with the staff in charge of the ICT program it was not evident that the school had yet determined any strategy to monitor the effectiveness of its ICT upgrade in improving students learning. It is recommended the school develop an evaluation plan to measure the effectiveness of the ICT program on student learning.

The school has reconfigured its leadership team to comprise the Principal, Associate Principal at Level 4 with specific responsibility of Student Services and the Deputy Principal at Level 3 responsible for Curriculum.

The Associate Principal leads the Student Services Team comprising the Learning Support Coordinator, School Psychologist, English as a Second Language teacher, School Chaplain, Aboriginal Education Officer, and teacher representatives. This group monitors 120 IEPs to cater for the specific learning needs of some students. These plans are accessible to staff via the school’s shared drive. The group also invites external assistance from groups such as Special Education Needs and Disabilities Services, Rocky Bay, Autism Association and the Department of Child Protection.

The Deputy Principal leads four curriculum teams of teachers for the Learning Areas of English, Mathematics, Science, History/Geography, Technology and Enterprise, and Health and Physical Education, Arts and Languages. The role of the teams is clearly outlined together with the support available. These teams develop and monitor the Operational Plans for the learning areas. The Operational Plans detail the outcomes, major strategies, budget, monitoring and the achievable targets for each learning area. The school acknowledges the Operational Plans are still in the development phase and more refinement is needed, particularly in target setting.

Under the direction of the Deputy Principal, the four curriculum teams provide the curriculum leadership for the school through the implementation of the Operational Plans. The information from these plans contributes to the School Report and the Business Plan. Operational Plans are systemically reviewed and revised when necessary. Discussions with staff indicate they have the opportunity to provide appropriate strategies that best cater for the diverse needs of the students. For example, staff have been supported to implement the Australian Curriculum as well as specific programs such as Jolly Phonics, Diana Riggs Reading Program and Lets Decode. Staff have identified problem-solving skills as lacking within the student population and are investigating strategies to overcome this. The current curriculum leadership structure as a feature in the
school's improvement process and the practice of broad phases of learning representation on curriculum teams that include members of administration is affirmed.

A sustainable garden has been established on site in partnership with the community. The school received resourcing from the Garden Gurus to establish the garden. Maintenance of the garden is done in collaboration with community members. Discussions with student, staff and community indicate the garden provides an effective learning environment for the students. There is also evidence that students with behavioural issues benefit having access to a non-classroom learning environment.

The school funded a specialist teaching role to support its Science priority as detailed in its Business Plan for 2012 and 2013. Student results indicate the stated targets have not been achieved. The school is aware of the issues and is currently reviewing its strategies.

There is evidence the school has created an environment that promotes student learning. The leadership provided by the Student Services Team ensures a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of the students. All students are encouraged and supported in their learning in both academic and non-academic areas. Staff provide a differentiated curriculum and through their operational plans, use strategies that cater for the diverse needs of the students. High standards in student outcomes and behaviour are expected. There is continual monitoring of student outcomes to determine the effectiveness of the strategies.
4c. **School Performance – Sustainability**

Since opening in 2008, Bannister Creek Primary School has developed sustainable frameworks for future improvements. The school presented evidence to indicate the school community has:

- established a culture that is underpinned by a clear vision for the provision of a quality education where courage, wisdom and happiness are embraced
- a focus on improving student learning in the priority areas of literacy, numeracy and science
- implemented effective strategies to support student learning through improving the quality of teaching
- developed whole school programs in literacy and numeracy
- ensured that staff are conversant with and are implementing the Australian Curriculum
- established a rigorous evidence based approach to the analysis of data as the foundation for guiding student learning and resource allocation
- implemented strategies to improve student attendance and behaviour
- developed a focus on sustainability of the environment
- provided for the enrichment of opportunities for students through special interest programs.

The school practice of self-reflection based on data related to student performance, attendance and behaviour is affirmed as effective.

The school presented a wide range of documentation and detailed data analysis that was used to support strategic planning designed to improve student outcomes particularly in literacy and numeracy.

The leadership of the school is both distributed and sustainable in the longer term. The Associate Principal and Deputy Principal have carriage of particular portfolios, Curriculum and Student Services, while staff are encouraged and supported through professional learning to take on leadership roles in school-based committees that immerse key staff in the expectations of the DPA. This is exemplified through the practice of broad phases of learning representation on curriculum teams which also include members of administration. This is a deliberate strategy of the Principal to empower the staff and is viewed as essential to teacher development and sustainability.
A comprehensive central tracking mechanism of each student's academic and social/emotional progress is in place. The school has embedded strategies to support a thorough analysis of student learning. In addition to whole school, phases of learning and individual teacher analysis of key data, the school has demonstrated a clearly articulated process to ensure appropriate individual and group education plans are developed and monitored in consultation with parents and staff. Similarly, the non-academic targets are closely monitored and modified to gain improved outcomes. For example, through this process the school has refined its attendance tracking using the SMS attendance notification system to better communicate with families when a student is absent thereby reducing unexplained absences.

Teaching practice is under constant review at Bannister Creek Primary School. Recognition that 'quality teaching leads to quality learning' is the premise upon which professional learning is provided at the school. Appropriate professional learning, adequately resourced, particularly in the focus areas of literacy and numeracy and a focus on up-skilling informs teacher development. Performance management processes are also in alignment with this philosophy. All staff are supported in improving their pedagogy to achieve improved student learning.

The 12 member representative Board is aware of its responsibilities and focuses on fulfilling its role according to its terms of reference. It is 'hands on' and provides critical oversight and reflection on school performance and self-review as verified through samples of board minutes and discussion with representative board members. They interrogate presented data, review finances, analyse survey feedback and enthusiastically support the establishment of community links that demonstrate the potential for improved student learning. The Board played an active role in the production and review of the Business Plan with a clear understanding of the separation of governance and operations. The Board Chair has undergone training offered by the Department of Education and commented how helpful she found this in understanding the role and responsibilities of the Board and in fulfilling her role as Chair. In addition, the newest member of the Board (6 weeks) has declared an interest in attending the training offered by the Department of Education. Succession planning remains a focus with staggered terms of service for members to ensure continuity. It has conducted a review if its own performance and taken appropriate action in regard to a need to improve induction processes for new members.
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It is recommended the Board continue to avail its members of training opportunities offered by the Department of Education.

Community understanding of the work of the Board appears to be limited. Parent conversations revealed a lack of understanding of the Board's role. It is recommended that the Board develop a strategy to ensure the wider community is aware of its pivotal role in supporting the school.

Engagement of the community has been a priority of the school since opening in 2008. The closure of three schools in 2007 to form one school was not well received by all members of the community, some of whom were very much in support of their small local school, a view expressed by several parents. Strategic involvement of the community in the school has established positive relations.

The sustainable environment and garden project has bought community members, community groups and parents into the school as experts, volunteers and advisors. Effective communication channels with the parent body and the wider community was quoted by parents interviewed as a strength of the school. The range of programs and strategies employed to engage parents and the community with the aim of building relationships between parents and the school is affirmed.

Bannister Creek Primary School has in a relatively brief period managed to establish sustainable education practices that allow it to deliver a quality academic curriculum meeting the needs of its community. Sound leadership at all levels has allowed teachers and support staff to focus on professional engagement and development that improves the learning of all students. Improving student outcomes by improving the quality of teaching is the model in place. The School Board is active in its support of the school, particularly in planning and review. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in their child's education by engagement that is inclusive, builds their capacity and knowledge, invites them onto school grounds and into the classroom and is intent on building a positive shared relationship with the school.
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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 Bannister Creek Primary School as part of the Department of Education Services' independent review process. The Principal and Board Chair have had an opportunity to check on any matters of fact contained within this document.

(Signature of John Iacomella, Lead Reviewer)  9-5-2013

(Signature of Kevin Pilkington, Reviewer)  9/5/13

(Signature of Richard Strickland, CEO, Department of Education Services)  15/5/13