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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: Ms Christine Rowe
Board Chair: Mr Ashley de Prazer
School Location: Dodd Street, Wembley WA 6014
School Classification: PS Class 4B
Number of Students: 193
Reviewers: Mr Gerry Chapman and Mr Don Boyd
Review Dates: Self-review presentation: 4 September 2013
Review visits: 18 and 19 September 2013

1. About the Independent Review

The purpose of the independent review of Lake Monger 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 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**

Lake Monger Primary School is a unique school that is embracing its multicultural identity and community with a view to providing an inclusive and exciting education for its diverse group of students.

The school staff and leadership team are cohesive, collegial and focused on the provision of a positive learning experience for all students in the context of specifically developing the language needs of a significant proportion of the school population.

The school leadership team provided a thorough and comprehensive school self-review supported by extensive, relevant, well-structured documentation and an in-depth analysis of the extent to which business plan targets have been achieved. Additional information outlining future trends and directions identified from the review was evident.

The school's self-review processes are well embedded and there is evidence of a developing culture of data analysis across all levels of the school's operation. This was verified through interviews with the broader cross section of the school community.

A well-developed set of operational plans aimed at whole-school and individual student improvement supports school planning in all key priority areas and provides a mechanism for ongoing sustainability.

The school takes pride in its ability to deliver a responsive and tailored curriculum to meet the needs of all of its students. Curriculum development and delivery is targeted to meet the areas in need of improvement with a strong focus on literacy. Implementation of the Australian Curriculum is on schedule and well supported across the school.

Resources are closely aligned to achieving optimum outcomes for teaching and learning and the school is well positioned to meet current and future needs, trends and challenges.

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

- its success in improving student learning as reflected in NAPLAN data over the past three years
the extent to which it is constantly reviewing its performance against national and like-school benchmarks
the development of its English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) Strategy and the appointment of an EAL/D specialist teacher to implement the program
the extent to which it focuses on and caters for the needs of all students especially those needing additional support
its comprehensive Monitoring Information System and Context Matrix that enables close monitoring of all students and provides a process for the triangulation of data
the intuitive and collaborative processes used to achieve a clear school identity that creates a harmonious learning environment and promotes high expectations of all students
the development of a robustly inclusive learning environment through which all students are supported and valued
the development and use of a comprehensive suite of strategies to monitor student progress and refine curriculum provision
the high quality of its planning and the constant focus on improvement especially in relation to targets set in the Business Plan
the practices and processes in place or planned to ensure that the school is able to sustain and continue to improve its performance.

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

- the intention to develop processes to measure the effectiveness of their EAL/D program especially in relation to improved student achievement
- the effective use of strategies and resources to meet the diverse range of student learning styles and needs
- the ongoing focus on positive teaching strategies and the evaluation of their effectiveness.

The following recommendation is made to add value to the school's improvement and review processes:

- in addition to holding one open meeting per year, the Board consider other strategies to increase awareness of its role and responsibilities.
3. **School Context**

Lake Monger Primary School, opened in 1954, is a Level 4 primary school situated on the shore of Lake Monger in the Perth suburb of Wembley. The current Kindergarten to Year 7 enrolments of 193 students includes 85 students involved in English as an Additional Language or/Dialect (EAL/D) courses, six Aboriginal students and two students with a disability.

The school’s ethos, having evolved over its long history, has been refocused to acknowledge the diverse multicultural background of the current school community. There is a priority placed on developing a strong sense of belonging and being part of a whole-school community supported by an emphasis on building caring values. The outcome is a friendly, welcoming school providing a safe and supportive learning environment.

With an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1056, student attendance rate of 95.2%, and a transiency rate of 59.2% (2012) and 51% (2013), the school manages a unique range of educational needs. Since becoming a local area intake school in 2011 the transiency rate has declined, however, while the catchment includes significant rental, Homes West, light industrial areas, and residential first home accommodation for newly arrived immigrants, it will experience comparatively high transiency levels for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, the school has developed a targeted range of teaching and learning strategies to manage the transient, EAL/D and multicultural nature of its intake.

Enrolments are increasing at approximately 15% annually placing some pressure on existing resources. Most classrooms are at capacity. There are 50 different countries represented in the school population with a large proportion coming from the Indian sub-continent predominately from India itself. Sixty-six per cent of students are from a language background other than English including 95 students needing intensive literacy support and the school being recognised as an EAL/D Support School.

The school staff is stable and experienced with a proportionally smaller number of early career and graduate teachers. Staff are selected on merit based on specific skills to best match the school's ethos, priorities and specific learning programs. Gender balance is excellent with approximately 40% of staff being male, which is unusually high for primary school.
Teaching and non-teaching staff are selected to support the implementation of specialist learning programs and the school’s focus on pastoral care, values, EAL/D and ICT. The workforce plan is designed to closely monitor the staff demographic, qualifications and leave entitlements with a view to forward planning. Careful staff selection of teaching and non-teaching staff has ensured a close alignment of academic and pastoral care expertise with student learning needs.

Recently, several building programs have resourced the school with a purpose-built library, administration block, pre-primary classroom, music room, staff and conference rooms. An ICT upgrade has ensured all rooms are equipped with computers (clusters of three per room) and every classroom has an interactive smart board. This has provided significant motivation for staff and students and with the introduction of a class set of tablet computers, collectively enhanced learning opportunities.

The school values its partnerships with parents and fosters additional community links. Students from The University of Western Australia (UWA) assist the school with the delivery of EAL/D program and Lake Monger Primary School students visit UWA for science enrichment. The school enjoys reciprocal visits with Bold Park Community School and works with Telethon on the development of jointly used facilities.

The School Board, parents and students interviewed were strongly supportive of the school staff and its leadership team. The Board is developing in its governance role and is mindful of the need to broaden its communication strategy. Members are developing a better understanding of their role and there is appropriate expertise in its skill set. The Board endorses the DPA and Business Plan and plays an appropriate role in the development of major school policies.

Following discussions with a broad cross-section of the school community, the consensus is that the school has embraced its multicultural identity and supports student learning within this context. Through the provision of targeted resources, learning strategies and specific specialist programs, student learning and engagement is enhanced.
4a. School Performance - Student Learning

The Lake Monger Primary School Business Plan 2011–2013 identifies seven priority areas, namely: raising literacy standards; improving standards in mathematics; strengthening Early Childhood Education (ECE); improving planning processes and support for staff; enhancing the use of ICT; improving student attendance, and enhancing the physical environment of the school. Some targets are broad in nature and include achieving such things as developing whole-school literacy and numeracy plans. Other targets relate directly to improving student achievement and are quantifiable. This is particularly so for literacy, numeracy, ECE, attendance and behaviour. Examples include:

- 'The writing achievement of the Year 3 stable cohort tested in 2010 will be equivalent to or higher (than like schools) when they are tested as Year 5 students in 2012.'
- 'For Year 5–7 progress in NAPLAN Numeracy assessment from 2010 to 2012 to be equal to or greater than like-schools.'

Lake Monger Primary School’s self-review documentation indicates that measurable student performance targets have been met. The success in achieving these targets along with an overall focus on student performance across the school is reflected in improved NAPLAN data. For example, tracking of the stable Year 3 (2010) to Year 5 (2012) cohort shows numeracy and all literacy areas tested have improved when compared against national means. The Year 5 (2010) to Year 7 (2012) stable cohort also reflects this improvement. This trend from 2010 to 2012 is also evident in NAPLAN progress and achievement data with a consolidation of results across all literacy and numeracy areas into the higher progress—higher achievement quadrant when compared with both like schools and all Western Australian public schools.

The ECE target of 90% students with satisfactory readiness for formal work at the end of pre-primary was achieved in both 2011 and 2012. This strong focus on ECE is reflected in the above-expected 2013 Year 3 NAPLAN results in reading, writing, spelling, and grammar and punctuation when compared with like-schools. The 2013 Year 3 numeracy result was only 0.03 standard deviation from being in the above-expected range in the like-school comparison.
Lake Monger Primary School

Lake Monger Primary School is commended on the success in improving student learning as reflected in NAPLAN cata over the past three years. The school is also commended on the extent to which it is constantly reviewing its performance against national and like-school benchmarks.

The school has had similar success with targets related to non-academic student performance. In relation to student behaviour, the school’s self-review documentation shows that all targets were achieved, while those for attendance were either fully or partially achieved. The overall improvement in student behaviour over the past three years was a common point of discussion by teachers and parents during the review process. One teacher reported most of her teaching time was taken up with classroom management four years ago, whereas now 99% of teaching time was effective instructional time. Classroom visits by the reviewers confirmed that students were fully engaged in learning in a harmonious environment.

The EAL/D students form a significant sub-group within the school. As an Independent Public School, Lake Monger Primary School negotiated with the Department of Education to become an EAL/D Support School. The school’s Monitoring Information System (MIS) has a separate section for those in the EAL/D program with progress monitored and measured in terms of the EAL/D stages of English acquisition/development. In addition to withdrawing students for intensive lessons, the EAL/D specialist teacher also works in classrooms supporting students and assisting teachers develop EAL/D teaching skills to improve student learning.

The school is commended on the development of its English as an Additional Language/Dialect Strategy and the appointment of an EAL/D specialist teacher to implement the program.

The reviewers affirm the intention of the school to develop processes to measure the effectiveness of their EAL/D program especially in relation to improved student achievement.

The school also has a strong focus on ensuring the learning of Aboriginal students and those from low socio-economic backgrounds progress in line with and above national benchmarks. While Aboriginal education is not an identified priority in the Business Plan, a teacher in the school has a leadership role for this area. Two students are classified as having special needs and as with all students at the school there is constant monitoring of
their progress. Thirty students are working with individual education plans (IEPs) of which 21 are EAL/D, two special needs and seven are mainstream.

Teachers generate IEPs online as this provides a ‘consistent and ongoing recording and teaching/reporting tool’. The IEPs at Lake Monger Primary School incorporate both the Foundation Statements from the Australian Curriculum and the Special Education Needs Assessment Tools (SENAT). School documentation states: “Students requiring remediation or extension are accommodated through the application of differentiated curriculum within class (with the exception of EAL/D students). A non-withdrawal approach to differentiating curriculum is the preferred model for catering for students’ individual needs at Lake Monger Primary School.”

The school is commended on the extent to which it focuses on and caters for the needs of all students especially those needing additional support with learning.

The school has a clear focus on the learning of all students with individual performance for each student being monitored through a comprehensive MIS. In addition to NAPLAN data individual student results for a range of benchmarked literacy and numeracy tests are recorded. This enables close monitoring of all students and provides a process for the triangulation of data. The MIS is supplemented with a School Context Matrix which in addition to student background information records attendance and behavioural concerns and notes students who are on an IEP.

The school is commended on its comprehensive Monitoring Information System and Context Matrix.

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum is well advanced and adding to the strength of instructional delivery at the school. The reviewers sighted comprehensive planning documentation for the English, mathematics and history components of the Australian Curriculum. The implementation of the science component is gathering momentum. These planning instruments had been designed by a teacher at the school and used to ensure integration of the Australian Curriculum into the school’s operational and classroom plans.

ICT is a school priority and there is clear evidence (for example: planning documentation; effective ICT professional learning for staff; high student usage of computers) that technology is being used as an effective tool to engage students in learning and improve their learning outcomes.
In summing up their progress with student learning over the past three years, Lake Monger Primary School’s self-review documentation states that they believe their success is:

...directly attributed to becoming an Independent Public School, being able to merit select quality staff and professional development of staff...Ownership of pedagogy and planning processes by the whole school, and an educationally pragmatic approach to leadership (simple and systemic) have enhanced the overall quality of education of students at Lake Monger Primary School as reflected in student academic achievements.

4b. School Performance - Quality of the Learning Environment

The school’s ethos, culture and learning environment is extensively shaped by the multicultural nature of the school community. The focus is on promoting a sense of belonging and bringing together a diverse group of cultural backgrounds to build a cohesive and cooperative learning environment. This is achieved by placing a strong emphasis on values that support cooperation, collaboration and reciprocal acts of kindness. Personal ethics and maintaining friendly interpersonal relationships are reinforced to ensure a positive and harmonious school environment. The school is commended for the intuitive and collaborative processes used to achieve a clear school identity that creates a harmonious learning environment and promotes high expectations of all students.

Inclusivity is seen as integral to successful learning at Lake Monger Primary School. The school has articulated a clearly defined set of inclusive indicators that guide its operations. Its multicultural character provides a rich context for including a wide range of culturally significant celebrations (Harmony Day, NAIDOC Week, Diwali Festival, and Sustainable Garden Project) that add value to the learning experience. These activities provide an ideal opportunity for the school to engage with parents and to include them in an atmosphere in which they, and their children, feel valued and included. Curriculum content is carefully structured to reflect the diversity of cultures and aligned to meeting the EAL/D needs of the students. The Australian Curriculum is being used as a vehicle to learn about indigenous history and to strengthen inclusive links. The school is commended for the development of a robustly inclusive learning environment through which all students are supported and valued.

Interviews with teaching staff from each phase of learning identified that the school uses a variety of strategies and resources to address the diversity of
student backgrounds and learning needs. Common programs running vertically across phases of learning include *Jolly Phonics, Mathletics, Lexiles Reading* and *Bilingual Diaries*. These are supported by academic extension and remediation programs for identified groups of students. The school priority to improve information and communication technology has involved the provision of interactive smartboards and increased access to computers and tablet computers for student learning. This technology also enables teachers to access individual student learning profiles and update these as students progress. The school’s use of *Best Performance Triple A* data analysis and planning proformas are additional strategies used to track and monitor individual student performance and to identify students for further review or in need of IEP. Reviewers affirm the effective use of strategies and resources by the school to meet the diverse range of student learning styles and needs.

The school is progressively implementing the Australian Curriculum in accordance with its operational plan. Teachers and education assistants work collaboratively during “early close” time to plan, assess and monitor student performance. Additional planning and collaboration occurs during whole-school planning days and at staff meetings. School use of SAIS data *First Cut* to examine school and student progress, achievement and grade allocation/ moderation serves to assist teachers to adjust and refine curriculum provision. The MIS student tracking/profiling system provides a comprehensive longitudinal summary of individual student progress and achievement. It enables all staff to access online data for every student they teach and it serves as a conduit of information as students transition from year-to-year and teacher-to-teacher. It also provides a summative set of information as a focus for teacher discussion about student achievement and curriculum delivery. The school is commended for developing and utilising a comprehensive suite of strategies to monitor student progress and refine curriculum provision.

**4c. School Performance - Sustainability**

Lake Monger Primary School is justifiably proud of its achievements especially in relation to the improvements gained over the past three years and measured against the targets set in the school’s Business Plan and as an Independent Public School. During the independent review process the leadership team acknowledged that an important priority in the next planning cycle will be sustaining the improvements already attained especially those in
relation to student achievement. The indicators for the school to maintain and build on the foundation of the last three years are, as detailed below, positive.

While the Principal and Deputy Principal currently provide focused and strategic leadership, a distributed leadership model is emerging. The ability of the school to appoint staff in line with its priorities and planned direction is facilitating distributed leadership, especially in learning and teaching. Leaders have been assigned to EAL/D, Aboriginal Education, and ICT. There are three Level 3 aspirants who are all keen to take on additional leadership responsibilities and facilitate the school’s ongoing improvement process.

Evidence-based self-review processes are well established. During discussion with teachers, the reviewers noted the importance teachers placed on data to inform their teaching, especially data analysed from NAPLAN, On Entry assessments and other standardised measurements. The Lake Monger Primary School MIS is a powerful tool driving improvement in student performance and sustaining the focus on continuous progress. The school acknowledges the need to engage more teachers in the actual maintenance of the MIS. In this respect, the reviewers affirm the intention to distribute the responsibility of maintenance and usage of MIS data to others across the school.

Performance reviews are of a high priority and status at the school. Teachers use the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers as a self-reflection tool and as part of this process, set improvement targets and identify personal professional learning needs. All graduate teachers have mentor teachers. This focus on quality teaching and learning especially within the contextual needs of the school will enhance student achievement currently, as well as into the future.

School planning is comprehensive. Key student learning priorities including literacy, numeracy and ICT skill development, have dedicated operational plans— all of which have been developed during the life of the current Business Plan. The Triple A (Access, Analyse, Action) model along with the school’s MIS ensures that there is a constant focus on targets.

The school is commended on the high quality of its planning and the constant focus on improvement, especially in relation to targets set in the Business Plan.
During classroom visits and in discussion with teachers, the reviewers noted the extent to which a wide range of teaching strategies are used at the school including cooperative learning and explicit teaching. High expectations are set for all students. This was evident by observations during the review in conjunction with the extent to which individual student data is analysed and the placement of all students on the central MIS. At the meeting with students the reviewers were told that 'lessons are interesting and fun'. As part of the school's self-review process there is an emerging focus on the effectiveness of the various teaching strategies employed across the school. A comment made by several teachers during the review was that they would like more time to collaborate with their colleagues in regards to assessments, data analysis, effective learning strategies and working within the special context of the school. It was also noted, however, that being a small school, finding time for teacher collaboration is a challenge.

The reviewers affirm the ongoing focus on positive teaching strategies and the evaluation of their effectiveness.

Discussion with board members indicated that there is a sound understanding of the steps that need to be taken to continue the growth and effectiveness of the Board. Early in 2013, board members were surveyed to gauge their 'competence and confidence as board members'. The survey identified that members 'unanimously agreed that they felt confident in reviewing and endorsing the Business Plan, the financial reports, school budget and applying processes to review school performance'. Further, board members 'enjoyed being on the Board, attend regularly and strongly agreed they contributed to the success of our school'. As a result of their own self-review process, the Board has identified four actions for the future:

- to approach another community/business member to join the Board
- continue training programs for board members
- ensure all board members are familiar with their roles and responsibilities
- hold one open meeting each year.

During discussion with parents it was evident to the reviewers that they had little or no understanding of the Board and its role. It is recommended that in addition to holding one open meeting per year, the Board consider other strategies to increase awareness of its role and responsibilities.
Lake Monger Primary School

The school has developed effective partnerships with the wider community. Of particular note is its partnership with universities to engage pre-service teachers in the school. The school values the new ideas and enthusiasm pre-service teachers bring to it. Likewise, the school welcomes the opportunity to share its expertise and experience with the next generation of teachers. Other partnerships exist with local businesses and a range of community groups and agencies, for example with Bold Park Community School, Mulberry Tree (before and after school care) and the Telethon Speech and Hearing Centre. All of these partnerships enhance the learning environment and create additional learning opportunities for students.

It was clear from the meeting with parents and board members that there is widespread support for the school. Parents spoke highly of the extent to which the school has built a harmonious environment within a multicultural context. Parents also believe that the school communicates well with them and that they receive clear reports on student progress and achievement. Board members and parents are positive about the future and the overall strategic direction of Lake Monger Primary School. As a result of the recently completed Parent-Teacher Interaction Survey, the school has plans in place to build further on the effectiveness of parent-teacher relationships.

Lake Monger Primary School is commended on the practices and processes in place or planned to ensure that the school is able to sustain and continue to improve its performance.
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 Lake Monger 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.

Gerry Chapman, Lead Reviewer

30 October 2013

Date

Don Boyd, Reviewer

24 October 2013

Date

Richard Strickland, CEO, Department of Education Services

31/10/13

Date