



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Education Services

# **Kalamunda Senior High School**

**2013**

**Independent Review Findings**



Independent Review of  
Independent Public Schools

## **Contents**

School and Review Details .....	1
1. About the Independent Review .....	1
2. Summary .....	3
3. School Context .....	6
4a. School Performance - Student Learning .....	9
4b. School Performance - Quality of the Learning Environment .....	12
4c. School Performance - Sustainability .....	14
5. School and Cluster Performance .....	18
Declaration .....	20

## **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, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority 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.

The Department of Education Services does not endorse any commercial organisation, product or service mentioned in this report.

The Department of Education Services can only guarantee the authenticity of original documents. This document is uncontrolled once printed.

To help people with disabilities obtain access to information, this document can be provided in alternative format on request. Please contact [ips@des.wa.gov.au](mailto:ips@des.wa.gov.au) with specific requests or telephone 08 9441 1900.

## **School and Review Details**

<b>Principal:</b>	Ms Kathy Ritchie
<b>Board Chair:</b>	Ms Jennie Collins
<b>School Location:</b>	12 Cotherstone Road, Kalamunda
<b>School Classification:</b>	SHS Class 6B
<b>Number of Students:</b>	863 (Semester One 2013)
<b>Reviewers:</b>	Mr Rees Barrett and Mr Keith Newton
<b>Review Dates:</b>	Self-review presentation: 20 June 2013 Review visits: 1 and 2 July 2013

### **1. About the Independent Review**

The purpose of the independent review of Kalamunda Senior High 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*<sup>TM</sup> website
- the Department of Education School Performance Monitoring System
- Schools Online reports
- School Curriculum and Standards Authority Year 12 Student Achievement data.

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. Following the half-day visit the three schools making up the Hills Learning Precinct Cluster met with the reviewers for the cluster self-review. Subsequently the reviewers analysed the evidence presented in the school and cluster 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 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**

Kalamunda Senior High School has responded effectively to contextual factors affecting student learning. Commitment to the school's vision and values is evident throughout its operations. Diverse specialist programs have been developed in response to student learning needs. The school has achieved a highly functioning Board, a team of expert staff, effective partnerships with parents and targeted use of resources.

Significant improvement in student learning outcomes is being achieved in the DPA period. Data-driven analysis underpins program development and review at Kalamunda Senior High School. Sophisticated target-setting and evidence-based review techniques are used effectively to build a culture of improvement across the school.

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

Overall, the school has established governance processes, systematic plans, policies and collaborative teams with distributed leadership; these have been built within a strong culture of collaboration and high expectations. School leadership actively oversees the performance of all teams and fine tunes as required.

The school is well-placed to sustain its significant drive to improve student and school performance.

The formation of the Hills Learning Precinct Cluster between Kalamunda Senior High School, Kalamunda Senior High School Education Support Centre and Lesmurdie Senior High School has proven to be a commendable initiative. It has achieved its aim of raising the profile of public education in the Hills community. The loose configuration has also facilitated the expansion of curriculum access for students and the sharing of resources, particularly staff expertise. Kalamunda Senior High School has also benefitted from the professional development opportunities gained through cluster membership.

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

- sustained improvement related to NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) and non-academic (attendance and retention) learning targets
- addition of targets during the DPA period for emerging priority areas resulting in significant improvements in curriculum and student learning (for example, the improvements achieved in the Attainment Rate)
- the use and level of achievement of a complex array of targets covering the whole curriculum and all students in each year to drive learning improvement across the school
- inclusion of targets based on school-wide assessment and grading that has contributed to the whole-school culture of improvement based on sophisticated analysis of results and review of programs by the school's curriculum leaders
- the identification of the needs of a diverse student population and the implementation of the range of inclusive learning and pastoral care programs to cater for them
- the range of and attention paid to the programs it has established to meet the learning needs of the students
- the collegiate 'tone' and commitment to a school-wide pedagogy and purposeful, successful learning
- the way in which the school has taken a broader view of self-assessment and in doing so has adopted an evidence-based framework that addresses operational strategies focused on teaching, learning environment, curriculum implementation, leadership, financial management, resources and infrastructure, relationships/partnerships, school culture and workforce
- the school's integration of performance management with planning and review processes
- the establishment and embedding of a school-wide expectations platform and the outcome of creating a common language across all participants focused on individual student growth as well as school improvement
- the expanded curriculum access, sharing of staff expertise and provision of professional development opportunities achieved through the formation of the Hills Learning Precinct Cluster.

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

- the action taken to improve satisfaction rates with career counselling and preparedness for next-year and post-school goals
- the plan to maintain the five focus areas and strategies in the next Business Plan
- the priority for developing closer collaboration with the Kalamunda Senior High School Education Support Centre as part of the Kalamunda Senior High School strategy for supporting the learning of the increasing number of 'borderline' students who do not qualify for ESC enrolment.

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

- that future refinement of the current highly developed target-setting methodology takes account of factors such as predicted cohort variations
- that in light of the school's vision statement of 'sharing our forest of possibilities' the Board assumes a role in surveying within the Hills community satisfaction levels with school identity and capacity to serve
- that the Board explores ways in which the Hills Learning Precinct Cluster profile may be further strengthened in order to enhance its sustainability.

### **3. School Context**

The Kalamunda Senior High School purpose is to provide comprehensive, quality public education offering a diversity of educational pathways for students to achieve their potential. This purpose is captured in the school vision: 'Sharing our forest of possibilities'. The school ethos is captured in its well-communicated values: 'Learning, Respect, Resilience, Pride and Community'. Students, parents, board members and staff spoke confidently about the ways these values are enacted in school life.

The school is located in the Perth hills town of Kalamunda. Its site, near the centre of the town, is accessed via two regional roads. The major part of the school's buildings and infrastructure are over 50 years old and the school community takes pride in the way in which the physical environment has been enhanced through regular maintenance and improvement programs. The recently constructed cafeteria is an example of significant infrastructure improvement. The Kalamunda Senior High School Business Plan (2011 – 2013) articulates 11 strategies implemented to "develop and maintain a safe and sustainable physical environment and to enhance the appearance and functionality of the grounds, classrooms and buildings".

The sense of community and tradition in the school is strengthened by family and generational links. A relatively high proportion of students have another family member who was previously enrolled at the school. Similarly, a number of staff members have family connections with, or previously attended, the school.

Students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds attend Kalamunda Senior High School. The school's published Index of Community Socio-economic Advantage (ICSEA) is comparatively high (1017.36). However, more than 20% of students are from families with a health care card or receiving secondary school assistance. From the start of 2012, the change to using the ICSEA (in which the school is included in Decile 3) from the Socio Economic Index (Decile 4) has affected 'like school' comparisons of performance.

Diversity of ethnic background is less evident. Although the profile is broadening, the student population is dominated by Australian students from European and English speaking backgrounds.

Another long-term trend is the increasing diversity of student learning needs. For example, the proportion of high achieving students has been reduced by



the drift to non-government schools and other government schools with specialist programs. The proportion of lower achieving students has increased through the enrolment of high functioning students with autism who do not qualify for enrolment at education support centres.

In response to these trends, the school has developed a wide range of specialist programs (including: Gifted and Talented Education; Primary Scholarships; Learning Centre; Academic Excellence; Outdoor Education; Performing Arts) providing students with diverse learning pathways. Consequently, students are drawn from a broad area that encompasses over 30 primary schools. In some cases, a Year 8 student may be the sole representative of a primary school. In response, Kalamunda Senior High School has developed high quality transition programs.

Overall, student numbers are increasing significantly. The total enrolment in 2010 was 773 students ('half cohort' in Year 8). In 2013, it is 862 students. The predicted enrolment for 2015 (the first year of Year 7 enrolments) is 1200 students.

The experienced, long serving teaching staff has an average age of 47 years. Increased staffing flexibility has been used to recruit less experienced teachers (e.g. five staff members are in their first three years of teaching). Kalamunda Senior High School has a well-developed Workforce Plan that includes the following priorities: diversifying the support staff profile; increasing level of IT support; supporting teachers seeking Level 3 status; responding to changing student numbers (e.g. impact of half cohort on some positions); achieving economies of scale through the cluster strategy; increasing school psychologist, school nurse and Learning Centre capacity, and planning for the Year 7 intake.

The DPA for the period April 2011 to April 2014 refers to the following funded additional programs to improve educational attainment:

- Secondary Selective Placement Program (Visual Art)
- Asian Language Hub (Japanese and Indonesian)
- Senior Secondary Engagement Program.

The school has utilised the flexibilities of its one-line budget (\$6.46 million in 2011) to meet student learning needs. The significant decline in the payment of school contributions and charges is starting to impact school programs.

## **Kalamunda Senior High School**

---

Kalamunda Senior High School enjoys a positive reputation with its parents and broader community. Indicators include the growing enrolment, Year 8 waiting lists and positive parent responses gathered through regular satisfaction surveys. Two phases of renewal since the current Principal was appointed in 2000 have significantly improved community perception of Kalamunda Senior High School. The first focused on building school identity and pride (including reintroduction of uniforms, honour boards, yearbooks, as well as grounds improvement). The second phase, involving the whole school community, began in 2006 using the Innovative Design for Enhancing Achievement in Schools (IDEAS) framework focusing on vision, values and pedagogy.

Parents express appreciation for Kalamunda Senior High School communication strategies. The school has an excellent website and plans to enhance the home-school learning partnership through Sharepoint. The Parents and Citizens' Association (P & C) has approximately 20 active members.

The School Board meets twice each term. It includes five parents, three teachers, three community members and the Principal. The Head Boy and Head Girl provide student input. An indicator of increased parent and community interest is that elections were required for some positions. However, an annual open board meeting has not attracted attendance by non-members. Terms of reference and a code of conduct are utilised. All initial members undertook board training and an induction strategy is implemented for new members. Board effectiveness surveys indicate a high degree of satisfaction with operations. Members indicate that the development of the Kalamunda Senior High School Board represents a natural progression from the operations of its predecessor School Council.

Kalamunda Senior High School has responded effectively to contextual factors affecting student learning. Commitment to the school's vision and values is evident throughout its operations. Diverse specialist programs have been developed in response to student learning needs. The school has achieved a highly functioning Board, a team of expert staff, effective partnerships with parents and targeted use of resources.

#### 4a. School Performance - Student Learning

The published *Kalamunda Senior High School Business Plan (2011 to 2013)* includes a comprehensive array of academic and non-academic targets for 2013. Targets encompass all students across all learning areas. The following table summarises whether or not these targets were achieved at the time of the review. As the independent review was conducted at the end of first semester 2013, this is a preliminary analysis based on 2011 and 2012 data.

Business Plan Target (2013)	Preliminary Analysis
<b>Academic Targets</b>	
1. WACE Graduation rate at or above 99%	<i>Achieved 2011/12</i>
2. Median Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) at or above the median for Department of Education (DoE) and above statistically similar schools and DoE mean	<i>Partially Achieved (Achieved 201. Partially achieved 2012)</i>
3. ATAR Triciles – reduce to 33% the number of students in the bottom tricile	<i>Partially Achieved (Achieved 2011. Not achieved 2012)</i>
4. ATAR students with one or more scaled scores of 75+ - increase to and maintain at 18% or above	<i>Partially Achieved (Achieved 2011 not achieved 2012)</i>
5. Full qualification achievement VET Cert II or higher - 70%	<i>Partially Achieved (Not achieved 2011. Achieved 2012)</i>
6. Stage 2 and 3 course achievement - means at or above similar schools and DoE mean	<i>Partially Achieved (varies across courses)</i>
7. Stage 1 course achievement - A and B grade allocation above DoE and similar schools	<i>Partially Achieved (varies across courses)</i>
8. NAPLAN Reading/Writing/Numeracy levels equivalent to or above predicted achievement when students tested as Year 7s	<i>Achieved</i>
9. NAPLAN Reading/Writing/Numeracy mean above state and similar schools means	<i>Almost achieved (not achieved for Numeracy 2012)</i>
10. NAPLAN Literacy - girls above/boys at state mean	<i>Partially Achieved (boys just below Writing state means 2011/12)</i>
11. NAPLAN Numeracy - boys above/girls at state mean	<i>Achieved 2011. Partially achieved 2012 (girls below state mean)</i>
12. NAPLAN reduce % at or below National Minimum Standard 2012 level	<i>Achieved (against 2010 benchmark)</i>
13. Year 8, 9, 10 achievement A and B grade allocation across all courses above similar schools and state	<i>Partially achieved (varies between year group and learning area)</i>
<b>Non-academic Targets</b>	
14. Attendance above state mean and above 90% for all year groups	<i>Achieved 2011. Achieved for whole school 2012. Year 10 not achieved (88%)</i>
15. Retention rates Years 10-12 at or above 70%	<i>Partially achieved. (Not achieved 2011. Achieved 2012)</i>



The school is commended for sustained improvement related to NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) and non-academic (attendance and retention) learning targets. The proportion of students achieving at, or below, the benchmark in the Reading domain was 38% in 2010, compared with 22% in 2011 and 19% in 2012. Similarly, the proportion of students achieving at or below the benchmark in the Writing domain was 41% in 2010, compared with 28% in 2011 and 2012. Finally, the proportion of students achieving at or below the benchmark in the Numeracy domain was 31% in 2010, compared with 17% in 2011 and 24% in 2012. This improvement is directly attributable to the implementation of the Learning Centre and Tactical Teaching strategies.

The school's self-review includes well-documented, in-depth analysis and commentary for each target. This commentary covers contextual factors and any consequential adjustments to strategies. For example, significant differences between the ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank) achievements for the Year 12 cohorts of 2011 and 2012 were noted. For the latter cohort, 50% of students were in the Low tricile (compared with 26% for the 2011 cohort). It is not possible to pinpoint a specific reason for such a marked variation; however, several strategies are being implemented in 2013. These include prerequisite grades or satisfactory performance for Stage 2 and Stage 3 course enrolment, closer monitoring and tracking of individual Year 11 students, targeted parent and student interviews, after-school tutoring, study periods, implementation of lower secondary examinations.

During the DPA period, the school added targets in new priority areas. In response to changes in senior secondary curriculum, the school added a target related to the Attainment Rate (i.e. ATAR greater than or equal to 55 and/or completion of Certificate II or higher). Whereas the 2011 Attainment Rate was 66%, it climbed significantly to 85% in 2012. This improvement, resulting from curriculum changes and improvement strategies implemented by Kalamunda Senior High School, is commended. Similarly, targets were added for student achievement in Western Australian Monitoring Standards in Education (WAMSE) testing in Society and Environment and the Science learning areas.

Overall, Kalamunda Senior High School is commended for its use and level of achievement of a complex array of targets covering the whole curriculum and all students in each year to drive learning improvement across the school.



Improvement was also achieved in other aspects of school performance, such as behaviour management. For example, implementation of a 'triage strategy' in the Student Services Centre contributed to a significant reduction in student suspensions (450 days in 2010 compared with 340 days in 2012, despite a growth of 65 student enrolments in that period).

The school also reviewed the impact on student learning achieved through the Visual Arts and Asian Language Hub programs identified in the DPA. Conclusions could be included in the school's summative self-review report.

Learning outcomes for student sub-groups are also reviewed. Targets are set for the average NAPLAN achievement of boys and girls in Literacy and Numeracy domains. Conclusions drawn from these reviews have resulted in changes to teaching strategies. Similarly, monitoring of the performance of the relatively small number of Aboriginal students (16 in 2013) is a priority. Strategies implemented have contributed to excellent attendance of these students (93.6% compared with 67.9% across the State).

Targets also include comparisons with state standards and similar schools, across all year levels. The school performs well in these comparisons and this is reinforced through published recognition. For example, *The Australian* (1/6/2013) analysis of 2012 NAPLAN results ranked Kalamunda Senior High School 15<sup>th</sup> out of 153 government schools and 80<sup>th</sup> out of 256 WA schools. The school has also consistently received Department of Education recognition as a 'high performing Year 12 school'.

The target-setting methodology used by Kalamunda Senior High School combines benchmark targets (2011), interim targets (2012), achievement targets (2013) and stretch targets for priority areas. The target level typically increases over the period. This use of target setting to focus and drive improvement efforts and the differentiation of target levels over the three-year period are highly commendable. However, progressive growth in the target level of achievement may not always be realistic for several reasons. Firstly, in the case of ATAR targets, it does not take account of identified Year 12 cohort differences. Secondly, in the case of priority areas like attendance, continued growth beyond the current very high level is highly unlikely. In such cases, maintaining current levels may be a worthwhile target. Thirdly, with the commencement of Year 7 student enrolments in secondary school from 2015, target setting for Year 7 NAPLAN achievement will require a different approach. Therefore, it is recommended that future target setting methodology takes account of such factors.

Perennial issues related to reliability and comparability of school assessment underpin the school's questioning of the value of using related targets. Notwithstanding this, inclusion of such targets contributes to the whole-school culture of improvement. It has contributed to commendable, sophisticated analysis of results and review of programs by the school's curriculum leaders.

Significant improvement in student learning outcomes is being achieved in the DPA period. Data-driven analysis underpins program development and review at Kalamunda Senior High School. Sophisticated target-setting and evidence-based review techniques are being used effectively to build a culture of improvement across the school.

#### **4b. School Performance - Quality of the Learning Environment**

The reviewers were able to verify that the school vision, ethos and values have been developed collaboratively between staff and community and are embedded in the day to day practices of the school. This was established through extensive interviews with staff, parents and students, as well as first-hand observation of interactions between students, between staff and students and between staff. Strategies specific to academic excellence and achieving excellence in teaching and leadership in support of the school's ethos are embedded in the Business Plan.

Meetings with the School Board, a large cross-section of staff, parents and students provided evidence of inclusive practices and planning to meet the learning needs of all students. The Learning Centre established in 2011 and expanded in subsequent years caters specifically for students with literacy and numeracy needs. The Centre provides direct instruction to the students and supports them and their teachers in the mainstream classes with individual education plans. In addition, the school provides after-school tutoring and runs a number of intervention and support programs focused on student health and wellbeing, such as 'Drumbeat' and 'Rainbows'. It also runs a Bibbulmun Challenge program aimed at building resilience and leadership skills.

Most staff (79%) have received training in Class Management Strategies (CMS), with all reporting that it has made a positive impact on their classroom practices. The school's 'Good Standing' procedures and 'Triage' model of student service delivery have resulted in improved attendance and reduced suspension rates.

Transition from the primary to secondary years is extremely well managed as are the transitions from the middle to senior school. Of note is the care and attention the school pays to the specific needs of students with autism within these transitions, especially from Year 7 to 8 where they are provided with additional time and support materials to enable the students to make the transition with as little discomfort as possible.

The school is commended on the identification of the needs of its diverse student population and the implementation of the range of inclusive learning and pastoral care programs to cater for them.

Collaborative planning, curriculum delivery and monitoring of student performance are purposely structured and evident at every level within the school. It is enabled by a judicious focus on professional learning related to contemporary pedagogy and the direction set by the Business Plan.

The vast majority of staff (95%) report that they are using the School-wide Pedagogy (SWP) in delivering their lessons. SWP, which challenges and supports students while relating to their experience, stage of development and background, forms part of performance management discussions with teachers.

Within this, the school has implemented and carefully monitors a range of learning programs to meet the learning needs of students. This includes the Hills Education Precinct (video conferencing delivery Year 11/12), Curtin Coaching, Soundway (spelling), Tactical Teaching (reading), the use of cooperative strategies and specialist programs in visual and performing arts, academic excellence and outdoor education. This is supported by the targeted use of resources to optimise use of the 50 year old infrastructure including the use of learning technologies such as Interactive Whiteboards (100% of classrooms) and Netbooks for all Year 11 and 12 students.

The school is commended on the range and attention it pays to the programs established to meet the learning needs of the students.

The school has noted some concerns about career counselling expressed in student satisfaction survey responses and is taking action to provide an improved service. The direction the school is taking in this regard is affirmed.

The action the school is taking to improve satisfaction rates with career counselling and preparedness for next-year and post-school goals is affirmed.



Throughout the review process staff displayed openness to critique by colleagues and a willingness to accept others in their classrooms to observe their teaching. It is evident that there is a strong focus on quality learning and on the creation of a culture in which all students are expected to achieve to their full potential, in their own way and at a pace that best suits their capacity. Individual talents are valued and every attempt is made to ensure that all students are engaged in challenging, meaningful learning and that their achievements are celebrated. The reviewers commend the collegiate 'tone' and commitment to a school-wide pedagogy and purposeful, successful learning.

It is evident that staff, students and parents interact in a positive manner and parents and families are encouraged to take a genuine and close interest in the work of the school and are welcomed as partners in their children's learning.

Effective partnerships with parents and the wider community are established on trust and mutual respect. The reviewers were able to verify students as being articulate, thoughtful and conscious of 'doing their best to succeed' with a positive attitude toward the school, teachers, and their learning.

In meeting with parents and board members, which includes community representation, the reviewers were able to affirm the high regard for the school. Parents in particular expressed their appreciation of staff; their honesty and respect, provision of an environment where students build confidence and social skills and a commitment and a genuine interest in the students.

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

### **4c. School Performance - Sustainability**

Kalamunda Senior High School has as its vision 'Sharing Our Forest of Possibilities'. The reviewers found that the school is realising this on a daily basis. In every contact with different groups and sub-groups within the school,



the reviewers found the same core values of 'Respect, Pride, Community, Resilience' and 'Learning' were present across students, teachers and parents. These are reinforced continuously in class activities and within the professional endeavours of the teaching and non-teaching staff. The values are reference points for school and individual identity, individual responsibility and commitment to learning, and the establishment of trust and security to underpin all learning activities.

The school's 'Good Standing' procedures cover all elements of school activity and are a successful outcome of staff, student and parent collaboration. It has established a common understanding and language which in turn give rise to desired behaviours from Year 8 to 12. Teachers welcome the commonality of expectations and understand that it serves as a platform for all teachers to use in lifting standards.

The 'Good Standing' procedures, the Learning Centre, 'Triage' approach to student services and a number of specialist learning programs are examples of quality planning and a school-wide evidence-based research culture.

With a powerful coherence in policy and practice, the school is well placed to sustain all of its commitments in the DPA.

The leadership team of the school demonstrated tight administrative procedures, thorough documented plans/policies coupled with performance information. There is a free flow of information and a climate of approachability for inquiries.

The school leadership team, led by a highly competent and influential principal, ably supported by two associate principals and a business manager, assume collective end-of line responsibilities whilst providing leadership for defined focus areas of the Business Plan.

To ensure school-wide coherency, heads of learning areas (HoLAs) are encouraged to take a whole-school perspective. This is a key factor in the school reaching a consensus based on evidence and ensuring consistency.

The school has noted its aging workforce and has taken steps to ensure the continuity of expertise through a balance recruitment framework focused on attracting graduate and experienced staff. The school has also noted that there is a staff gender imbalance and whilst this is largely beyond its control it is actively encouraging women to pursue leadership roles. In addition, the

school is actively encouraging staff to apply for and supporting them through the process of attaining Level 3 classroom teacher status.

The school is commended on the way in which it has taken a broader view of self-assessment and in doing so has adopted an evidence-based framework that addresses operational strategies focused on teaching, learning environment, curriculum implementation, leadership, financial management, resources and infrastructure, relationships/partnerships, school culture and workforce. This entails measuring and analysing performance against pre-set success indicators and results in revised plans for improvement, some of which inform the Business Plan and some of which remain at the operational level. The extended self-assessment is also reflected in the school's 2011 and 2012 Annual Reports.

The school's self-assessment is a multi-layered cyclical process involving senior staff, teachers and the Board. The process includes performance data analysis; a review of targets and associated strategy; a review of operational strategies; mid-year reviews for selected courses, strategies, targets; mapping school progress against the Business Plan, and the preparation of an annual report.

This model underpins the sustainability of the school purpose to 'develop life-long learners using the School-wide Pedagogy and school values to nurture young men and women who can realise their full potential'. It also ensures teachers collaborate to enhance their individual instructional skills whilst addressing common student performance deficits and adds freshness, vitality and focus to their work.

The integration of the Department of Education's Performance Management policy and local context ensures the Business Plan targets, Department of Education initiatives and the Teacher Competency Framework are addressed in a coherent manner. This is supported by the use of reflective journals (67% of staff surveyed indicate that this had a positive impact) and peer coaching (90% of staff participated in 2012; 77% of whom indicated that it had changed their teaching practice). Staff meet with their performance manager three times per year to plan, receive interim feedback, and undertake a final review and receive written feedback. The school's integration of performance management with planning and review processes is commended.

The School Board demonstrated to the reviewers that it is fulfilling its governance role effectively and that cyclic self-reviews are an integral part of

this. Its role is well understood and operates in harmony with the Parents and Citizens' Association.

Board minutes reveal that the Principal presents comprehensive student performance information to provide feedback on the achievement of targets. The Board, whilst acknowledging it has been a learning journey, has developed a sound understanding and knowledge of the curriculum and data analysis processes. It is recommended, however, that in light of the school's vision statement of 'sharing our forest of possibilities' the Board assumes a role in surveying within the Hills community satisfaction levels with school identity and capacity to serve.

The school demonstrated that its resource management and workforce planning are appropriately and effectively targeted to align with the DPA and school priorities. Staff members have appropriate access to resources to sustain their roles within the school.

The reviewers commend the school on establishing and embedding a school-wide expectations platform; and the outcome of creating a common language across all participants focused on individual student growth as well as school improvement. Further the reviewers affirm the school's plan to maintain the five focus areas and strategies in the next Business Plan.

Overall, the school has established governance processes, systematic plans/policies and collaborative teams with distributed leadership; these have been built within the strong culture of collaboration and high expectations. School leadership actively oversees the performance of all teams and fine tunes as required.

The school is well-placed to sustain its significant drive to improve student and school performance.



## 5. School and Cluster Performance

Kalamunda Senior High School, Kalamunda Senior High School Education Support Centre and Lesmurdie Senior High School form the Hills Learning Precinct Cluster. The key driver in the cluster formation was to enhance the profile of public education in the Hills community. As such, it is a loose configuration with specific advantages for each school. Cluster school principals meet once per term to monitor cluster arrangements and explore opportunities for increased collaboration. Each cluster school retains its own Board and Business Plan. There are no specific cluster targets.

The benefits of cluster membership for Kalamunda Senior High School relate to the increased level of collaboration with each of its partner schools.

### *Collaboration with Lesmurdie Senior High School*

Through the cluster, Kalamunda Senior High School sought to build collaboration to replace its traditional competitive relationship with neighbouring Lesmurdie Senior High School. It was feared that if only one of the schools had gained IPS status, enrolment at the other would have declined. Increasing enrolments and waiting lists at both schools are evidence of this risk being averted.

In 2011, online delivery of senior secondary courses at Kalamunda Senior High School and Lesmurdie Senior High School commenced through the Hills Education Precinct (HEP). This has resulted in improved curriculum access for students at both schools; however cluster membership is not essential for this to occur, as Darling Range Sports College is the third member of the HEP.

Cluster membership has promoted teacher collaboration in preparing for implementation of the new Western Australian Curriculum and the new Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE). This, in turn, strengthens the HEP arrangement. Kalamunda Senior High School is also providing professional learning and support for teachers at both cluster senior high schools seeking Level 3 classroom teacher status.

The goal of running joint selection and recruitment processes has not been achieved. Joint pools were found to be impractical. However, some economies of scale have been realised through shared selection panels and regular contact between administration teams of both schools.



### *Collaboration with Kalamunda Senior High School Education Support Centre*

As the Education Support Centre is collocated with Kalamunda Senior High School, stronger links have developed through their cluster partnership. Sharing of resources between the two schools is facilitated. For example, the Education Support Centre purchases staff FTE to deliver specialist courses such as dance, physical education, home economics, design and technology, art and drama. Education Support Centre students also access the Kalamunda Senior High School Learning Centre to use Soundway and online learning programs. In this way, Education Support Centre students gain increased curriculum access and Kalamunda Senior High School teachers broaden their expertise in teaching students with learning difficulties.

This closer collaboration is also important for Kalamunda Senior High School in meeting the needs of its 'borderline' students. For example, Kalamunda Senior High School has an increasing number of students with autism who are high functioning and do not qualify for Education Support Centre enrolment. From time to time, a small number of these Kalamunda Senior High School students are accommodated in the Education Support Centre to support and further develop their academic and social skills. The Kalamunda Senior High School priority for developing this relationship to benefit the learning of this group of students is affirmed.

### *Future Direction*

The Kalamunda Senior High School staff and Board are keen to continue the cluster from 2014. It is recommended that sustainability of the cluster be strengthened through exploring ways in which its profile may be further enhanced. For example, there may be benefits in each of the Board Chairs meeting on a regular basis. It would also be useful to gather information about the ways in which the cluster has affected community perceptions about public education in the Hills.

The formation of the Hills Learning Precinct Cluster has proven to be a commendable initiative. It has achieved its aim of raising the profile of public education in the Hills community. The loose configuration has also facilitated the expansion of curriculum access for students and the sharing of resources, particularly staff expertise. Kalamunda Senior High School has also benefitted through the professional development opportunities gained through cluster membership.

## Declaration

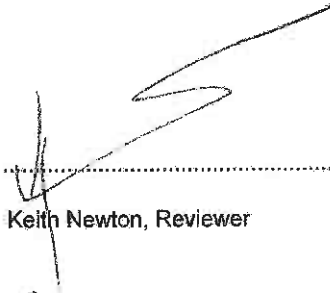
We the undersigned hereby confirm that the information provided in this findings document is to the best of our knowledge true and correct and is based on our assessment of the evidence provided by Kalamunda Senior High School as part of the Department of Education Services' independent review process. The Principal and Board Chair have had an opportunity to comment on any matters of fact contained within this document.



Rees Barrett, Lead Reviewer

6 August 2013

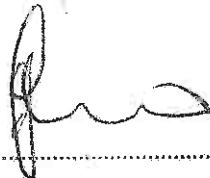
Date



Keith Newton, Reviewer

6 August 2013

Date



Richard Strickland, CEO, Department of Education Services

14 / 8 / 13

Date