FOUR YEAR ANNUAL REVIEW
SCHOOL EXTERNAL REVIEW PANEL REPORT

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<th>School</th>
<th>Lindisfarne North Primary School</th>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>2013</td>
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Introduction

The External Review Panel met with Lindisfarne North Primary School principal, Shane Oldfield on October 29th to prepare for the school visit, scheduled for Tuesday, November 5th, 2013. Despite the very short timeline for the pilot review, the preparation for our visit was well organised and the panel’s thanks is extended to the principal and the staff of the school.

Lindisfarne North Primary School is located on Hobart’s eastern shore in a primarily residential suburb. The school has an Educational Needs Index (ENI) of 35.3 and the Lindisfarne community has an ICSEA rating of 964. In addition to families with young children, Lindisfarne has a considerable number of aged care facilities located near the school. The school has a separate kindergarten site located approximately 200m from the main school campus.

The school’s leadership team have all been appointed to the school within the past two years (principal, AST3 and business manager). General staff members have for the most part been at the school for much longer periods. The current principal has been at the school for 18 months and during that time there have been two contentious political issues which have in the view of the panel, impacted upon the school’s momentum in establishing a learning focussed agenda. These included a discussion about relocating the school site to the grounds of the nearby Geilston Bay High School and more recently, relocation of a private child care facility from the kindergarten to provide room for increased early childhood enrolments. Both issues have created considerable media coverage and required considerable leadership time to manage.

School Planning Process

School planning documents are aligned with the DoE Strategic Plan 2012 -2015. Current priorities include literacy, numeracy, IT (digital learners), and Health and Well Being. A current emphasis has been systematising school processes with the intent being to automate as many of these as possible so that the work of school improvement can proceed without distraction. The panel formed the view that the political issues outlined above, had significantly impacted the momentum for school improvement planning.
Areas identified where the school is doing well

**School environment:** The school site is restricted physically, bounded by a major highway and suburban roads. Playground spaces are small and student movement channels are often narrow and restricted. Despite this, the panel was impressed by the calm, school environment and the ability of the students to interact positively and generously within such a restricted area. A clear message from students, parents and staff was the positive way students interacted and the low levels of bullying in the school. A number of people throughout the day commented on the low levels of bullying and the strong processes in place to address this when it does occur.

Despite adult members of the school community expressing concern about the limited play spaces, students were far more positive. Student play areas are assigned by age groups and moving to a new area is something that students looked forward to. A number of students commented that they loved their playground while acknowledging more space to kick a ball would be an improvement.

**Community Engagement:** Parents spoke with great affection for the school. They were strongly supportive of the principal and liked his style. They described a supportive parent network which had its roots in links created through the LiL programs.

High numbers of volunteers were evident in many areas across the school with parents running the canteen, school uniform shop and school fair.

Parents seemed to have less input into school planning processes and largely described their roles in terms of school resource support.

**Inclusive environment:** Staff described an increasing approach of collective responsibility for all children. A number of people spoke about the strong commitment to developing an inclusive environment for all students and in particular, students with high needs. Parents also commented specifically on the inclusive nature of the school community and described a strong, whole school ethos where students with high needs were supported in every way possible. One parent described his full involvement in developing an IEP for his son as being particularly praiseworthy and couldn't speak highly enough of the school’s efforts to resource programs for his child. Several examples were cited about how the Lindisfarne North environment seemed to have a calming effect on previously highly disruptive students. The panel found this aspect of the school environment particularly commendable.

**Leadership:** Parents and staff consistently described the openness, approachability and supportive nature of the leadership team. The panel also felt that the leadership team led by example in their openness to improvement with the school visit clearly developed around a ‘warts and all’ philosophy and a genuine desire for feedback.

**Staff:** The school has an experienced cohort of staff who are clearly student focussed and proud of their roles in supporting student learning.

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**Possible areas for future consideration**

**Playground and classroom safety:** Part of the school playground is located 3 metres below the level of the highway and some of the early childhood classrooms are located level with and just metres from the highway. While the highway is separated from the school by a guard rail, this is only a single layer high. It is recommended that the school, through the DoE, investigate the adequacy of this safety barrier through DIER, and that appropriate baffling also be investigated to protect classrooms from noise and exhaust grime. This was a matter of concern for the panel.

**Planning:** The school appears to be working well with students remarking that teachers ‘support us in our work; they encourage us to learn and help us in this’. The panel felt however, that to some extent there was a lack of clarity across the whole school with respect to a key strategic focus. Professional learning and school improvement goals were described in an ad hoc manner by staff and the panel felt that the school needed a stronger focus on strategic planning with fewer, more unifying goals – a focus on excellence for example. Communication of school priorities to staff and parents was identified as a
**Professional Learning:** Staff described some professional learning processes as excellent and described an inquiry team structure operating in the school. The panel felt that the professional learning program needed a more systematic approach and the inquiry team structure needed strengthening. The panel recommends a more systematic inquiry team focus, linked to student data and strong, unifying, school learning goals. The principal indicated that this was firmly on the 2014 school agenda with 90% of staff meetings being allocated to inquiry team time.

**Student engagement:** Students’ social engagement was identified as a strength within the school. The panel felt other aspects of student engagement such as emotional and cognitive engagement were less well established focuses and that pursuit of this within a broad school focus on excellence would extend the pedagogical discussions amongst teachers and reinforce the establishment of whole school, collective goals. The panel recommended a student engagement survey be considered by the school to provide a foundation for further inquiry in relation to this. The principal described plans for 2014, to pursue online student engagement surveys from Dylan Williams and the panel was strongly supportive of this suggested direction.

**High School Transition:** Some panel members encountered a lack of clarity amongst older students about arrangements to transition to high school and expectations of them in a high school environment. The panel was unable to determine within the scope of the visit, the extent to which this is a broader issue for the school.

**Digital Learners:** The school is well resourced with smart boards and ICT hardware. The principal identified creating a digital learning focus for 2014 was important. The panel strongly endorses this focus within the context of staff inquiry and the establishment of clear goals enunciated above.

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**General**

In the opinion of review panel members, Lindisfarne North Primary School is performing strongly with NAPLAN results indicating student performance at a level above like schools. The panel formed the view that the improvement agenda was impacted to some extent by significant political issues which needed addressing in the crucial period following the appointment of a new leadership team. The panel recommends a refocussing of the school around a few, whole school, unifying goals centred on student learning and staff inquiry teams.

The panel's overall impression was one of a strongly performing school which is ready for a refocussing process.

**Review Panel**

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<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Bob Phillips</td>
<td>18 November</td>
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<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Vicki Mackrill</td>
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<td>Member</td>
<td>Andrew Bennett</td>
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**Attachments:** (If necessary the panel may attaché any data or information pertinent to this report)