



Department of
Education

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West Byford Primary School

Public School Review

March 2021



PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

Purpose

All Western Australian public schools are reviewed by the Department of Education's Public School Accountability directorate. A review gives assurance to the local community, the Minister for Education and Training and the Director General about the performance of public schools in delivering high quality education to its students. The review acknowledges the achievements of the school and gives feedback to support the Principal and staff with their improvement planning.

Initially conducted on a three-year cycle, subsequent reviews are determined to occur on a one, three or five-year timeframe.

The Principal provides the review team with a self-assessment of the school's performance based on evidence from the school. Information to be validated by the review team is considered before and during the school visit. This forms the basis for the school review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the Principal, the Chair of the School Council/Board and the regional Director of Education.

Expectations of schools

The Statement of Expectation (Statement) makes clear and public the expectations and responsibilities of schools and the Department in student achievement and progress.

The Statement is between; the Department of Education, represented by the Director General; the school, represented by the Principal; and is noted by the school council/board, represented by the Chair.

The Statement sets out the expectations of Principals in relation to the delivery of the 2020-2024 strategic directions *Every student, every classroom, every day*, and *Building on Strength*.

The Statement will underpin each school's strategic planning and self-assessment and will form part of the school's Public School Review, as well as the Professional Performance Review of the Principal.

Public School Review – The Standard

A Standard has been developed across the domains of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework to describe essential indicators of performance. The selection of the indicators is based on literature research and historical reviews of school performance in Western Australian public schools.

The purpose is to better ensure that judgements about student performance are standardised and objective. Indicators describe what is evident in schools functioning 'as expected' within each domain.

The Standard defines the expected level of school performance. Judgements are made in relation to the Standard. External validation is also based on evidence presented relating to the Standard.



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Context

West Byford Primary School opened in 2013 as part of Perth's rapidly developing southern corridor. Close to national parks and nature reserves in the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, the school is located approximately 40 kilometres south of the Perth business district, within the South Metropolitan Education Region. In 2014, the school gained Independent Public School status.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1005 (decile 5). There are currently 803 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6.

As an integral part of the local community, the school encourages parents and community members to become involved in the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C). The highly engaged P&C provides substantial funding and resources to the school through their fundraising efforts.

The School Board assists in shaping the school's strategic direction and provides valuable input into the review of policies and procedures and feedback on performance data.

The school is part of the Armadale Cluster of the South East Corridor Network of schools, sharing ideas, resources and expertise for the benefit of all member schools.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive and rigorous school self-assessment.

The following aspects of the school's self-assessment process are confirmed:

- A longstanding practice of internal evaluation of school performance has enabled the school to move seamlessly through the self-assessment process as a prerequisite for its Public School Review.
- Staff collaboration and engagement in the analysis of a wide range of evidence informed the school's self-assessment.
- Staff reported significant benefit from being engaged in both the school self-assessment and validation phases of the process.
- The succinct analysis of credible data and appropriate evidence provided a well-considered account of the school's current level of performance.
- The improvement agenda and demonstrated mutual accountability of staff for the quality of student outcomes, were a feature of the review process.
- There is strong knowledge of, and alignment between, the factors impacting on the conditions for student success and areas identified for improvement.
- Parent representatives actively engaged and contributed their reflections during the school validation visit.

The following recommendation is made:

- Maintain a continuous focus on 'warehousing' data, and recording observations and judgements using the Electronic School Assessment Tool, its guidelines and the Standard.

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Relationships and partnerships

Positive relationships, fostered by the leadership team and supported by the School Board and P&C, are at the core of the strong reputational badge the school has in its local community.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The COVID-19 response was a catalyst for strengthening staff collaboration, sharing individual skills, and increasing the bonds between teachers and education assistants (EAs), and more broadly, the local community.
- Parents describe staff as highly professional and approachable. Staff in turn report feeling professionally accountable and proud to serve their local community.
- The connected relationships between all members of staff reinforces their sense of being mutually valued and respected. Staff morale is very positive.
- Office reception and Kindergarten staff play complementary roles in ensuring a positive first encounter with the school for parents.
- The School Board understands its governance role, providing informed feedback during the review of the business plan and being a public advocate for both the school and parents.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Consider developing criteria for assessing the effectiveness of school relationships and evaluating the impact of existing partnerships.

Learning environment

Successful schools understand they are both a place for student learning and an adult work place. West Byford Primary School optimises their school environment to maximise success in both aspects.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Structures and processes are in place to ensure students' emotional and physical wellbeing needs are identified and responded to appropriately.
- Teachers design classrooms to inspire, engage and challenge students. Students describe feeling supported to learn and encouraged to 'have a go' in a safe and caring environment.
- The school promotes a personal best ethos by highlighting students' achievements through 'Super Student' visits to the office, newsletter acknowledgements and merit certificates.
- Highly effective practices for students at educational risk are supported by education assistants. Line managers meet with teachers to set targets. This is followed by an annual review of students at educational risk and an audit of Special Educational Need planning.
- Students were articulate in describing how much pride they have in their school and confident in sharing the opportunities they are provided to have a voice in the school's decision making processes.
- Health and wellbeing initiatives for students and staff include a combination of physical fitness, chaplaincy support, the Aussie Optimism Program for students and differentiated professional learning and acknowledgements for staff.

Leadership

Research has proven that successful schools have effective leaders who create and sustain high performing cultures by supporting teachers in partnership with education assistants and administrative staff.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- An authentic distributed leadership ethos using a 'gradual release' model has achieved an impressive number of staff having an opportunity to be in a leadership role, from team leader through to deputy principal.
- There is a notable 'buzz' in the school when performance management occurs at the beginning and end of the year. Staff truly value opportunities for growth and development.
- The leadership team received numerous accolades during the validation phase of the process for their genuine approach to transparent and open decision making, clarity of expectations and empathetic interest in staff welfare.
- Leadership affiliations with the School Board and P&C are strong and extend to productive relationships with the local high school and to building relationships with Aboriginal families in order to understand and appreciate the local Aboriginal context.
- Staff are provided with the opportunity to participate in the peer observation program, Watch Others Work (WOW), with additional support available for graduate teachers and level 3 classroom teacher aspirants.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Plan to increase staff knowledge of local Aboriginal histories.

Use of resources

School leaders recognise the importance of ensuring resources are deployed carefully to maximise the impact on student learning and their health and wellbeing.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Through an innovative decision to increase the number of highly trained school officers, extra time has been created for teachers to commence their learning program at the start of each day.
- Budget management is thoughtful, measured and applied consistently, with the students' interests a priority.
- Staff are invested in, and committed to, the strategic alignment between school planning and the need to take appropriate measures in managing the constant demands of workforce planning.
- Student characteristics funding is monitored closely to ensure it is centred on meeting identified student needs.
- The Academy Attendance and Visitor Management interface provides staff alerts, policies, timetables and rosters, and is augmented by a parent friendly website that eases 'paperwork' for excursions and other permission requests.

Teaching quality

The school offers a range of curriculum content and delivery options to closely match the differentiated needs of groups and individual students. Teachers generate and analyse a comprehensive collection of student data and performance information to set improvement targets.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- At the core of the school-wide curriculum delivery are Kindergarten – Year 6 Curriculum Documents, which outline the school’s shared beliefs of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Linked directly to the Western Australian Curriculum, the Kindergarten – Year 6 Curriculum Documents prescribe whole-school approaches, ensuring rich, disciplined dialogue exchanges are underscored by a common language.
- Decisions, such as introducing a new approach to teaching problem solving in mathematics, are supported by: high quality professional learning; initial trials; modelling; and lesson plans, to create the best conditions for implementing change.
- A frank assessment of literacy performance in the early years has led to a rethink on the meaning of ‘authentic’ collaboration. The astute observation that cooperation does not have the same impact as collaboration, was transformative for staff.
- Differentiation in classrooms is authentically based on data through the school’s Target Student process.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Use the annual Kindergarten – Year 6 Curriculum Documents review to consider ‘trimming’ some aspects.

Student achievement and progress

An integral part of any school learning program is to assess its impact on student success.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff are highly committed to the continuous improvement of their teaching. They use student performance data reflections to guide their teaching practice.
- Analysis of system and school-based data informs teaching intentions, ensures tailored, early and sustained interventions, and adds to the impact of differentiated teaching.
- A balance between student academic, social and emotional wellbeing reflects the school’s focus on developing the whole child.
- The school factors student attendance and behaviour into the overall student performance equation. This ensures all aspects of the child’s welfare are considered in terms of what influences student achievement and progress.
- A disciplined dialogue approach is used to analyse data and agree on actions to build on strengths and address weaknesses.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to emphasise to Kindergarten parents that, although non-compulsory, attendance is extremely valuable to their child’s education in the long term.

Reviewers

Rod Lowther
Director, Public School Review

Helen Taylor
Principal, Aveley North Primary School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

Based on this report, I endorse the commendations and recommendations made by the review team regarding your school's performance.

Your next school review is scheduled for Term 1, 2024.



Melesha Sands
A/Deputy Director General, Schools