



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Piara Waters Primary School

Public School Review

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 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 Public School Review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the Principal and the regional Director of Education.

Expectations of schools

The Statement of Expectation (the 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.

For further information or resource in alternative formats for people with accessibility needs, please contact PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au

Context

Piara Waters Primary School was established in 2012 in a rapidly growing southern suburb, approximately 27 kilometres south of the Perth central business district, within the South Metropolitan Education Region. In 2015, the school was granted Independent Public School status.

There are currently 939 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. State-of-the-art facilities include an early childhood education centre, library, administration block, oval and tennis courts. Students benefit from modern technology including iPads and interactive whiteboards in all classrooms. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1066 (decile 2).

Active support is provided by the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) and the School Board.

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:

- The School Assessment Summary outlined the context of the school and the impact of long-term leadership instability until early 2021.
- Leaders outlined the change management process that was required before engaging staff fully into the Public School Review process.
- The school review was considered an improvement strategy by leaders who engaged staff in genuine reflection on the school's performance. This was symbolic of the way in which collaboration is valued by the new leadership team.
- Staff described an ownership over the process having been integral in development of the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission within domains of their choosing. Teachers assisted deputy principals gather evidence voluntarily during Duties other than Teaching (DOTT) time, demonstrating their enthusiasm in the process.
- A broad selection of staff, students, School Board and P&C representatives contributed during the validation day discussions, each enhancing further the judgements and evidence presented in the ESAT submission.

The following recommendation is made:

- Utilise the Standard and the ESAT for ongoing school self-assessment practices between school review cycles.

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Relationships and partnerships

Significant investment in establishing and maintaining highly effective and mutually respectful relationships, within and beyond the school, is enhancing the learning opportunities and experiences of students.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A culture of authentic consultation is driving a renewed energy from staff to work collaboratively to progress the school's improvement agenda.
- Relationships across the school community are based on genuine trust and a focus on what is in the best interests of students.
- All efforts are made to ensure communication is accessible and transparent, which has been welcomed by staff and parents. Regular 'snippets' are keeping staff well-informed with Connect and Seesaw the predominant sources of information for families.
- The Principal values feedback from all stakeholders to ensure the school is meeting the expectations of the school community. Survey data from staff and parents have influenced the direction of the school.
- The School Board has been provided with support to play its role in governance. Board training, upskilling in analysing school performance data and unpacking of the school's business plan will enhance their capacity to contribute in developing improvement targets.
- The largely newly appointed P&C members are working with the school to provide students with extra-curricular opportunities for their enjoyment and to raise vital funds to add value to the learning environment.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Consider a range of options to expand ways in which the school communicates with parents.

Learning environment

A positive and high energy 'vibe' resonates throughout the school. Attention in providing an engaging and supportive environment is enhancing the conditions for student learning.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A safe and inclusive learning environment is enhanced by the collective commitment of staff to the general wellbeing of students. Protective behaviour, mindfulness, the gardening program and school chaplain, complement the overall care provided by all staff.
- High levels of student behaviour, attendance and engagement exist. The 'Golden Rules' are providing clear behaviour expectations for students who can describe the school's values and demonstrate appreciation for the reward system.
- The provision for students at educational risk (SAER) has greatly improved with the introduction of effective processes to identify, monitor and support students requiring intervention. The sharing of student data between teachers to inform class placement has been well received.
- A robust Student Council election process identifies civic minded students with a talent for leadership. These students survey peers, collate results and work in committees to actualise the things important to students.
- Staff wellbeing has been elevated as a result of their professional knowledge being valued in whole-school decision making.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to refine the support for SAER.

Leadership

A profound and immediate impact on school culture is attributed to the Principal. High levels of consultation demonstrate a focus on creating the conditions for people to thrive.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The new leadership team has engaged staff in developing a shared vision and direction for the school. The 'elevator speech', to capture staff voice, is respected and embraced by staff.
- Cognisant of the impact of the high turnover of Principals over a long period of time, change has been managed in a way that is purposeful, collaborative and strategic, prioritising mindfully areas that required greatest need.
- The alignment of the business plan to accurately reflect the current school performance and contextual needs, as well as the strategic directions outlined by the Department, has been a significant body of work for the entire school community. The level of consensus in, and understanding of, the business plan is impressive.
- Attention to improving the effectiveness of current operational plans is underway. The new mathematics plan is now being implemented, the refinement of the digital technologies plan is underway and realignment of the English plan prioritised.
- The leadership structure has been reviewed to provide better support to staff and students. It is understood and accepted by all staff. Roles to lead priority areas have been created in consultation with staff and are providing opportunities for aspirant leaders.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Develop and implement a PM&D¹ process that is better connected to the needs of staff and the school.

Use of resources

As evident in each of the domains of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework, there has been a purposeful approach in realigning financial management and resource allocation to agreed priority areas.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Utilising a wealth of financial knowledge and experience, the Principal is supporting and partnering with the manager corporate services and business support manager to build the capacity of the school and elevate the effectiveness of financial and resource management.
- Resources are allocated and adjusted to meet student needs. Additional funds have been directed to mathematics and physical education to meet the business plan focus areas of mathematics and fundamental movement skills.
- A review of reserve accounts is underway to ensure funds are directed to support current school planning. The one to one iPads purchase was considered by staff, the Finance Committee and the School Board for its financial impact and educational dividend.
- The use of student characteristics and targeted initiatives funding is directed to support the students for which it is intended, including, additional education assistant and school chaplaincy time.
- Workforce requirements have been identified and responded to by school leaders. Addressing the number of fixed-term contracts within the school has been prioritised and rectified.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Review the asset replacement plan and determine a strategy for the use of the Independent Public School salary reserve.

Teaching quality

Leaders, teaching staff and para-professionals demonstrate a collective commitment to provide high quality teaching and learning to promote student success.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- There is a shared belief in the efficacy of teaching staff. An alignment in their professional discourse about what good teaching is, as well as bringing their own talent to the classroom, is compelling.
- The agreement that 'strength is in the curriculum' underpins the degree to which teachers have a deep understanding of the requirements of the Western Australian Curriculum.
- Collaboration around teaching and learning is strong and is now being undertaken beyond the year group 'silos' providing a better understanding of each other's work.
- Teachers plan differentiated lessons and implement documented plans for SAER with intervention through MiniLit and MacqLit. Oral language and vocabulary intervention is supporting EAL/D² students.
- Staff are becoming increasingly data literate with leaders doing the 'heavy lifting' in accessing and providing the data analysis, creating a broader appreciation of the 'power of data' for student progress.
- A strong focus of providing professional learning to meet the needs of staff and students has provided 'quick wins' in upskilling staff. More alignment to school priorities and performance review is planned.
- Aboriginal perspective across the curriculum is providing students and staff a greater understanding about Aboriginal histories, peoples, cultures and languages. An Aboriginal parent is providing advice to the Kindergarten collaborative team to embed Aboriginal perspectives into their programs.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Provide an opportunity for staff to articulate and document their shared belief about teaching and learning.

Student achievement and progress

A focus on high quality curriculum delivery dominates the conversations and actions of staff. Their collective endeavours for sustained improvement in student achievement and progress is having an impact.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school self-assessment schedule prioritises the analysis of student achievement and progress data beyond simply collecting data. Students identified as not reaching their expected level of achievement are identified for individualised attention by teaching staff.
- A system to collect longitudinal systemic and school-based data for all students has been developed to support staff, track individual students over time and to inform whole-school planning.
- Longitudinal NAPLAN³ data aligns with contextually similar schools. However, Student Progress and Achievement (2019 -2021) is variable in each of the assessment items.
- An EAL/D intervention focus on oral language and vocabulary has been introduced based on data showing a higher than desired number of students scoring lower than peers in Kindergarten-Year 3 assessments.
- Six of seven Aboriginal students enrolled at the school are achieving their expected levels of literacy and numeracy with one student requiring intervention through MiniLit.
- Teachers are very familiar with the SCSA⁴ Judging Standards. Levels of student achievement and progress align closely with grade allocation.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Refine business plan targets with staff and the Board including understanding of how to set targets and associated milestones.

Reviewers

Vicki McKeown
Director, Public School Review

Craig Stanners
Principal, Sheoak Grove 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 4, 2024.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Performance management and development
- 2 English as an Additional Language or Dialect
- 3 National Assessment Program -Literacy and Numeracy
- 4 School Curriculum and Standards Authority