



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Dunsborough 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

Dunsborough Primary School is approximately 250 kilometres south of Perth in the Southwest Education Region.

The school opened in 1963 and became an Independent Public School in 2011.

Currently there are 737 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. Dunsborough Primary School has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1054 (decile 2).

Community support for the school is demonstrated through the work of the School Board and Parent and Citizens Association' (P&C).

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 Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission and feedback provided during the validation visit delivered a wide-ranging account of the school context and operations in addressing its improvement agenda.
- A culture of reflective school self-assessment, as the foundation for effective planning and continuous improvement, was evident at the strategic and operational levels.
- Preparation for the Public School Review was aligned to ongoing procedures for the school's developing self-assessment and improvement processes.
- A broad scope of performance evidence was selected for the review, with planned actions aligned to judgements made.
- Staff demonstrate ownership for student success, with professional and personal responsibilities and expectations understood.
- The school's self-assessment was enhanced significantly by conversations held with members of the school community during the validation visit.
- School Board and community representatives engaged openly in the validation visit, providing compelling insights into their beliefs about the role the school plays in the day-to-day community life of Dunsborough.

The following recommendation is made:

- Further embed the school's self-reflective culture to strengthen and enhance the strategic intent and alignment of the school improvement journey.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships

Powerful school climates are frequently a product of schools mobilising staff, parents and the community to come together in harmony for the benefit of the students. When school and community values intersect on critical aspects of student and staff wellbeing needs, sustained student success is attainable.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- School Board led parent approval surveys have, over the years, consistently shown high levels of satisfaction from parents on the performance of the school.
- Staff understand and respect the value and impact of collaboration. It is seen as mutually beneficial, both professionally and personally, to the whole-school approach to deliver sustained improvement.
- Positive and productive relations have been established over many years with parents and in particular grandparents and Aboriginal families. Students exhibit a strong sense of belonging with their school.
- The implementation of a staff wellbeing framework recognises that schools are adult workplaces where sharing of skills, experience and knowledge is based on common language and values.
- The identification of Cultural Ambassadors has created leadership roles for Aboriginal students. Collaborative projects, involving the Wadandi community, adds lustre to the school's understanding of local Aboriginal perspectives and history.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Consider a review of existing parent communication options to reach a wider community audience.

Learning environment

A functional physical environment within an aged infrastructure is complemented by a genuinely caring approach to group and individual needs. With due consideration to the school context, a welcoming, safe, engaging and orderly environment has been developed.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- As the health and wellbeing needs for students increase, the school has appointed a committee to examine existing research-based programs to target identified areas of concern.
- The learning support coordinator provides timely advice and support to staff seeking appropriate strategies to accommodate individual student needs. The integrity of the record management for students at educational risk is maintained through both digital and hard copy options.
- While attendance rates are within reasonable limits, the school has made a determined effort to address the collection of parental notes for 'U' code student absences.
- Teachers and education assistants collaborate to ensure special support programs are implemented with fidelity. Parent engagement is recognised as crucial to the support of students through the school's approach to Case Conferences.
- The school recognises the inherent value of integrating student support and management programs to achieve greater impact. This is most evident in the strategic blending of behaviour management with student wellbeing programs.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Maintain the focus on identifying key roles for the intended 2023 launch of the school's Student Services team.

Leadership

Following a recent change in the composition of the leadership team, a structured, aligned and supportive work environment has emerged. This is complemented by staff being personally accountable in response to explicit whole-school teaching expectations.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The executive leadership team has an intentional approach to supporting aspirant leaders. It recognises, for these staff to develop explicit leadership skills and understandings, they must be modelled, explained and supported through targeted feedback.
- Establishing and maintaining a whole-school pedagogy is a key priority of the leadership team. Professional learning, classroom observations and coaching are applied in an appropriately differentiated way.
- Staff understand and accept the importance of working as a team. The Principal's consistent messaging and high levels of visibility demonstrates empathy for their professional needs and secures staff trust and respect.
- A key element of the school's advocacy for meeting the needs and aspirations of the community it serves, is the School Board. Long standing parent and community engagement reflects the passionate belief in the important part the school has in local family activity.
- The Principal's leadership, combined with the executive leadership team's multi-layered skills, has created a rich and vibrant undergrowth of a staff-wide commitment to the students and community of Dunsborough.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Commence the process of formulating the school's Business Plan 2023 – 2025.

Use of resources

All schools need to ensure resources are mobilised to optimise the physical environment for student success. At Dunsborough Primary School, planning, management and monitoring processes for the deployment and use of resources are aligned to school strategy and operations.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Processes and procedures ensure clear links exist between budgeting and planning.
- Financial management processes, articulated in the staff procedures manual, ensure understanding of school resourcing and expenditure protocols. Budget submissions include essential expenditure required to operate cost centres. They are vetted by the manager corporate services and endorsed by the Finance Committee.
- The allocation and distribution of resources are unambiguously focused on meeting the differentiated needs of students.
- Thoughtful attention is given to improvements necessary to lift the appearance and functionality of the school. A landscape architect has been engaged to assist in the design of student play areas.
- Resourcing, notably funding for professional learning, is committed to the ongoing improvement in the quality of educational programs. Support for students with special needs is linked to planned priorities, including ensuring targeted initiative funding is appropriately allocated.
- Workforce planning needs are prioritised to optimise succession planning.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to seek feedback from key groups, Finance Committee members and cost-centre managers, on how staff can build their understanding of the competing priorities in maximising support to students.
- Develop a workforce plan noting existing priorities, using a three-year horizon to future proof staff needs.

Teaching quality

There is a school-wide commitment to continue to embed a student success culture around explicit teaching and whole-school approaches. A strong foundation for this commitment is provided by a high level of teacher capacity and unwavering passion, underscored by the mantra, 'it's all about the kids'!

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The involvement in the Centre for Excellence – Explicit Teaching of Literacy Internship program has had a compelling influence in defining the school's pedagogical approach. The knowledge and staff enthusiasm generated has ensured a priority is given to consistent high-quality connected teaching practice.
- The school's curriculum leadership ethos, underpinned by the school motto 'Together Everyone Achieves More', places an unambiguous focus on teachers collaborating and working together to maximise student outcomes.
- The curriculum manager, curriculum support teachers and learning team leaders, offer a rich vein of support to staff by providing high quality feedback and coaching, based on classroom observations and day-to-day informal engagement.
- Collaborative engagement and professional learning have been astutely structured and timetabled to optimise impact. They reinforce staff understanding of, and commitment to, school-wide beliefs that teaching success is built on authentic collaboration between teachers and education assistants.
- The focus on building assessment literacy has been amplified using research-based assessment tools. This has led to the pursuit of teaching programs, which are evidence-based and relevant to the 21st century learning needs of the students.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to monitor the impact of teaching practice, using existing processes in combination with action research such as Learning Sprints.

Student achievement and progress

Long-term student performance data are mostly within reasonable limits, that is, in line with like schools. However, there are strong aspirational intentions to pursue student performance success with trend lines exceeding like school performance.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Processes are embedded to analyse a range of data to inform plans for improvement. There is a consistent understanding of the value of evidence-based decision making at the class and whole-school levels.
- Intervention programs are used to track long term student performance. Identifying D and E grades and designing specific classroom adjustments and accommodations for these students is a school priority.
- Moderation of grade allocations based on systemic and common assessment tasks are regular topics of discussion during collaborative meetings.
- Staff expressed appreciation for the curriculum manager's work in preparing the school's 'Curriculum Guide – Working Document'. Used in conjunction with the Western Australian Curriculum it offers a comprehensive interrelated range of: lesson design expectations; scope and sequence; and assessment scheduling.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Consider reviewing the methodology for setting school-wide and individual student improvement targets. Be clear about the level of target specificity required to confirm success and incorporate milestone targets for longer term improvement objectives in the business plan.

Reviewers

Rod Lowther
Director, Public School Review

Melanie Buller
Principal, South Halls Head 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 in or after Term 1, 2025.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

1 Unexplained