



Department of
Education

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Cascade Primary School

Public School Review

May 2019

PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

Purpose

All Western Australian public schools are reviewed every three years 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 that a school is operating effectively and 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.

The principal provides the review team with a self-assessment of the school's performance based on evidence gathered by the principal and staff. Information validated by the review team is considered before and during the school visit. This forms the basis for the school review report. The report is provided to the principal, the chair of the school board/council and the Regional Executive Director.

Expectations of schools

For all Western Australian public schools, expectations are set out in either: the Delivery and Performance Agreement, which is an agreement between the Department (represented by the Director General), school (represented by the principal) and school board (represented by the school board chair); or, the Principals' Statement of Expectations and the Funding Agreement for Schools.

School performance rating

This performance rating is based on information gained from the self-assessment submission and the validation process. It is focussed on a review of the following areas of school performance: relationships and partnerships; learning environment; leadership; use of resources; teaching quality; and student achievement and progress.

The school's performance rating is:

	Effective
	The school demonstrates effective practice in creating the conditions required for student success.

✓	Needs Improvement
	The school has aspects of its practice below expectations and needs supported action to improve student success.

Context

Cascade Primary School is located 100 kilometres north-west of Esperance and 650 kilometres south-east of Perth, within the Goldfields Education Region.

First opened in 1974 at a site with several transportable buildings, the school moved to the current site in 1981. Enrolments generally fluctuate between 20 and 30 students and the school currently enrolls 29 students from Kindergarten to Year 6 in three multi-aged classes.

The ESAT¹ submission and school-based validation phase of the review process were facilitated and prepared by the Principal who commenced her appointment at the beginning of the 2019 school year.

The school is strongly supported through the efforts and contributions of the parent body, School Council and the Parents and Citizens' Association.

School self-assessment validation

The acting Principal compiled a school self-assessment submission based on the evidence, information and time available.

The following aspects are confirmed:

- The school's self-assessment initiated a range of conversations with staff, parents and community representatives.
- Staff engagement in the school's self-assessment submission process was limited.
- A shared understanding of current levels of achievement and progress is emerging.

The following recommendations are made:

- Embark on a process of developing a culture of continuous school improvement.
- Use the guidelines and information provided in the ESAT to develop an ethos of ongoing school self-assessment.
- Establish alignment between performance evidence, judgements made and strategies for improvement.

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Relationships and partnerships	
<p>In the past, underdeveloped communication and feedback processes limited the professional engagement of staff. The need for more opportunities for the community to become actively involved in school improvement discussions is recognised and being addressed.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An emphasis on building positive school-community relations has been a priority. • Links that staff now have with the local community are based on mutual trust and respect. • Staff have confidence in the organisational structures and processes introduced to facilitate transparency in decision making. • Connections with neighbouring schools for staff professional development is being promoted.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff meetings are governed by a clear agenda, respectful discussions and follow up on decisions made. • Continue to work with the lead school psychologist to facilitate discussions and workshops with staff and the community. • Work with the School Council chair to maximise input from the community with respect to information exchange and future school planning. • Build a team culture based on professional obligation, public accountability and personal responsibility.

Learning environment	
<p>Attentive planning to ensure school-wide, consistent implementation of procedures relating to students at educational risk and behaviour management, is necessary. The educational health and wellbeing of students is regarded as a team priority shared between teaching staff and education assistants (EAs).</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents acknowledge the quality of support provided to students at educational risk by EAs. • Structures for classroom behaviour management of students are being consolidated. • An EA schedule of student and class engagement has had a positive effect on the deployment EAs.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for parents to visit classes to better understand about the learning environment. • Explicit learning intentions are required to be developed for each class. • Develop a whole-school behaviour management policy.

Leadership

Fundamental to student success is the provision of a motivating and inspiring vision based on high standards and expectations. Efforts to develop such an ethos is a key focus of the school's leadership.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal has introduced organisational structures and processes and has commenced work on a number of school policies. • There is an intentional effort to build staff capacity to engage positively and productively in school planning and assessment. • The School Council has a role in planning and review discussions. • The Principal is endeavouring to capitalise on staff strengths and offers of community support.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence a review of all operational plans. • The Principal to set out a personal professional learning agenda with a focus on building professional knowledge in curriculum design and delivery. • Clarify leadership expectations of staff in terms of student outcomes. • Commence classroom observations with feedback targeted on teaching practice. • Review performance management procedures and practices.

Use of resources

There is a practical understanding of the need for constant vigilance and astute management of the deployment of school resources in a small school context. The need for workforce planning to address organisational priorities is understood by the leadership.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal has responded appropriately and in a timely way, to identified areas of financial management concern. • The support provided through the Department, by a student-centred funding principal advisor is acknowledged and appreciated. • Developing a positive relationship between the Principal and manager corporate services (MCS) has been a leadership priority. • Thoughtful consideration is being applied to ensure students work and play in an educationally invigorating and physically enjoyable learning environment.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a workforce management plan to reflect the school's strategic direction and budget imperatives. • Ensure budget and financial management decisions are open and transparent. • Maintain a focus on Principal/MCS joint professional learning.

Teaching quality

Teachers are committed to their role in providing a learning program that is engaging for their students. The recent appointment of two early career teaching staff has prompted the school to analyse school-wide approaches to facilitating quality teaching in a Multi-Age Group (MAG) setting.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent development of a Reporting Schedule has provided direction for teaching staff to clarify areas of the WAC² requiring planning and those to be taught in a MAG setting on a rotation basis. • A new Assessment Schedule has also provided a shared understanding for staff to collect baseline data on student achievement.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use system tools (OEAP³ and NAPLAN⁴) and school-based assessments to develop planning for student needs. • Through performance management, teachers to reflect against the AITSL⁵ Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and school priorities. • Use the Mallee Network and Esperance Network to moderate student grade allocations through a wider lens. • Strengthen the literacy and numeracy block structures across the whole school by setting expectations in a Cascade Pedagogical Framework expounding on what this looks like in a MAG classroom rotation setup. • Share IEP⁶s with EAs to ensure individual learning targets and adjustments in curriculum delivery are understood and collectively managed.

Student achievement and progress

Recent developments in relation to longitudinal tracking and a whole-school assessment schedule will lay the foundations for supporting informed judgements about achievement and progress at a whole-school level. Further, it will serve to inform planning for student needs.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of a whole-school assessment schedule has established initial student performance baselines and will enable the longitudinal tracking of student achievement and progress. • A variety of school-based data are used to complement the interpretation of systemic assessments in the small school context.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set school targets for growth in student achievement in strategic and operational planning. • Extend OEAP assessment from Pre-Primary to Year 2 to facilitate early identification of learning needs and enhance reporting to parents. • Develop staff knowledge of system assessment tools, such as SAIS⁷ and EARS⁸, to strengthen assessment literacy and formative use for whole-school and classroom planning. • Build on the existing processes for SAER⁹ assessment, identification and planning by incorporating RTP SEN¹⁰ planning and SMART¹¹ goals.

Reviewers

Rod Lowther
Director, Public School Review

Melanie Capper
Principal, Dumbleyung Primary School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

Based on this report, I endorse your school performance rating of 'needs improvement'.

Your next school review is scheduled for 2022.



Stephen Baxter
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Electronic School Assessment Tool
- 2 Western Australian Curriculum
- 3 On-entry Assessment Program
- 4 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 5 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- 6 Individual education plan
- 7 Student Achievement Information System
- 8 Education Assessment and Reporting Software
- 9 Students at educational risk
- 10 Reporting to Parents Special Educational Need
- 11 Specific, measurable, agreed/achievable, realistic and time-based