



Department of
Education

Learning changes lives

Southwell Primary School

Public School Review

Public School Review

Purpose

All Western Australian public schools are reviewed by the Department of Education's School and Principal Review directorate. A review gives assurance to the local community, the Minister for Education 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 3 year cycle, subsequent reviews are determined to occur on a one, 3 or 5 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 of Education (the Department) in student achievement and progress.

The Statement is between; the Department, 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. It will also support the Principal Professional Review.

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 resources in alternative formats for people with accessibility needs, please contact PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au

Context

Southwell Primary School is located approximately 25 kilometres south-west of the Perth central business district in the South Metropolitan Education Region.

Currently there are 71 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6 and the school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 794 (decile 10).

Support for the school is demonstrated through the work of the School Council and the Parents and Citizens' Association.

The last Public School Review of Southwell Primary School was conducted in Term 2, 2023. This 2026 Public School Review report provides a current point of reference for the next cycle of school improvement.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a collaborative and transparent school self-assessment.

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

- The Public School Review process was leveraged as an opportunity to analyse the school's current performance and contribute to the development of the 2027-2029 Business Plan.
- The Principal facilitated staff reflections against the domains of the Standard during fortnightly staff meetings and school development days. Lines of inquiry were used to deepen staff understanding of the depth and breadth of each domain.
- Staff provided feedback and samples of evidence for the submission. These were collated and annotated by the Principal to develop and refine a narrative of the school's practice and performance against the Standard, including identified priorities and improvement actions.
- Candid discussions with staff, students and a community member during the validation day provided the review team with a deeper understanding of the context of the school and the priorities requiring further attention.

The following recommendations are made:

- Implement a cyclical, whole-school self-assessment process aligned to the domains of the Standard to regularly evaluate progress and identify emerging priorities for action.
- Strengthen whole-school data collection and analysis processes to systematically measure the impact of initiatives and interventions on student achievement and progress, using this evidence to inform future planning and resource allocation.

Relationships and partnerships

The school recognises that strong, trusting relationships with families and the wider community are fundamental to student engagement, wellbeing and learning.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A range of communication channels, including text messages, telephone calls, the school Facebook page and a twice-termly newsletter, support regular communication with parents and caregivers. Mid-year parent-teacher interviews provide an opportunity for families to discuss student progress and achievement.
- The Moort-ap Engagement Hub provides a coordinated point of connection for students and families. The engagement officer and social worker are beginning to facilitate access to services, targeted programs and additional support, strengthening the school's capacity to respond to individual family needs.
- Strong partnerships with government, community and not-for-profit organisations enhance support for students and families, providing access to a broad range of services and programs, including the edible garden project, vision checks and speech therapy assessments.
- Whole-school events including the athletics carnival, Welcome Back BBQ Breakfast and Sausage Sizzles, provide welcoming and informal opportunities for families to connect with staff, build relationships and participate in school life.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Strengthen school-home partnerships through consistent, two-way communication and meaningful opportunities for families to provide feedback, contribute to decision making and participate in school life.
- Develop and trial strategies to increase parent and community engagement with the School Council, strengthening representation and supporting effective governance.

Learning environment

A renewed focus on consistent behaviour expectations is strengthening the predictability and safety of the learning environment.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Culturally responsive systems and practices, including Noongar language classes, Aboriginal and Islander education officer (AIEO) support and the Moort-ap Engagement Hub, are established to support student connection, identity and belonging. The highly respected AIEO provides valued leadership and support for cultural safety across the school.
- The school proactively addresses barriers to learning, with initiatives including breakfast and lunch programs, food hampers, uniforms and stationery supporting student wellbeing and readiness to learn.
- Initial steps to restore consistency and predictability in the learning environment include refreshing the STAR¹ values, explicitly teaching behaviour expectations and re-establishing visual supports and rewards.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Underpinned by targeted staff capability development, embed a consistent, whole-school approach to behaviour support. Include clearly defined expectations and responses, documented referral and escalation pathways and systematic processes for case management, monitoring and review of students presenting with complex and persistent behaviours.
- Formalise and document a whole-school multi-tiered system of support process that strengthens the identification and case management of students requiring additional support. Outline clear referral pathways for students at educational risk, defined roles and responsibilities, documented intervention plans and systematic monitoring and review of student progress and intervention effectiveness.
- Implement systematic processes to identify, support and case manage attendance concerns to address the longitudinal decline in regular and whole-school attendance rates.

Leadership
The recently appointed substantive Principal, supported by the experience and deep contextual knowledge of long-serving staff, is providing stability, direction and a sense of optimism across the school community.
Commendations
The review team validate the following: • The Principal has strategically leveraged recommendations from the whole-school environmental scan to stabilise the school, harness staff voice and establish clear improvement priorities. • Clarified roles and expectations for senior teachers and level 3 classroom teachers provide a foundation for distributed leadership and the implementation of improvement initiatives. • Performance and development processes enable staff to reflect on their practice and progress towards professional goals aligned with student needs and self-identified areas for growth.
Recommendations
The review team support the following: • Informed by self-assessment findings and evidence, develop the 2027–2029 Business Plan to articulate the school's core priorities, with measurable targets, success indicators and processes for monitoring and reviewing progress. • Document English, mathematics and cultural responsiveness operational plans to translate whole-school priorities into agreed actions and align behaviour, curriculum and assessment practices across the school. • Clarify and document the school's distributed leadership structure, with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and accountability measures across all staff and leadership roles, including the Moort-ap Engagement Hub, ensuring clear lines of accountability and that ultimate responsibility for attendance, behaviour and student engagement processes remains with the school.
Use of resources
Open and trusting relationships between the Principal, manager corporate services and school officer provide a strong foundation for collaborative problem-solving and financial management.
Commendations
The review team validate the following: • The Principal and manager corporate services maintain oversight of expenditure and the budget through regular monitoring and liaison with the central finance team to identify and resolve financial issues. • The school effectively leverages grant funding and financial support from external agencies to provide essential services and programs, including the Moort-ap Engagement Hub, for students and families. • Strengthened documentation and filing processes support successful applications for additional funding for students with disabilities, improving access to human and physical resources and transparency in student characteristics funding allocations.
Recommendations
The review team support the following: • Align financial decision making and cost-centre budgets with strategic and operational planning to ensure resources are allocated transparently to directly address identified student and school needs. • Ensure school-funded initiatives align with the school's roles and responsibilities, while strengthening partnerships with external agencies to access services that sit beyond the school's remit. • Build the financial governance capability of the School Council and Finance Committee, supported by a documented financial management cycle with clear processes for budget approval, cost-centre responsibilities, regular monitoring and reporting. • Develop a workforce plan informed by enrolment projections, student needs, staff intentions and workforce skillsets and capabilities to strengthen workforce sustainability and continuity.

Teaching quality
Staff recognise the need for greater consistency of practice and alignment of expectations across the school.
Commendations
The review team validate the following: • The Southwell Way lesson design framework for English and mathematics, together with Talk for Writing and Heggerty, provides a strong foundation for consistent teaching practice. • Professional learning and the planned implementation of the University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI) Foundation in 2027 provide an evidence-informed approach to strengthening early literacy instruction and addressing student needs. • Release time and mentoring to use the Special Educational Needs planning and reporting tool strengthen the development of individual learning goals for students with documented plans.
Recommendations
The review team support the following: • Engage with Statewide Services to develop shared beliefs about the capacity of all students to learn and establish high expectations for student engagement, achievement and participation, building staff capability to translate these expectations into classroom practice. • Refresh and implement the Southwell Way instructional framework, aligning agreed pedagogical expectations with Teaching for Impact and establishing consistent expectations for explicit teaching, differentiation and responsive instruction across the school. Explore opportunities to collaborate with a Quality Teaching Strategy lead school to inform implementation and strengthen practice. • Progress the implementation of UFLI Foundation to provide explicit, systematic phonics instruction, with agreed expectations for consistent implementation and monitoring of student progress. • Develop scope and sequence documents aligned with the Western Australian Curriculum and the Southwell Way to clarify essential learning, support appropriate adjustment of content and expectations and strengthen continuity of learning across year levels. • Develop and embed consistent structures and expectations for staff collaboration to strengthen collective practice, build shared responsibility and support improved outcomes for students.

Student achievement and progress
Staff demonstrate a commitment to improving student outcomes, with a clear recognition of the significant underachievement of students in comparison with like schools.
Commendations
The review team validate the following: • Data from the On-entry Assessment and school-based assessments is used to inform teacher planning, particularly in the early childhood area. • Students requiring targeted literacy intervention are identified through Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills assessments, with their progress monitored over time through regular assessment. • Work samples and student workbooks inform teacher judgements and reporting to parents.
Recommendations
The review team support the following: • Establish a whole-school assessment schedule and consistent data-collection processes to support longitudinal monitoring of student engagement, wellbeing, achievement and progress and inform responsive teaching and targeted support. • Build staff capability to use observational and assessment data to identify individual student strengths and learning needs and adjust teaching and content to improve engagement, achievement and progress.

Reviewers	
Melanie Langley Director, Public School Review	Jennifer McCarthy Principal, Pinjarra 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.

The next review process focusing on the learning environment, leadership, use of resources, teaching quality and student achievement and progress domains only, is scheduled for Term 3, 2027. You will be formally notified in the 2 terms leading up to your school's scheduled follow up review.

Should the school demonstrate sufficient and sustainable progress towards meeting the Standard in relation to recommendations of identified domains, a full Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, will be scheduled for 2029.



Lisa Criddle
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Safe, Take Responsibility, Aspire, Respect