



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Southwell 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 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 resource in alternative formats for people with accessibility needs, please contact PublicSchoolAccountability.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 75 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 756 (decile 10).

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

The first Public School Review of Southwell Primary School was conducted in Term 4 2018. This 2023 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 comprehensive and rigorous school self-assessment.

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

- Staff, students, School Council members and the community's perspectives were included in the process of the school's self-assessment.
- The school's judgements on current performance against the Standard were aligned with the evidence submissions in the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT).
- The community viewed the review as an opportunity to celebrate strategic aims achieved over the past 4 years while acknowledging ongoing areas for improvement.
- The authentic engagement of parents, community members, students and staff in the validation process added value to the school's ESAT submission.
- A brief, student-led tour gave the review team perspectives on the physical and learning environment, that strengthened understandings of the school's priorities and moral purpose.

The following recommendation is made:

- Consider use of the ESAT as a reflective school self-assessment repository to enhance the impact of current data collection and analysis.

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Relationships and partnerships

The school is described by staff, students and the community in terms of being a sanctuary and place where students feel they belong. Students express a belief that 'you can do and achieve anything'.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Relationships are inclusive and based on trust. Staff work hard to make families feel welcomed within the school, starting with the manager corporate services (MCS) at the reception desk and extending throughout the staff.
- An active P&C has a large and enthusiastic presence in the school with an expanding membership contributing positively to the building of community and the group's collected advocacy for the school.
- Parents view the staff as hardworking, nurturing and connected to the needs of their child/ren and community. The 2 Aboriginal and Islander education officers (AIEOs) are highly valued staff in the school.
- The School Council is well led and aspires to become an established part of the school's governance fabric. Communication between the Council chair and Principal is strong, direct and united in purpose.
- Partnerships with organisations such as the Koya Aboriginal Corporation's Kinship Empowerment Program for boys, the local Aboriginal Health Service and the Cockburn Integrated Health Hub add value to students' educational and wellbeing experiences and connect families to vital external services.
- Students describe their school as a place of happiness. They value their friendships, events such as camps and graduation and the responsibility of leadership roles such as speaking at Monday Muster.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Build on the dialogue that exists between the school and families to include student achievement.
- Explore the opportunity to establish a cultural reference group with key members of the community.
- Collectively, support the community to strengthen the growing P&C and School Council as effective advocates for the school's strategic journey.

Learning environment

Parents reflect that the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) framework has improved the quality of the learning environment. Delivery of this strategy is enabling consistent and connected practice between staff.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Principal assumes the duties of the learning support coordinator and has engaged support from Schools of Special Educational Needs (SEN) for staff to implement teaching interventions for students at risk.
- Cultural responsiveness has been established and language is seamlessly woven into everyday school life. Noongar language is taught by a qualified AIEO and is a source of pride for the school community.
- Maintaining open and trust-based lines of communication with the families of students in the severe attendance category is seen as paramount to supporting improved attendance and engagement.
- An example of student voice is the students' participation, alongside leaders and staff, in classroom walkthroughs and their provision of feedback to teachers on what they have observed.
- The prioritisation of reading improvement for all students is exemplified through whole-school participation in the Premier's Reading Challenge, upgrades to the library and use of P&C funded take home readers.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Ensure currency of staff understanding in delivering interventions to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Leadership

The Principal is highly valued by the school community as compassionate, consultative, warm and emotionally intelligent. She is credited with enabling a sense of team membership among staff through cultural change.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The distributed leadership team of Principal, MCS and 2 recently appointed curriculum leaders is fluidly manoeuvred to address areas of student and school need, based on data. Staff in leadership positions bring a coaching mindset to the process of building staff capacity.
- Feedback from regular staff walk-throughs and peer observations provide support for the implementation of agreed programs.
- Staff regularly visit contextually similar schools within and outside of the immediate network to share and learn from best practice.
- Teacher champions work alongside staff from the Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation to build the capacity of staff aligned to the implementation of plans and programs for improvement in literacy.
- Increased relevance of the performance development process has clarified staff roles. This is aligned to priorities, targeted at staff goals and the implementation of Talk for Writing, Sounds-Write and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Consolidate the leadership structure, including the identification of teacher champions and instructional coaches.
- Build a pedagogical framework supported by a lesson design template and explicit teaching model.

Use of resources

The School Council and Finance Committee assist the experienced MCS and Principal to determine and oversee transparency of financial and resource distribution throughout the school.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Annually, there is a review of the most appropriate deployment of staff to meet the needs of the transient student population. Consideration is given to how best to meet the needs of the current cohort of students.
- Locally raised revenue from Memorandums of Understanding with the SSEN: Sensory campus and a Western Australian Health Department facility on site provide extra funds to support the provision of programs and staffing to support students.
- Currently the school enrolls 6 students identified under the disability resourcing system and provides appropriate support through trained education assistants - special needs and mainstream, in and out of the classroom.
- The MCS, who is an essential and highly trusted staff member in the school community, builds respectful relationships and leverages support for families above what is usually provided at school.
- Workforce planning prioritises the recruitment of staff with the knowledge, expertise or aptitude to implement the school's strategic plans.
- Recent large purchases include a complete upgrade of classroom furniture, matching elements of the externally funded library upgrade and replacement of the school's set of iPads.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Build the capacity of staff, through professional learning, to integrate technology in classrooms.

Teaching quality

There is an alignment in the vision of all staff to ensure shared beliefs on teaching practice are embedded in classrooms providing consistency for students and structure to their progress. New staff undertake a process of induction and professional learning in school approaches.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Over the past few years an effort has been made to make Individual Education Plans more workable for staff. The school has focused on differentiating for students within the classroom rather than withdrawing them for intervention.
- The development of the 'Southwell Way' in English and mathematics has served to align practice between staff. It features an instructional and pedagogical framework and clear direction on content and curriculum.
- A strategic response by staff to address concerns about computational skills as seen in systemic and school data was the introduction of the Bond Blocks early years mathematics program.
- The establishment of shared and common routines in classrooms has supported the PBS framework in improving the active engagement of students in their learning.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Align the classroom practice of staff to the Department's Teaching for Impact statement.
- Extend the 'Southwell Way' documents to ensure coverage of all curriculum areas.
- Continue to foster and promote the shared beliefs of staff on what constitutes delivery of quality teaching.

Student achievement and progress

A concerted effort by staff to improve students' levels of achievement in reading, writing and numeracy is evident. There is a tangible sense of urgency on the part of staff to improve outcomes.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The School Curriculum and Standards Authority Judging Standards, Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) data and the Brightpath assessment tool are used in collaborative discussions on standards and the moderation of teacher judgements.
- Parents receive regular communication from staff about student progress.
- Students are able and encouraged by staff to set individual goals for achievement based on the Sounds-Write tracker and Brightpath ruler providing for further agency in their learning.
- There is effective application of teacher's knowledge on the learning profiles of their students. Collegiality and a sense of shared ownership of student achievement drives all to improve classroom practice.
- Implementation of Data Walls with PAT, On-entry and attendance data has provided a visual status update for staff on student achievement and engagement, leading to collaboration on how to deliver improvements.
- The Kindergarten Assessment Tool is used by the Kindergarten teacher to identify students with additional learning needs. Local volunteers are enlisted to provide additional support for these children.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Explore curriculum support options enabling small group literacy intervention for identified students.
- Strengthen links between the use of existing data tracking tools and classroom practice for ongoing student progress monitoring.

Reviewers

Rohan Smith
Director, Public School Review

Helen Barnes
Principal, Beachlands 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 to be scheduled for 2026. You will be formally notified in the 2 terms leading up to your school's scheduled review.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools