



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

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

Context

Mount Helena Primary School opened in 1890 and is approximately 40 kilometres from the Perth central business district, within the North Metropolitan Education Region.

The school has an Index of Community and Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 984 (decile 6).

It currently enrolls 169 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Mount Helena Primary School is supported by the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) and School Council.

The first Public School Review of Mount Helena Primary School was conducted in Term 1, 2019. 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 an extensive and rigorous school self-assessment.

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

- In preparation for the Public School Review, the leadership team guided a comprehensive self-assessment process that engaged and incorporated the perspectives of a range of staff and school community representatives.
- The school self-assessment provided an opportunity for staff to reflect on, and determine, the school's performance against the domains of the Standard.
- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission was constructed in alignment with the Standard. An overview document was submitted outlining the judgement, evidence and improvement plans for each domain and foci of the Standard.
- A broad range of evidence was provided in the ESAT outlining the significant processes and practices undertaken by the school.
- A significant representation of staff, students and parents engaged in discussions with the review team, contributing to the validation visit. There is significant staff buy-in to the school's current improvement agenda.
- The school's leadership reported the Public School Review was a positive experience that has extended understanding of the school's performance and enabled them to celebrate their progress and achievements and to identify areas for development.
- A tour of the school enriched the validation process providing a greater understanding of evidence presented in relation to the learning environment.

The following recommendations are made:

- In future ESAT submissions, avoid repetition between the information provided in the overview document and in additional entries for each domain. Select data sets to support the evidence provided which clearly demonstrate the impact on student outcomes.
- In preparation for the follow up review, create a plan with a focus on the recommendations from the report. Consider the inclusion of strategies, timelines, responsibilities and data collection in the plan, to determine impact.

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Relationships and partnerships

A professional and committed staff display high levels of positivity and motivation to work collaboratively with a focus on student success.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Professional and respectful relationships between staff are enabled through collaboration practices, structures and the provision of supports.
- Communication between families and classroom teachers is effective. Parents are notified about learning activities in the classroom and how their child is going. Frequent and detailed communications keep parents of students at educational risk (SAER) well informed about their progress.
- Partnerships have been established with a variety of external agencies that enhance the learning program for students including Curtin University, Eastern Hills Senior High School and Eastern Hills Community Kindergarten.
- Surveys are conducted to understand levels of satisfaction and gather the opinions of parents, students and staff.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Seek opportunities to engage parents as genuine partners in their child's learning and to develop authentic community relationships.
- Continue the intent to establish a compliant School Council. Schedule sufficient meetings for the Council to satisfactorily complete its role in school governance.
- To further enhance understanding and accountability, develop and share a communication policy that identifies the expected mode and frequency of two-way school and parent communication.
- Provide clear and transparent responses to feedback provided through the parent National School Opinion Survey.

Learning environment

A safe, positive and supportive learning environment is embedded within the school with a focus on developing the individual child. Efforts are made to create an appealing physical environment to engage students within a natural landscape that invites creative play and learning.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Consistent messaging through the recent introduction of Positive Behaviour Support including the Tier Target rewards and an explicit behaviour matrix is developing a shared language and understanding of staff and students.
- Effective processes are established to ensure that SAER are identified and supported in their learning. Determined in consultation with parents, Special Educational Needs plans outline goals and strategies to support students.
- Engagement with the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework and the development of the Reconciliation Action Plan is successfully raising awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal culture and history.
- A Pre-Kindergarten café, along with a Kindergarten orientation program, support families and students to be school ready when they enrol.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue with the intention to establish an attendance and engagement team to support regular attendance.
- Implement with fidelity, a comprehensive, evidence-based, Tier 3 intervention program to support students at risk.

Leadership

Leaders are enthusiastic advocates for the improvement direction the school is taking, with leadership roles distributed through the school allowing interested staff opportunities to lead others.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Provided with frequent opportunities across a range of roles for staff to undertake leadership positions, aspirant leaders are supported with professional development through the Emerging and Team Leaders: Primary program.
- Change is implemented in a strategic, timely and inclusive manner with a focus on student success. Staff are supported to understand the need and the evidence base of the intended change.
- Student leadership is diverse and valued with a range of initiatives established. Students across the school are provided with chances to lead, support others and share feedback.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Engage staff and community in developing the new strategic plan. Develop a shared understanding of the school's vision and priorities. Set targets and strategies aligned to the vision and priorities. Ensure a clear alignment between the strategic and operational plans.
- Develop instructional leaders and formalise processes to provide professional learning and support to staff for the implementation of agreed pedagogical practices and whole-school programs, with a focus on consistency and low variance teaching.
- Ensure all staff participate in regular performance development maintaining a balance of accountability, support and feedback on performance.

Use of resources

Processes for resource deployment and workforce management are strategic. The alignment of resources to both long-term and short-term planning is reflective of the identified needs of the school and its students.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The acting manager corporate services (MCS) is being provided with support and professional learning to ensure sound financial processes while the substantive MCS is on extended leave.
- The school's resources are significantly augmented through the sourcing and approval of substantial grants that support programs and operations.
- Sound processes and practices are established for managing financial and human resources. An effective Finance Committee assists with financial oversight. Resource allocation is responsive, ensuring resources are directed to where they are most needed.
- Workforce planning is responsive to the needs of the school, acknowledging student needs, the impacts of staffing and changes to enrolments.
- The work of the P&C supports the school programs and opportunities for students.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Ensure that operational plans include the identification of intended resource costings creating a clear link between the strategic plan priorities, operational planning and the allocation of resources.
- Within workforce planning, allocate sufficient time for leaders to support the priorities of literacy and numeracy.

Teaching quality

A commitment to continue to develop a performance culture around low variance, evidence-based, whole-school approaches is evident. Staff have a shared ownership for the success of all students.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Comprehensive curriculum guides support the implementation of consistent curriculum and whole-school programs.
- Established, collaborative planning structures support the intent to have consistency of curriculum delivery, instruction, assessment practices, moderation and differentiation of learning for students.
- Assessments and reporting on student achievement and progress inform both students and parents. This includes a collaborative approach to individual education planning for SAER.
- Staff are beginning to understand the research and evidence base for the Science of Learning.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Align the expectations of staff in pedagogical practice to the Department's Teaching for Impact ensuring consistency and connectedness of teaching practice through the development of a whole-school instructional model.
- Enhance instructional support for teachers through the implementation of an agreed process for observation and feedback as a driver of quality teaching.
- Ensure literacy and numeracy leaders have the support and resources to guide evidence-based, consistent practice with a view to improving student achievement and progress.
- Continue a focus on developing consistency in the delivery of daily reviews across phases and learning areas of the school.

Student achievement and progress

Staff can identify gaps in student learning and understanding and plan to support their improvement and progress. Systemic NAPLAN¹ data is collectively analysed by staff and further guides classroom planning.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- In-school moderation processes are in place, utilising the School Curriculum and Standards Authority Judging Standards and the Brightpath tool, to support the accuracy of grade allocation and reporting.
- Longitudinal data sets are collected and used to develop individual and cohort profiles enabling tracking of student academic progress.
- An assessment schedule informs staff of the type and timing of data collection. Reading and mathematics assessments, On-entry Assessment, phonics and speech screening data is reviewed and analysed at the classroom level to identify areas of achievement and guide planning for improvement.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue with the intent for whole-school analysis of a greater range of systemic and school-based data to inform teaching practices.
- As planned, increase the number and range of valid, norm-referenced assessments including accessing Acadience Learning.

Reviewers

Craig Skinner
Director, Public School Review

Andrea Macfarlane
Principal, Yangebup 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 relationships and partnerships, leadership and teaching quality domains only, is scheduled for Term 4, 2024. You will be formally notified in the 2 terms leading up to your school's scheduled follow up review.

Should the school meet the Standard for these domains, a full Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, will be scheduled for 2026.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy