



Department of  
Education

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Public education  
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# York District High School

## Public School Review

February 2021



# PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

## Purpose

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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 its 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 school review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the Principal, the Chair of the School Council/Board and the regional Director of Education.

## Expectations of schools

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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

together with the Funding Agreement for Schools.

## Public School Review – The Standard

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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.



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## Context

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York District High School is located in the historic town of York, approximately 97 kilometres east of Perth within the Wheatbelt Education Region. The first European settlers reached the Avon Valley in 1831 and a small settlement was established by 1836, with York State School opening in 1898.

There are currently 409 students enrolled at the school from Kindergarten to Year 10.

The school became an Independent Public School in 2013. It has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 918 (decile 9).

The Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) supports the school by coordinating a number of social and fundraising events, and operates the school's canteen and uniform shop. Funding raised by the P&C is used to purchase equipment and resources for the school.

School Board representation is diverse with a range of members from across the school and wider community. The Board is proactive in school governance, engaging actively in its support of the school's strategic direction.

## School self-assessment validation

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The Principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

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

- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided a transparent account of the school context and operations in addressing its improvement agenda.
- A culture of reflective school assessment as the foundation for effective planning and continuous improvement is developing at the strategic and operational (phase) levels.
- A range of performance evidence was selected for the school self-assessment submission.
- The school's self-assessment was enhanced by conversations held with members of the school community during the validation visit.
- Staff engagement and collaboration in the school assessment process is evidence of developing practices of reflection and improvement.

The following recommendations are made:

- Ensure selections for the ESAT submission provide the best evidence for judgements made.
- Use the ESAT as a repository for performance evidence as part of the ongoing school self-assessment process.

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### Relationships and partnerships

The current leadership team have worked hard to foster positive and respectful relationships and partnerships within the school and the broader community.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Community views are analysed in reviewing school performance and effectiveness. Regular, clear and honest communication is developing alignment between school and community perception.
- There is a renewed commitment from leaders and staff to creating honest and authentic partnerships with stakeholders, for the mutual benefit of students and the wider community.
- An increased focus on the effectiveness and alignment of methods of communication has seen a significant increase in access to information by members of the community.
- There is a broad range of partnerships with businesses, community groups and support personnel, engaging students to optimise the conditions for learning.

#### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to build relationships with the Aboriginal community to improve cultural responsiveness.
- Seek to enhance engagement with the Shire of York to explore mutually beneficial avenues.

### Learning environment

Establishing and maintaining a safe, orderly and inclusive learning environment is a priority for the leaders. Adherence to whole-school processes and procedures are viewed as essential to establish the conditions desired.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Implementation of the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) framework is in its early stages. Clarity of language and common practice, together with the explicit teaching of expected behaviours, are key foci.
- The safe and consistent environment afforded by the ACCESS program has resulted in marked improvements in attendance, behaviour and levels of engagement for students.
- Processes and procedures are in place that enable students to be identified and supported actively, to address individual needs.

#### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue implementation of the PBS framework to align behaviour management, school vision and classroom instructional strategies.
- Provide targeted professional learning to upskill staff in the essential elements of PBS.

## Leadership

Leaders demonstrate a unified purpose in establishing the pre-conditions for school and student success. They have articulated a clear assessment of current conditions, with a clear school improvement agenda and priorities for short-term and long-term attention.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- There is a developing model of distributed leadership to support a focus on school priorities. Staff from different learning areas and teaching and learning teams are encouraged to share roles and responsibilities to enable representation across the school.
- Leaders acknowledge the current position and focus on school improvement as central in future strategic direction. Alignment between strategic and operational plans is in development.
- Performance and development processes have been refined, with goals designed to increase meaningful accountability. Staff receive feedback and are more confident to reflect on practices and seek support.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to develop alignment between policies, planning and practices to enhance teaching and learning and the impact on student achievement and progress.
- Articulate clearly, the expectations, support and accountabilities associated with 'The York Way' to optimise the sustainability of school operations.

## Use of resources

Resource management and deployment is appropriate to address the needs of current students and future directions. Broad staff involvement in the Finance Committee ensures understanding and oversight of financial management practices.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Targeted initiatives and student characteristics funding support programs to optimise student outcomes. A review of the disability resource allocation has resulted in an increased number of students assessed and funded at the school.
- The workforce plan has been the catalyst to enact processes that ensure the alignment of staffing appointments to current need.
- Professional learning is developing staff understanding and oversight of financial management practices.
- Development of the asset replacement schedule has enhanced the accounting for school resources and monitoring of long-term needs.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Ensure continued alignment between resource allocation and business plan priorities.
- Ensure targeted resource allocation for staff professional learning.

## Teaching quality

The school improvement agenda initiated under the current leadership is committed to the development of a culture of high performance. There is an identified need for teaching to be targeted to student need through consistent whole-school approaches.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- There is awareness of the need for effective use of assessment data to determine student progress. This is complemented by improved staff perceptions of accountability for student performance.
- An emerging confidence of staff in the moderation of school-based assessments through tools such as Brightpath, has positively impacted teaching and learning.
- Collaborative time is timetabled where possible for staff to plan together, moderate, utilise and devise common assessment tasks.
- Students in the school engage in STEM<sup>1</sup> activities such as the Synergy Schools Solar Challenge, with regular success at the regional and State levels.
- Differentiated practice and specialised programs, including MiniLit, Promoting Literacy Development (PLD) and Education Perfect, cater for the individual needs of students.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Formalise processes for staff collaboration to align school planning, action and assessment focused on the impact on student achievement and progress from Kindergarten to Year 10.
- Develop a database to capture relevant student achievement data to demonstrate progress and inform school, class and individual planning from Kindergarten to Year 10.

## Student achievement and progress

Long-term NAPLAN<sup>2</sup> student performance data are variable. As a consequence, leaders are facilitating processes to focus on teaching pedagogy and data analysis to inform plans for improvement.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Longitudinal NAPLAN achievement data was consistently at or above like schools in Years 7 and 9.
- Implementation of the OLNA<sup>3</sup> pathway plan to prepare students for each round of OLNA has impacted student attainment positively.
- Early years' teachers use On-entry Assessment Program data to identify student capacity and inform planning for literacy and numeracy. This is complemented by student PLD profiles to monitor and communicate achievement and progress.
- Staff are developing an appreciation of the need for standardised data sets to inform planning and for validation of teacher judgements.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Incorporate staff analysis of student achievement data to inform performance and development processes.

## Reviewers

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Brett Hunt  
**Director, Public School Review**

James Milne  
**Principal Advisor**  
**Teaching, Learning and Early Childhood**  
**Peer Reviewer**

## Endorsement

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Based on this report, I endorse the commendations and recommendations made by the review team regarding your school's performance.

The timeframe for the next review process focusing on the Learning Environment and Teaching Quality domains only, will be Term 1, 2022.

The next Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, will be scheduled for Term 1, 2024.



Stephen Baxter  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**

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## References

- 1 Science, technology, engineering, mathematics
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 3 Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment