



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Halls Creek District High 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 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 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 in student achievement and progress.

The Statement is between; the Department of Education, 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, as well as the Professional Performance Review of the Principal.

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

Halls Creek District High School is located in the Kimberley Education Region. Students are enrolled from Halls Creek and the communities of Mardiwa Loop and Nicolson Block. Some students commute from family communities up to 40 kilometres from Halls Creek, Koongie Park Station (20 kilometres) and Lamboo Station (40 kilometres).

The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage is less than 700 (decile 10).

Halls Creek District High School currently enrolls 380 students from Kindergarten to Year 12.

Recent capital works programs have improved the learning environment and there are more capital works planned.

Important partnerships with Technical and Further Education (TAFE), Bina-waji Nyurra-nga Aboriginal Corporation, Blina and Mryoodah stations and the Department of Primary Industries Aboriginal Pastoral Program were initiated in 2020.

Community support for the school is demonstrated through the work of the School Council.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a transparent school self-assessment, highlighting aspects of school operations and some planning considerations for improvement.

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

- The Standard was used to support self-assessment processes in preparation for the Public School Review.
- In preparing the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission, staff were invited to participate in reflective processes to support a shared understanding of the level of performance across all domains.
- Members of the school community, students and staff, who were invited to engage in interviews during the validation visit, provided a range of feedback to complement judgements on school performance outlined in the ESAT submission.

The following recommendations are made:

- To strengthen future school review processes, ensure they are framed by school planning comprised of vision and purpose statements, structured business continuity plans and specific operational planning for school priorities.
- Engage staff, the School Council and community stakeholders in regular cycles of self-assessment, guided by target timelines described in school planning.
- Critical to ongoing self-assessment processes, explicit attention should be given to the quality of evidence used to confirm indicators of improved performance.
- Embed the language of self-assessment across all aspects of the school's ongoing reflective processes, with an intentional narrative on how the school is performing.
- Empower all staff, students and stakeholders to be defined by optimism and opportunity in meeting the challenges of school improvement.

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Relationships and partnerships

Successful school cultures result from strong school/community partnerships. Rhetoric on building positive and proactive relationships has not been fortified with clarity of leadership intention required for such relationships to become a reality.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- There is an understanding that authentic relational collaboration is an organisational imperative that needs to be nurtured by the leadership team.
- Staff participate in priority team and cluster meetings. These meetings are an important structural necessity if staff are to benefit from shared knowledge, skills and experience.
- Leadership and the staff acknowledge the empowering impact of creating genuine opportunities for collaborating with students and parents in the spirit of school improvement.
- The need for the school leadership to play a central role in building interagency collaboration is recognised.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Capitalise on local community knowledge and expertise to truly engage community groups and allied agencies. Use influential community voices to advocate for a strengthened community/school partnership.
- Consolidate existing communication options within the school and between the community to ensure timely and transparent messaging that meets the diverse audience needs.
- Explore options to augment and/or replace existing survey methodologies with tools and processes that provide timely and instructive feedback to and from staff, community and students.
- Support the continuity of the Aboriginal Advisory Council to encourage parent involvement in school and community based activities.

Learning environment

The school is aware of the relationship between student attendance and student success. However, existing processes and structures have yet to give rise to trending improvement.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A whole-school Positive Behaviour Support program has been established. The role of staff in building school-wide consistency when managing students' behaviour is gaining momentum.
- The learning environment is strengthened by staff/student relationships. Students acknowledged the supportive and caring approach exhibited by the team approach between teachers, Aboriginal and Islander education officers and education assistants.
- The staff, in recognising the importance of creating a culturally responsive and engaging learning environment, is seeking to create opportunities to incorporate the wisdom of community cultural advisors.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Establish a dedicated school leadership role to maintain a relentless focus on monitoring strategies for school-wide and individual plans for student attendance and engagement.
- Review processes for identifying, developing and tracking documented plans for students at educational risk.
- Maintain a year-round cultural induction process for newly appointed staff.

Leadership

Successful schools have highly structured, sustainable organisational processes. Evidence of a defined school direction with leadership expectations underpinning school-wide professional and personal accountabilities, has yet to be established.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The leadership team has a respectful and genuine commitment to the needs of students and staff as they deal with the day-to-day responses to a complex range of challenges.
- Staff have a desire to be part of a professional development culture, which includes peer observations in combination with structured instructional feedback from school leaders.
- There is an acceptance of the need to lead a change agenda. The completion and implementation of the school's business plan has been identified as a priority.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- The Principal to review the leadership team structure, roles and responsibilities.
- The leadership team to build an unwavering commitment to a school-wide agreed set of shared beliefs and values. Articulate a clarity of purpose and direction with an intention to achieve a spirit of collective empowerment.
- Establish mechanisms for effective change management through creating an ethos of timely responses where the need to adjust, adapt or change is required.
- Establish expectations to ensure investment in staff professional learning is complemented by agreed expectations and responsibilities that builds collective staff and leadership accountability.
- Leaders to work alongside staff to develop K-12 operational plans with explicit improvement targets and milestones to monitor progress. Design a system of structures and processes to withstand unforeseen staff and leadership changes.

Use of resources

For financial and budgetary processes to be effective, knowledge of school resource management is crucial. In simple terms, the leadership needs to have a deep understanding of the probity and governance requirements for decisions relating to school resource deployment.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Whilst there is some understanding of the student characteristics and targeted initiative funding, there is limited alignment between funding and school priorities, that explicitly support teaching and learning processes.
- There is an understanding of a critical need to apply targeted recruitment and retention processes to attract and retain teachers and allied professionals, inclusive of Aboriginal staff, as part of the workforce plan.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- The leadership team to engage in professional learning to ensure strategic oversight of the school's budget and resource management decisions to maximise positive student outcomes.
- Establish resourcing links to ensure consistency in programs and continuity of connected teaching practice.
- Regularly review the impact of literacy intervention programs using data and relevant targets. Identify students to have access to evidence-based, culturally appropriate, selected resources.
- Engage in robust and strategic workforce planning that identifies staffing gaps and seeks innovative recruitment strategies. Mitigate staff changes through mandated induction and handover processes.

Teaching quality

Whole-school lesson design requires content sequencing between all phases of learning, particularly in a district high school. Staff engagement in low variance connected teaching practice has been tentative.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff value informal mentoring processes emerging between some clusters of staff.
- Culturally responsive teaching practices are enhanced by taking advantage of available staff with cultural expertise and experience.
- There are pockets of enthusiasm for establishing continuity of teaching practice, at the year level and between phases of learning.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Develop, socialise and embed the 'Halls Creek Way' by promoting whole-school beliefs and values about how students learn best. Unambiguous school-wide expectations and intentional language should underpin all classroom planning processes and instructional feedback.
- Current operational plans need to be reviewed and improved with specific improvement targets and associated milestones. Conditions for staff to work collaboratively, to develop and embed K-6 operational plans, that explicitly link to the Western Australian Curriculum, to be a priority.
- Explicitly include whole-school planning and share effective, differentiated teaching and assessment practices in cluster meeting agendas. Use the meetings to build trust and confidence in peer observations.
- Review timetable structures and prioritise the allocation of collaborative planning time across all clusters.
- Facilitate processes that build teacher capacity through performance development, coaching and targeting professional learning opportunities.
- Review the impact of the existing mathematics program.
- For secondary students, ensure there is alignment between secondary learning programs and opportunities available for local community workplace learning experiences.

Student achievement and progress

The development of a reliable, comprehensive student data tracking cycle, used to inform teacher planning and student improvement targets, is yet to be achieved. The extent to which there is a school-wide understanding of collecting and analysing data is not clear from the evidence provided.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The use of the English as an Additional Language or Dialect Progress Map to support and inform teacher planning is evident.
- Curriculum leadership discussions that translate to coherently sequenced curriculum content have begun.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Drive an unwavering data driven focus on improving student achievement and progress across all learning areas. Update and embed a whole-school assessment schedule.
- Explore moderation options, including Brightpath, to inform teaching practice and accurate grade allocations.
- Use systemic, school-wide and classroom data collection to drive decision making regarding priority areas for improvement, documented plans and identification of targets.

Reviewers

Rebecca Bope
Director, Public School Review

Rod Lowther
Director, Public School Review

Endorsement

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 all domains is to be scheduled for Term 2, 2023.

The next Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, is to be scheduled for Term 2, 2025.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools