



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Atwell College

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

Opened in 2008, Atwell College is located 21 kilometres south of the Perth central business district, within the South Metropolitan Education Region.

The college's endorsed Education Support Program supports the unique educational and personal needs of students with a disability to maximise opportunities for academic engagement and achievement.

The college has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1008 (decile 4).

There are currently 972 students enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12. Independent Public School status was gained in 2011.

Community and parent involvement is encouraged through the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) with the College Board maintaining strategic oversight.

The first Public School Review of Atwell College was conducted in Term 1, 2020. This 2024 Public School Review report provides a current point of reference for the college's 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:

- The Principal and executive team prioritised undertaking the school review process in the best interests of the community and students, despite several changes to the leadership team structure over recent years.
- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission highlighted a clear alignment and focus to the Public School Review Standard.
- A feature of the ESAT was the articulation of authentic and sincere reflections about the school's performance, including the identification of future planned actions to progress the school's improvement journey.
- The leadership team led the self-assessment process with staff. There was transparent engagement of staff, students and community members with a broad range of views incorporated during the self-assessment and validation phases of the review.
- Staff, student, family and community engagement with the review team during validation meetings was open and undertaken in the spirit of supporting continued school improvement.

The following recommendations are made:

- Enhance whole-school self-assessment processes to ensure that the final step of asking 'how are we going', in relation to the work being undertaken, is clearly articulated and that analysis assesses the value of approaches.
- When submitting evidence, consider undertaking a comprehensive analysis and succinctly annotating the evidence in the ESAT, demonstrating the impact of the evidence that has been submitted.

Relationships and partnerships

Inclusive, safe and student-centred approaches reflect the college ethos of students first. Internal and external partnerships ensure that college staff and students contribute to, and are supported by, the local community.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Communication structures between staff and between the college and families support the delivery of transparent, timely and relevant information to all stakeholders.
- There is a shared commitment to seek feedback from parents, students and staff and to enacting changes where required. This is demonstrated through the recent collection of survey data using the Tell Them From Me platform.
- Partnerships with a suite of therapy providers, including Rocky Bay, support students enrolled in the endorsed Education Support Program with the provision of highly specialised therapy spaces.
- The College Board meets regularly and members have a sound understanding of their governance roles and responsibilities. Training is regularly held for Board members, including induction for new members.
- The P&C provides a forum for parents and community members and is a vital means of connection between the college, its leaders and the wider community.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Explore further opportunities to engage and connect with local primary school students and staff throughout the Cockburn Central Education Network to highlight the strengths of the college.
- Build the presence of the college within the Cockburn community to understand and address declining enrolment numbers, linking community expectations and aspirations with programs and offerings.
- Enhance and embed the professional learning communities' collaborative structure, aligned to the vision and priorities of the college.

Learning environment

The positive learning environment is supported through the shared commitment of staff, students and the community to the college values of showing respect, striving to achieve and being responsible.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Resourcing at the college level, in cooperation with regional resources such as the Engage program, demonstrates the college's commitment to raise levels of student attendance to meet expected levels.
- A strong Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Committee, with representatives from all learning areas, leads the messaging with the college community on consistent application of behaviour expectations.
- Students affirm that their voice is valued in the determination of strategies and programs to meet their needs. They cite their involvement in PBS planning as an example of the college adopting their input.
- The endorsed Education Support program demonstrates best practice in planning for the learning needs of a large proportion of the student population. This includes those enrolled in mainstream curricula through the process of individualised planning for students with additional needs, supported by partnerships with the Department's Special Educational Need schools.
- Processes for managing and meeting the needs of students at educational risk are effective, privileging partnerships with students and families in planning and goal setting for educational growth.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Work with the Cockburn community, including local council resources and Elders, to enhance the delivery of a culturally responsive learning environment and practices.
- Using the established relationships with families, seek to build processes and strategies that foster, support and reward improved levels of regular attendance among students.
- Consider bespoke delivery of the You Can Do It or another fit for purpose social emotional learning program in the endorsed Education Support Program.

Leadership

Despite the challenges associated with changes in leadership there is cohesion and engagement with school improvement among staff, demonstrated by their commitment to working in collaboration.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A unified school vision is driven by a focus on quality teaching. There is a shared commitment to working collaboratively across the college in the area of instructional improvement.
- Lead allied professionals support consistency in practice and access to supports for all students. These staff are highly valued by students, families and the wider staff cohort.
- Opportunities to lead are provided to staff, including the provision of roles such as year coordinators, second in charge curriculum leaders and acting heads of learning areas. Engagement with the Western Australian Future Leaders Framework assists leaders to guide the development of the skills of aspirant staff.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Collectively define and document the responsibilities of leadership roles within the executive team and throughout the college's distributed leadership structure.
- Build a whole school understanding of agreed approaches to change management at the college, including transparency through consultation when seeking data driven improvements in student performance.
- Review the school improvement plan and clarify the college vision in consultation with staff, determining the best way to maximise staff understanding and engagement with the school's priorities.
- Implement and embed consistent performance and development processes with all staff, with a focus on supporting the improvements in areas of college priority including high impact instruction.

Use of resources

The Principal, manager corporate services (MCS) and leadership team have aligned financial decision making in responding to enrolment trends and a curriculum and support profile that meets the needs of current students is emerging.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Finance Committee assists the Principal and MCS with the construction of the annual budget, and financial reports noted by the Board aid the transparent management of college resources.
- The school has had a period of augmented human resourcing while maintaining historical staffing and program structures. The current focus seeks to better balance the salaries and cash budget.
- Programming and staffing in the endorsed Education Support Program is aligned with the needs of the child. The provision of specialist technology and equipment ensures that the program is well resourced.
- The college's focus on embedding processes that are not reliant on specific personnel is assisting to provide a sustainably resourced structure.
- Devices and related ICT¹ are provided to students through class sets of iPads and dedicated laboratories, prioritised on the premise that no one should be disadvantaged.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to define and embed transparency in decision making aligned to student characteristics funding, ensuring there are clear defensible links between funding and programs that meet the needs of students.
- Engage with the Department's student-centred funding model team to review and plan for the effective deployment of resources with current and projected enrolment data, and the needs of current students as a focus.

Teaching quality
Led by a cohort of teacher ‘champions’, there is a commitment by staff and leaders to deliver consistency in evidence-based lesson design and instructional practice throughout the college, aligned to Teaching for Impact.
Commendations
<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating Teach Well high impact instructional strategies alongside the agreed iSTAR model has assisted in building the instructional leadership and capability of staff, reducing variability in many learning areas. Professional learning supports staff at point of need in their implementation of High Impact Teaching Strategies. Regular staff surveys gauge the comfort levels of teachers in applying these in classrooms. Six staff have commenced in the Teach Well Instructional Lead Fellowship, exemplifying the college’s commitment to the provision of coaching and feedback to all staff on their teaching practice. A suite of cross curricula professional learning communities are established to link classroom practice and approaches to college strategic priorities to the approaches of individual learning areas. The endorsed Education Support Program, specialist sport and school-based academic extension programs enable targeted individualised approaches to differentiating the learning to serve student need. The use of student learning profiles and systematic and inclusive documented education planning for students, including application of the ABLEWA² curriculum, assists staff to support individual students.
Recommendations
<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver coaching opportunities and feedback for staff on their teaching practice through trained staff following their participation in the Teach Well Instructional Lead Fellowship. Review and refine school-wide approaches to formalise the implementation of a whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy support for students within operational plans that contain aspirational targets.
Student achievement and progress
There is a clear commitment on the part of senior and middle leaders to the use of student achievement and progress data as the evidence base for decision making throughout the college.
Commendations
<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A focused effort, including professional learning for staff timetabled to ATAR³ courses, has resulted in a rise in the school’s median ATAR of over 20 points, supporting community confidence in the college. Against the changing and broadening landscape of post-school destinations, staff have undertaken individualised student counselling involving family members to match students to meaningful pathways. Endorsed Education Support Program students have achievements tracked through individualised data, aligned to ABLEWA, ensuring they meet progress goals in personal growth, academic and social domains. Strategies implemented to support students at risk of not achieving OLNA⁴ have resulted in growth to 9 per cent of students attaining the qualification. WACE⁵ achievement rates are comparable to like schools at 9 per cent. Staff are committed to communicating openly with students and families regarding academic progress and achievements. Students report feeling informed about the progress they are making in their courses.
Recommendations
<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide professional learning that supports the continued growth of the leadership team in data literacy. Ensure that staff responsibility for data collection and analysis is articulated in a defined cycle which incorporates the actions to be taken in the wake of data analysis. Define a whole-school integrated approach to the implementation of effective intervention, ensuring that allied professional support for students is targeted at point of need.

Reviewers	
Rohan Smith Director, Public School Review	Debra Unwin Principal, Dianella Secondary College 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 use of resources domains only, is scheduled for Term 2, 2025. 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 2027.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Information and communications technology
- 2 Abilities Based Learning Education, Western Australia
- 3 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
- 4 Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
- 5 Western Australian Certificate in Education