



Department of
Education

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Balingup Primary School

Public School Review

May 2021



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 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

The Statement of Expectation (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.



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Context

Balingup Primary School is located in the Shire of Donnybrook, approximately 230 kilometres south of Perth, within the Southwest Education Region. Surrounded by forests, vineyards and orchards, the town of Balingup is situated at the entrance to the Blackwood River Valley.

The original school building was established in 1895 and has historical significance in the town. The grounds are well established and offer large open play areas, as well as fruit bearing trees.

Currently, there are 71 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school became an Independent Public School in 2015. It has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1061 (decile 2).

There is strong community support for the school, demonstrated through the work of the School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C). The school is also involved in various community events, such as Balingup Community Garden and Small Farm Field Day.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a school self-assessment with evidence provided against each domain of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework.

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

- The Principal, together with school staff and community members, is working to build on the school's successful improvement journey in recent years using collaborative school self-assessment as the foundation for future improvement.
- Opportunities for staff contribution were provided, to identify areas of celebration and evidence to support each domain of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework and student achievement and progress.
- The school self-assessment and Public School Review process was viewed as a positive learning experience, bringing awareness to school strengths and highlighting areas for ongoing school development.
- The Electronic School Assessment Tool submission and feedback received during the validation visit provided an understanding of the school context and operations, in addressing its improvement agenda.
- There is evidence that staff share a sense of ownership for student success, and professional and personal responsibilities and expectations well understood.
- Representatives of the School Board participated positively in the validation visit, demonstrating support for the school's strategic direction.

The following recommendations are made:

- Further refine the selection of evidence to ensure the best reflection of the school's performance in each domain of the Standard.
- Continue to succinctly analyse the evidence provided, with alignment to clear planned improvements.
- Progress staff engagement in systematic school self-assessment processes, using data and evidence to drive decision making and support high performance and high care.

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Relationships and partnerships

Building a school culture based on trust, collaboration and respect is a clear priority, contributing to a sense of staff cohesion and openness to new ideas and strategies for improvement. The school's high regard in the community is fostered through strong community partnerships and authentic relationships with families.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff collaborate in fortnightly staff meetings, school development days, team teaching and peer observation.
- National School Opinion Survey data indicate high levels of staff and parent satisfaction with the school.
- Internal communication is prioritised to build a sense of team and strengthen accountability and efficiency in achieving goals and consistent approaches.
- Use of a variety of communication methods, including the Seesaw application, parent meetings, and formal reports, is viewed by families as effective.
- The School Board has strong community membership and actively supports the school's strategic directions.
- The school engages extensively with the community through events and organisations such as the Small Farm Field Day, Medieval Carnival, Volunteer Fire Brigade, Balingup Arts and Crafts Fair, Balingup Progress Association and the Community Garden.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to prioritise the development of a collaborative culture and structured staff collaboration focused on teaching and learning and student achievement.
- Progress intentions to engage School Board members in professional learning, and build membership.

Learning environment

The school's vision of an "Engaged, skilled and reflective school staff facilitating successful and happy students, with successful and happy futures", underpins the development of a safe and inclusive environment focused on maximising student learning and wellbeing outcomes.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school has collaboratively developed a Positive Behaviour Management policy. Key values are being embedded across the school to support student outcomes.
- A valued school chaplain provides pastoral care for students and together with a number of community volunteer mentors, contributes strongly to student wellbeing.
- SAER are identified, supported and monitored for improvement. The school psychologist provides support for planning for SEN¹ students. IEP²s are developed in consultation with families, in line with student needs.
- There is a focus on cultural responsiveness through the development of positive relationships with local Noongar elders and the provision of rich Aboriginal cultural learning experiences for students.
- Student voice is supported through student-elected councillors, student surveys and input of ideas into the school garden.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to build connections with local Aboriginal elders and enrich students' knowledge of and reconciliation with Aboriginal culture and history.
- Continue to develop student voice, including the provision of opportunities for feedback to staff on the impact of classroom teaching on learning.

Leadership

Strategic directions are articulated clearly in a collaboratively developed business plan, reflective of the Department's strategic expectations, with emphasis on skills for the future. Staff are supportive of strategic goals and demonstrate a desire to build on a period of successful school improvement evident in recent years.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Alignment exists between business plan priorities, detailed operational plans and classroom plans.
- Expectations for the implementation of strategies and programs outlined in operational plans are clear, with accountability measures evident in assessment timelines and the analysis of individual and group data.
- Consultative processes are in place for the development of new school initiatives and programs. Student data, along with teacher observations and judgements, inform the evaluation of program success.
- The implementation of peer observation is evident, with staff trust contributing to the effective sharing of knowledge and feedback on practice. A range of skilled teachers provide support and mentoring for colleagues to enhance pedagogy and practice.
- Staff are encouraged to access leadership opportunities based on personal interest, in line with school priorities. Teaching staff are allocated additional time to support leadership undertakings and contribute to school improvement.
- Performance management processes are in place for staff to reflect on performance and support ongoing development. Professional learning is identified to develop staff capacity in line with needs.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to develop peer observation, including the structuring of feedback and identification of focus areas linked to agreed pedagogical practices.
- Progress instructional leadership through a shared understanding of the implementation of whole-school approaches and consistent practices linked to student achievement data.
- Continue to build and focus on effective school self-assessment and improvement processes. Increase collaborative analysis of data and reflection against operational and strategic plans.

Use of resources

The manager corporate services and Principal collaborate effectively to ensure sound financial management and decision making, and the effective allocation of resources to maximise student learning and wellbeing.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school budget is developed in line with business plan priorities, with resourcing requirements outlined clearly in operational plans.
- Student characteristics and targeted initiatives funding is used effectively through engagement of the chaplain, expansion of curriculum offerings and by enabling the full provision of Kindergarten hours.
- Cost centres are reviewed regularly, with Finance Committee meetings taking place each term, and as required.
- The sustainability of technology is planned for carefully within the school budget to ensure resources are maintained and updated through systematic equipment renewal processes.
- The school engages in workforce planning, utilising tools within the School Resourcing System to determine funding for current staffing and additional requirements for future needs.

Teaching quality

Staff demonstrate a shared focus on maximising student learning. Teaching strategies and programs are research-based and determined in collaboration with teaching staff. Consultation and feedback opportunities are contributing to a sense of shared decision making and ownership of school programs and practices.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Collaborative planning and completion of moderation tasks supports teachers' identification of strengths and areas for development of cohorts and individual students.
- An allocated staff member collates data from a range of assessments across the school and shares information with teachers to inform classroom planning.
- The school prioritises the individualisation of learning programs to meet student needs within multi-age group settings. New curriculum offerings in drama and dance are valued by students and families.
- The recent implementation of iMaths is focused on improved differentiation. Currently in a trial phase, program efficacy is to be collaboratively determined based on student achievement data.
- Professional learning needs are identified through a combination of performance management and whole-school planning. Network opportunities and school visits are used to expand staff skills and knowledge in key programs and practices.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to embed whole-school approaches and develop consistent practices based on agreed pedagogy and teaching expectations.

Student achievement and progress

A strong improvement agenda over recent years, focused on optimising teaching and student achievement, has provided a strong foundation for data and evidence-based decision making. Staff engage in the analysis of data at the individual and cohort level. System and school-based data are used to guide whole-school decisions on the efficacy of teaching programs and practices.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A whole-school self-assessment schedule is supporting the timely and systematic collection of assessment data, including NAPLAN³, On-entry Assessment Program, Diana Rigg Promoting Literacy Development screens, Oxford Wordlist, South Australian Spelling Test, Mathematics placement testing, Brightpath and ACER⁴ tests.
- Year 3 2019 NAPLAN Grammar and Punctuation achievement was significantly above like schools.
- NAPLAN 2019 Year 3 and 5 Reading achievement was above that of like schools.
- NAPLAN Year 3 Writing achievement in 2019 was significantly above that of like schools.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Progress intentions to introduce an intervention program for literacy, such as MultiLit.
- Continue to focus on consistent implementation of Brightpath, and upskilling staff in its use.
- Continue to monitor student progress regularly at the individual and cohort level in all learning areas, through analysis of systemic and school-based data.

Reviewers

Kim McCollum
Director, Public School Review

Michael Smith
Principal, East Manjimup 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 scheduled for Term 2, 2024.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Special Educational Need
- 2 Individual Education Plan
- 3 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 4 Australian Council *for* Educational Research