Shaping the future
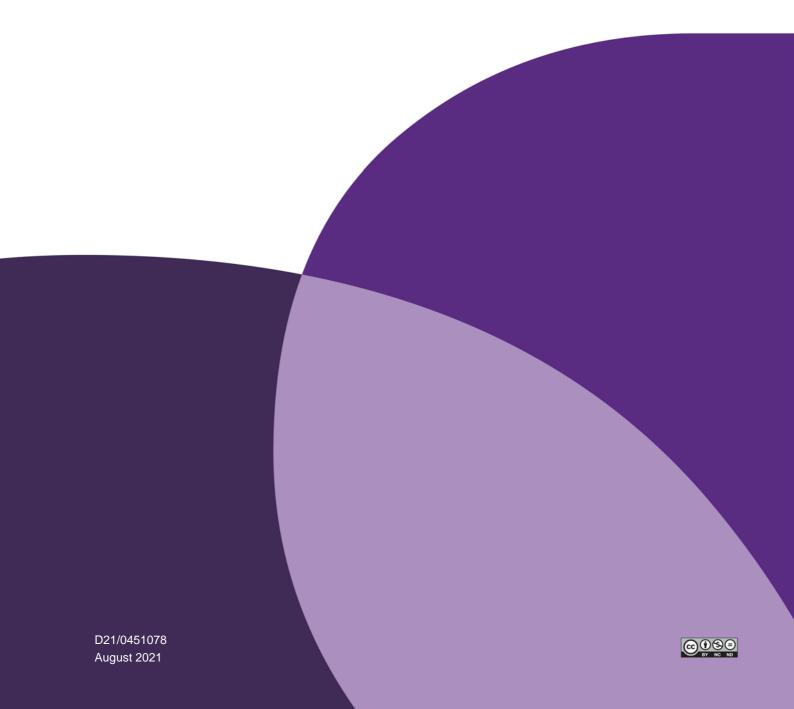
Palmyra Primary School

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 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

Palmyra Primary School opened in 1913 and is located approximately 20 kilometres south-west of the Perth central business district, within the South Metropolitan Education Region.

The school boasts well maintained grounds in addition to heritage buildings that date back to the time the school first opened.

Currently, there are 525 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1086 (decile 2).

In April 2020, the Director General commissioned a review of the school, which was the catalyst in formulating the improvement agenda in preparation for this Public School Review.

Community support for the school is demonstrated through the work of the School Council and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C). The P&C is actively engaged in raising funds that go towards school projects and resources, including solar panels, air conditioning and playground equipment.

P&C and School Council members advocate strongly for the current direction of the school.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive, rigorous and succinct school self-assessment.

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

- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided an account of the current school context, student and school performance, and planning priorities.

- The presentation of the ESAT submission provided clarity for reviewers in its structure and ability to 'snapshot' essential elements and analyses of evidence.

- A range of interrelated and credible evidence was selected for analysis.

- Evidence and analyses substantiated progress in response to changes mandated in the commissioned review.

- Alignment was apparent between the evidence provided and the Standard for each domain of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework.

- Preparation for the Public School Review provided an opportunity to consider the significant changes as a result of the commissioned review and its impact.

- General satisfaction with what has been achieved was evident, together with an understanding of the need to focus on embedding actions to create sustainable practice across the school.

- A cross-section of school leaders, teachers, allied professionals, students, parents and community representatives elaborated on the evidence described in the submission, during the validation visit.

The following recommendations are made:

- Continue to review, articulate and embed the consistent practices that have been captured in the current improvement agenda.

- Use the ESAT as a repository for ongoing school self-assessment information aligned to the Standard.

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Relationships and partnerships

The school acknowledges that effective working relationships are the key to building a positive culture. It is implementing strategies to maintain and affirm the positive culture with community members.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school community is welcoming and responsive to all cultures, with a strong focus on building and fostering relationships with the Aboriginal community.

- Partnerships have been developed within the education community and with families to assist in the development of evidence-based, connected practice, to build improvements in literacy in the early years.

- A range of communication platforms is used to ensure clear communications are evident, both within the school and with key stakeholders. Workshops for parents ensure access and understanding.

- Staff agreements and protocols for communication have been developed collaboratively to optimise engagement and strengthen the school improvement focus.

- A positive climate, based on trust and respect between staff, has been developed. There is a focus on building relations that are constructive and purposeful. These relations are exemplified in the collaborative focus on core business by Professional Learning Teams (PLT).

- School governance is facilitated through School Council operations. Members are involved in guiding and supporting the school's strategic directions and understanding school and student performance.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Develop a contemporary, user-friendly website to communicate essential information and acknowledgments.

Learning environment

The school is focused on working with the community to foster a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment, providing high quality teaching and learning to ensure students progress to achieve their social, emotional and academic best.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Clarity of expected student behaviours to enhance a safe, caring and positive culture, has resulted from the adoption of the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) framework, with an encouraging impact on behaviour.

- A range of school-wide practices, including Be You, You Can Do It and Zones of Regulation, have been implemented to enhance social and emotional learning and health and wellbeing. These complement the PBS framework.

- Leaders, staff and external consultants have developed an effective Students at Educational Risk policy, ensuring clear guidelines on identification and a consistent approach to developing, resourcing and monitoring documented plans.

- Professional learning has enhanced staff understanding of both diagnosed and imputed disabilities and the adjustments required to support these students in teaching and learning programs.

- Outdoor learning spaces are viewed as adding value to the student learning experience. A nature playground is being installed to further enhance outside play.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Ensure explicit instruction of 'valued' behaviours as outlined in the PBS matrix.

- Extend the implementation of the You Can Do It program into Year 3 to Year 6.

Leadership

It is recognised in the school that leadership focused on quality teaching pedagogy and practice will have the greatest impact on student achievement and progress.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- School improvement planning has been aligned specifically to the mandated changes outlined in the 2020 commissioned review. Developed in consultation with staff and the School Council, 'Palmyra 2022 – Moving forward together' aligns with Department directions and SCSA[1] expectations.

- Operational planning, together with the Western Australian Curriculum, guide teachers' classroom planning, resulting in an improved school culture. The school is 'moving forward together' with greater teacher clarity and commitment to targeted school improvement.

- Leaders provide guidance and instructional support to staff, with professional review delivering performance feedback for staff. This has enhanced the development of consistency in the agreed instructional model.

- Staff are provided with opportunities and support to lead through a variety of roles. PLT leadership foci include high quality instructional leadership through developing and utilising the skills of staff. Team effectiveness, the power of collective teacher efficacy and elements of change management are priorities.

- Performance development goals are linked to business plan imperatives and PLT goals. These initiatives are enhanced by peer and line manager observations that provide performance feedback for staff.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to use peer observations to monitor evidence-based teaching practices aligned to the instructional model.

Use of resources

There is a concerted approach from the school to use resources, including staff time, expertise, funds, facilities and materials, in a targeted manner to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of all students.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- In response to directives from the commissioned review, the Finance and Administration team reviewed existing practices to ensure compliance to financial management policy and procedures. A financial handbook was developed and distributed to all staff with accompanying training and professional learning.

- Plans and budgets for physical resources and the replacement of assets align with the school plan and policy requirements.

- Diligent attention to resource management with stringent controls for budget expenditure and oversight are being enacted. An effective Finance Committee ensures resources are directed to documented school priorities.

- Ongoing guidance is provided by the Principal and manager corporate services to ensure staff are well informed and knowledgeable, with a transparent understanding of financial planning and transactions.

- Short and long-term planning support the development, implementation and monitoring of maintenance, improvement and replacement for facilities, ICT[2], equipment and buildings in prescribed timelines.

- An effective, well-communicated workforce plan is in place to ensure transparency regarding current and future levels of staffing aligned with school planning.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Embed systems for management of school resources to ensure compliance and consistency of procedures.

- Formalise succession planning for curriculum leaders, PLT leaders and deputy principals.

Teaching quality

Collaboration, self-improvement and reflective practices are priorities for staff to build high quality teaching practices in order to optimise learning for all students no matter what their starting point.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff are incorporating strategies to engage students in relevant learning experiences and clear learning intentions that are responsive to individual student's needs.

- Explicit teaching and instructional models are developing in classrooms, with quality data informing learning experiences that address identified student needs. Analysis of systemic and school-based data informs teaching plans.

- Productive and responsive PLTs have been established to support whole-school approaches in literacy and numeracy. Data are used effectively with teachers working collaboratively to make judgements about student progress and achievement.

- Phased professional learning and PLT peer observations provide a solid foundation for effective implementation and moderation of agreed instructional practices.

- A school assessment policy has been developed, outlining expectations and support for making fair and valid judgements. An assessment schedule with assessment tools informs decision making.

- Early Childhood Education staff use the National Quality Standard framework to self-assess and have a reflective approach to continuous improvement. A clear understanding of the need for balance between play-based and explicit teaching underpins an agreed philosophy.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Use existing teacher capability in differentiation to support colleagues to meet student learning needs. This is to be informed by analyses of systemic and school-based student achievement data.

Student achievement and progress

Long-term student performance data (2015 to 2019) in NAPLAN[3] are generally aligned closely to like schools.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- As a result of targeted attention and support, positive trends are evident in the alignment between student achievement and progress and teacher judgements.

- Moderation against NAPLAN, PAT[4] data and formal moderation against 'C' grade descriptors and exemplars has seen an improvement in teacher judgements.

- Staff collect and analyse a range of student performance data, including PAT and On-entry Assessment Program, for early detection of deficits in learning to inform planning for intervention.

- Staff demonstrate a commitment to student achievement through consistent processes to plan for, act on and assess student performance and progress.

- Improved data literacy and judgements of individual student achievement and progress have been used to provide feedback to teachers about their impact on student learning in relation to business plan targets.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to develop connected practice to improve consistency in delivering high impact teaching optimising student progress.

- Consolidate consistency in agreed instructional strategies to enhance student achievement and progress in reading and numeracy.

Reviewers	
Brett Hunt **Director, Public School Review** Rohan Smith **Director, Public School Review (Observer)**	Lynette Bates **Principal, Campbell 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 3, 2024.

Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References
1   School Curriculum and Standards Authority
2   Information and communications technology
3   National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
4   Progressive Achievement Tests