



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Mullaloo Heights 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](mailto:PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au)

## Context

Mullaloo Heights Primary School is located approximately 26 kilometres from the Perth central business district in the North Metropolitan Education Region.

The school opened in 1978 and gained Independent Public School status in 2015. Facilities are set within spacious grounds with trees providing a natural environment for the students to explore.

Currently, there are 253 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. Mullaloo Heights Primary School has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1069 (decile 2).

Positive community relationships culminate in support from the School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

## 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:

- A broad range of staff engaged in school self-assessment reflection and discussion prior to the school visit, including teaching and school support staff.
- A range of evidence relating to school practices and performance in each of the domains was submitted through the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT).
- Staff had input into whole-school self-assessment and decision making through a range of committees.
- During the validation visit, a cross-section of school leaders, teachers, support staff, students, parents and community members made contributions relating to claims and evidence provided in the ESAT.
- School Board members, parents and P&C representatives engaged enthusiastically in validation visit discussions, reflecting a strong sense of engagement and investment in the school's ongoing development.
- The school demonstrated a strong improvement agenda with a clear strategic direction for the ongoing development of student wellbeing and a culture of positive relationships.

The following recommendations are made:

- Continue to engage a broad range of staff in future school review processes including for the selection and analysis of evidence, the identification of planned actions and contribution to the judgment of school performance. Ensure the focus is on 'how the school is going', not 'what it is doing'.
- Strengthen the alignment between school planning and improvement strategies and the analysis of school data on student achievement.

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### Relationships and partnerships

The school recognises the importance of building a culture that has at its core strong internal relationships, in combination with a respect for the values of the local community. It has a strong commitment to developing positive relationships with families, staff and students that are founded on trust.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- An invested School Board is supportive of the school and the Principal. Members demonstrate a willingness to collaborate and draw on professional and personal knowledge and skills as part of their school governance responsibility.
- The school has a well-ordered and harmonious tone, creating a trusting and respectful ethos conducive to student learning as well as a productive workplace.
- Communication is promoted through a range of platforms including: parent information booklets, weekly whole-school meetings, fortnightly newsletters, Facebook and the school website.
- Student voice is documented in the business plan and expanded on through operational planning.
- Opportunities for staff to collaborate provide an ongoing focus to promote deeper, value adding reflective practices in teaching, assessment and moderation.
- A partnership with Giggling Geckos, provides a strong presence with a growing number of student numbers accessing the service.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Plan for the Principal and the newly appointed School Board chair to jointly attend the Department's School Board training.

### Learning environment

Mullaloo Heights Primary School has developed a cohesive ethos and strong culture of wellbeing, inclusion and safety. Evidence indicates students feel a strong sense of connection and belonging to the school.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The learning environment reflects an understanding of the importance of creating a safe place for learning where students want to attend.
- Whole-school programs have been implemented to support students in their ongoing social and emotional development. Recently becoming an 'Act, Belong, Commit' school, associated activities and events provide further avenues for students and staff to engage positively.
- The school acknowledges they are working with '21st century students' who require careful nurturing through challenging times.
- Teachers are well-versed in the SAER<sup>1</sup> processes. Referrals are evidenced-based with tracking and targeted support carried out in a timely manner. MiniLit is used as an intervention program in Years 1 and 2.
- The school chaplain is an important adjunct to the range of options available for students to access support. The success of this program has led to plans for its extension through a Values segment at school assemblies.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Ensure the standard and management of documented plans are monitored for implementation and reviewed for impact.
- Further the staff wellbeing agenda through the implementation of a mental health policy and operational plan.

## Leadership

The leadership team, albeit forming with the recent arrival of a new Principal, is steadfast in its determination to provide a united image both in words and actions. The Principal has been emphatic in pursuing trust and positive relationships across the school.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Relationships between the school and the community are a product of good leadership and an astute reading of community needs. Staff and community engagement has been a priority and is evident in the development of the school vision, values and strategic directions.
- The leadership is alert to promoting staff with potential as future school leaders. This includes seeking avenues of professional learning that cater for the unique needs and/or interests of staff.
- There is compelling evidence that school support staff are valued and offered leadership opportunities.
- Phase leaders drive accountability within teams ensuring planning 'non-negotiables' are adhered to and their impact reported. These leaders form an important element of the school's change management model.
- Peer and line management class observation processes are an emerging factor in determining the professional growth and development needs of staff.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Strengthen the instructional leadership capacity of phase leaders to drive school improvement centred on consistent classroom practice with fidelity.
- Investigate the use of the Department's Future Leaders Framework for staff with leadership aspirations.

## Use of resources

The school has sound processes for resource management including budget development and monitoring in combination with astute asset management. There is evidence of clear alignment between school resourcing and student needs.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Principal and Manager Corporate Services have established the foundation for a firm and mutually respectful relationship. Appropriate balance between strategic and operational responsibilities have already been established.
- Staff understand the significance of decision making based on the needs of students. They are willing to adapt and adjust to ensure student needs are met whilst not compromising the budget.
- Timely provision of information to the School Board enables them to make informed comments and ask appropriate questions, strengthening the transparency and probity of decision making.
- There is evidence of effective decision making in the allocation of school resources to address the needs of students with special educational needs.
- Workforce management is underscored by a comprehensive workforce plan. Student enrolment has been historically stable, however, with an eye on enrolment growth, the school has embarked on a strategy to raise its early childhood profile in the local community through open days and social media.
- Efforts to update and renovate the school's physical assets to ensure it provides a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment have commenced.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Introduce credit cards for cost centre managers with a complementary spreadsheet to maintain a running record of expenditure for quick reference and quality assurance purposes.

## Teaching quality

Research shows that quality teaching, above all other influences, is the most important factor in student academic success. An ethos of shared ownership for the success of all students defines schools where quality teaching is evident and consistent across phases of learning and from class to class.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Shared beliefs about teaching and learning are widely discussed as a school priority. The school is well placed to build on the positive learning environment to achieve student academic success.
- The staff are motivated to identify research-based programs that will successfully lead to improved student achievement. Phase leaders' insight and elevated awareness of accountability is driving the school's determination to lift student achievement levels.
- The school's literacy and numeracy policies outline unambiguous expectations in terms of whole-school approaches. Teachers are required to prepare and follow scope and sequence documents to explicitly teach and assess student achievement.
- Underpinning a structured approach to professional learning, staff participate in mini-modelling and adhere to action learning protocols through in-house workshops and coaching peers.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Implement school-identified, evidence-based programs to address the desired improvements in student academic achievement.
- Consolidate consistent pedagogical practices across the school through regular check-ins, peer coaching and targeted instructional feedback.
- Ensure collaborative meeting agreements in relation to connected classroom practice are monitored for transfer to classroom practice.

## Student achievement and progress

It is recognised that optimal learning and wellbeing outcomes are achieved through a culture of high care and high performance. Sound judgements on student achievement and progress is best achieved through a robust blend of standardised and school-based assessments.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- An evidence-based, reflective culture is emerging, focusing on the impact of specific teaching strategies on student learning. Data is accepted as a legitimate pathway to discover specific gaps in student learning.
- Whilst the strategy for identifying students not making sufficient progress is appropriate, plans for more detailed analysis will ensure staff know the numbers, names and needs of students for all assessment areas.
- The comprehensive, robust and frank assessment of student achievement and progress presented, is a strong indication that the school accepts ownership of student performance. The breadth and depth of the analysis, while commendable, raise questions about the range of assessment tools used.
- While the trends in student achievement are well known to staff, less well known is the extent to which teaching practices, class by class, are adjusted in accordance with the needs of individual and cohort groups of students.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Review the range of tools used to collect student performance data. Further, for fidelity purposes, ensure all comparative school performance analyses are based on similar schools.
- Set interim, explicit student improvement targets and milestone check points for phase team meetings.

## Reviewers

Rod Lowther  
**Director, Public School Review**

Matthew Snell  
**Principal, Gooseberry Hill 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.

The timeframe for the next review process focusing on the Teaching Quality and Student Achievement and Progress domains only, will be Term 4, 2022.

The next Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, will be scheduled for Term 4, 2024.



Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**

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## References

1 Students at educational risk