Department of
Education
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North Cottesloe Primary School

Public School Review

December 2020

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 executive director.

Expectations of schools

For all Western Australian public schools, expectations are set out in either:

- the Delivery and Performance Agreement, which is an agreement between the Department (represented by the Director General), school (represented by the principal) and school board (represented by the school board chair); or
- the Principals' Statement of Expectations

together with the Funding Agreement for Schools.

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.

Context

Opened in 1913, North Cottesloe Primary School is located within walking distance of the ocean in the North Metropolitan Education Region, approximately 11 kilometres south-west of the Perth central business district.

North Cottesloe Primary School gained Independent Public School status in 2021, and has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1181 (decile 1). There are currently 385 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6.

The school is focusing on building a strong relationship with the School Board, with a joint commitment to targeted planning in the pursuit of improved student outcomes. The diverse composition of the Board offers an ideal blend of knowledge and experience to support the school.

A very supportive Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) assists the school considerably through the provision of significant funding for student resources and facilitating numerous community events.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

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

- Multiple sources of evidence were used to confirm judgements about school performance.

- The self-assessment acknowledged the challenges the school has faced in the last twelve months.

- During the validation process, the Principal clarified the school's future intentions for using the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) to advance the opportunity for establishing a school-wide self-assessment culture.

- The purpose of evidence-based self-assessment is embraced by the leadership team, ensuring a positive approach to promoting the validation phase of the review process.

- Leadership and staff added value to the conditions for school growth across all domains of the Standard.

- The engagement of staff through Professional Learning Communities, expanded upon during the validation phase, underscored the school's commitment to a sustainable self-assessment culture.

The following recommendations are made:

- Use the Standard to frame and augment the existing levels of staff reflective capacity.

- Backward map from the existing judgements and observations and analyses submitted in the school's self-assessment to build future planning intention statements.

- Give consideration to the volume of information presented in future ESAT submissions.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships

The need for a cultural shift has triggered a number of initiatives required to reset the relational agenda, both internally with staff and externally with the community.

Commendations	The review team validate the following:
	• The school's tone is orderly and harmonious, creating a trusting and respectful ethos conducive to student learning as well as a productive workplace.
	• The building of a cohesive, collegial and collaborative staff culture is based on explicit group norms promoted by the school's leadership.
	• There is an emerging mindset that gives momentum to the implementation of new initiatives, along with honest and realistic reflective processes.
	• Input from the School Board, P&C and Parent Liaison Committee offer a steady stream of information, advice and support to the school's improvement agenda.
Recommendations	The review team support the following:
	• Ensure that building quality, sustainable relationships, remains a high priority for all staff.
	• Embark on a strategic journey to build a reservoir of survey data to validate existing perceptions of a changing school culture.
	• Explore options for consistent, effective, contemporary communication processes between the school and families.

Learning environment

The school monitors the emotional health and wellbeing of its students, ensuring that the learning environment is inclusive and safe. Support structures and processes have been established to ensure that students' unique needs are met.

Commendations	The review team validate the following:
	• The school has an intentional approach to building student resilience, enterprise and a respectful appreciation of the local environment.
	• The school has a range of strategies for monitoring and triaging student intervention and Individual Education Plans (IEP).
	• The school chaplain provides a range of services to support the wellbeing of students.
	• Teachers and education assistants work in close partnership to ensure effective delivery of intervention and support programs.
	• Staff, students and parents have welcomed the numerous improvements made to the school's physical environment.
Recommendation	The review team support the following:
	• Explore options beyond 'low C' grades to identify students requiring an IEP.

Leadership

There is confidence in the Principal to lead the reforms necessary for the school to improve. Significant progress has been made, but the school's submission reminds all stakeholders, "there is still much to be done".

Commendations	The review team validate the following:
	• The Principal's narrative about the need to raise student achievement expectations is understood and accepted.
	• There are raised levels of optimism amongst staff based on their recognition of the need for a school improvement consciousness.
	• The leadership team aspires to be recognised as effective problem solvers, who are professionally self-aware and capable of making informed and timely needs-based decisions.
	• Change has been managed strategically by leaders at all levels to ensure depth of understanding and maximum impact on learning.
	• Graduate and new staff mentoring is seen as a genuine step forward in achieving staff-wide belief in, and commitment to, the school's direction.
Recommendations	The review team support the following:
	• Consolidate a common set of beliefs and norms that define the school's improvement and accountability ethos.
	• Consolidate the staff's curriculum knowledge and understanding of contemporary research on how students learn best.

Use of resources

The school's approach to the management of its budget has been measured and thoughtful, with the students' needs consistently at the centre. This means short, medium and long-term budget planning reflects the need to be prudent with budget expenditure.

Commendations	The review team validate the following:
	• Budget management is aligned to school planning, resulting in transparency of decision making.
	• The Finance Committee works effectively to ensure the school's financial position is robust and sustainable.
	• Funding for school-wide programs, targeted initiatives and staff development are discussed with the School Board.
	• Decision making is highly accountable and focused on student needs.
Recommendations	The review team support the following:
	• Continue to monitor the availability of digital learning options, with reliable information and communications technology support a priority.
	• Build on the workforce profile to develop a comprehensive workforce plan. It should be predicated on staff deployment and engagement decisions that are defined by student needs.

Teaching quality

Achieving a consistently high standard of teaching quality is a whole-school priority. This will involve, but is not limited to, strengthening curriculum knowledge, identifying and sharing best practice, lifting expectations for student achievement and providing informed feedback on teaching practice.

Commendations	The review team validate the following:
	• The school has identified and promoted the importance of a common pedagogical language between staff.
	• There is a focus on the importance of monitoring teaching practice for curriculum coherence and student learning continuity.
	• The introduction of Brightpath is one of a number of moderation initiatives that has been adopted to lift consistency of teacher judgements.
Recommendations	The review team support the following:
	• Monitor the standard of in-class data analysis to ensure a consistent level across the school.
	• Apply a targeted approach to the provision of opportunities for students with the potential for academic extension.
	• Explore the application of digital learning options to ensure students have access to 21st century teaching practice.

Student achievement and progress

Judgements about student achievement and progress should be informed by a blend of standardised and school-based instruments, in combination with an integrated set of recorded observations, daily records and student feedback. In successful schools, there is a staff culture of everyone 'owning' student achievement and progress.

Commendations	The review team validate the following:
	• The school's leadership has been proactive in developing strategies to turn around past trends in student achievement and progress.
	• Strategies are in place to ensure system and school-based data are used to identify points of differentiation required to target the individual learning needs of students.
	• School-wide collegial accountability has been strengthened through informed administrative and peer feedback.
Recommendations	The review team support the following:
	• Continue to strengthen school-wide data literacy to better inform class-to-class student information handover processes.
	• Consolidate classroom observations by leaders to target the standard of the collection, analysis and use made of student data.
	• Ensure the introduction of Explicit Instruction and Habits of Mind are characterised by modelled strategies and robust evaluation.
	• Set aspirational targets for student achievement and progress that transcend traditional 'like-school' benchmarks.

Reviewers

Rod Lowther
Director, Public School Review

Julie Roberts
Principal, Wattle Grove 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, focusing on Student Achievement and Progress in numeracy and literacy only, is scheduled for Term 4, 2021. This will be followed by a school review inclusive of all domains in Term 4, 2023.

Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools