



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Cowaramup 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 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 resource in alternative formats for people with accessibility needs, please contact PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au

Context

Cowaramup Primary School is situated in the Southwest Education Region of Western Australia, in the Shire of Augusta Margaret River, approximately 258 kilometres from Perth.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1041 (decile 3) and became an Independent Public School in 2015.

It currently enrolls 373 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Cowaramup Primary School has the support of the School Board and the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

The first Public School Review of Cowaramup Primary School was conducted in Term 3 2019. This 2023 Public School Review report provides a current point of reference for the school's next cycle of school improvement.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a transparent school self-assessment, highlighting aspects of the school's current operations and some planning considerations for improvement.

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

- The school's leadership reported the Public School Review provided an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate their achievements and to refocus on ongoing priorities for school improvement.
- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission was constructed in alignment with the Standard. An overview document was submitted outlining examples, evidence and planned actions for each domain and foci of the Standard.
- A significant representation of enthusiastic staff, students and parents engaged in discussions with the review team, contributing authentic reflections in support of the school.
- There is a commitment from the school's leadership to authentically engage staff in school improvement.
- Student leaders provided the review team with a tour of the school, which further enriched the validation process, providing a greater understanding of evidence presented in the ESAT submission.

The following recommendations are made:

- Engage all staff and stakeholders in regular and collaborative school self-assessment processes aligned to planning.
- Carefully consider the choice of evidence and analysis, ensuring that the evidence selected is the most appropriate to demonstrate school performance against the Standard, and the analysis accurately describes the impact on student outcomes.
- Ensure that evidence submitted in future ESAT submissions covers the breadth of expectations described in the Standard.

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Relationships and partnerships

Through growth and changing demographics, the school has maintained the feel of a strong small country school. The community are highly engaged in the school and value the authentic and productive relationships developed between staff, parents and the wider community.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Parents identify communication as a strength of the school. The school uses a range of channels and digital platforms. Seesaw and Compass keep the community informed of events, to publish newsletters and to provide timely information about their child's/children's positive behaviour, wellbeing and achievements.
- Extensive partnerships have been established with a variety of external organisations that enhance the learning program for students. This is particularly evident in the annual Say G'day to the Bay day when students work with volunteers from health, safety, environmental and community agencies.
- The School Board has a sound understanding of its governance role and responsibilities. Members are engaged in and value important strategic discussions and advocate strongly to improve school facilities.
- Staff relationships are respectful, collegial and demonstrate a common understanding of their students and the school's direction. The leadership team is valued as approachable and supportive of staff.
- Constructive and purposeful collaborative processes have been established. Professional learning team (PLT) leaders provide support, and staff plan together using a common meeting format that ensures key priorities are addressed at each meeting.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- To further enhance transparency, consider developing and sharing a communication policy that identifies the expected type and frequency of teacher to parent communication.
- Engage with high performing schools to share practice and broaden understanding of school improvement.

Learning environment

The school promotes students' enjoyment of coming to school by creating a sense of belonging through the establishment of a welcoming and safe environment. The students are enthusiastic advocates for the school's caring, inclusive ethos delivered through a visibly strong partnership between staff and the wider community.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Overall excellent student behaviour is maintained and enhanced through Positive Behaviour Support where consistent messaging and language is used by staff. Students are rewarded for following the 3 school expectations: be respectful, be resilient, and be your best.
- A focus on cultural responsiveness is evident with staff engaging in Wadandi Cultural Awareness learning at Cape Naturaliste and the use of Noongar language across the school.
- Student voice is sought through student leaders who provide feedback to the school on matters including the school environment, fundraising, the canteen menu and reward activities.
- A well maintained internal and external environment enhance the welcoming appeal of the school. Upgrades to facilities and resources are prioritised based on need and budget.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Ensure all staff fully understand processes to identify, support, assess, track and report on students at educational risk through the development of sustainable processes and policy.
- Improve the transparency and promote the key aspects of the managing student behaviour policy with all stakeholders.

Leadership

Underpinned by a collective desire to improve leadership structures, PLTs and professional learning are guiding staff to understand and participate in shaping future directions of the school.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Aspirant leaders are identified, supported and valued. Opportunities for leadership development are offered through participation in the Emerging Leaders program and the Western Australian Future Leaders Framework.
- The school's distributed leadership model supports staff to work collaboratively in teams to share practice, engage in planning and have a heightened awareness of the need for year level moderation.
- Graduates and new staff participate in a comprehensive induction program and are supported in the adoption of whole-school programs.
- School leaders are gaining a deeper understanding of local Aboriginal history, culture and language and are beginning to incorporate this into the school's culture.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Appoint leaders for literacy and numeracy. Provide opportunities for these staff to progress operational plans and scope and sequence documents to give clear direction and consistency of curriculum delivery across the school.
- Ensure staff demonstrate accountability to whole-school practice through performance management where data is analysed and classroom practice is shared through formalised observation processes.
- In collaboration with staff, further develop shared beliefs about teaching and learning. Provide specific detail in the instructional model in relation to what quality teaching looks like at Cowaramup Primary School.

Use of resources

A trusting and productive relationship between the Principal and manager corporate services ensures planning, management and monitoring processes for the use of resources are aligned to department expectations. This has enabled the school to effectively address the items identified in a recent financial audit.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- An effective Finance Committee assists with financial oversight. The School Board is kept well-informed of the school's financial management processes.
- A detailed and clear Staff Finance Handbook ensures accountability and sound financial management at all levels of the school.
- A productive partnership between the school and the P&C adds value to the school's priorities.
- Resource allocation is responsive, with priority given to ensure that all teachers and allied professionals have access to professional learning relating to the agreed whole-school programs.
- A strategic approach has been taken to the management of the school's information and communications technology, with a comparative assessment made on purchasing versus leasing of equipment based on sustainability and value for money.
- Compass provides a safe and simple platform for parents to pay for incursions and excursions.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Ensure that operational plans include the identification of intended resource costs, creating a clear link between business plan priorities, operational planning and the allocation of school resources.

Teaching quality

Research shows that quality teaching and low variance whole-school practices, above all other influences, are the most important factors in supporting student achievement. The school has commenced establishing beliefs around these key drivers.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff are supported, through professional learning opportunities, to implement whole-school programs including Talk for Writing, Promoting Literacy Development and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness.
- Collaborative practices between staff are valued with a range of formal and informal opportunities to engage. PLTs, common DOTT¹ and year level planning days held each term, focus on the review of data, common assessments and implementation of whole-school programs.
- Students requiring differentiated teaching practices identified through Progressive Achievement Tests, NAPLAN² and Elastik data, are catered for using the Special Educational Needs (SEN) planning tool. Feedback to parents and students is provided using SEN reporting.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to develop the whole-school instructional model, aligned to Teaching for Impact, ensuring the commitment of all teachers.
- Use formalised classroom observation and feedback processes to strengthen quality teaching.
- Use whole-school longitudinal data from contemporary, norm-referenced assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching practice and programs and to inform school improvement planning.
- Ensure feedback to parents on student achievement and progress is provided through the 2 agreed after-hours parent and teacher meetings per year.

Student achievement and progress

A range of systemic and school-based data is collected and analysed using Elastik. Staff are beginning to use this data to inform planning and practice.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Gaps in student learning are identified and processes are developing to differentiate learning to address the specific curriculum needs of all students.
- Data walls have been developed to provide a visual representation of student achievement and progress. This has created significant discussion and a collective ownership of student learning by staff and leaders.
- An annual data collection schedule informs staff as to what and when a range of student achievement data is collected and how it is used.
- Overall data from NAPLAN and Progressive Achievement Tests show student achievement to be consistently close to like schools and above national averages.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Review student achievement targets used in business, operational and class planning to ensure that they are sufficiently aspirational and fine grained to address identified areas of concern.
- Continue to utilise Elastik to guide teacher planning, develop SEN plans and implement a program for small group intervention to target groups or cohorts of students with similar gaps in learning.
- Further evolve moderation processes by providing cross-school opportunities and use of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority Judging Standards and exemplars to support teachers in ensuring comparability of student achievement across all years.

Reviewers

Craig Skinner
Director, Public School Review

Julie Fendrich
Principal, Gibbs Street 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 Leadership and Teaching quality domains only, will be Term 2, 2024.

Should the school meet the Standard for these domains, a full Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, will be scheduled for 2026.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Duties other than Teaching
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy