



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Pickering Brook 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

Pickering Brook Primary School opened in 1915 and became an Independent Public School in 2012. Located within the South Metropolitan Education Region, the school is approximately 35 kilometres south-east of the Perth central business district.

There are currently 93 students enrolled at the school, ranging from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school runs several after school clubs with an onsite playgroup providing weekly opportunities for families with younger children.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1046 (decile 3).

The Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) actively fundraises to support the school with governance provided by the School Board.

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 wide scope and multiple sources of credible evidence were selected for analysis.
- Staff access to, and close engagement with, the school's self-assessment process added value to the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission.
- Significant collaboration was a highlight of the school self-assessment process, with staff members expressing a sense of empowerment resulting from the Public School Review process.
- The wide selection of evidence provided an open and transparent account of the current school context and performance.
- There is alignment between evidence of school performance, observations and judgements about performance.
- Positive support from the School Board throughout the review process was acknowledged by the Principal.
- Sentiments shared by School Board members were unequivocal in their support for their school. They proactively engaged in sharing accounts of how the school is positively engaging with the community.

The following recommendations are made:

- Explore options for the ongoing use of the ESAT as a warehouse for regular uploading of school performance information.
- Continue to use the Standard to inform judgements about school performance.

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Relationships and partnerships

Effective school leaders invariably scan the local community and beyond to secure strong partnerships with allied agencies and community support groups. With strong parent engagement and advocacy, the school is positioning itself to become a school of choice.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Parents are included in the daily life of the school, valued and respected for the support they give and for their absolute commitment to their school. The response from parents to initiatives such the Learning Journey invitation was very positive.
- Collaboration in the different phases of learning is evident, backed by a strong commitment to open and transparent communication, both within the school and between the school and the community.
- Talents and professional expertise are recognised amongst the staff who acknowledge the value of structures and processes introduced, which empowers and enables them to provide quality learning programs.
- The School Board meets regularly to discuss student performance, school planning, budget and local issues of importance. It appreciates the information it receives as part of its governance obligations.
- The very close community network is highly supportive of their school. Community representatives expressed appreciation for the clarity of informed decision making that characterises the Principal's leadership approach.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to pursue opportunities to engage with the local education network to increase collaborative prospects for staff to network and moderate.

Learning environment

The school is clear about its purpose in providing an engaging, nurturing, inclusive and creative learning environment that ensures the optimal conditions for student success. The current 'can do' approach from the school to support families with vulnerable children is acknowledged and appreciated by the community.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Parents described feeling confident to approach school leaders and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about their children. The chaplain describes the school as a place where children can grow and develop safely.
- A purposeful case conferencing model is strengthened by the effective use of student information and the compelling partnership between teachers and education assistants. Staff value the support provided to the preparation of documented plans for students with special needs.
- Students are given authentic opportunities to become involved in school decision making. The setting up of student committees to consider issues such as social justice and the environment provides an ideal avenue for student leadership/agency to thrive.
- Improvements to the physical environment, internal and external, have been welcomed by staff and the community. Changes have been made with the better use of space and furnishings in classrooms and the creation of external spaces where students can be inspired to learn and enjoy every day at school.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Explore options for staff to receive feedback from students about learning activities.

Leadership

The extent to which individual staff are motivated to undertake roles for the benefit of students and their colleagues, reflects their trust in and respect for their Principal.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A clear and focused vision, driven by a compelling whole-school improvement agenda and aligned to the Department's objectives, provides certainty of direction. Using the National School Improvement Tool, staff and parents combined to establish the priorities for school improvement.
- The Principal recognises staff expertise and, together with authentic instructional leadership, strengthens teaching, learning and the commitment to school growth.
- Frequent reference to the leadership of the Principal makes it clear that: presence; self-awareness; professional credibility; and personal empathy are features of her leadership attributes.
- The Principal's focus on instructional programs to improve consistency in teaching practice has challenged staff to reset their approach to working collaboratively to maximise the impact of their teaching on student learning.
- An unwavering commitment to students and high expectations from the Principal has inspired the belief among staff that sustained student success can be achieved through quality teaching, informed by professional insight and reliable evidence.
- Performance and development processes for staff are aligned to school planning. The 'push' for greater evidence-based processes has led to robust professional exchanges which have been embraced by staff.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Ensure progress towards achieving school planning targets are monitored with improvement milestones.

Use of resources

The school approaches its use of resources, both strategically and operationally, to great effect. Discretionary specialist programs are funded through careful assessments of how to achieve the best 'value for money' outcome.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- There is a trusting and respectful relationship between the Principal, manager corporate services, Finance Committee and cost centre managers.
- Staff awareness and acceptance of the complexity of, and challenges in, meeting the needs of all students is a dividend of the spirit of openness and transparency of decision making.
- Extensive supplemental funding is provided by the P&C, augmenting the funds received under the Funding Agreement for Schools.
- Decisions about funding of specific programs are determined following an assessment of the impact on existing programs, followed by research into available options.
- The front office administration staff provide a warm and welcoming reception for families and visitors.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Maintain the resource deployment mantra of 'students first'. This means resource allocations and workforce planning is driven by student needs, encapsulating the flexibility required to accommodate fluctuations in student enrolments.

Teaching quality

Creating a respectful two-way feedback loop promotes circumstances where staff can engage in a disciplined dialogue about teaching practice. Expecting high levels of curriculum cohesion and continuity together with persistent follow up is a leadership priority.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A culture of data analysis is emerging in the early years. This enables timely adjustments to the delivery of visible learning strategies in the years that follow.
- Effective pedagogical practices, linked to the Western Australian Curriculum and strengthened by classroom observation and feedback on mutually agreed focus areas, are now strengthened through the development of a common language.
- Staff express a willingness to build their knowledge and work collaboratively to improve the impact of their performance on student success. The use of assessment information to inform classroom teaching plans is more common than the exception.
- Discussions, both incidental and through formal collaboration are increasingly about what and how students learn best. This results in the greater use of data to inform differentiated teaching practices.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Ensure the locus of accountability is on teachers applying practices that ensure fidelity of approaches through quality observation and associated explicit feedback for teachers.
- Maintain a high priority on embedding the use of data to inform differentiated teaching practices.
- Continue to promote the value of using contemporary research-based, whole-school curriculum phase of learning sequencing and lesson design to achieve low variance connected practice.

Student achievement and progress

Strengthening levels of data literacy lifts staff confidence in the judgements they make about student progress. While there are grounds for satisfaction with some areas of student performance, the volatility of cohort performance generally, together with concerning trends in the early years, requires focused attention.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school has recognised the need to reset some teaching approaches to address concerns with recent performance trends. Attention is now appropriately on minimising discrepancies between NAPLAN¹ results and teacher judgements.
- The Pickering Brook Primary School Plan 2021–2024 has been drafted in response to data, consultation and observations. The commitment to pursue an ethos of evidence-informed practice and up skilling staff in data literacy, is evident in the emerging disciplined dialogue of staff.
- Setting high expectations for every student's progress based on ambitious targets is at the core of improving the consistency of the school's literacy and numeracy performance. This includes the tracking of individual students and class cohorts.
- Education assistants are a key part of the teaching and learning process. They are involved in the creation of programs to address the needs of students identified by the data.
- Discussion of student progress and achievement is becoming habitual across the school, giving confidence to teachers and parents alike.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Expand moderation options to include Brightpath together with engagement with local school networks.

Reviewers

Rod Lowther
Director, Public School Review

Tayna Grantham
Principal, Mingenew 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

References

- 1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy