



Department of
Education

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Castletown Primary School

Public School Review

February 2021



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 Director of Education.

Expectations of schools

The Statement of Expectation (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.



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Context

Located in Esperance, approximately 720 kilometres south-east of Perth within the Goldfields Education Region, Castletown Primary School opened in 1966. From its initial enrolment of 139 students, the school population has increased significantly with 491 students currently enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. A proportion of travel to school each day from outlying rural areas on one of seven school buses.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 977 (decile 6). Castletown Primary School became an Independent Public School in 2017.

The active School Board provides governance, advice and support to the school. The dedicated Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) raises funds to assist with the supply of educational resources and facilities.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

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

- An open, transparent and honest analysis of the school's performance was submitted as part of the school's self-assessment.
- Staff articulated the value of engaging in the review as it enabled reflection processes and supported the school's planned directions for ongoing school improvement.
- The school leadership team and staff were engaged in reflection and identification of entries and evidence sources for the Electronic School Assessment Tool.
- A range of staff and community members positively engaged in the validation visit, providing insights to enhance the school self-assessment submission.

The following recommendations are made:

- Embed a cycle of ongoing self-assessment to support continued school improvement processes.
- Consider the quality of evidence with reference to alignment between judgements and analysis.

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Relationships and partnerships

A cohesive and positive school culture reflects a genuine desire to work in collaboration in order to provide opportunities for all students to be successful.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Feedback from parents, staff and students through the National School Opinion Survey and interviews indicates high levels of satisfaction with the school.
- Communications between the school and families are valued and acknowledged as an integral way of being informed about student learning and school directions.
- The School Board understands their governance role and responsibilities. They advocate positively for the direction of the school and support the leadership team's direction.
- A committed group of parents lead the P&C and work in partnership with the leadership team to support successful outcomes for students.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to provide parent workshops as an ongoing strategy to engage and inform parents about school directions and planning.

Learning environment

A commitment to ensure students are provided with opportunities to learn within engaging and orderly learning spaces supports the conditions under which student academic performance, and social and emotional wellbeing can thrive.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The introduction of school-wide behaviour processes has facilitated the implementation of positive incentives, clear expectations and a common and shared language.
- A commitment to improve the physical learning spaces, including furniture and playgrounds, has resulted in aesthetically appealing changes and a greater sense of pride by staff, students and parents.
- There are sound processes and procedures to identify and address attendance concerns.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Consolidate the implementation of whole-school approaches to managing behaviour and engagement.
- Continue with plans to consolidate processes for students at educational risk through explicitly documenting clear guidelines and supports for staff and students.
- Continue to work in partnership with the Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation and the local community in order to embed planned intentions that support the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan.

Leadership

A united and respected leadership team sets the tone for school improvement through fostering a cohesive team culture with an unrelenting focus on embedding whole-school pedagogy.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Leadership roles, structures and relationships are understood and in place to enable clarity of decision making and planning processes.
- Strategic planning is evident with a shared understanding of the school's directions. There is a clear process of review, reflection and action for priority areas.
- Aligned to systemic focus areas, development of the current business plan was collaboratively undertaken with staff, parents and the School Board.
- Implementation of the strategic intent of the school is strengthened by the supporting key actions document and business plan overview. Committees are structured and aligned to these key actions to support and ensure strategic alignment across the school.
- Change is carefully managed by the leadership team with high levels of trust, consultation and support evident.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Clarify, align and embed the Professional Learning Community and Phase of Learning leadership structures to ensure a targeted and continuous focus on priorities.

Use of resources

The Principal and manager corporate services work in partnership to ensure sound management of human, physical and financial resources. Transparent and open decision making, with an unwavering focus on the school's strategic direction, is evident.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school demonstrates transparent decision making processes and allocates funding aligned to identified student needs.
- Intervention programs are evidence based, and the provision and timetabling of staff to support the programs are reviewed regularly.
- Led by an operational team, ICT¹ planning supports the review, rationale and provision of devices for students and staff.
- The Finance Committee meets regularly to provide financial oversight and monitoring of school budget expenditure.
- Operational planning highlights key areas of focus and a clear alignment to resourcing required.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Review and develop appropriate asset replacement plans.
- Document the workforce plan and explicitly outline strategies to address workforce gaps.

Teaching quality

Passionate and dedicated staff value opportunities to work in collaboration in order to consolidate the implementation of whole-school pedagogical practices and programs.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Year and phase level team collaborative structures are in place to support planning and implementation of whole-school approaches.
- There is a growing commitment to, and application of, the agreed teaching pedagogy (iSTAR) and common approaches in order to have greater consistency across the school.
- Staff commit to and embrace data-informed decision making and planning. The use of Data Hub supports and is enhancing processes involving the review of school-based assessments.
- Professional learning is aligned to priorities with a view to embedding whole-school approaches.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Strengthen collaborative opportunities through formalising the structures and expectations of the Phase of Learning and Professional Learning Community teams, with clear links to pedagogical expectations and data.
- Formalise observation processes to facilitate feedback on pedagogical practice.
- Upskill staff and develop a clear and shared Early Childhood Education philosophy outlining play-based learning pedagogy.

Student achievement and progress

There is a commitment to collect, analyse and embed data-informed decision making processes across the school.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- System and school-based data are used to determine current levels of performance and focus areas for targeted improvement.
- School-based assessments inform the provision of individualised support and intervention for targeted students.
- Emerging data-driven conversations demonstrate sophisticated levels of disciplined dialogue and interrogation of data.
- NAPLAN² data highlight satisfactory levels of students achieving in the top 20 per cent. Academic enrichment is a continued focus and direction through explicit intervention and integration in the classroom.
- 2019 NAPLAN data indicate performance above that of like schools across all areas, with the exception of Year 5 writing and spelling. Response to this data has driven the implementation of whole-school approaches and moderation in writing.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to refine and embed the processes for interrogation of achievement and progress data to inform planning at the individual, class and year level.

Reviewers

Rebecca Bope
Director, Public School Review

Dianna Miller
Principal, Wandina 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 1, 2024.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Information and communications technology
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy