



Department of
Education

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Spearwood Primary School

Public School Review

November 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.



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Context

Opened in 1914, Spearwood Primary School is located in the South Metropolitan Education Region, approximately 25 kilometres south west of the Perth central business district.

The school became an Independent Public School in 2017. It has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 961 (decile 7).

Currently, 112 students are enrolled at the school from Kindergarten to Year 6. There has been a significant reduction in student numbers over the last few years.

The grounds have recently been updated to include a bird sanctuary reading area, with each building named after the six seasons in the Noongar calendar.

The school has an active School Board and the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) supports the school with both resources and services.

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:

- Members of the executive team used an ongoing and embedded focus on self-assessment, planning and reflection to prepare for the Public School Review.
- Identification and interrogation of evidence was conducted to determine judgements, and contributed to the observations, analyses and impact statements in the Electronic School Assessment Tool submission.
- The School Board understands and accepts the value of self-assessment processes.
- Staff were provided with opportunities to discuss and reflect on the evidence submitted.

The following recommendation is made:

- Continue to embed and monitor the impact of whole-school approaches to ensure the sustainability of established improvement strategies.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships	
<p>The Principal and School Board have built a strong collegial culture amongst staff, students and families, founded on mutual respect, trust and support. The quality of the relationships that have evolved is valued highly by the school community.</p>	
Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School Board and P&C advocate strongly for the school, facilitating community partnerships that provide multiple avenues for parent engagement. • Parents are respected partners and play a strong leading role in a range of committees that promote whole-school activities and community engagement. • The school community embraces its cultural diversity, fostering positive interactions and acceptance of all cultural groups. The cultures, languages, experiences and world views of their families are respected, creating a sense of belonging.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationships with the newly re-formed Spearwood Progress Association to plan school-based community events with the parent body. • Continue to promote The Fathering Project to further strengthen family engagement.

Learning environment	
<p>The school prides itself on providing an inclusive, safe and caring environment for students and staff, underpinned by an ethos that supports positive behaviours and quality learning.</p>	
Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High priority is placed on student and staff wellbeing with processes in place to provide both academic and non-academic support to address individual needs. • The school grounds include areas and displays that connect and enrich the learning program and build cultural responsiveness. • Interactions between staff, students and families are respectful and focus on supporting student learning. • A whole-school approach to behaviour management, based on Highway Heroes, is focused on developing resilience and students' ability to take responsibility and self-manage their behaviour. • Students have leadership opportunities, with captains and prefects running assemblies and fundraising activities for selected charities. Prefects meet with the Principal to share their ideas.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to explore student leadership programs to facilitate greater engagement in decision making.

Leadership

Leaders demonstrate a unified purpose in establishing the pre-conditions for school and student success. They have articulated a clear vision for the essential elements of school improvement and priorities.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership team and School Board are united in their purpose. Board members are highly motivated and make a substantial contribution to the development of the business plan. • The Board provides strong governance and oversight of school planning and with guidance from leaders, actively monitors the implementation of the business plan. • The Cultural Committee, led by the Aboriginal and Islander education officer and manager corporate services, has implemented the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework with tangible and permanent school improvements. • Spearwood Primary School has a highly experienced staff, many of whom are senior teachers. Staff lead learning areas and school programs according to their strengths and interests.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further strengthen alignment of teaching programs through building connection and engagement of teaching staff with the School Board and parent committees. • Investigate Department of Education leadership professional learning opportunities to provide career development for capable staff.

Use of resources

Financial planning and prudent budget management protocols are in place to ensure resource allocations relate specifically to the improvement of student outcomes.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget information is shared with the School Board and staff to build their understanding and inform decision making to maximise the use of resources. • There is strong alignment between teaching and learning reforms and budget allocation in order to support the learning needs of all students. • The manager corporate services is valued highly and works in partnership with the Principal to maintain a clear student-centred focus. • The school is strategic in identifying community partnership opportunities on the basis of their capacity to contribute to improving student wellbeing and promotion of the school.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the workforce plan and develop a succession plan that considers the ongoing needs of staff and their capacity to address predicted change.

Teaching quality

<p>The school has built a culture in which teachers and school leaders take a personal and collective responsibility for promoting continuous professional improvement. All staff accept shared responsibility for student success.</p>	
<p>Commendations</p>	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers collect and routinely analyse whole-school and systemic data to support and guide decisions on teaching practice and program selection. • Structures have been established to enable highly skilled and knowledgeable staff to share their knowledge and experience for the benefit of all students. • Staff create and implement differentiated Group and Individual Education Plans for students in care and with diagnosed or imputed disabilities. • There is a strong culture of self-evaluation and reflection, which informs school-level decisions for intervention and initiatives. • Staff have a shared pedagogical belief that is embedded in school-wide planning and practices based on explicit instruction and gradual release.
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to focus on support for teachers in strengthening processes and practice attending to the needs of students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect. • Consider whole-school planning, data collection and curriculum approach around HASS¹ and science.

Student achievement and progress

<p>The school culture embodies an emphasis on excellence and development of the whole child. Curriculum offerings and support structures optimise the prospects for student success.</p>	
<p>Commendations</p>	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student progress in literacy has been strong over the past few years. In 2019, student performance was above expected in reading, writing and spelling. • Numeracy achievement and progress shows improvement with growth evident between Year 3 and 5 in 2019. • The school has a clear, documented schedule for the systematic collection of data to monitor and assess student progress and achievement. • A disciplined dialogue structure underpins the interrogation of student data and planning for improvement. • Due to the small student numbers, staff both formally and informally share their knowledge of individual students and their needs.
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options to moderate with other schools in the Fremantle/Cockburn Network to build staff capacity to use data to identify and respond to trends in student achievement at the group and cohort level.



Reviewers

Lou Zeid
Director, Public School Review

Barbara Iffla
Principal, Jolimont 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 4, 2023.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

1 Humanities and social sciences