



Department of
Education

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Margaret River Primary School

Public School Review

April 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

Established in 1909, Margaret River Primary School is located approximately 270 kilometres south-west of Perth within the Southwest Education Region. Margaret River has an agricultural heritage, as well as a local surfing and adventure sports culture, and thriving creative industries.

Currently, 734 students are enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. Approximately half of the student population lives within the town of Margaret River, with other students travelling from outlying rural communities. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1038 (decile 3). It became an Independent Public School in 2015.

As a STEM¹ Innovation Partnership school, the school has innovative classroom designs with the aim of strengthening and transforming the teaching and learning of STEM.

Margaret River Primary School has a kitchen garden, as part of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, created with the support of the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) and the Margaret River Community Action Group.

The School Board supports the school by assisting to shape its strategic direction. Support is also provided by the P&C through financial contributions for school events and facilities upgrades, and parents volunteering their time for various activities.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive, succinct school self-assessment.

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

- The Principal led a self-assessment process that incorporated the perspectives of a wide range of staff and school community representatives.
- An open, transparent and honest analysis of the school's performance was submitted as part of the school's self-assessment.
- An extensive tour of the school, with opportunities to speak with staff, further enriched the validation process providing a greater understanding of evidence presented in the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission.
- Staff, students, families and community members demonstrated support for, and genuine understanding of, their school, its development to date, and future direction.
- There was clear alignment between the evidence provided, the judgements made by the leadership team and plans for advancement.
- It was acknowledged that during the compilation of the ESAT submission, a clear focus to make judgements and generate a series of planning intentions was enabled.
- Staff declared that the review had provided an ideal opportunity to celebrate the growth that has been achieved and gave recognition to all those who contributed.

The following recommendation is made:

- Continue to use the Standard to facilitate informed discussions about school performance and inform the development of the next business plan.

Relationships and partnerships

The school's deliberate and nuanced approach in the formation of sustainable relationships and partnerships is acknowledged. The intent to develop globally aware and responsive citizens is a reflection of what is important to their town and region.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Embedded, quality, intergenerational relationships are the drivers of heightened awareness and response to environmentally sustainable practices reflecting the values of the broader Margaret River community.
- The school has developed a truly collaborative culture with parents and the wider community through purposeful, respectful and reciprocal partnerships focused on student needs.
- Strong partnerships with organisations such as the Nature Conservation Foundation, Cape to Cape Catchments Group, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden, Shire of Augusta-Margaret River and the United Nations culminated in the school winning the United Nations Association of Australia 2020 Global Goals Challenge Award.
- The school seeks and acts on the opinions of families through regular surveys. Timely responses to feedback guide and assist the school to better connect with the community.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to pursue greater consistency in the use of digital communication platforms.

Learning environment

Successful schools create a learning environment designed to maximise student engagement. The school has given thoughtful consideration to setting the conditions that sustain interactive, creative learning and student wellbeing.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A well-considered approach to creating flexible learning spaces allows for individual preferences and learning styles, opportunities to interact and work collaboratively, and more effective use of technology. This has led to high levels of student engagement and participation, enhancing student curiosity and learning.
- Student life experiences and staff teachable moments include 'metaphorically': working in a cave; using a campfire; and exploring a waterhole and mountain top. The result of these innovative approaches has heightened levels of student wellbeing and agency.
- Comprehensive students at educational risk policy and procedures, together with education assistants as paraprofessionals, provide for the identification, tracking and monitoring of students at risk ensuring effective differentiation, interventions and adjustments are in place.
- The provision of 'Life Space Interviews' professional learning has built staff capacity to manage student behaviour, successfully reducing suspensions and negative behaviours of targeted students.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Consolidate strategies to engage all Kindergarten to Year 2 staff in reflection and reporting on the National Quality Standard framework.
- Continue to implement the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework to ensure cultural responsiveness is embedded in classroom practice.

Leadership

A culture of innovation and future-focused school improvement has been expertly crafted by the Principal through a consistently articulated shared vision. School leaders understand their roles, guiding staff to work towards the school's values and strategic direction.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff are professionally mature and capable, taking on leadership roles to enhance school processes.
- A carefully constructed change management process, underpinned by the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, is providing the 'So What' element. This has developed understanding and commitment to act by staff, students and community to the school improvement agenda.
- Attention is given to developing the content expertise of curriculum and cell leaders. This ensures whole-school practices are embedded with fidelity across the school.
- Performance management processes are clearly documented and scaffolded to support all staff. The classroom observation and feedback model, in combination with growth coaching, assists staff to meet their targets.
- There is a strong connection between strategic planning and classroom practice, exemplified through the business plan, operational plans and an extensive pedagogical framework.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to progress staff engagement and commitment to the peer observation and feedback process.

Use of resources

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

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Aligned to planning and priorities, the school ensures the allocation of resourcing to programs/initiatives is evidence based and data informed.
- Workforce planning is open and transparent, with the Principal and manager corporate services providing direction and guidance for staff in understanding the priority of aligning resource deployment to student needs.
- Targeted initiatives and student characteristics funding ensure students receive the support they require, both in terms of individual needs and health and wellbeing, through the chaplaincy and MiniLit programs.
- The Finance Committee and School Board provide effective oversight of the school's financial management.
- Comprehensive attention to ICT² planning enables the school to forecast future needs for its 21st century digital learning options.
- The school has capitalised on the recommendations of the financial compliance review to address areas of concern and fine-tune financial procedures and processes.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Progress the development of a handbook, identified by the financial compliance review, to support and provide guidance for the Finance Committee members' understanding of their role and responsibilities.

Teaching quality

An inquiry-based integrated learning strategy from Kindergarten to Year 6 defines the school's approach to delivering a school-wide pedagogy. The intent to foster learners who understand how their learning will influence their future actions has had a noticeable impact.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Thoughtfully constructed planning documents such as the Scope and Sequence Ecology of Learning linked to 21st century skills, provide direction to achieve whole-school agreed and shared pedagogy.
- The Inquiry Learning Pedagogy Reflection Summary provides insight to the professional learning needs of staff and supports the implementation of whole-school connected teaching practice.
- Collaborative planning structures initiated through the Fusion Planning Committee, give opportunity for staff to collaborate and share practice at the point of their professional learning needs.
- A variety of whole-school summative and formative assessment tools, such as Brightpath, Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) – Reading, PAT Mathematics and MiniLit, are supporting teachers to make accurate judgements and plan accordingly to maximise student outcomes.
- The whole-school approach to Asia literacy, as an Asia Engaged School, has been recognised by the Department, resulting in the development of a resource support video for other schools.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to develop the data literacy of staff to inform classroom practice and curriculum planning.

Student achievement and progress

The importance of evidence-informed decision making is well recognised by staff. System and school-based data are used to inform levels of achievement and determine targets for ongoing student success.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Teachers are gaining a greater awareness of the alignment between grade allocation and student achievement through the close attention given to moderation.
- A focus on the early years has led to improved student progress, identified through backward mapping from 2019 Year 3 NAPLAN³ to On-entry Assessment Program data.
- The school acknowledges and understands their academic data and have taken steps to address the decline in NAPLAN progress and achievement from Year 3 to Year 5.
- Professional learning in the provision of SMART targets and Individual Education Plans has resulted in increased confidence of classroom, specialist teachers and education assistants to achieve greater consistency in targeted planning for students.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to progress the investigation and consideration of implementing Brightpath Mathematics.
- Continue to refine and embed the processes for interrogation of achievement and progress data to inform planning across all year levels.

Reviewers

Maxine Augustson
Director, Public School Review

Damian Luscombe
Principal, Denmark 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 2, 2024.



Melesha Sands
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Science, technology, engineering, mathematics
- 2 Information and communications technology
- 3 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy