



Department of
Education

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Public education
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Highgate Primary School

Public School Review

October 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

Highgate Primary School is located two kilometres from the Perth central business district in the inner Perth suburb of Highgate, within the North Metropolitan Education Region. This location allows students to easily access facilities such as the Western Australian Museum, Art Gallery of Western Australia and Parliament House.

Established in 1895, Highgate Primary School is one of the oldest primary schools in Western Australia and has a rich and vibrant history. It became an Independent Public School in 2010. The school community is diverse and multicultural with many students attending intensive English classes.

Current enrolments are 790 from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1120 (decile 1). Support from the community is demonstrated through the work of the School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association.

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:

- The Principal supported a self-assessment process that incorporated the perspectives of a wide range of staff and the school community.
- These contributions have added value to the understanding of the school's performance in the domains of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework.
- Summary statements outlined in the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided reviewers with information that informed the school's self-assessment and their planned actions for improvement.
- The School Board understands the value of self-assessment processes and supports the school's planning and development priorities.
- During the validation visit, a broad representation of staff, and selected community representatives and students, provided insights that added considerable meaning to the Public School Review process.
- Staff indicated that the review process was a positive experience that supported their focus on improved student outcomes. They appreciated the opportunity to celebrate the ways in which the school was effective.

The following recommendation is made:

- Maximise the advantage offered by the strong leadership team. Their keen focus on reviewing all aspects of school performance and innovative action to drive change has already begun to yield significant dividends.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships	
<p>The school promotes highly professional, positive relationships between staff members and its community, which is comprised of over fifty different nationalities. High levels of engagement with outside agencies ensures focused assistance for students and their families.</p>	
Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications are clear, translatable and available to users in a variety of formats including the website, newsletter and 'news videos'. • A sense of community is evident and fostered through the interactions of the canteen, kitchen garden and well-supported cultural events. • Flexible enrolment and support processes meet the complex needs of vulnerable families. • The highly effective and well-trained School Board works in partnership with the school to forge the direction and advocates strongly for its work. • The school is sensitive to the needs of highly vulnerable people and meets them in flexible ways.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build and maintain local connections to enhance the support for students and nurture the community links to the arts.

Learning environment	
<p>The core business of the school is centred on inclusion and care. As a Teacher Development School for EAL/D¹, expert support is provided to build capacity of teachers Statewide.</p>	
Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear and consistent, whole-school Positive Behaviour Support policy has been developed collaboratively to guide processes and expectations for student behaviour and emotional regulation. • The gardener has developed aesthetically pleasing and interactive garden spaces, mindful of the culture and history of the school. • Students at educational risk are well supported through the 'wrap around' processes of the highly functioning Student Services team and learning support coordinator. • Families, including those arriving from countries facing significant conflict, describe a feeling of hope and belonging. • Teachers are well supported in their work, providing adjustments to programs that allow for inclusion and good progress for students.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to investigate solutions to create sufficient learning and play spaces as numbers of students increase on a site of limited size. • Maintain the security of the site in its inner city setting.

Leadership

Staff, parents and students have contributed to the development of an innovative plan to further improve their collective efficacy. Eight elements of innovation, ownership, applause, attention, symbols, drama, love and coaching underpin the school's strategic planning.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The executive leadership team are respectful and supportive of each other and their roles. They provide inspiring motivation and guidance in the drive for excellent student outcomes. • Believing that all students have the capacity to be successful is at the forefront of all planning and action. • Leaders are identified and developed on many levels across the school using tools such as the Western Australian Future Leaders Framework. • Staff development is conducted within processes based on school and system needs and facilitated through helpful performance feedback. • Listening to staff perspectives has ensured that change strategies have been applied in an innovative, inclusive and effective way.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to refine, and embed deeply, the strategies for improving classroom practice.

Use of resources

The financial management of the school complies with the expectations of the Funding Agreement for Schools and incorporates the needs of students, the workforce and the community profile.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The knowledge and expertise of the manager corporate services supports the school vision and assists with effective planning to meet the educational needs of students. • The school supports effective intervention through programs such as Friendly Schools Plus and Zones of Regulation. • A 'SWAT' team, including education assistants and other school staff, is funded to provide academic, social and emotional support for vulnerable students. • A well-planned response provides targeted support to staff with student numbers over the recommended allocation. • All support roles are reviewed regularly to ensure that student needs are met flexibly. A strength-based approach to this allocation ensures maximum impact for students needing support.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the focus on sustaining a productive and capable workforce.

Teaching quality

A strong collaborative culture drives the shared beliefs and processes for planning and teaching. The learning needs of all students are met through contemporary and engaging strategies that focus on deep learning.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff engage successfully in action research, following data interrogation, to improve the impact their teaching has on student learning. • Teachers are developed to be able to meet the needs of all children including those who are gifted and talented as well as students requiring additional academic support. • Collaboration and integration are a feature of the high-quality arts and science programs that regularly showcase student talent. • Analysis of systemic and school-based data has informed teaching plans and led to staff adopting more consistent pedagogical approaches.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to evaluate the impact of the Highgate Learning Surge strategy and share the research findings.

Student achievement and progress

A sensible blend of summative and formative assessments informs planning and teaching in order to develop students holistically. Persistent intention to improve student learning through careful selection of high-impact teaching practices is positively driving student achievement.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong commitment to using the fine grained evidence obtained from various assessments to tailor programs towards students' specific academic needs, is a feature of the teaching and learning culture. • The school plans link effectively to performance targets and the aspiration towards high academic standards. • The Highgate Learning Surge strategy has shown promising signs of supporting students to learn in demonstrably effective progressions. • Observation of trends and areas of concern in On-entry Assessment Program data in Pre-primary has focused teachers' efforts to work with families and improve oral language competence. • All staff have sound knowledge of the strengths of individual students, and groups of students, as well as areas that require attention. • Progress of Year 3 to Year 5 students in NAPLAN 2017 to 2019 demonstrates the value adding of the school's strong focus on effective teaching and learning.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop more consistent approaches for literacy and numeracy in the early years.

Reviewers

Jen Graffin
Director, Public School Review

Leatrice Hadley
Principal, Harmony 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 English as an Additional Language or Dialect