



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Merredin College

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

Merredin College (the school) opened in 2012 following the amalgamation of North Merredin Primary School, South Merredin Primary School and Merredin Senior High School. Obtaining Independent Public School status in 2017, the school is situated within the Wheatbelt Education Region.

Merredin is a regional centre located approximately 250 kilometres east of Perth. The economic foundation of the district is agricultural, supported by a small number of manufacturing businesses.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 954 (decile 8).

Student numbers are stable and at present there are 558 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 12.

With strong links to the community, the school is supported by the School Board and an active Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

The College has an emphasis on post compulsory planning and actively seeks community and industry partnerships to support students' post-secondary pathways.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

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

- The Principal outlined the long-term focus on improving student outcomes, and the processes and procedures that have held the school in good stead throughout a time of considerable change in leadership, staffing and Board profiles.
- The substantive Principal engaged staff in initial consultation about the Public School Review process in 2020. Current leaders collectively progressed the work in developing the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission.
- Leaders each took responsibility for specific domains, working with staff to select the most appropriate examples and evidence to best tell the story of the school.
- A number of staff, students and parents participated in conversations throughout the validation visit, each providing further elaboration to support aspects of the ESAT submission.

The following recommendations are made:

- Familiarise staff with the Standard and the domains outlined in the School Improvement and Accountability Framework, to consolidate their understanding of and approach to school self-assessment.
- Utilise the Standard and the ESAT for ongoing school self-assessment practices between school review cycles.

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Relationships and partnerships

Positive and respectful relationships underpin interactions within and beyond the school. Partnerships are established in the best interests of students to purposefully enhance their educational experience.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Formal and informal opportunities for staff collaboration are providing the conditions for shared responsibility and collective decision making to benefit students in a Kindergarten to Year 12 context.
- The school values the contribution and profound impact of the Aboriginal community in deepening the understanding about Aboriginal histories, people and cultures for staff and students.
- Relationships between staff, students and parents are based on trust and the understanding that 'everyone matters'. Students highlight the care provided by staff as the best thing about their school.
- The Youth Committee, established in partnership with the Western Australia Police Force, Shire of Merredin and Avon Youth Services, demonstrates the school's commitment to its students and community.
- Ensuring communication with families is accessible for all, the school provides a variety of platforms including social media, Seesaw, Connect and face-to-face opportunities, such as home visits.
- The school plays a central part within the Eastern Wheatbelt Education Network, providing mentoring partnerships through the Teacher Development School initiative, Innovation and STEM¹.
- The Board and P&C actively advocate for the school. Bringing together the community and local industry to upgrade the junior primary nature play area, is evidence of how they value the school.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Use social media platforms to celebrate school and student success and increase opportunities for parent feedback to inform decision making.
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan in consultation with the local Aboriginal community to further embed the school's response to the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework.

Learning environment

Significant effort in establishing the right conditions for learning has resulted in a safe, caring and culturally responsive learning environment for students and staff.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The PBS² framework has been embedded with fidelity. Students articulate the school values, and explicit lessons on behaviour expectations are contributing to improved student behaviour.
- The rejuvenation of the house and reward systems is enhancing the existing positive environment. Visuals throughout the school reinforce the PBS messages.
- Students at educational risk are identified and monitored for progress. The Special Educational Need (SEN) booklet ensures effective handover between teachers each year and promotes data-informed planning.
- Student health and wellbeing is supported through a number of whole-school, phase of learning and targeted programs. The 'Building up Zone', Zones of Regulation and the Boxing program are developing students' skills in regulating emotions, forming positive friendships and enhancing the ability to work cooperatively.
- Providing all students with the opportunity for success drives decisions for intervention. In addition to MiniLit and MacqLit, the Life Skills program is providing targeted intervention for SEN students.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Seek to further enhance the provisions for Tier 3 students requiring intensive individualised support.

Leadership

Leadership capacity is being strengthened across the school, with changes in leadership providing aspirants opportunities to develop skills and confidence to progress the school improvement agenda.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff are working collectively to address the priorities of the current business plan. Leaders have a united vision for the school and are articulating the next iteration of the improvement agenda.
- Providing evidence-based and purposeful learning opportunities for students drives decision making, capturing student voice through the role of student leaders.
- Leadership opportunities in Aboriginal education, literacy, STEM, digital technologies, and student services complements other leadership roles and are providing an effective distributed leadership model across the school.
- Leaders actively seek opportunities to engage staff in nominations for a number of public awards for those demonstrating excellence in leading initiatives that benefit students and the school community.
- Leaders are responsive to the needs of staff. Authentic two-way feedback is building trust in collaborative decision making and consensus.
- An instructional model of leadership is building capacity in the agreed, consistent teaching and learning practices and programs.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Articulate teaching expectations and formalise the agreed whole-school instructional model.
- Continue to implement classroom observation processes, ensuring accountability and safety for the embedding of identified consistent practices, and reduction of instructional variability.

Use of resources

Financial and resource management decisions are aligned to the priorities of the school and monitored effectively through robust, compliant and transparent processes and procedures.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Principal and manager corporate services work collaboratively in managing the ongoing financial position of the school. Budget and resource decisions are overseen by the Finance Committee, with the Board playing its role in good governance.
- Additional school-based tracking tools have been developed to further enhance the monitoring of finances and to support the management and replacement of resources.
- Prudent use of funds allocated to support the Teacher Development School initiative is providing support across the school network and ongoing professional learning for teachers.
- There is a clear understanding of the potential human resource challenges that exist for the school. As such, workforce planning, recruitment, staff induction and performance development are identifying and addressing areas of need.
- Student characteristics and targeted initiatives funding are directed to support the needs of students for whom they are intended. Significant funds are allocated to support VET³ and Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) pathway offerings.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to prioritise the review and impact of funding decisions.

Teaching quality

Collective teacher efficacy and improved teaching practice across the school are being strengthened through collaboration and a shared commitment to improve student outcomes.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Considered and significant investment is building capacity in the consistent delivery of Visible Learning strategies as the agreed whole-school teaching practice.
- Student voice has strengthened staff commitment to engage in the implementation of 'learning intentions' and 'success criteria' as part of the Visible Learning strategy.
- Senior staff have a good understanding of data, which informs whole-school, phase of learning and classroom planning. Teachers present their analyses of data at the whole-school level.
- Students are engaging CoRE⁴ STEM in project-based integration in science. They participate in collaborative learning, and parent feedback indicates an increase in student interest in science.
- The school is well placed to support remote learning if required. The 'continuity of learning' program has been developed, with information technology capabilities of families front of mind.
- Extensive use of ICT⁵ is enhancing the learning experience for students through Google Classrooms.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to prioritise the implementation of Visible Learning and agreed consistent teaching practices.

Student achievement and progress

Tracking student achievement and progress is viewed by all as a shared responsibility, with whole-school, cohort and individual data guiding planning decisions, including intervention and pathway planning.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- NAPLAN⁶ and Easy Mark data are tracked longitudinally. Teachers use these data to set improvement targets for students.
- On-entry Assessment Program data from Pre-primary to Year 2 is analysed by the early childhood team, and identified strengths and weaknesses influence learning program development.
- The Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Attainment Operational Plan provides targeted strategies to improve senior school achievement and progress and assists in identifying appropriate and viable course offerings.
- A targeted Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment strategy has seen a reduction in the number of students being required to sit the assessments in Year 12 in 2020 and 2021.
- In 2019, NAPLAN performance was higher than like schools in all assessments in both Year 3 and Year 5.
- WACE achievement is close to like schools, with the median ATAR in 2020 demonstrating expected performance.
- Fifty-three per cent of all Year 12 students achieved a Certificate III or IV VET qualification in 2020.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to seek opportunities for moderation with other schools.

Reviewers


Vicki McKeown
Director, Public School Review

Bernadette Jones
Principal, Bullsbrook College
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 3, 2024.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Science, technology, engineering, mathematics
- 2 Positive Behaviour Support
- 3 Vocational Education and Training
- 4 Centre of Resource Excellence
- 5 Information and communications technology
- 6 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy