



Department of
Education

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Spencer Park Education Support Centre

Public School Review

March 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

Spencer Park Education Support Centre (the school) is located in Albany, approximately 420 kilometres south-east of Perth, within the Southwest Education Region. Opened in 1993, the school gained Independent Public School status in 2015. It shares a site with Spencer Park Primary School and has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 920 (decile 9).

Currently, there are 34 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6, with an additional six external Pre-primary students.

The school caters for students with intellectual disabilities, global developmental delay and autism, as well as students with mental health and behavioural support needs.

Intensive intervention is provided for students with autism in Kindergarten and Pre-primary through an Early Intensive Intervention Program, with the goal of preparing these students to enrol in their local primary school in Year 1.

A Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) is shared with the co-located primary school.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a school self-assessment with evidence against each domain of the Standard.

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

- The Principal has supported and guided staff through reflective and consultative school improvement processes during a period of cultural and structural change for the school in recent years.
- Staff demonstrated a developing knowledge of school self-assessment processes and a strong commitment to ongoing school improvement.
- Whilst statements relating to the Principal's judgement submitted through the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) provided a limited analysis of the evidence provided, information shared during the school visit by a broad range of staff and community members added significant value to the school's ESAT submission.
- The leadership team viewed the school self-assessment and review process as useful for clarifying and developing a sound understanding of effective self-assessment processes for the future.

The following recommendations are made:

- Include in future ESAT submissions succinct analysis of the evidence provided, including analysis of student achievement and progress.
- In future ESAT submissions, provide a clear alignment between current performance and areas identified for improvement and planning.
- Further refine the selection of evidence that best demonstrates the school's performance against the Standard.
- Continue to facilitate the engagement of staff and Board members in the school self-assessment and school improvement processes.

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Relationships and partnerships

High levels of care and respect are evident in staff and student relationships. The leadership team actively supports the development of positive staff working relationships and the promotion of solution-focused problem solving.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Parents have input into their child's education through IEP¹ meetings and case conferences.
- A focus on building communication with parents through a range of modes is evident, including a new website, a school Facebook page, and increased visibility of staff and leadership through daily 'meet and greet' opportunities, assemblies and events.
- The development of clear processes for working with therapy providers is widening the support provided to meet the individual needs of students.
- The chaplain adds considerable value through individual and targeted support for students.
- A positive relationship with Spencer Park Primary School is increasing opportunities for student inclusion and staff sharing of practice, benefitting both school communities.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to develop the inclusive partnership with Spencer Park Primary School.
- Strengthen School Board governance through access to training to enhance understanding of School Board roles, functions and legislative requirements.
- Explore options to increase parent engagement in providing feedback to the school.

Learning environment

A supportive learning environment is underpinned by a shared commitment to identify and meet students' individual needs. The school is active in its development of the physical environment and optimising learning spaces for the benefit of students.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school has a long-term commitment to PBS² and implementing systems and processes that support student behaviour, including clear behaviour expectations and reward procedures.
- Behaviour Watch is currently being trialled as a tool to monitor student behaviour progress and inform planning for whole-school and targeted interventions.
- A range of whole-school and targeted professional learning opportunities are developing staff capacity to meet students' social and emotional, behavioural and learning needs.
- The Health and Wellbeing committee is expanding the intentional support for staff wellbeing.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to embed whole-school approaches to support student behaviour and monitor progress.
- Progress the school's intentions to monitor and track student social skills through use of a continuum, such as the Personal and Social Capabilities.
- Continue to develop the school's cultural responsiveness and engagement with the ACSF³.

Leadership

The Principal's leadership of change during a restructuring process in recent years is acknowledged, with staff cohesion and a shared, clear vision for the school evident.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A range of committees/teams such as PBS, Health and Wellbeing and AAC⁴, have been established across the school, with opportunities for skilled staff to assume leadership.
- Performance development processes have been recently reviewed to further support ongoing staff growth. Classroom observations are evolving through video and self-reflection processes.
- Opportunities were provided for staff to have input into the business plan, which clearly articulates the school's priority areas for future development.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Prioritise and calibrate the implementation of business plan strategies and school initiatives to ensure sustainable change.
- Strengthen distributed leadership and increase shared leadership of the school's improvement agenda through the development of leaders in learning areas and other leadership roles.
- Strengthen staff understanding of the link between the business plan, operational plans and classroom plans.

Use of resources

The Principal and manager corporate services work in collaboration with the Finance Committee to manage finances and allocate resources focused on improved student learning and wellbeing outcomes.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Principal, manager corporate services and Finance Committee develop the school budget in alignment with business plan priorities, and school, staff and student needs.
- Staff understanding of financial management is supported through a school finance handbook. Cost centre managers follow clear procedures for managing cost centre funds.
- Allocation of resources for professional learning that builds staff capacity to meet students' complex learning and behavioural needs, is a school priority.
- Following a restructure, the school is prioritising workforce planning to mitigate risk, including monitoring projected student enrolments and promoting the school in the community to support future enrolment growth.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to closely monitor student enrolments and staff recruitment to ensure sustainability of the school's human and financial resources.

Teaching quality

A commitment to developing high quality programs to meet students' individual needs and improve outcomes is evident. A number of skilled teachers and 'champions' are well placed to lead the ongoing development of consistent programs and practices across the school.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Teacher leaders are implementing effective classroom practice and providing shadowing opportunities for other staff to support growth.
- The SENAT⁵ and ABLEWA⁶ mapping books, aligned to the Western Australian Curriculum, are used to support the writing of IEPs.
- Baseline testing and class assessments inform planning and decision making on classroom programs and practice.
- The school has implemented YuMi Deadly Maths and a range of Dr Paul Swan Mathematics strategies to support the teaching of numeracy.
- Four Blocks Model of Literacy and Talk for Writing have been implemented across classrooms to support student literacy development.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Progress intentions to develop literacy and numeracy leaders and planning teams.
- Explore opportunities for scheduled teacher collaboration, to share practice and build consistent practices across classrooms.

Student achievement and progress

The school is using a range of baseline and whole-school assessments to identify student needs and inform teacher decision making at the classroom level.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Diagnostic assessments in literacy and numeracy, as well as the SWESN⁷'s Adjustment to Assessment tool, are supporting common assessment for students.
- The development of an accountability timeline for assessments and IEP policy has contributed to clarification of assessment processes and practices.
- A data review document sets out a procedure to assist teaching staff in the review of student achievement data.
- Increasing student achievement of IEP targets is a business plan priority, with current student achievement data collected at the leadership level.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Further progress whole-school processes for the monitoring and use of student achievement data to inform planning and decision making at the whole-school, class and individual student level.
- Share analysis of student achievement of IEP targets with teaching staff.
- Continue to build staff data literacy and use of data to determine the efficacy of class programs and interventions.

Reviewers

Kim McCollum
Director, Public School Review

Cathy Allen
Principal, Clifton Park 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.

The timeframe for the next review process focusing on the Relationships and Partnerships, Leadership and Student Achievement and Progress domains only, will be Term 1, 2022.

The next Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, will be scheduled for Term 1, 2024.



Melesha Sands
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Individual Education Plans
- 2 Positive Behaviour Support
- 3 Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework
- 4 Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- 5 Special Educational Need Assessment Toolkit
- 6 Abilities Based Learning Education, Western Australia
- 7 South West Education Support Network