



Department of
Education

D20/0129005

Public education
A world of opportunities

Denmark Primary School

Public School Review

March 2020

PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

Purpose

All Western Australian public schools are reviewed every three years 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 that a school is operating effectively and 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.

The principal provides the review team with a self-assessment of the school's performance based on evidence gathered by the principal and staff. Information validated by the review team is considered before and during the school visit. This forms the basis for the school review report. The report is provided to the principal, the chair of the school board/council 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 and the Funding Agreement for Schools.

School performance rating

This performance rating is based on information gained from the self-assessment submission and the validation process. It is focused on a review of the following areas of school performance: relationships and partnerships; learning environment; leadership; use of resources; teaching quality; and student achievement and progress.

The school's performance rating is:

	Effective
	The school demonstrates effective practice in creating the conditions required for student success.

	Needs Improvement
	The school has aspects of its practice below expectations and needs supported action to improve student success.

Context

Denmark Primary School is located in the small south coastal town of Denmark, within the Southwest Education Region. The school became an Independent Public School in 2017.

The school is situated on a six-hectare site with two ovals and is surrounded by natural bushland. It was the first school established in the town and boasts a range of a facilities including purpose-built rooms such as a home economics room, a facility usually reserved for secondary schools. A recently established science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) room seeks to offer increased technology access using hands-on, real-life learning.

Currently, there are 438 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1031 (decile 3).

The School Board is committed to supporting the school to achieve goals set out in strategic planning documents. The Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) raises significant funds each year for resources.

School self-assessment validation

The principal submitted a comprehensive and rigorous school self-assessment.

The following aspects are confirmed:

- Staff engaged actively in determining the most appropriate evidence sets to submit via the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT).
- Working at committee level, staff interrogated data to support the school's self-assessment judgements and demonstrated a clear appreciation of the content of the ESAT submission.
- Comprehensive summaries were provided for each domain of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework, and Student Achievement and Progress, articulating the school's response to the three key questions: How are we going? How do we know? What are we doing next?
- The validation visit provided considerable value adding opportunities, with input from key staff, and School Board, P&C and parent representatives.
- The school's leadership team expressed the view that the staff valued the opportunity to engage in the Public School Review process, noting that it has enhanced their self-efficacy by increasing their sense of shared ownership of their school improvement agenda.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships	
<p>The principal was acknowledged for being highly visible and making genuine connections that foster positive relationships. Aply led, the staff have forged a strong sense of community premised on respect at all levels – with colleagues, parents and students.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A highly functioning School Board contribute effectively to the strategic direction of the school, harnessing their considerable capacity to engage directly in selected committees as appropriate. • Parent insights are sought actively, as partners in their children’s education. This collaborative approach is valued by parents and results in staff being better able to cater for student needs. • A productive partnership with the Gumnut Playgroup has improved transition into formal schooling and actively promotes public education.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to garner parent and community support to further enhance opportunities for student academic and social development. • Embed in practice, the new SMILE¹ playground strategy, which is designed to engage every student and increase their confidence in accessing support.

Learning environment	
<p>A nurturing and inclusive learning environment where the academic focus is matched by equal attention to social emotional development is highly evident. A before-class active engagement initiative improves class readiness and sets a positive tone for each day.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable improvements to the physical environment have resulted in nature playgrounds, loose parts play and chill out safe spaces being easily accessible to all students. • As a Positive Behaviour Support school, the core expectations, ‘to be your best, be safe and caring, be respectful, and be resilient’ are taught overtly and monitored closely so that follow up interventions prove effective. • A mental health initiative using the Be You framework is focused on fostering resilience and protective behaviours. • A targeted approach to engaging Aboriginal students, promoting their proud culture and teaching code switching, supports their sense of belonging to the school community. • Students at educational risk are well supported to achieve, with a progress-oriented tracker used to ensure that data informs practice.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage students and parents in a strategy to reduce the percentage of unexplained absences. • Overtly promote throughout the school community the tangible strategies currently being employed to foster increased student resilience.

Leadership

A strong culture of distributed leadership, enabled by a stable and supportive executive team, is underpinned by a shared philosophy that every staff member can be a leader in delivering high performance and high care.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers credit the clear line management structures as providing opportunities for deep consultation where all opinions are valued, resulting in shared ownership of the data-driven decision making.• Whole-school interventions are acknowledged and accepted as the most effective method to drive the school improvement agenda.• Staff development is supported through quality professional learning using a cascade model where key teachers are trained to train others.• Positive and active engagement in cultural awareness is valued and embedded in practice.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to embed the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework</i> to support a transition from cultural awareness to cultural responsiveness.• Increase the use of executive walk-throughs and fully embrace the new peer observation model as strategies to monitor the consistent use of whole-school agreed practices, including learning intentions, success criteria and formative assessment.

Use of resources

The transparent alignment between budgeting and school planning is supported by processes to ensure teacher leaders are consulted and informed decisions are made.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The manager corporate services is very approachable and supports cost centre managers in meeting their fiscal responsibilities.• The representative Finance Committee meets regularly, is well informed and works to ensure a shared appreciation of prioritised funding allocations.• Para-professionals are valued highly and employed specifically to support the delivery of targeted intervention programs, which are meeting with success.• Working in partnership with the P&C and the Shire of Denmark, successful grant applications result in considerable external funding that is impacting positively upon grounds beautification, in particular.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Track more closely the impact of strategies funded through targeted initiatives and student characteristics funding to ensure positive effect.• Establish a grounds committee inclusive of the community to gain alignment between the strategic direction of planned improvements and financial targets for fundraising opportunities.• Continue to develop a strategic marketing plan designed to attract more families to choose public education.

Teaching quality

Passionate and capable teachers articulate a clear sense of self-efficacy. Reflective teacher champions lead the school improvement agenda with the sure knowledge that they are empowered to make a positive difference to student outcomes.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong culture of collective accountability has been established through collaborative meetings held at phase of learning, professional learning community and learning area specific committee levels. • The assess, plan, teach model, incorporating 'cold tasks' at the outset of new learning, provides a database to inform planning and differentiation thus enabling teachers to better meet individual student needs. • A combination of embracing whole-school pedagogical models and digital student handover data ensures a seamless transition from year to year. • Acknowledging that the implementation of whole-school initiatives with fidelity takes time, teachers engage in a staged introduction of new programs using a gradual release model.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to Brightpath, formally embed moderation practices using the SCSA² Judging Standards to increase grade alignment across all years and learning areas. • Enhance teachers' capacity to engage with technologies, with a clear intent to overtly embed the use of digital technology and STEM across the curriculum in meaningful ways.

Student achievement and progress

With a noted increased competence in data literacy, teachers actively seek improved data triangulation and use their findings to intervene at strategic points of need.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-entry Assessment Program and AEDC³ data indicate an increased capacity of students to engage in formal schooling. • Below expected performance across most testing areas in Year 3 NAPLAN⁴ in 2019 is acknowledged. PM Benchmark⁵ assessments, PAT-R⁶ and PAT-M⁷ have been introduced to better track progress and ensure early identification of students at educational risk and for intervention strategies to be applied. • A noted improvement in student progress and achievement in NAPLAN from Year 3 in 2017 to Year 5 in 2019, compared with like schools shows higher achievement for most testing areas, and both high progress and high achievement in writing in particular. • MiniLit⁸ and MacqLit⁹ interventions support those students struggling to meet the national minimal standard. Equally evident is a determined focus on accelerating more capable students to aspire to high achievement.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the whole-school approach to mental computation and problem solving in support of a targeted approach to improved numeracy.

Reviewers

Kath Ward
Director, Public School Review

Leigh Nelson
Principal, Merredin College
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

Based on this report, I endorse your school performance rating of 'Effective'.

Your next school review is scheduled for 2023.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Scan, move, interact, listen, engage
- 2 School Curriculum and Standards Authority
- 3 Australian Early Development Census
- 4 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 5 Reading assessment resource
- 6 Progressive Achievement Tests – Reading
- 7 Progressive Achievement Tests – Mathematics
- 8 Early literacy program
- 9 Reading intervention program