



Department of
Education

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Brookton District High School

Public School Review

June 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

Brookton District High School is located approximately 138 kilometres south-east of Perth in the Wheatbelt Education Region. It is situated in the heart of the Avon Valley.

The school opened in 1960, replacing the primary school that had been serving the community since 1903. School grounds are attractive, well-maintained and include student sustainability gardens. In 2015, Brookton District High School became an Independent Public School (IPS).

Currently, there are 149 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 10, a third of whom are Aboriginal. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 899 (decile 9).

Brookton District High School was selected to engage with schools in the Centre for Excellence in the Explicit Teaching of Literacy, a partnership between Curtin University, Statewide Services and five public primary schools.

The school has also engaged enthusiastically in the Ngala Koolangka Kaadadjin (Our Children's Learning) Project, which proactively links the school, community and Aboriginal parents to maximise the academic, attendance, engagement and health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal students.

There is a strong sense of community evident in the school. Support is provided by the active School Board, with the dedicated Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) fundraising to assist in the provision of operational enhancements for the school.

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 improvement journey detailed in this review targeted the school's response in the period following the IPS review in 2017.
- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission included an account of the school context and operations in addressing this improvement agenda.
- A culture of reflective school assessment, as the foundation for effective planning and continuous improvement, is developing at the strategic and operational levels.
- Staff demonstrated ownership for student success, with professional and personal responsibilities and expectations understood.
- A range of performance evidence was selected for the school's self-assessment submission.
- The school's self-assessment was enhanced by conversations held with members of the school community during the validation visit.

The following recommendations are made:

- Use the ESAT as a repository for performance evidence as part of the ongoing school self-assessment process aligned to the Standard.
- Ensure the focus of the self-assessment draws on the most recent and relevant evidence of performance in relation to the Standard.

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Relationships and partnerships

Gratitude, being willing to help others for no personal gain, shared experiences and a sense of humour epitomise staff behaviours at Brookton District High School. Staff work together consistently to improve the welfare of, and relationships with students, cementing genuine partnerships.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The School Board, in conjunction with the Shire of Brookton, has been instrumental in progressing the Happy Valley Water Project, with the potential to provide significant savings to the costs of water usage.
- Community views are sought and analysed regularly in reviewing school performance and effectiveness. Parents have high levels of satisfaction with the school's capacity to meet student needs.
- Supportive staff relationships result from a stable teaching cohort with strong community connections. Staff are well informed of operations and progress due to regular meetings and data reviews.
- Student feedback highlights the perception that: teachers expect them to do their best; the school looks for ways to improve; and teachers care about them.
- There is a strong commitment from leaders and staff to creating honest and authentic partnerships with Aboriginal families, for the mutual benefit of students and the wider community.
- A range of mutually beneficial partnerships have been established with businesses, community groups and support personnel, including the Shire of Brookton, Seabrook Aboriginal Corporation and Silver Chain, to enhance the conditions for student development.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Embed the Ngala Koolangka Kaadadjin Project into school operations.

Learning environment

Leaders and staff have a strong commitment to establishing and maintaining a Safe, Organised, Achieving and Respectful (SOAR) learning environment. These values enhance the culture of learning.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Implementation of the Positive Behaviour Support framework has been highly beneficial. It has provided clarity of language and common practice, incorporating the explicit teaching of expected behaviours.
- Unified commitment to teaching protective behaviours aligned to Positive Behaviour Support, has enhanced the learning environment.
- The physical environment adds value to the student learning experience through the creation of a welcoming and inspiring atmosphere. A balance between explicit teaching and play-based learning is enhancing success for students in the early years.
- Students at educational risk are supported. Wraparound care to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for students is evident, with involvement from allied health services.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Enhance Positive Behaviour Support implementation through incorporating Zones of Regulation as a whole-school approach.

Leadership

School improvement is founded on a shared understanding of the available performance data and a common vision to support progress. Consultative planning processes have enabled the development of strategic direction with attention to addressing student, school and community needs.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- There is strong appreciation for the model of distributed leadership founded on the capacity of staff to focus on school priorities. Support for relationships to form and consolidate has been complemented by processes that assist whole-school teaching and learning emphases.
- Reflection and collaboration are viewed as integral in developing staff capability. Planning for improved student outcomes is the product of the authentic focus on achievement data.
- Targeted committees have been developed to support the school vision and leadership. They utilise staff strengths strategically to support identified programs in the core business of teaching and learning.
- Formal and informal classroom observation and reflection that provide commendations and recommendations regarding professional practice, are integral in developing staff capability.
- The school has embarked upon an enhanced model of student leadership to provide a broader spectrum of opportunity to develop and demonstrate their leadership skills.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Develop secondary school pathway plans in collaboration with the School of Isolated and Distance Education to broaden student opportunities.
- Ensure ongoing attention to established, whole-school curriculum approaches in secondary school.

Use of resources

The school has developed processes and procedures for planning, decision making, management and monitoring of resources that are aligned to required protocols and the conditions for student success.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Strategic workforce planning and recruitment processes have enhanced resource budgeting, deployment and management, and link to school planning. Student outcomes are being optimised as a result.
- Resource management protocols, developed in response to a 2018 Compliance Review, demonstrate improved effectiveness and efficiency in catering for current needs and future directions.
- Targeted initiatives and student characteristics funding support individuals and programs to improve student outcomes. With the recent enrolment of students with high levels of behavioural, learning and emotional needs, initiatives and equipment to support teachers' delivery are being prioritised.
- Consistent monitoring of assets and resources has enhanced the accounting for school resources and monitoring of long-term needs.
- Effective practices have been established for budget management of financial and human resources. Guided by the school business plan, they align with Department policy and strategic directions.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Develop a plan for school Occupational Safety and Health practices, including signage regarding safety issues, procedures and practices aligned to Australian Standards.

Teaching quality

The school has implemented research-based practices in Explicit Instruction to strategically and explicitly teach new concepts by breaking down content, modelling skills and guiding students to mastery.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Teaching and Learning Handbook defines staff expectations, and outlines: school context; Explicit Instruction; high expectations; curriculum components; skills consolidation; highly structured lesson sequence; use of data; and an effective teacher feedback policy, to enhance school-wide instruction.
- Involvement in the Centre for Excellence in the Explicit Teaching of Literacy program has ensured high priority is given to quality teaching pedagogy, which is maintained and supported across the school.
- Targeted strategies, including Letters and Sounds, Talk for Writing, Daily Writing and PR1ME Mathematics, have been introduced to support whole-school curriculum and assessment.
- Shared beliefs about culture exist to support school-wide practices. The need to embed language and culture within curriculum practices is evident in the school's commitment to the Noongar language program.
- The Ngala Koolangka Kaadadjin Project is providing success in engaging Aboriginal students and families. It assesses student attendance and academic data to identify gaps in learning, and supports teachers and families to create individual learning plans to monitor academic progress.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Investigate opportunities for all secondary staff to engage with Teach Well.

Student achievement and progress

Long-term student performance data in NAPLAN¹ Years 3 to 7 are generally above like schools.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- School means were above the like school mean in all NAPLAN assessments in Year 3, Year 5 and Year 7 in 2019.
- Comparative performance data for Year 3 to Year 7 have been above the expected mean in the majority of NAPLAN assessments, 2014-2019.
- On-entry Assessment Program data for 2020 indicated levels of achievement in speaking and listening, reading, writing and numeracy that are consistent with State distributions.
- The introduction of Letters and Sounds in response to On-entry Assessment Program data has improved student skills in phonics and phonemic awareness.
- Annual Progressive Achievement Test assessments provide supplementary measures to systemic testing, to monitor progress in reading, grammar and punctuation, numeracy and science.
- Implementation of the MiniLit and MacqLit programs has had a positive impact on progress in literacy.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Consolidate reading as a priority including the implementation of a home reading program.

Reviewers

Brett Hunt
Director, Public School Review

Melanie Hancock
Principal, Northampton District High 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
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy

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