Shaping the future

Connolly Primary School

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

Connolly Primary School is located approximately 30 kilometres from the Perth central business district, in the North Metropolitan Education Region.

The school opened in 1991 and became an Independent Public School in 2012.

Currently, there are 394 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Connolly Primary School has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1061 (decile 2).

Specialist educational programs include physical education, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), performing arts and Japanese.

Community support for the school is demonstrated through the work of the School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

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:

- A broad range of staff engaged in school self-assessment reflection and discussion prior to the school visit, including teaching and school support staff.

- A range of evidence relating to school practices and performance in each of the domains was submitted through the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT).

- Staff had input into whole-school self-assessment and decision making through a range of committees.

- During the validation visit, school leaders, teachers, support staff, students, parents and community members made contributions and provided information relating to claims and evidence provided in the ESAT.

- School Board members, parents and P&C representatives engaged enthusiastically in validation visit discussions, reflecting a strong sense of engagement and investment in the school's ongoing development.

- The school demonstrated a strong improvement agenda with a clear strategic direction for the ongoing development of student wellbeing and a culture focused on student success.

The following recommendations are made:

- Continue to involve a broad range of staff in future school review processes including the selection and analysis of evidence, the identification of planned actions and contribution to the judgment of school performance. Ensure the self-assessment focus is on 'how the school is going', not 'what the school is doing'.

- Strengthen the alignment between school planning and improvement strategies and the analysis of student achievement data.

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Relationships and partnerships

Positive school climates, good relationships with communities and strong parental support are powerful factors for school success. Staff holding each other to account as partners in driving student success is fundamental to the Department's high care, high performance mantra.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school is characterised by its culture of building strong, positive relationships between students, staff and parents that are based on respect and inclusivity.
- The School Board understands its governance role through engagement with the Department's School Board training and the support provided by the school leadership team. Maintaining observance of planning, budget management and student achievement and progress is a shared priority.
- Partnerships with the Connolly Residents Association, Joondalup Resort, Edith Cowan University and West Coast Language Development Centre, augment and add value to the range of support and learning experiences for students and staff.
- As an adult workplace, the school recognises the importance of implementing strategies to promote staff wellbeing.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Engage the School Board more deeply in school improvement foci, incorporating the regular sharing of student performance information as a standing order in meetings.
- Continue to advance the implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework by exploring local Aboriginal history and stories unique to the Joondalup location.

Learning environment

A precursor to effective, school-wide curriculum delivery, is facilitating the conditions for student learning to become embedded. A multi-faceted approach to ensuring alignment between strategies for attendance, behaviour and students at educational risk is a feature of successful schools.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Behaviour management approaches have longitudinal application, are consistent, and are accepted by staff, students and parents. Indicators of routine explicit teaching of expected behaviour are evident.
- Evidence of the school's inclusive, nurturing and safe environment is compelling. Students share a deep understanding about the importance of caring for each other and accepting difference without judgement. The professional support from education assistants is acknowledged and appreciated.
- Processes and procedures are in place to manage and track students at risk with behaviour, attendance and learning difficulties. Oversight, with informed support, is available through the student services coordinator.
- The school has identified the importance of creating an exciting, motivating learning environment both in the classroom and externally. An upgrade and replacement program for facilities has revitalised the school's appearance and learning functionality.
- Specialist teachers (science, physical education, languages etc) add a rich vein of learning experiences that appeal to students' unique talents and interests.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Establish an attendance policy that highlights key roles and responsibilities, together with incorporating a case management approach for students at risk with unauthorised absences.

Leadership

Research indicates that effective school leadership practices include: leading others to improve student learning; establishing clear expectations; effective professional development; and taking ownership for overall school improvement.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- There is a distributed model of leadership whereby staff are invited to undertake leadership roles. This includes curriculum planning, phase of learning and special project leaders.

- As a result of engagement with the Department's Centre for Excellence, staff have an elevated appreciation of the obligations when aspiring to be involved in school leadership roles.

- The school has undertaken a network leadership role in digital technologies. This, together with the Autism Spectrum Disorder therapy dog (Max) initiative, is indicative of the school's enthusiasm for seeking innovative solutions to system and school needs.

- School leaders have shown a willingness to promote the need for change. Starting with the 'why' for change, identifying change champions and resourcing appropriately are the key pillars identified by the school to drive successful change.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Empower change leaders to research, determine, document and articulate an agreed change management model. Ensure all change initiatives are accepted by staff to be non-negotiable once they have been researched, proposed, agreed, planned, communicated, resourced and implemented.

- Develop a shared understanding of strategic and operational planning frameworks. Be clear about agreed roles in relation to implementation, monitoring, review and accountability of planning intentions.

- Enhance performance management processes through incorporating teacher-directed peer observation. Train staff in the 'art' of peer observation, focusing on the skill of giving feedback intended to lead to professional improvement.

Use of resources

The school approaches the use of its resources, both strategically and operationally, to great effect. An audit of existing practices and processes has placed the school in a strong position of fiscal integrity.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The manager corporate services provided compelling evidence of the school converting its strategic intentions into operational reality. This includes the improved appearance and functionality of school facilities.

- Decision making in the use of resources is based on what is best for students. This consists of the school making an important decision regarding the sustainability of staffing levels to maintain learning programs.

- The Finance Committee, in partnership with the School Board, ensures the budget is aligned to school planning priorities and special projects.

- The school office staff are welcoming and support all enquiries received. They are inclusive and provide appropriate assistance to give parents and visitors a positive 'front of house' experience.

- The school has identified current and future workforce management issues. This includes consideration of replacing staff due to retirement and targeting staff with specialised expertise.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to monitor the workforce profile, staff transiency and declining enrolments to ensure staffing is both adequate and appropriate for students' needs.

Teaching quality

Creating a trusting two-way feedback loop is the first step to staff engaging in disciplined dialogue. Maintaining high levels of continuity across curriculum, teaching practice and data management, through all phases of learning, is fundamental to sustained student success.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school's eleven-point statement on 'Effective Teachers at Connolly Primary School' provides an ideal basis upon which to frame discussions about the consistency of teaching practice across the school. Holding each other to account by genuinely following the LEARN[1] model will be the next step.

- Staff have regular opportunities to collaborate. The expectations for consistent teaching practice and student learning, articulated by school executive leaders, is to be at the core of the collaborative meeting agendas.

- Sentiments expressed by staff indicate a well-intentioned and caring approach to working with students. Modifications to classroom programs, including authentic, moderated differentiation for cohorts and/or Individual Education Plans for identified students, will enhance the prospects of student success.

- Top Ten Mathematics has been introduced to achieve greater consistency and continuity of delivery across all years. A united sense of ownership, meaning all teachers being professionally accountable for its full implementation, is the expectation from school leaders.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Specify expectations regarding the delivery of teaching strategies and the sources of professional learning support required to be differentiated according to the needs of each phase of learning.

- Ensure that agreed non-negotiable approaches are adopted unswervingly using specialised data analysis, the selection of teaching strategies and the establishment of common language for teachers and education assistants.

- Develop a self-assessing, reflective culture based on the fundamental proposition that, to assure student success, it is first crucial to achieve low variance, connected teaching practice across all classrooms.

Student achievement and progress

Judgements about student achievement and progress should be a blend of standardised and school-based instruments in combination with targeted observations, daily records and student feedback.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Following a frank analysis of recent NAPLAN[2] data, the leadership accepts the importance of re-setting approaches to deliver oversight of teaching based on rigorous data analysis and class observations.

- Efforts to build a reservoir of complementary data using PAT[3] assessments, are noted. This will provide a stream of data to inform classroom planning and student progress in targeted areas of concern.

- The recent appointment of a staff member with specialised knowledge of data analysis for literacy and numeracy, is recognition of the school's priorities and demonstrates astute workforce planning.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Use backward mapping techniques to identify possible areas requiring specific attention from Kindergarten to Year 3. Prioritise deeper, collaborative analysis of early years' student learning.

- Provide professional learning to staff on the use of SAIS[4] data analysis. Plan term moderation of grade allocations to address existing misalignment with student performance data.

- Review the number of assessment options used by the school with a view to retaining only those that provide the necessary information to support class and whole-school planning.

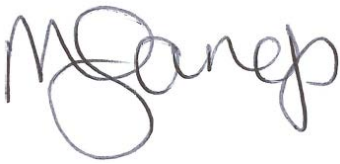| Reviewers	
Rod Lowther **Director, Public School Review**	Kristy Mularczyk **Principal, Success Primary School** **Peer Reviewer**

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 Teaching Quality and Student Achievement and Progress domains only, will be Term 4, 2022.

The next Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, will be scheduled for Term 4, 2024.

Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

1   Learning intentions; Engage; Activate learning I do; Review; Next steps
2   National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
3   Progressive Achievement Tests
4   Student Achievement Information System