



Department of  
Education

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Public education  
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# South Halls Head Primary School

## Public School Review

March 2021



# PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

## Purpose

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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

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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

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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

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South Halls Head Primary School opened in 2008 and is located in Mandurah, approximately 80 kilometres south of the Perth central business district, within the South Metropolitan Education Region. In 2010, the school became the first Independent Public School in the Mandurah region.

Currently 593 students are enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1027 (decile 4).

There is a wide range of well-maintained facilities at the school, including three adventure playgrounds (Kindergarten, Pre-primary, Primary), a nature playground, a fitness track, two multi-purpose courts, a school oval and access to a community oval. In addition, specialist facilities for music and art are provided, and a colourful and well-resourced library.

The School Board is involved in strategic decision making and parents and community members participate in assisting the school through the Parents and Citizens' Association.

## School self-assessment validation

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

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

- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided a transparent account of the school context and operations in addressing its improvement agenda.
- A culture of reflective school self-assessment as the foundation for effective planning and continuous improvement is evident at the strategic and operational (phase) levels.
- A range of performance evidence was selected for the school self-assessment submission.
- The process acted as a vehicle for meaningful staff collaboration and reflection in school self-assessment. It provided an understanding of 'where we are at', 'how we know' and 'where we are going' to a much deeper level.
- Assessing progress across the domains of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework enabled staff to celebrate strengths and successes and identify gaps in processes and practice.
- 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.
- As a staff group, reflect on the Public School Review process undertaken to guide future school self-assessment.

## Public School Review

### Relationships and partnerships

The school culture is founded on the concept of a 'village'. It is defined by all students, parents and staff knowing each other well and each person showing genuine concern for the care and welfare of others and the environment.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A targeted focus on the consistency, effectiveness and alignment of methods of communication has increased access to information by parents across year levels.
- The School Board is a dedicated, supportive and collaborative group bringing a range of skills and knowledge to facilitate governance and drive improvement.
- The school priority of 'Community Partnerships', has enabled successful connections with a number of local and national organisations to enhance student opportunities and outcomes.
- Collaborative practices have been developed successfully to enhance staff commitment to teaching and learning focused on the range of student needs.
- There is a whole-school focus on creating a supportive and engaging work environment. The health and wellbeing of staff and students is a priority.

#### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to build and nurture relationships within the school and with the broader community to enhance the health and wellbeing of the 'village'.

### Learning environment

A safe and supportive learning environment fosters positive student behaviour and engagement in seeking to create the conditions that enable success for all.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The conditions for student learning are enhanced by an expectation of regular attendance, and consistent management processes. The school's explicit teaching approach includes lesson structure and norms to support the engagement of all levels of learners.
- Aligned to the explicit instruction model, the school's positive behaviour policy is based on 'define, teach and encourage' in teaching real life skills, with the consistency of delivery paramount.
- Student voice is sought, heard and acted on. The Student Council actively represent their peers and act upon their needs and/or requests.
- The whole-school focus on student health and wellbeing is supported by the successful implementation of initiatives such as the Healthy Breakfast and Student Wellbeing clubs.

#### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Review the behaviour management policy with involvement from all key stakeholders including staff, students, parents and community members.

## Leadership

Leaders demonstrate a unified purpose in establishing the pre-conditions for school and student success. They have articulated an assessment of current conditions, together with the short-term and long-term priorities for the school improvement agenda.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A 'phase' leadership structure supports a focus on quality teaching. Committed and competent staff collaborate to ensure consistent and high quality practice across the school.
- Leaders prioritise school improvement as central to strategic direction. Alignment between strategic and operational plans is understood and enacted by phase leaders.
- Performance and development processes have been refined, with goals designed to increase meaningful accountability. Staff receive feedback and are confident to reflect on practices and seek support.
- Formal and informal classroom observation and reflection are integral in developing staff capability.
- Change is effectively researched, trialled and assessed prior to broader implementation.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Investigate the Future Leaders Framework program for staff and the Mandurah Schools Network to support leadership identification and development.

## Use of resources

The school has developed processes and procedures for resource management that ensure alignment between school resourcing and short-term and long-term needs of students.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Effective and considered financial management procedures are evident as outlined by the overall assessment of 'Good' in the most recent School Compliance Review Report.
- Staff are provided with training and documentation outlining expected practice, to improve their understanding of school resource management.
- The Principal, manager corporate services, cost centre managers and Finance Committee in partnership provide clear processes to administer the one-line budget.
- Through the chaplaincy program, targeted initiatives funding ensures support for students individually, in class groups and via whole-school programs.
- Resource deployment has been prioritised to support professional learning and teaching practices that focus on literacy development.
- Workforce management is considered and transparent, with the Principal and manager corporate services providing oversight of alignment between human resources and student needs.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to provide professional learning to staff to build understanding of, and capacity in managing, financial policy and procedures.

## Teaching quality

There is a school-wide commitment to embed a performance culture around explicit instruction. Practice has driven improvement with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff collaboration has led to a refinement of whole-school lesson design and class level resources to include 'Engagement Norms' and 'TAPPLE'<sup>1</sup> strategies.
- Analysis of the National Quality Standard has resulted in a balanced approach to the implementation of explicit instruction and play-based learning. The Special Educational Need planning and referral process for the early years has been modified to ensure it is streamlined and relevant to the school context.
- Learning differentiation strategies have impacted positively on student performance. Academic Challenge classes cater for high achieving students enabling greater depth of investigation, challenge of minds and accelerated learning.
- A range of data are collected and analysed routinely to support judgements regarding student achievement and progress. Research-based intervention strategies are determined through meta-analysis of essential elements.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue implementation of early intervention in the Science of Reading, and extend processes into middle and upper years.

## Student achievement and progress

Long-term student performance data in NAPLAN<sup>2</sup> are generally above or well above like schools.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- On-entry Assessment Program data demonstrates school achievement comparable to or above that of the State in all areas.
- The early childhood team collect a range of screening data for early detection of deficits in learning, to inform planning for intervention.
- The school Benchmarks and Standards document specifies agreed targets in school-wide assessments to guide continual student improvement.
- Comparative performance data for Year 3 have been above the expected mean in all but one NAPLAN assessment, 2014-2019.
- School means were above the like school mean in all NAPLAN assessments in 2019.
- Support for teachers to plan, assess and report on students with additional learning needs has been beneficial.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Review the Kindergarten to Year 6 mathematics scope and sequence documents to improve scaffolding and the allocation of time spent on each skill.

## Reviewers

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Brett Hunt  
Director, Public School Review

Natalie Mayho  
Principal, Eden Hill Primary School  
Peer Reviewer

## Endorsement

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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 1, 2024.



Melesha Sands  
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

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### References

- 1 Teach first, Ask a question, Pair – share, Pick a non-volunteer, Listen, Effective feedback
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy