



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Gooseberry Hill 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](mailto:PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au)

## Context

Gooseberry Hill Primary School is located approximately 20 kilometres east of the Perth central business district within the South Metropolitan Education Region. Established in 1972, the school is situated in a unique bush setting alongside national parks.

In 2012, Gooseberry Hill Primary School became an Independent Public School. Currently, there are 463 students enrolled at the school from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school has an Index of Community-Socio Educational Advantage of 1069 (decile 2).

As part of the school's environmental program, it partners with Kanyana Native Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, with senior students visiting each week to assist in the care of injured native wildlife. Various specialist programs are offered at the school, including numerous visual arts and performing arts programs.

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

## School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

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

- The Professional Learning Community and curriculum committee structures provide a scaffold underpinning the emerging culture of school self-assessment and personal professional reflection at the school.
- Leaders engaged staff in preparation for the school's Public School Review, developing an understanding of the process, unpacking the Standard and identifying evidence against each domain of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework.
- Staff indicated the Public School Review process provided opportunity to reflect upon and consider the successes of the school. They expressed appreciation at being given a voice through their inclusion in validation day discussions.
- Staff, parents and community partners participated in conversations throughout the validation visit, enhancing the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission.

The following recommendations are made:

- Ensure the ESAT submission expands on what is being done in the school to clearly articulate 'the impact' in each domain and align commentary with the evidence.
- Maintain a focus on the Standard as a constant reference point for ongoing performance reflections.

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### Relationships and partnerships

Recognition of the importance of staff having a voice, sharing ideas and being able to give feedback has been acknowledged as a significant recent development in the school's relational culture.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- School Board members, together with representatives of the P&C, have strongly endorsed the school's vision, direction and progress towards achieving and maintaining community confidence.
- The Principal's priority for bringing staff into the foreground of school planning, decision making and performance reflection has been welcomed by staff.
- Development of staff confidence to engage in operational discussions and take ownership of a change environment, has contributed significantly to the improved levels of staff self-efficacy.
- There are many examples of exceptional community-based events and activities in which families and staff collaborate to deliver a unique school experience and lasting memories for students.
- Staff with leadership aspirations have been given a voice through being involved in the development of the school business plan.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to 'fine tune' the multi-layered communication processes for information sharing to maximise staff and community engagement.
- Consider how School Board members can achieve enhanced levels of visibility.
- Continue to build functional strategies to include student voice in the school's decision making processes.

### Learning environment

The school has an engaging bushland environment that it uses to great effect. Described as an additional classroom, unique and engaging outdoor activities give expression to students' creative and inquisitive minds.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school's approach to behaviour management is evolving to incorporate a proactive, whole-school strategy reflecting local community values. School programs, such as Zones of Regulation, URStrong and Cyber Safety, together with dedicated school chaplaincy time for each class, adds to the mix of health and wellbeing activities provided to students.
- Teachers and education assistants monitor intervention programs and share feedback on student progress.
- External agencies are welcomed into the school to provide specialised support. Parents are regarded as partners in the monitoring and support given to students at risk.
- The health and wellbeing of staff is considered a significant factor in how students perceive the 'vibe' of the school environment. The leadership works to ensure staff feel they are able to do their job in a safe and supportive environment.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Review the school's students at educational risk processes, updating information management and student transition processes to reflect contemporary practice. Take into account the multi-layered information systems that inform decisions relating to students at risk.
- Invest time to develop staff skills in the design of explicit improvement targets for students at educational risk.

## Leadership

The Principal has created the conditions for respectful leadership, supportive of staff and community relationships with a focus on improvement through collaboration, consultation and evidence-based decision making.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school has introduced a level of devolved leadership through the development of a Professional Learning Community. This structure has engendered an appetite for change and professional learning.
- Staff have been further upskilled through their participation in the Leading School Improvement program.
- A change management approach has been developed and is outlined in the 'Road to Wisdom' document. This cleverly links to the historical context of the school, establishing a commitment from staff to be part of a forward looking school improvement ethos.
- Operational planning is evident through the agency of curriculum committees. The professional dialogue between these committees and Phase of Development teams is emerging.
- While a formal, consistent whole-school approach to performance management exists, it is still in a change phase. Staff are beginning to focus on the AITSL<sup>1</sup> Australian Professional Standards for Teachers for self-reflection in combination with the Educator Impact program.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Consider how the school budget can accommodate time for staff to be involved in collective leadership development activities.
- Maintain a focus on building staff understanding and acceptance of the value of professional reflection through performance management processes.

## Use of resources

Guided by the school business plan, the Principal and manager corporate services deliver open and transparent management and decision making processes. There has been a proactive approach to using budget allocations to augment the school's access to specialist expertise that supports intervention programs.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A comprehensive workforce plan has been developed giving consideration to existing and future staffing requirements. All decisions are underpinned by an unambiguous focus on the needs of students.
- The school actively seeks donations, grants and the support of volunteers, to supplement school resources and enhance programs, experiences and learning opportunities for students.
- Through their engagement, the School Board, Finance Committee, and staff more broadly, are developing a shared understanding of the complex nature of governance for budget management and resource allocations.
- Targeted initiative and student characteristics funding have been deployed to assist students to achieve learning goals, including through the setting of individualised targets.
- Good financial processes and strong governance are in place, with budget allocations and expenditure decisions discussed with the Finance Committee and shared with School Board members.
- The digital technology needs of the students and school have been reviewed and a long-term plan and replacement schedule has been established.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Maintain the creation of opportunities for staff to meaningfully engage in school financial and budget management processes, including access to the Funding Agreement for Schools.

## Teaching quality

There is evidence of significant levels of teacher efficacy evolving across the phases of learning. The excitement among staff to be part of a shared commitment to accountability and responsibility for every child's success is palpable.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A focus on instructional practice has begun at the school and this will need to be transferred from the Professional Learning Community to a whole-school approach.
- Through professional learning and instructional leadership, a disciplined dialogue has emerged featuring a common pedagogical language.
- Following a school audit, the priority for elevating the school focus to be on academic rigour has been embraced and is at the core of staff valuing and accepting 'what the data says'. This means greater emphasis is placed on data triangulation to identify gaps in student learning and teacher content delivery.
- The relationship between teachers and education assistants has elevated the capacity of the school to meet the needs of all students, particularly for those identified with additional learning needs.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Implement the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework across the curriculum as a matter of urgency. Commence planning of a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Create a strong, collaborative and reflective teaching culture, delivering impactful, low variation, connected practice across all phases of learning.
- Continue to upskill staff to an evidence-based approach, including accessing Student Achievement Information System and On-entry Assessment Program data. Use these data to better inform differentiation planning to cater for the needs of all students.

## Student achievement and progress

Attention has been given to forging greater levels of understanding and acceptance for the school to establish robust, school-wide data collection and analysis processes. There is a solid core of like-minded staff enthusiastically pursuing this objective.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Student achievement levels related to systemic data (NAPLAN<sup>2</sup>) in recent years for Year 3, have been consistently below like schools. Year 5 data, while marginally better over the same period, has not indicated improvement trends in all areas assessed.
- Staff have identified the appropriateness of strategies catering for Aboriginal students and students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect. The implementation of a new assessment schedule for cohort and individual tracking has strengthened the school's capacity to make informed class planning decisions.
- The introduction of Progressive Achievement Test assessments and Brightpath is anticipated to strengthen alignment of grade allocations and systemic data sets.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Establish effective, consistent tracking tools and databases that ensure data for student cohort performance and students at educational risk is available to all staff and used in handover processes.
- Focus on the consistency of grade allocation. Be sure judgements are defensible by using reliable, systemic and research-based complementary school-based assessments.
- Drive a school-wide belief that student success is everyone's responsibility. Give rigorous attention to maintaining a shared belief in the value of assessing, monitoring and reviewing student performance.

## Reviewers

Rod Lowther  
**Director, Public School Review**

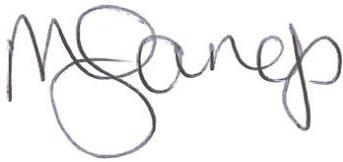
Craig Stanners  
**Principal, Sheoak Grove Primary School**  
**Peer Reviewer**

## 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 3, 2022.

The next Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, will be scheduled for Term 3, 2024.



Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**

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## References

- 1 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy