



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# West Balcatta 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. It will also inform the Principal Professional Review.

## 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

Established in 1977, West Balcatta Primary School is located approximately 13 kilometres from the Perth central business district in the North Metropolitan Education Region.

West Balcatta Primary School became an Independent Public School in 2019. It has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1078 (decile 2). The school currently enrolls 518 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Support for West Balcatta Primary 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:

- Staff have been actively involved in data collection and robust analysis, which led to a broad outline of the school's performance. This outline resulted in targeted strategic and operational planning being owned and valued by staff.
- Rescheduling the proposed Public School Review to allow the school to focus on pandemic management and recovery gave rise to the information submitted to the Electronic School Assessment Tool being updated during 2022.
- Enthusiastic members of staff, students and community groups unequivocally endorsed the work of the school during validation meetings conducted by the review team.
- The school's leadership reported that the Public School Review process has extended their understanding of the school's performance and sharpened their focus on the improvement agenda.

The following recommendations are made:

- Consider distilling evidence to that which has the strongest impact on student learning and demonstrates that the Standard has been met.
- Develop a schedule to ensure that preparation for school review is paced and forms an integral part of the annual assessment.

## Public School Review

### Relationships and partnerships

High levels of respect, communication and collaboration exist between the community and its school. Positive, productive relationships with partners continue to be modelled by the committed leadership team and underpin a sustainable culture of excellence.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Students have a strong connection to their school and value the efforts of staff to provide quality learning experiences, affording them agency in their education.
- Evidence provided through the National School Opinion Survey points to an exemplary level of parent and community satisfaction with the school. This supports the notion of it being a local school of choice.
- Members of the School Board advocate strongly for the school and support the school's strategic direction by analysing student achievement data and contributing to school plans.
- A clear outline for quality communication guides interaction and informs the community effectively.
- All staff, and particularly the front office interface, demonstrate a supportive, student-centric approach to public relations.
- Effective collaboration between staff builds their professional capacity to optimise student outcomes.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Investigate further options to collaborate with the local public secondary school to provide clear pathways and enhanced learning opportunities for students.
- Continue to identify School Board members with varied backgrounds so that a range of perspectives contribute to the Board's effective governance of the school.

### Learning environment

The appealing physical environment has been cleverly designed by the school community to engage students within a natural landscape that invites creative play and learning. Parents are active partners in the school's efforts to create a safe, caring and inclusive environment.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff consistently demonstrate high expectations and a shared responsibility for positive behaviour, regular attendance and robust engagement in learning. Positive outcomes in these areas are evident in data sets and are a source of community pride.
- Considerable knowledge and experience across the staff, supports students with additional needs and ensures that these students are provided with data driven, targeted intervention embracing high care principles.
- Planning for staff and student wellbeing is operationalised by the Health and Wellbeing Team and significant success in this area has been achieved.
- Social emotional learning, restorative practice and an understanding of the effects of trauma on child development are valued when creating the pre-conditions for a positive learning space.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Further develop authentic opportunities for students to have a voice in their educational experiences.
- Revisit the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework as a reflection tool to sustain meaningful cultural competency.

## Leadership

The instructional leadership of the Principal is highly valued by staff. They describe a credible leadership team who listen, support and have created a re-energised vision for the school's improvement. This vision aligns with the Department of Education's strategic direction and is well understood and acted upon by stakeholders.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Consultation and analysis of data are key to creating an informed team unified in action towards even better student outcomes. Staff are willing to extend their efforts and dedication because they are well supported.
- Key teachers identified in information and communications technology (ICT), literacy, numeracy and Early Childhood Education have broadened leadership across the school. This has resulted in an enhanced use of data, shared decision making and professional learning. Aspiring leaders are supported to build their leadership strength.
- Staff performance management and development processes are well-established and linked to professional learning and whole-school planning.
- Effective operational plans and scope and sequence documents have been developed by staff to guide the Plan Act Assess cycle.
- Student leaders have opportunities to contribute to the creation of a productive, safe and inclusive environment.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to ensure that change relating to non-negotiables, such as High Impact Teaching Strategies, is managed in consultation with staff and community and is linked to coaching and peer observation.
- Garner the value and support offered through the local network of schools to further develop leaders.

## Use of resources

The priorities of the budget align well with the imperatives of the new business plan and are considered alongside the specific needs of individuals and groups of students. Data analysis drives the action that successfully meets student need within the intervention process. Resources are expended prudently and flexibly.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A trusting relationship between the Finance Committee, manager corporate services (MCS) and the Principal ensure that financial and human resources are strategically managed to optimise student success. Like many staff, the MCS contributes significantly outside her role.
- Future staffing needs are linked to the business plan and are articulated in the thoughtfully considered workforce plan.
- Students can participate in 21st Century learning because ICT hardware and teacher development of digital skills are well-supported through the budget planning process. The contribution of the active P&C to this is acknowledged.
- Financial resources received through targeted initiatives and student characteristics funding are directly allocated to programs to support identified SAER<sup>1</sup> and are regularly reviewed to measure impact on student learning. The deputy principal skilfully and knowledgeably plans and monitors this area.
- A significant financial commitment has been shown to professional learning that ensures staff have a common language in, and capacity to, fully implement, whole-school approaches.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Further refine the replacement plan and align reserve accounts to ensure resource acquisition and improvements are augmented.

## Teaching quality

Differentiated curriculum and teaching is designed by expert practitioners to meet the identified needs of all students. Decisions about planning for learning and selecting appropriate approaches are based on research and the competent analysis of comprehensive data sets.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school has developed a collaborative culture and structure described by staff as powerful, flexible and purposeful. Within this, a range of professional activities, including planning and assessing, moderation and data analysis, contribute significantly to teacher efficacy.
- Implementation of consistent approaches to teaching and assessment in literacy and numeracy is progressing well. A large number of staff have adopted these approaches with enthusiasm and improvement in student learning is measurable.
- An intentional, play-based learning approach is complemented by a strong synthetic phonics learning program in the early years. This balance of explicit teaching with inquiry, creativity and nature play is purposely designed to meet the full range of developmental needs of young children.
- A student tracking document, developed in 2021, provides a profile of student performance in assessments such as Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) including PAT Reading and PAT Mathematics, in addition to Words Their Way. This document is valued in the handover of students between teaching and support staff at the completion of each year and as a foundation for targeted planning.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Embed the whole-school focus on teaching strategies in mathematics problem solving and literacy that significantly impact student learning.
- Continue to develop staff skills relating to Digital Technologies and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) across the curriculum.

## Student achievement and progress

Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic and Timed (SMART) goals have been incorporated into the business plan to enable the school to measure the success of chosen strategies. The leadership team has demonstrated a more consistent system using data as a springboard to more effective teaching, leading to improved student achievement and progress.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Between 2018 and 2021, students in Year 3 and Year 5 have performed within or above one standard deviation from the predicted school mean across all 5 areas of NAPLAN<sup>2</sup> testing. Staff celebrate these results but still see opportunities to do even better.
- Formal tracking of students from On-entry Assessment to Year 3 NAPLAN has been implemented to identify longitudinal trends and assess whether students are maintaining their expected academic trajectory.
- The introduction of PAT Reading, Mathematics and Vocabulary assessments has allowed teachers to assess year on year progress of students as well as plan more targeted ways to improve student learning.
- Staff have identified a tendency to award lower grades, particularly in writing, than what is indicated by NAPLAN assessments. This is being counteracted through collaborative moderation of assessments and more effective use of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority Judging Standards.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to strengthen the robust use of diagnostic tasks that guide differentiation, especially for extension.
- Maintain the renewed focus on Talk for Writing, Kindergarten to Year 6, with a specific focus on teaching vocabulary and grammar.

## Reviewers

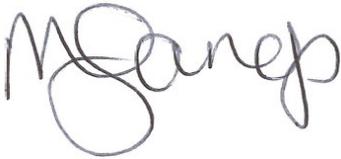
Jennifer Graffin  
**Director, Public School Review**

Daniel Bergin  
**Principal, Canning Vale 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.

Your next school review is to be scheduled for Term 3, 2025.



Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**

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## References

- 1 Students at educational risk
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy