



Department of
Education

D19/0524037

Public education
A world of opportunities

Somerly Primary School

Public School Review

November 2019

PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

Purpose

All Western Australian public schools are reviewed every three years 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 that a school is operating effectively and 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.

The principal provides the review team with a self-assessment of the school's performance based on evidence gathered by the principal and staff. Information validated by the review team is considered before and during the school visit. This forms the basis for the school review report. The report is provided to the principal, the chair of the school board/council and the Regional Executive Director.


Expectations of schools

For all Western Australian public schools, expectations are set out in either: the Delivery and Performance Agreement, which is an agreement between the Department (represented by the Director General), school (represented by the principal) and school board (represented by the school board chair); or, the Principals' Statement of Expectations and the Funding Agreement for Schools.

School performance rating

This performance rating is based on information gained from the self-assessment submission and the validation process. It is focused on a review of the following areas of school performance: relationships and partnerships; learning environment; leadership; use of resources; teaching quality; and student achievement and progress.

The school's performance rating is:

	Effective The school demonstrates effective practice in creating the conditions required for student success.
	Needs Improvement The school has aspects of its practice below expectations and needs supported action to improve student success.

Context

Somerly Primary School is located approximately 35 kilometres from the Perth central business district in the North Metropolitan Education Region.

The school opened in 2009, providing modern facilities that are well maintained. Further additions have been made to the school to include extensive grassed play areas that include three nature-scape playgrounds.

Currently there are 475 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 977 (decile 6).

Somerly Primary School achieved Independent Public School status for the commencement of 2019. This coincided with a change in leadership during Term 1, 2019 with the substantive principal accepting a fixed-term position elsewhere and the substantive deputy appointed as acting principal. Furthermore, a substantive deputy principal was appointed and a second deputy principal joined the leadership team from another school on a fixed-term basis.

Active support is provided by the newly formed School Board and the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

School self-assessment validation

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

The following aspects are confirmed:

- The Electronic School Assessment Tool submission and feedback provided during the validation visit, delivered an in-depth account of the school context and operations in addressing its improvement agenda.
- The significant changes to the leadership team prior to commencing the review process does not appear to have had any adverse effects on the quality of the self-assessment process due to the school's long standing reflective culture on school performance.
- The preparation for this review was described by the leadership team as both timely and valuable in assisting the school to consolidate its focus with respect to the implementation of its business plan.
- High levels of staff engagement and collaboration in the school assessment process are evidence of an embedded culture of reflection and improvement.
- The school's reflections on its community engagement was enhanced significantly by conversations held with members of the school community during the validation visit.
- Staff demonstrate ownership for student success with professional and personal responsibilities and expectations understood.

The following recommendation is made:

- Enhance the suite of strategies and actions undertaken, with commentary on their impact.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships	
Schools that build close relationships with parents and the local community engender respect and confidence. This school understands its purpose and value to the community it serves. In turn, parents describe their school as a very caring and inclusive environment for their children.	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a strong sense of a family-school partnership embedded in the daily exchanges between parents and staff.• The school understands and values the contribution of school support groups, such as the P&C, which offer a range of student activities and community events.• The 2019 inaugural School Board is enthusiastic about the opportunities to build an understanding of its role and responsibilities in supporting the continued growth of the school it serves.• Valuable links have been established between the school and the community through a number of events initiated by the school chaplain.• Positive relationships between teachers, education assistants and office administration, exemplify the quality partnerships across the school.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore options for widening community awareness and knowledge of those who serve on the School Board.

Learning environment	
Successful schools give insightful consideration to creating the conditions that best enable students to learn. This school has a deep understanding of the diverse needs of its students, which assists in crafting a range of differentiated strategies to meet their needs.	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improvements in the reduced levels of unexplained absences, in combination with rigorous data analysis and participation in the North Metropolitan Education Region Attendance Pilot Program, is evidence of the school's focus on attendance.• The prevailing whole-school ethos ensured the successful implementation of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) focused on the values of respect, responsibility and safety. Student tracking and individual plans strengthen the impact of PBS.• Well-developed practices for student case management underpin the school's regionally acknowledged approach to managing students at educational risk.• A neuro-developmental sensorimotor movement program (Gymbaroo), introduced in 2017, is having a very positive affect on early years students' cognitive, social and physical development.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pursue the development of a 'student services' team focusing on developing processes for Special Educational Need planning, implementing Abilities Based Learning Education, Western Australia assessments and the use of the English as an additional language/dialect Progress Map.

Leadership

Recognising that education is the key to reducing the impact of disadvantage, drives the moral imperative of this school's leadership and staff. The shared approach to the undertaking of leadership roles and responsibilities makes the staff's aspirations for their students more likely.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership's astute understanding of the need to achieve alignment with existing planning structures and processes, led to strategic planning refinement facilitated through the Fogarty EDvance transformation framework. • There is whole-hearted staff and School Board commitment to the school's vision and direction. • A feature of the school's approach to change is the depth and breadth of staff engagement in authentic research as the first step. • Recognition for the quality, and respectful sharing of professional knowledge and experience, ensures safe and informed two-way feedback. • A differentiated approach to professional learning provides staff with opportunities to pursue their passion and strengths within the spirit of mutual accountability for school improvement.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders to use the research based pedagogical knowledge of the staff to craft the 'Somerville Way' teaching and learning manifesto.

Use of resources

Discretionary program coherence is reflected in the planning priorities, ensuring prudent management of the budget. Long-term planning, based on expanding the range of digital learning options for students, illustrates the school's 21st century learning priorities.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The physical environment of the school is recognised as a major asset with upgrades considered on the basis of developing play areas that reflect the students need to grow through exploration. • The leadership narrative, created to provide staff with an understanding of links between overarching strategic planning and budget allocations, ensures transparency of decision making. • A thorough and detailed workforce development plan has been prepared, emphasising the importance of the school's need to respond flexibly to the complex demands of human resource management. • There is a positive and productive relationship existing between the principal and the manager corporate services. • Staff involved in the Finance Committee use their role to be advocates for staff and student needs where choice about priorities is required.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft a strategy to develop the School Board's understanding of its role in the governance of the school's budget management processes.

Teaching quality

The school has intentionally chosen to implement and maintain programs such as Blueearth and Gymbaroo because of its strong belief that a child's emotional, social and physical wellbeing are key factors in their potential success in learning.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A holistic approach to student learning informs the curriculum design and delivery for each phase of learning. • Understanding pedagogy is at the core of staff disciplined dialogue focusing on the selection of appropriate strategies and support materials. • A whole-school low variation strategy, using videos and lesson plan examples to achieve consistency in the teaching and assessment of reading, is a key feature of the school's planning intentions. • Staff accept and value data as a legitimate means of making informed decisions about classroom teaching practices. • A well-considered strategy guides the intention to adopt a whole-school mathematics program (ORIGO), while explicitly focusing on reading pedagogy as an immediate priority, before progressing to writing in Semester 2, 2020.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the ethos of curriculum review and refinement giving consideration to programs such as Letters and Sounds and Talk for Writing in the early years.

Student achievement and progress

The school demonstrates a willingness to be accessible to parents to discuss student achievement and progress. A realistic assessment of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data highlights the school's determination to maintain a trajectory of continuous improvement.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff work in collaborative teams, through the disciplined dialogue process, to look deeply into NAPLAN trend lines, cohort progress and proficiency strand summaries. • By taking ownership of student achievement and progress, teachers are empowered to set explicit class-based improvement targets. • The open day strategy for teachers and parents to meet and discuss student progress and achievement was endorsed by staff and appreciated by parents. • Phase of learning teams ensure shared action plans include evidence-based targets for individual and cohort improvement. • Brightpath moderation complements a range of school-based assessments to identify specific teaching points for individual and groups of students.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote pedagogical research as a pillar of the school's teaching and learning improvement agenda.

Reviewers

Rod Lowther
Director, Public School Review

Rebecca Burns
Principal, Southern Grove Primary School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

Based on this report, I endorse your school performance rating of 'Effective'.

Your next school review is scheduled for 2022.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools