



Department of  
Education

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Public education  
**A world of opportunities**

# Harmony Primary School

## Public School Review

June 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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Harmony Primary School is located in the suburb of Atwell, approximately 25 kilometres south of the Perth central business district, within the South Metropolitan Education Region. The school was officially opened in 2004, and became an Independent Public School in 2011.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1062 (decile 2). There are currently 532 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6.

An environmentally friendly school, it incorporates a number of ecologically sustainable design principles, including the recycling of grey water and landscaping designed to reduce water usage. The modern facilities include contemporary teaching and learning areas, a large library, computer equipment and well-resourced science and technology areas. Students have access to a number of enrichment programs, including the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden.

The active School Board is integral to the governance of the school and the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) works to provide the school with additional resources and support throughout the year.

## 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 and further information provided during the validation visit gave an understanding of the school context and operations in addressing its improvement agenda.
- Judgements submitted in the school self-assessment were established through widespread collaboration. Consensus and general agreement resulted from discussions and analysis of the evidence selected.
- Embedded reflective practices on school performance provided a substantial base upon which to prepare effectively for the Public School Review.
- An extensive tour of the school provided the review team the opportunity to view the school in operation, further adding to the evidence submitted in the ESAT and enriching the validation process.
- A broad range of staff, student and parent representatives engaged enthusiastically during the validation phase, contributing authentic reflections in support of the school.
- Staff reported that their preparation for the Public School Review had offered opportunities to reflect deeply and celebrate their achievements to date.

The following recommendations are made:

- Continue to use the ESAT as a repository for evidence aligned to the Standard, to facilitate discussions about school performance as part of the school's ongoing self-assessment practices and review cycle.
- Embed ongoing cycles of self-assessment to ensure a focus on 'how' the school is performing, not 'what' the school is doing.

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### Relationships and partnerships

The school has prioritised positive relationships and a genuine desire to work in collaboration with the P&C, School Board and families. This cohesive, collaborative culture is at the core of the strong reputation the school has in its local community.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Multi-layered, collaborative structures are guided by the Collaborative/Communication Agreements, thoughtful timetabling and scheduling of school support staff interactions. This has established a culture of 'working together to work smarter not harder', promoting trust, respect and distribution of workload.
- The school partners with the P&C and School Board in the review of school performance and implementation of initiatives. The Code of Conduct helps guide and support productive relationships.
- Positive relationships with students, staff and parents result from regularly seeking their opinions and input. Established processes facilitate rapid and decisive responses to feedback.
- Maintaining a focus on students, the school takes a proactive approach to partnering with parents. Via Connect, weekly curriculum updates and a 'Marks Book', parents/carers are provided with open and transparent information on their child's learning, achievement and progress.
- Partnerships have been established through the Cockburn Central Education Network, providing valuable collegiate support and effective transition for students to secondary education.

#### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to monitor the consistency of communication and messaging by teachers in their provision of information to parents.

### Learning environment

Guided by 'what is right for the child', staff provide strong advocacy for students. By knowing the 'back story' of every child, a collective staff responsiveness has established a safe and welcoming place for all.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff are supported in their work with students at educational risk through professional learning, detailed observations, data sets and rigorous handover procedures, to ensure comprehensive oversight of the complex layers of support required.
- A culture of community has been developed through the establishment of events for students and staff. Open days and the staff Munch 'n' Mingle contribute to a culture of connectedness and belonging.
- The skills and contributions of education assistants are valued highly. They are integral to the delivery of professional learning for staff and implementation of social, emotional and learning support programs.
- Clear documentation supporting student engagement processes and the identification of Tier 1, 2 and 3 behaviours, provides understanding for all staff that the individual student's context is the priority when applying behavioural expectations and engagement strategies.
- Thoughtfully constructed indoor and outdoor spaces, such as 'The Hub', provide a safe space for students to manage their sensory needs and work through co- or self-regulation strategies.

#### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to progress and embed Positive Behaviour Support, with a focus on consistency of application by all staff and clear messaging to the community of the behaviours and expectations matrix.

## Leadership

The Principal has paid close attention to creating the conditions for respectful leadership, defined by a highly collaborative, consultative approach. A non-hierarchical structure where no individual holds all the knowledge, has engendered high levels of commitment, accountability and ownership of the school's vision.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A considered approach is taken by the leadership team in managing change. With extensive consultation and careful consideration given to communication, the voice of staff is prioritised. Regular surveys, professional learning and allocation of time ensure staff are supported, not overwhelmed.
- The business plan is developed in a consultative manner, with input sought from the community, staff and students. The school has focused on producing a document that is succinct and accessible to the wider community, whilst aligning with the Department's strategic focus.
- Structures established across the school ensure staff have ongoing support in their work. Collaboration, learning area/phase committees, extensive operational plans and scope and sequences, provide for the development and consistency of teaching practice.
- The performance management process highlights a message of 'always learning', in line with the business plan. Goal setting and classroom observations support a consistent pedagogical approach.
- A distributed leadership model, with a focus on developing and recognising emerging leaders, provides opportunity for all staff to take an active role in leading. Impactful leadership is provided by the education assistant (special needs – lead) and, as a Teacher Development School (TDS) in HASS<sup>1</sup> and Technologies, to schools across the State.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Consider implementing the Future Leaders Framework to further support leadership development.

## Use of resources

The Principal and manager corporate services provide open and transparent management structures with the School Board, Finance Committee, cost centre managers and staff, developing a shared understanding of school resourcing.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Targeted initiatives and student characteristics funding is distributed in a flexible manner, directing the deployment of workforce and physical resources to identified areas of need.
- Aligned to planning and priorities, the school ensures the allocation of resourcing to programs and initiatives is evidence based and data informed.
- Careful consideration is given to ensuring resources are fit for purpose and economical in terms of time.
- Astute allocation of funds to professional learning and programs, such as Spelling Mastery, Letters and Sounds, Talk for Writing and SIREN<sup>2</sup>, support the complex needs of identified students.
- Prudent management of TDS HASS and Technologies funding ensures valuable professional learning for Harmony Primary School staff, together with teachers and education assistants across the State. A TDS operational plan and annual report supports the implementation, monitoring and review of the program.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to explore arrangements that will provide flexibility in the deployment of education assistants.
- Progress the intention to move financial management processes to an electronic format.

## Teaching quality

High levels of teacher efficacy are reflected by the staff's moral sense of collective responsibility in every child gaining a 'year's worth of growth'. Shared expectations of their own performance and the performance of students has emerged through a strong culture of feedback.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Collaborative practices and shared beliefs about teaching and learning are embedded across the school, supporting consistency in the delivery of content, data analysis and monitoring of student progress.
- Education assistants and school support staff are valued paraprofessionals, who work skilfully alongside teachers to support student learning.
- Professional learning supports a holistic, differentiated approach to teaching and learning. This includes the development of staff capacity to provide for students with trauma, sensory and behavioural needs.
- A focus on data-informed practice is developing across the school. Team and area leaders, through informal and formal moderation opportunities, are developing teachers' understanding of planning from a data-informed perspective.
- Teachers are aware of the importance of students understanding the purpose of their learning, with all classrooms providing visual cues for learning intentions and success criteria. This is complemented by the What A Good One Looks Like resource and a range of methods for student feedback, such as help desks and reflection journals.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to develop teachers' knowledge of the curriculum, with a view to tracking coverage.

## Student achievement and progress

Rigorous attention is given to creating a shared culture of 'our students' in the assessment, monitoring and reviewing of student performance, ensuring student achievement and progress is everyone's business.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school has established an accessible, centralised student achievement database for the collation and analysis of data and tracking of student progress.
- A broad range of data is collected to inform and monitor the impact of programs and accurately make judgements on student achievement and progress.
- Collaborative moderation processes are developing. Staff use a range of tools, such as Brightpath writing, Common Assessment Tasks, School Curriculum and Standards Authority Judging Standards and assessment rubrics, to promote consistency of grading across a cohort and accuracy in reporting to parents.
- Interventions have been planned to accommodate developmental vulnerabilities identified in the early years using Australian Early Development Census data.
- Targeted professional learning is developing staff capacity to routinely use the data they collect through both summative and formative assessments, to inform their planning and teaching.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to progress the plan to share On-entry Assessment Program data with key stakeholders.
- Continue to embed data-disciplined approaches to further develop the data literacy of staff.

## Reviewers

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Maxine Augustson  
Director, Public School Review

Fiona McBeath  
Principal, Nedlands 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 2, 2024.



Melesha Sands  
Deputy Director General, Schools

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## References

- 1 Humanities and Social Sciences
- 2 Screening and Intervention Resource for Early Number