



Department of
Education

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Public education
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Cassia Primary School

Public School Review

October 2018



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 focussed 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

Cassia Primary School is located in South Hedland, 1637 kilometres north of the Perth central business district. The towns of Port and South Hedland are well known major regional centres supporting the mining and export of iron ore.

The school was officially opened in 1981 and the constant enrolment growth has seen additional building programs completed in 1989, 2010 and 2016.

The school, with an Index of Community and Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 915, currently enrolls approximately 500 students from Kindergarten to Year 6. An Education Support Centre shares the school site and those students integrate with students from Cassia Primary School.

Cassia Primary School enjoys a strong reputation for excellence, recognised as the Primary School of the Year in 2013 as part of the Western Australian Education Awards.

School self-assessment validation

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

The following aspects are confirmed:

- Genuine collaboration and high levels of staff engagement in the school assessment process underpin a strong culture of self-assessment.
- An evidence-based culture is embedded. The succinct analysis of credible data and appropriate evidence provides a well-considered account of the school's current levels of performance.
- The staff demonstrate a shared ownership of student success with professional and personal responsibilities understood and evident.
- A willingness to seek and respond to feedback is a feature of the school's practice and provides collective insights that inform follow up planning.
- Appropriate actions for improvement were described in the school's self-assessment documentation.

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Relationships and partnerships	
<p>The leaders have built high levels of trust based on a culture of transparency, collaboration and engagement. The influence of the Principal in creating an ethos where stakeholders are engaged and valued as partners in the education process, is widely acknowledged.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High staff morale is evident in the quality of relationships. Staff are valued members of a team, committed to ensuring quality teaching for all students. • A highly functional School Board are well trained and kept abreast of whole-school performance and financial information. They are strong advocates for the school and effectively perform their governance role. • Staff collaboration involves disciplined dialogue focussed on understanding student progress and achievement. • A commitment to feedback is evident in the frequent use of surveys, employed to seek and respond to the views of staff and community. • Strong, productive community partnerships support a range of programs including academic enrichment programs, music tuition, information and communication technologies (ICT) support and a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen and Garden program.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the quality of communications with staff and the community through expanding the use of electronic communications.

Learning environment	
<p>A strong moral purpose that every student is every person's responsibility characterises a learning environment centred on success for every student. A school-wide commitment to engagement is evident in the staff narrative around positive behaviour and attendance.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Positive Behaviour in Schools program sets high expectations for behaviour and supports the explicit teaching of behavioural responsibilities. • Effective case management, part of a comprehensive attendance strategy, has seen improved attendance for students in the 'severe risk' category. • A committed early childhood team embrace the opportunity to improve practice through the diligent application of the National Quality Standards. Their engagement of the Education Support Centre and Long Day Care facilities in these assessments is recognised and appreciated. • Established initiatives to acknowledge student success, such as the 'super-greenies', are enthusiastically embraced by the school community. • The school has prioritised improving class-based differentiation through a greater focus on effective planning for students with identified needs.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the Response to Intervention process to enhance the quality of identification and intervention processes. • Strengthen the focus on engagement and attendance through harnessing network support opportunities.

Leadership

The concept of leadership at all levels is valued. A united and talented leadership team guide the school with integrity and humility. They build trust through authentic behaviours, a strong work ethic and a sincere and compassionate approach. A 'restlessness' with the status quo and a commitment to continuous improvement is grounded in the rhetoric of "even better if....?"

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and well-documented expectations together with cohesive and connected processes create the conditions for student success and provide a high degree of certainty and predictability for all stakeholders. • A strong commitment to distributed leadership, together with established committees provide staff with continuous opportunities for growth and a strong voice in school-wide planning and decision making. • A strong culture of evidence-based decision making guides the work of committees and informs planning at all levels. • The strategic and diligent introduction of school-wide initiatives reflects the leadership's deep understanding of effective change management. • Staff are actively engaged in the implementation of the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework</i>. Actionable data will inform targets to be included in the school's 2019-2021 Business Plan. • An extensive transition plan prior to students commencing Kindergarten strengthens community relations, positive student experiences and reflects quality leadership from the early childhood team.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align the collection of data and evidence to Public School Review domains. • Establish phase of learning teams to further strengthen support for school-wide initiatives.

Use of resources

The school's leaders ensure that plans for raising the standard of student achievement are appropriately resourced. A balanced, well-informed budget is supported by decision making and monitoring processes that are transparent and inclusive of staff and community members.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student characteristic funding is employed strategically, with plans and programs regularly reviewed for their impact and ongoing relevance. • The manager corporate services plays a key role in strategic resource management and is recognised as an integral part of the leadership team. • Comprehensive planning supports the management of reserves, which have been effectively used to enhance the school's grounds and facilities. • Significant funding from local businesses allows the school to provide a suite of additional learning opportunities to support the needs of all students. • ICT and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are supported through the strategic acquisition of resources, ensuring access for all students.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase break out, interview and office spaces to accommodate growth. • Review the workforce plan to reflect directions of the new business plan.

Teaching quality

High expectations for staff underpin a culture of professional obligation and personal responsibility. A commitment to improving teacher practice is supported through quality instructional leadership and the establishment of a coaching culture where teachers grow and develop through the shared expertise of their colleagues.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Staff Information Booklet, which includes expectations for teachers, policies, beliefs about effective teaching and supports the implementation of operational plans, is highly valued by staff. • An explicit approach to teaching is reflected in the agreed Literacy and Numeracy blocks. • Classroom teachers are supported to use ICT to enhance the quality and impact of their teaching through a dedicated support teacher. • Performance management systems are intrinsically linked to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Standards and school-wide directions. • Classroom observations and walkthroughs allow support for teachers to be differentiated depending on need. Staff receive targeted feedback aligned to the expectations for teachers and the school's agreed directions. • The effective use of coaches supports staff to moderate their judgements about student achievement.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a consistent language of pedagogy to provide clarity and add value to the staff development processes. • Expand the team of coaches to support the school-wide implementation of the Response to Intervention process.

Student achievement and progress

Data literacy levels among staff are high. The skilled use of school and system data ensures high quality judgements are made about the levels of performance and decisions relating to areas for improvement. Specific student interventions are well informed.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid and reliable information from a variety of school and system sources is used effectively by staff to set student performance targets and fine grained benchmarks against which student progress is measured. • Longitudinal Progress from Years 3 to 5 in all areas of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assessments indicates an upward trend compared to like schools. • While progress in previous years has been positive, the performance of Year 3 students in numeracy, reading and writing NAPLAN 2018 assessments is below expected performance. In addition, the performance of sub-groups has been identified as requiring targeted attention. • Dedicated systems to address the needs of students at educational risk and sharpen the focus on individualised support, are being implemented.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement school-wide writing and Response to Intervention process. • Enhance support for staff to implement targeted interventions for students at educational risk through dedicated coaching and support.

Reviewers

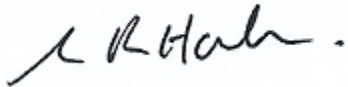
JIM BELL
Director, Public School Review

WARREN BACHMAN
Principal, Falcon Primary School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

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

Your next school review is scheduled for 2021.



LINDSAY HALE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC SCHOOLS