



Department of
Education

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Public education
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Challis Community Primary School

Public School Review

February 2021



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 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

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

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

Challis Community Primary School is located in Armadale, 33 kilometres from the Perth central business district, within the South Metropolitan Education Region.

Established in 1974, the school became an Independent Public School in 2010. The onsite Challis Parenting and Early Learning Centre offers a selection of health, education and social services to local families including access to a child health nurse and playgroups.

Currently, there are 920 students enrolled at Challis Community Primary School from Kindergarten to Year 6.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 941 (decile 8).

In 2018, singer Guy Sebastian collaborated with the school to teach music to students. A documentary on this initiative called 'Don't Stop the Music', later aired on ABC television and Guy Sebastian's connection with the school endures to this day.

The school receives community support through the work of the Parents and Citizens' Association and the School Board.

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:

- Multiple sources of credible evidence were provided, underpinning judgements about school performance.
- Judgements submitted in the school self-assessment were established from widespread collaboration. Consensus and general agreement resulted from this discussion.
- A longstanding practice of performance reflection provided a substantial base upon which to prepare effectively for the Public School Review.
- The value of evidence-based self-assessment is embraced by the leadership, staff, contributing partners, the School Board and families. This ensured a positive approach to the validation phase of the review process.
- The significant capacity of leadership, staff and contributing partners to understand the complexities of the school community added value to the longitudinal analysis of school performance across all domains.
- The validation visit provided an opportunity for the whole school community to recognise and celebrate the exemplary educational practices displayed in the school over time.

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Relationships and partnerships

Aspirational thinking and nuanced negotiation has yielded tremendous benefits. Connections to business, agencies and educational experts, are some of the unique opportunities that have been created for all students to succeed, irrespective of their personal circumstances.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Sustained, quality relationships are the drivers of action and provide opportunities to improve academic and social outcomes for all students.
- A truly collaborative culture has been developed through purposeful, respectful and reciprocal partnerships focused on the needs of students.
- Student success is enabled through positive, vibrant, supportive relationships with all staff.
- Aboriginal parents have a valued voice in the school, which has resulted in a reinvigorated homework class and a Boys Academy to match the existing Girls Academy.
- Parent support is welcomed, respected and nurtured by the school. The Challis Angels, a group of dedicated parents assist teachers and school staff on a regular basis doing anything and everything to support the staff.
- Members of the School Board bring a powerful range of skills and knowledge to facilitate governance and drive sustained improvement.
- The school has communicated key messages around curriculum and operations with high levels of transparency and exemplary clarity of purpose for all stakeholders.

Learning environment

Research-based initiatives, including Positive Behaviour Support practices and trauma-informed management, provide optimal social and emotional conditions for learning to occur.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The intent to cater for the social, emotional, academic and physical development needs of all students has created an environment where children feel respected and capable. This leads to high levels of positive participation and engagement.
- The school's highly effective Positive Behaviour Support program has resulted in a multi-tiered response to behaviour guidance, ensuring effective practices are implemented consistently across the school.
- The school's mantra 'Better than the Postcode' drives the relentless pursuit of excellence for every child and to maximise the opportunities and outcomes for their lifetime.
- A highly developed framework of support to implement teaching practices and research-based programs that meet the special learning needs of students, is embedded through the school's progressive and innovative approach to the identification of individual and cohort needs.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Further develop the implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework to ensure sustainable levels of cultural competency.

Leadership

A culture of family support and excellence in teaching has been expertly crafted by the Principal through a consistently articulated shared vision. This is embraced by all as a blueprint for improvement. Leaders understand their roles and skilfully inspire staff to work in the 'Challis Way' to support students.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Three clear and well developed priorities inform all aspects of the school's improvement structure: developing leadership across the school; effective instructional strategies and assessment practices; and creating ideal conditions for learning.
- School planning is collaborative, based on Dempster's Leadership for Learning framework and is strongly aligned to the Department of Education's strategic intent.
- Leadership is thoughtfully structured and distributed to enable the strength of individuals to build the capacity of groups. Leadership momentum is achieved by developing 'their own' with a deep understanding of, and buy-in to, the school's improvement agenda.
- Aspirant leaders are given opportunities to build reflective practices, share expertise and plan pathways through the school's Leadership Development program.
- In-house induction, coaching, modelling, observation and feedback, challenging conversations and disciplined dialogue, within a climate of encouragement and safety, have a measurable impact on teacher efficacy for student learning.

Use of resources

The school's approach to the management of its budget has been measured, thoughtful, innovative and with the students' needs consistently at the centre. This means short, medium and long-term budget planning reflects the school's fiscal integrity while being strategically responsive.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The strong collaborative relationship between the Principal and manager corporate services ensures there is always a direct link between school budget decisions and strategic and operational expenditure.
- Finance Committee members are well informed and plan proactively for short and longer-term school improvement needs.
- Strategic workforce planning has been integral to the recruitment and development of a high performing staff, resulting in quality teaching and learning.
- Student characteristic funding is strategically deployed through innovative approaches to meet the needs of identified students, providing them with targeted and visible support.
- The rigorous analysis of data to identify priority areas informs and provides focus for financial planning.
- Significant resourcing is obtained through partnering with local businesses to provide unique, world class opportunities for students.

Teaching quality

The school community works together collaboratively to deliver each student an education that builds skills, knowledge and attitudes to maximise their life opportunities and to be fully participating and capable citizens.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- High expectations, combined with contemporary teaching pedagogy based on quality research, promote and sustain teaching excellence.
- Student progress and achievement data are monitored systematically through contemporary formats to ensure teaching is targeted at point of need. Data champions drive improvement.
- Target setting meetings establish and review short-term learning goals that include information about the whole-child.
- Explicit Direct Instruction has been resourced and professional learning provided to embed consistent effective practice, incorporating high engagement strategies and clear learning intentions.
- Education assistants and Aboriginal and Islander education officers are valued paraprofessionals who work skilfully alongside teachers to support student learning.
- The school demonstrates a high level of care towards its committed staff by providing detailed induction, refocus and refresh weeks and support for teams.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to develop the layers of data literacy that enhance teaching for success.

Student achievement and progress

Student achievement has been consistently strong across all phases, particularly the early years. The school's holistic approach to achieving a balance between academic, social and emotional aspects strengthens the students' focus on their learning.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Student performance, and by extension school performance, is owned by all staff, who share responsibility for making improvements.
- The school has paid rigorous attention to the development of staff capacity to use data-informed practices, leading to performance in NAPLAN¹ above like schools or equal to and above State norms.
- The school is open and transparent in its communication of targets and performance. This informs and educates families and partnering organisations, strengthening the educational and relational outcomes for students and the school.
- The school's attention to providing and recognising the pre-conditions necessary for students to learn, has enriched and provided opportunities for all students to succeed.

Reviewers

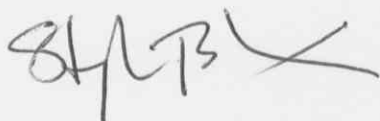
Jen Graffin
Maxine Augustson
Directors, Public School Review

Andrew Holmes
Principal, Forest Crescent 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 scheduled for Term 1, 2026.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy

