



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Helena Valley 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, 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.

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

Helena Valley Primary School is located approximately 22 kilometres from the Perth central business district. Established in 1927, in the foothills of the Darling Scarp, the school is situated in the North Metropolitan Education Region.

In 2015, Helena Valley Primary School became an Independent Public School.

Currently, there are 313 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6.

A playgroup is offered for future students of the school, to promote familiarity with the school environment from a young age.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1017 (decile 4).

Community support for the school is demonstrated through the work of the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) and 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:

- In response to the recommendations of the previous school review the school has developed robust, well-established self-assessment processes inclusive of all staff and School Board members.
- A strong engagement in ongoing reflection and review of school performance is contributing to a shared understanding of school progress and the identification of focus areas for improvement.
- The Principal actively engaged with colleagues from the local network to seek advice, support and guidance in developing understanding of, and determining how, the process is undertaken. This in turn, significantly contributed to supporting and providing confidence for staff in their preparation for the Public School Review and validation visit.
- Multiple sources of evidence and a 'warts and all, honest and true account' of the school's performance were provided in the school's Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission.
- A broad range of well-informed and enthusiastic staff, students, School Board members, P&C representatives, parents and community partners contributed to the discussions held with the reviewers during the validation visit.
- The leadership team capitalised on the opportunity to use the school review process as valuable professional learning for all staff, inclusive of the School Board.
- Staff reported that the process had been extremely positive and provided an opportunity to reflect on the achievements and progress made since the last school review.

The following recommendation is made:

- Continue to review each of the ESAT domains, guided by the Standard and domain foci, as part of regular school review processes.

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### Relationships and partnerships

The school actively seeks to establish and maintain beneficial and authentic relationships and partnerships within and beyond the school. This has created amplified levels of relational trust and widespread community confidence.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Based on feedback from parents, a school-wide communication policy has been developed. This policy outlines the pathways of communication and the expectations of teaching staff to ensure parent communication is regular, consistent and focused on student learning.
- The legacy statement established by the School Board, 'To become the teacher that students remember in 20 years' gives evidence to the strong, authentic partnership the Board has with the school. The Board's influence and progressiveness provides transparency of governance, accountability and strategic direction.
- Recognised and celebrated through the 'Community Spirit Award' the school values the partnerships they have established with their local community. A range of organisations, network schools and volunteers are strengthening outcomes and providing opportunities for students and staff.
- The school is well-supported by a strong P & C. The members' advocacy for the school provides services and strengthens resources whilst bringing the community together.
- The development of 'above and below the line behaviours', meeting norms and behaviour protocols have contributed to the establishment of strong collaborative and professional relationships between staff.

#### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue the focus on developing authentic opportunities to meet with other schools and the Hills Education Network to share practice, participate in professional learning and/or moderate student work.

### Learning environment

The school has embedded itself as a central hub of the Helena Valley community. An inclusive culture with a focus on belonging and building inter-generational connections has made this a school where children, families and staff want to be.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Authenticity of approach is driving heightened levels of cultural responsiveness by staff. Aboriginal culture is now emerging as a school-wide focus through project-based learning, the Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum and connections with local Aboriginal organisations and Elders.
- High levels of trust in the school and the valuing of education by parents, together with rigorous monitoring processes, ensure that student attendance tracks above both like schools and Western Australian public schools.
- The school's implementation of the 'wave' intervention model, and 10/20/push/watch tracker, provides clarity for the identification of students at risk. The ensuing case management approach, with oversight by the Case Management team supports staff, students and parents in the provision of academic and mental health interventions.
- Well supported in its introduction, the PBS<sup>1</sup> Framework provides staff and students with a structure to explicitly teach and learn positive behaviours. The teaching of social skills, behaviour expectations matrix and analysis of behaviour set data, are positively impacting on student behaviour.
- Diverse roles for student leaders with access to the GRIP<sup>2</sup> leadership conference, a focus on student agency in the early years, and input by students to school decision making is promoting student voice.

#### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to make links with the Aboriginal and broader community with the intent to collaboratively develop a Reconciliation Action Plan.

## Leadership

The Principal and leadership team in their execution of an ambitious school improvement change agenda, is to be commended. The highly structured and supported approach has resulted in collaborative buy-in, where all are responsible, accountable and empowered to contribute to the school's improvement strategy.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The embedded, transparent leadership structure driving school-wide improvement is founded on a distributed leadership model. Based on professional strengths and interests, this model provides the opportunity for all staff to nominate for leadership positions.
- Instructional leaders provide strong guidance and support for staff in their work. This includes setting clear expectations, managing curriculum, monitoring school programs, allocating resources and providing regular feedback on teachers' practice to promote student learning and growth.
- A high focus has been placed on developing the capacity of leaders. Individuals, identified through the Western Australian Future Leaders Framework, are provided with a mentor, whilst the executive leadership team reflect against the AITSL<sup>3</sup> Self-Assessment Tool. They seek regular feedback from staff, School Board and community members to further develop their leadership effectiveness.
- Well-developed staff performance management structures, that honour the school's vision and beliefs, are showing a shift from compliance to a process with a rigorous focus on professional growth.
- Together with staff, School Board members, P&C representatives and the wider community, a shared and common vision has been established. The National School Improvement Tool, business plan and operational plans, ensures clarity, guidance and understanding by all.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue, as part of the Western Australian Future Leaders Framework, with the intention to participate within the Hills Education Network.

## Use of resources

The Principal and manager corporate services (MCS) provide open and transparent management structures in collaboration with the School Board, Finance Committee and staff. This is developing a shared understanding of the complex nature of school resourcing.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The MCS ensures the management of resources are streamlined and meet the needs of all students. This has resulted in alignment of the annual budget to the school's business and operational plans.
- A regularly reviewed, detailed Financial Management Handbook is provided to all staff when they commence at the school as part of their induction. This has led to an increase in understanding by staff of the need to align resource purchases to operational planning and evidence.
- Reserves accounts and a detailed Digital Technology Infrastructure plan provide assurance to the community that current levels of resourcing are sustainable.
- A comprehensive workforce plan identifies trends, gaps and future actions. This forward-focused approach facilitates leadership development, succession planning and flexibility to the deployment of support staff in the implementation of targeted interventions and programs.
- The Stakeholder Management plan provides a mechanism to monitor the impact on student learning, assist in reducing the risks involved with hiring out facilities to community groups. This ensures appropriate services and opportunities are given to students through the programs provided by key stakeholders.

## Teaching quality

'No lone rangers', everyone on the same page and a sense of united optimism defines the teaching and learning culture of the school. The pre-conditions of trust, collaboration and collective efficacy, are building a strong foundation to achieve the goal of quality teaching and success for every child.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Collaborative planning structures and clear meeting norms enable robust conversations between colleagues, providing opportunity for staff to work together and engage in professional practices and processes to improve student learning.
- The provision of opportunity to moderate students' work with the Hills Education Network is providing teachers with valuable support in making judgements and regulating grade reliability.
- The What is Due schedule keeps staff aware of requirements to be completed as part of the teaching, learning and assessment cycle. Opportunities to share their findings are supported through the Disciplined Dialogue Data document giving guidance for staff in conducting lines of inquiry and tracking of student data.
- Staff are supported in the delivery of whole-school programs and approaches through operational plans, the English curriculum book, scope and sequence documents and targeted professional learning.
- The whole-school approach to lesson design, consisting of the iSTAR<sup>4</sup> gradual release model and visible learning strategies, provides clear success criteria for students and promotes consistency of instruction.
- To promote high levels of engagement, student agency and 21st century skills, the school has implemented Project Based Learning. Positive feedback indicates greater understanding by staff in delivering future focused learning and enhanced levels of student engagement.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to monitor and review the whole-school programs and instructional model to ensure fidelity of implementation and the impact on student learning and classroom practice.

## Student achievement and progress

There is a genuine sense of collective responsibility and acknowledgement by staff of student achievement data. This is building momentum in the development of a shared focus on improving student progress and achievement.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The focus on data, whole-school programs and lesson design is contributing to improved student outcomes. This is evident by the significant progress from Year 3 to Year 5 as measured by 2019–2021 NAPLAN<sup>5</sup> for Numeracy, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation and Reading.
- All students are monitored to ensure that no one is left behind with high importance placed on creating the pre-conditions necessary for learning. Based on 'Maslow before Bloom' philosophy, addressing the increase in students presenting with greater social and emotional deficits or imputed diagnosis is prioritised.
- Opportunities for staff to moderate in the key areas of English, mathematics and social and emotional behaviours are scheduled each term.
- Student achievement and progress is tracked through data walls, student assessments and the 10/20/push/watch tracker. This enables staff to accurately identify gaps and determine the impact of programs whilst alerting them to areas that require attention.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to provide opportunity for teachers to engage in moderation with the Hills Education Network to build confidence in getting alignment between grade allocation and student performance.
- Further review and monitor the suite of student achievement data to ensure that the most effective data sources are being utilised to assess student achievement and progress.

## Reviewers

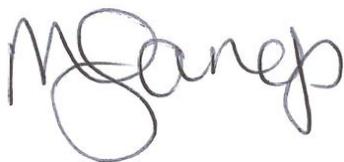
Maxine Augustson  
**Director, Public School Review**

Peter Harty  
**Principal, West Morley 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 4, 2024.



Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**

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## References

- 1 Positive Behaviour Support
- 2 Generosity, Responsibility, Integrity, People
- 3 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- 4 Inform/Inspire, Show/Share, Try/Transfer, Apply/Act, Review/Revise
- 5 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy