



Department of
Education

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Merriwa Education Support Centre

Public School Review

February 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 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

Merriwa Education Support Centre (ESC) is located in Perth's northern suburbs on a shared site with Merriwa Primary School. The schools work together to foster an inclusive learning environment that supports the education of students with intellectual or physical disability from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Opened in 1995 and becoming an Independent Public School in 2017, the campus has attractive classrooms fitted with resources that accommodate a variety of student needs. The school offers an Early Intensive Intervention Program for Pre-primary students with autism.

Merriwa Education Support Centre and Merriwa Primary School share a School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association who take a whole-of-campus perspective to supporting both schools.

School self-assessment validation

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

The following aspects are confirmed:

- The staff demonstrate a strong commitment to, and shared ownership of, student achievement and progress.
- Whole-staff collaboration and engagement in the analysis of data informed the school's self-assessment through extensive reflection against NSIT¹ domains.
- Reflection against the NSIT domains and completion of the ESAT² submission provided the opportunity for teacher leaders to gain greater understanding of the whole-school assessment, planning and review cycle and for senior leaders to identify distributed leadership opportunities.
- Planned actions were aligned to the school's self-assessment of its performance and elaborated on during the validation phase.

The following recommendations are made:

- Planned actions for future business plans to include measurable targets.
- Further explore the aggregation of individual student achievement data to enable longitudinal tracking of student achievement and progress at phase-of-schooling and whole-school levels.
- Aggregate individual student achievement data in order to develop measurable business plan and/or operational plan targets.

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Relationships and partnerships	
There is a genuine and pervasive culture of planned inclusion across the Merriwa Education Support Centre and Merriwa Primary School campus. This is facilitated through strategic alignment of school mission, leadership philosophy, governance structure and joint planning.	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship between campus principals is considered, respectful and revisited proactively to ensure a shared commitment to inclusive practice. • The authentic commitment of the School Board extends beyond governance requirements and prioritises genuine attempts to engage the school community in a range of whole-of-campus initiatives. • Staff engagement in and ownership of school improvement is reinforced through operational plan coordination, curriculum plan facilitation, collaborative NSIT review and peer 'collaborations'. • Partnerships with therapy providers have benefited from clear expectations and responsibilities, which have in turn are enhancing student outcomes. • A high degree of relational trust and respect for parent voice is evident.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target the recruitment of community members for the School Board to ensure that cultural difference and disability are considered. • Enhance the function of School Board working parties through greater clarity as to their role and links to school improvement strategies.

Learning environment	
The school is focussed on creating an environment that supports their mission for students to achieve, demonstrate friendship, maintain a positive disposition and to be respectful. Whole-of-campus approaches are enacted alongside differentiated support linked to student need.	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' voices are sought and considered through the joint school Student Council, ESC student leadership group and student monitors. • The PBS³ committee leads whole-campus student support approaches. • Classroom teachers facilitate targeted behavioural support through application of the Ziggurat model, functional behavioural analysis, teaching of alternative behaviour, Zones of Regulation and sensory planning. • Shared case management leads to targeted intervention through an extensive array of student support strategies.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline student profiles to ensure behaviour, medical and risk management information is succinct and more readily accessible. • Develop a plan for an overarching health policy, incorporating behaviour support and including a description of whole-school approaches.

Leadership

A common vision has enabled the Principal and deputy principal to work with staff to collaboratively develop a school-wide focus on improvement, monitoring and review.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-school reflection against NSIT domains has resulted in a school-wide focus on improvement, a strategic approach to change and significant staff engagement. • Purposeful, distributed leadership includes multi-layered opportunities for staff to lead school improvement initiatives and/or peer support. • Teacher leaders provide quality instructional and curriculum leadership through operational plan coordination, literacy and numeracy policy guidance, and mentor support through the 'collaborations' approach. • Implementation of the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework is enacted through a combined campus approach, with emerging links to an integrated studies operational plan.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum leaders to support classroom implementation and provision of feedback to ensure consistent implementation of whole-school plans. • Enhance whole-school approaches to protective behaviours and STEAM⁴.

Use of resources

School budgeting considers school improvement. The day-to-day management of resources is effective and the contribution of the manager corporate services is acknowledged and valued.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of cost centre managers is supported through a detailed handbook and practical application guidance. • Operational plans include direct links to school budgeting in most areas. • Student-centred funding and targeted initiative funding is used to implement teaching and learning adjustments.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager corporate services to guide the finance committee to streamline budget and purchasing processes. <p>The review team identifies the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish firmer links between operational plans, cost centre applications, school budget allocations and approval processes to enable operational plan coordinators to function with greater authority and autonomy. • Develop a workforce management plan that considers anticipated staffing changes, responsive recruitment strategies and staff development priorities.

Teaching quality

Links between school planning and classroom implementation of whole-school strategies are clear, with targeted support provided by the leadership team, plan coordinators, curriculum committees and teacher collaborations. A considered approach is taken to instruction.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All full-time teaching staff manage a school improvement priority. • Strong, supportive accountability expectations are maintained through classroom observations, collaborative moderation, literacy and numeracy assessment/tracking and monitoring of ABLE WA⁵ and SENAT⁶ attainment. • Teacher collaborations support student assessment and tracking, targeted grouping of students, teacher moderation, and modelling of instruction. • Teacher self-reflection is extensive with links to AITSL⁷ standards, IEP⁸ foci, school priority areas, behaviour, attendance, and leadership. • The deputy principal supports teachers to review the efficacy of teaching approaches to ensure a strong, evidence-based approach to instruction.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor new staff to ensure consistent application of whole-school teaching and learning approaches. • Establish peer-led classroom observation processes.

Student achievement and progress

The school collects a range of student achievement data that support personalised planning. Individualised assessment, planning and tracking processes are fine grained and considered.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is strong connectedness between student achievement data sources, which include school-based screening tools, diagnostic assessments, ABLE WA and the SENAT. • These data sources are used at the individual student level to assess student progress effectively and track achievement longitudinally. • Engagement of staff when selecting or designing whole-school assessment instruments has resulted in strong compliance with assessment schedules.
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend teacher use of ABLE WA tools to include the mathematics, digital technology, and personal and social capability learning areas. • Review and update student assessment files and staff induction documentation to align with whole-school expectations regarding baseline assessments. • Investigate the expanded RTPSEN⁹ system with a view to incorporating direct links to ABLE WA attainment in student reports.

Reviewers

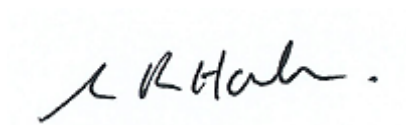
Stuart Percival
Director, Public School Review

Noelene Mason
Principal Consultant, Leadership Institute
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

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

Your next school review is scheduled for 2022.



Lindsay Hale
Executive Director, Public Schools

References

- 1 National School Improvement Tool
- 2 Electronic School Assessment Tool
- 3 Positive Behaviour Support
- 4 Science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics
- 5 Abilities Based Learning Education, Western Australia
- 6 Special Educational Needs Assessment Tool
- 7 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- 8 Individual Education Plan
- 9 Reporting to Parents Special Education Needs