



Department of
Education

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Comet Bay Primary School

Public School Review

March 2020

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 focused 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

Located in Secret Harbour, approximately 55 kilometres from the Perth central business district, Comet Bay Primary School is in the South Metropolitan Education Region.

Opened in 2007, the school offers modern facilities within beautifully presented grounds. In 2010, the school became an Independent Public School. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1013 (decile 4). Currently there are 811 students enrolled at Comet Bay Primary School from Kindergarten to Year 6.

The offsite Kindergarten maintains excellent communication and connection with the main school site. A shaded nature play area has expanded creative and investigative play opportunities in the early childhood area. Contemporary and engaging outdoor learning and play spaces create a range of opportunities for students to develop their creativity and interpersonal skills.

Major school art projects have been completed under the guidance and participation of local Aboriginal families.

A strong relationship with the local secondary college has resulted in successful transition programs and offers selected students opportunities to attend extension programs.

The Comet Bay Kitchen Garden provides fresh produce and substantial additional learning opportunities for students through its integration in curriculum areas. It also offers an avenue for parent involvement through student cooking classes.

Community engagement with the school is enhanced by the work of the dedicated School Board and an active Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

School self-assessment validation

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

The following aspects are confirmed:

- An established culture of ongoing self-assessment, with a focus on continuous school improvement, aided the school by the ease with which it could gather, not create, documentation for the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission.
- The executive leadership team and leadership focus groups collaborated with year level and curriculum teams to conduct the school's self-assessment. Time was privileged to allow thorough analysis and consultative discussions.
- Information from the self-assessment was considered and distilled into observations, analysis, impact and planned actions in the ESAT submission.
- Staff contributed to the ESAT during staff meetings.
- Eight leadership team members submitted entries into their ESAT area of responsibility.
- The selection of a range of credible evidence to support the school's analysis and judgements resulted in an open and transparent account of the current school context and performance.
- Staff, families, students and community members engaged positively in the validation process, offering a confident endorsement for the direction the school has taken.

The following recommendations are made:

- Develop and present a strong narrative of the school's journey to strengthen the clarity of school messages and directions.
- Consider refining the planned actions through determination of whether there is a major body of work or whether the initiative is in the maintenance stage.

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Relationships and partnerships	
Respectful, trusting relationships have led to a culture of connection, care, commitment and positivity. Staff and school community members describe the school as a family.	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the preparation for each business plan, the staff review the school's beliefs to ensure they are current and relevant to the school's ethos. • Current and past staff members demonstrate confidence and pride in Comet Bay Primary School through enrolling their children at the school. Some have moved into the school's local intake area to allow for this. • The school's annual National School Opinion Survey results reflect high levels of satisfaction from staff, parents and students. • Strong support from the P&C enhances community engagement and improves school facilities through undertakings like the successful solar panel project and the nature playground. • The effective School Board comprises parents, staff and community members with a range of skill sets, ensuring the school can view discussions through a variety of lenses.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspire to maintain and raise the already high rate of parent engagement with the school.

Learning environment	
The embedded 'Comet Bay Way' ethos has established a safe, inclusive and caring learning environment, providing wraparound support for its students, families and staff.	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has demonstrated its responsiveness to the changing needs of students in the local community by adapting programs and support to best meet their needs. • Students' merit certificates are linked to academic progress and the demonstration of the school's six dispositions of learning. • Mental health and wellbeing is a priority focus for the leadership team, who enlist assistance from the school psychologist and external providers to support students, staff and families. • Thirteen years ago, the school opened as a 'TRIBES' school. It attributes the positive school and classroom environment to its unwavering focus on the TRIBES core agreements of: attentive listening; appreciation/no put downs; mutual respect; and the right to pass. • A highly effective student services team supports students at educational risk through partnerships with external service providers in areas such as speech pathology, occupational therapy and autism.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on clarifying the reasons for the significant decline in 'regular' student attendance and review and refine strategies to arrest this decline.

Leadership

Continuity of strong, supportive, empathetic leadership has enabled the school to use its energy to build on their strengths. Through shared high expectations, leaders plan strategically to take the school to the next level of effectiveness.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has established effective structures, processes and protocols, which are articulated in the Comet Bay Way curriculum planner and the staff diary, and are valued and used by all staff. • Staff appreciate leaders' responsiveness to requests, most recently evidenced by organising targeted professional learning on school development days for education assistants to develop their skills further. • Implementation of Visible Learning and the GROWTH coaching model has led to an embedded observation, feedback and improvement culture. • There is clear alignment of strategic, operational, financial and classroom planning. School decisions are based on research, evidence of effectiveness and suitability for the needs of students. • The leadership team articulated the school's strategic intent of developing leaders through purposeful roles in core school focus areas. This has the dual purpose of sustainability of knowledge and continuity of practice at the school.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trial the sharing of the student services role across the executive leadership team to ensure consistency and sustainability of student intervention.

Use of resources

The school's leadership team and manager corporate services ensure that resources for raising the standard of student achievement are appropriately allocated and aligned to current priorities.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The one-line budget, including student characteristics funding, is allocated to best support the needs of each years' students. • The school leverages its resident expertise to provide professional learning and support to secure consistent practices and understandings. • Investment in the employment of education assistants provides in-class support for individuals and groups of students. This supports a differentiated and targeted learning environment, supporting the needs of all students. • Human resources funding is allocated to support an embedded coaching model, focus group meetings and teacher release time to continue the Visible Learning peer to peer observations.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the financial literacy of all staff, particularly focusing on the Finance Committee and cost centre managers.

Teaching quality

Dedicated teachers who employ quality teaching practices underpin long-term student academic success. Teachers are valued and respected by students and the community.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders conduct classroom observations and walkthroughs to provide feedback to teachers to enable their reflection on lesson effectiveness. This is supplemented by peer observations in which teachers support and hold each other accountable through reciprocal processes. • It is clear that increased student achievement rates result from the consistency of teaching practice through whole-school approaches including an explicit teaching lesson structure. • The curriculum is differentiated through targeted planning for groups and individuals, ensuring that each student is working at the appropriate level. • Staff are committed to the development of the whole child. Students are offered a variety of additional programs in which they can experience success including extension activities, lunchtime clubs and leadership opportunities. • Aboriginal cultural awareness and education are integrated into the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area. This includes an annual NAIDOC¹ event, producing art installations designed by students and Aboriginal community members.
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Student achievement and progress

A culture of continuous self-reflection, data analysis and a focus on school improvement has supported the long-term high levels of student achievement and progress.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-based assessments including Brightpath writing assessment, Progressive Achievement Tests in mathematics, reading and spelling, PM Benchmarks and the use of DataHUB are utilised effectively. • The school's agreed purpose of data collection has shifted from compliance to a focus on 'assessment for learning'. Data are used to provide feedback to teachers on students' understanding and to inform curriculum differentiation. • Year 3 NAPLAN² comparative performance from 2014 to 2019, in 29 of 30 tests, has been within the predicted school mean range. • In 2014 to 2019, Year 5 NAPLAN comparative performance has been within the predicted school mean range in 28 of 30 tests. • The On-entry Assessment Program testing and Kindergarten speech and occupational therapy screening support teachers' identification of students at educational risk. This has led to targeted intervention at the school level and with the support of external providers.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned to the school's shared high expectations of student achievement, develop a refined whole-school understanding of what constitutes good student progress related to each assessment.

Reviewers

Laura O'Hara
Director, Public School Review

Heather McNeil
Principal, Willetton Primary School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

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

Your next school review is scheduled for 2023.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy