



Department of
Education

D19/0276538

Public education
A world of opportunities

Dongara District High School

Public School Review

June 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

Dongara District High School was built in 1971 and is situated 360 kilometres north of Perth and 65 kilometres south of Geraldton in the Midwest Education Region. Servicing Dongara and Port Denison, the school currently enrolls 434 students from Kindergarten to Year 12.

A population increase in the area led to a \$30 million school upgrade with new premises opening in 2012. State of the art facilities include interactive whiteboards in every primary classroom, open-plan cooperative learning spaces and specialist facilities in the secondary school.

The school provides both VET¹ and ATAR² opportunities for senior secondary students and has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 972 (decile 7).

The school became an Independent Public School in 2015 and has the support of a highly committed School Board. The Parents and Citizens' Association is very active and regularly fundraises to provide additional resources for the school.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a range of evidence to support its judgements about the school's performance.

The following aspects are confirmed:

- Staff, students and members of the School Board actively engaged in the review process.
- The planned intentions described in the school's submission were elaborated upon during the validation visit.
- Robust conversations with the review team demonstrated a culture of reflection and a commitment to continuous improvement, which was enhanced by the Public School Review process.
- The school validation visit provided further insight into strategic planning and school operations.

The following recommendations are made:

- Reflect upon the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) guidelines to support decision making when selecting the most relevant and current evidence for the school self-assessment.
- When submitting evidence for each domain, articulate a clear narrative of the school's improvement journey by considering the three key questions: 'How are we going? How do we know? What will we do next?'

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships

Effective partnerships exist with the community and the School Board advocates strongly for the school and its achievements. The school's PBS³ values of, 'Choose Respect; Be Responsible; and Achieve Your Best', are evident in the interactions between staff, students and parents.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Board members are well trained and work as true partners of the school.• There is clarity regarding the School Board's governance role and a clear self-review schedule ensures that the Board remains well-informed.• A wide variety of communication modes exist and are valued.• The school has forged credible partnerships with local businesses to deliver quality educational programs, including access to industrial kitchens for the delivery of the Certificate II in Hospitality.• The extensive leadership team is united in promoting a shared moral purpose for their students to '<i>achieve with honour</i>'.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a strategic marketing campaign to encourage more families to choose their local school into the senior years.• Increase opportunities for staff voice with whole-school business planning.

Learning environment

The school is proactive in its approach to 'Behaviour Management in Schools' and has worked to ensure that parents have a deep understanding and appreciation of the evidence-based practices used.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a genuine sense of pride in the safe, inclusive and vibrant learning environment.• As a PBS school, a positive culture that fosters increased resilience, independence and motivation to achieve is embedded in daily practices.• Robust data analysis has led to strategic interventions, such as using a Teacher Initiated Problem Solving process, and results in a quality peer relationship social skills focus.• Opportunities to provide students a voice are embraced. A dynamic Student Council actively engages in the effective functioning of the school.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase key staff access to data systems such as Online Student Information, to support individual student profiling and planning.• Induct teaching staff in the effective use of the School Information System to promote a shared and more streamlined approach to data creation, collection and analysis.

Leadership

A distributed leadership model ensures that a wide range of staff are actively engaged in the school's improvement focus. New initiatives are introduced with due consideration given to fostering staff acceptance and commitment.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-school plans are adhered to with staff engaging in ways that are individualised to suit their preferred teaching styles. • A robust audit of the school's implementation of the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework</i> has resulted in quality baseline data and a strategic approach for the future. • Performance management plans exist and strengthening the culture of classroom observation and feedback, is a leadership priority. • Improved data analysis of student achievement is ensuring that targeted professional learning meets identified needs of the staff.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically formalise and simplify executive leadership portfolios to allow for greater autonomy and effective mentoring of middle leaders. • As a leadership team, reflect upon and review the measures of success identified in the business plan to gain greater clarity and alignment between SMART⁴ goals, strategies, targets and milestones. • Continue to foster a culture of classroom observation and feedback by conducting executive walk-throughs.

Use of resources

Resource allocation decisions are evidence based and student centred. Transparent decision making processes exist and budget setting processes inform school planning.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The buildings and grounds are exceptionally well maintained and provide a rich learning environment for students. • Targeted initiatives and student characteristic funding are used to meet the identified needs of students. In particular, experienced and highly competent education assistants support the teaching and learning adjustments for students at educational risk. • Operational plans include financial, resource and staff development information that is linked to school priority areas. • The manager corporate services ensures that staff are fully aware of their fiscal responsibilities.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a comprehensive workforce plan that identifies both current and future staff recruitment and development needs. • Consider a reduction in teaching time of the executive team, especially the Principal, to allow for a more strategic use of their expertise across the school.

Teaching quality

Phases of learning meetings are used effectively for consultative processes. Collaborative planning, data analysis and information sharing regarding whole-school programs empower teachers to have ownership of operational planning.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expertise of key staff is capitalised on to establish whole-school plans that are aligned to key priority areas, such as literacy and numeracy. • Through the STEM⁵ and ICT⁶ initiatives, a mutually valued connection with a metropolitan school has emerged and is leading to improvements in the use of technology. • Moderation processes include the use of work samples and the School Curriculum and Standards Authority judging standards to ensure that grade allocations are accurate and consistent. • Cross-curricular links in the secondary setting are well established and support seamless and interconnected curriculum delivery.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the STEM and ICT initiatives through the Innovative Schools Partnership. Strategically structure the implementation schedule for change management to be embraced and embedded.

Student achievement and progress

The school gathers and analyses school based and systemic data to determine targeted approaches to improvement. The school's leadership team is aware that, with a unified commitment to agreed school-wide strategies, the desired improvements in student achievement will likely ensue.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-entry data collection, such as Screen of Communication Skills, allows for early intervention, including access to speech therapy as needed. • Analysis of the 2018 NAPLAN⁷ data has resulted in a more robust and shared commitment to engage in targeted interventions using explicit teaching. • ACER⁸ Progressive Achievement Tests in mathematics have been implemented to elicit fine-grained understandings of students' abilities and to differentiate the curriculum. • Individual education plans, especially for students with imputed disabilities, are comprehensive and used to good effect. • Senior secondary interventions resulted in 100 per cent OLNA⁹ achievement for Year 12 students in 2018.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in research of evidence-based practices relevant to identified priority areas and reach consensus on establishing school-wide approaches.

Reviewers

Kath Ward
Director, Public School Review

Lisa Dentith
Principal, Richmond Primary School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

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

Your next school review is scheduled for 2022.



Stephen Baxter
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Vocational Education and Training
- 2 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
- 3 Positive Behaviour Support
- 4 Specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and time-based (goals)
- 5 Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
- 6 Information and communication technology
- 7 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 8 Australian Council for Educational Research
- 9 Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment



Your ref :
Our ref : D19/0276756
Enquiries :

Ms Janine Calver
Principal
Dongara District High School
13 Cave Way
DONGARA WA 6525

Dear Janine

I am pleased to advise that the Public School Review of Dongara District High School has been completed. I endorse the report and am satisfied it will provide a basis for sustained school improvement.

Your school performance rating determined through your self-assessment submission and validated by the review team is 'Effective'. I acknowledge the efforts of you and your staff in creating the conditions for successful students.

In particular, the positive partnerships you have established with your parent community and the School Board is to be commended. Further, I am advised that your distributed leadership model also has real potential to create quality future leaders for our schools.

The areas your school and the review team validated as being effective and those for which ongoing improvement is planned are noted.

As stated in the initial correspondence, please make the report available to your staff and school community and upload it to your school website and/or Schools Online.

I know you, your staff and school community will take the opportunity to use this report to continually improve outcomes for your students.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Baxter
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

27 JUN 2019

cc. Mr Steven Watson, A/Regional Executive Director, Midwest Education Region
Chair, School Board, Dongara District High School

