



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Applecross 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

Applecross Primary School is situated ten kilometres south of the Perth central business district, within the South Metropolitan Education Region. Established in 1905, the school buildings are heritage listed and provide a rich historical learning environment for students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Connecting with the rich Aboriginal history of the Applecross area, the school has worked to restore the surrounding bushland and acknowledges the significant contribution Aboriginals have made to the area.

In 2012, the school gained Independent Public School status.

Currently, there are 592 students enrolled at Applecross Primary School. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1145 (decile 1).

Community support for the school is demonstrated through the significant contributions of the School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

## 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:

- Guided by the Standard domain foci and elaborations, the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided evidence that supported the judgements made.
- Well-established school self-assessment and review processes, inclusive of all staff, was evident. This ongoing reflection of school performance is contributing to a shared understanding of school progress and the identification of focus areas for improvement.
- The staff and community came together through self-reflection and a Public School Review action plan comprised of three phases, Enabling, Engaging and Presenting. This provided clarity and a shared understanding of the Standard, domain areas and the review process enabling staff to contribute with confidence in reviewing their school performance.
- A broad range of staff, students, parents/carers and community representatives enthusiastically contributed to the discussions during the validation visit. This added significant depth and value to the ESAT submission for the review team.
- The Principal shared that the review process provided opportunity for staff to work together building relationships, staff collaboration and engagement, enhancing collective efficacy at Applecross Primary School.

The following recommendation is made:

- Continue to use the ESAT as a repository for evidence as part of the school's ongoing self-assessment practices and review cycles.

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### Relationships and partnerships

Collaborative and consultative, together with the key values of respect and kindness has contributed to the unequivocal support and high levels of satisfaction expressed by families, staff and students for their school.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Building connections with the Aboriginal community and Elders of the local area is developing students and staff understanding of Aboriginal culture and histories. Rich learning experiences have ensued through the valued input and support of Bindi Dreaming and Djirily Dreaming.
- Collaboration between the Applecross Primary School and Ardross Primary School chaplains has led to the development of the Year 6 student leadership program. This is providing an avenue for students to practice communication skills, promote school values and establish connections with students from another school.
- A well-developed induction to Kindergarten package BYOD<sup>1</sup> information sessions, Skoolbag and the school website provide parents with clarity and transparency of school processes and procedures.
- School Board membership is representative of the community and brings a complementary combination of skills and knowledge to provide expert advice and feedback from the community to the school.
- Highly regarded, the P&C provides valued support to the school. Their active engagement contributes to a positive, connected school culture whilst providing additional resources that benefit students.
- Families value having their voice heard and actively respond to NSOS<sup>2</sup> and other specific surveys. The school is responsive and acts on the information they receive to improve overall school operations.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue, in response to parent feedback, to establish agreed expectations on how the school communicates with families.

### Learning environment

Staff are committed to working together to create an environment and culture where all members of the school community feel safe, welcomed and belong.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Health and Wellbeing Committee provides oversight of numerous programs. Complementing this work is that of the chaplain in the delivery of programs that impact positively on both students and staff.
- Attention is paid to the provision of outdoor spaces for students and staff to connect with nature. The creation of dedicated zones promotes peacefulness and mindfulness leading to positive wellbeing.
- A genuine commitment to providing students with a strong voice is evident. The implementation of the inquiry learning model is promoting student agency in determining their learning path. Student coordinated and led assemblies, student leadership, surveys and the Gratitude Challenge provide further opportunities.
- The student support team provide guidance in the identification, screening and development of IEPs<sup>3</sup>. The role of allied professionals is highly valued and essential in the delivery of research-based programs to meet the needs of individual students.
- The school has been intentional in acknowledging local Aboriginal culture giving it a highly visual physical presence. This is established through the location of permanent fixtures in central areas.
- Student-centred learning is maximised through play and inquiry learning. A range of play areas and equipment supports responsible risk taking and play-based learning, developing resilience and problem-solving skills.

## Leadership

The Principal and the leadership team have taken a considered approach in managing change. With consultation and thought given to communication and professional learning, staff buy-in has been maximised.

## Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The business plan provides strategic direction for the staff and school community articulating the integrated approach taken and alignment to the Department's Strategic documents. Monitoring and review of the impact of key targets gives currency to the plan.
- Professional learning is targeted and aligned to the school's strategic direction such as the K-2 involvement in the Leading Inspired Learning in the Early Years (LILEY) and the inquiry learning approach.
- A distributed model of leadership exists across the school. This allows for maximum staff participation, empowering them to have input into and influence over the school's strategic improvement agenda.
- The roles and responsibilities of leaders are clearly articulated providing clarity for staff in their work. Consideration is given to professional learning to build the capacity of leaders to lead in the school.
- Aligned to the 'Measuring our Effectiveness' document, performance management provides feedback and identifies individual staff goals, professional learning needs and the future aspirations of staff.
- Developed scope and sequence documents for English and mathematics, along with a well-supported and embedded whole-school approach to the implementation of inquiry learning ensures staff are informed and supported.

## Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Refine practices to include a unified instructional model to build the capacity of staff in the implementation of integrated practices.
- Review the business plan with a view to developing SMART targets.

## Use of resources

Giving strong acknowledgement and paying homage to their humble beginnings, the school has prioritised providing facilities that capitalise on its history and meet the needs of present and future students.

## Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The manager corporate services (MCS), together with learning area committees, provide oversight of budgets. This has led to an increase in understanding by staff of the need to align resource purchases to operational planning and evidence.
- School budgets are closely monitored by learning area committees, cost centre managers, the Finance Committee and School Board with strong support and guidance provided by the MCS.
- The deployment of staff is based on planning and evidence. This has resulted in a holistic, targeted and streamlined approach to cater for specific priorities and student needs such as additional funding for the chaplain to deliver health and wellbeing programs and the deployment of education assistants to support students at educational risk (SAER).
- Resources are centrally located providing ease of access. A replacement plan for assets and resources and close monitoring and recording of resources is providing greater efficiency and responsibility in resource management.
- Workforce planning is carefully crafted guided by the Measuring Effectiveness document. This ensures employment and timetabling of staff will maximise the outcomes for students. A flexible approach to the deployment of allied professionals provides support for the implementation of SAER programs.

## Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to provide support and professional learning to build the financial capabilities of all staff.

## Teaching quality

Highly collaborative, a staff culture has been established at Applecross Primary School where making a difference for all students is the priority. This is reflected through the shared commitment to be accountable for the success of all students.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Teachers recognise the diversity of their students and confidently cater for their needs through ABLE WA<sup>4</sup>, Progress Maps, extension programs and specialist learning subjects.
- Content leaders are building staff capacity to effectively implement the inquiry learning model and health and wellbeing initiatives. Teachers engage in professional dialogue, year group planning and assessment with a focus on providing every student with a pathway to a successful future.
- Established, collaborative planning structures support consistency of curriculum delivery, instruction, assessment practices, moderation and differentiation of learning for students, providing ongoing professional learning to improve teaching quality and practice.
- The collaboratively developed, and prominently displayed 'Our Beliefs' posters articulate the teaching and learning shared beliefs giving clarity and a shared understanding by staff of teaching and learning practices.
- Students are provided with timely and purposeful feedback. Task developed rubrics give the opportunity for students to self-assess and set goals for future improvement.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to embed a shared understanding of the whole-school integrated approach to cater for diverse learners within the classroom context.
- Progress with the intention to reinstate classroom observations and feedback.

## Student achievement and progress

In a strong commitment to improve student achievement and progress, staff work collaboratively in the analysis and moderation of longitudinal systemic data compared to in-school data.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Year 5 stable cohort data, NAPLAN<sup>5</sup> 2019 -2021, indicate high progress and high achievement in all assessed areas. Additionally, numeracy, reading and writing progress in 2021 Year 5, is significantly greater than like schools for very high progress and significantly less for very low and low progress.
- Teachers' engagement through disciplined dialogue data analysis is assisting them to identify emerging patterns in longitudinal data and measure the impact of programs on student learning.
- Based on sustained evidence of high achievement, a focus on planning for enrichment has been prioritised. Problem solving skills, integrated approaches to learning through an inquiry model, supporting risk taking and fostering resilience is providing opportunities for students to excel.
- Numeracy NAPLAN and ACER<sup>6</sup> data reflects that of high achieving schools. Staff remain vigilant in monitoring those students who have not achieved their expected outcomes. Envision post tests and time allocated within collaborative teams allows for disciplined dialogue regarding deficits identified within a cohort or for individual students.
- A range of data is used to track student progress and achievement including EAL/D<sup>7</sup> Progress Maps, ABLE WA, Schonell Spelling, PM benchmark and Brightpath (writing). This data informs planning and reporting.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Closely investigate and monitor progress from On-entry to Year 3, to determine effectiveness of programs and the instructional approach in the Kindergarten to Year 2 phase of learning.
- Continue to develop moderation processes to accurately grade student achievement allowing for consistent, valid and reliable judgements across year levels.

## Reviewers

Maxine Augustson  
**Director, Public School Review**

Karen Duncan  
**Principal, Harrisdale 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 Bring Your Own Device
- 2 National School Opinion Surveys
- 3 Individual Education Plans
- 4 Abilities Based Learning Education, Western Australia
- 5 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 6 Australian Council for Educational Research
- 7 English as an Additional Language or Dialect