



Department of
Education

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Public education
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Perth Modern School

Public School Review

August 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 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

Perth Modern School is situated in the inner city suburb of Subiaco, in the North Metropolitan Education Region. Construction of this, the first public secondary school in Western Australia, began in 1909. In 1911, 226 students were welcomed for the first time to a "...modern education where the sciences and modern languages were to be on an equal footing with classical education".

Since its opening, the school has had a history of either having selective enrolment status or being a standard comprehensive five year high school. A State Government announcement in 2005 outlined the intent to have Perth Modern School become a selective school for academic excellence.

Following major refurbishment and construction, academically selected students enrolled in Years 8, 10 and 11 in 2007. By 2008, the majority of students had been selected academically. Currently, it is the only fully academically selective school in the State.

The school provides a differentiated and compacted curriculum that develops the skills of gifted students. Professional, enthusiastic, merit selected staff provide a broad range of subjects and activities tailored to the special needs of these students.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1239 (decile 1). It currently enrolls 1429 students from Year 7 to Year 12.

Perth Modern School became an Independent Public School in 2012. The school community and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) support a variety of fundraising ventures that complement the work of the School Board which is represented strongly by parents, community leaders, students and staff.

School self-assessment validation

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

The following aspects are confirmed:

- The Electronic School Assessment Tool submission and feedback provided during the validation visit delivered an in-depth account of the school context and operations in addressing its improvement agenda.
- A targeted scope of performance evidence was selected for the review to illustrate planned actions aligned to judgements made.
- Staff engagement and collaboration in the school assessment process is evidence of an embedded culture of reflection and improvement.
- Staff demonstrate individual and collective ownership for student success with professional and personal responsibilities and expectations understood.
- School assessment is underpinned by consistent reference to the two key focus areas (KFAs) of the business plan as the foundation for effective planning, action and review.
- The school's self-assessment was enhanced significantly by conversations held with members of the school community during the validation visit.

The following recommendation is made:

- Continue to investigate ways to reflect, innovate and respond, as an established leader in the field of gifted education, to the needs of gifted students.

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Relationships and partnerships	
<p>Trusting, harmonious, engaging and productive relationships and partnerships have been established with members of the School Board. Processes to engage parents and community members in partnerships are considered, strategic and effective.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the School Board articulated high levels of understanding of the school context and advocacy for its operations and direction. • The 'Modernians' provide vital support for the school including a sense of history. Contributions of the alumni, such as the Museum and academic and equity scholarships, are valued highly by staff and students. • The P&C works collaboratively with the school to form a highly effective partnership. Ongoing support for the school and its promotion through sponsored activities, has united the school community. • Staff relationships with students, parents and each other are strong. The importance of work/life balance is recognised and accommodated. • Strategic promotional activities prepare potential students (and parents) for success in this unique environment. Primary school liaison, transition and student and parent engagement events are well-supported. • A culture of community service and entrepreneurship is endorsed strongly by students through the development of a broad 'tapestry' of experience.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the support for staff wellness. Continue to explore strategies to engage the small proportion of staff who do not participate positively with decision making and/or change.

Learning environment	
<p>The high priority given to supporting the social and emotional wellbeing and resilience of gifted learners is evident in the development of a proactive student services team and the provision of essential processes. Leaders and staff are deeply committed to the 'whole child'.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful student outcomes for KFA 2¹ are supported by targeted programs including: Advocacy; MAT²; the Positive Ed Program; Year group wellbeing days; and the Young Adult Ethos. • A comprehensive risk alert and management strategy provides wraparound support for students through the student services team. • An extensive range of opportunities is provided (curricular and co-curricular) to promote academic, cultural, sporting and social development. • Student voice and leadership is sought and considered. Student views are represented through the Student Council, regular meetings with the executive team, representation at School Board meetings, surveys and numerous leadership roles including House and Advocacy captains. • Students consider the school to be a safe place to be themselves and connect with like-minded peers.

Leadership

Leaders have created a highly organised, structured and engaging environment founded on the development of students' 'love of learning'. Targeted planning and policy documentation is built on a strong research base and articulates school operations effectively.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic focus on establishing the conditions for effective learning for gifted students, strengthens the likelihood of successful outcomes. • The alignment of, and unified staff commitment to, the school vision, values and philosophies articulated in the KFAs of the business plan, is profound. • School-wide direction, focused on progress through strategic change management, has been complemented by the development of policy documentation (eg CAR³) to support the school improvement agenda. • An ongoing commitment to leadership development is evident through a diverse and disseminated framework. Aspirants described the support to pursue areas of interest for school-wide benefit, for example, the Principal's Fellowship and the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework</i>. • Quality performance development systems ensure staff growth is aligned to individual and school needs. • A comprehensive induction process is valued highly by incoming staff.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate the KFA targeting staff development, identified by the school community, in the new business plan.

Use of resources

Resource deployment for this unique school is reflective of its context. This results from the astute approach to planning, monitoring and deployment. Timetabling structures provide optimal opportunities for student needs and capacities.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources are allocated to meet the specific needs of gifted students. • Resource allocation decisions about funding of specific school programs and interventions, are student-centred and evidence-based. • Processes for risk minimisation have been established to ensure short-term and long-term planning for human, physical and financial resources are efficient and effective. Strong financial governance is provided through the Finance Committee and School Board. • Targeted initiative funding for gifted provision facilitates a seven-line timetable grid, co-curricular opportunities, additional curriculum leader roles and the broad provision of student services. • The strategic allocation of resources to capital and minor works on this heritage site is appreciated by the student body. It has been facilitated through the effective management of the one-line budget.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop a process for sustainability as reflected in the 2020 business plan.

Teaching quality

Exceptional teaching, based on contemporary research, to meet the needs of gifted students, underpins school-wide curriculum approaches. Students are successfully prepared with the skills and understandings to achieve their personal best and collective excellence.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standard of teaching required to meet the needs of gifted learners is made explicit during recruitment. Quality teaching in this context is at the core of KFA 1⁴, and is evident in exceptional student outcomes. • Targeted whole-school structures and processes such as the seven-line grid, semesterised Year 10 curriculum and the Modern Innovations Curriculum, expedite accelerated learning. • Staff performance is enhanced through clear expectations, targeted support and relevant accountability mechanisms. • Professional learning is enhanced through GERRIC⁵ training, staff sharing and support for L3CT⁶ portfolios. The Innovations Committee encourages staff to think creatively regarding teaching and learning. • There is strong recognition of staff capacity evident in award nominations, newsletter references, P&C acknowledgements, Principal letters, conference presentations, the inaugural Gifted Conference, representation on SCSA⁷ Curriculum Committees and Teacher Development School status.
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Student achievement and progress

There is a high level of appreciation that the use of data and their analysis will drive meaningful change and create a responsive self-reflective culture to inform curriculum initiatives and practice. Curriculum structures and the use of digital learning options motivate, enrich, differentiate and accelerate student learning to enable outstanding levels of achievement.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School performance is owned by all staff who share responsibility for student achievement. This has resulted in exceptional NAPLAN⁸ assessments, 2014-18. • In 2018, 98 per cent, 74 per cent and 95 per cent of students achieved in the top 20 per cent of NAPLAN Year 9 scores in numeracy, writing and reading respectively. • In 2018, 98 per cent, 76 per cent and 97 per cent of Year 7 students achieved in the top 20 per cent of scores in numeracy, writing and reading respectively. • Senior school achievement data in 2018 including: a median ATAR⁹ of 96.98; 55 students with an ATAR of 99 or above; 97 percent WACE¹⁰ achievement rate; and 100 per cent attainment, exceeded Western Australian public schools. • In 2018, students were the recipients of the Beazley Medal: WACE, Rob Riley Memorial Award, 17 General Exhibitions and nine Subject Exhibitions. • Students are successful in gaining scholarships or assured pathways to university (48 in 2018) at State, national and international levels. • Participation in a variety of competitions at national and international levels has led to acclaim, eg Olympiads, ICAS¹¹ and the World Scholars' Cup.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As currently embedded, continue to promote the learning process rather than a focus on a 'mark'.

Reviewers

Brett Hunt
Director, Public School Review

Paul Leech
Principal, Applecross Senior High 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 Key Focus Area 2: Quality Learning Environment for Students
- 2 Mindfulness Attention Training
- 3 Curriculum Assessment and Reporting
- 4 Key Focus Area 1: Quality Teaching and Learning
- 5 Gifted Education Research, Resources and Information Centre
- 6 Level 3 classroom teacher
- 7 School Curriculum and Standards Authority
- 8 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 9 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
- 10 Western Australian Certificate of Education
- 11 International Competitions and Assessments for Schools