



Department of  
Education

D21/0274204

Public education  
**A world of opportunities**

# School of Special Educational Needs: Medical and Mental Health

## Public School Review

May 2021



# 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 its 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 school review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the Principal, the Chair of the School Council/Board and the regional Director of Education.

## Expectations of schools

---

The Statement of Expectation (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.



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

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

---

The School of Special Educational Needs: Medical and Mental Health offers educational services to students whose physical or mental health makes it difficult to access their usual educational program.

Relevant educational curricula are delivered to students in both public and private schools across Western Australia, from Kindergarten to Year 12 (K-12), who are in hospital or at home due to medical reasons. A diverse workforce supports all phases of learning, curriculum and student services to meet individual student needs.

Work is undertaken in many hospital/health settings with staff co-teaching in classrooms, working as single teachers alongside health staff, and supporting students who are isolated or learning at home.

The Liaise-Educate-Transition-Support (LETS) model provides staff a framework to optimise students' educational continuity in a supportive learning environment and to enable enrolled schools to reduce the gap in attendance, connectedness, engagement and achievement – issues well documented for students with health needs.

The school currently operates 60 teaching and liaison programs across 40 Department of Health settings, with administration staff located at the Perth Children's Hospital (PCH) in Nedlands. The reach of the school's support is evidenced through its service provision to more than 5500 students each year. Education staff work as part of an interdisciplinary team, assisted by volunteers, to support students' needs.

Community support for the school in the provision of authentic school experiences for student and system needs is demonstrated through the work of the School Council. The School Council fulfils its role in supporting school governance with broad representation across public and non-government education, health services, parents and students.

## 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:

- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided a clear summary of the specific considerations of the school context, planning priorities and student and school performance.
- A range of interrelated data provided a snapshot of evidence for analysis by school staff.
- The process of preparing for the Public School Review, with reference to the domains of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework and indicators of the Standard, provided a mechanism to reflect on school operations and outcomes.
- A strong culture of reflection against an evidence base and contextual monitoring tools is evident. This leads to prompt yet considered action.
- The ESAT submission provided strong evidence of the collaborative nature of staff involvement in the reflective process.
- A cross-section of school leaders, teachers, allied professionals, and representatives from health partnerships and the School Council elaborated on the evidence described in the submission, during the validation visit.

## Public School Review

### Relationships and partnerships

High quality staff collaboration with health professionals and enrolled schools optimises the continuity of education and transition for individual students. Authentic partnerships supported by clear processes for engagement, ensure contextual factors for individual care are considered and actioned effectively.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A range of communication platforms are used successfully to communicate internally and externally. Information provided is appropriate, responsive and timely, with consideration of target audiences.
- A school-specific database is an essential communication tool that allows staff to access relevant and up-to-date student information, ensuring educational continuity across sites and programs.
- Collaborative, constructive and sustainable relationships and partnerships have been developed with a range of individuals, government and non-government groups to provide comprehensive and coordinated support for students.
- The school is proactive in seeking and acting on student, parent, staff and partner feedback to optimise the educational experience for students. Feedback indicates a high level of satisfaction with the school.

#### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to develop partnerships and projects in conjunction with the broader education sector.

### Learning environment

Quality student education and care, strategic partnerships and personal/emotional support initiatives are provided to enhance student experiences. Genuine consideration of individual needs foregrounds the school's approach in this unique context of educational support.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Students at educational risk are identified, supported and monitored effectively for improvement in the varied learning environments. Staff are proactive and responsive in differentiating for individual student needs.
- The school response to the global pandemic was highly successful. Ninety-six per cent of students involved in the COVID-19 Medical Referrals project returned successfully to their enrolled school.
- A proactive decision to develop staff capability in the use of Webex to deliver online learning in response to COVID-19, has been extremely beneficial in broadening long-term student instruction options.
- Support for the personal and social capabilities of students is reflected in the design of learning environments that enhance their self and co-regulation and positive engagement.
- Play-based learning opportunities and planning have been enhanced in response to the National Quality Standard, in consultation with expert consultants.

#### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to consult with health partners to ensure play-based learning principles consider links to trauma-informed teaching to enhance continuity of education and connections with schools.

## Leadership

A highly organised, responsive, collaborative and supportive work environment is evident, where staff conduct is aligned legitimately and authentically to the school vision. The extended leadership group and senior staff actively engage a large number of staff through school plan working groups.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff identify with and commit to the school vision (Connect, Learn and Thrive). The vision and school plan are instrumental in driving staff engagement with the school improvement agenda.
- Change is managed in a sensitive and collaborative manner within a commitment to improved outcomes for individuals and/or groups of students. Individual staff have been key contributors to the LETS model.
- The leadership team empowers staff through a broad range of distributed leadership roles despite the challenges in this unique, multi-located, K-12 school.
- Formal opportunities are provided to staff to develop leadership skills through active participation in the WAFLF<sup>1</sup> trial. Participants are included in the Extended Leadership team, and have access to: support for their development plan; a leadership mentor, and 'stretch projects' related to school improvement.
- Sophisticated school planning is strengthened by the engagement of all staff. Clear school direction and purpose has resulted from the review and analysis of the impact of current strategies.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to engage deeply with the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework to foster cultural responsiveness.

## Use of resources

Targeted resourcing processes required in this context, with links to school planning and student outcomes, have ensured optimal resource budgeting and management aligned to student supports in Statewide Services, education regions and inter-agency providers.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Robust internal controls are implemented to manage financial and operational business requirements. Resource management practices inform cash and human resource allocations for each budget cycle.
- Relevant financial procedures for cost centre managers are reflected in the school operational file, with the Finance Committee providing effective oversight of management practices.
- Priorities identified within the school's strategic plan inform human and financial planning. Budget allocation processes are based on historical evidence and an analysis of current need.
- Workforce planning is shared with staff and informs future planning, enabling a responsive and strategic approach to meet school and student needs with consideration of the staff profile.
- Physical assets and resource acquisitions and improvements are prioritised to support students' learning and engagement. These are managed effectively through maintenance and asset replacement planning.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Conduct regular budget reviews to consider planned milestones and patterns of expenditure.

## Teaching quality

Staff are agile and responsive in their approach to the implementation of practices in the school. These are directly related to improvements in opportunities and outcomes for the range of students and programs offered.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Targeted professional learning links to performance management and development with a focus on building staff capability. The dividends of this investment include improved student learning, outcomes and the provision of pastoral care.
- Through the use of evidenced frameworks, a whole-school approach to high impact teaching strategies (HITS) is being embedded. A focus on literacy and personal and social capabilities has been prioritised.
- Differentiation is embedded in teaching practice to cater for the learning needs of a diverse range of students across a Statewide K-12 context. Staff demonstrate shared beliefs and expectations about quality teaching, learning and engagement in this environment.
- Staff have a breadth of expertise and work collaboratively in the range of teaching teams to enhance curriculum delivery. High levels of satisfaction are provided in student and parent feedback regarding teacher quality and care.
- A staff working group has developed a learner profile to build the capability of staff to individualise student support needs.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Develop frameworks to support staff in catering for the diverse curriculum needs of students in this K-12 environment.

## Student achievement and progress

The school has a unique involvement in the continuity of education of students in its care. It is seeking to determine standardised assessment measures in personal, social and academic domains that will more realistically inform the impact of its work.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Research conducted by the Telethon Kids Institute (TKI), identified the association between missing school and educational outcomes. The school's response in providing liaison and transition support has helped mitigate this association.
- TKI research also identified personal and social capabilities as an area in which school support can positively influence students. In response, a working group has developed an effective rubric of statements for assessment and reporting as a reference tool for teachers.
- Staff liaise closely with each student's enrolled school to ensure continuity of education, being mindful that the stress of hospitalisation can lead to increased anxiety for the student about missing school.
- Cognisant of the value of student voice, university expertise and community feedback was enlisted to inform the development of a Student Voice Survey. Initial indications are very positive regarding the impact and value of the survey aligned to the LETS model.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Develop contextually appropriate metrics to assess the impact of school practices.

## Reviewers

---

Brett Hunt  
**Director, Public School Review**

Kristy Watson  
**Principal  
Clarkson Community  
High School  
Peer Reviewer**

Joanna Hall  
**Principal  
School of Special Educational  
Needs: Disability  
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 2, 2024.



Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**

---

## References

1 Western Australian Future Leaders' Framework