



Department of
Education

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Public education
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Denmark Senior High 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

Denmark Senior High School is situated just east of the Denmark township, within the Southwest Education Region.

Established within 19 hectares of land and surrounded by natural bushland, the school offers modern facilities to students, while taking advantage of easy access to waterways and horticulture.

Currently, there are 436 students enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1032 (decile 3).

Well served by active community groups, Denmark Senior High School benefits from the work of the School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C). The School Board plays a critical role in the governance of the school and the P&C works to support the school through fundraising and by providing a full service canteen.

School self-assessment validation

The principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

The following aspects are confirmed:

- Members of the senior leadership team took carriage of allocated domains from the School Improvement and Accountability Framework in preparation for the Electronic School Assessment Tool submission.
- Staff and community representatives were invited to join domain teams, as appropriate, to determine the evidence sets submitted and further contribute to the observations, analyses and impact statements provided.
- The principal, in partnership with key senior leaders, reviewed each domain submission and this analysis informed the principal's concluding judgement for each entry.
- The validation visit provided an opportunity to distil, from the broad narrative provided, the key and strategic planned intentions to support the school's continuous improvement journey.
- The school reported that the process of self-assessment proved affirming and the validation visit provided an opportunity to celebrate successes.

The following recommendation is made:

- Consider being more selective about evidence sets and analyses in future, focusing on the point in time nature of the Public School Review and articulating only the most essential and most relevant future intentions given the school's current priorities.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships	
<p>The philosophy that it takes a village to raise a child is evident in the strong community partnerships with local expertise that are embedded in the fabric of the school to better cater for the diverse needs of students.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School Board is valued highly and engages in robust debate to ensure shared ownership of decision making. • The proactive Shire of Denmark applauds the school's responsiveness to initiatives offered. The Lighthouse Project, Outward Bound Australia camp and traineeships highlight the reciprocal value-adding opportunities that exist. • Employers embrace Vocational Education and Training (VET) work placement students, with curriculum pathways often leading to ongoing training and employment. • The Approved Specialist Program in basketball affords student leadership opportunities through umpiring and coaching juniors in the community. • Direct parent and community involvement, notably through the arts and sport, results in high calibre showcasing of student success.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to empower the School Board to contribute effectively to the strategic direction of the school. • Increase the public perception of the school by actively promoting the excellent opportunities provided and achievements gained. • Be proactive in engaging the school community with the National School Opinion Surveys, seeking to gain broader perspectives.

Learning environment	
<p>A highly inclusive and responsive learning environment, where every child is known and valued, fosters a sense of belonging and engagement.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in Classroom Management Strategies, coupled with a strong relationship focus premised on mutual respect, ensures that behaviour issues are low level and managed before point of escalation. • A highly capable student services team leads a focus on student wellbeing and protective behaviours. Suitable targeted interventions, such as the Rock and Water program and Tomorrow Man, respond to identified needs. • Special educational need (SEN) and imputed disability students are well catered for, with support provided by the learning support coordinator to ensure that individual education planning is suitably robust with achievable, yet aspirational, targets.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instigate a comprehensive attendance plan, incorporating the importance of the pastoral care role of form teachers, to significantly increase regular attendance and active engagement.

Leadership

Staff acknowledge and appreciate the distributed leadership structure established by the principal, with opportunities for consultation embedded. Additionally, they value the support of the relatively new deputy principals, appointed after a period of considerable transiency in the senior leadership team.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers engage actively at operational planning levels, embracing the whole-school literacy and learning frameworks, and trust in their senior leadership team to ensure alignment to the business plan. • Performance management practices afford staff access to suitable professional learning opportunities that serve to support their individual professional growth and whole-school priorities. • Using the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework</i> as a reflective tool, there is considerable evidence of cultural awareness embedded in curriculum across a range of learning areas.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In planning for the future, maintain an intentional focus on fewer priorities and targets aligned directly to the core business of teaching and learning. • Undertake an audit against the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework</i>, seeking authentic community engagement and progression as a school toward cultural responsiveness. • Having reintroduced a student council, provide genuine opportunities for students to lead and contribute to decision making, as appropriate.

Use of resources

Prudent financial management has resulted in reserve accounts that enable the school to undertake facilities upgrades that impact directly upon improved learning opportunities.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is clear alignment between the budget and priority areas. • The managers corporate services, a shared role until recently, ensure that cost centre managers are trained and adept at meeting their fiscal responsibilities. • Targeted resource allocations, including support of the school's literacy priority, are monitored to confirm evidence of positive impact. • Effective facilities management is supported by a detailed improvement plan and priorities list. • The representative Finance Committee oversees a transparent process for resource allocation. Similarly, the P&C has established its own grant application process. • Marketing and improved communication, deemed key priorities, have been supported through effective workforce management and infrastructure support.
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Teaching quality

Highly collegiate and competent teachers demonstrate a collective efficacy in the sure knowledge that they are empowered to make a positive difference with every student.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected staff review a range of systemic and school-based data and share findings to inform future planning. Targeted individual and small group literacy interventions commence in Year 7 as a result of PAT¹ data analysis and are demonstrating a positive impact. Following robust consultation, teachers recently committed to an instructional framework, ensuring planned uniformity of practice that includes clear learning intentions. While the whole-school numeracy plan is in its infancy, staff have embraced the literacy plan to good effect.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed 'feedback for growth' as a peer observation strategy, establishing a common language and culture of reflective practice. Review current meeting schedules, seeking improved mechanisms to provide the collaborative time needed to forge quality professional learning communities as desired by the school.

Student achievement and progress

Acknowledged as a high achieving school, continuing to strive for excellence is a key driver in maintaining the impetus of quality results and avoiding complacency.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NAPLAN² data is sound with considerable progress noted in 2019, from Year 7 to Year 9, in numeracy, writing, and language conventions. Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment achievement rates are high. A large percentage of students pre-qualify in Year 9 and targeted interventions commence in Year 10. Both ATAR³ and VET achievement data are sound and supported by a broad range of opportunities to gain endorsed program unit equivalents. These include: engaging in the school's drama production; country week; and Duke of Edinburgh qualifications. SEN students are integrated successfully into the school with support provided through SSEN: D⁴ and the use of assistive technology as needed.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage actively in improving staff data literacy and embedding moderation practices to offset any disadvantage caused by distance and/or class size. Review assessment and grading practices, especially for senior schooling general courses, to consider strategies that will support comparable attainment of A grades in alignment with like schools. Establish quality end of year handover practices, especially for SEN students, to ensure a seamless transition from year to year.

Reviewers

Kath Ward
Director, Public School Review

Leigh Nelson
Principal, Merredin College
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 Progressive Achievement Tests
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 3 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
- 4 School of Special Educational Needs: Disability