



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Denmark Senior High School

## Public School Review

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## 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 3 year cycle, subsequent reviews are determined to occur on a one, 3 or 5 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 of Education (the Department) in student achievement and progress.

The Statement is between; the Department, 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. It will also support the Principal Professional Review.

## 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 resources in alternative formats for people with accessibility needs, please contact [PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au)

## Context

Denmark Senior High School is located approximately 415 km from Perth, within the South West Education Region. Originally opening in 1896 the school was built at its present location in 2000. In 2015 the school was granted Independent Public School status.

Currently, there are 441 students enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1036 (decile 3).

Well served by active community groups, Denmark Senior High School benefits from the work of the School Board and an active Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

The first Public School Review of Denmark Senior High School was conducted in Term 1, 2020. This 2024 Public School Review report provides a current point of reference for the next cycle of school improvement.

## 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 process of ongoing school self-assessment is led by the Principal and senior leadership team, in collaboration with a broad range of staff participants and community members who regularly work in partnership with the school.
- Staff created a clear narrative as to how they have been meeting the elements of the Standard, aligned to their strategic planning documentation, in the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission.
- The selection of evidence meticulously reflected the school's efforts in transferring strong practice to strong process over recent years. The presentation of authentic data, encompassing a variety of metrics, was a feature of the ESAT submission.
- Entries to the ESAT were co-authored between leaders, teaching and allied professional staff and reflective of a consensus view of staff as to how the school is meeting or exceeding the Standard.
- School Board, P&C and family members demonstrated a rich knowledge of the school's vision and strategic direction during validation meetings.
- The sincere contributions of students during the validation process added value to the review team's ability to authenticate the ESAT submission. This was further strengthened with a brief tour of the school's facilities and learning environments at the start of the validation visit.

## Relationships and partnerships

The community works and plays together, demonstrating the pivotal role that the school holds as a place of belonging, where staff leverage arts, outdoor education pursuits and basketball connections to provide genuine care for students.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Board members enjoy their role of contributing to the school's business plan. Members trained in their governance responsibilities recently consulted over the addition of a relationships pillar to the new plan.
- Parents appreciate that there is a pathway for all students. They credit the school for nurturing the strong community and employer relationships critical to the delivery of training and employment to their children.
- The P&C communicates well with the Principal and works with the staff to yield tangible benefits to students. The timely expenditure of parent voluntary contributions has seen the P&C instal significant rooftop solar infrastructure, reducing power costs and diverting school funds to student programs.
- The use of the Compass system to keep students and parents informed is backed by a Facebook page for community and school notices. Communication between staff is supported through daily notices and the development of a new staff intranet.
- Students with a talent are provided a place to belong in the school's elite basketball program and exposure to experiences in the arts and sustainability. Building citizenship in students is a key element of all learning.
- Students report that their transition to the secondary school environment is skilfully managed by staff, and they rapidly gain a sense of belonging. They value the opportunity to perform in school productions and pit their scientific knowledge against peers through the Minister's Innovation Challenge.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- In partnership with students, explore opportunities to participate in programs such as international exchange, maintaining the stated focus on broadening their view of the wider world.

## Learning environment

Students enter the school from a diverse range of schooling backgrounds, and the depth of engagement in their transition enables staff to establish the conditions for them to thrive over their secondary years of schooling.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Denmark Respectful Relationships Framework supports the maintenance of a positive environment through clearly set and agreed expectations for staff, students and families. An extensive suite of behaviour data is curated by the wellbeing team featuring evidence of frequent positive recognition of students.
- Regular analysis of student wellbeing data gathered through surveys has assisted staff to identify the promotion of wellbeing among identified groups of students as a school-wide focus.
- Significant efforts in the streamlining of student services processes and collection of data on the needs of students has led to the implementation of a multi-tiered system of support, delivered by a structured team.
- A student support officer with a strong rapport with students and families works in partnership with them to monitor and improve attendance. The relational capital built through this partnership assists staff and families to maintain an authentic shared dialogue.
- Aboriginal perspectives, in support of the school's developing Reconciliation Action Plan, are embedded within the curriculum, led by the on-Country experiences delivered by the science learning area.
- A student council, with student initiated and led sub-committees, is united in its service of the student body. Councillors enjoy a rapport and common dialogue with school leaders in representing all students.
- Staff and community advocacy has ensured that the grounds undergo continued renewal and improvement.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to develop the house system to fully capitalise on the positive engagement and connection with students including timetabled rewards, supported by a targeted suite of interventions for student behaviour.

## Leadership

The distribution of leadership is key to the shared ownership of the school's strategy and vision. A significant number of formalised roles are available for staff to lead areas of passion and skill across the areas of curriculum, governance and operations and in support of the personal development of students.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff are identified to participate and are assigned a mentor in the Great Southern Network leadership program. Aligned to the Future Leaders Framework, participants have found the program to be empowering and many have undertaken school leadership roles in and outside of the school following their engagement.
- The school has been represented through the opportunity to serve on the Western Australian Student Council. A recent student has represented the voice of rural and regional students in this way.
- The Principal provides leadership to the Great Southern Network, ensuring strong representation of the needs of the school alongside other Great Southern schools and nurturing a conduit to regional leadership.
- Staff are provided the opportunity to participate in scheduled peer observations each semester, supported by classroom release time, to build their instructional skills.
- A formal process for the performance development of teachers is embedded, linked to the AITSL<sup>1</sup> Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and aligned to the Department's performance development templates.
- There is evidence of staff engagement in the incorporation of Department strategies in the school's collaboratively developed 2024-2028 Business Plan. Operational plans have been developed for each learning area and are led by middle leaders or teams of staff, or with the support of senior leaders.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to support an increase in the number of teachers achieving level 3 status through provision of access to the level 3 classroom teacher workshops.

## Use of resources

The priority pillars of the school's strategic plan are reflected in the operational plans of the curriculum areas and supported by budget and resource allocations. There is high community confidence in the school's management of resources among staff and community stakeholders.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Transparency of the management of resources is supported through the provision of financial reports to the School Board and consultative decision making undertaken by the Finance committee, which broadly represents staff.
- Decisions taken at the Finance Committee initiate channels that ensure school calendar, resourcing, staffing, communication with staff and the community and adjustments to budget projections occur.
- Reserve accounts for the replacement of major resources are established, including provision for the upgrading of the schools ICT<sup>2</sup> equipment and infrastructure.
- Technical support for staff is provided by an onsite technician, assisting staff to provide continuity in the learning program for students when using devices. Staff feedback on potential strategies for the provision of technology to students is welcomed and has led to innovation in classrooms.
- The school's planning priorities are clearly articulated, and this is reflected in the workforce plan which privileges the provision of face to face instruction for students in senior school courses.
- Flexible timetable structures, classroom support and leadership support are formalised to maximise the impact of funds in the one line budget that are intended to support all students.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Ensure that there is an annual review of the 2024-2028 Workforce Plan to maintain alignment with staffing and resourcing trends and needs.

## Teaching quality

'We're making learning stick for everyone' is the shared mantra of the school in implementing the Unleash Learning Framework. It is the stated aim of staff to strengthen what is determined to already be strong practice.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Feedback to staff through student reflection sheets following assessments assists them to gauge the impact of their teaching in supporting students to achieve outcomes and develop skills.
- Staff participating on the school's Unleash Learning leadership team are committed to supporting the rigour of embedded practices through the development and implementation of a shared instructional model.
- The optimal conditions for their students to learn are identified by staff, including a school-wide focus on active engagement in classrooms and support for students with strategies to take ownership of learning.
- A series of engagement expectations across the school support the seamless provision of instruction, exemplified by the commitment by every Year 7 to Year 10 teacher to establish a classroom seating plan.
- Staff are provided the opportunity to either undertake observation and feedback with their peers or to participate with teams of staff on learning walks. These projects facilitate collaboration between staff across curriculum areas of the school, outside of their day to day teams.
- Staff engage with colleagues regarding the delivery of the Western Australian Curriculum and the application of the SCSA<sup>3</sup> Judging Standards. Staff teaching ATAR<sup>4</sup> subjects undertake small group moderation with peers in other schools.
- Information collected in student profiles through the shared Microsoft OneNote page is used by staff to guide the planning of differentiation for students requiring adjustments and with special educational needs.

## Student achievement and progress

Deep levels of expert individualised care are provided to students, supported by academic and wellbeing data sets analysed by teaching staff, school leaders and the highly regarded team of allied professionals.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- In 2023, 100 per cent of the Year 12 cohort achieved their OLNA<sup>5</sup> qualification. The support for students to achieve OLNA, WACE<sup>6</sup>, ATAR and VET<sup>7</sup> outcomes is viewed as a whole staff focus, engaging leaders, allied professionals and teachers in ongoing discussions and monitoring in partnership with students and families.
- The achievement of students across a range of senior school pathways is celebrated and promoted locally. Community stakeholders take pride in the achievements of ATAR students and those who secure employment outcomes in equal measure.
- The transition planning for students from a range of primary schooling backgrounds is supported through the collection and analysis of On-entry PAT<sup>8</sup> which are undertaken by students.
- The MacqLit program is deployed for small groups of students identified as requiring support for the building of phonemic awareness. Support for students is ongoing while they work to transition out of the program.
- Student wellbeing data is gathered through PAT Social and Emotional Wellbeing surveys. Analysis of PAT data led to the implementation of the Open Parachute program, focused on building the resilience of students.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Engage in analysis of the new secondary metrics as a way of articulating the value added to student achievement and progress by the school.
- Support the development of the school-wide numeracy plan to build the capacity of students to achieve improved numeracy outcomes.

## Reviewers

Rohan Smith  
**Director, Public School Review**

Steven Smethurst  
**Principal, Belmont City College**  
**Peer Reviewer**

## Endorsement

Based on this report, I endorse the commendations and recommendations made by the review team regarding your school's performance.

You will receive formal notification in the 2 terms leading up to your school's next scheduled review. This notification will be provided in 2029.



Steven Watson  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**

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## References

- 1 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- 2 Information and communications technology
- 3 School Curriculum and Standards Authority
- 4 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
- 5 Online Numeracy and Literacy Assessment
- 6 Western Australian Certificate of Education
- 7 Vocational Education and Training
- 8 Progressive Achievement Tests