Department of
Education

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Belmont Primary School

Public School Review

September 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

Belmont Primary School is located approximately eight kilometres from the Perth central business district, in the South Metropolitan Education Region. Established in 1897, the school enrols students from Belmont, Ascot, Ascot Waters and parts of Cloverdale.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1016 (decile 4). It currently enrols 123 students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Twenty-three per cent of students have a multicultural background and seven per cent of students are Aboriginal.

Specialist programs offered at the school include music, science, health and art. Australian sign language (AUSLAN) has been introduced as the school's language program. Students in the upper school are supported to run the whole-school daily fitness program.

Members of the School Council and the Parents and Citizens' Association are committed to engage in school development and actively seek opportunities to support students and the school.

School self-assessment validation

The principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

The following aspects are confirmed:

- The principal provided opportunities for staff engagement in the school's self-assessment.
- The selection of information and evidence provided an open and transparent account of the current school context and performance.
- There is strong alignment between the evidence presented, the factors impacting on the conditions for student success and areas identified for improvement.
- School leaders, a number of staff and parent representatives actively engaged and contributed their anecdotal reflections during the school visit. All were candid in their judgement of the school's performance, which included aspects requiring improvement.

The following recommendations are made:

- Establish a whole-school ethos and shared ownership for student success with professional and personal responsibilities understood and evident.
- Build on opportunities for staff and community representatives to collaboratively engage in the development of a continuous self-reflective culture of improvement.

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Relationships and partnerships

The principal is conscious of the need to build a cohesive school community through a concerted effort to develop trust, mutual respect and a shared ownership for the success of all students. The leaders are mindful of the need to support staff morale and wellbeing.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• Relationships between staff and students are caring, supportive and focused on student wellbeing.
	• Documented behaviour norms set clear expectations for staff interactions.
	• Meetings and the use of Connect have enhanced internal communications.
	• Network focus groups enhance specialist teacher practice and planning.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Make explicit the ongoing opportunities and forums for staff, parents and students to provide feedback and contribute to decision making.
	• Provide School Council training to enhance the impact of strong community governance when contributing to the school's improvement agenda.
	• Extend partnerships with other schools, leaders and networks to enhance effective planning, current programs and staff knowledge and skills.
	• Foster collaborative partnerships within the local community to maximise learning opportunities for students.
	• Consolidate a communication plan that increases consistent and timely exchanges of information and feedback between parents and the school.

Learning environment

The small school environment is valued by students who feel well known and supported by staff. A culture of high care has contributed to a safe and orderly learning environment.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• Students are supported to process conflict through restorative practices.
	• The chaplain fosters positive social interactions between students through the breakfast club and 'boys' club' activities.
	• Timely monitoring and communication support high regular attendance.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Implement positive behaviour approaches by establishing school values, shared behaviour expectations and a good standing policy.
	• Develop a whole-school plan that introduces programs, strategies and related measures to support student and staff health and wellbeing.
	• Consolidate roles, responsibilities, identification, intervention and monitoring to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach for students at educational risk.
	• Implement strategies that meet the National Quality Standard.

Leadership

The principal acknowledges existing challenges in leading change, and the need for strategic leadership that will establish whole-school cohesion and a culture of collaborative improvement that builds community confidence in the school.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following: • Student councillors are provided ongoing opportunities to demonstrate responsibility and leadership through roles in school events and activities. • School development days and staff meetings are focused on school planning and the discussion of new programs. • The principal has introduced comprehensive school planning documents. • Senior teachers lead the development of learning area plans.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions: • Support a school culture that is professional, inclusive and focused on student outcomes by ensuring that beliefs, values, expectations, norms and protocols are developed collaboratively and revisited regularly. • Lead the collaborative comprehensive review of data to: inform school priorities; set student achievement targets; and develop the strategic plan. • Apply effective change management processes, through the balanced provision of ongoing accountability and support, for the successful and sustainable implementation and shared ownership of planned initiatives. • Foster a culture of empowerment and trust through the public celebration of achievement and recognition of staff practice.

Use of resources

Facility upgrades and maintenance continue to be a priority for the school. The principal has identified the need to undertake an audit to maximise access and use of existing resources.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following: • Student characteristic funding aligns with student need by utilising education assistants to support individual/group intervention programs. • Reserve accounts have been established and reviewed. • A comprehensive finance policy provides clear guidelines for staff. • Budget and spending is discussed at School Council meetings. Finance Committee meetings are held twice each term.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions: • Ensure the Finance Committee access available information to meaningfully contribute to budget management discussions. • Link professional learning and budgeted expenditure to student targets and school priorities as articulated in strategic and operational plans. • Undertake a review of staff roles, budgets, existing resources, facilities and expenditure to identify potential areas for increased efficiencies. • Continue to allocate time and opportunities that allow staff to collaboratively reflect on current practices and contribute to whole-school planning.

Teaching quality

Staff are motivated by the success of students and accept responsibility for classroom level planning and monitoring. Collaborative data analysis and increased ownership of evidence-based planning are required to enhance staff engagement in whole-school practices.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• Year level learning expectations, developed by staff, guide the planning of the Western Australian Curriculum and general capabilities learning programs.
	• Most teachers use Sound Waves as a phonics scope and sequence, building on the Letters and Sounds program in Pre-primary.
	• Intentional and inquiry learning approaches are fostered through the whole-school use of a 'solution fluency' framework.
	• Teachers plan differentiated learning for identified students in their class.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Provide consistent feedback mechanisms, that include observations aligned to school priorities and student achievement, to enhance practice.
	• Maximise collaborative planning time by introducing specific lines of inquiry that support teachers to analyse and use systemic and school-based data.
	• Implement a school-wide numeracy block approach and consolidate literacy programs and teaching strategies consistently across all classes.
	• Enhance grade allocation consistency and progress monitoring by extending common assessment tasks and moderation.
	• Implement digital technologies learning in all classrooms.

Student achievement and progress

Staff are developing a practical understanding of student performance data and acknowledge whole-school challenges when analysing systemic data for small cohorts. Increasing NAPLAN[1] numeracy achievement and Year 3 to Year 5 literacy progress are priorities for the school.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• A school self-assessment schedule communicates whole-school assessment, planning and reporting requirements.
	• Sounds~Write phonics program and the MultiLit literacy intervention program are provided for identified students.
	• A data wall has been established to identify each student's spelling and reading age, inform intervention planning and track longitudinal progress.
	• Reporting to Parents Special Educational Need has been implemented to streamline individual and group education planning.
	• Student profile folders support transitions and continuity of learning.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Increase the use of assessments for specific purposes, including the timely analysis of the On-entry Assessment Program data, to identify student ability, plan for need and track longitudinal progress.
	• Incorporate the use of the EAL/D[2] Progress Map to identify intervention, monitor, assess and report on the achievement of identified students.

Reviewers

Merrilee Wright
Director, Public School Review

Amanda Kelley
Principal, Herne Hill Primary School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

Based on this report, I endorse your school performance rating of 'Needs Improvement'.

Your next school review is scheduled for 2022.

Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

1   National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
2   English as an additional language/dialect