



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Perth Modern School

Public School Review

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 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

Context

Opened in 1911, Perth Modern School is situated in the inner-city suburb of Subiaco, in the North Metropolitan Education Region.

Perth Modern School is Western Australia's only fully academically selective co-educational government senior high school. Entry to the school is only available by examination administered by the Gifted and Talented (GAT) team through the Department.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1237 (decile 1).

It currently enrolls 1447 students from Year 7 to Year 12 and became an Independent Public School in 2012.

The school is supported by the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C), the School Board and the Perth Modernian Society.

The first Public School Review of Perth Modern School was conducted in Term 3, 2019. This 2023 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 Principal and executive team used a self-assessment process to capture the past 18 months of the school's improvement journey in preparation for the review.
- The perspectives of a wide range of school leaders, teachers and students were captured in the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission. This included the identification of common themes pertinent to the school's desired next strategic steps. Executive team members and leaders throughout the school were unified in their understanding of this.
- A large cross-section of staff were involved in validation meetings, all of whom spoke with passion about their work and its interconnections with programs and priorities across the school.
- The perspectives of a large number of students ranging from Year 8 to Year 12 provided valuable insight into the student experience at the school.
- Parents, Board members, P&C representatives, alumni and past students contributed with pride and enthusiasm during the validation visit phase.

The following recommendations are made:

- Review and refine the volume of evidence provided, including avoiding duplication of evidence, to ensure clarity. Annotations that draw attention to pertinent sections of large pieces of evidence may also assist in this regard.
- Ensure that the evidence selected best demonstrates the school's performance in each domain of the Standard.

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Relationships and partnerships

High levels of student, family and staff satisfaction are evident. Students view themselves as part of a team, citing their selective enrolment as an opportunity to achieve excellence together. There is a strong sense of community pride in the school and acknowledgement of history and tradition through engagement with alumni.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The broad experience of Board members assists in its delivery of governance for the school. The Board works collaboratively with staff, has a voice in the school's strategic direction and is highly valued.
- Close ties to the P&C are complemented by culturally embedded support through the Perth Modernian Society and its Museum Association, and the Sphinx Foundation, who fund scholarships.
- A range of partnerships including academic with Curtin University and UWA¹, sporting in volleyball, badminton and rowing, and cultural with language sister schools, enhance the student experience.
- Students are provided access to a wide range of rich educational experiences led by passionate staff. Opportunities include camps, on-Country learning experiences, international tours, performances as part of a world-renowned music program and participation in academic challenge events.
- A productive, consultative process between leaders and staff has led to the establishment of a new timetable structure that is both an efficient, choice laden schedule for students and equitable for staff.
- The school's provision of the GAT online program provides access for 75 regionally based students to GAT tuition. Further, the school supports other Department schools in their delivery to GAT students.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Increase opportunities for parents to be partners in their children's education and to share their successes.

Learning environment

In an academic environment with high expectations, skilled staff with insightful knowledge of their students, go to considerable lengths to foster a love of learning and sense of positive wellbeing while pursuing ambitions.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- An authentic approach is being taken to embed an Aboriginal culturally responsive environment and a plan for reconciliation, viewed by staff and students as a moral imperative.
- Levels of expertise within the student services team are maintained with a strategic rotation and retention of staff. Managers are supported by coordinators, education assistant's (EAs), a school psychologist, nurse and chaplain.
- Year group themes, coordinated by student services and appropriate to stages of schooling, are explored. Year 7 students align to 'A Sense of Belonging' to transition a cohort drawn from 140 different primary schools.
- Using a commercial online platform, the progress and emerging needs of SAER² on IEPs³ are tracked by the student services EAs. Both students who are undiagnosed and those identified by the Disability Resourcing System are supported by the EA team.
- The Thriving Minds program is implemented under a 'learn, live, teach explicitly and embed' structure. Data from Reporting to Parents Attitude Behaviour and Effort and regular wellbeing surveys serve to predict needs and deploy student support.
- A program of seminars and workshops with parents known as the Conversation Series incorporates expertise on nurturing the wellbeing of students in and out of the high-performance school environment.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to embed a culturally responsive environment led by staff, students and the community, engaging authentically with traditional owners and on-Country learning.
- Maintain an explicit focus on student wellbeing as a holistic responsibility of all staff.

Leadership

High performing and passionate staff are supported by visible and passionate leaders, connected to colleagues, students and the community. Leaders respond to feedback and enact change in students' best interests.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- There is active, informed and valued student leadership through the Student Council. The student body is also represented at state and national level in the Western Australian Student Council and its parallel national body.
- Growing opportunities for staff to work on shared projects across multiple learning areas are evident. Staff value opportunities to lead areas of expertise and grow professionally with colleagues and leaders.
- The addition of second in charge (2IC) roles exemplifies efforts to restructure and broaden opportunities and support for leaders. Determined by the needs of students, the new leadership roles provide operational support to existing leaders and allows leaders the chance to retain a direct connection to the classroom.
- The leadership of the Principal is providing a workplace culture where staff voice is valued when determining the strategic direction of the school. The Principal is visible and connected to students.
- A learner culture and growth mindset is being fostered among the staff when approaching their performance management and development process. The cycle of development is continuous and reflective in nature.
- Staff are nurtured in their development and provided pathways to leadership positions within the school, supported by contextual knowledge on the best way to progress school vision and strategy.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to build the capacity of the large number of aspirant staff through access to opportunities to lead and support staff in middle leadership roles.
- Explore opportunities to share expertise and provide outreach to schools and leadership across the system.

Use of resources

The Finance Committee, encompassing the manager corporate services, business support officer and school officer, work in consultation with the Principal to ensure alignment of school resource management to requirements and school priorities.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Finance Committee provides staff insight on financial decision making. The opportunity for Board members to sit on the committee as observers adds strength to the transparency of resource deployment.
- Locally raised revenue through scholarships supported by the Sphinx Foundation, P&C fundraising and the aligned Friends of Music group, supports students and provides resources for school programs.
- The review of ICT⁴ equipment provision and a strategy around leasing, purchasing and replacement of devices is evident, significantly boosting access to technology and connectivity for students and staff.
- Driven by the 2021 Thrive at Work report, the school has heavily invested in a new online platform which has created clear channels of communication between staff, students and parents.
- The capacity building of staff through professional learning is a resourcing priority. This extends to the provision of mentoring and support for graduate and pre-service teachers, prioritised in the workforce plan.
- Staff in the Finance Committee have successfully actioned the majority of findings in a recent financial improvement plan, strengthening the resource capability of the school and its ability to fund learning programs, provide access to student extra-curricular events and reform the school timetable.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Proceed with the plan to re-establish the staff ICT committee supporting the use of new equipment and providing guidance on the use of e-learning platforms.

Teaching quality

A school-wide Teaching for Impact team provides instructional leadership through open classrooms, graduate mentoring and engagement with the Quality Teaching Strategy, regularly presenting to staff at meetings.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Student agency for their learning is supported by the Pivot survey, a curriculum survey from Years 7 to 10 and a reflective exit survey for Year 12 students. Both surveys are sources of feedback to staff on quality teaching.
- A focus on not speaking about, but learning from, Aboriginal culture has guided the embedding of a culturally responsive curriculum in and out of classrooms, with examples of excellence in this area evident.
- Differentiation for students with autism and those who are twice exceptional, along with a range of traits commonly associated with giftedness, is managed by skilled teaching staff competent in deploying strategies.
- Currency in the University of New South Wales GERRIC⁵ training is monitored for all teaching staff. The structure of the observed learning outcome taxonomy is applied to planning for the needs of gifted learners.
- Staff are supported to partner with the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) as ATAR⁶ examiners, markers and curriculum advisors. This benefits teaching practice, programming and the provision of valid school-based assessment for students.
- School-wide, there is evidence of extension of students, exemplified in the computational algorithmic thinking skills approach used in mathematics and composition tasks in the ATAR music program.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to culturally support sharing and dialogue about exemplary practice and open classrooms.
- Clarify a unified pedagogical framework that articulates, from the large body of research, those instructional principles that are the shared beliefs of all teaching, leading and allied professional staff.

Student achievement and progress

Renowned nationwide for exceptional levels of student achievement the school boasts a 2022 median ATAR of 97.25. Several former students have been recognised with the Beasley Medal as the top performing Western Australian ATAR student.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Students are highly ambitious in seeking their selected post school destinations. They are well informed of tertiary and professional pathway options and are supported by staff school-wide to achieve their goals.
- Staff widely reflect on a voluminous collection of student achievement data in an effort to 'make a great school better.' Data and feedback from ATAR examiners is used to guide future planning by teachers.
- Robust moderation between teachers and an external focus on standards through SCSA supports the authenticity of students' high achievements. Perfect, 'cusp of grade' and below expected results are rigorously cross-checked by teachers in conjunction with curriculum directors.
- Students are well prepared for senior school ATAR courses due to careful backward mapping through early secondary years in the planning of content and skills and the introduction of formal exams from Year 9.
- Teacher supported development of students' inquiry skills aids the administration of rich tasks across learning areas. Staff collaborate to assist students in their application of common skills cross-curricula, such as graphing nuanced for mathematics and science.
- System entry testing data from the ASET⁷ is complemented by CAT4⁸ testing administered upon entry, in verbal, non-verbal, quantitative and spatial reasoning, informing planning to meet students' needs.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to pursue and monitor the effectiveness of the broader range of course offerings for students that support their health and wellbeing, exemplified by the introduction of General Year 11 and 12 courses.

Reviewers


Rohan Smith
Director, Public School Review

Helen Deacon
Principal, Kalamunda Senior High School
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 to be scheduled for 2026. You will be formally notified in the 2 terms leading up to your school's scheduled review.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 University of Western Australia
- 2 Students at educational risk
- 3 Individual Education Plans
- 4 Information and communications technology
- 5 Gifted Education Research Resource and Information Centre
- 6 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
- 7 Academic Selective Entry Test
- 8 Cognitive Abilities Test, Fourth Edition