



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Applecross Senior High 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 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 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, 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.

For further information or resource in alternative formats for people with accessibility needs, please contact PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au

Context

Applecross Senior High School is located approximately 13 kilometres south of Perth in the South Metropolitan Education Region.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1113 (decile 1).

It currently enrolls 1872 students from Year 7 to Year 12 and became an Independent Public School in 2012.

Applecross Senior High School has the support of the School Board and an active Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

The first Public School Review of Applecross Senior High School was conducted in August 2019. This 2023 Public School Review report provides a current point of reference for the school's 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 staff engage in regular reflection on the school's progress toward meeting the Standard as part of the established self-assessment schedule.
- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission was linked directly to the domains of the Standard and ensured that evidence presented covered all foci within the domains.
- In the ESAT, clear reference to the 2019 Public School Review provided a narrative around the school's efforts to implement all recommendations from the previous report.
- An elaborate meeting schedule ensured that a large cross-section of staff and students were able to participate and contribute to the review throughout the validation visit.
- Parents and community representatives who participated in the review process were knowledgeable about the process and the school's priorities in its improvement journey.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships

Students highly value the sense of community provided by the school. Parents have high expectations for students' academic and wellbeing outcomes and view the school as very effective in delivering both.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A highly skilled School Board (the Board) works alongside school leaders and staff in meeting the school's strategic aims. The Board is consulted in the process of establishing business planning priorities and achievement targets.
- A long term established P&C operates a full-time canteen within the school. The funds from this and other revenue sources assist to supply a prioritised wish list of school projects and program resources.
- The school's partnerships with Curtin University's UniReady program, local businesses and workplace learning providers broadens the range of post school options available to students.
- There are strong lines of communication between the school and families through the SEQTA platform. Efforts are made to cater communications to the diverse cultural and linguistic needs of families.
- Positive staff relationships in the school are based upon trust. Staff express very high levels of satisfaction through feedback opportunities and contribute purposefully to maintaining a positive workplace culture.
- Parents report high levels of satisfaction with the school and concerns raised through survey data, collected and reported regularly, are followed up and acted upon by the school's leaders and staff.

Learning environment

Students are supported by an outstanding learning environment with a robust student services structure consisting of pastoral, learning, therapeutic and allied professional staff and led by an associate principal.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Students with special needs speak highly of the levels of support they receive from staff. They are supported to implement assistive technology when required in day-to-day classes and value access to a low stimulus room.
- Students at educational risk and others requiring risk management and wellbeing support are triaged through regular student services team case meetings in consultation with parents and families.
- Education assistants (EAs) support a large cohort of funded and unfunded disability resource students. The appointment of a learning support coordinator and plans to establish a therapy centre are further examples of resources provided.
- Good relationships exist with the local primary schools. Transition of students to the secondary environment takes place throughout the year, prioritising students at risk for targeted support in orientation.
- Staff practice in managing the behaviour of students is aligned to the principles of the Department's Classroom Management Strategies program.
- Embedded cultural curriculum activities, on-Country staff learning experiences and bold mural statements are examples of the school's determined approach to deliver a culturally responsive environment.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to support the provision of a culturally responsive environment including implementation of the Applecross Senior High School Reconciliation Action Plan.

Leadership

The senior leadership of the school is connected to the staff and middle levels of leadership. Open dialogue between all staff is evident and all meetings start with a 'health check' in support of the wellbeing priority.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Consultation with staff in constructing the current business plan was all-encompassing. Staff input led to the decision to establish new school priorities to better meet the needs of the school community.
- The staff wellbeing team is led by a coordinator with release time. The work of this team is valued by senior levels of the school's leadership, demonstrated through regular check ins and staff voice forums.
- A leadership team of 20 staff meets both as a group and in sub-groups to increase meeting efficiency.
- There are a range of opportunities for staff to be developed professionally, lead areas of interest and further their career aspirations, exemplified through leadership of areas such as literacy, pedagogy and SEQTA.
- Heads of learning areas divide and distribute the leadership of curriculum, assessment and school priorities among their teams, providing opportunities for staff to grow as leaders and manage workloads.
- Graduates and new staff are inducted fully and are supported to adopt the school's instructional priorities.
- There is clear alignment between the priorities of the school and those of the Department.

Use of resources

A transparent approach to managing finances and resources at the school is led by a Finance Committee consisting of staff representatives. The School Board routinely consults upon and notes financial reports.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- School priorities are privileged within the annual budget. Salaries expended additional to classroom teaching time support areas such as the release of classroom based instructional coaches working with staff to build teaching capacity.
- Recent growth in student numbers has been accommodated through an expansion of school facilities, with several infrastructure improvements underway to support the needs of the growing student population.
- A lead EA, manages a team of 13 EAs, working directly with students in classrooms and upskilling and supporting staff to meet the needs of students through educational and instructional adjustments.
- The Specialist Tennis and Visual Arts programs are jointly funded by the Department, parent fees and P&C contributions. Students have access to industry professionals and coaches as tutors through these elite programs.
- A large uptake of students in the Bring Your Own Device program alongside school-based equipment support the provision of classroom and information technology.
- Targeting the needs of senior school students, VET¹ funding is distributed between staff qualification maintenance, auspicing agreements and maintenance of compliant commercial teaching facilities.

Teaching quality

An evidence-based dialogue about the impact of pedagogy is a feature of the school. As an inaugural participant selected for the Leading Cultures of Teaching Excellence program, the school has set goals to ensure the impact of participation.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The implementation and fidelity of the established pedagogical framework is overseen and led by a team of lead teachers, identified across all learning areas to ensure broad representation.
- There is peer to peer instructional leadership in place supporting school wide implementation of the shared beliefs and agreed approaches. 'Do Nows' and essential questions are examples of the techniques in use.
- Resourced by trade-off time, peer observations of teaching adhere to agreed shared language when providing feedback. A variety of templates tailored to observation strategies are available for observers.
- Student feedback on teaching is provided through the Pivot platform and is incorporated in both the guidance of teaching strategies to be employed and gauge levels of student coverage of the curriculum.
- Extension and differentiation for students is delivered by classroom teachers in conjunction with the learning support coordinator, team of EAs, and pastoral and student services support teams.

Student achievement and progress

The approach of all staff and leaders to analysing the impact of their work through student data is fearless and deeply inquisitive. Confident leaders deploy strategies dynamically as student achievements dictate.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Students achieved well above proficiency standards in literacy and numeracy in the 2022 NAPLAN².
- 100% of Year 12 students achieved their Western Australian Certificate of Education in 2022 and the median Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) of 91.2 was above that of like schools. 100% of students achieved their Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment qualification.
- Delivery of literacy support and learning school-wide is exemplified by the science department's delivery of peer reading activities and moderated written tasks across other learning areas.
- Student focus group feedback at learning area level has led to altered approaches to teaching form through themes, resulting in greater levels of student engagement in English.
- The VET pathway now stands alongside ATAR and general pathways under consideration by senior school students and their parents. Goals with high expectations for the outcomes of VET students have been set.
- Learning area teams use a bank of collected exemplars of student work to guide the moderation of assessments for staff. These are employed alongside the School Curriculum and Standards Authority Judging Standards and opportunities to moderate with staff in other schools. School administered common tasks, such as those administered by the Humanities and Social Sciences team, provide staff with an in-school moderation connection.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue current efforts to match mathematical pedagogical rigour with meeting the numeracy progress potential of students between Year 7 and Year 9.

Reviewers


Rohan Smith
Director, Public School Review

Heath Dullard
Principal, Southern River College
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 2028. 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 Vocational Education and Training
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy