



Department of
Education

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Ashdale Secondary College

Public School Review

November 2020



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 its 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 school review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the principal, the chair of the school council/board 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

together with the Funding Agreement for Schools.

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.



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Context

Ashdale Secondary College opened in 2009. The college is located in the suburb of Darch, approximately 23 kilometres north of the Perth central business district. It has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1030 (decile 3).

Student population at the college has grown from 143 in 2009 to the current 1730 students from Year 7 to Year 12. English is a second language for 24 per cent of the student population.

The college has a suite of specialised programs: information and communication technology (ICT); Specialist Learning Program (SLP-A) for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder; cluster science program; pre-service teacher program; and soccer, netball and music academies.

Gaining Independent Public School status in 2010 as part of the Ashdale Cluster, the college has a supportive College Board in addition to the Cluster Board represented by the College Board Chair and Principal.

The Ashdale Cluster, comprised of the college, Ashdale Primary School, Landsdale Primary School, Madeley Primary School and Carnaby Rise Primary School is committed strongly to a model of effective partnerships to optimise student outcomes from Kindergarten to Year 12.

Community support is further demonstrated through the work of a motivated Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

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:

- College leaders and staff have a strong understanding of school self-assessment processes and demonstrate a commitment to school improvement and public accountability.
- As part of this commitment, school self-assessment processes align with business plan targets, operational plans and the Ashdale Secondary College Annual Report.
- The process of preparing for the Public School Review was in keeping with the comprehensive, ongoing and embedded procedures at both the college and individual levels.
- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided a detailed account of the current college context, performance and the planning of priorities in the Ashdale Secondary College Business Plan 2019-2021.
- A broad range of interrelated and credible evidence was selected for analysis.
- During the validation visit, a wide cross-section of college leaders, teachers, support staff and parent and community representatives elaborated on the evidence and planning intentions described in the ESAT submission.
- Staff reported a very high level of understanding of the value of their involvement with the self-assessment process and endorsed college operations.
- There is strong alignment between performance evidence, judgements about priorities and planning for improvement.

The following recommendation is made:

- Continue to investigate the most appropriate performance evidence measures to validate student success in the achievement of their individual learning pathways.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships

High quality relationships underpin the effectiveness of school improvement processes. This reinforces a foundation for ensuring consistent actions are embedded with an authentic and unrelenting commitment to the core business of teaching and learning.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Ashdale Cluster promotes professional partnerships targeted to a holistic Kindergarten to Year 12 community. Phase of Learning Teams have had a profound impact on improved student learning.
- The College Board, representative of parents, students, staff and community, is fully conversant with its governance responsibilities, rigorous in its practices and supportive of the college ethos.
- Parent, student and community feedback is sought regularly to inform improvement planning. This is complemented by an extensive range of strategies to communicate with parents regarding student progress.
- Sustainable partnerships respecting participation and responsibility, exist within and beyond the college. Highly valued and mutually beneficial educational partnerships have been established with industry and the tertiary sector.
- High priority is given to staff wellbeing and a positive workplace culture. The success of a multi-layered approach to staff support is evidenced through consistently positive survey data.

Learning environment

The learning environment is characterised as safe, caring, inclusive and productive, leading to high levels of effectiveness in meeting the needs of students both collectively and individually. A focus on engagement is embedded with successful student learning as its central focus.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The formation of the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Committee demonstrates the college's proactive approach to building cultural responsiveness through high expectations for students from all cultural backgrounds.
- A dedicated Learning Support Team has established effective processes for care and planning. High quality support for students with specialised learning needs on their individual journeys, is ensured.
- Scaffolded leadership, management and instructional systems are focused on high quality and flexible teaching and learning. This optimises student opportunities and pathways.
- Comprehensive wraparound support is provided through student services. This includes tailored support from college staff and external agencies.
- Student voice is recognised through a genuine commitment to the role of leaders through the large, active and well-established Student Leadership Team and Mentor Captains' forum.
- Diversity and inclusion are embraced within a unified culture of respect and understanding.

Leadership

The strategic intent of the college is enhanced by processes and opportunities structured to build staff capacity. Distributed leadership opportunities provide professional growth and lead to action, reflection and accountability for student outcomes. There is an integrated and acknowledged focus on aspirant staff and opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Leaders provide clarity about the purpose for all actions. This is complemented by explicit expectations, support for implementation and accountability.
- An effective distributed model of leadership and organisational structure supports high quality development of staff. College leaders are invested in the identification and growth of future leaders.
- Formalised student leadership roles provide a valuable conduit for engagement between staff and students and are developing a sense of 'pride of place' in students.
- Support staff are valued highly for their impact on student achievement. Opportunities for professional development are sought proactively to enhance their leadership skills.
- High levels of teacher leadership and engagement are fostered through annual innovation grants, which are required to align with the college vision and improved student outcomes.
- Leadership commitment to the alignment of all levels of planning provides clarity to staff about the strategic directions and their individual and collective role in delivering on business plan targets.

Use of resources

Resource deployment and workforce management processes consider optimal student achievement while fostering innovation and creativity. The strategic alignment of resources to both long-term and short-term planning are reflective of identified need and ensure the effectiveness of allocation.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The strategic allocation of resources to improve the college environment has contributed to student positivity. A commitment to well-maintained and resourced classrooms and facilities, together with the retention of highly effective teaching staff, is appreciated.
- Effective financial and human resource management align allocations to areas of priority in a clear and transparent fashion. A comprehensive workforce plan articulates anticipated growth and strategies to ensure the ability to meet identified gaps.
- Evidence-based decision making underpins high quality resource management. Clear and defensible links exist between college budgeting and business plan targets.
- Targeted resourcing for STEM¹ ensures state-of-the-art equipment and facilities support a clear focus on quality teaching and learning. As a result of high level student achievement, the college was selected as a STEM Hub and a finalist in the Governor's School STEM Awards 2020.
- The manager corporate services plays a key role in strategic resource management and is recognised as an integral part of decision making processes.

Teaching quality

College leaders promote and support actively the college's key focus on teacher capacity, and in turn, quality teaching and learning. The emphasis on quality teaching has resulted in effective, evidence-based practices and tailored support for teachers in consistency of implementation.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Formalised and comprehensive processes for classroom observation and instructional rounds provide ongoing support to enhance staff reflection, implementation and review of pedagogical practice.
- A college-wide pedagogy is customised by each learning area to meet their individual needs. The research-based LEARN² and GROW³ instructional frameworks promote collective teacher efficacy.
- The College Teaching Portal provides contextual support for staff through reference information regarding LEARN and GROW and examples of best practice from a range of teachers.
- The AITSL⁴ Classroom Practice Continuum has been used to articulate clearly the alignment between LEARN and GROW and the AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.
- A range of data are collected and analysed routinely to support judgements regarding student achievement and progress across the college and Ashdale Cluster. This has led to reading comprehension becoming a focal area of development for the next three years.
- Staff recognise the value of student feedback to provide a fair and insightful view of teaching effectiveness. They use survey data such as Pivot, to encourage teams to plan individual and team development.

Student achievement and progress

Student achievement across the range of academic opportunities is of a high order. The college culture embodies high expectations regarding learning. Curriculum offerings and support structures optimise the prospects for student success.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- College performance is owned by all staff sharing responsibility for making performance improvements. Achievement in literacy and numeracy is supported successfully through the NAPLAN⁵ and OLNA⁶ Conferencing model.
- Positive trend lines are evident in longitudinal data in most NAPLAN assessments (2015-2019). Comparative performance in Year 7 and Year 9 was above the predicted school mean in all assessments in 2019.
- Longitudinal student progress and achievement data are above like schools consistently. Levels of achievement (2019) and progress (2017-2019), were above or well above the national average of students from similar backgrounds.
- In 2019, the Year 12 cohort achieved 98 per cent WACE⁷ achievement, significantly higher than like schools (91 per cent) and State (88 per cent).
- Comprehensive and systematic processes for data analysis in Year 7 to Year 10 inform individualised pathway planning for senior school.

Reviewers

Brett Hunt
Director, Public School Review

Trevor Hunter
Principal, Willetton Senior High School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

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

Your next Public School Review is scheduled for Term 4, 2025.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
- 2 Learning intentions, engage, activate, review, next steps
- 3 Greet, respect, on task, work hard
- 4 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- 5 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 6 Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
- 7 Western Australian Certificate of Education