Department of
Education

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Hillcrest Primary School

Public School Review

June 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 focussed 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

Hillcrest Primary School was founded in 1950 and is situated prominently on the crest of a hill overlooking the City of Bayswater. The school is situated approximately seven kilometres from the Perth central business district within the North Metropolitan Education Region.

Tracing its history to before establishment, the local Whadjuk people used the setting as a gathering place. The relationship with Noongar Land is recognised in the naming of several of Hillcrest Primary School's key buildings. The most notable, the Administration block, opened in 2016, it is inscribed with the words 'Malya-Ba Mia', signifying our 'Place of Learning'.

The school currently enrols 415 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Parents are involved in supporting Hillcrest Primary School through Parent and Citizens' Association (P&C) initiatives and the School Council is represented by active and informed community members. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1002.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive and rigorous school self-assessment.

The following aspects are confirmed:

- The leadership team consulted widely with staff and engaged them in identifying suitable evidence sets.
- The information submitted highlighted the school's current self-assessment process and related plans for ongoing improvements.

The following recommendations are made:

- Consider the evidence that is submitted for validation. A focus on compliance measures not aligned to the self-assessment is unnecessary.
- Be concise and selective with evidence in order to capture the important aspects of the school's self-assessment process.
- Use the process to embrace the opportunity to reflect on the journey, not just the end product.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships

The school is emerging from a period of cultural change where positive relationships and trust have recently been re-established. Numerous partnerships have been initiated and nurtured, to support the needs of students and promote the school in the community positively.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following: • Effective communication processes between all stakeholders are embedded in the school. • Partnerships with key stakeholders enhance the programs at the school, build community connections and enable student success. • Some staff operate above what is expected, to build and promote positive and productive relationships within and beyond the school community. • The chaplain is supportive and innovative in his approaches to support staff, students and families. • The reformed School Council is supportive, functional and effective. They have embraced training opportunities and understand their responsibilities.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions: • With reference to data, consider how the school reports back to its community when measuring the success and impact of programs. • Explore partnerships with the Aboriginal and EAL/D[1] communities to build culturally responsive connections and student support.

Learning environment

Varied and distinctive areas of the school, support inclusive places to encourage students to learn, explore and thrive within the learning environment. Signage, gardens and dedicated spaces across the school build cultural connections and a sense of pride.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following: • The Early Childhood area provides a strong ethos of, and supports for, play-based learning. • The sustainability program, which promotes school-wide integrated learning experiences, is a feature of the school. • There is an embedded school-wide approach to managing student behaviour that is underpinned by the PBS[2] school model. • A Learning Intervention Focus Team (LIFT) provide an interagency approach to the case management of students with additional needs.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions: • Continue to review the effectiveness of the LIFT model, and refine as required. • Embed processes and ensure sustainability by aligning school programs and directions to the strategic plan.

Leadership

Leaders are visible, unified and provide clarity of direction and focus for the school. There has been a strategic approach to leading change within the school underpinned by a focus on relationships. The leaders are committed to the improvement journey ahead.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• Driven by the leadership team, there is a collective responsibility and focus on the need to improve student levels of achievement.
	• Leaders are viewed as approachable, transparent and the drivers of change in the school.
	• A staff handbook facilitates clear communication, consistent practice and sets the expectations for all staff.
	• A distributed leadership model is emerging. Identified curriculum and POD[3] leaders support their colleagues through planning and moderation processes.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Complement existing cultural and student diversity learning through the strategic implementation of the *Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework*.
	• Lead a comprehensive analysis of data to inform priorities, student achievement and strategic planning.
	• Explore formats for POD and curriculum meetings that facilitate consistency and alignment to priorities of data-driven practice and whole-school approaches.

Use of resources

In consultation with the Principal, an experienced MCS[4] manages a balanced budget effectively. The school has begun to develop its new strategic and operational planning, reflective of recent consultation, re-culturing and focus on evidence-based approaches.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• The Principal and MCS prepare and present key financial summaries to the School Council meetings and the P&C.
	• There is sound financial management of the one-line budget. Processes are in place for the planning for, and management of, reserves and to ensure expenditure does not exceed budgeted revenue.
	• Student characteristic funding supports a range of initiatives. The leadership team is aware of the need to ensure that plans to support student achievement are appropriately resourced.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Formalise the workforce plan to reflect increasing enrolments and include strategies for future workforce development and growth.
	• Within operational planning, document how student characteristic funding is used to implement appropriate teaching and learning adjustments.

Teaching quality

The school has developed shared beliefs and practices that highlight a growing staff capacity. All staff are guided to operate under the 'Hillcrest Way' and have started to embrace the application of consistent teaching approaches.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• Teacher performance is aligned to the AITSL[5] Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Feedback and observations are used to identify goals and support skill development.
	• Assessment and reporting is guided by a schedule. It is supported by moderation processes and approaches to guide dialogue in meetings.
	• Staff engage in professional learning through Apple Classroom and iCafes to support the implementation of the digital technologies curriculum.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Align and consolidate the whole-school approaches to data collection with accountability, for all phases of learning.
	• Refine the performance management process to ensure alignment to whole-school planning frameworks.
	• Continue the school-wide focus on moderation and pedagogical approaches.

Student achievement and progress

The school understands its level of achievement and is starting to develop a strong collective responsibility for the analysis of school-wide data. There is an awareness of the need to create and sustain the right conditions for learning.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• There is a focus on early intervention programs, as a result of the vulnerabilities highlighted in the AEDC[6] and other school-based data.
	• Student Achievement data is generally at or above like school means in Year 3 and highlights good performance. Results are analysed to inform planning.
	• Year 5 achievement data reflects a downward trend with performance below that of like schools in Reading and Numeracy. The reasons for the decline in performance is unclear. However, the school has embraced a holistic view towards arresting this decline, through an explicit focus on assessments to inform the teaching cycle.
	• In order to consolidate whole-school planning and practice, restructures to leadership occurred within committees to enable consistency and guidance across PODs.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Review the purpose and relevance of the current assessment regime and seek coherence through the implementation of the MIS[7].
	• Continue to analyse data, lesson design and pedagogy in pursuit of higher levels of success for all students.

Reviewers

Rebecca Bope
Director, Public School Review

Kim Fraser
Principal, Churchlands Primary School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

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

Your next school review is scheduled for 2022.

Stephen Baxter
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

References
1   English as an additional language/dialect
2   Positive Behaviour Support
3   Phase of development
4   Manager Corporate Services
5   Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
6   Australian Early Development Census
7   Managing Information System