



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Education**

Your ref :
Our ref : D20/0568639
Enquiries :

Mr Andrew Newhouse
Principal
Darlington Primary School
2-14 Amherst Avenue
DARLINGTON WA 6070

Dear Andrew

I am pleased to advise that the Public School Review of Darlington Primary School has been completed. I endorse the report and am satisfied it will provide a basis for sustained school improvement.

I acknowledge the efforts of you and your staff in endeavoring to create the conditions for successful students. The areas your school and the review team validated for commendation and those for which there are recommendations for ongoing improvement are noted.

Following discussions, the next review process focusing on the Leadership domain only, will be in Term 4, 2021. This is viewed as a prudent, informed decision to validate the completion and implementation of the school's strategic plan.

The next Public School Review inclusive of all domains will be conducted in Term 4, 2023.

I note the high level of consultation you have undertaken with the school community and the School Council's strong community engagement in setting the school's direction. It is also pleasing to read about the commitment of the whole school community to providing students with a learning environment that is inviting and provides positive learning experiences.

As stated in the initial correspondence, please make the report available to your staff and school community and upload it to your school website and/or Schools Online for a minimum period of 12 months.

I know you, your staff and school community will take the opportunity to use this report to continually improve outcomes for your students.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

13 NOV 2020

cc. Mr Jim Bell, Executive Director, Strategy and Policy
Mr Jim Webb, Regional Executive Director, North Metropolitan Education Region
Mr Paul Meacock, Assistant Regional Executive Director, North Metropolitan Education Region
Ms Joanne Harris, Assistant Regional Executive Director, North Metropolitan Education Region
Chair, School Council, Darlington Primary School



Department of
Education

D20/0568643

Public education
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Darlington Primary School

Public School Review

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



Context

Opened in 1912, Darlington Primary School is situated on a three-hectare site in the Perth hills, 25 kilometres east of the Perth central business district. Located within the North Metropolitan Education Region, the school has a unique environment, taking advantage of its natural bushland setting.

The school has a rich history. Established on its current site in 1913 as Darlington State School, one of the original classrooms is still in regular use today and is recognised by the National Trust as having historical significance. There were substantial upgrades in 1960, with the acquisition of more land to expand the school's footprint.

Many of the current students have followed their parents and grandparents in attending the school. The school currently enrolls 392 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Darlington Primary School has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1106 (decile 1).

The School Council assists in school planning and decision making. The Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) manages the canteen and uniform shop as well as contributing both physically and financially to the school.

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 school's self-assessment process facilitated a range of conversations with staff, parents and community representatives.
- The validation visit provided an opportunity to distil from the broad narrative provided, the ongoing process to determine key and strategic planned intentions to support the school's continuous improvement journey.
- A number of key staff and community representatives engaged actively during the validation visit and added value to the information submitted via the Electronic School Assessment Tool.
- There is a strong commitment to establishing an agreed improvement agenda, most notably in relation to enhancing consistent approaches to teaching and learning.

The following recommendations are made:

- Finalise and implement the strategic plan to support the development of whole-school approaches and ensure the sustainability of improvement strategies.
- Expand whole-school understanding and ownership of strategic and operational plans for raising the standards of student achievement.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships	
<p>There are high levels of trust between the school leadership, families and staff. Quality professional relationships underpin high levels of staff morale and a commitment from the school community to maintaining productive and sustainable community partnerships.</p>	
Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal has formed a strong partnership with the School Council. Together they have clarified the school's direction and priorities for 2020 to 2023. • The School Council engages with the community, ensuring they are well informed and offering meaningful opportunities for families to provide feedback to support decision making. • The P&C is highly supportive of the school and actively supports projects through fundraising activities and seeking grants. • Relationships between parents, staff and students are positive. Parents and students comment on teachers being accessible and willing to discuss individual concerns. • Student and staff relationships are supportive. Students comment that staff provide support beyond the classroom, which makes school a positive experience.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to utilise Connect to further strengthen and build consistency in communication with families.

Learning environment	
<p>The school community is committed to providing students with a learning environment that is inviting and provides positive learning experiences. The physical environment is viewed as one of the school's great assets providing children with opportunities for nature play.</p>	
Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of student leaders is strongly supported by the Principal, with a focus on teaching leadership qualities and providing students with greater engagement in decision making. • Behaviour management approaches are well established and are being applied with greater consistency. Staff report a positive tone and high energy in the classroom. • Students at educational risk (SAER) are monitored and individualised approaches are implemented with the support of families and staff. • The chaplain's role is highly valued and provides programs focused on student wellbeing to a wide range of students.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide planning time for learning support staff to enable a coordinated approach to cater for SAER. • Further refine the SAER case management approach and continue to provide professional learning for staff in this area.

Leadership

The school leadership has taken a measured approach to clarify with the community the school direction. A clear overview has been established and articulated, which has been well accepted by the community and staff.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and the school community have appreciated the Principal's approach to change management following a period of long-term leadership. • The leadership team is focused on building on strength and recognising individual teacher expertise. Opportunities have been afforded for staff to trial new initiatives to inform the development of a whole-school approach to teaching and learning. • Mutually respectful relationships between staff are evident. These are complemented by strong collegial relationships with staff willing to share practice and provide advice through informal collaboration. • Individual teachers, with particular interests or knowledge, take on additional responsibilities to lead committees or coordinate whole-school events.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise the strategic plan documentation to clarify strategies, targets and milestones for the five key priorities. • Utilise staff expertise and provision of leadership opportunities to strengthen staff leadership beyond the classroom.

Use of resources

Financial planning and prudent budget management are in place to ensure resource allocations relate specifically to the improvement of student outcomes.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The manager corporate services works in partnership with the Principal to maintain a clear, student-centered focus. • Finance Committee members are well informed and plan proactively for short-term and long-term considerations for optimal impact on student learning. • Evidence-based decision making underpins high quality resource management. Links exist between school budgeting and key priorities of the strategic plan. • The P&C contributes to the school through its community partnerships and fundraising activities.
Recommendation	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the strategic plan is constructed, continue to ensure expenditure aligns with the five key priorities.

Teaching quality

The need to enhance student achievement through whole-school approaches is well understood and drives the school's improvement journey.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher development has been a focus with teachers exploring and trialing a range of programs. Staff feedback is used to inform decisions relating to the selection of whole-school programs and practices. • The willingness of individual staff to share their knowledge and experience for the benefit of all children in the school is an example of the professional obligation existing among staff. • Genuine supportive relationships exist between the teaching staff and education assistants. Intervention programs are monitored and feedback shared on student progress.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise the development of a school-wide pedagogical framework to provide greater consistency for staff in the delivery of teaching and learning. • Formalise structures to strengthen staff collaborative practices and support the implementation of agreed whole-school strategies and the establishment of common language.

Student achievement and progress

The staff believe that creating a safe environment for students to develop socially, emotionally and behaviourally sets the foundation for student success. Teachers in close alliance with support staff evaluate the impact of their programs on student achievement and progress.

Commendations	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2016, student performance NAPLAN¹ data indicate that there is a sustained upward trend in reading, spelling, grammar and punctuation. • Recent results indicate that students are making good progress in writing and numeracy from Year 3 to Year 5. • Attitude, Behaviour and Attendance data, evident in student reports, indicate that students at Darlington Primary School are well behaved, strive to do their best and place priority on their school engagement. • The On-entry Assessment Program data are used to plan for learning programs and inform school planning and review.
Recommendations	<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the benefits of expanding the use of the On-entry Assessment Program into Year 1 to monitor student achievement and progress in writing and numeracy. • Prioritise the implementation of a whole-school approach to the teaching of writing. Closely monitor the implementation and results.

Reviewers

Lou Zeid
Director, Public School Review

Jacqueline Varris
Principal, Bassendean Primary 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, focusing on the Leadership domain only and the completion and implementation of the school's strategic plan, is scheduled for Term 4, 2021. This will be followed by a Public School Review inclusive of all domains in Term 4, 2023.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy