



Department of
Education

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Public education
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Willetton Senior High School

Public School Review

March 2021



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 Director of Education.

Expectations of schools

The Statement of Expectation (Statement) makes clear and public the expectations and responsibilities of schools and the Department in student achievement and progress.

The Statement is between; the Department of Education, 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.



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Context

Opened in 1977, Willetton Senior High School is located approximately 18 kilometres south of the Perth central business district, within the South Metropolitan Education Region.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1117 (decile 1). It gained Independent Public School status in 2011.

Students are drawn from diverse cultural backgrounds. Enrolment at the school is sought by families both locally and internationally and with the exception of students in the basketball or gifted and talented programs, is limited to students living in the local intake area.

Enrolments have been trending upwards, with 2564 students currently enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12. Numbers are projected to continue to increase with the growth in school-aged children both within the region and in particular in the area around the school.

Student performance data consistently places the school within the top performing public schools in the State, being recognised widely for its high level academic outcomes.

A proactive School Board provides constructive oversight to school activities, and as an incorporated body, together with dedicated staff, parents and local community, provides additional human and financial support to the school. A subgroup of volunteers, the 'Willo' Parent Group, provides support for parents with issues relating to the needs of their children as well as assistance with applications for external funding and partnership agreements.

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 leaders have a strong understanding of school self-assessment processes and demonstrate a commitment to school improvement and public accountability.
- The process of preparing for the Public School Review provided an additional opportunity to reflect on school performance and what has been accomplished, to influence plans for the future.
- Processes were in keeping with the comprehensive, ongoing and embedded procedures for self-assessment and improvement at the school and individual levels.
- A culture of reflection and continuous improvement using a strong evidence base was clear.
- Staff reported a high level of understanding of the value of involvement in the self-assessment processes and endorsed the school operations.
- Staff satisfaction was derived from the analysis of evidence identifying areas for improvement in addition to areas where successes could be acknowledged and celebrated.
- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided a detailed account of the current school context, planning priorities and student and school performance.
- A broad range of interrelated and credible evidence was selected for analysis.
- A wide cross section of school leaders, teachers, support staff and parent and community representatives elaborated on the evidence described in the submission, during the validation visit.

The following recommendation is made:

- Use the ESAT as a repository for performance evidence as part of the ongoing school-self assessment process.

Relationships and partnerships

Sustainable processes to engage parents and community members in partnerships are considered, strategic and effective. Respectful and proactive relationships and partnerships are founded on a commitment to, and faith in, high level educational outcomes for students.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Professional relationships between staff are enabled through highly successful collaboration, facilitating evidence-based change in teaching and learning and opportunities for staff professional growth.
- A range of reliable communication systems is evident, both within the school and with key stakeholders. Staff and parents report satisfaction with the approaches and feel that their opinions, concerns and feedback are valued.
- Staff, student and parent relationships are respectful. There is a concerted focus on fostering these positive and productive relationships as the foundation for effective teaching and learning in addressing student needs and celebrating success.
- A diverse range of personal and professional backgrounds and experiences assist members of the School Board to successfully fill their proactive role in school governance.
- The local community values its school and is appreciative of its influence in the 'Willo Way'. Community support for, and engagement with, the school contributes to ongoing success.
- An extensive range of sustainable partnerships has been developed at the international, State and community levels to enhance student opportunities.

Learning environment

The learning environment is safe, caring, inclusive and culturally responsive. Leaders and staff are committed deeply to the most appropriate care for all students within a culture of high standards and expectations toward the achievement of 'personal best' for each student.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The effective focus on, and support for, students at transition points (Years 6 to 7; Years 10 to 11; and post school), culminating with the Competency Education Program in Year 12, provides a range of knowledge and skills to assist students with their pathways post school.
- Attendance and engagement strategies enhance student learning. Monitored closely, with rigorous follow up strategies, attendance rates are high.
- The physical environment adds value to the student learning experience. Student, staff, parent and community feedback about the physical environment is sought regularly and acted on to optimise the academic and social outcomes.
- The health and wellbeing of students and staff is enhanced through a range of proactive initiatives in place including: wellbeing events, Big Brother Big Sister, mentoring and a broad range of extra-curricular club activities.
- Students at educational risk are identified, supported and monitored effectively for improvement.
- Student voice is encouraged with a range of opportunities, such as the Student Council Forum, provided to exercise leadership and represent the school.

Leadership

A highly organised, structured, collaborative and supportive work environment, where staff are provided clarity about the purpose for all actions, has been created and embedded. Staff and the community participated actively in the creation of shared 'Vision and Values'.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Survey data endorse the highly successful provision for the educational needs of students across the variety of educational programs. Leaders provide guidance and instructional support to staff. There are embedded processes to provide performance feedback and support to staff.
- Curriculum expertise is shared enthusiastically within and beyond the school. The long-standing role as Teacher Development School for languages epitomises ongoing support.
- Staff are provided with opportunities to lead through participation in a variety of school-based committees to enhance teaching and learning. There is effective delegation and opportunities to gain leadership experience and development within the autonomous learning areas.
- There is a strong commitment from leaders to support and nurture staff development and, as a consequence, staff feel valued and appreciated.
- Strategic and operational planning guides classroom practice. Business plan targets are evidence-based, align with the learning needs of students and feature strongly in planning for the aspirations and obligations of learning.
- Change is undertaken in a timely, informed and inclusive manner with strategic reviews of operations used to identify areas of strength and improvement.

Use of resources

The strategic alignment of resource deployment to long-term and short-term planning and reflective of identified need, ensures effectiveness. Budget processes are both strategic and intentional in ensuring fiscal efficiency.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Effective processes and practices have been established for budget management of financial and human resources guided by the school business plan, in accordance with Department policy and directions.
- Evidence-based decision making underpins high quality resource management and deployment. Clear and defensible links exist between school budgeting and business plan priorities.
- Human resource recruitment and management processes are strategic, providing a high quality workforce committed to sustainable programs and practice. Attention to succession planning is an ongoing priority.
- Human resource support is targeted to improved student achievement and progress. The most appropriate use of middle management positions is determined through learning area autonomy.
- The Finance Committee has broad staff and School Board representation. Members are well informed and plan proactively for short-term and longer-term needs.
- Asset and replacement planning guides a strategic approach to the refurbishment of school infrastructure and equipment.

Teaching quality

Staff demonstrate shared beliefs and expectations about what they consider to be their core business of teaching and learning. This is underpinned by a deep commitment to the belief that all students can learn successfully at Willetton Senior High School.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Teachers ensure students are engaged and challenged, and appropriate interventions and teaching adjustments are made in response to individual needs. There is a visible and public focus on recognising, affirming and encouraging 'personal best'.
- Staff recognise the value of student feedback to provide a fair and insightful view of teaching effectiveness through the use of survey data such as the Pivot questionnaire.
- The analysis of systemic and school-based data informs teaching. Staff collaborate to plan for, act on, and assess student learning. Data identify starting points for improvement, progress and differentiation.
- Professional learning opportunities build staff teaching capability. Targeted opportunities to build staff skills in analysing and interpreting data has resulted in improved data literacy of staff, development of comparisons to historical averages, and focused attention on business plan achievement targets.
- The creation of a Data Catalogue has drawn teachers' attention to the most valuable sources of data.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Further enhance high quality teaching practice through staff research and development of a contextually relevant school-wide instructional framework.

Student achievement and progress

Leadership roles in operations and student services have enabled successful tracking of student progress. Performance against business plan achievement targets and longitudinal data are shared and analysed by staff to inform planning for improvement.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- School means were above and generally well above the like school mean in all assessments in Year 7 and Year 9 NAPLAN¹ since 2015.
- Student progress and achievement (Year 7 to Year 9) was higher than like schools in all NAPLAN assessments except spelling in 2019.
- School performance is owned by all staff who share responsibility for making performance improvements.
- The WACE² achievement rate in 2020 was 99.5 per cent. This was higher than the business plan improvement target of 98 per cent.
- The school achieved the second highest ranked median ATAR³ (87.75) within the like schools group and was the fourth highest ranked public school.
- VET⁴ Year 12 performance in 2020 included 240 full qualification enrolments and 120 Certificate III or higher enrolments. 99.17 per cent successful completion rate was achieved across all enrolments.

Reviewers

Brett Hunt
Director, Public School Review

Lesley Street
Principal, Mount Lawley Senior High School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

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

Your next school review is scheduled for Term 1, 2026.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 2 Western Australian Certificate of Education
- 3 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
- 4 Vocational Education and Training