Department of Education
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Rapids Landing Primary School

Public School Review

April 2021

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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

Rapids Landing Primary School opened in 2018 as an Independent Public School. The school is located in the town of Margaret River, approximately 280 kilometres south-west of Perth, within the Southwest Education Region.

It is the first new public primary school to be opened in Margaret River since 1909. Another school operated briefly in Rapids Landing from 1925 to 1927, approximately one kilometre away, and catered to students across all year groups.

There are 317 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6, with current enrolments more than double the original figure.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1031 (decile 3).

A welcome addition to the Margaret River community, the school is supported by a dedicated School Board and active Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C). The P&C hosts fundraising events throughout the year and recently contributed funds towards the school's nature playgrounds.

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 Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission and feedback provided during the validation visit delivered an in-depth account of the school context and operations in addressing its improvement agenda.
- Judgements submitted in the school self-assessment were established through widespread collaboration. Consensus and general agreement resulted from discussion.
- Rigorous attention to reflective practice on school performance provided a substantial base upon which to prepare effectively for the Public School Review.
- An extensive tour of the school provided the review team the opportunity to view the school in operation, further adding to the evidence provided in the ESAT and enriching the validation process.
- Staff, students, families and community members demonstrated support for, and genuine understanding of, their school, its development to date, and future direction.
- The school review process was regarded by staff and the community as 'everyone's business', creating the conditions for honest and frank conversations around school performance and accountability.
- Staff shared that the review process provided an opportunity to celebrate the growth that has been achieved and gave recognition to their work.

Relationships and partnerships

In establishing its unique identity, rigorous attention has been given to building a school community that reflects the vision and ethos of Margaret River, through strong collaboration with the community. This has led to the formation of partnerships and relationships based on trust and respect.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Underpinned by the TRIBES Agreements[1], relationships between students, staff, families and the community are respectful and characterised by trust. Clear communication, with the school motto of 'Creating Excellence Together', is front and centre of everything they do.
- An influential and progressive School Board has provided transparent governance, accountability and strategic direction in the role of raising its profile and positively supporting the school's intent to establish a school for the future.
- The P&C provides valuable assistance to the school by way of decision making and significant fundraising activities. It provides valuable resources and fosters and builds relationships within the school community.
- Strong partnerships with external agencies and the Capes Network of schools have afforded mutual benefit through the access to and provision of professional learning as a STEM[2] and Early Years Teacher Development School, and a PEAC[3] provider to network schools.
- The school seeks feedback from staff, students and families through surveys, focus groups and meetings to guide future direction and create involvement, improvement and belonging.
- Communication is extensive and varied to cater for all members of the community. Platforms, such as a website, Facebook and face-to-face meetings, provide accessibility to audience-specific information.
- The Sister School partnership with Yayasan Pendidikan Etika Dharma, Surabaya, East Java (TKK Santa Maria Regina and SDK Santa Maria Regina) contributes to the vision to develop active global citizens.

Learning environment

The Principal and staff have been deliberate in successfully creating an environment that is welcoming, culturally inclusive and highly personable. This has led to the school being a place that is viewed by students and families as the hub of the community.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Underpinned by the TRIBES Agreements and through the explicit teaching of expected behaviours, supported by the TRIBES Implementation Plan and Reconciliation Action Plan, the school has created a safe, inclusive and culturally responsive environment.
- A proactive approach to identifying and managing student attendance, through focused messaging in all communications, ensures families and students understand and give priority to regular attendance.
- Authentic, age-appropriate opportunities for all students to have a voice, gives child agency an influence over the programs and operations of the school.
- The school provides extensive services and resources to the identification, monitoring and planning for students at educational risk. Support from the school psychologist, learning support coordinator, external agencies and comprehensive student profiles ensures targeted teaching and learning plans are implemented.
- A deliberate and purposeful approach to the design plan of the physical environment, including close consideration of community and family wishes, has been adopted. Indoor and outdoor spaces maximise positive impact on student learning and wellbeing, and further support the embedding and application of the TRIBES Agreements.

Leadership

The Principal has taken a deliberate leadership approach. Prior to the opening of the school, and a continuing practice, thoughts and opinions are harnessed, capturing community diversity to shape the direction of the school and to meet current and future needs of the students and community.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The leadership team undertakes sophisticated, significant consultation with community, staff and stakeholders in the establishment and ongoing reviews of the school vision. This has resulted in high levels of commitment, ownership and alignment to system, school and community needs and interests.
- Change is managed in a sensitive and supportive manner with consideration for the needs of staff and community. The leadership team has been agile in their ability to accommodate the rapidly changing landscape as the school continues to increase in student and staff numbers, astutely adapting to ensure the school vision, direction and priorities are maintained.
- Collaboratively developed operational plans, frameworks, scope and sequences and policies drive practice across the school providing staff with clear direction and focus, and guidance for leaders to lead with accountability and scaffolded support.
- Leadership is thoughtfully structured and distributed to enable the strength of individuals to build the capacity of groups. Leadership momentum is achieved by developing 'their own' from within, with a deep understanding of, and buy-in to, the school improvement agenda.
- An established culture of reflective practice, based on the growth coaching model and classroom observations and feedback, is leading to high levels of teacher practice and efficacy.

Use of resources

The school's approach to the management of its budget has been measured, thoughtful, innovative and student focused. This means budget planning is done with agility to adapt and adjust to the changing needs of the school as it grows.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Open and transparent management structures have developed a shared understanding of resourcing.
- The manager corporate services, school officer and Principal have provided strong guidance and support to the School Board, Finance Committee, cost centre managers and staff, in building financial literacy and an understanding of prudent budget management to maximise student outcomes.
- The school actively and successfully seeks additional funding through various grants, partnering bodies and fundraising by the School Board and P&C. This is significantly enhancing the learning environment by providing indoor and outdoor activity spaces and ensuring the sustainability of programs.
- A sophisticated understanding of school resourcing, in particular student characteristics funding and targeted initiatives, is employed to maximum effect, resulting in recruitment processes and deployment of physical resources to identified areas of need.
- Strategic workforce planning has been skilfully structured to cater for the growth of the school, and ensures staff recruitment continues to meet the context and direction of the school.

Teaching quality

The school, along with its community, recognises the teaching and learning needs of its students in preparation for life beyond school. Together they proactively respond to student needs through innovative, evidence-based, whole-school approaches.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school has deliberately created the conditions for quality teaching to occur in every classroom through purposeful curriculum leadership roles, staffing structures, evidence and a strong culture of collaborative practice.
- Scaffolded structures, notably classroom observation and feedback, mentoring, coaching and targeted professional learning, support the development of consistent teaching practice across the school.
- A shared, school-wide, embedded pedagogy and teaching and learning beliefs provide guidance, focus and consistency of practice across the school.
- Staff have a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of differentiating the curriculum that is considerate of the individual circumstances of each child.
- Education assistants, the Aboriginal and Islander education officer and school support staff are valued paraprofessionals, who work skilfully alongside teachers to support student learning.
- Staff have been innovative in researching and developing a reliable data base. Along with a visible learning approach, this provides performance measures to accurately judge the impact of teaching and whole-school programs on student performance.

Student achievement and progress

In the absence of longitudinal system level data, the school has been proactive in developing alternative forms of data assessments, ensuring effective monitoring of student progress and achievement is in place.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Transparent and varied communication of student progress and achievement is provided to students' parents/carers, staff and the School Board. The school actively seeks their input, resulting in high levels of trust in their judgements on school performance.
- The school has established an accessible, centralised student achievement database for the collation and analysis of data and tracking of student progress, mitigating the risk from the lack of longitudinal data.
- Regardless of the limited longitudinal data available, NAPLAN[4] data is demonstrating improvements in all areas assessed in Year 3 and Year 5, when compared to Western Australian public and like schools.
- Rigorous processes in the analysis of data inform business plan targets, operational planning and classroom practice.
- A collaborative planning structure has established high levels of teacher efficacy and accountability to the progress and achievement of every child in the school.

Reviewers

Maxine Augustson
Director, Public School Review

Damian Luscombe
Principal, Denmark Primary School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

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

Your next school review is scheduled for Term 2, 2026.

Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

1 Four agreements of: attentive listening, appreciation/no put downs, mutual respect and the right to pass
2 Science, technology, engineering, mathematics
3 Primary Extension and Challenge
4 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy