



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Upper Swan Primary School

## Public School Review

# 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 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 3 year cycle, subsequent reviews are determined to occur on a one, 3 or 5 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 Public School Review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the Principal and the regional Director of Education.

## Expectations of schools

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

The Statement is between; the Department, 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. It will also support the Principal Professional Review.

## 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.

For further information or resource in alternative formats for people with accessibility needs, please contact [PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au)

## Context

Established in 1905, Upper Swan Primary School is in close proximity to the Derbarl Yerrigan and Yagan Memorial Park. The school is located in the Swan Valley approximately 30 kilometres from the Perth central business district and is in the North Metropolitan Education Region.

The school has an Index of Community and Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1022 (decile 4).

It currently enrolls 433 students from Kindergarten to Year 6 and became an Independent Public School in 2017.

Upper Swan Primary School is supported by a School Board and a 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:

- Aligned to the Standard, the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided a succinct narrative of school performance against each domain.
- The Principal incorporated collaborative strategies that supported staff understanding and engagement with the Standard and the domain foci. This provided guidance and gave confidence for staff to actively contribute and participate in all aspects of the Public School Review process.
- 'How the school is operating' in addition to 'what the school is doing' was the focus throughout the review process. This provided opportunity for celebration and confirmed, aligned and added additional clarity as to where their focus lies. Further, the Principal noted an immediate outcome of the school review process has been the mobilisation of people in actioning projects identified in the school improvement plan.
- A broad range of engaged and enthusiastic staff, students, parents, School Board and P&C representatives made informed contributions to the discussions held with the reviewers, enhancing and validating the evidence presented in the ESAT submission.

The following recommendations are made:

- Carefully consider the choice of evidence and analysis to ensure it is the most appropriate to support the judgement made in meeting the Standard, and accurately describes the impact on students.
- Explore ways in which the ESAT can be used to facilitate and refine the ongoing collection and analysis of data to support school self-assessment.

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### Relationships and partnerships

A strong relational approach underpinned by respect and trust, is fostering open and transparent communication, where the opinions of staff, students, families and the wider community are heard and acted upon.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Valued partnerships with Curtin University, TAFE<sup>1</sup> and secondary schools deliver mutually beneficial outcomes for students, the school and pre-service educators engaged in workplace learning.
- Provision of common DOTT<sup>2</sup>, designated meetings for Phases of Learning Teams and opportunities for specialist teachers to engage in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) with network schools, ensures collaborative structures impact student learning and build professional relationships.
- The school has committed to forming strong relationships and connections with their community through events and celebrations such as learning journeys and the biennial Art Show and Dance Concert. These events create a sense of community with strong involvement and support from families.
- The School Board engages earnestly in their role supporting strong governance and accountability. Strengthening this, the P&C provides considerable resources through fundraising and organisation of events, facilitating an avenue for families to connect with each other and staff.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Forward the intention to align the focus of the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework with future planning, including collaborating and engaging with families and Elders of the local Aboriginal community.
- Progress the intention to promote and raise the profile of the School Board.

### Learning environment

'A country school in an urban setting', epitomises the environment created at Upper Swan Primary School. The school has established a welcoming, culturally inclusive space that is truly reflective of the community's values.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Approaches to managing student behaviour are restorative, promote the development of positive relationships and reflect the school's values and virtues.
- Acknowledgement of Indigenous culture is evident in signage and artwork throughout the school. Operational planning outlines strategies assisting teachers to strengthen their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.
- The school has established a positive record of working with students who have diverse learning needs with a growing reputation for providing 'a fresh start' for these students. Targeted intervention programs and processes ensure staff are well-supported to address the needs of all students.
- A considered approach has been taken to ensure indoor and outdoor spaces build on curriculum focus areas and school initiatives. This fosters high levels of engagement and encourages students to extend their learning in an environment that builds a sense of agency.
- Diverse roles for student leaders with access to leadership development and input into school decision making recognises the value of student voice. A focus on giving back to the community is building citizens for the future with a strong social conscious.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to refine the behaviour management policy and processes to ensure consistency of language and implementation across the school.

## Leadership

The leadership's commitment to three 'big ideas' to garner connectedness and refocus momentum, have impacted favourably on cohesion, direction, and ultimately on staff agency to embrace the work of continual improvement at all levels.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Change is managed in a timely, informed and inclusive manner, prioritising staff voice, maximising buy-in and resulting in successful outcomes.
- Talk for Writing champions provide instructional leadership through the provision of modelled lessons, guidance, observations and one-to-one planning. Further, teacher leaders provide informal coaching and mentoring opportunities to strengthen and embed whole-school processes and programs.
- The approach to performance growth is developing a culture of reflective practice underpinned by evidenced-informed feedback. This provides a structured and focused process in supporting staff development and future aspirations.
- Aligned to the school's strategic direction, the business and operational plans are framed by data-informed targets. Learning area teams have ownership of the operational strategies, with representation from each phase of the school providing guidance and connected practice school-wide.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to build the instructional leadership model to impact directly on the classroom and embed whole-school processes and programs that create low variability and consistency of teaching practice.

## Use of resources

Recognising each other's individual strengths, the Principal and manager corporate services have established a positive and respectful relationship. Aligning the school's financial resources to business plan priorities and the needs of students underpins all decisions.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A reflective approach is employed to refine the budget planning process and monitor the effectiveness of management practices. Financial documentation, and business and operational plans align to the school priorities and budget submissions.
- Detailed spreadsheets track staffing, individual classroom expenditure and mainstream and disability resourcing. This supports short and longer-term planning and monitoring of resource allocation.
- Close monitoring of student data informs decisions in the allocation of student characteristics/targeted initiatives funding. This includes lower student-teacher ratios to increase support in K-3, addressing the decline in student progress from On-entry Assessment to Year 3 NAPLAN<sup>3</sup>, co-contribution to the chaplaincy program and a focus on building culturally responsive teaching practice.
- The school has prioritised the allocation of resources to address the shortfall in learning technologies as identified through the School Culture Survey – Resources. The investigation together with a detailed justification of buy vs lease has ensured Information and Communication Technologies planning and replacement is strategic and focused on supporting classroom learning, now and into the future.
- There is a deliberate and strategic focus on selection and recruitment of staff. This includes attention to recruitment processes for allied professionals, teaching and associate principal positions that will attract applicants with the skill set and personal attributes to best progress the school's improvement plan.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue the development of the workforce plan, ensuring staffing structures and resourcing are meeting students' needs and immediate and future workforce gaps.

## Teaching quality

High levels of teacher efficacy are reflected through a shared commitment of accountability and responsibility for every child's success. This is supporting a collaborative and responsive teaching culture and establishing the prerequisite conditions to deliver impactful pedagogy that makes a difference for students.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Teachers are well supported to differentiate the curriculum to meet the diverse learning needs of their students. This is further strengthened through the application of teaching strategies that check for understanding, ongoing monitoring, seeking/giving feedback and small group targeted lessons.
- Staff are developing evidence-based, data informed teaching practices. Linked and embedded in the Professional Growth Process, professional learning facilitated by teacher leaders, is developing staff capacity to implement the whole-school programs, processes and instructional model.
- Shared beliefs and pedagogical approaches inform school-wide practices. High Impact Teaching Strategies, collaborative structures, operational plans and overviews reinforce and embed the pedagogical approaches implemented, referenced in the Teaching and Learning Handbook.
- Collaborative structures support teachers in their planning, teaching, assessment and implementation of the agreed whole-school practices. Assessment and moderation within these groups helps identify opportunities for differentiation, targeted intervention and extension.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Consider further development of phase of learning leaders to support and develop staff capacity to interrogate and use data to measure the impact of their teaching on student achievement and progress.

## Student achievement and progress

Driven by the underlying belief that student achievement and progress is everyone's business, attention is given to creating a shared culture in the assessment, monitoring and reviewing of student performance.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Led by teacher leaders, staff are provided explicit support in conducting data disciplined dialogue in the analysis of student achievement and progress data. This is building their understanding of how students are performing and provides focus and direction for improvement planning.
- A whole-school approach to PLC to drive reading improvement has been initiated in response to the decline in reading progress. This included a review of school and system data, identification of foci and teaching emphasis planning for differentiation.
- Using disciplined dialogue analysis, grade disparities between On-entry Assessment, NAPLAN and semester reporting are identified and rigorously examined to determine causes and develop intervention plans to address.
- In 2022 NAPLAN Numeracy, 67% of Year 5 students achieved Bands 6 and above, compared to 57% in like schools. No students scored below the National Minimum Standard.
- Longitudinal data shows Year 5 students have achieved above like schools since 2017 in NAPLAN reading. This steady and consistent progress is attributed to the positive impact of the reading priority initiated from the beginning of 2018.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to monitor closely the impact and consistency in the implementation of agreed whole-school programs, pedagogy, the instructional model and interventions on learning outcomes for students.

## Reviewers

Maxine Augustson  
**Director, Public School Review**

Lisa Helenius  
**Principal, Rapids Landing 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 is to be scheduled for 2026. You will be formally notified in the 2 terms leading up to your school's scheduled review.



Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**

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## References

- 1 Tertiary and Further Education
- 2 Duties other than Teaching
- 3 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy