



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Walkaway 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 resources in alternative formats for people with accessibility needs, please contact [PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au)

## Context

Walkaway Primary School is located in the Midwest Education Region in the town of Walkaway, 28 kilometres south of Geraldton and approximately 400 kilometres north of Perth. Opened in 1887, the school has been at its current location since 1966.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1016 (decile 4).

There are 68 students currently enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6 and the school became an Independent Public School in 2019.

Walkaway Primary School has the support of the School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

The first Public School Review of Walkaway Primary School was conducted in Term 4, 2019. This 2023 Public School Review report provides a current point of reference for the next cycle of school improvement.

## School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

The following aspects of the school's self-assessment process are confirmed:

- The Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided an account of the current school context, as well as student and school performance and planning priorities.
- Staff contributed to the ESAT through written feedback, included as attachments under each domain.
- A tour of the school provided further clarifying information about aspects of the school context and physical environment for the review team.
- The Principal provided staff with the opportunity to engage with the Standard and reflect on school performance in preparation for the review. Staff valued the review and opportunities for open discussion about the school's performance.
- A wide selection of staff together with the Principal, students and parents contributed to validation day discussions elaborating on evidence submitted.

The following recommendations are made:

- In preparation for the next review, provide opportunities for staff to reflect on the school's performance against each domain of the Standard.
- In future ESAT submissions, strengthen the analysis of student achievement data and aligned actions for improvement.
- Continue to embed cycles of school self-assessment and include staff engagement in reflective practices to drive the collective ownership of the ongoing school improvement agenda.

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### Relationships and partnerships

Valued by the community, the school has prioritised the building of positive and respectful staff and student relationships. Staff know their students and families well and demonstrate a collective focus on engendering a strong sense of connection and belonging.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Opportunities for staff and parent feedback were provided through the School Culture Survey with evidence of steps being taken to respond to feedback through identified actions.
- Students value the sense of community, the friendships they make across year groups and learning opportunities available at the school.
- School governance is facilitated through the School Board. Members are supportive and invested in the ongoing progress of the school's improvement agenda.
- The active P&C coordinate fundraising events and contribute to the school through catering, hosting events, sourcing grants and donations and supporting school events such as carnivals.
- External communication is facilitated through Facebook, the school newsletter, face to face meetings and Seesaw.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Strengthen opportunities for staff to engage in structured collaboration focused on teaching, learning and student achievement.
- Continue to engage the School Board and provide opportunities for input into strategic decision making, including the development of the next business plan.
- Continue to build family/school engagement focused on student learning.

### Learning environment

The school has developed a safe, caring and orderly learning environment underpinned by well-established routines and a stable staff.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A commitment to developing Aboriginal cultural responsiveness is evident. This includes the provision of staff professional learning, building of connections with Aboriginal community members, establishment of a yarning circle and introduction of the Wajarri word of the week, valued by students.
- Students with additional needs are catered for through support, intervention programs and the implementation of IEPs<sup>1</sup>, developed in collaboration with families and reviewed on a 5-week cycle.
- The school has introduced a focus on the character strength of kindness, which is promoted through curriculum and explicit teaching.
- Year 6 students have opportunities to mentor students in the early years, valued by students and families.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Develop a whole-school approach to support students' social and emotional development with implementation actions supported through operational planning.
- Develop clear and documented processes for identifying, monitoring and supporting students at educational risk.
- Continue to engage with the ACSF<sup>2</sup> and develop Aboriginal cultural responsiveness across the school.
- Expand opportunities to develop student voice and leadership through clearly defined processes and practices.
- Strengthen the shared understanding of behavioural expectations and consistent practices for responding to and encouraging expected behaviour.

## Leadership

After a period of leadership change, the school is taking steps to develop strategic alignment with opportunities for staff consultation and input into decision making evident.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Experienced senior teachers model high expectations and provide leadership support for staff through mentoring, and guidance.
- The development of an observation checklist aligned to the principles of Teach Well and the Quality Teaching Framework, as well as planning guidelines and a classroom expectations document, are focused on developing a shared understanding of quality teaching.
- Opportunities at staff meetings to share practice and visit classrooms have been embraced by staff and there is an appetite to progress opportunities for collaboration focused on teaching and learning.
- There is an understanding of the importance of clearly defined and collaboratively developed operational plans, with evidence of a planning day to review the school's operational plans and drive improvement.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Strengthen support for staff instructional practice through the development of an instructional framework, informed by Teaching for Impact. Support consistent practices through professional learning, collaboration, modelling, observation and feedback and performance management.
- Continue to develop staff leadership roles and responsibilities linked to key strategic focus areas. Build the capacity of leaders to implement operational plans and whole-school initiatives.
- Work with the School Board, staff, students and families to review the school vision and develop the next business plan, ensuring a shared understanding through consultation of future directions.

## Use of resources

The Principal works collaboratively with the recently appointed manager corporate services (MCS) and the Finance Committee to provide oversight for school financial management.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The MCS has had an opportunity to shadow a finance consultant in managing financial processes and has been provided opportunities to access professional learning, together with the Principal.
- Staff are supported to understand school financial management processes through the provision of information, support and guidelines outlined in the financial management handbook.
- The school has updated the reserves plan and asset replacement schedule, along with tracking the cash budget to determine future costs and inform financial decision making.
- Funds have been deployed for specialist staff in writing, physical education, music, Indonesian and art.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to monitor school enrolments to ensure the sustainability of staffing is aligned to student needs.
- Ensure clear alignment between the business and operational plans and resource allocation in-line with student needs. Include predicted costings on operational plans.
- Strengthen the management of ICT<sup>3</sup> to ensure resources maximise student learning and engagement.
- Ensure the Finance Committee engage in regular meetings and have access to information and professional learning to support a sound understanding of financial management practices.

## Teaching quality

Committed teachers understand the importance of quality teaching and are invested in supporting their students to succeed through positive relationships, explicit teaching and clear routines.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff engage in collaboration, including working in partnership with education assistants to monitor student progress and implement strategies to support their learning.
- Most staff have completed Teach Well professional learning and there is a commitment to further embed and implement agreed practices such as daily reviews across the school.
- Whole-school programs have been introduced to support student learning in literacy, including the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness (Heggerty) program and Sounds-Write.
- The majority of staff have completed Seven Steps for Writing Success training, and there is a commitment to strengthen consistent practices in teaching writing.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Progress plans to implement a whole-school approach to mathematics. Support consistent practices through professional learning, collaboration and targeted support. Use data and evidence to monitor the efficacy of strategies and approaches.
- Continue to strengthen opportunities for staff structured collaboration focused on teaching and learning and student achievement.
- Further embed whole-school programs, beliefs on teaching and learning and consistent practices in teaching reading and writing with a particular focus on lower primary.

## Student achievement and progress

There is a commitment to collect, analyse and embed data informed decision making processes across the whole-school.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Year 5 NAPLAN<sup>4</sup> achievement for 2023 is above like schools and the national mean in all areas.
- The school has developed an assessment schedule outlining a range of assessments for data collection.
- The school reports that Heggerty implementation has contributed to improved outcomes in reading in the early years.
- Brightpath Writing has been introduced at the school to support the identification of students' strengths and areas for development.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Prioritise opportunities for staff to engage in moderation, both internally and with other schools within the region.
- Strengthen whole-school approaches to the collection and analysis of data. Build opportunities for staff to engage in disciplined dialogue and develop data literacy. Use data to identify students' needs and set achievement targets at the individual, class and year level.
- Progress plans to review and refine the current assessment schedule to align assessment in reading and mathematics and provide a benchmarking tool for intervention.

## Reviewers

Kim McCollum  
**Director, Public School Review**

Melanie Capper  
**Principal, Dumbleyung 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.

You will receive formal notification in the 2 terms leading up to your school's scheduled review. This notification will be provided in 2026.



Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**

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## References

- 1 Individual Education Plan
- 2 Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework
- 3 Information and communications technology
- 4 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy