



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Geographe 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 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 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 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.

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

Geographe Primary School is located approximately 220 kilometres from Perth in the Southwest Education Region.

The school opened in 2002 and became an Independent Public School in 2011.

Currently there are 446 students enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6. Geographe Primary School has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 978 (decile 6).

Community support for the school is demonstrated through the work of the School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association.

## 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 provided a transparent account of the school context and operations in embedding its school development framework.
- A culture of reflective school self-assessment as the foundation for effective planning in pursuit of continuous improvement, is evident at the strategic and operational levels.
- A range of performance evidence was selected for the ESAT submission.
- Staff input to the ESAT submission demonstrated enthusiasm for recognition of their individual and group commitment to the school improvement journey.
- The process provided a vehicle for meaningful staff collaboration and reflection in school self-assessment. It provided an understanding of 'where we are', 'how we know' and 'where we are going' giving guidance for the future ahead.
- Recent changes to the composition of the leadership team, has not disrupted the alignment between structures, processes and plans for improvement.
- The school's self-assessment was enhanced by passionate conversations held with members of the School Board and P&C representatives.

The following recommendations are made:

- 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.
- Maintain an ongoing focus on the Standard as a reference point for periodic reflection of school performance at the school determined milestones outlined in the business plan.

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### Relationships and partnerships

A strong relational approach fosters open, transparent communication, where the opinions of all, including students, are heard and acted upon. This contributes to the high reputational regard the school enjoys from the community. Professional and interpersonal relationships between staff are strengthened through interactions that are constructive, purposeful and add zest to morale.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The School Board is widely regarded as an asset to support the school's unremitting determination to be the local community's school of choice. Such is the interest in supporting the school, in 2022 more people nominated as Board members than positions available.
- In 2021 the leadership team worked closely with staff to ensure that only one communication system was being used. Seesaw is now the main communication tool.
- Transparent, evidence-informed decision making is a feature of leadership roles and responsibilities. Multi-layered structures foster a strong collaborative culture across the school.
- In all staff feedback surveys since 2018, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have been rated as highly effective in adding value to all staff skills. Authentic collaboration is described as being at the core of staff growth and development.
- Students gave a thoughtful and insightful account of how the school has created opportunities for them to genuinely have a voice in school decision making.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Encourage staff across the school to meet with the executive leadership team for discussion, observation and feedback.

### Learning environment

Schools that place a high priority on caring for their most vulnerable students stand tall in public education. Geographe Primary School is such a school. The teaching of philosophy and associated critical thinking skills provide a unique backdrop to the learning environment.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Building of self-awareness has resulted in a thoughtful, level-headed, confident cohort of student. This contributes to a mature engagement between staff and students to create a safe and supportive classroom environment.
- In 2022, a decision to move from the Friday faction team approach to a Mindful Monday approach, has elevated to a conscious level, the focus required on expected behaviours.
- Case management and a multi-disciplinary approach needs to be the focus for students with Tier 3 behaviours. Staff frequently expressed gratitude for the way the executive leadership has gone to extreme lengths to support them during incidents involving confronting student behaviours.
- The staff focus on building student mindfulness, fitness, diet, social and emotional wellbeing and social media safety has had a mirroring impact on how staff look out for each other. They know how important it is to stand by colleagues in times of personal or professional distress.
- A parent speaking on having a transgender child has enabled staff to develop their professional understanding and personal regard for the scale and complexity of issues that vulnerable students contend with in their lives. The partnership between the families and school is a credit to all.

## Leadership

The recently appointed Principal has seamlessly maintained the well-established, inclusive, collaborative and safe school ethos. Having high expectations for himself and all staff, he leads a highly engaged and knowledgeable team of passionate professionals.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A finely balanced mix of talent, experience and professional knowledge makes up the leadership team. In the short time they have been together, staff consistently described them as genuinely supportive and approachable with decision making processes open and transparent.
- The number of staff who have a leadership role has increased over time with funding allocated to develop distributed leadership. Everyone who identified leadership as part of their performance management and development was given a role in 2022.
- Distributed leadership is defined by what leaders do. Staff leadership activity includes leading teams in; Sustainability, Fluency, Teacher Development, Positive Behaviour, Wellbeing, Intervention and Learning Support. Leaders come from all layers of staff, exhibiting a strong sense of accountability for their role.
- The school's Focus documents align the business plan to the Department's strategic plan. Every staff member is part of one of the five focus area operational teams and collaborate to develop and assess the impact of year level and curriculum operational plans.
- School Board members and P&C representatives are keen participants in the school's community engagement activities. Authentic, open governance is at the core of the Board's leadership, believing in strong advocacy for the school and the parents and carers it represents.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Prioritise performance management and development in 2022 to ensure all staff are engaged in the process.
- Maintain the high level of rigour and momentum for all operational plans to ensure the team is tracking milestones and reviewing the data.

## Use of resources

The Principal and manager corporate services take a prudent, yet creative, approach to ensure all financial and human resources are used to deliver quality educational outcomes for students. Planning, decision making, management and monitoring processes for the use of resources are clearly aligned.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Representation is present from across the school at finance meetings and minutes are documented. The meetings demonstrate due process is followed when allocating funds in cost centres and funds align to key school focus areas.
- Relevant workforce issues are highlighted in a detailed workforce plan. Maintaining a sustainable workforce, seeking greater gender balance, investment in professional growth and agile responses to fluctuations in student numbers is evident.
- Effective practices for finance management and monitoring aligned to the requirements of the Funding Agreement for Schools are undertaken by the Finance Committee and noted by the School Board.
- Established resource management procedures are in place to ensure funding deployment is targeted to planned expenditure and acquitted in accordance with annual need.
- Targeted initiatives and student characteristics funding enable the operation of a range of evidence-based programs to successfully support improved academic, behavioural and social outcomes.

## Teaching quality

There is a school-wide understanding of, and commitment to, the need for a strong research base to the essential elements of the core business of teaching and learning. Successful high classroom practices underpin the school's strong sense of responsibility as a regional Teacher Development School.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- In PLCs, staff were given research from Hattie as well as the Madeline Hunters Lesson Plan. This has amplified their focus on teaching literacy and numeracy, building cultural competency and crafting intervention strategies for students at educational risk.
- Philosophy for Children, implemented following a two-day workshop, is having a profound effect on how students learn including: reasoning; asking questions; and giving feedback. Staff confirmed, and the reviewers witnessed, that there is strong evidence (qualitative) of advanced thinking skills emerging across all year levels.
- Professional learning is provided to develop teachers' skills and understandings in whole-school approaches that align to the Fluency (English and Maths) operational plan. Impressive professional knowledge is exhibited by staff on the 'science of learning'.
- The Geo Lesson design is a result of a school-wide consultative process on what makes an effective lesson. Links to Instructional Intelligence and an ethos of accountability to each other drives acceptance of the 'non-negotiables' approach to implementation of learning programs.
- Education assistants (EAs) are viewed as equal partners in teaching and the school is invested in further strengthening and building their capacity. EA intervention specialists maintain extensive records of students' progress with MiniLit and MacqLit programs.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- In 2022, use professional learning in Promoting Literacy Development (PLD) programs to support the needs of specific teachers who are at different stages of implementing the programs.

## Student achievement and progress

A range of school-based and systemic data is used to inform operational and strategic planning. The school recognises it is critical to ensure all teaching and classroom support staff possess strong assessment and data literacy skills.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A data team has been established, with the aim of developing a whole-school assessment schedule that will provide long-term data to monitor and track school performance. This will inform decisions required to respond to identified areas of concern.
- A forensic examination of 2021 system data, complemented by classroom-based Progressive Achievement Tests and common assessment tasks, is the basis of an ongoing school-wide scan of what is required to meet the needs of students, at all points on the continuum of student achievement and progress.
- The appointment of a Gifted and Talented and High Achievers (GATHA) coordinator works, not only on extension programs in English and mathematics, but also to support teachers in identifying what contributes to sustained student success.
- Analysis of students underperforming is triangulated with wellbeing and complex case strategies (where attendance may be an issue), to ensure the whole-child needs are considered when intervention strategies are being shaped.

### Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Maintain analysis of longitudinal data to assess teacher impact and the success of teaching strategies.

## Reviewers

Rod Lowther  
**Director, Public School Review**

Melanie Buller  
**Principal, South Halls Head 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 scheduled in or after Term 1, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MSands', with a large loop at the end.

Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**