



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Darlington 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

Opened in 1912, Darlington Primary School is situated in the Perth hills, 25 kilometres east of the Perth central business district, within the North Metropolitan Education Region.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1124 (decile 1).

It currently enrolls 361 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Support for Darlington Primary School is demonstrated through the work of the School Council and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C)

The first Public School Review of Darlington Primary School was conducted in Term 4, 2020. 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 and rigorous school self-assessment.

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

- In preparation for the Public School review, the leadership team led a self-assessment process that incorporated the perspectives of a range of staff and school community representatives.
- The school enhanced their approach to self-assessment by maintaining a focus on the actions relating to previous review findings.
- The new business plan focus areas align to the School Improvement and Accountability Framework and reflect the Department's strategic directions.
- A broad representation of staff, student and parent representatives engaged enthusiastically during the validation phase, contributing authentic reflections in support of the school.

The following recommendations are made:

- Whilst acknowledging the effective engagement of staff in the preparation of the Electronic School Assessment Tool submission, ensure future submissions avoid repetition across domain entries.
- Ensure the evidence submitted aligns to the judgements made about school performance. Distil evidence to that which has the strongest impact on student outcomes and demonstrates that the Standard has been met.

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### Relationships and partnerships

Staff work in collaboration to drive the consistent implementation of shared school expectations and directions. There is an unwavering commitment to building strong relationships with students and families, ensuring students are provided with significant educational opportunities.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The School Council advocate positively for and support the direction of the school. Embedded governance structures are established and members are actively engaged in school improvement processes.
- Communication strategies including the use of Connect, newsletters, open nights and 3-way conferences provide valued opportunities to inform and engage families in their child's learning and share information about events and school directions.
- Opportunities to engage with the local community are valued. A range of external partnerships enhance the educational experiences available to the students and fosters connection to the wider community.
- Embedding a school-wide cohesive and collaborative culture is a focus. There are pockets of excellence evident across the school with staff actively engaged in improvement processes and change.
- Engaged and supportive of the school, the P&C maintain a strong focus on community connections. In addition to fundraising events, opportunities for family engagement with the school are highly valued.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Address staff relational challenges by responding to survey data and implementing a strategy to build a whole-school positive culture.
- Embed the Phase of Learning Team (POLT) collaborative structure through the provision of resourcing and with a clear meeting focus that aligns to the business plan priorities.

### Learning environment

The school is proud of its history, ensuring their historically significant buildings, together with the nature spaces throughout the playground, provide engaging, safe and inspiring spaces for students to learn and play.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Supported by strategies and the shared expectations of the school and community, high levels of attendance, positive behaviour and engagement are evident across the school.
- The values of resilience, integrity, initiative and care underpin the school-wide commitment to the provision of a positive and respectful environment for students.
- Genuine care for students is strengthened by school approaches including the chaplaincy program, targeted supports and intervention programs, ensuring the conditions for students to engage and thrive are in place.
- Documented processes provide a framework to support staff in addressing the additional needs of students at educational risk (SAER).

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Consider the implementation of Positive Behaviour Support approaches in order to embed whole-school consistency in behaviour management and language.
- Formalise and implement a whole-school strategy to address staff wellbeing.

## Leadership

Collective and collaborative engagement of staff has led to the development and implementation of the business plan which is setting the direction for school improvement with established milestones and targets.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Staff are supported through induction and performance management and development processes, ensuring they have guidance in their roles and in understanding whole-school priorities.
- Instructional leadership is currently prioritised through a new deputy principal position, providing highly valued support and guidance, leading to significant change in school-wide pedagogical practices.
- Alignment between strategic and draft operational planning frameworks are evident. Shared leadership structures, evident through committees, are driving consistency in the development of whole-school approaches in literacy, health and numeracy.
- Distributed structures provide leadership opportunities for aspirant staff across the school, with a collective focus on professional, consultative and informed decision making.
- Student leadership opportunities are provided and feedback is valued in decision making processes.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Embed accountability to the implementation of the business plan by strengthening the current system of review, monitoring and tracking of targets and milestones. Ensure structures, meeting foci and implementation of changes, align directly to the business plan.
- Continue to prioritise instructional leadership and build middle leadership across the school.
- Engage staff in reflective processes aligned to the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework to embed culturally responsive practices.

## Use of resources

The manager corporate services and Principal engage regularly to discuss the one-line budget and resourcing requirements across the school. Aligned to the business plan priorities, there is an unwavering focus on ensuring that resources are deployed in response to student need.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The P&C is active and effective. Members not only coordinate key activities and events, but also raise significant funds to supplement the school budget.
- Sound financial processes and procedures are in place. The Finance Committee are informed, meeting regularly and provide appropriate oversight to the school's financial management strategies and processes.
- The school manages its resources in a targeted manner, implementing identified strategies and programs in consultation with staff to maximise the learning outcomes for students.
- Current workforce planning is targeted to address operational and student need, with a focus on the development of instructional leaders due to their significant impact on school improvement processes.
- Resourcing is deployed to support trained allied professionals to deliver MiniLit and MacqLit intervention programs across the school. The ongoing review of data to determine impact is considered.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Ensure future workforce planning is reflective of school priorities with a clear focus on building instructional leadership. Ensure leadership roles are adequately resourced to enable sustainability.
- Formalise planning and the provision of contemporary technologies through adequate operational and asset management planning.

## Teaching quality

A shared understanding of the conditions required for quality teaching to thrive is evident between staff. Investment in processes that facilitate instructional leadership, structures and collaboration are supporting teachers to understand and implement evidence based, low variance and data informed practice.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- With links to the business plan priorities and attention to data, English and mathematics committee leaders have collaboratively engaged with staff to develop draft operational plans.
- Effective implementation of Talk for Writing across the school highlights the capacity to implement instructional clarity, planning and supports for staff.
- There is a clear and unwavering focus on pedagogy and evidence-based practice. Through established staff meeting and POLT structures, staff are engaged in review, planning and decision making processes.
- A range of whole-school approaches including Talk for Writing, Letters and Sounds and Heggerty Phonemic Awareness teaching sequences are evident, with professional learning to support implementation prioritised for staff.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to embed literacy approaches and formalise the development of the literacy playbook.
- Progress the implementation of a whole-school approach to the teaching of mathematics, including a consistent and structured numeracy block.
- Strengthen the POLT meetings to ensure the impact of effective pedagogy and planning is measured.

## Student achievement and progress

Whilst in the early stages of its journey as a strong, data informed school, there is a collective understanding and shared ownership of the need to value add to current levels of student achievement through ongoing targeted reviews and analysis of data.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A range of data is used to support teachers in their planning and reporting processes. Standardised, school and systemic data is collected and used to monitor and track student achievement and progress.
- Staff are supported to engage collaboratively in the review of NAPLAN<sup>1</sup> data using the Student Achievement Information System dashboard. Formal approaches to review Progressive Achievement Test data are being explored with the use of a commercial platform.
- The development and implementation of student profiles is supporting transition processes and enhancing identification and tracking processes for SAER.
- Teachers moderate to make judgements about student achievement in writing using the Brightpath Writing tool and by engaging in across school moderation. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority Judging Standards support teachers when undertaking formal reporting processes.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Implement and strengthen the current assessment schedule by defining the purpose of assessments.
- Build the data literacy of staff through embedding disciplined dialogue approaches aligned to established targets and the agreed assessment schedule.
- Undertake whole-school tracking processes of student data to support monitoring longitudinal progress.

## Reviewers

Rebecca Bope  
**Director, Public School Review**

Robert Marshall  
**Principal, Como 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 next scheduled review. This notification will be provided in 2026.



Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**

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## References

- 1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy