



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Merriwa Education Support Centre

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

Context

Merriwa Education Support Centre is located on a shared site with Merriwa Primary School, approximately 40 kilometres north of the Perth central business district, within the North Metropolitan Education Region.

The school has an Index of Community and Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 983 (decile 6).

It currently enrolls 88 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Merriwa Education Support Centre became an Independent Public School in 2017 and shares a School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) with Merriwa Primary School.

The first Public School Review of Merriwa Education Support Centre was conducted in Term 1, 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 and rigorous school self-assessment.

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

- The school's Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission provided an open account of the school's context and operations in achieving its improvement agenda.
- Staff were provided opportunities to engage with the Standard and reflect on the school's performance in preparation for the review, contributing to a strong sense of ownership and understanding of the school's strengths and focus areas for ongoing development.
- A broad range of staff, students, parents and community members authentically and enthusiastically contributed to validation day discussions, offering insights on evidence submitted and demonstrating positive support for the school.
- A school tour, including classroom visits, afforded the review team a further opportunity to understand the school's context and reinforce aspects of the evidence presented.

The following recommendations are made:

- In future ESAT submissions, continue to refine the selection of rich evidence sources and ensure clear alignment with the planned actions for improvement.
- Continue to embed cycles of school self-assessment, including staff collaborative analysis of data and evidence of school performance, to inform school decision making.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships

The school has established authentic community connections and developed positive staff, student and family relationships, providing the foundation for a welcoming and harmonious environment with a strong sense of belonging and acceptance.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Connections with families and children prior to commencing school are fostered through the school readiness program providing access to a Pre-kindergarten program with a focus on orienting children and families to school and building positive relationships and networks.
- A strong sense of team has been established amongst staff, underpinned by high levels of collaboration and open communication founded on trust. Education assistants (EAs) work within class teams as equal educators and are valued for their contribution to student learning and wellbeing.
- Held in high regard by the school community, the care and support for each child has contributed to the high levels of family confidence and satisfaction in the school's capacity to provide a quality education.
- The School Board, combined with the co-located primary school, is viewed as providing effective school oversight and advocacy. Board members understand their governance roles and engage in school performance monitoring and financial management discussions.
- An active P&C has parent representation from both schools and provides clear support through multiple fundraising events and initiatives.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to foster a strong working partnership and collaboration with co-located primary school staff.
- Progress plans to build connections and partnerships with all families and continue to build Aboriginal cultural responsiveness, guided by the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework.

Learning environment

The school has established a caring and child centred learning environment where students are supported to thrive through careful, individualised planning in collaboration with families and key stakeholders.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school chaplain supports students and families through a range of initiatives including community outreach, breakfast club and the school readiness program, making early connections and building positive relationships.
- The implementation of Zones of Regulation has been embraced across the school supporting students' self-regulation by developing their understanding of emotions and strategies to self-regulate.
- A well-equipped sensory room with oversight by a trained EA is designed to support students' sensory needs through individually tailored programs and strategies.
- Staff wellbeing has been prioritised through the work of the Be You Committee contributing to a culture of collaboration and support.
- Students' communication competency is supported through staff embracing of a range of Augmentative and Alternative Communication and their commitment to enable students to have a voice.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Progress plans to develop a PBS¹ policy in collaboration with the school psychologist.
- Continue to build consistent practices for students requiring complex behaviour planning through professional learning and support.
- Align current practices and explore curriculum opportunities to implement a whole-school approach to supporting student social and emotional development.

Leadership

The Principal and cohesive leadership team have effectively developed a positive team culture, shared vision and directions for the future. This has supported navigation through a period of significant enrolment growth and change, which has been further enhanced by the Principal's and leaders' astute decision making and consultative approach.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Support for staff to build their leadership skills is evident through opportunities to take on a range of leadership responsibilities. A number of lead education assistants undertake leadership initiatives and roles across the school, contributing to improved student learning and wellbeing.
- The school has a distributed leadership structure including committees, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and collaborative groups, which enables effective information flow, sharing of practice and ownership of whole-school initiatives and programs that drive the school improvement agenda.
- Collaboratively developed, the school's business plan is owned and understood by the school community following consultation and opportunities for input.
- Staff are being supported to develop their instructional practice through clear expectations for a structured lesson design, opportunities for observation, professional learning and collaboration.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Further develop leaders' capacity to drive whole-school programs and practices in mathematics, literacy, communication and student social and emotional development. Support implementation through actions outlined in operational plans including targets, strategies and responsibilities.
- Continue to build support for staff instructional practice through the development of an agreed instructional framework informed by the Quality Teaching Strategy and the continued development of collaboration, professional learning and observation to support consistent practices.

Use of resources

The Principal and manager corporate services (MCS), have worked effectively to ensure sound oversight of school resources and finances during a period of change, driven by a focus on meeting the changing needs of students.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The school budget is developed by the Principal and MCS in collaboration with the Finance Committee and aligned with school priorities and student needs.
- In response to rapid enrolment growth, the school has channelled funding to accommodate students in newly installed transportable buildings, including furnishings, purchased ICT² equipment, created play spaces, learning resources and a new reception building.
- Funding generated from Individual Disability Allocation applications is reviewed regularly to ensure it is adequate in meeting students' needs.
- Workforce planning is considered and aligned to school, student and staff needs and includes prudent decision making on supporting leadership and staff development.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to build staff capacity to understand financial management practices through opportunities for professional learning.
- Continue to monitor student enrolments to ensure future sustainability of staffing linked to student needs.

Teaching quality

A highly motivated staff are reflective in their practice and committed to learning and collaborating within teams to build their pedagogical practice and positively impact student outcomes.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Professional learning opportunities are provided to build staff capacity in key literacy areas through Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, Spelling Mastery and Sound Waves programs.
- The school's Curriculum Assessment and Reporting policy outlines expectations for assessment and curriculum as well as guidelines for the school's structured lesson design, iStar³ and the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and reports.
- Staff engage in performance management and development benefiting their professional growth. Clear structures exist to support new staff and graduate teachers to build their skills and knowledge through professional learning and mentoring.
- Staff reported the value of classroom observations from leaders and viewed feedback as enhancing their professional practice.
- Teachers have embraced the ABLEWA⁴ curriculum and assessment platform, with information used to inform classroom planning and decision making.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue planned intentions to embed ORIGO Mathematics Education for identified students.
- Explore programs and assessment tools for students working beyond the Letters and Sounds program.
- Progress intentions to further research reading programs and assessment as part of a whole-school approach.

Student achievement and progress

Underpinned by high expectations, the school has a clear commitment to the collection of data and evidence to inform decision making at the class and whole-school level.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Teachers use a variety of assessment tools to track student progress and have opportunities to discuss data within PLCs.
- A tracking tool for mathematics and Letters and Sounds has enabled the use of comparative data to track student progress and identify gaps in learning.
- The school has introduced the Foundation Skills Assessment to identify fine grain early progress for identified students.
- Student achievement of IEP goals are collated, analysed, and shared at the whole-staff and individual teacher level.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Broaden the scope of assessment data collected and analysed to identify student achievement and progress including in reading, communication and writing.
- Continue to provide opportunities for staff to collaboratively analyse various data sets at the team and whole-school level to inform class and whole-school decision making.

Reviewers

Kim McCollum
Director, Public School Review

Ashleigh Currie
**Principal, Koorana Education Support Centre
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

References

- 1 Positive Behaviour Support
- 2 Information and communications technology
- 3 Inform/Inspire, Show/Share, Try/Transfer, Apply/Act, Review/Revise
- 4 Abilities Based Learning and Education, Western Australia