



Department of
Education

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Comet Bay College

Public School Review

June 2021



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 its 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 school review report and determines when the next review will occur. The report is provided to the Principal, the Chair of the School Council/Board and the regional Director of Education.

Expectations of schools

The Statement of Expectation (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.



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Context

Opened in 2006, Comet Bay College (the college) is located in the coastal suburb of Secret Harbour, approximately 65 kilometres south of Perth, within the South Metropolitan Education Region. In 2012, the college became an Independent Public School.

Currently, there are 1749 students enrolled from Year 7 to Year 12. The college has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage of 1013 (decile 4).

The college offers Gifted and Talented and Australian Football programs, as well as arts and academic extension programs. Facilities include specialist science laboratories, a lecture theatre, fitness centre, metal fabrication and engineering studios and a performing arts theatre.

Support is provided by the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C), and the College Board enables parents and community members to engage in activities to enhance the education offered by the college.

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 college undertakes continual self-assessment, monitoring progress against three yearly business plan targets.
- All decisions made are evidence based and aligned to the business and operational plans, which allowed for seamless preparation for the Public School Review.
- Leaders indicated that the biggest challenge was determining what to present in the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission, and provided further examples of relevant evidence and elaborations during the validation visit.
- The Principal appreciated the benefit of having been a Public School Review peer reviewer prior to undertaking the process at Comet Bay College.
- A broad selection of staff provided further evidence of the strategic scaffolding that exists across the college, each having intimate knowledge of and involvement in the domains discussed during the validation visit.

The following recommendation is made:

- Consider utilising the ESAT as part of the ongoing, robust college self-assessment process.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships

Strong relationships and sustained partnerships are integral to the overall strategic intent of the college in providing meaningful learning experiences and connections to benefit students.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Highly professional relationships underpin collegiate and collaborative interactions between staff, who are united in their efforts for ongoing school improvement and success.
- Staff are committed to establishing respectful community partnerships that support programs through the building of genuine and positive relationships for the ongoing benefit of the college and its students.
- System and school partnerships in the area of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) have been carefully cultivated by the college, which is recognised as a leader in Teacher Development, STEM Enterprise and STEM mentor school roles.
- There has been a significant turnaround in the reputation of the college for parents and community over time. Survey data indicate parent satisfaction in communication with the college and appreciation for the high expectations for student learning.
- The Board are aware of their role in school governance and fully support the directions of the college.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to strengthen communication and engagement with parents and the local community.

Learning environment

Significant effort is directed to ensuring the conditions for learning are deeply embedded across the college, resulting in a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment for staff and students.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The college leaves nothing to chance and actively monitors the degree to which staff and students are provided a positive environment that promotes learning.
- The establishment of the Positive Culture Team to develop and maintain whole-school initiatives and engagement programs has promoted positive student wellbeing and healthy competition.
- The Student Leadership Team engages 70 students in weekly meetings that enhance student voice in decision making. Students describe appreciation for the opportunities that exist at the college.
- Students at educational risk (SAER) are well catered for by the large, experienced and trained Student Support Team. Regular year group SAER meetings identify, plan for and monitor these students.
- The physical environment is afforded the same consideration as everything the college does to ensure students have the best chance of success. Ongoing maintenance is prioritised and the provision of responsive activity spaces ensures a quality learning environment for all.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to progress the plan for Aboriginal education, identified through the college audit, using the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework to guide planning and decision making.

Leadership

The Principal has engaged staff and the community in a deliberate and strategic change process to shift the culture and reputation of the college, leading to significant improvements in student achievement.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Principal has a clear vision for the college that is embraced by all staff. The alignment of every aspect and all levels of the college to the priorities and strategies of business and operational plans, is impressive.
- All decisions are evidence based and guided by assessment of impact. This ensures delivery on the targets of the business plan whilst reserving opportunity for innovation to benefit the college and students.
- There is a high level of trust for college leaders, who demonstrate respect and supportive accountability for staff. Staff feel empowered in their ability to support the college in achieving its goals.
- Leadership opportunities are provided for staff across the college to address business plan priorities. Leaders undertake intensive coaching and mentoring to support leadership development.
- All teaching staff participate in collaborative coaching through the Advanced Coaching and Teaching program as part of the performance and development process.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Complete the intended review of the Advanced Coaching and Teaching program at the end of 2021.

Use of resources

As evident in each of the domains of the School Improvement and Accountability Framework, finance and resource decisions are aligned directly to the college business plan and future vision.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Resources are allocated to the areas of greatest need to support the priorities of the college, including considerable human resourcing to provide time for leading quality teaching and student support.
- Gifted and Talented, STEM, and Enrichment and Intervention programs enhance the learning experiences for students, demonstrating effective use of student characteristics and targeted initiative funding.
- Prudent use of Vocational Education and Training funding and strategic timetabling provides flexibility to students and ensures funds successfully target all priority areas of the business plan.
- Financial management processes and practices are well understood by cost centre managers and are overseen by the Finance Committee and College Board.
- Workforce planning is ongoing, with consideration of the college's strategic objectives. This is particularly evident when recruiting new staff.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue the current practice of future planning in line with projected student enrolments.

Teaching quality

The quality of teaching and learning is central to the operations of the college. Leaders and staff are focused on the consistency of pedagogy and engage fully in processes that promote reflective practice, such as ongoing classroom observation and feedback.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- There is a significant investment in creating the conditions for continuous improvement in teaching quality through the alignment of decisions, structures and resources for this purpose.
- The established instructional model 'Comet Bay Way' articulates the teaching and learning norms expected in every classroom, reducing variability of practice across the college.
- Providing Real Opportunity for Professional Educational Learning and Leadership (PROPELL) is building the capacity of all staff through targeted and evidence-based professional learning.
- The analysis of data informs planning. In response to OLN^A¹ and NAPLAN² data and teacher judgements in writing, the introduction of the Literacy Committee is driving the whole-school literacy strategy.
- Enrichment and Intervention programs differentiate learning for identified students. Improvements in literacy for these students is evidenced through school-based data.
- The restructuring of mathematics and English learning area operations has resulted in improvement in student achievement data, in particular ATAR³ differentials and OLN^A performance.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue the professional collaboration with local primary schools through the Comet Bay Professional Learning Community, to improve current NAPLAN student achievement.

Student achievement and progress

Meaningful pathways for all students ensure authentic choice in a broad selection of offerings that cater for all abilities and interests. Many of these are 'point of difference' opportunities unique to the college.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Comparative NAPLAN performance data are longitudinally as expected in Year 7 and Year 9 in all assessments.
- Year 12 Western Australian Certificate of Education eligibility and achievement and student attainment rates were higher than public and like schools in 2020.
- There is a marked improvement in the number of students pre-qualifying for the OLN^A requirement in Year 9 and OLN^A achievement in Year 12.
- Significant improvement in the median ATAR has resulted in measures above 80 in the last two years.
- Twenty-one per cent of Year 12 students successfully completed a Vocational Education and Training Certificate IV. This has provided them with increased choices in areas of interest, leading to genuine post-school pathways.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Continue to interrogate Year 12 course data at the classroom and teacher level to set targets for improvement.

Reviewers

Vicki McKeown
Director, Public School Review

Karon Brookes
Principal, Ocean Reef Senior High 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 for Term 2, 2024.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 3 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank