



Department of
Education

D19/0289316

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Carnarvon School of the Air

Public School Review

June 2019



PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

Purpose

All Western Australian public schools are reviewed every three years 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 that a school is operating effectively and 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.

The principal provides the review team with a self-assessment of the school's performance based on evidence gathered by the principal and staff. Information validated by the review team is considered before and during the school visit. This forms the basis for the school review report. The report is provided to the principal, the chair of the school board/council and the Regional Executive Director.


Expectations of schools

For all Western Australian public schools, expectations are set out in either: the Delivery and Performance Agreement, which is an agreement between the Department (represented by the Director General), school (represented by the principal) and school board (represented by the school board chair); or, the Principals' Statement of Expectations and the Funding Agreement for Schools.

School performance rating

This performance rating is based on information gained from the self-assessment submission and the validation process. It is focussed on a review of the following areas of school performance: relationships and partnerships; learning environment; leadership; use of resources; teaching quality; and student achievement and progress.

The school's performance rating is:

	Effective
	The school demonstrates effective practice in creating the conditions required for student success.

	Needs Improvement
	The school has aspects of its practice below expectations and needs supported action to improve student success.

Context

Carnarvon School of the Air is located in Carnarvon in the Gascoyne Region of Western Australia within the Midwest Education Region. The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1021. Carnarvon School of the Air currently enrolls 38 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Students enrolled in the school are located across a 500 kilometre radius of Carnarvon and are beyond the reach of normal education services. The school was established in 1968 to provide services to students through the Royal Flying Doctor Service radio network and the state Correspondence School.

High frequency radio was phased out in 2004 and information technology based lessons (Air Lessons) and online programs are now delivered via satellite and supplemented with set work curriculum materials.

The school is supported by a School Council and the Parents and Citizens' Association also provides strong support to the school and its students.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

The following aspects are confirmed:

- Staff engaged positively in the review process.
- Planning intentions described in the school's self-assessment submission were elaborated on during the validation phase.
- The task of completing the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission in the context of a School of the Air distance education program, carries with it unique challenges.
- In completing the ESAT, the newly appointed Principal demonstrated how to 'fast-track' his knowledge of the school's current performance.

The following recommendations are made:

- Continue to be fearless in identifying areas requiring improvement and those where success has been achieved.

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Relationships and partnerships	
<p>Strong, productive family partnerships are at the core of Carnarvon School of the Air's commitment and driving belief that students in remote locations should have access to high quality learning programs.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are strong, supportive and collaborative internal staff relationships ensuring successful delivery of learning programs across the year levels. • The School Council is a strong advocate for the concept of distance education and the school's team who prepare and deliver programs of learning to their children. • The School Council has participated in a Department facilitated workshop that has enabled it to understand its role and responsibilities. • Carnarvon School of the Air is engaged in a pilot project with Edith Cowan University to provide opportunities for new graduates to experience distance education. • The school understands the importance of developing and maintaining close partnerships with Home Tutors.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure fidelity of the quality of Home Tutors, initiate a program of support based on regular catch ups and updates. • Explore options to update the school's communication protocols.

Learning environment	
<p>Unlike mainstream schools, attendance at Carnarvon School of the Air is based on a combination of 'Air Lesson' attendance and the completion of set work under the guidance of a Home Tutor. Like mainstream schools, they also support parents and Home Tutors with issues relating to student behaviour and those at educational risk.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous school camps for students are designed to offset the effects of isolation with an emphasis on building social currency skills with peers. • Extensive collection of data is the basis for preparing programs that support students at educational risk. • A set of Smart Goals is established for each student with specific learning requirements. • Parents made the observation that they are often the beneficiaries of support from school staff during times of concern in the role of Home Tutors and are offered emotional support in difficult times. • A continuing cycle of TAG¹ student identification exists.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the prospect of maintaining an online lesson option for Kindergarten students.

Leadership

The Principal is building a united team who accept their individual and collective responsibilities and work to their strengths. A persistent approach to school improvement is emerging as a key ethos being established at the school.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal exhibited high levels of awareness in supporting staff and working with families for the benefit of students. • The partnership between the school and School Council is underpinned by authentic communication and sharing of information. • Staff utilise the AITSL² Australian Professional Standards for Teachers reflection tool as part of their ongoing performance management. • Redefining the school vision, in combination with a review of its school planning, is a collaborative process between staff and parents, led by the Principal. • There is a positive level of relational trust evident between the Principal and staff.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to receive structured feedback incorporating peer review, as part of the professional improvement process. • Initiate a series of 'mini-survey' events throughout the year to gage the impact of change. • The Principal to explore/research distance education in other State jurisdictions.

Use of resources

The school has a systematic approach to ensure the allocation of resources meets the needs of geographically isolated students. Regular meetings between the Principal and the MCS³ forms the basis of informed discussions about budget management.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prudent budget management, together with some additional funding, has facilitated the introduction of additional 'air lesson' time for Kindergarten students. • The Carnarvon School of the Air asset base is carefully managed through the Asset and Replacement Plan. • The Principal is alert to the need to seek ongoing efficiencies to ensure an ongoing positive budget outcomes. • The school ensures the budget and financial position is shared with the School Council.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an audit of existing programs to assess their ongoing impact and therefore benefit for students. • The Principal to seek advice about the preparation of a workforce plan.

Teaching quality

The prevailing teaching practice has evolved to become the basis upon which staff shape the best ways of maximising learning for geographically isolated students. Literacy and numeracy instruction is balanced with camp programs to enrich student sporting interests and to build social and emotional resilience.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recently introduced Seesaw⁴ platform enables students to receive immediate feedback from their teachers. • The role of the Support Teacher Learning (STL) is highly valued by families with children who have special learning needs. • Student performance data is valued by staff as a legitimate evidence base for the preparation of targeted learning programs. • The school ensures there is an understanding and acceptance of grade allocation by conducting a moderation workshop for Home Tutors and parents at the beginning of each year. • Teachers show a willingness to be innovative and creative in lesson design and delivery for students with special needs including academic extension. • Establishing quality student/teacher relationships is a school priority.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the continuity of the teaching of writing, investigate such programs as Talk for Writing. • Consider establishing 'sister school' relationships with mainstream schools.

Student achievement and progress

Systematic monitoring of performance data and other information, such as student health and wellbeing records, informs curriculum design and delivery. Moderation of student work samples has been a focus to maintain confidence in the school's standards.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The practice of continued review and monitoring of data by staff is key to maximising student performance. • The STL attends professional learning opportunities to ensure students at risk have access to contemporary teaching strategies. • Teachers have undertaken a range of moderation activities to better align grade allocations in each learning area. • Parents report the transition to mainstream schools, in terms of academic performance, is generally smooth. • Staff engage in a full review of the performance of each student at the end of each term.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an induction package for staff arriving after the start of the school year. Advice on data management and feedback to parents to be a priority.

Reviewers

Rod Lowther
Director, Public School Review

Rebecca Instance
**Kewdale Primary School
Peer Reviewer**

Endorsement

Based on this report, I endorse your school performance rating of 'effective'.

Your next school review is scheduled for 2022.



Stephen Baxter
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Talented and Gifted
- 2 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- 3 Manager Corporate Services
- 4 Student driven digital portfolio application