



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Carnarvon School of the Air

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

Established in 1968, Carnarvon School of the Air (SOTA) is located in the Midwest Education Region.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1042 (decile 3).

Students enrolled in the school are located across a 500 kilometre radius of Carnarvon and are beyond the reach of normal education services. Carnarvon SOTA currently enrolls 41 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

The school is supported by a School Council and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

The first Public School Review of Carnarvon SOTA was conducted in Term 2, 2019. This 2024 Public School Review report provides a current point of reference for the next cycle of school improvement.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal coordinated the submission of the school's self-assessment.

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

- The Principal understands and accepts the review process is an opportunity to reflect on the school's improvement journey and identify areas for celebration and improvement.
- Although limited in number, the staff provided insightful and authentic participation in discussions. Their unwavering shared commitment to the school's success and improvement was notable.
- A tour of the facilities including the purpose-built studios and dispatch room provided an understanding of the unique and distinct SOTA context.
- Year 5 and Year 6 student leaders articulated their connection to the school and spoke with pride about their experience receiving an education through a virtual learning environment.
- The School Council chairperson and P&C President engaged enthusiastically in the validation visit discussions. Their comments and observations reflect a strong sense of engagement and investment in the school's ongoing development. They were particularly appreciative of the work of staff in supporting educational outcomes for their children.

The following recommendations are made:

- Carefully consider the choice of evidence and analysis in each domain of the Standard to ensure it accurately describes the impact on student outcomes.
- In collaboration with staff, and as part of the school's regular self-assessment process, review the school's performance in each of the domains guided by the Standard and domain foci.
- Build a culture of reflection and continuous improvement using the Electronic School Assessment Tool as a vault to record judgements and observations as preparation for the next follow-up review and as part of the ongoing school self-assessment cycle.

Public School Review

Relationships and partnerships

Carnarvon SOTA partners with families in special and unique ways. The relationships it has built over many years are mutually respectful and trusting despite the vast area it covers.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Communication is personalised and embedded in the operations of the school. This includes weekly Muster presentations, emails, an online newsletter, and Seesaw.
- Experienced staff work collaboratively to plan for teaching and learning, fostering positive and professional relationships.
- The school welcomes the feedback they receive from parents and home tutors through emails and surveys and respond in a timely and thoughtful manner. The data collected is acted upon and guides future planning for school improvement.
- Parents reported high levels of gratification and trust in the school. They describe it as a family, responsive to their needs and value the genuine care shown for their children.
- Home tutors are an invaluable resource to the school, engaging effectively with students through interactive sessions that augment learning programs.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Pursue the intent to establish a SOTA network of schools to support the unique nature of the school and establish a genuine like-schools group.

Learning environment

Central to the school's learning environment are high levels of individualised care. The virtual learning environment is inclusive of, and tailored for, each student to gain optimal learning experiences to build a sense of belonging to the virtual classroom community.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Individual education plans are developed for students at educational risk. Student profiles are updated termly and remain with students for the duration of their academic journey.
- Air lessons are skilfully facilitated to achieve optimum student engagement. The use of strategic questioning and interactive elements such as text chats and Kahoot quizzes enhance their participation.
- The annual camp is eagerly anticipated as students and staff gather in Geraldton. The camp provides an occasion to connect as a school and offers students opportunities to interact socially with their peers.
- Student, staff and home tutor health and wellbeing is a priority. The use of Smiling Mind activities is contributing positively to a productive and engaging learning environment.
- Student voice is valued and informs future planning for events such as camps and in-school days. This ensures the social, emotional and academic needs of all students are served, both individually and collectively.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Continue to initiate external partnerships to support curriculum delivery.
- Development of a school-wide health and wellbeing plan. Incorporate the current Smiling Mind initiatives which are being implemented with great success.

Leadership

The school has created a distributed leadership model. This is designed to promote shared ownership of school initiatives and improvements together with providing leadership opportunities for staff.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The Principal is described as being passionate and knowledgeable and is credited with maintaining the school's strategic direction and efficient operational procedures throughout their leadership.
- Staff are actively encouraged to aspire and use their initiative to take leadership roles beyond their classrooms.
- Committees drive a collaborative and inclusive distributed leadership structure. Collectively they provide opportunities for staff to build their knowledge, skills and leadership in a spirit of collaboration.
- Change management is consultative and well-paced, with change attainable within an acceptable timeframe.
- Staff have a desire to be part of a professional development culture, which includes peer observations in combination with structured instructional feedback.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Prioritise the development of a business plan with supporting operational plans in collaboration with staff, and in consultation with the School Council.
- Commencing with an audit, reinvigorate curriculum sets by developing accompanying scope and sequence documents aligned to the Western Australian Curriculum.
- Formalise the regularity of classroom observation and feedback processes.

Use of resources

Fastidious financial management by the manager corporate services (MCS) ensures financial acuity and responsive deployment of resources, further enhancing the learning opportunities for students.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The MCS works closely with the Finance Committee to deploy school funds in a transparent manner.
- Due to the school no longer being responsible for ICT¹ for families, the acquisition of devices favours outright purchasing over leasing.
- The P&C and School Council have a keen interest in the financial position of the school and engage actively in mutual fundraising events.
- Workforce planning involves recruitment strategies to prepare the school for staff turnover. The intent is to find staff with relevant knowledge and skills to progress the commitment to pedagogy, as well as embrace the unique aspects of teaching in a SOTA environment.

Recommendation

The review team support the following:

- Maintain financial resource management and monitoring of operational plans to ensure responsive resource allocations to meet the unique needs of the student population.

Teaching quality

Staff are acutely aware of the geographical isolation of the students and families attending Carnarvon SOTA. They place a high priority on creating effective structures that successfully connect families to the school and with each other.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Parents and home tutors are supported as educational facilitators through the highly regarded Home Tutor Seminar and Home Visits program. Teachers model best practice and lessons to parents and home tutors to support continuity of curriculum delivery as well as teaching skill development.
- Home visits are excitedly anticipated as students proudly showcase their home learning environment.
- Intervention is facilitated by the support teacher learning (STL). This targets individual student needs using evidence-based programs such as MiniLit and InitialLit.
- Seesaw is valued by teachers as a tool for sharing work and enabling timely feedback. It also facilitates the creation of a student portfolio that augments reporting and monitoring of progress.
- Participation in Scaling Up Success in Remote Schools program is in the initial stages and the opportunity to further refine collaborative and evidence-based practices is valued.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Document the school-wide approach to pedagogy in a 'playbook' to support the embedding of evidence-based practices. Promote consistency of teacher practice aligned to the Quality Teaching Strategy.
- Review and refine the school-based assessment schedule to ensure all data sets remain fit for purpose.
- Implement a disciplined dialogue approach to data analysis, ensuring staff participate in discussions about planning for practice informed by data that is collected.

Student achievement and progress

There is a genuine sense of collective responsibility and acknowledgement by staff of student achievement data. The plan, act and assess cycle is underpinned by the analysis of data, guiding and directing air lessons and differentiation to support individual student needs.

Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Year 3 NAPLAN² data in 2023 exceeded state performance in all areas of assessment.
- The STL maintains a comprehensive database to track and monitor student achievement and progress at an individual and class level. Collaboration with teachers occurs to identify student needs and plan program adaptations accordingly.
- Teachers moderate to make judgments about student achievement using Brightpath. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority Judging Standards support teachers during formal reporting periods.
- Assessments and reporting on student achievement informs both students and parents. Initiation of meetings with parents at the point of need ensures parents have a complete understanding of their child's progress and 'there are no surprises'.
- In collaboration with the Desert Coast Network, student achievement data is monitored using an online platform to determine progress against contextually similar schools.

Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Intentionally build longitudinal data sets to measure and evaluate the impact of teaching and learning programs and set business plan targets based on this data.
- Strengthen moderation practices to ensure low variance in teacher judgements and comparability of student achievement across all year levels.

Reviewers

Kate Wilson
Director, Public School Review

Eloise Jansen Van Vuuren
**Principal, Kalgoorlie School of the Air
Peer Reviewer**

Endorsement

Based on this report, I endorse the commendations and recommendations made by the review team regarding your school's performance.

The next review process focusing on the leadership and teaching quality domains only, is scheduled for Term 2, 2025. You will be formally notified in the 2 terms leading up to your school's scheduled follow up review.

Should the school meet the Standard for these domains, a full Public School Review, inclusive of all domains, will be scheduled for 2027.



Melesha Sands
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Information and communications technology
- 2 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy