



Department of
Education

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Atwell College

Public School Review

February 2020

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 focused 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

Atwell College is situated 21 kilometres south of the Perth central business district in the South Metropolitan Education Region. The college has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1009 (decile 4).

Enrolling students from Year 7 through to Year 12, the college opened in 2008 and gained Independent Public School status in 2011. Student numbers have been steadily increasing over recent years with 1438 students currently enrolled. It is expected that the opening of a nearby public secondary school in 2020 will stabilise student growth at Atwell College.

The college campus is modern with state-of-the-art buildings and facilities including a new library and resource centre, performing arts centre and the Kim Beazley Learning Centre (KBLC), which is a purpose built facility for students with special needs. The KBLC includes a hydrotherapy pool, specialist sensory equipment and life skills training rooms. An integrated learning model where students with special needs engage in mainstream classes supports the college ethos of inclusivity.

Atwell College offers Approved Specialist Programs in Netball and Rugby League. It also offers an Academic Extension Program in Year 7 to Year 9 with extension activities offered in English, humanities and social sciences (HASS), mathematics and science.

The College Board maintains strategic oversight of the college. Community and parent involvement is encouraged through the Parents and Citizens' Association.

School self-assessment validation

The principal submitted a comprehensive and rigorous school self-assessment.

The following aspects are confirmed:

- The self-reflection process undertaken to prepare the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) was valued highly by the college's leadership as an opportunity to engage staff, consolidate their focus and inform the development of the next business plan.
- There was clear alignment between evidence provided, the analysis of performance and planned actions for improvement.
- Planning intentions described in the college's ESAT submission were enhanced during the validation phase.
- A broad range of staff, students and community members engaged in the validation visit, providing insights that enhanced significantly the school self-assessment submitted through the ESAT.

The following recommendation is made:

- Be discerning when identifying which priority areas to highlight as planned actions for improvement to best support the college's continuous improvement agenda.

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Relationships and partnerships	
Respectful and positive relationships are clearly evident at Atwell College. Well-established partnerships with external stakeholders and a high level of camaraderie within the college result in a wide range of learning opportunities to improve student wellbeing and achievement.	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication processes have been streamlined in response to parent feedback, with strategically selected platforms now being widely embraced.• The college acts as a conduit for families engaged with the National Disability Insurance Scheme, accommodating specialist therapy and support on-site during the school day.• As an active contributor to its local school network, the college values transition highly and encourages primary schools to engage in on-site extension opportunities such as PEAC¹ and FIRST LEGO League.• Staff are very giving of their personal time, providing before and after school tutoring as well as leading a variety of extra-curricular clubs and activities that foster good rapport.• The College Board is well-trained, highly knowledgeable and actively seeks broad perspectives when setting the strategic direction of the college.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build upon the current marketing strategy by showcasing achievements to gain the desired reputation as a college of choice.

Learning environment	
A culture of mutual respect exemplifies a highly inclusive learning environment. The dynamic student services team lead a coordinated approach to student health and wellbeing that seeks to meet student needs, support staff and incorporates a focus on the physical environment.	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Behaviour and Engagement Advisory Group led a review of processes, establishing an improved behaviour support flowchart designed to increase consistency of restorative practices across the college.• As a PBS² school, student and staff expectations are clearly articulated and promoted through a combination of a whole-school professional growth program and the use of CMS CAT³ trained instructional coaches.• Transition programs, including a Relationship Building, Achievement and Pride intervention program designed specifically for students at potential educational risk, prove highly effective.• Increased shelter, outdoor seating and grounds beautification have impacted positively on the physical environment.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pursue the plan to increase the number of trained instructional coaches to further embed a shared and common approach to behaviour support.• Reinvigorate PBS through homeroom and curriculum integration.

Leadership

Currently in his second year in the school, the principal is acknowledged by staff and parents as having quickly established a renewed shared ownership of the college vision and improvement agenda that aligns directly to both system-wide and college priorities.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff appreciate the highly collaborative approach to improvement with time provided to embed key strategies mapped to SMART targets. • A distributed leadership model is underpinned by coaching to empower current and emerging leaders to build their leadership capacity. • The data literacy of staff is sound with evidence of an increased personal accountability for student success demonstrated through targeted interventions and monitoring. • A focus on the Relationships Standard of the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework</i> (ACSF) has resulted in an increase in engagement by Aboriginal families. Programs such as AIME⁴, The Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation Follow the Dream and NAIDOC⁵ celebrations impact positively on student pride and engagement.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider engaging in the Leading School Improvement professional learning to further enhance leadership capacity and a shared vision. • Build upon the good work of selected learning areas such as HASS in understanding the ACSF and embedding relevant practices in curriculum.

Use of resources

There is a clear and defensible link between budgeting and expenditure, aligned to, and reflected in, key priority areas. The manager corporate services works in partnership with the principal to ensure that a well-informed and balanced budget best meets the identified needs of students.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student characteristic and targeted initiatives funding are used appropriately to enable improved outcomes aligned to the specific reasons for the funding allocation. • Financial practices are transparent. Effective training and consultation has increased staff financial literacy and appreciation of budget constraints. • Strategies to access external funding have met with considerable success, resulting in facility upgrades, perimeter fencing and additional classrooms. • The workforce plan identifies current and future issues to consider. • Decisions about funding of specific programs are evidence-based and monitored for value-adding capacity.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure transparent alignment between planning and resourcing at the operational level by making resource links explicit in documentation.

Teaching quality

A growing culture and shared appreciation of what constitutes quality teaching and learning is promoted through an evidence-based school-wide framework focused on relationships, inclusivity, expectations, communication and support.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance and development documentation is sound and aligned to the AITSL⁶ Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Similar documentation exists for education assistants who engage actively in professional development opportunities. • A common lesson design incorporating checking for understanding is promoted through the 'Coffee Club' and whole-school professional learning sessions, and prioritised during peer observation and reflective practice. • The education support staff are acknowledged for their expertise and share examples of best practice with colleagues. • Targeted support provided to heads of learning areas, to empower them to drive the teaching quality improvement focus, is appreciated.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed procedural classroom expectations in practice to gain consistency across the college. • Reinforce the importance of classroom observations, providing clarification where needed, to achieve active engagement by all teachers. • Overtly articulate the whole-school literacy interventions designed to impact positively on NAPLAN⁷ and OLNA⁸ achievement in every learning area plan.

Student achievement and progress

The college gathers and analyses school-based and systemic data to establish key priority areas. Staff are committed to a renewed and strategic focus on early intervention strategies in literacy and numeracy to attain the desired improvement in student achievement.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term NAPLAN student performance data remain below like schools although within the expected range. • A detailed analysis of ABLEWA⁹ data results in SMART targets and SEN¹⁰ achievement data is sound. • The college's median ATAR¹¹ has improved, however, the WACE¹² achievement rate has declined over successive years. • Students have access to a diverse range of certificate courses relevant to individual pathways and VET¹³ achievement rates are high.
Improvements	<p>The review team support the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the culture of academic rigour to improve achievement data across all years and foster ATAR aspirations in senior schooling. • Interrogate task design and continue moderation practices to improve grade alignment in comparison to NAPLAN data and like schools.

Reviewers

Kath Ward
Director, Public School Review

Craige Pettit
Principal, Bunbury Senior High School
Peer Reviewer

Endorsement

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

Your next school review is scheduled for 2023.



Stephen Baxter
Deputy Director General, Schools

References

- 1 Primary Extension and Challenge
- 2 Positive Behaviour Support
- 3 Classroom Management Strategies Conference Accreditation Training
- 4 Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience
- 5 National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
- 6 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- 7 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 8 Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
- 9 Abilities Based Learning Education, Western Australia
- 10 Special Educational Need
- 11 Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
- 12 Western Australian Certificate of Education
- 13 Vocational Education and Training