



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Baler Primary School

## 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 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 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, 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.

For further information or resource in alternative formats for people with accessibility needs, please contact [PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:PublicSchoolAccountability.PublicSchoolReview@education.wa.edu.au)

## Context

Baler Primary School was established in 1975 and gained Independent Public School status in 2019. Located in South Hedland, 1640 kilometres north of Perth, the school is part of the Pilbara Education Region.

The school has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 919 (Decile 9). It currently enrolls 579 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Baler Primary School is supported by a School Board and Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C).

The first Public School Review (PSR) of Baler Primary School was conducted in August 2019. This 2023 PSR report provides a current point of reference for the school's next cycle of school improvement.

## School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a limited school self-assessment using the Electronic School Self Assessment Tool (ESAT).

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

- A significant representation of staff and students engaged in discussions with the review team, contributing authentic reflections in support of the school. There was significant evidence of staff buy-in to the school's current improvement agenda.
- Staff demonstrated ownership for student performance, with professional and personal responsibilities accepted and understood.
- In the absence of the Principal, due to illness, the deputy principals proved a unified and cohesive team, providing a clear reflection on the schools current strengths and areas for improvement.
- A tour of the school added context to support the validation visit.

The following recommendations are made:

- Use the Public School Review Standard, and in particular the domain foci, as the basis for ongoing school improvement planning.
- Through the lens of the following reflective question: Why do we think the evidence selected for our Public School Review demonstrates meeting the Standard? Consolidate the parameters for selecting evidence to be included in future ESAT submissions.
- Build a school-wide culture of self-assessment through the collection and use of credible evidence to determine current levels of performance and areas for targeted improvement.
- Ensure that all staff and the wider community have opportunity to participate in the analysis and contribution of content for future ESAT submissions.

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### Relationships and partnerships

Staff at Baler Primary School are hardworking, dedicated, supportive of each other and share a common belief that they collectively can improve outcomes for all students.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Collaborative processes, enabled through a Professional Learning Community (PLC) structure, are constructive and purposeful. Team leaders provide support, and staff plan together, share resources and moderate student work to ensure consistency of practice.
- Extensive partnerships have been established with a variety of external organisations that enhance the learning program for students; these include the Clontarf Foundation, Polly Farmer Foundation, the Pilbara Education Partnership and Rotary.
- The front office staff provide a welcoming environment where parents, students and visitors feel valued and supported when attending the school.
- Opportunities for regular staff morning teas, celebration of birthdays and other special events support staff health and wellbeing.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Ensure that all relevant school information is shared with the School Board and parents in a timely and comprehensive manner prior to implementing significant changes.
- Conduct the National School Opinion Survey of parents, staff and students biennially to receive feedback on the school performance and identify areas for improvement.
- Use the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework to guide staff in creating a Reconciliation Action Plan and embed cultural responsiveness, actively celebrating partnerships with Aboriginal families and community members.

### Learning environment

The school ensures students enjoy coming to school by creating a sense of belonging through the establishment of a welcoming and safe environment. The students are enthusiastic advocates for the school's caring, inclusive ethos.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Positive Behaviour Support forms the premise of classroom and playground management, and this gives staff the tools and knowledge to consistently implement behaviour management processes.
- Staff are committed to strengthening student attendance and engagement. Attendance processes are in place to follow up low attendance with the support of an attendance officer to reengage families and students.
- A policy outlines school-wide processes that support the identification and monitoring of students at educational risk (SAER). Well trained and enthusiastic education assistants deliver an intervention program and track student progress.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Seek opportunities for students to have a genuine input into school decision making through the student council and student surveys.
- Continue to use the Be You Framework and ensure that a school health and wellbeing program is implemented with fidelity to support the social and emotional needs of students.
- Streamline the intervention program so it aligns with classroom programs and all staff fully understand processes used to identify, support, assess, track and report on students at educational risk.

## Leadership

Inclusive, cohesive and supportive leadership exists across the school. Having high expectations of themselves and of all staff, the Principal and leadership team lead a culture of collaborative and collective responsibility for every child's success.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Leadership is distributed allowing opportunities for interested staff, as PLC leaders, to support others in whole-school improvement.
- Change is implemented in a strategic, timely and inclusive manner, with a focus on student success and providing staff with a voice in key decision making.
- Student leadership is valued and enhanced through leadership opportunities across the school. Student representatives advocated positively for the school, reporting that the school provides significant learning opportunities in a safe learning environment.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Review and implement a structured and formalised performance development process where staff reflect upon their practice and engage in observation processes aligned to school instructional priorities.
- Provide opportunities for leaders to develop their skills and knowledge to provide instructional support for staff.
- Ensure operational plans linked to the business plan are monitored within teams and serve to guide the school's strategic agenda.

## Use of resources

Planning, management and monitoring processes for the use of resources are aligned to school operations. There is a clear intent to ensure resources are deployed in a targeted way to optimise learning outcomes for all students.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- The newly appointed manager of corporate services (MCS) is supported in her professional development through the regional MCS network and accessing the department's finance professional learning programs.
- A detailed and clear Staff Finance Handbook ensures accountability and sound financial management at all levels of the school.
- An effective Finance Committee assists with financial oversight. The School Board is kept well informed of the school's financial management processes.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Ensure that there is a tangible link between the student characteristic funding provided for Aboriginal students and those with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD), and the programs and initiatives that support their learning.
- Continue to monitor the workforce while considering expected shortfalls and develop strategies to address potential workforce gaps.
- Consider improvements to the physical environment, particularly in the early childhood area, to provide an engaging and stimulating environment for children to play and learn.

Teaching quality
A commitment to implement a performance culture around consistent, evidence-based, whole-school approaches is apparent where staff share ownership for the success of all students.
Commendations
<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching Sprints are evident through planning and collaboration processes. Staff engage in collaborative meetings to plan and discuss progress ensuring a degree of uniformity of instruction and curriculum delivery.</li> <li>Staff are supported to implement whole-school approaches including Talk for Writing, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, Letters and Sounds, and Top Ten Mathematics.</li> <li>Staff value the support given to them by the administration team including informal instructional support and feedback.</li> <li>New staff and graduate teachers are provided with an induction inclusive of orientation, mentoring and support to assist their alignment with school expectations on curriculum and teaching practice.</li> </ul>
Recommendations
<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a whole-school instructional model, in alignment with the Quality Teaching Strategy. Include the introduction of structured classroom observations and feedback processes to ensure low variance practice.</li> <li>Continue plans to implement the Baler Playbook for literacy with fidelity, and the development and implementation of the Baler Playbook for numeracy.</li> </ul>
Student achievement and progress
Staff have access to student achievement data and opportunity for analysis and reflection. Student achievement continues to be an area the school is seeking to improve.
Commendations
<p>The review team validate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff acknowledge the decline in student achievement and progress data in NAPLAN<sup>1</sup> since 2019 and are committed to reversing the trend.</li> <li>A range of systemic and school-based data is collected, including Brightpath and the ACER<sup>2</sup> Progressive Achievement Tests to assess student progress.</li> <li>Moderation and collaboration processes support teachers in ensuring comparability of student achievement across all years.</li> <li>Operational plans are developed in all learning areas to articulate strategies to address school plan targets and support teaching and learning.</li> </ul>
Recommendations
<p>The review team support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect an extended range of norm referenced student data to determine each student's level of achievement at any point in time and evaluate if students are meeting their potential. Set aspirational, cohort specific student achievement and progress targets in annual operational plans.</li> <li>Use NAPLAN data to critically reflect on the effectiveness of programs and practices in place across the school.</li> <li>Focus on improving achievement for students identified as needing additional support to meet proficiency standards in literacy and numeracy.</li> <li>Incorporate a response to intervention model to provide differentiated tiers of support for students at educational risk.</li> </ul>

## Reviewers

Craig Skinner  
**Director, Public School Review**

Shannon Wright  
**Principal, Greenfields Primary 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 to be scheduled for Term 1, 2026.

Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**



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## References

- 1 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
- 2 Australian Council for Educational Research