



Department of  
Education

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Public education  
**A world of opportunities**

# Port Hedland School of the Air

## Public School Review

October 2018



# PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIEW

## Purpose

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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

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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

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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:

	<b>Effective</b>
	The school demonstrates effective practice in creating the conditions required for student success.

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

## Context

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Port Hedland School of the Air is located at the Port Hedland International Airport between the towns of Port Hedland and South Hedland, 1635 kilometres north of Perth.

Established in 1964, Port Hedland School of the Air is one of five Schools of the Air in the Western Australian public school system designed to enable distance education students to have peer and teacher contact on a regular basis.

The school has an Index of Community and Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 981. Enrolments fluctuate from around 25 to in excess of 50, from Kindergarten to Year 6. The majority of students reside on cattle stations, in Aboriginal communities and within national parks in an area spanning 560 000 kilometres.

The Distance Education model presents exciting opportunities for Western Australian students. They are provided with laptop computers, a National Broadband Network (NBN) internet connection, school supplies and printed learning programs based on the Western Australian Curriculum.

Each child attends a series of 40 minute online lessons with their teachers throughout the day, in addition to completing offline materials. Students also utilise technology to complete other online educational activities as prescribed by their teachers. The school day commences at 8.00am and concludes at 2.20pm, much the same as mainstream schools in the Pilbara Education Region.

Teachers visit their students and home tutors throughout the year as required. Students also spend time at school facility in Port Hedland with personnel. A range of camps and get-togethers during the year enhance educational and social interaction opportunities with their peers, staff and other families. Port Hedland School of the Air also engages with other Schools of the Air on intrastate and interstate excursions.

## School self-assessment validation

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The Principal submitted an informative school self-assessment.

The following aspects are confirmed:

- A comprehensive schedule of data collection and analysis supports the development of a reflective culture.
- The analysis of available data and evidence provides an authentic account of the school's current levels of performance.
- Engagement of staff in the school assessment process has built an understanding of contemporary practice and demonstrates a commitment to an ethos of improvement.
- Staff engaged positively in the review process.
- Actions for improvement were described in the school's self-assessment documentation. These were enhanced through conversations with staff during the validation visit.

The following recommendation is made:

- Consider the selection of data/evidence to most effectively and efficiently represent the school's performance and related planning in support of sustaining conditions for student success.

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Relationships and partnerships	
<p>Relationships between staff are respectful and supportive. In recognition of the unique nature of education delivery in these contexts, Port Hedland School of the Air functions with due attention to relationships ensuring a shared focus on the needs of students.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High staff morale is evident in the quality of relations. Staff enjoy professional working relationships and appreciate the unique work environment.</li> <li>• Parents value the individualised attention their children receive. Frequent reporting (two to four times per week), common to this setting, is appreciated by parents.</li> <li>• Parents express appreciation for the school's communication strategies, acknowledging their timely receipt of appropriate information.</li> <li>• School Council members are strong advocates for the school, however, the need for further training to assist in their governance role is acknowledged.</li> <li>• Home tutors are well supported, receiving guidance and assistance as needed. The annual home tutor seminar is highly valued by parents.</li> </ul>
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing the functionality of the Council is a priority. Ensure meetings are regular and include discussions in relation to school performance.</li> <li>• Review the terms of reference and role of the Council and provide appropriate training.</li> </ul>

Learning environment	
<p>Daily air lessons, face-to-face meetings, home visits and special social events contribute to a learning environment where the academic, social and emotional needs of the students and their families are prioritised. A culture of empathy, respect and inclusivity is evident in the school.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Support Teacher Learning (STL) provides planning support, one-to-one tuition for selected students, interagency liaison and advice for parents and home tutors. This support is highly valued by staff and parents.</li> <li>• The Response to Intervention model provides staff and the STL with a structured framework that guides targeted planning and interventions.</li> <li>• Support for academically high-achieving students is acknowledged and will be a focus in reviewing the role and responsibilities of the STL.</li> <li>• An annual program of camps and events provide frequent opportunities for students to socialise and interact with other children.</li> <li>• Students identified as at 'severe attendance risk' receive appropriate case management. The Protective Behaviours program has been a focus.</li> </ul>
Improvements	<p>The review team validates the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt SEN<sup>1</sup> planning and reporting to provide a consistent approach for all staff and enhance the current student support systems.</li> <li>• Revise the role of the STL to include a focus on academically high-achieving students.</li> </ul>

## Leadership

The new Principal has adopted a proactive approach to building staff capacity and ensuring their engagement in the school improvement process. A commitment to transparency, clarity of purpose and consultative decision making is evident in the school's planning for improvement.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comprehensive plan for data collection provides a foundation for building data literacy. This ensures that reliable and valid information informs school plans.</li> <li>• Policies and systems are evident but require review and documentation.</li> <li>• Initiatives are introduced strategically, building acceptance by clarifying reasons for change and demonstrating connection to school directions.</li> <li>• The influence of system-wide professional learning and the support of a highly functional network has assisted in leading the improvement agenda.</li> </ul>
Improvements	<p>The review team identifies the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the current leadership focus is operational, acknowledgment of the need to enhance the quality of educational leadership is recognised.</li> <li>• Adopt a strategic approach when implementing agreed school and system initiatives by including support, oversight, reflection and review.</li> <li>• Ensure specific student performance targets are adopted in the new strategic plan.</li> <li>• Review and document school policies and processes to provide clarity and certainty for staff.</li> </ul>

## Use of resources

The school manages resources effectively to address the current needs of its students. An open and transparent approach, together with ongoing training, has resulted in a broad base of staff expertise. Decision making is inclusive and aligned to the school's plans.

Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Finance Committee meets regularly, is well versed in the student-centred funding model and provide appropriate oversight to the school's financial management practices.</li> <li>• The school has transitioned from historical budget allocations to those informed by the school's improvement plans.</li> <li>• A well-considered approach is adopted to the deployment of student characteristic funds, including additional home and school visits; appropriate, reliable ICT<sup>2</sup> resources; and support for parents and home tutors.</li> <li>• Targeted initiatives support the STL delivery of quality outcomes for staff and students.</li> <li>• Partnerships with local businesses and the Pilbara network add value to the school's planning efforts.</li> </ul>
Improvements	<p>The review team identifies the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the workforce management plan to ensure alignment with the new strategic plan.</li> </ul>

## Teaching quality

<p>An individualised focus is a feature of the teaching at this school. Staff are adept at using school data to identify individual and group needs, plan interventions and monitor progress. They work collaboratively and share responsibility for the teaching and learning program.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEN planning and reporting is recognised as an area of future development to standardise school-wide practices.</li> <li>• The value and impact of an explicit teaching model is acknowledged and has been adopted through the school’s strategic planning.</li> <li>• Performance and development systems are evident, though informal. A more structured approach, aligned to the AITSL<sup>3</sup> Standards has been recently introduced with staff.</li> <li>• Collaboration between staff within the school is strong.</li> <li>• On-entry Assessment Program data is used effectively to set specific student targets and plan appropriate interventions.</li> </ul>
Improvements	<p>The review team identifies the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen performance management processes to support the development of staff.</li> <li>• Foster relations with local schools and Schools of the Air to strengthen support and moderation processes.</li> <li>• Develop an agreed language around an explicit model to enhance the value of classroom observations and feedback to teachers.</li> </ul>

## Student achievement and progress

<p>The Principal and staff acknowledge that longitudinal data for schools with small cohorts can be variable. In response, the school collects and analyses a suite of school-based information to inform classroom planning and interventions.</p>	
Effectiveness	<p>The review team validates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No student performed at or below the National Minimum Standard in the 2018 NAPLAN<sup>4</sup> assessments.</li> <li>• Available system data indicates an upward trend in progress and achievement from Years 3 to 5 in NAPLAN assessments.</li> <li>• School data is comprehensive and provides reliable evidence on which to base decisions. The need to aggregate this information to provide a whole-school picture of progress is acknowledged by the school.</li> <li>• The learning program for every student is differentiated, with programs being tailored to individual needs.</li> <li>• The screening of early childhood students provides staff with a baseline of early literacy skills and informs targeted planning.</li> </ul>
Improvements	<p>The review team identifies the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review current targets using system and school data to ensure specific student achievement targets are adopted in the new strategic plan.</li> <li>• Liaise with similar small schools (other Schools of the Air, small regional schools, Education Support schools) to identify strategies for aggregating school data, to inform discussions about performance.</li> </ul>

## Reviewers

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JIM BELL  
Director, Public School Review

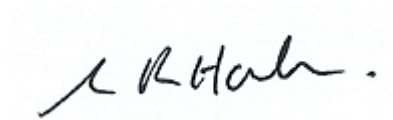
WARREN BACHMAN  
Principal, Falcon Primary School  
Peer Reviewer

## Endorsement

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

Your next school review is scheduled for 2021.



LINDSAY HALE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## References

- 1 Special Educational Need
- 2 Information and communication technology
- 3 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
- 4 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy