Como
Secondary College

Public School Review

August 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

Como Secondary College is located in the suburb of Como, approximately six kilometres from the Perth central business district. The College is in the South Metropolitan Education Region.

Established in 1969 as Como Senior High School, and attaining Independent Public School status in 2013, Como Secondary College offers a variety of educational programs to support student pathways including: Enriched Mathematics; Information Technology and Science; School of Contemporary Jazz Music; and specialist golf and hockey academies. Each of these approved specialist programs take advantage of the close proximity to, and association with, Perth universities, training institutions and/or sporting facilities.

The College has an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage rating of 1061 (decile 2). It currently enrols 850 students from Year 7 to Year 12. A long-running International Student Program has provided students with a pathway to universities throughout Australia and overseas.

The College enjoys the support of the local community, a Parents and Citizens' Association and the School Board.

School self-assessment validation

The Principal submitted a comprehensive school self-assessment.

The following aspects are confirmed:

- A broad range of evidence was selected for analysis and included in the submission.

- An open and honest account was provided of the College context in relation to the improvement agenda.

- The analysis of evidence was appropriate and supported a genuine understanding of the College's performance.

- There was alignment between evidence provided, the analysis of performance and planned actions for improvement.

- The school visit yielded detailed information that served to add value to the school self-assessment and assisted with validation.

- An understanding of the value of a strong evidence base for self-assessment was obvious.

- A culture of reflection and continuous improvement was evident.

The following recommendations are made:

- Enhance future input to the Electronic School Assessment Tool by providing opportunities for staff to submit comments reflective of current observations, analysis and planned actions.

- Ensure the most recent data are used to best represent evidence of school effectiveness.

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Relationships and partnerships

Leaders have engendered high levels of respect. Staff, students, and Board members, including community representatives, appreciate the genuine care and commitment to the creation and maintenance of positive relationships and partnerships in an engaging and inclusive culture.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• There is a strong collegial culture of mutual trust and support among teachers and school leaders, and positive, caring relationships between staff, parents and students.
	• College Board representatives are well trained and engage actively in consultation regarding school direction. They advocate strongly for the College, its achievements and the leaders' preparedness to act on advice.
	• Communication processes are well established and respected by the school community.
	• Effective partnerships have been established and fostered with key organisations in support of specialist programs. Strong community support for students is evident in the College mentor (volunteer) program.
	• Student feedback is sought routinely through the NSIT[1] 'School Climate: Student Voice' survey, to shape improvement policy.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Refine strategies and timelines for support in areas of need, identified from student surveys.
	• Continue to investigate formal partnerships with the local Arts community to support the 'Create at Como' program.

Learning environment

The learning environment is founded on responsive student services structures and processes for the management of attendance, behaviour, engagement and SAER[2]. Shared understanding of, and responsibility for, safe and orderly conditions is evident.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• Students articulated strong opinions of safety and connectedness to peers within the College.
	• Behavioural expectations are articulated, managed and supported genuinely by promotion of 'The Como Way' within the PBS[3] framework.
	• SAER are identified, supported and monitored effectively. Extensive wraparound support is provided to accommodate student needs.
	• Attendance issues are addressed through explicit school-wide strategies.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Continue to reinforce self and peer regulation of student behaviour.
	• Continue to explore proactive approaches to student services operations.
	• Use the ACSF[4] to develop a reconciliation action plan and foster improved levels of understanding of Aboriginal history, culture and contributions.

Leadership

The College vision is articulated clearly and implemented authentically by leaders and staff in providing a 'culture that promotes learning'. It is driven by the belief that every student is capable of learning and that it is the responsibility of every teacher to ensure student progress.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• The foundation has been laid for continued college improvement. Change is managed strategically with consideration of varying degrees of staff readiness for, and engagement in, this journey.
	• Staff development is formalised and aligned closely to the college-wide improvement agenda.
	• Performance management and development processes are referenced strategically to the AITSL[5] Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, CMOT[6], PLCs[7] and classroom observations, to provide teachers with relevant feedback to improve their craft.
	• The NSIT is used effectively to review college performance and quantify staff and leader satisfaction with operations and direction.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Develop a proactive aspirant leadership strategy to support the ongoing development of college staff.
	• Continue to upskill leaders at all levels in aligning strategic, operational and classroom planning within the school self-assessment framework.

Use of resources

Alignment between the use of resources and school operations has been established through careful analysis of priorities in a changing landscape. There is a clear and defensible link between the use of resources and the conditions for student success.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• Alignment between planning priorities and resourcing allocations is evident.
	• Student characteristic funding is allocated strategically to support students requiring specific learning adjustments. Supplementary resourcing is prioritised to support the highly effective Intensive Learning Team.
	• The assessment and management of workforce need is aligned to consideration of areas for current and future focus.
	• Resource allocation decisions about funding of specific school programs and interventions, are student-centred and evidence-based.
	• Planning for targeted initiatives is managed effectively.
	• Risk minimisation processes have been established to ensure short-term and long-term planning for human and financial resources are efficient and effective.
Improvements	The review team support the following actions:
	• Review processes to monitor resource planning and projections regularly, to align with existing and changing priorities.
	• Recruit and develop staff to make the best use of available expertise.

Teaching quality

There is a college-wide commitment to the targeted and consistent support that underpins the College's improvement journey. A process to align agreed teacher practice and responsibilities, 'The Four Givens' with demonstrated student progress, is being embedded.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• A focus on the development of a culture of high expectations has been underpinned by the development, acceptance and commitment to 'The Four Givens'.
	• Beliefs about teaching and learning are understood and accepted within the learning environment as outlined in the context and ethos statements.
	• A college-wide approach to teaching is evident in staff acceptance of the CMOT.
	• Collaboration and engagement in professional discussions with colleagues within PLCs, is aligned to the peer coaching program (Como Grows).
	• Targeted intervention focused on explicit instruction in literacy and numeracy through the Intensive Learning Team has proved highly successful. This is recognised through consultancy being provided to numerous other schools.
Improvements	The review team support the following action:
	• Continue to embed the CMOT. Articulate clearly the alignment between instructional practice, PLCs, classroom observation and Como Grows.

Student achievement and progress

The College collects and analyses school-based information to complement systemic data in identifying students requiring targeted approaches for improvement. Unified endorsement for intervention strategies was articulated based on explicit data analysis of student progress.

Effectiveness	The review team validate the following:
	• Comparative NAPLAN[8] student achievement data are generally within the expected range in Year 7 and Year 9.
	• Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) performance has been within the expected range but below the expected mean since 2016.
	• ATAR participation rate has been well above the expected level since 2016.
	• Vocational education and training achievement is robust, leading to an attainment rate at or above the public school mean since 2016.
	• Online Literacy and Numeracy Assessment response strategies are improving student achievement.
	• The long-term commitment of the College to Progressive Achievement Tests has provided a strong baseline of data to confirm student progress.
Improvements	The review team support the following action:
	• Develop staff data literacy and embed processes for review and analysis of achievement and progress evidence, to inform planning at the individual, class and college levels.

Reviewers

Brett Hunt
Director, Public School Review

Susan Gilchrist
Principal, Morley 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 2022.

Stephen Baxter
A/Deputy Director General, Schools

References

1 National School Improvement Tool
2 Students at educational risk
3 Positive Behaviour Support
4 Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework
5 Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
6 Como Model of Teaching
7 Professional Learning Communities
8 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy