



Department of  
Education

**Shaping the future**

# Instrumental Music School Services

## 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

Operating from the former Maylands Primary School site, the Instrumental Music School Services (IMSS) provides music lessons, ensemble and performance opportunities and specialised equipment to public schools and their students.

Selection into the program is based on musical aptitude testing and other criteria.

Instrumental teachers are qualified musicians and registered teachers. They work with more than 400 primary and secondary public schools across Western Australia.

## School self-assessment validation

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

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

- Operating as a service to schools and students, the leadership team approached the self-assessment using the Standard as a guide, contextualising each domain to draw parallels with traditional school contexts.
- The leadership team and learning area coordinators (LACs) participated in the self-assessment during the 12 months leading up to the Electronic School Assessment Tool (ESAT) submission.
- The leadership team sought perspectives of allied professionals in relevant areas of the submission.
- A broad cross-section of staff, including representatives from regional areas, attended meetings during the validation visit, their perspectives validated the self-assessment of the leadership team.
- A series of 3 site visits to schools where the service is in operation, held on a second day of validation, provided insight into the service model, and supported the school judgements made in the Relationships and partnerships, Learning environment, Leadership and Teaching quality domains.
- Students at each school visited, provided information and their perspectives on their experiences accessing the IMSS program. As a representation of the service's approximately 20,000 students, this was invaluable in supporting validation of the service's self-assessment.

The following recommendations are made:

- Ensure alignment between the evidence selected for submission in the ESAT and the Public School Review Standard. Reduce the duplication of evidence throughout the submission.
- In future review processes, liaise with schools to provide a voice to families of students participating in IMSS programs to better support judgements made about parent satisfaction.

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### Relationships and partnerships

The program provides an opportunity for students from beginners to an elite level throughout Department of Education schools. There is a high level of satisfaction among the students who are selected for tuition.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Delivering lessons state-wide and throughout the pandemic, staff have developed a suite of online teaching and check-in resources using Connect to remain in contact with students, colleagues and parents.
- Progress in engaging with the Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework has grown rapidly over recent years as staff work with Aboriginal Elders and the Department of Education support, to contextualise their reconciliation journey.
- Close engagement with universities and schools that host the IMSS program ensure that there is a shared strategic approach to the provision of formal music education in Department schools.
- A service level agreement with the Australian Band and Orchestra Director's Association and other industry and professional memberships provide access to festival performance opportunities for students and their teachers.
- The strong relationship with the School Curriculum Standards Authority (SCSA) has seen staff engage with curriculum steering committees and other moderation activities to strengthen practice and connectedness between students and the syllabus.

#### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Collect parent satisfaction data biennially by conducting state-wide parent surveys.
- Build and embed connections with Aboriginal community members to support the continued development of a culturally responsive service.
- Continue to support the consistency of quality relationships between IMSS teachers and leaders in the schools where they provide service.

### Learning environment

The annual service agreement co-signed by schools and IMSS outlines the classroom, equipment and occupational health and safety requirements of hosting instrumental tuition in Department schools provided by the external teachers of the service.

#### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A growing staff awareness of academic and non-academic student data has led to a recent collection and analysis of formal attendance data to gauge student engagement with the learning program.
- There is a focus on monitoring the retention rates of students at key transition points. Staff take steps to mitigate the effects of primary to high school transition and during the middle high school years.
- Relationships with class music teachers, Principals and other host school contacts ensure follow up on student engagement and that students who exit the program are interviewed as per process.
- IMSS teachers find data relating to students at educational risk (SAER) invaluable in determining teaching approaches and meeting student needs. The data is provided by schools, through access to platforms such as SEQTA and Integris.

#### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Build opportunities for the student and parent voice to be heard and acted upon including further exploration of the proposed IMSS Student Council.
- Collect and report annually on whole-school student attendance, engagement and retention data.
- Develop an IMSS position on the minimum access level required by staff serving schools on platforms such as SEQTA and Compass to ensure risk minimisation when meeting students' needs.

## Leadership

A feature of the service has been long-standing stability in the senior leadership team. The current transition to a new team affords the service the opportunity to refresh and review its key priorities.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Performance development is aligned to the school plan and goals are set collaboratively by staff with their line managers.
- A highly motivated and committed group of middle leaders assist the executive team to drive school improvement throughout the service.
- The past 10 years has seen a significant growth in the range of leadership opportunities available to staff. The Cultural Engagement, Data, Mentoring and School Plan Consultation teams are examples.
- Leaders place priority on the delivery of explicit teaching, use of differentiation and the High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS) along with a focus on meeting the broad spectrum of student needs that the service provides statewide.
- Strategic student achievement targets in the business plan focus on engagement, retention and access to live performance opportunities.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Promote the service agreement throughout networks of Principals to ensure teaching staff have access to the equipment and facilities required to deliver the service.
- Engage all staff, including leaders and members of the School Plan Consultation team in the development of learning area plans, united under a clear and decisive service vision.
- Continue to develop the leadership capacity of learning area coordinators and other leadership aspirants.

## Use of resources

A unique resource management structure is in place for the service, supported by a central business support officer, school based staff, leaders in schools and studio teachers who account for instruments and repairs.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- A complex array of musical instruments are managed in conjunction with schools using the Musical Instrument Loan System (MILS). The system tracks end of year instrument exchanges between schools and the requirement for regular maintenance and repair.
- In the absence of a one-line budget for equipment maintenance, the musical instrument repair trust fund, established with the annual hire fees paid by participating students, pays for repair expenses.
- The executive team works with schools statewide to attempt to address all needs for local programs. Planning for staffing annually is targeted at approximately 190 full-time equivalent teachers.
- Strong relationships have been forged with universities to promote career opportunities at IMSS. Recruitment processes prioritise hiring staff with the ability to use HITS and differentiation techniques.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Engage with the Department's financial consultants to review the rigour of financial structures.
- Review and restructure budgetary processes to facilitate school plan priorities to enable the adequate provision of resources including the information and communications technology (ICT) hardware required for staff to fulfil their duties.

## Teaching quality

A shift in the approach to teaching studio music based on the research 'Music in Our Lives' (McPherson, Faulkner and Davidson 2012) has led to the implementation of HITS led by the woodwind LACs and their staff.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Teaching prioritises the building of a broad musical skill set that enables students to be lifelong musicians.
- Leadership staff and LACs work with their teams to identify lead teachers who champion the work of implementing HITS, differentiation strategies and moderation of standards.
- In the past 10 years the service has developed an evidence-based pedagogical framework. Using the HITS, staff are supported by professional learning and now extend this teaching approach to ensemble settings.
- The creation of assessment rubrics to ensure comparability of teacher judgements and alignment with expected standards is undertaken at learning area level.
- Rigorous and collegial debate among teaching staff and leaders has led to a review and reinstatement of previous approaches to the collection of student achievement data and moderation of assessment.
- Learning areas have commenced a process of identifying benchmark pieces and expected grade level standards. The woodwind LACs Mystery Marker activity is an example of established collegial moderation.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Develop whole-school data collection, analysis of pedagogical approaches, strengthen moderation and conduct the Department's School Culture Survey as a minimum level of engagement with the Quality Teaching Strategy.
- Design and implement whole school professional learning with a priority on the agreed differentiation approaches and the techniques articulated in the HITS to deliver consistent pedagogical practice.
- Provide broader access to mentoring for staff to support the implementation of whole-school practices.

## Student achievement and progress

Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) performance rehearsal days and the 11 annual ensemble festivals provide opportunities for staff to collaborate on standards and improved practice. Adjudicator feedback in workshops to ensemble conductors and directors is invaluable, specialised and expert in nature.

### Commendations

The review team validate the following:

- Year 12 ATAR IMSS students' data is reported to host schools, and staff liaise with classroom teachers and school leaders to maximise the feedback they receive on this data at the start of each year.
- IMSS staff work in collaboration with their host schools, to gain access to important student achievement, necessary emergency and medical and SAER data using each school's information platform.
- The IMSS program run between the Geographe Bay Music Program schools in Busselton presents a unique advance in the sharing of student achievement data being monitored by leadership staff.
- A deeper understanding of SCSA judging standards, is being fostered through the learning areas and led by middle leaders.
- The Rhythm Pilot Program, first held at Belmont City College, presents broader student access to a music education. The collection of data before and after participation demonstrates successful outcomes.

### Recommendations

The review team support the following:

- Leaders to ensure staff access to and engagement with student achievement data from entry and aptitude testing to the completion of Western Australian Certificate of Education studies to track the progress and growth in students' learning.
- Work collectively to engage with student achievement data through moderation and other collaborative opportunities to better inform classroom practice and track student outcomes.

## Reviewers

Rohan Smith  
**Director, Public School Review**

Travis Vladich  
**Principal, John Curtin College of the Arts  
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 scheduled for Term 4, 2025.



Melesha Sands  
**Deputy Director General, Schools**