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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Hambledon State School from 9 to 11 September 2015. It provides an evaluation of the school’s performance against the nine domains of the National School Improvement Tool. It also recommends improvement strategies for the school to consider in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The review and report were completed by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU). For more information about the SIU and the new reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the Department of Education and Training (DET) website.

1.2 School context

| Location: | 77-83 Stokes Street, Edmonton |
| Education region: | Far North Queensland |
| The school opened in: | 1887 |
| Year levels: | Prep to Year 6 |
| Current school enrolment: | 821 |
| Indigenous enrolments: | 27 per cent |
| Students with disability enrolments: | 8 per cent |
| Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value: | 932 |
| Year principal appointed: | 2015 |
| Number of teachers: | 34 |
| Nearby schools: | Bentley Park College, Isabella State School |
| Significant community partnerships: | Cairns and District Playgroup Association, Woolworths, Independent Growers Association |
| Unique school programs: | Breakfast program, Hambledon Playschool (Step up into education playgroup) |
1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of three reviewers.

The review consisted of:

- a pre-review audit of the school’s performance data and other school information
- consultation with the school’s Assistant Regional Director/Principal Supervisor
- a school visit of three days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal
  - Two deputy principals, the Head of Special Education Services (HOSES) and master teacher
  - Guidance officer, Year 1 Support Teacher Literacy and Numeracy (STLaN) teacher, behaviour support teacher, music and physical education teachers and four special education teachers
  - More than 28 classroom teachers, six teacher aides and two administration officers
  - 14 Year 6 students
  - Parents and Citizens’ Association(P&C) president, 11 parents and tuckshop convenor
  - Local high school, outside school hours care coordinator, local early childhood provider, school playgroup coordinator, school chaplain and local councillor.

1.4 Review team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hugh Goodfellow</th>
<th>Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leann Griffith-Baker</td>
<td>Peer reviewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Hall</td>
<td>External reviewer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.5 Reading the report

The executive summary outlines key findings from the review. The key improvement strategies prioritise future direction for improvement. The executive summary should be read along with the findings and improvement strategies outlined in the nine domains which provide a strategic view for improvement.
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The school has reviewed school strategic planning documents and identified key foci for the present year.

  Writing is a focus and staff and community members identified this as a school priority. A consistency of approach to writing practices across the school has led to improvement in student outcomes. The 2015 Year 3 and Year 5 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results are evidence of this improvement.

- Staff are committed to improving the outcomes for student.

  The leadership team have identified that greater levels of communication and collaboration between staff members’ needs to occur so that the planning and delivery of key learning programs and teaching strategies are provided in a more consistent way.

- There is clear evidence school leaders view reliable data about school performance as essential to the continuous improvement of student outcomes.

  The school has a reporting schedule and collects a range of data. The reporting schedule includes timelines and targets to be achieved. There is a need to refine the schedule to reflect current school practice.

- The school has established a responsible behaviour plan for students implemented through the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) initiative.

  School leadership acknowledges that the present implementation of this plan is not meeting the needs of the school and the behaviour of some students is impacting on student learning. Many classroom learning environments that were observed demonstrated limited challenge and engagement practices to meet the needs of all students. Teachers identified that behaviours of some students restricted their pedagogical choices.

- The school has reviewed school planning documents to ensure that they are compliant with departmental requirements.

  Units of work are now predominately drawn from the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resource. Most year levels are working together to plan units of work. A consistent delivery of the curriculum is beginning to develop across most year levels.

- The school principal has targeted funds to support a number of key leadership positions in the school to drive the improvement agenda.

  These include an additional half-time deputy principal, curriculum coordinator, behaviour support teacher, lead teachers and explicit teaching coaching positions.
School leaders are explicit about their desire to see effective teaching occurring throughout the school.

Teachers use the *Explicit Teaching Model* which is evident in all classrooms. The leadership team make class observations focused on explicit teaching and feedback cycles which includes discussions of specific teaching practices.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Review the Positive Behaviour for Learning program to create and maintain a safe and engaging school environment.

- Develop structures that enable staff, students and parents to have input into the decision making practices of the school.

- Engage all students in their learning to ensure that they experience meaningful and personal success.

- Embed a school-wide structure that enables teachers to collaboratively plan units of work to ensure consistency across year levels and vertical alignment through the school.

- Maximise the effectiveness of all leadership positions within the school through strategic coordination of roles and responsibilities to promote consistency of curriculum planning and pedagogical delivery.
3. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains

3.1 An explicit improvement agenda

Findings

The principal has recently been permanently appointed to the school. There has been a number of principals during the past four years and a 40 per cent change in staff in the past 18 months. Staff, parents and community members have a belief that this has impacted on the performance and the effective running of the school.

The principal articulates a commitment to improvement. The school has reviewed school strategic planning documents and identified key foci for the present year. Writing is a focus and staff and community members identified this as a school priority. A consistency of approach to writing practices across the school has led to improvement in student outcomes. The recent 2015 Year 3 and Year 5 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results are evidence of this improvement.

The leadership team and staff are concerned about the school performance. There is a belief that the school can achieve higher outcomes for students. This is reflected in the targets that have been set for 2016. Behaviour of students is having a major impact on teaching.

Discussions are occurring and action plans are being developed to realign the school’s priorities. Analysis of school data is being used to develop a whole school understanding and commitment to changes required. The leadership team have identified that greater levels of collaboration between staff members needs to occur so that the planning and delivery of key programs and teaching strategies are more consistent.

Staff are committed to improving the outcomes for students and to developing a more systemic and consistent approach to teaching and learning.

Roles and responsibilities for leadership positions are in place. A deep understanding of expectations of roles, especially of recently established positions is in a developmental phase.

The school does communicate to the community its expectations for students to regularly attend school. A focus on promoting student engagement, particularly for priority groups, and high expectations of learning is not as evident.

Supporting data

Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Strategic Plan 2012-2015, Explicit Improvement Agenda 2015, pedagogical framework, curriculum framework, 2016 NAPLAN targets, pupil free day agenda, school newsletters, school website, staff, student and community interviews, Headline Indicators, School Data Profile.
**Improvement strategies**

Develop and implement an improvement agenda that has a narrow focus with clear targets and timelines that are communicated to staff, students and parents.

Develop structures that enable staff, students and parents to have input into the decision making practices of the school.

Embed a depth of understanding of leadership roles and structures to promote consistency of curriculum planning and delivery.
3.2 Analysis and discussion of data

Findings
The school has a reporting schedule and collects a range of data. The reporting schedule includes timelines and targets to be achieved. There is a need to refine the schedule to reflect current school practice.

There is clear evidence school leaders view reliable data about school performance and in particular NAPLAN as essential to the continuous improvement of student outcomes. Recent communication with staff about this data outlined the areas of successful achievement and areas for improvement. Comparisons were drawn between the school and similar schools data.

NAPLAN 2015 data identifies that the school achievement results are comparable with other similar schools. The school is achieving below the national average in all areas. There was an improvement in 2015 in Year 3 and Year 5 writing results.

With the recent reintroduction of Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) units of work and five-week data collection cycles the teachers are collecting a range of systemic, diagnostic and class-based data to inform their practices.

Staff capability in the analysis, interpretation and use of diagnostic and systemic data to inform teaching practice varies across the school. Some pockets of the school work collaboratively using data. There is limited evidence of opportunities for staff to discuss student achievement data, moderate teacher judgement and collaboratively use the data to inform future teaching.

The use of data to systematically track and monitor student progress is not consistent across the school.

The school uses OneSchool to collect and store data on student behaviour, achievement and as a school reporting function. The use of OneSchool as a tracking tool of student performance is developing.

Supporting data

Improvement strategies
Review assessment tools, documents and consistent monitoring procedures to reflect the present and future school practices.

Provide professional development for staff to establish a clear understanding of how to effectively analyse results from assessment tools.

Develop teacher capacity to utilise data to influence teaching practices.
3.3 A culture that promotes learning

Findings

All parents are welcomed at the school and most parents speak highly of the school within the community. A small and active Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) supports the school learning priorities.

The school views parents and families as integral members of the school community. The 2015 School Opinion Surveys (SOS) indicate that 88.5 per cent of parents, 83 per cent of students and 84.6 per cent of staff indicate this is a good school. Most students have a sense of belonging to the school.

The school is aware that there is an increasing number of students from varying cultural backgrounds. The school community recognises change to the local demographics. Students identify as representing 21 cultures and 9 per cent of students identify as Language Background other than English. School-wide targeted programs to meet the needs of these students are yet to be established.

School attendance rate data indicates that this school is slightly lower than other state schools with Semester 1, 2015 data demonstrating 11.5 per cent of students attending for less than 85 per cent of the school year. Student attendance is currently above 91 per cent. The attendance of Indigenous students is less than their non-Indigenous peers. The school promotes regular attendance in the newsletter during the year.

The school has established a responsible behaviour plan for students implemented through the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) initiative. The PB4L team meets fortnightly and school rules are both visible and known by students. School leadership acknowledges that the present implementation of this plan is not meeting the needs of the school.

A number of students in many year levels exhibit inappropriate behaviours and while the school has policies, these appear to have little impact in practice. Many classrooms exhibit disruptive behaviour which impacts on student learning. Much of the time of the school leaders is taken up dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

Staff morale is below 50 per cent and has decreased this year, as evidenced in the 2015 staff survey (SOS) and interviews with staff.

School Disciplinary Absences have increased in 2014 and 2015 and are currently above the average state rate.

Supporting data

Strategic Plan 2012-2015, Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Explicit Improvement Agenda 2015, School Data Profile, professional development program 2015, school website, school newsletters, budget overview, staff, student and leadership team interviews.
**Improvement strategies**

Review the PB4L to create and maintain a safe and engaging school environment.

Review student behaviour data and actively involve all staff in the process to define the appropriate actions required for school improvement.
3.4 Targeted use of school resources

Findings

The school principal has targeted funds to support a number of key positions in the school. These include an additional half time deputy principal, curriculum coordinator, behaviour support teacher, lead teachers and explicit teaching coaching positions. It is recognised that the coordination of these roles to support classroom teaching practices is a critical factor in their effectiveness.

The full time master teacher has worked with Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 teachers. Release time for Watching Others Work (WOW) is available for teachers who volunteer to participate.

The Support Teacher Literacy and Numeracy (STLaN) allocation of 1.8 Full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers is shared across all year levels in the school.

Twenty hours a week of teacher aide time has been allocated to work with higher achieving students in Year 1. This program focuses on reading comprehension and includes approximately 50 students.

Teacher aides are timetabled to classrooms to support students in literacy blocks. Each class from Year 1 to Year 6 have a base allocation of three hours a week. An additional hour is provided to Year 2 classrooms for NAPLAN preparation and to other classes where individual students require additional behaviour support.

The majority of the students with a disability requiring significant adjustments are supported within the special education facility. This houses four classroom spaces and a designated playground. Teacher aide allocation for students with disabilities has been prioritised to support other students in mainstream classroom, with one special education teacher coordinating support for classroom teachers.

The current bank balance is $853 575 including Great Results Guarantee (GRG) funds of $178 917.

The school is generally well-presented. Year level classes are located in close proximity to one another, whenever possible, supporting collegial connections within teaching teams. The school’s ‘learning lounge’ offers significant versatility for future learning opportunities.

There is a collection of laptops in the library that are used by classes as a computer lab. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards and a small bank of computers. Some iPads and iPods are available across the school. Staff and students report that access to computers is limited and that resources are unreliable. The work of the computer technician is valued.
Supporting data

Strategic Plan 2012-2015, Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Explicit Improvement Agenda 2015, Great Results Guarantee 2015, budget overview, staff, student and leadership team interviews.

Improvement strategies

Maximise the effectiveness of the additional support positions within the school through strategic coordination of roles and responsibilities.

Use all physical spaces within the school and ensure technology is accessible to all staff and students.
3.5 An expert teaching team

Findings

The leadership team value the professional development of teachers and recognise the importance of coaching and mentoring. The principal and other leaders are aware of the need to attract and retain the best possible teachers and have used personal networks to recruit staff.

There is a documented professional learning plan and the school has arrangements for mentoring and instructional feedback. The school has evidence to support that there is a culture of professional learning and teachers engage in WOW to strengthen professional practice and to support the quality of instruction.

Some teachers visit each other’s classrooms to observe and reflect on pedagogical practices. These are articulated in pedagogical framework of *Explicit Instruction* which aligns with regional practices.

Teachers are eager to expand their current curriculum knowledge and are committed to improve their current teaching practices. There is a formal process for conducting professional development discussions with all teaching staff.

There are some formal processes for communication with staff. In the 2015 SOS staff survey, 66.7 per cent of staff indicate *there is good communication at this school*.

The principal has engaged the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Act for Kids to work with the leadership team. The school initiated the recent establishment of the deputy principal network meeting. The local principal cluster has held one meeting this year which the principal attended.

Supporting data

Strategic Plan 2012-2015, Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Explicit Improvement Agenda 2015, School Data Profile, 2015 School Opinion Survey results, Headline Indicators, professional development program 2015, budget overview, pedagogical framework, staff, student and leadership team interviews, school professional development days.

Improvement strategies

Maximise the use of staff expertise to embed coaching and mentoring processes within the school

Embed the developing performance planning process to align staff development to school priorities.

Develop a workforce plan, with regional office, to provide stability within the school staff.
3.6 Systematic curriculum delivery

Findings

The school has recently reviewed school planning documents to ensure that they were compliant with the requirements of the Australian Curriculum and Department of Education and Training (DET). Units of work are now predominately drawn from the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resource.

Most year levels are working together to plan units of work. This is beginning to develop a consistency of delivery across most year levels.

The unit assessments are as recommended by C2C. Moderation of assessment occurs and provides some direction for future learning. The school has a Key Learning Area (KLA) assessment guide. Due to the recent change of direction this is not reflective of the school’s practices.

Practices to support teachers plan commenced in 2015. Development of units by backward mapping from C2C assessments has been the focus. This practice is yet to be embedded and there is no evidence of monitoring or evaluation of units.

Many teachers were able to talk to and show the alignment of unit plans, classroom plans and teaching and learning. Some teachers were unable to see this alignment or show planning.

The vertical alignment of curriculum planning is developing. Tracking and recording of changes that occur to meet the needs of students are not evident in school planning documents as yet.

The school is developing programs to support teachers deliver the curriculum. The most noticeable is the development of the writing program.

The school reporting processes to parents of student progress is recognised by parents as providing relevant information. Parents commented positively on the willingness of teachers to discuss student needs and progress on a regular basis.

Supporting data

Interviews with staff and the leadership team, curriculum plan, teacher planning, pedagogical framework, English and writing program, classroom observations, School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, school website, newsletters, Annual Implementation Plan 2015.

Improvement strategies

Implement a school-wide unit planner for teachers to use to plan learning episodes, identify local school needs and priorities and evaluate the effectiveness of units.

Embed a school-wide structure that enables teachers to collaboratively plan units of work to ensure consistency across year levels and vertical alignment through the school.
Implement a practice to moderate the success of units. Ensure that recommendations for future units are recorded.
3.7 Differentiated teaching and learning

Findings

The school leadership team acknowledges that differentiated teaching and learning is an area of developmental need. The recent restructure of the curriculum framework has created a focus on teaching the core curriculum within units of work. This has affected teachers’ understanding of how to engage, challenge and extend students of all ability levels while delivering the renewed curriculum.

Differentiated classroom structures such as reading ability groups exist in most classes. There is some movement between classes to cater for needs in specific subject areas. This is a localised decision between teachers rather than a school strategy. Some Information and communications technology (ICT) is being used, when available to provide more individualised programs.

Guide to making judgements’ documents are shared with students and used by some teachers to explicitly teach different content to ability groups within the class.

The student support committee meets weekly to address the needs of students with disabilities and learning difficulties. Classroom teachers complete a support referral form and attend the meeting to discuss particular students.

Students identified as having learning needs are included in programs coordinated by the STLaN team. Additional teacher aide time assists in the delivery of this program.

It is recognised that some students require significant adjustments to their learning programs. An Individual Curriculum Plan (ICP) has been completed to document these adjustments for each student with verified disabilities. ICPs exist for students not achieving within two years of their peers in English and mathematics. The process of making curriculum adjustments is strengthening within the school culture and parents are included in the negotiation of the ICPs.

Teachers report that some assessment items do not provide detailed information about student progress which can inform future learning activities. This impacts on teachers’ ability to adjust their teaching to cater for individual student needs.

There is provision of enrichment for Year 1 students in reading; however, there is limited evidence of a systematic, school-wide approach to providing additional opportunities for higher performing students across the curriculum.

The use of individual student goals in writing is evident across the school, supporting the school’s priority for the year. These goals have generally stayed the same for at least a term. A consistent process for students to reflect on the achievement of these goals throughout the school is yet to be developed.

Face-to-face interviews occur with parents during the year. More detailed and regular communication regarding student progress is generally reliant on parental involvement and presence at school.
**Supporting data**


**Improvement strategies**

Ensure that appropriate data is efficiently collected to inform teaching practices that are relevant to the diverse learning needs of students.

Develop school practices through which students develop learning goals and use scales of proficiency to monitor, articulate and celebrate their learning progress.

Increase access for students to engage with relevant ICT to support student learning and differentiation.
3.8 Effective pedagogical practices

Findings

School leaders are explicit about their desire to see effective teaching occurring throughout the school. They recognise that this is the key to improving student learning outcomes.

The school has a pedagogical framework. This is based on research and aligns with the framework suggested by the region.

Teachers use the *Explicit Teaching Model* which is evident in all classrooms. The leadership team members make class observations focused on explicit teaching and feedback cycles which includes discussions of specific teaching practices.

Many classroom learning environments that were observed demonstrated limited challenge and engagement practices to meet the needs of all students. Teachers identified that behaviours of some students restricted their pedagogical choices.

Teachers provide some feedback to students about their learning. Guide to making judgements are shared with students in some classes and used to inform students of achievement.

Individual student target setting has occurred in writing. Targets for improving classroom performance are not evident in other areas of the curriculum. Decreasing upper two bands data indicates that higher achieving students’ needs are not being addressed.

The school is committed to the priority of writing and evidence exists that teachers are implementing a school-wide program to improve students' ability and skill to be effective communicators through increasing vocabulary and analysing the structures of good writing.

Supporting data

Strategic Plan 2012-2015, Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Explicit Improvement Agenda 2015, Great Results Guarantee 2015, professional development program 2015, school website, school newsletters, budget overview, pedagogical framework, assessment and reporting framework, staff, student and leadership team interviews, school professional development days

Improvement strategies

Include all teaching staff in the refinement of the school's pedagogical framework.

Provide teachers with ongoing detailed feedback on the implementation of the agreed pedagogical framework utilising an instructional leadership model.

Actively involve all staff in the collection, analysis and moderation of student work samples to reflect on the impact of teaching practices.
3.9 School and community partnerships

Findings

The schools partnerships appear to be strategically targeted. They are successfully implemented and there is evidence that the partnerships are adding value to the operation of the school and value to the community.

The school’s pre-prep playgroup program is conducted by the school as part of the *Step Up into Education* initiative. The program works with both parents and their children as they prepare for school.

The school has fostered linkages with the local kindergarten and long day-care centres. The established relationships assist in the smooth transition of students into the school and entry to the Prep classes. Orientation visits and transition days have been established providing opportunities for pre-prep students to transition to school.

Partnerships with families, local businesses and community organisations to access resources not available within the school for the purposes of improving student outcomes are established, or being considered, by school leaders. Partnerships with organisations such as Hambledon House and Wu Chopperen have a student wellbeing focus for either individual students or target groups.

The chaplain’s breakfast program is supported through donations of food by the local Woolworths supermarket. The local Independent Grocers’ Association (IGA) store also supports the school financially.

A small and committed Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) manages the canteen and uniform shop.

Formal processes to systematically monitor and review the impact of established partnerships on student learning outcomes are yet to be established. Anecdotal feedback describes the partnerships as positive.

Parents and families are recognised as partners in their children’s education. The school conducts parent/teacher interviews at key reporting junctures. A regular newsletter is sent to families, through online arrangements and a signboard at the entrance to the school advises of key messages. Class newsletters are usually published each term.

Transitions to high school are organised with the local high school. Many students transition to alternative high schools. There is a desire for furthering these partnerships and the expanding of the transition program.

Supporting data

Strategic Plan 2012-2015, Annual Implementation Plan 2015, professional development program 2015, school website, school newsletters, budget overview, staff, student and leadership team interviews.
Improvement strategies

Identify and formalise partnerships with community groups and agencies that will further support the learning and well-being needs of target groups within the school.

Extend the high school transition program to include other junior secondary programs.
4. Follow-up timelines

- School to publish the executive summary on their website within two weeks.
- School to meet with Assistant Regional Director to discuss review findings and improvement strategies.