

Cairns State Special School

Executive Summary





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1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from School and Region Reviews (SRR) at **Cairns State Special School** from **9 to 11 August 2022**.

The report presents 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 implement in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies that prioritise future directions for improvement.

Schools will publish the executive summary on the school website within two weeks of receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their Assistant Regional Director (ARD) to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information regarding SRR and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SRR [website](#).

1.1 Review team

Bradley Clark	Internal reviewer, SRR (review chair)
Marcus Donaldson	Peer Reviewer
Nicholas Alexander	Peer Reviewer
Jenny Hart	External Reviewer



1.2 School context

Indigenous land name:	Gimuy-Walubarra Yidinji
Location:	Windarra Street, Woree
Education region:	Far North Queensland Region
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12
Enrolment:	107
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	34 per cent
Students with disability percentage:	100 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	933
Year principal appointed:	Term 2, 2022



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, deputy principal, Head of Department (HOD), Business Manager (BM), guidance officer, 24 teachers, 15 teacher aides, two administrative assistants, four cleaners, facilities officer, computer technician, Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president and vice president, eight parents, 15 students and a volunteer.

Community and business groups:

- Nil.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Woree State School principal, Woree State High School Head of Department (HOD), and Paramatta Park State School Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP) Head of Special Education Services (HOSES).

Government and departmental representatives:

- Two regional managers for inclusion, two Speech Language Pathologists (SLP), Advisory Visiting Teacher (AVT) – Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), AVT Assistive Technology (AT), physiotherapist, two nurses and ARD.

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

Parents express feeling a sense of belonging in the school.

Parents speak highly of the school and feel valued as partners in their child's education. Parents and families are recognised as crucial members of the school community. They describe that they value how the staff know their child and develop trusting relationships. Staff members have a strong commitment to their students and are able to speak in relation to each individual student, discussing their strengths and next steps for learning.

Teachers demonstrate a strong knowledge of student Individual Curriculum Plan (ICP) goals which create a framework for differentiation.

Processes are established for the development, completion and storage of ICPs. Parents comment that they are involved in the ICP process and appreciate the knowledge and experience of teachers in meeting their child's learning needs. Staff have developed expertise in the use of adaptive technologies, including the use of specialised software and device access options, such as switching to support students to access their learning programs and demonstrate achievement of their ICP goals. ICPs form the basis of teaching, learning, assessment and reporting within an age-appropriate context.

Teachers are committed to the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning.

Leaders articulate the need for systematic curriculum delivery ensuring consistent teaching and learning expectations. Student learning is aligned to ICPs for all students in Prep to Year 10. Senior students in Years 11 and 12 complete a Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA) aligned to the Guideline for Individual Learning (GIL). Aspects of systematic curriculum delivery are apparent through team curriculum planning days, literacy and numeracy planners, a curriculum map, concept organisers and the use of age-appropriate contexts for learning. A whole-school curriculum plan aligned to the Australian Curriculum (AC) as indicated in the P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework (P-12 CARF) is yet to be developed.

School leaders have developed school-wide processes to strengthen an expert teaching team.

The principal and school leaders are committed to building a cohesive leadership team to lead and support the strategic direction of the school. Teaching staff members discuss past practices of sharing learning at staff meetings and within their teaching teams. Teachers and teacher aides discuss the school's Annual Performance Development Processes (APDP) as authentic and actioned. They are encouraged to seek out professional learning. All staff meet with school leaders to discuss their plans, and cycles of review are established. Leaders acknowledge that as a new team they need time to build shared understanding, and the instructional leadership required, to lead the school Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA), school priorities and operational processes.



Staff express an eagerness to play an active role in delivering consistent, high-yield pedagogical practices.

It is apparent the school has many highly skilled educators committed to delivering high-quality outcomes for all learners. Information gathered from staff surveys indicates that teaching staff seek clarity and direction as to the agreed pedagogical approaches of the school. Most staff members outline a desire to implement consistent approaches to support the literacy development of students. Expectations for differentiation and a range of High Impact Teaching (HIT) strategies including goal setting, assistive technology and multiple exposures for learning are outlined in a pedagogical practice document. Expected pedagogical approaches identified by the school are yet to be identified by most teachers.

Staff work collaboratively to support all students to be successfully engaged in their learning.

The principal recognises the importance of having a precise improvement agenda that supports a cohesive, whole-school approach to enhancing student outcomes. They model a strong commitment focused on improving learning and wellbeing outcomes for all students. The vision statement, five values, and purpose created at the time of foundation in 2017 are yet to be reflected or referred to in current conversations with staff and leaders. The principal outlines a plan to redefine this vision in the next strategic planning cycle to provide staff with greater clarity regarding the school's core business and ways of working.

School leaders identify types of data that are collected to inform student learning.

A school-developed monitoring tool is used to track improvement for mathematics and personal and social capability. There is an expectation that data obtained from diagnostic assessments is updated on a whole-school data log for each student. Staff comment that the data is used to inform curriculum planning and differentiation strategies. Teachers discuss that recording student results in the data log over the past two years has been inconsistent. Systematic processes to support the regular analysis and discussion of data at a school, cohort and individual level are yet to be apparent.

School leaders are taking a strategic approach to understanding the context of the school through a range of consultation processes.

Staff comment they appreciate the consultative approach school leaders have adopted and the opportunity to have input into the future professional learning agenda. This includes seeking feedback at staff meetings, staff and parent surveys, conducting a scan and assess and engaging in ongoing dialogue with staff members. Staff value the greater presence of the leadership team in classrooms enabling a stronger understanding of classroom contexts.

A culture of collegiality and support amongst classroom and sector teams is apparent.

Staff wellbeing is a school priority and supported by a wellbeing committee. Most teachers speak highly of the opportunity to work in their teaching teams and acknowledge the professional and collegial support they receive from their colleagues. Staff consistently



express they are committed to implementing agreed upon whole-school approaches and express eagerness to engage in associated professional learning opportunities.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Work collaboratively with regional support and professional networks to develop and quality assure a whole-school curriculum plan aligned to P-12 CARF requirements.

Develop strategies and processes, including Quality Assurance (QA) measures, to support the instructional leadership capability of all leaders to lead, manage and monitor school improvement.

Collaboratively review, refine and set agreed pedagogical approaches aligned to the delivery of the EIA and priority areas for improvement.

Collaboratively develop a vision and values that relate to the educational outcomes of all students in an inclusive and supportive environment.

Develop a data plan and systematic processes, including ongoing discussion and analysis of data, to inform the implementation of the teaching and learning cycle.