

Cairns State Special School

Executive Summary



School
Improvement
Unit



Queensland
Government



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1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Cairns State Special School** from the **19 to 21 of February 2018**.

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 consider 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 the SIU and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SIU [website](#).

1.1 Review team

Kate Russ	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
David Rogers	Internal reviewer
Jenny Hart	Senior reviewer

1.2 School context

Location:	Windarra Street, Woree
Education region:	Far North Queensland Region
Year opened:	2017
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12
Enrolment:	58.2 students Full-time equivalent (FTE) 39.2 students FTE additional impairments
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	25 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	100 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	n/a
Year principal appointed:	May, 2016
Full-time equivalent staff:	26.5
Significant partner schools/networks:	Woree State School and Woree State High School - SAFEST Committee, Far North Queensland Region – Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), Inclusive Practices and Independent Public School (IPS) principal/school networks
Significant community partnerships/ networks:	Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C), school council, The Resilience Project – Official Partnership Program, Endeavour Foundation - Disability and Community Services, ARC Disability Services Inc., Cairns Paediatrics, Connected Care, Rotary Club of Cairns, Woree Tavern



<p>Significant school programs:</p>	<p>Whole-school curriculum commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • junior school Prep to Year 2, middle school Years 3 to 6, junior secondary Years 7 to 10, senior secondary Years 11 to 12, • visual arts specialist program • music specialist program • physical education specialist program. <p>Whole-school daily physical activity program</p> <p>Whole-school communication commitment</p> <p>Hospitality program</p> <p>Horticulture program</p> <p>Whole-school student leadership program</p> <p>Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program</p> <p>The True All School program</p> <p>Education Support Program (8 per cent out of home care, Professional Learning Teams (PLT)</p> <p>Professional Development (PD)</p> <p>Investing for Success (I4S)</p> <p>Information Communication Technologies (ICT)</p> <p>Special Education</p> <p>Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing</p> <p>Induction and mandatory training program</p>
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1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, deputy principal, curriculum coordinator, 15 teachers, nine teacher aides, Business Manager (BM), four parents, P&C representative, school council chair, 20 students, Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), advisory teacher – Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ACC), school-based ICT technician and five cleaners.

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD.



1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2017/2018	Strategic Plan 2017-2020
Investing for Success 2018	School Data Profile (Semester 2, 2017)
Headline Indicators (Semester 2, 2017)	School budget overview
OneSchool	Senior Education and Training (SET) plan
Professional learning plan 2017	Individual Curriculum Plans (ICP)
School pedagogical framework	Staff and Parent handbook
School data plan	Student reports
Responsible Behaviour Plan	School newsletters and website
Curriculum planning documents	School Opinion Survey (2017)
School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework	



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The principal is leading all staff members in committing to the school's core objective to provide personalised and relevant opportunities for all students to achieve their potential and have a voice and choice in their learning and pathway.

A common belief in high expectations is articulated by all parents and staff members, in addition to a shared commitment to establish and maintain mutually respectful relationships across the school community. Significant importance is placed on positive and caring relationships as a foundation for successful learning. All staff members uphold the belief that the school needs to provide a safe and supportive learning environment where every student is able to experience success every day.

Community members and parents applaud the culture of the school that embraces all individuals.

Parents commend the inclusive and personalised nature of support provided for their child, and all staff articulate high expectations for the learners of the school. Parents articulate they feel valued as part of their child's educational team, and express they have the utmost respect and trust in the staff of the school.

The leadership team acknowledges that the development and implementation of a whole-school curriculum plan is a priority for the school in 2018.

A 'Cairns State Special School Curriculum – Our Commitment' provides an overview of the school's philosophy and beliefs about curriculum and the way in which students learn. There is a commitment to developing school curriculum units that meet the diverse learning needs of the school population. The school is in the early stages of the implementation of a newly- developed curriculum planning overview and unit plan templates that align to the content descriptions of the Australian Curriculum (AC). These templates are currently being unpacked with teachers using exemplars to build common understandings of the expected curriculum planning processes.

The school's pedagogical framework highlights high-yield teaching practices and sets out expectations regarding teaching procedures.

The implementation of the pedagogical framework is in its initial stages with teacher understanding and implementation of key components at differing levels. The leadership team is aware that the framework requires further unpacking to build the consistent implementation of agreed practices. The leadership team acknowledges that staff members have been immersed in the framework at this time and that further unpacking of the framework will occur.



The school leadership team clearly articulates the belief that the collection of reliable, authentic and meaningful data to provide a detailed, holistic profile for individual students is crucial to inform future student learning, and reflect distance travelled.

The school has developed its own assessment framework comprising a number of diagnostic assessments. Formal school-wide assessment time frames are developed with specific weeks nominated each term for the collection and moderation of data. There is a clear expectation that teachers will analyse and utilise data to understand their learners. Staff members are in the beginning stages of collecting, analysing and using this information to monitor student progress and set next steps for learning.

All staff members express the belief that all students in this school are capable of learning when they are appropriately motivated, able to access appropriate learning and given the necessary supports to engage in learning.

Teachers are striving to provide motivating and challenging classroom activities to meet the identified needs of students. Curriculum planning documents demonstrate how the different needs of students are addressed and teachers are confident in talking about the different learning needs of the students in their classes. Differentiation is a feature of all teachers' practice. Some teachers require support to further develop a repertoire of practice to differentiate the curriculum for the diverse learners in their classroom.

The school has established practices to enable teaching teams to share their strategies and achievements.

All teachers are aligned with a Professional Learning Team (PLT) that meets weekly. All PLTs have a leader that provides guidance, direction and support for colleagues. The principal and deputy principal coach the PLT leaders to build their leadership capacity. These teams have enabled cohesion between the teachers within a sector. Teachers value this approach and view this as an important way to operate to ensure the continuity of a culture of collaboration.

The school recognises the value of partnerships with families and cluster schools, and is beginning to look outwards for the benefit of the school.

Partnerships with local businesses and community organisations are in the initial stages of development and will take some time to formalise. The school council has commenced looking for mutually beneficial partnerships to support students transitioning from school. School staff members and parents indicate the express purpose of any partnership is to improve outcomes for students.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop and implement a whole-school curriculum framework aligned to the implementation of the full AC as stated in the P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework (CARF).

Collaboratively develop and implement an observation and feedback process aligned to the expected practices of the pedagogical framework and the school's Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA).

Continue the development of the data collection processes and their utilisation in teacher conversations and monitoring of student progress to include all curriculum areas.

Enhance professional learning opportunities for staff members to continue to develop their knowledge and capability to differentiate the AC to suit the diverse learning needs of students in their classrooms.