

Bellenden Ker State School

School Review Report





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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 **Bellenden Ker State School** from **16 to 17 October 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

Stephen Bobby

Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)

Jason Manttan

Peer reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	Harvey Creek Road, Bellenden Ker
Education region:	Far North Queensland Region
Year opened:	1922
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Enrolment:	12
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	50 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	nil
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	888
Year principal appointed:	October 2017 (acting)
Day 8 Staffing Teacher Full-time equivalent numbers:	1.51 – teaching 1.05 - non-teaching
Significant partner schools:	Bartle Frere State School, Babinda P-12 State School
Significant community partnerships:	Babinda community
Significant school programs:	Explicit teaching, guided reading, Primary Connections, Sound Waves, Casey Caterpillar



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, classroom teacher, teacher aide, five parents, Business Manager (BM), school cleaner and 12 students.

Community and business groups:

- Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) representative.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal Babinda P-12 State School and principal Bartle Frere State School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- Principal coach and ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2018	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2018
Investing for Success 2018	School Data Profile (Semester 1, 2018)
Headline Indicators (Semester 2, 2017)	School budget overview
OneSchool	Curriculum planning documents
School improvement targets	School newsletters and website
School pedagogical framework	Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students
School data plan	School Opinion Survey
School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework	Report Card and NAPLAN Update Semester 1 2018



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The principal and staff members are united and committed to improving learning and wellbeing outcomes for all students in the school.

High expectations are articulated for all students to engage in learning activities presented by teachers. The catchphrase the principal articulates with all members of the community is that 'all students attending the school are capable of achieving great things'.

The principal is recognised as being visible across the school, working closely with staff and students.

Parents express that the dedication and sincerity of the principal and staff, and the welcoming, open environment of the school are greatly appreciated within the school community. Staff members demonstrate an understanding of the importance of positive and caring relationships for successful learning, and there is evidence of mutually respectful relationships between students, staff members and parents. Students speak highly of the care afforded them by all staff members.

All staff articulate a collegial culture and sense of team.

Teacher aides are regarded as equal partners in the teaching team. Teacher aides are a valued human resource working in partnership with teachers to deliver the curriculum and learning interventions for students.

The principal emphasises a collaborative approach to enacting the school's improvement agenda.

The principal and staff members are implementing an Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) that has three priority areas focusing on improving learning outcomes for students in reading, writing and rigorous explicit teaching. The Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) outlines in detail the key actions to be undertaken by the teaching team to accomplish the identified improvement goals. The principal articulates that the school is beginning its journey to embed consistent practice in all elements of the EIA. They articulate that further work needs to be undertaken to ensure consistency of practice occurs across the school with all members of the teaching team implementing commonly agreed strategies for the teaching and learning process.

The principal views ongoing professional learning by the entire teaching team as central to improving outcomes for students.

A culture of lifelong learning is shared amongst staff with some teaching team members engaging in undergraduate studies in teaching and business. The principal seeks feedback on personal teaching practices by engaging the principal of Bartle Frere State School to observe their teaching. The principal articulates extending observation and feedback to others in the teaching team, and aligning this Professional Development (PD) with the school's EIA.



The principal acknowledges the development of student learning goals as a critical component to support the EIA and to assist students to take ownership of their learning.

Some students speak of the encouragement provided by teachers in assisting them to monitor their own learning. Most students are aware of their current reading level. Their knowledge of the next steps for their learning is less clear. Collaborative learning goals developed by teachers and students are yet to be embedded in the teaching and learning process across the school.

Teachers provide regular and timely feedback to students, formally and informally, based on their classroom work

Students express that feedback helps to support their learning. Some students are able to clearly articulate their next steps for learning or identify strategies for improvement. A culture of feedback is developing within the pedagogical practices of teachers. The principal recognises this is an area for continued development.

A curriculum, assessment and reporting plan aligned to the Australian Curriculum (AC) is developed.

Currently, there is a range of curriculum planning capabilities across the school and the process relies predominantly on the expertise of the principal to ensure that all of the required AC content and standards are being taught and assessed. The principal expresses a desire to further develop all staff members' understanding of the AC to allow them to be more actively involved in the curriculum decision-making process at the school.

There is a positive tone in the school that highlights the caring, polite and inclusive interactions between staff and students.

Staff members ensure that all students and staff feel they are part of the Bellenden Ker school family through celebration of personal milestones, including birthdays and other achievements. Staff and students ensure that everyone's birthday is celebrated at school by providing a birthday celebration cake.

Staff members recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents and the wider community to maximise the learning outcomes for students.

All staff contribute considerable energy into building positive partnerships with parents as demonstrated by their efforts in being available for informal discussions and involvement in community events, including the annual Babinda Harvest Festival and the ANZAC Day commemoration service. The school holds an annual end of year concert and graduation organised by the staff and students. This annual event is well supported by the community and is a highlight for the broader community.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Maintain the sharp and narrow focus of the current EIA including the processes to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in producing the desired improvements in student learning and performance.

Collaboratively develop a formal and agreed approach for all staff to participate in classroom-based learning that includes modelling, coaching and mentoring opportunities.

Explore ways to further assist students to understand their individual learning goals and how they relate to improving their learning outcomes.

Collaboratively develop clear expectations regarding the types of feedback staff give to students to enhance student capability to identify actions they can take to make further learning progress.

Continue collaborative processes to support curriculum development, with an emphasis on the teaching team developing a deep understanding of the AC.



3. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains

3.1 An explicit improvement agenda

Findings

The acting principal commenced in Term 4, 2017, following a period during which the school experienced a number of short-term principals. The principal emphasises a collaborative approach to enacting the school's improvement agenda. This way of working has been well received by all staff who express genuine positivity in the school's future direction. The principal is recognised as being visible across the school, working closely with staff and students. Parents express that the dedication and sincerity of the principal and staff, and the welcoming, open environment of the school are greatly appreciated within the school community.

The principal and staff members are united and committed to improving learning and wellbeing outcomes for all students in the school. High expectations are articulated for all students to engage in learning activities presented by teachers. The catch phrase the principal articulates with all members of the community is that 'all students attending the school are capable of achieving great things'.

The school seeks to understand student achievement levels and has used this information to inform the school's EIA. The principal has reviewed the achievement data over time, in addition to current student data, to understand the learning needs of all students, including those from an Indigenous background, at an individual and cohort level.

The principal and staff members are implementing an EIA that has three priority areas focusing on improving learning outcomes for students in reading, writing and rigorous explicit teaching. The AIP outlines in detail the key actions to be undertaken by the teaching team to accomplish the identified improvement goals. The AIP outlines other focus areas for improvement that are not part of the EIA. The AIP has associated timelines, long-range targets for student improvement and staff engagement.

The principal communicates the school's EIA to the community through the school newsletter and at Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) meetings. Staff members, parents and students are able to identify and articulate some practices that are aligned to the EIA.

A key aspect of the work to be undertaken in reading incorporates the use of daily timetabled reading instruction. There is an expectation that consistent practices are used to teach reading within the school. A 'teaching of reading script' is developed to ensure expected practices are known. Staff describe a range of ways they are engaging with this expectation including a daily literacy warm-up with a reading hierarchy focus, engaging students in guided reading, using rotational reading/comprehension activities, individual and paired reading.

In writing, staff articulate the expectation of consistent practices encompassing the use of explicit writing lessons in rotational groups, extensive writing scaffolding for all students,



daily feedback to all students, and extended writing episodes to build students' writing stamina.

The third element of the EIA, rigorous explicit teaching is described by staff in terms of the consistent use of consolidations - warm ups for all literacy and numeracy blocks, student achievement data used to inform explicit teaching episodes, collaboration between staff regarding best practice and how to teach critical content.

The principal articulates that the school is beginning its passage to embed consistent practice in all elements of the EIA. They articulate that further work is required to be undertaken to ensure consistency of practice occurs across the school with all members of the teaching team implementing commonly agreed strategies for the teaching and learning process.

Improvement strategies

Maintain the sharp and narrow focus of the current EIA including the processes to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in producing the desired improvements in student learning and performance.

Ensure teachers are supported to focus on implementing the agreed school-wide teaching practices relating to the EIA, are provided with sufficient time to embed these as part of their repertoire of practice, and that strategies are implemented to monitor consistency of practice.



3.2 Analysis and discussion of data

Findings

The principal views the use of data as essential for effective delivery of the school's curriculum, teaching and learning processes.

Data is used throughout the school to identify starting points for improvement and to monitor growth in student learning across the years of schooling. The school's new assessment and data schedule has recently been implemented, and includes the systematic plan for the collection of data, in addition to an array of assessment tools in oral language, reading, spelling and writing.

The school's assessment schedule outlines the collection of PM Benchmark, PROBE, comprehension tasks, phonics and sight word checklists, South Australian Spelling Test (SAST), weekly spelling assessments, weekly writing monitoring tasks, Early Start, oral presentations, number facts test and formal mathematics assessments. The plan sets out the expectations for teachers in terms of timelines and frequency of assessments. Some elements of the assessment schedule include school aspirational benchmarks. The principal outlines the need to consistently review the schedule to ensure its relevancy in informing teaching practice and the EIA.

Data is collected by all teaching staff, as per the schedule, and is presented to the principal for analysis. Data is shared through formal staff meetings and more informally at the time of data collection or during school breaks. The teaching team articulates that they would welcome the opportunity to become more data literate. They express the desire to be more engaged in the analysis of student assessment data.

Attendance data is collected electronically and analysed regularly. Issues relating to low attendance are addressed informally, as the school attempts to understand family situations and offer support to improve attendance of identified students.

Staff and parents identify student behaviour as a particular area of strength for the school. The school records any inappropriate behaviour in OneSchool. The principal identifies that the recording of positive behaviour in OneSchool would allow for greater analysis of all student behaviour. Due to the small student cohort informal analysis of behaviour data occurs regularly. This informal analysis apprises all staff of areas for attention regarding student behaviour.

Care needs to be taken when considering the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data due to the small cohort of students who participate in the testing program.

The 2018 NAPLAN participation rate for Year 3 is 100.0 per cent across all strands and equals the 2008 rate. The Year 5 participation rate in 2018 is 100.0 per cent and compares to the 2008 rate of 66.7 per cent for all strands.

2018 NAPLAN data indicates Year 3 Upper Two Bands (U2B) achievement in the focus areas of reading and writing is above Similar Queensland State Schools (SQSS). Year 5



U2B achievement in the focus areas of reading and writing is above and similar respectively when compared to SQSS.

Year 3 Mean Scale Score (MSS) achievement is above SQSS in reading and writing. Year 5 MSS achievement in 2018 NAPLAN is above SQSS in reading and similar to SQSS in writing.

Year 3 achievement at or above the National Minimum Standard (NMS) in reading and writing is 100.0 per cent and is above Queensland State Schools (QSS). Year 5 NMS achievement is 100.0 per cent and above QSS. Year 5 NMS achievement in writing is below QSS.

Relative gain 2016-2018 Year 3 to Year 5 is above SQSS in the focus strand of reading and below SQSS in the writing.

Improvement strategies

Provide Professional Development (PD) for the teaching team to ensure their data literacy skills enable deeper understandings of data and the implications for teaching and learning.

Review the school data assessment schedule to ensure it accurately informs teaching practice and the EIA.



3.3 A culture that promotes learning

Findings

Teachers, teacher aides and other staff members are held in high regard by students and parents. Staff members demonstrate an understanding of the importance of positive and caring relationships for successful learning, and there is evidence of mutually respectful relationships between students, staff members and parents. Students speak highly of the care afforded them by all staff members.

There is a positive tone in the school that highlights the caring, polite and inclusive interactions between staff and students. The school ensures that all students and staff feel they are part of the Bellenden Ker school family through celebration of personal milestones, including birthdays and other achievements. Staff and students ensure that everyone's birthday is celebrated at school by providing a birthday celebration cake. The school community celebrates the achievements of its students in a range of ways including sticker rewards, student of the week awards acknowledged in the school newsletter, end of term awards, and major end of year awards.

Parents, staff and students report that student behaviour at school is excellent. This is reflected with very few inappropriate behaviour incidents recorded electronically and no School Disciplinary Absences (SDAs) recorded for the past five years.

The school's Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students (RBPS) was last reviewed in 2017 and the principal articulates the desire to investigate linking present processes with a Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) model.

The school has a set of five expectations known as the '5 C's' – *'caring, common sense, courtesy, cooperation, concentration'* that are long standing, known and used consistently by staff and students.

The school identifies that engaging parents as genuine partners in their child's education is an area for further development. P&C executive members identify that participation in meetings is presently limited and they are working to further engage the community in the association. The principal indicates that there has been a marked improvement in parent participation in parent teacher interviews. Parents report a high level of trust in the principal and staff at the school, and the welcoming nature and willingness to discuss the 'whole child' is most appreciated.

The current average attendance rate is 93.7 per cent. This is similar to the 2017 attendance rate of 93.3 per cent. The current rate of students attending less than 85 per cent of the school year is 25.0 per cent. The current rate of attendance for Indigenous students is 93.1 per cent with 20.0 per cent attending less than 85 per cent of the school year. The school's small enrolment numbers can impact attendance rates.

The school grounds are well maintained and facilities include a tennis court, oval, two playgrounds and undercover spaces. Classroom spaces are large and resourced appropriately. Well-maintained gardens and grounds add to the attractive environment.



Teachers present their classrooms as inviting places in which to learn with artefacts displayed to assist student learning and displays of student work.

School camps are well supported by the P&C, with all associated costs covered by the P&C. Other excursions are additionally funded entirely by the P&C throughout the year.

The school values students' cultural backgrounds. National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Day celebrations occur each year, and the school joins with a neighbouring school for activities throughout the day, raising awareness of Indigenous perspectives for all students.

The school has commenced its journey with robotics and is investing in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure. Each student has a computer to use in varying capacities to assist learning, and the school has sufficient iPads for each student. The computers were funded by the P&C this year. The principal recognises the promotion of a culture of inquiry and innovation as an area of continued improvement.

The 2018 School Opinion Survey (SOS) indicates overall satisfaction rates for parents, students and staff members have improved. In 2018, overall agreement rates with the statement 'This is a good school' are 100.0 per cent for parents, students and staff. In 2018 staff agreement with the statement 'I feel staff morale is positive at my school' is 100.0 per cent which compares to the 2017 rate of 60.0 per cent.

Improvement strategies

Further develop the culture of innovation and inquiry whereby creative exploration and independent learning are valued within classroom learning programs.



3.4 Targeted use of school resources

Findings

The school utilises human, financial and physical resources in a targeted manner to meet the learning needs of students in a multi-age setting.

The principal in consultation with the Business Manager (BM) formulates the budget based on EIA expenditure requirements and historical data. The budget is aligned to systemic and school priorities to support the educational needs of students. The balance of funds available is \$57 873. Regional financial staff provide Quality Assurance (QA) for the final draft of the budget.

Within the budget, \$13 978 is allocated to the curriculum cost centre, supporting the purchase of reading books and new books for the library. \$4 600 is allocated to marketing and the promotion of the school, with school signs being purchased to display on the nearby highway.

The principal is developing the required financial and policy understanding required for the implementation of budgetary processes.

Investing for Success (I4S) funding of \$5 342 is being utilised to provide additional teacher aide time, purchase learning resources, and provide PD in reading.

The P&C contributes additional funding to the school each year. Priorities are sought from the principal and funds are allocated accordingly. The P&C contributes approximately \$2 000 to the school annually to support school camps and excursions. In addition, the P&C responds to school requests for additional support for specific purchases, such as recently contributing to the upgrade of school computers.

The principal strategically utilises the human resources available to best support student learning. Literacy and numeracy learning times are timetabled in the morning and middle sessions of the day, and this learning time is further supported with teacher aides in classrooms for these sessions.

Learning intervention programs are conducted by teacher aides, under the direction of the principal. The teaching team utilises some student learning data and anecdotal observations to identify students who require additional support. Most intervention is conducted outside of the literacy and numeracy time allocated in the timetable.

The monitoring of key human, financial and physical resources relating to teaching and learning is developing. The use of systemic student data to identify the needs of all students and to inform the targeted use of resources is an emerging practice. A systemic process to monitor the effectiveness of school-wide programs in the delivery of student outcomes is yet to be developed.

The physical resources at the school are well maintained. The school grounds are neat and well presented. Ancillary staff take pride in presenting the school positively for staff and students. Learning spaces are flexible to allow for whole-class work, small group work and



individual work. A unique model exists for grounds work with the role contracted out externally. A tender process is enacted that involves the successful contractor quoting to maintain the grounds for 12 months at a time.

The school is well resourced with ICT. The school has Wi-Fi capability, iPads for use in classrooms and desktop computers for student use. Internet connection can be slow on occasion.

A specialist teacher is employed in a cluster situation for music and Health and Physical Education (HPE). Language Other Than English (LOTE) lessons are delivered face-to-face for all students from Year 3 to Year 6.

Improvement strategies

Continue to work with regional personnel to develop budgetary practices that have clarity of alignment between the school budget, improvement agenda and a PD plan.

Develop monitoring and QA processes to measure the effectiveness of expenditure and use of targeted resources to achieve planned improvements in student learning.



3.5 An expert teaching team

Findings

The principal views that ongoing professional learning by the entire teaching team is central to improving outcomes for students.

The teaching team is focused on the priorities of reading, writing and rigorous explicit teaching as identified in the EIA. The principal is committed to continuous improvement in the implementation of strategies to assist students to achieve success.

A culture of lifelong learning is apparent amongst staff members. Various staff members are completing undergraduate qualifications to improve their ability to provide better learning outcomes for students attending the school. These include undergraduate studies in teaching and business.

The principal leads and models professional learning in the school through building networked school relationships and has been actively engaged in reinvigorating the local schools cluster for support in leadership development, moderation processes and principal to principal mentoring relationships.

The principal seeks feedback on personal teaching practices by engaging the principal of Bartle Frere State School to observe their teaching. This process is aimed at being reciprocated in the near future. The principal articulates that extending observation and feedback to others in the teaching team, and aligning this PD with the school's teaching pedagogy of Explicit Instruction (EI), is an area for future development.

Teacher aides are regarded as equal partners in the teaching team. Teacher aides are a valued human resource working in partnership with teachers to deliver the curriculum and learning interventions for students. All staff articulate a collegial culture and sense of team. Teacher aides participate in professional learning and have attended some external PD opportunities to further enhance their practice. They indicate a willingness to participate in additional opportunities to improve their practice.

The school is yet to develop a professional learning plan that is linked to the EIA. The school budget allocates funds to PD. Staff indicate that professional learning opportunities are identified in an ad hoc manner. The principal has developed an Annual Performance Development Plan (APDP). APDPs for other staff members are yet to be developed.

The principal is developing networks and professional relationships beyond the school through the South Cairns schools cluster and directly with the principal at Bartle Frere State School. The two principals meet regularly for professional discussions.

The school began participation in interschool English moderation in Term 3 this year with the South Cairns schools cluster. All member schools within the cluster are committed to continuing the practice of moderation each term. The principal articulates a need to engage all teaching staff members in this moderation process in the future, and to continue to seek the support of the region's Principal Education Advisor - Australian Curriculum (PEA-AC) to provide more comprehensive guidance in this area.



The principal articulates that the school as part of the South Cairns schools cluster intends to strengthen this relationship to the advantage of each school. The schools report valuing this new process and express a desire for such work to continue.

Improvement strategies

Collaboratively develop a formal and agreed approach for all staff to participate in classroom-based learning that includes modelling, coaching and mentoring opportunities.

Continue engaging with regional support staff to enhance the collegial moderation processes, enabling staff to participate in scheduled, rigorous, and ongoing conversations regarding teaching and learning.

Develop a whole-school PD plan that has clear links to the EIA and all staff members' APDPs.



3.6 Systematic curriculum delivery

Findings

A curriculum, assessment and reporting plan aligned to the AC has been developed. This plan makes clear what and when teachers should teach and students should learn across all learning areas and the years of schooling.

The school documents outline a sequenced plan for curriculum delivery across Prep to Year 6. The principal has been predominantly responsible for the development of curriculum documentation and implementation of the teaching and learning cycle. The planning process begins in Term 4 each year to accommodate the changing class combination that is determined by enrolment numbers each year.

The school utilises Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resources and planning directly from the AC content descriptions to deliver the AC. Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), HPE, the Arts, LOTE and technology utilise C2C as the significant teaching, learning and assessment resource. Science is delivered using Primary Connections. English is planned directly from the AC content descriptions, using C2C assessment tasks and Guides to Making Judgements (GTMJ). Mathematics is planned directly from the AC content descriptions and the school develops assessment tasks and GTMJ's.

The principal has developed a rigorous, school-wide QA process to monitor the implementation of the school's curriculum plan to ensure that all students are consistently and effectively provided with opportunities to demonstrate their learning against the content descriptions of the AC. The process has two functions. The first as a tracking measure for when students are taught content descriptions and the second as an individual tracking measure for students' demonstration of the content descriptions.

There is a focus on developing teachers' understanding of the AC, with teachers describing a process of front ending assessment to backward map from an agreed assessment task. GTMJ's are analysed to build clarity of understanding for teachers in understanding what students need to know or do. Teachers then select which learning episodes they will use to provide maximum engagement for students during their learning. Some staff members indicate that the development of learning intentions, success criteria statements and exemplars, and the subsequent sharing of these with students, is the next step in the development of school curriculum planning processes.

Currently, there is a range of curriculum planning capabilities across the school and the process relies predominantly on the expertise of the principal to ensure that all of the required AC content and standards are being taught and assessed. The principal expresses a desire to further develop all staff understanding of the AC to allow them to be more actively involved in the curriculum decision-making process at the school.

The school's assessment, moderation and reporting plan provides details of the range of assessment tools used and the standards to be achieved. This includes PM Benchmark, PROBE, C2C assessment and school assessment tasks, SAST, weekly spelling tests, comprehension tests, and weekly writing monitoring task in English, and weekly number



facts tests and formal mathematics assessments. Teachers report using an on-balance judgement against summative and formative assessments to assign Levels of Achievement (LOA) in English and mathematics.

The school focuses attention on ensuring students are proficient in the basics. The school has a clear and explicit focus on the teaching of reading, with a documented reading script guiding teaching practice. Areas including writing and numeracy are also considered essential to student learning and specific teaching expectations regarding these learning areas are developing.

Reporting processes are aligned with the curriculum and formal report cards are issued twice a year. Formal parent teacher interviews are offered twice yearly in Terms 1 and 3. Parents express satisfaction with the information they receive regarding their child's progress in learning. Parents appreciate the efforts teachers make to inform them of the learning that is occurring in their child's classroom. They comment that the principal's focus on the 'whole child's' learning is welcomed.

Classrooms provide visually stimulating and welcoming learning environments for students with displays of instructional prompts and guidelines, behaviour reminders, learning displays and student work.

Students are provided with a range of learning experiences that enable them to develop their skills in areas of enthusiasm or interest. Students access interschool sport, gala days each term, and the Arts program that culminates in the end of year presentation to the school community. Students report they value these learning experiences and the time school staff take to support them.

Improvement strategies

Continue collaborative processes to support curriculum development, with an emphasis on the teaching team developing a deep understanding of the AC.

Continue to engage with regional support staff to build all staff knowledge of the AC achievement standards, content descriptions and LOA.

Expand the school curriculum planning expectations to include the development of success criteria, learning intentions and assessment task exemplars for the purpose of developing deeper student understanding of the requirements to achieve the year level standard.

Develop clear and explicit frameworks for teaching in all priority areas to ensure that all staff members have the expert understanding and the skill set required.



3.7 Differentiated teaching and learning

Findings

The school prides itself on personalised learning for students in a small school multi-age approach to student achievement, curriculum and learning needs.

The school places high priority on staff members identifying and addressing the learning needs of all students within the school. Staff members recognise that all students can learn successfully whilst some may do so at different rates or stages of learning. There is an expectation across the school that students' learning growth will be achieved.

The collection, analysis and use of data informs teacher judgements in planning teaching and learning, learning area groupings and ongoing support for improved learning outcomes. Parents are kept informed of strategies and learning programs that are developed and implemented for their child.

The principal has developed a number of tracking systems to monitor student learning. These include an AC content descriptions tracker for each student, spreadsheets to monitor student progress in spelling, phonics and number facts. These data sheets for each student in the school provide a clear reference point for all staff to discuss and monitor movement in student achievement progress.

Staff members speak of ongoing informal discussions regarding where students are on the learning continuum. There is strong recognition by staff members that students are at different stages in the learning process and strategies for differentiated teaching are apparent. Documented differentiation at the classroom level is an emerging practice.

The school uses the weekly staff meeting to provision student support services. Students are discussed during the weekly meeting if a teaching team member has concerns relating to academic achievement, behaviour or attendance. Strategies and supports are collaboratively developed and implemented. This can include the actioning of other departmental services including guidance officers and Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) where necessary. The school is using OneSchool to document individual student's participation in formal intervention programs.

At the time of the review, there are no students on an Individual Curriculum Plan (ICP) or student with disability attending the school.

Parents articulate they are well informed regarding their child's progress through report cards and formal and informal interviews. Parents value the fact that they are able to discuss any issue openly with staff members and are provided with advice regarding how to best support their child's learning at home.

Staff members know their students and take the time to build positive relationships to support learning engagement. All students speak fondly of the school staff and the school's engaging learning environment.



Some students speak of the encouragement provided by teachers in assisting them to monitor their own learning. Most students are aware of their current reading level. Students' knowledge regarding the next steps for their learning is less clear. Some students are able to clearly articulate their next steps for learning and identify strategies for improvement. Feedback processes to assist students to monitor their own learning and set aspirational goals are yet to be fully developed.

The teaching team acknowledges that providing opportunities to appropriately challenge and extend high achieving students is an area for ongoing attention. The use of some commercial ICT products occurs to engage students in extension learning. The principal regularly incorporates elements of Bloom's¹ Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) into lessons to challenge students. Most students express that classroom and curriculum expectations usually provide adequate challenge.

Improvement strategies

Explore ways to further assist students to understand their individual learning goals and how they relate to improving their learning outcomes.

Continue to ensure that differentiation is an ongoing school priority and is a feature of every teacher's planning and practice.

¹ BLOOM'S, T. M. E. (1965). *Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. Longman.



3.8 Effective pedagogical practices

Findings

The principal is familiar with current research regarding evidence-based teaching practices and recognises that effective teaching is critical to improving student learning outcomes. The teaching team is committed to enhancing teaching and learning practices. The principal articulates a desire to enact a signature pedagogical approach across the school.

The principal leads improvements in teaching and learning for the school, and demonstrates a strong conviction that quality teaching is the key to improved student learning.

All staff articulate the school's commitment to the implementation of the EI method and the initiative is progressing as a practice across the school. Teaching team members express a commitment to the process and articulate that their personal confidence is growing. They are supportive of further developing their pedagogical practice using this approach.

The principal articulates that there are other teaching strategies utilised in classrooms. These include an established learning environment where students are engaged, challenged, feel safe to take risks and are supported to learn new material with explicit demonstrations of what students are to know and be able to do. Teaching team members discuss the use of other pedagogies including inquiry-based learning and drill and practice as approaches commonly used.

In the small multi-age environment, opportunity for teachers to observe and provide each other with constructive ongoing feedback regarding their teaching is a challenge. The principal acknowledges that engagement in modelling practice for staff and creating opportunities for staff to watch others work is an area for further development. Some opportunities for staff members to receive informal, constructive and relevant feedback regarding their teaching are emerging. The principal acknowledges that observation, feedback, modelling and coaching are important aspects of the QA of pedagogy.

Collaborative learning goals, developed by teachers and students, are yet to be embedded in the teaching and learning process across the school. The principal acknowledges the development of student learning goals as a critical component to support the EIA and assist students to take ownership of their learning.

Teachers provide regular and timely feedback to students, formally and informally, based on their classroom work. Students express the feedback they are given helps to support their learning. A culture of feedback is developing within the pedagogical practices of teachers. The principal recognises this as an area for continued development.

The school utilises many shared spaces for lesson instruction. Staff members use a range of lesson implementation models, including individual, small group and large group instruction, utilising teacher aide support.

The principal has been integral to the re-invigoration of the South Cairns schools cluster. Schools within this cluster have recently engaged in interschool moderation of English tasks. Staff from cluster schools have visited the school to observe elements of EI and to share



best practice. The principal articulates the desire to expand this relationship that will result in further opportunities for the staff members of different schools to continue to share professional knowledge.

Improvement strategies

Establish a regular coaching, observation, mentoring and feedback process to develop teacher capabilities to consistently deliver the school's agreed pedagogical practices.

Embed the school-wide approach to student learning goals to ensure students are more self-reflective in their learning.

Collaboratively develop clear expectations regarding the types of feedback staff give to students to enhance student capability to identify actions they can take to make further learning progress.



3.9 School-community partnerships

Findings

The principal seeks ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing through collaborating with parents, families and the local community. Parents and families are recognised as integral members of the school community and the school would welcome greater involvement from the wider community. Parents express a sense of optimism for the direction of the school under the guidance of the current principal.

The school holds an annual end of year concert and presentation organised by staff members and students. This event is well supported by the community. Preparation for the event is the result of the Term 4 Arts program. This annual event is a highlight for the broader community.

A transition program exists between the school and the nearest local feeder high school, Babinda P-12 State School. Transition programs include a day visit to the school during each school term to participate in classroom learning alongside Year 6 students from other cluster schools. During Term 4 the principal meets with key staff members from the feeder schools to discuss the individual strengths and areas for improvement of all students enrolling in junior secondary. The principal of the feeder school has welcomed this practice and comments that this process further assists students in their transition.

The Babinda P-12 State School principal indicates the intention to extend the relationship with feeder schools through the introduction of gifted and talented programs in 2019. This initiative has been welcomed by cluster school principals. High school staff identify that students from the school are well prepared academically for the challenges of junior secondary. They articulate that some students take a little time to adjust to the larger school environment of junior secondary.

The school is liaising with the local kindergarten centre to assist with effective transition to Prep processes. This includes an open day during Term 3 where all students from the local kindergarten centre spend a day at the school participating in Prep familiarisation activities. The school offers transition to Prep days during Term 4 where prospective Prep students and their parents attend the school for the day and participate in early years learning activities.

The principal articulates that the geographic location of the school is problematic to enrolment growth via Prep. They acknowledge that within a small geographic area there are a number of small primary schools vying for a finite number of Prep-eligible students.

Staff members recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents and the wider community to maximise the learning outcomes for students. All staff contribute considerable energy into building positive partnerships with parents as demonstrated by their efforts in being available for informal discussions and involvement in community events including the annual Babinda Harvest Festival and the ANZAC Day commemoration service.



Partnerships with parents are strengthened through a range of school events and celebrations. These events enhance the sense of community within the school. The school has a supportive P&C that provides financial support for the school. The P&C is well financed through sugar cane sales from a farm lot that has been donated to the school and farmed by a local farmer at no cost to the P&C.

P&C fundraising aligns with school needs and varies from year to year. Members of the P&C articulate the principal shares information regarding the school's improvement journey, curriculum and school events. There are high levels of satisfaction with the information provided.

The school networks with other schools of similar size through the South Cairns schools cluster. This cluster exists for principal to principal engagement and development, in addition to teacher networking, mentoring and assessment moderation. In addition, it conducts combined student sporting carnivals and gala days held each term on a rotational location basis.

The school is continuing to build partnerships with the South Cairns schools cluster. The principal recognises broadening networks to develop partnerships with schools on a similar education journey has the potential to bring benefits to student outcomes and teacher practice.

Improvement strategies

Investigate ways to bring the parent and wider school community body into the school to enhance the sense of community in the local area and to highlight the opportunities the school can provide.