

# Innisfail East State School

## School Review Report





## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
1.1 Review team.....	3
1.2 School context.....	4
1.3 Contributing stakeholders .....	5
1.4 Supporting documentary evidence.....	5
2. Executive summary.....	6
2.1 Key findings.....	6
2.2 Key improvement strategies .....	8
3. Snapshot of previous school review .....	9
4. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains .....	10
4.1 An explicit improvement agenda.....	10
4.2 Analysis and discussion of data.....	12
4.3 A culture that promotes learning .....	14
4.4 Targeted use of school resources.....	17
4.5 An expert teaching team.....	19
4.6 Systematic curriculum delivery .....	21
4.7 Differentiated teaching and learning .....	23
4.8 Effective pedagogical practices .....	25
4.9 School-community partnerships.....	27



## 1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Innisfail East State School** from **26 to 28 June 2019**.

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

### 1.1 Review team

Anthony Ryan	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Jacqueline Bates	Peer reviewer
Matthew Glen	External reviewer



## 1.2 School context

<b>Location:</b>	Mourilyan Road, East Innisfail
<b>Education region:</b>	Far North Queensland Region
<b>Year opened:</b>	1936
<b>Year levels:</b>	Prep to Year 6
<b>Enrolment:</b>	236
<b>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</b>	49 per cent
<b>Students with disability enrolment percentage:</b>	2 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	848
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2016
<b>Day 8 staffing teacher full-time equivalent (FTE):</b>	15.6
<b>Significant partner schools:</b>	Innisfail State College, Haileybury College, Balaclava State School, Fleming Network Schools – Tully State School, Whitfield State School, White Rock State School, Caravonica State School
<b>Significant community partnerships:</b>	Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C), Mamu Health Service, Goodstart Early Learning Child Care Centre Innisfail, Woolworths, Coles, Brumby's Bakery, District Sports, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, MAMS Group
<b>Significant school programs:</b>	Student leadership program, drumming and ukulele group, Nutrition Program – P&C Tuckshop, Be Strong resilience initiative and school pledge, Be Strong reading intervention program, Reef Guardians, gardening club, Step Up to Prep transition and orientation programs, Stay and Play to Write, iRead



### 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, Head of Curriculum (HOC), Business Manager (BM), Canecutter Cluster deputy principal, special education teacher, Community Liaison Officer (CLO), 13 teachers, 10 teacher aides, administration officer, groundsman, cleaner, 28 parents and 58 students.

Community and business groups:

- John Fleming, P&C and School Based Police Officer (SBPO).

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Tully State School, Innisfail State College and Goodstart Early Learning Child Care Centre.

Government and departmental representatives:

- Cassowary Coast Councillor Division 6 and ARD.

### 1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2019	School Opinion Survey
Investing for Success 2019	Strategic Plan 2016-2019
School data plan	School Data Profile (Semester 1, 2019)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Curriculum planning documents	Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students
School improvement targets	School differentiation plan or flowchart
School pedagogical framework	Professional development plans
Headline Indicators (April 2019 release)	School newsletters and website



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

#### **The school team is committed to providing a quality education for all students.**

They hold a belief that through a focus on developing wellbeing and with quality teaching all students can achieve and succeed. The school pledge recited by staff and students daily, *'I will be safe, respectful and strong. I will be the best learner I can be'* is enacted collectively by all staff and students as they strive for improvement.

#### **Staff members display high levels of professional energy and commitment towards the work they do within the school.**

Students, staff, parents and community members speak highly of the school and its excellent reputation in the wider community. Staff and parents express a high level of confidence and trust in the school leadership. Staff members articulate that an atmosphere of belonging is cultivated throughout the school through a caring culture and positive relationship building.

#### **The school has developed and embedded a detailed and consistent approach towards the teaching of reading.**

The school is yet to develop an explicit, coherent and sequenced whole-school curriculum plan for all learning areas of the Australian Curriculum (AC). The leadership team acknowledges that it is a priority to develop a systematic whole-school curriculum, assessment and reporting framework.

#### **Teachers recognise that systematic curriculum delivery is essential to improving student learning and achievement.**

Efforts have been made by the leadership team to ensure that teachers are provided with the necessary tools to effectively deliver the curriculum. Staff recognise that the three levels of planning at whole-school, year level and unit planning are essential elements for implementation of the eight learning areas of the AC.

#### **Teachers are involved in curriculum planning conversations with their year level colleagues and the leadership team.**

Teachers are able to identify aspects of their classroom assessment programs that relate to diagnostic, summative and formative assessment. The leadership team is working alongside staff to develop a comprehensive understanding of how quality assessment principles are to be embedded within their curriculum and teaching programs. The school's assessment and moderation practices are yet to be aligned with a comprehensive whole-school curriculum plan.



**Consideration of research-based strategies and effective pedagogies underpins staff teaching practice.**

School leaders recognise the need to ensure the school's pedagogical framework reflects agreed teaching practices, is considered in curriculum planning and is consistently implemented in learning experiences. A documented pedagogical framework that is reflective of the full repertoire of teachers' practice is yet to be fully developed.

**Staff recognise the importance of designing effective classroom programs to meet the diversity of student learning needs.**

The school has begun to experiment with a structural differentiation model for teachers to guide their curriculum and assessment adjustments for all students. The leadership team acknowledges that the enacted pedagogical differentiation practice is yet to be consistent across the school.

**The school recognises the importance of nurturing resilient students.**

Students participate in the '*Be Strong*' campaign, embedded through the fabric and culture of the school with students participating in social skills lessons. Students attune positively to the school's playground Gotcha system, with daily after lunch parades to recognise positive behaviour.

**Staff value the strong focus on collaboration to set school agendas and feel valued as a result of this approach by the leadership team.**

Staff demonstrate their commitment to continual improvement to continue to refine their practices and build consistent and effective teaching and learning strategies throughout the school. Their commitment to ongoing professional learning provides a solid platform to collaboratively address barriers to successful learning for all students.

**A range of extracurricular opportunities is offered to students to complement learning experiences.**

The sustainability team has built a culture of respect and caring for the environment through a range of activities including recycling, composting, the garden project, containers for cash program, Reef Guardians, Bread Tags for Wheelchairs and Envision Hands. Other extracurricular activities include the drumming and ukulele program, instrumental music, choir and sport. The school has a history of high success rates at local and regional competitions, particularly in the musical field.



## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop a systematic whole-school curriculum plan that incorporates clear guidelines, expectations and accountabilities regarding what teachers will teach and students will learn as specified by the AC including cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities.

Ensure that the three levels of curriculum planning – whole-school, year level and unit level, are collaboratively designed, implemented and aligned with the AC.

Further develop teachers' knowledge and skills of quality assessment strategies through collaborative planning, and internal and external moderation that is aligned with the whole-school curriculum plan and quality assured across the school.

Collaboratively review current pedagogical practices to develop consistent pedagogical approaches that are enacted across the school.

Develop a whole-school model that identifies a consistent approach to differentiation to further develop deeper understanding and capacity of teachers to implement whole-class differentiation practices including for high achieving students.



### 3. Snapshot of previous school review

This is the first review of the school undertaken by the School Improvement Unit (SIU).

The last review carried out at the school was conducted from **4 to 5 June 2015**. The school's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) at the time of the 2015 review was identified as 870 and the school enrolment was 194 with an Indigenous enrolment of 47.4 per cent and a student with disability enrolment of 6.7 per cent.

The key improvement strategies recommended in the review involved enhancing the school's Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) in literacy – reading and writing, and numeracy.



## 4. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains

### 4.1 An explicit improvement agenda

#### Findings

The school team is committed to providing a quality education for all students. They hold a belief that through a focus on developing wellbeing and with quality teaching all students can achieve and succeed. The school pledge recited by staff and students daily, '*I will be safe, respectful and strong. I will be the best learner I can be*' is enacted collectively by all staff and students as they strive for improvement.

Staff members are dedicated to improving outcomes for students. Staff articulate a belief that students can learn and be successful. Parents express the view that the professionalism and dedication of staff are strongly valued within the community.

The principal works with the Head of Curriculum (HOC) to undertake strategic planning processes whereby they consider the school's performance and plan responses for collective implementation. The school has been working towards a new collective vision for education. The school's vision and strategic direction are articulated to staff members and the community by the principal.

Staff value the strong focus on collaboration to set school agendas and articulate they feel valued as a result of this approach.

The school's documented EIA is embedded in the school's Annual Implementation Plan (AIP). The school articulates a focus on reading and attendance.

The AIP identifies reading as the school's first priority with a focus on consolidating staff understanding of high expectations for reading including planning, delivery, student reading behaviours and stages of individual progress. This includes consolidating reading inquiry actions to support the whole-school approach to reading and embedding iRead as the reading induction resource for how to teach reading at the school. The AIP identifies targets for achievement in National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), A to E assessment and Fountas and Pinnell<sup>1</sup> benchmarks. Roles and responsibilities that are known to all with accountabilities and timelines are yet to be developed.

The leadership team has developed and implemented an action research model for a consistent approach to reading across the school. The identified problem of practice to develop staff knowledge and skills to support students to become confident and successful readers who can transfer their reading skills drives the agenda.

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<sup>1</sup> Fountas, I., & Pinnell, G. (2011). *Benchmark assessment system: Years K-2, levels AN*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.



The reading team used the inquiry cycle process to develop an action plan. The reading plan has strategies aligned to a whole-school approach, planning and pedagogy, capacity building, assessment, data and feedback.

The leadership team articulates a vision for a systematic model for monitoring the strategies of the EIA as it transitions to a signature school practice. The model is yet to be documented.

Staff 'champions' were utilised to work alongside each other to develop pamphlets as a guide to the expectations of modelled, shared, guided and independent reading at the school. A lesson sequence was designed by the HOC to provide clarity for staff supporting the reading agenda. A guided reading checklist is developed for staff and provides an opportunity for coaching and feedback aligned to the school's expected practice.

Attendance is identified as the school's second EIA. The AIP articulates a process to consolidate staff understandings of high expectations for supporting 93 per cent or greater attendance. The use of the Closing the Gap attendance data is an emerging practice. The school employs a Community Liaison Officer (CLO) to work alongside staff to build positive home and school relationships. The CLO accesses services within and beyond the school to support student attendance. A Police Liaison Officer (PLO) has strong links with the school and works with the CLO to support attendance through home visits.

The leadership team and CLO share class and school attendance data with staff, students and parents. This data is used to identify chronic and habitual non-attendance patterns. Celebrating school attendance is a school priority with weekly awards and a celebration day at the end of term.

Staff members speak of their commitment to continual improvement and they identify the need to further refine their practices and build consistent and effective teaching and learning strategies throughout the school. Their commitment to ongoing professional learning provides a solid platform to collaboratively address barriers to successful learning for all students.

### **Improvement strategies**

Develop a systematic model for monitoring the strategies of the EIA as it transitions to a signature school practice including a focus on maintaining student learning achievement and staff capability growth.

Develop clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, with accompanying aspirational targets of success for key staff driving the agreed agendas.



## 4.2 Analysis and discussion of data

### Findings

The school leadership team articulates a belief that reliable and timely data regarding student outcomes is important to the school's improvement agenda and to classroom planning for effective learning. Data is used to inform school-level decisions, some classroom teaching practices to support student learning, and the school's EIA.

Analysis of systemic and school-based achievement data is undertaken by the leadership team. This data is shared with staff to generate discussions regarding further improvements sought in student learning. The data is used to inform school-level decisions regarding the implementation of school programs.

The leadership team has developed and is implementing an assessment schedule that includes standards and targets. This plan details the range of diagnostic, formative and summative data to be collected across all year levels and the timelines for collection. The range of student data is stored centrally on G drive and in OneSchool.

The HOC has an established Quality Assurance (QA) practice for running records to ensure accuracy of the collected data. Feedback is provided to all teachers aligned to the key performance indicators.

The leadership team has established a sight word data wall that displays sight word data for all students. This data wall tracks student outcomes against internal benchmarks. The data wall is used to provide encouragement to students as they progress up the wall. The data is used by teacher aides as a catalyst for team discussions with school leaders to review the school's sight word program.

Staff are using the literacy continuum to track student progress and inform starting points for the teaching of literacy.

Data is used by most staff to identify starting points for improvement and to monitor progress over time. School leaders, classroom teachers and specialist support staff use a range of data to track student attendance, behaviour and academic achievement. The use of data aligned to the curriculum, assessment and reporting framework is developing in the school.

The Canecutter Cluster deputy principal has designed a school data placement for all verified students. The placemat displays data related to attendance, behaviour, academic achievement, level of disability at an individual student level, and year level. The placemat is used to focus discussion with school staff and develop responses to support for students. The leadership team acknowledges the use of a case management approach to support a culture of self-evaluation and reflection on teaching is developing for reading.

The CLO tracks student absences at a class and individual student level. All classes are provided updated absence details each week. Class teachers follow up absences after three unexplained days. The CLO case manages students with regular absences and this includes home visits, phone calls and support from external agencies. The class with the highest attendance rate is acknowledged on a whole-school parade.



Transition statements provided by early learning providers assist school leaders and Prep teachers with their planning and enhances the transition of pre-Prep students into the Prep year. There are 26 students enrolled in Prep in 2019. Of these, 11 students attended an early years centre with the school receiving all eleven transition statements. Prep teachers report that some transition statements provide useful information relating to student personal development and learning progress.

The leadership team uses data collected for internal surveys of staff and parents to support the implementation of school policy. This information has been used to develop a homework policy and responses to staff collegiality.

The 2018 NAPLAN participation rates in Year 3 and Year 5 were 100.0 per cent in all strands with the exception of Year 3 writing which was 97.4 per cent.

The school's ICSEA percentile is 5. 2018 NAPLAN Mean Scale Score (MSS) percentile for Year 3 achievement ranges between 33 and 49. For Year 5 students, the percentile ranges between 22 and 34.

MSS data in the priority area of reading indicates that the school performance is above Similar Queensland State Schools (SQSS) in Year 3. Year 5 MSS achievement is similar to SQSS in reading. In the Upper Two Bands (U2B) in reading, Year 3 and Year 5 achievement is above SQSS.

Year 3 performance relating to reading achievement at or above the National Minimum Standard (NMS) when matched to Queensland State Schools (QSS) is 89.7 per cent compared to QSS achievement of 94.4 per cent. Year 5 NMS achievement in reading is 75.0 per cent compared to QSS achievement of 92.6 per cent.

NAPLAN relative gain 2016-2018 Year 3 to Year 5 is similar to SQSS in reading.

### **Improvement strategies**

Provide Professional Development (PD) for school staff to ensure their data literacy skills enable deeper understanding of the use of data and the implications for teaching, learning and reporting.

Enable deeper discussions of data, generate strategies for continuous improvement and monitor progress over time, including opportunities for case management to strengthen the culture of self-evaluation and reflection on teaching.



### 4.3 A culture that promotes learning

#### Findings

School leaders and teachers communicate that they expect all students to learn successfully and set clear targets for student attendance, engagement and outcomes. The motto of *'Achieve, Create, Inspire'* is complemented by the school pledge that is recited by students and staff each morning – *'I will be safe, respectful and strong. I will be the best learner I can be'*.

Students, staff, parents and community members speak highly of the school that has an excellent reputation in the wider community. All staff and parents express a high level of confidence and trust in the school leadership. Staff articulate that an atmosphere of belonging is cultivated throughout the school through a caring culture and positive relationship building.


The 2018 School Opinion Survey (SOS) results indicate that the overall rating for all survey items by parents is 87.3 per cent which is below that of the Like Schools Group (LSG) agreement rate of 91.6 per cent. The staff overall rating for all staff survey items is 74.3 per cent compared to 88.8 per cent for the LSG. Student overall satisfaction is 92.0 per cent which compares to the LSG rate of 92.5 per cent.

Staff members display high levels of professional energy and commitment towards the work they do within the school. 'Spotlight on practice' is a standing agenda item at staff meetings where staff collaboratively share best practices. A collegial culture of professionalism is emerging, particularly identified in the work of year level teams. The principal has built a level of collegiality through the collaborative cycle of inquiry process whereby staff recognise a problem of practice within a certain area and collaborate to identify causes and possible solutions. A willingness of staff members to engage in professional dialogue aligned to improving student learning and curriculum planning processes is emerging.

At the beginning of each term student expectations are explicitly taught to all students. These include specific lessons regarding learning and cultural expectations, bookwork policy and presentation expectations.

The school has clear behaviour management systems documented in the school's Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students (RPBS) and a staff behaviour management booklet. Clear guidelines are given for learning and cultural expectations in addition to core school rules. They promote processes to encourage positive reward and consequence systems. School Disciplinary Absences (SDAs) have declined since 2015 and the principal articulates there has been less frequent use of the dedicated detention room.

A rewards system provides motivation for most students to meet the school's behaviour expectations. Many students attune positively to the school's playground Gotcha system, with daily after lunch parades to recognise positive behaviour. Participation in sport and extracurricular activities is determined through positive student behaviour and attendance data. The school has implemented celebration days during Week 10 of each term to recognise students exhibiting exemplary behaviour. To promote and reward the completion



of homework, the school has implemented a homework raffle with the student leadership team donating prizes towards this incentive. The leadership team acknowledges that many components of the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) framework are currently employed in school processes. The formal implementation of PBL is yet to be developed.

The school recognises the importance of nurturing resilient students. Students participate in the '*Be Strong*' campaign, embedded through the fabric and culture of the school with students participating in fortnightly social skills lessons. The school has a clear anti-bullying strategy and parents and students state that bullying issues are dealt with promptly. The '*Stop, Walk and Talk*' strategy is enacted school-wide by students as a preventative bullying measure. A long-standing partnership with a local Adopt-a-Cop contributes to creating a supportive, safe environment.

Student attendance is identified as an ongoing school priority. Teachers commit to working with students and their families to enact expected practices to improve student attendance. A CLO position is funded by the school to assist in following up students with extended absences. The CLO tracks attendance data across each term and shares this data at weekly year level meetings. An active student support team meets every three weeks to discuss referred students and strategies to best assist improving outcomes. A Family Justice Program gives accessibility for students from disadvantaged circumstances to participate in their educational program by supplying food and uniforms as required.

The school average attendance rates for Semester 1 2019, year-to-date, is 91.6 per cent with 19.8 per cent of students attending less than 85 per cent. This compares with Semester 1 2018 average attendance of 93.2 per cent and 12.7 per cent less than 85 per cent. Attendance rates for Indigenous students for Semester 1 2019 is 89.2 per cent and 33.3 per cent respectively. 2018 attendance figures for Indigenous students were 91.9 per cent and 14.7 per cent respectively.

The school promotes students tracking their own attendance data and formally recognises students with 100 per cent attendance. Fortnightly attendance raffles are held on school parades. The class with the highest average attendance percentage for each term is rewarded with a pizza party as an incentive to boost attendance rates.

A range of extracurricular opportunities is offered to students to complement learning experiences. The sustainability team has built a culture of respect and caring for the environment through a variety of activities including recycling, composting, the garden project, containers for cash program, Reef Guardians, Bread Tags for Wheelchairs and Envision Hands. Other extracurricular activities include the drumming and ukulele program, instrumental music, choir and sport. The school has a history of high success rates at local and regional competitions, particularly in the musical field. Students articulate a desire to implement more lunchtime activities and clubs such as robotics, basketball and chess.

### **Improvement strategies**

Enhance the collegial culture of the school by developing, implementing and monitoring strategies to strengthen collaborative practice for both staff and students.



Collaboratively develop PBL processes within the school to identify aligned and agreed expectations that focus on the consistent implementation of strategies and consequences for the management of student behaviour.



## 4.4 Targeted use of school resources

### Findings

The school leadership team gives a high priority to understanding and addressing the learning needs of all students in the school. Human, financial and physical resources are deployed in strategic ways to maximise student learning and wellbeing. There is clear alignment between the EIA, staff professional learning and budget allocations.

The school budget is developed by the school principal and the Business Manager (BM) with some involvement of other staff members. The principal and the BM meet regularly to discuss the budget including adjustments, resource allocations and purchasing requirements.

The principal has refined the school timetable with staffing allocations to ensure staff have additional time available in their week for collaborative meetings with members of the leadership team. Providing opportunities for collaborative planning between teachers and members of the leadership team each week is an emerging practice. The leadership team articulates this area is a priority and as a result all teachers are provided with one hour additional Non-Contact Time (NCT) each week of curriculum release time to work with the principal and HOC to review curriculum planning and analyse student data. Specialist teachers are yet to be included in the collaborative planning cycles aligned to the EIA.

The leadership team acknowledges the need to continue to provide resource allocations to build a culture of intentional collaboration and teamwork focused on improving the capability of teachers to effectively implement the EIA in collaboration with school leaders.

The principal is building depth of leadership by encouraging staff members to undertake roles as team leaders. Team leaders meet in school time to support curriculum planning processes. Additional funding is provided to release team leaders for this role. The additional time provided to work with colleagues is valued by staff members.

The principal acknowledges the need to continue to provide resource allocations to build a culture of intentional collaboration and teamwork focused on improving the capability of teachers to effectively implement the EIA in collaboration with school leaders.

Teacher aides play an important role in enhancing learning and wellbeing outcomes at the school. They fulfil responsibilities ranging from supporting intervention programs, guided reading and intervention support to playground supervision. Teacher aides are highly skilled in the areas they support and are afforded regular PD aligned to their roles. A significant amount of teacher aide time is allocated to enhance student wellbeing, engagement and achievement.

Clear systematic processes for the rigorous monitoring of human and financial resources in priority areas to determine their impact on student outcomes is developing across the school. The principal recognises the need to systematically monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness of human resource allocations to ensure they are maximising outcomes for all students.



The school recently conducted a review of the use of teacher aide time and the effect on student learning. Following the review a decision was made to reduce the number of teacher aides and ensure the focus was on the support of the school's literacy programs aligned to the EIA. Teachers articulate the use of teacher aide time is valued in the classroom and benefits student ability in reading.

To support the attendance EIA the school has commenced a 'Stay and Play to Write' strategy. Teacher aides are deployed before school to conduct guided play activities that link to a writing strategy during the first session of the school day. Staff members report a positive impact on students' punctuality in the morning as a result.

The school continues to support staff to deliver Information and Communication Technology (ICT) across the curriculum areas. This has resulted in the procurement of devices for the computer lab, laptop trolleys and each class having access to an interactive television.

At the time of the review the OneSchool finance dashboard indicates that the physical cash at bank balance is \$440 479. The school received funding of \$188 778 in Investing for Success (I4S). The I4S funds provide additional teacher aide time to support the reading program, targeted modelling, observation and feedback, learning support time and iPads for classroom use.

An active Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) supports the budget process through the provision of additional funds. Funds have been used to support equitable opportunities for all students to access incursions, excursions and camps. Funds have been supplied to provide ICT devices for students and teachers.

Classroom environments are inviting with classroom teachers displaying artefacts and student work. Teachers use classroom furniture flexibly to support the learning of students in their class. The ancillary staff take pride in presenting the school positively for staff and students. The school grounds are neat and well presented. The school is adorned with significant and poignant artworks aligned to the '*Be Strong*' campaign.

### **Improvement strategies**

Continue to allocate resources to build a culture of intentional collaboration and teamwork focused on improving the capability of leaders and teachers to effectively implement the EIA.

Build a school-wide systematic approach to monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness of human and financial resource allocations in priority areas to ensure they are delivering the desired outcomes for all students.

## 4.5 An expert teaching team

### Findings

The school places a high priority on attracting, retaining and developing the best possible teachers; this includes a number of newly graduated teachers. The leadership team encourages all teachers to engage in continuous improvement of their own teaching and to be focused on the development of knowledge and skills required to improve student learning.

The principal has placed a strong emphasis on building staff knowledge and expertise in key aspects of the school's EIA. This is particularly apparent in the ongoing professional support for embedding a comprehensive reading program from Prep to Year 6.

Teachers acknowledge they have good collegial connections and beneficial working relationships with their colleagues. The school has a number of beginning teachers in their first years of teaching who express satisfaction with the personal support from the leadership team and other members of school staff in their induction to their responsibilities. Each beginning teacher has been assigned to work closely with an experienced mentor teacher.

All teachers are provided with an extensive teacher folder that contains a detailed array of program and planning expectations. The folder incorporates a compendium of school-based policy statements and practical guidelines for all teachers to consider in their teaching and learning programs. Specific processes, including mentoring coaching and feedback, are articulated as important learning tools to assist teachers to improve their curriculum knowledge and pedagogical skills.

School leaders recognise their responsibility to facilitate formal and informal opportunities for teachers to share effective practice and to build their teaching and learning knowledge and skills. The school has a documented plan for professional learning, linked to budget allocations, and involving internal and external learning opportunities for teachers and teacher aides. These opportunities include mentoring for beginning teachers, on-site Explicit Instruction (EI) training from John Fleming<sup>2</sup>, and release time for all teachers to engage in joint planning and completing Early Start testing and literacy continuum plotting.

All classroom teachers are provided with three hours per week of NCT to assist with year level planning, preparing assessment tasks, and meeting with the leadership team. All staff are required to develop an Annual Performance Development Plan (APDP) which, for teachers, is linked to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Teacher Standards. Teachers are encouraged to negotiate with the principal to align their APDP with school improvement priorities. Teacher aides indicate their work is highly valued in the school and that they are provided with a 'learning lounge' session with the HOC every fortnight.

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<sup>2</sup> Harker Brownlow Education. (2012). John Fleming. Retrieved from <http://www.hbe.com.au/john-fleming.html>



The principal has recently appointed three experienced teachers to take a role as team leaders in the junior, middle and senior years. These three teachers are provided with opportunities to meet with their colleagues as part of building curriculum knowledge and teaching capacity. Each of these teachers receives an additional hour of NCT per week. The leadership team acknowledge that they are yet to fully develop the role and responsibility of these team leaders.

Currently there is a whole-school process of building teacher capability and practice in implementing reading across the curriculum. All staff were engaged in a professional inquiry process in which a problem of practice associated with reading was defined. Program development in cross-year level teams was undertaken to resolve the reading practice issues identified by staff. Staff were identified as champions of reading in an identified mode of reading. The champions became advocates for implementation of the four main modes of reading. This inquiry process led to a unified approach to shared, modelled, guided and independent reading, including benchmarking of student progress and a consistent alignment of reading instructional activities across the school.

Teachers indicate that the positive collegial culture within the school is a good starting point for enhancement of their personal learning and development. The leadership team has provided targeted observation, coaching and feedback to teachers. This has included observation on classroom practice, differentiation, student engagement and teaching of modelled, shared, guided and independent reading within classrooms. Teachers value this professional learning through observation and feedback and are keen to continue to build their instructional knowledge and skills in all aspects of the curriculum.

### **Improvement strategies**

Expand teacher leadership opportunities for staff to participate in professional learning teams to coordinate alignment of school-wide curriculum, pedagogy and assessment plans.

Further develop and document professional learning opportunities for all staff to collaboratively participate in mentoring, coaching, observation and feedback aligned with the school's curriculum framework and EIA.



## 4.6 Systematic curriculum delivery

### Findings

School leaders and staff are aware of the need to fully understand and engage with the three dimensions of the AC – the eight learning areas, the cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities. Teachers recognise that systematic curriculum delivery is essential to improving student learning and achievement. Efforts have been made by the leadership team to ensure that teachers are provided with some of the necessary tools to effectively deliver the curriculum including the use of the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resources.

The school has developed a detailed and consistent approach towards literacy teaching and learning drawing significantly upon the Fleming EI model. This model is reinforced with existing and new staff through two annual visits to the school by the Fleming team in which model lessons are conducted and teachers are involved in specific coaching and feedback in their classrooms.

The reading inquiry process has led to a unified approach to modelled, shared, guided and independent reading, including benchmarking of student progress and alignment of reading instructional activities across the school. Teachers use the literacy continuum and Fountas and Pinnell benchmarks as their main tools for setting learning goals, grouping and benchmarking student reading progress. The leadership team uses the Fountas and Pinnell benchmarks as their main tracking tool for measuring distance travelled by each student in their reading.

The school has yet to develop an explicit, coherent and sequenced whole-school curriculum plan for all learning areas of the AC as specified by the P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework (P-12 CARF). The leadership team acknowledges that it is an important priority to develop a systematic whole-school curriculum, assessment and reporting framework. They recognise that the three levels of planning at whole-school, year level and unit planning indicated by the P-12 CARF are essential elements for implementation of the eight learning areas of the AC.

The school has developed an assessment and reporting document that provides guidance for teachers in planning assessment for their classroom learning programs and reporting on student progress to parents. Teachers are able to identify aspects of their classroom assessment programs that relate to diagnostic, summative and formative assessment. The leadership team is working alongside staff to develop a comprehensive understanding of how quality assessment principles are to be embedded within their curriculum and teaching programs. Oral reporting to parents is offered in Term 1 and Term 3 and in Terms 2 and 4 written reports are issued.

Internal moderation consists of a team-based process to moderate a Guide to Making Judgements (GTMJ) in reading. External moderation process are yet to be established. The leadership team acknowledges that the school's assessment and moderation practices and processes are yet to be fully aligned with a comprehensive whole-school curriculum plan.



Teachers indicate that they are involved in curriculum planning conversations with their year level colleagues. Opportunities are provided for all teachers to meet with either the principal or HOC to discuss their curriculum and assessment practice. These conversations and opportunities for collaborative engagement are highly valued, and facilitate meaningful discussions pertaining to aspects of student achievement data and learning progress.

The school provides students with access to the AC learning areas in English, mathematics, science, Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), the Arts, Health and Physical Education (HPE) and technologies. Specialist teachers in the Arts and HPE provide a full suite of curriculum offerings including classroom and instrumental music, drama, visual and media arts and HPE.

Many students successfully participate in the annual Innisfail Young Performers Competition in which choral and instrumental groups perform successfully. The community speaks fondly of the outstanding performing group of African Drummers who have built a strong tradition within the school and community.

Environmental awareness is developing within the school and includes a gardening group and a student leadership group that focuses on waste management, container recycling and other sustainability initiatives that are linked to the AC cross-curriculum sustainability priority.

### **Improvement strategies**

Develop a systematic whole-school curriculum plan that incorporates clear guidelines, expectations and accountabilities regarding what teachers will teach and students will learn as specified by the AC including cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities.

Ensure that the three levels of curriculum planning – whole-school, year level and unit level, are collaboratively designed, implemented and aligned with the AC.

Further develop teachers' knowledge and skills of quality assessment strategies through collaborative planning, and internal and external moderation that is aligned with the whole-school curriculum plan and quality assured across the school.

## 4.7 Differentiated teaching and learning

### Findings

Teaching practices within the school reflect the belief of staff that all students are capable of learning successfully if motivated and provided with appropriate learning opportunities and necessary support. Leaders and teachers understand the importance of designing effective classroom programs to meet the diversity of student learning needs, attuned to different levels of readiness and interests.

School leaders identify school readiness for pre-Prep age children as an issue, with 15 of 26 new Prep enrolments having had no experience in kindergarten or early learning contexts. Parents of 11 students provided transition statements at Prep enrolment. Based on this data, the leadership team organises a comprehensive 'Step Up to Education' initiative for parents and their child in Term 4 prior to enrolment. Each week for eight weeks the pre-Prep children participate in an early learning activity for a session whilst their parents receive information regarding the school's policies and practices.

Many younger children are presenting at school with a range of speech-language problems, and the school has organised ongoing intervention provided by teacher aides using programs designed by a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP).

Junior school teachers have recently begun experimenting with Age-appropriate pedagogies (AAP) and have introduced a differentiation initiative for children from Prep to Year 2, Stay and Play to Write. This initiative operates for 30 minutes before school on four days per week and allows students to experiment with various constructivist and self-chosen learning activities. Students and teachers identify positive levels of socialising and enjoyment whilst engaging in activities that include gross and fine motor skills development, oral language and writing for reading.

Teachers report using reading assessment data as starting points for learning in the classroom. Establishing rigorous classroom reading programs is a priority. Fountas and Pinnell benchmark data regarding student progress contributes to the formation and support of levelled reading groups. Monitoring and tracking of individual student progress in literacy and numeracy is established using a school-wide assessment plan.

The school has begun to experiment with a structural differentiation model for teachers to help guide their curriculum and assessment adjustments for all students. The leadership team acknowledges that the quality of enacted pedagogical differentiation practice varies across the school. Targeted support for students with special needs is apparent, including for four students with a verified disability and seven students awaiting verification. The Canecutter Cluster deputy principal provides professional support to the Special Education Program (SEP) teacher, school leaders and other staff to ensure effective delivery of programs for students with disability. The Canecutter Cluster deputy principal provides high quality advice on special education programs at school level and organises cluster activities for SEP teachers and other staff that support the embedding of inclusive education practices.



The school operates a model of inclusive education for identified students and students with disability who are well supported with individualised programs delivered by the SEP teacher and teacher aides. One-on-one lessons outside the classroom are for intensive programs such as speech-language and communication. Groups are formed for specific skill development, including for social skills training and understanding zones of regulation associated with behaviour.

At the time of the review the school has 22 students with documented Individual Curriculum Plans (ICP) and there is an expectation that classroom teachers will take responsibility for their development and implementation with support from the SEP teacher and teacher aides. Some teachers indicate that it is a significant challenge for them to make reasonable adjustments to learning and assessment programs to meet the needs of students on an ICP in a multi-age setting.

The leadership team acknowledges that it is timely to review the current identification and support service process for students with learning needs. The Canecutter cluster deputy principal is currently working with the cluster principals and SEP teachers on refining processes including learning needs identification, data analysis, intervention guidelines, support protocols and monitoring strategies that apply to ICPs, personalised learning plans or individualised learning plans.

The school has a student support team that meets every three weeks and includes the principal, HOC, guidance officer, SEP teacher, CLO and SLP. The student support team offers a comprehensive referral and intervention process to teachers to ensure that there is a formal system established for meeting the needs of students.

A small number of students are identified as having highly complex social-emotional and wellbeing needs that require a range of intervention services to allow effective learning to occur. The efforts of all staff members are highly commendable in seeking solutions to these complex needs.

### **Improvement strategies**

Develop a whole-school model that identifies a consistent approach to differentiation to further develop deeper understanding and capacity of teachers to implement whole-class differentiation practices including for high achieving students.

Review and document strategies to ensure inclusive education practices to support a consistent whole-school process for identifying diverse students' learning needs, intervention guidelines, support protocols, monitoring strategies and documenting adjustments.



## 4.8 Effective pedagogical practices

### Findings

School leaders recognise that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning. Careful consideration of research-based strategies and effective pedagogies underpin teacher practice. Explicit and inquiry-based pedagogies are the chosen vehicles for moving student outcomes. The school leaders promote evidence-based teaching strategies, referencing the EI model of Fleming, Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model and Hattie's<sup>3</sup> visible and active learning.

The school has developed a comprehensive teacher handbook detailing the preferred school-wide pedagogical approaches. This handbook gives clear guidelines regarding learning expectations, curriculum programs, literacy programs and explicit lesson structures. The school leaders recognise the need to ensure the school's pedagogical framework reflects agreed teaching practices, is considered in curriculum planning, and is consistently implemented in learning experiences. A documented pedagogical framework is yet to be fully developed and recognised as an embedded practice throughout the school. EI is an embedded practice in classrooms. Most teachers articulate they would like the opportunity to add additional pedagogical practice to their teaching repertoire.

There is a focus on encompassing appropriate pedagogical practices throughout the school. Most teachers indicate that they utilise EI and some teachers speak of starting to implement AAP. School leaders have invested in a partnership with researcher John Fleming, designer of an EI model. Twice a year, Fleming attends the school and delivers PD, observation and coaching sessions.

A focus on the teaching of literacy is identified in the school's EIA. The teacher handbook details clear and prescriptive pedagogical strategies for the teaching of literacy. These include English warm ups, spelling mastery, modelled and guided reading and elements of writing. Teachers and teacher aides indicate a clear understanding of the requirements for delivering a quality literacy lesson and the necessary pedagogies.

Consistent school-wide literacy approaches are developing through collaborative inquiry processes initiated by school leaders. School leaders aim to utilise the current professional knowledge of teachers and acknowledge that they each bring a range of expertise, experience and capacity as a basis for moving the literacy priority forward. A cycle of inquiry process resulted in the identification of champions of reading who assist in the delivery of reading programs, coaching, mentoring and observational feedback.

School leaders have a visible presence across the school and a formal lesson observation system is developed to quality assure consistency across the school. This is supported by a feedback program. The school outlines its coaching process as a mechanism to continually enhance teacher capability in delivering EI pedagogies. School leaders provide feedback

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<sup>3</sup> Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. New York, NY: Routledge



and opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice through a process of two observation sessions per term. Members of the extended leadership team are developing instructional leadership capabilities to quality assure consistent pedagogical practices across the school.

Students articulate that they value the positive relationships they have with school staff members and the ongoing support and encouragement they receive during the learning process. Most students comment that teachers promote high expectations and build on the understanding between effort and success.

School leaders and staff are encouraging students to be responsible for their own learning through the building of a culture of reflection and goal setting. Many students are competent in discussing their learning goals and reading benchmarks. Students articulate that they review these goals regularly throughout the learning process. Artefacts are displayed in most classrooms demonstrating student goal setting.

Timely, relevant and focused feedback to students regarding their achievement is emerging in classrooms. The majority of students report that they receive focused and useful feedback from their teachers and this is assisting them to improve. Various forms of student feedback are employed across the school. A school-wide systematic approach to the provision of student feedback is viewed as important to improving student outcomes and is yet to be fully developed and consistently implemented.

A published whole-school curriculum assessment schedule guides data gathering and helps inform classroom pedagogical practice to meet student learning needs. Most teachers indicate they use a range of data to support their planning and differentiated approaches to ensure all students are engaged in learning.

### **Improvement strategies**

Collaboratively review current pedagogical practices to develop consistent pedagogical approaches that are enacted across the school.

Develop instructional leadership capabilities for identified leaders on staff, to quality assure consistency and rigour of practice across the school.



## 4.9 School-community partnerships

### Findings

The school is highly regarded by staff, parents, students and members of the local community. This is reflected in the range of positive and encouraging comments received regarding the school. Partnerships are viewed as important and are used to broaden student knowledge and increase engagement levels. The school recognises the positive impact that partnerships with the community have on enhancing student learning and wellbeing.

A dedicated and enthusiastic P&C actively supports the endeavours of the school, and ensures all students are provided quality learning opportunities. The P&C supports the school by delivering services including the tuckshop, uniform shop, breakfast program, the school fete and financially assisting with other school initiatives such as funding computers and iPads. The school has developed a process for staff and students to formally request support from the P&C for in-school initiatives and extracurricular activities. These include financial support for incursions, excursions, the school garden project and supplying each pre-Prep student with a school hat. The P&C articulates confidence in the principal and expresses appreciation for the open lines of communication and support.

Partnerships are established with local businesses to support student outcomes and wellbeing. These include partnerships with Woolworths and Brumby's that supply produce for the breakfast program and additionally involve the Woolworths Earn and Learn Program. Parents express appreciation and value the tuckshop services and breakfast program. A partnership with Bunnings supports the school gardening program.

The school is engaging with and refining relationships with nine local schools known as the Canecutter Cluster. A strong partnership is established with the Haileybury College and researcher John Fleming that provides opportunity for staff to experience high quality PD and observational sessions. A partnership with Tully State School allows for leadership mentoring and observational processes regarding pedagogical practice occurring across the two schools.

The school has developed a positive strong relationship with the local Goodstart Early Learning Child Care Centre to support the smooth transition of students and their families into formal schooling. The school conducts a comprehensive Prep preparation program during Term 4 over a period of eight weeks that is well attended. Throughout the year, the early childhood students visit the school for buddy reading sessions, Under 8's activities and a science day event. The early childhood staff personally deliver all transition statements to the Prep teachers to provide information regarding incoming Prep students.

The majority of students from the school transition to junior secondary at Innisfail State College. The college currently offers a comprehensive orientation program for students to experience high school. This program operates throughout the year with two visits each term, one with college staff visiting the school and the other with students attending the college. High achieving Year 6 students attend the Helping Our Top Students Have the Opportunity to Shine (HOTSHOTS) program each term to experience extension lessons in



their area of expertise. The college staff members indicate that students from the school are well prepared for meeting the challenges of junior secondary.

Partnerships are established with the Mamu Health Service, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisation, to provide culturally appropriate health and wellbeing support for Indigenous students. The service provides hearing tests for Indigenous students twice a year. The Deadly Choices program is a health and wellbeing program conducted by the Mamu service for targeted students who experience engagement or behavioural issues. The Mamu service has been involved in the writing and delivery of a culturally appropriate inquiry unit that was implemented across all year levels in 2018.

The CLO has fostered an important partnership with the community sector network. This network that meets once a month is attended by a variety of support services, non-for-profit organisations and allied health professionals whose services can be utilised by the school to support students experiencing challenging situations.

The school regularly shares information with parents regarding the learning and extracurricular activities occurring at the school. A school-wide newsletter is sent home to parents weekly. Active use of social media including Facebook ensures timely information is shared with the community. Some staff use online platforms such as Class Dojo to regularly communicate with parents regarding student progress. Some parents express the desire to have a consistent online communication platform such as Class Dojo implemented across all year levels. Staff identify a high level of parental attendance and support at school events. Some staff would like to see an increase of parental engagement in their child's academic pursuits in the school.

### **Improvement strategies**

Continue to build networking opportunities with the local cluster of schools and schools on similar education journeys that promote the learning of students and the professional practice of staff.

Develop strategies to engage parents as partners in their child's learning and the life of the school.