School Improvement Unit
Report

Walkervale State School
Executive Summary
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Walkervale State School from the 9 to 12 March 2015. It provides an evaluation of the school's performance against the nine domains of the National School Improvement Tool. It also recommends improvement strategies for the school to consider in consultation with its regional office and school community.

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

1.2 School context

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>46a Hurst Street Walkervale, Bundaberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education region:</td>
<td>North Coast Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school opened in:</td>
<td>1955</td>
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<td>Year levels:</td>
<td>Prep to Year 6</td>
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<td>Current school enrolment:</td>
<td>470</td>
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<td>Indigenous enrolments:</td>
<td>10 per cent</td>
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<td>Students with disability enrolments:</td>
<td>7.6 per cent</td>
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<td>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</td>
<td>915</td>
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<td>Year principal appointed:</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>Number of teachers:</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>Nearby schools:</td>
<td>Kepnock State High School, Bundaberg State School, Norville State School, Thaebeban State School, Bundaberg South State School, St Mary’s Catholic Primary School</td>
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<td>Significant community partnerships:</td>
<td>Indigenous Wellbeing Centre, Child Adolescence Management Forum</td>
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<td>Unique school programs:</td>
<td>Academic Challenge and Excellence – Transition Program (ACE), breakfast club, lunchtime club.</td>
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1.3 Review methodology
The review was conducted by a team of three reviewers.

The review consisted of:

- A thorough and rigorous desktop audit utilising agreed headline indicators, the school's nine-page data profile and school context.
- A discussion with the assistant regional director
- A school visit of 4 days
- Interviews with key members of school staff and community, including:
  - Principal and five members of the leadership team
  - 28 classroom teachers and specialist teachers
  - Business Services Manager (BSM) and two office staff
  - 15 non-teaching staff
  - Eight parents
  - Principal of local high school
  - Chaplain and Community Liaison Officer
  - Guidance Officer (GO)
  - Parent and Citizen Association (P&C) President and Vice-President
  - Local member
  - 16 student leaders
  - Students in their classroom and the playground

1.4 Review team
Glenn McGowan Internal Reviewer, SIU (chair)
John Wessel External Reviewer
Esta Thiris Internal Reviewer
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

• The school leadership team and staff clearly articulate a strong commitment to a caring and respectful relationship with students, staff and parents.

The level of care and concern shown by staff members is seen by students and the community as a significant feature of the school.

• The leadership team is leading a process to build staff collaboration and commitment to consistent approaches of teaching and learning across the school.

Teachers report an increase in collaborative planning and sharing of ideas in year level teams. Classroom modelling, coaching and feedback is provided to teachers to support the development of a consistent approach to the teaching of reading. This has led to a growing de-privatisation of practice in this area. A whole-school approach to teaching and learning across the school is inconsistent.

• School staff identify the key components of the school’s improvement agenda as the teaching of reading, attendance and student learning engagement.

The whole-school approach to guided reading is evident in most classrooms.

Strategies to improve student attendance have delivered an increase in students’ attendance in 2015. A number of classes have achieved more than 94 per cent attendance.

Alignment of the elements of the school improvement agenda lacks clarity and cohesion. The commitment of staff to the improvement agenda is inconsistent.

The roles and responsibilities of school leaders are being renewed to deliver an instructional leadership model.

• Student learning engagement and behaviour is a major issue that is impacting significantly on teaching and learning and staff morale.

The school maintains a strong commitment to the Responsible Thinking Classroom (RTC). A responsible thinking process is in place to help students make appropriate behaviour choices.

A range of views were expressed by staff and parents interviewed as to the effectiveness of the RTC. Interviews with parents indicate that student behaviour is negatively effecting the good order and management of the school. Some parents questioned the effectiveness of the responsible thinking process.
• While the school has a documented whole-school curriculum plan and pedagogical framework in place, the implementation of these documents into classroom practice is at an early stage.

Discussions with teachers in regards to curriculum delivery are being driven by the leadership team and support staff, however the teaching and learning strategies being embedded in classroom practice are yet to be fully understood and embraced by staff.

• There is limited evidence of a whole-school approach to the use of student achievement data by teachers to inform curriculum delivery and classroom practice. There is no systematic whole-school data plan in place.

School leaders collect some data in regards to literacy, numeracy and behaviour to establish students learning needs and identify gaps in learning. This process is not systematic and strategic. Teachers have inconsistent knowledge about how to differentiate for the wide range of individual students.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Narrow and sharpen the improvement agenda in order to embed key programs and practices. Develop a precise and explicit action plan to implement the improvement agenda which includes timelines, milestones and targets. Communicate this plan to staff and the school community.

- Review the implementation of the *Responsible Thinking Process* in the school. Investigate evidence-based research as part of this process to develop a consistent approach which enhances positive behaviour and learning engagement in the school.

- Develop a whole-school profile for students who require significant adjustments and support to access the school curriculum, in order to inform strategic planning and deliver high quality case management.

- Develop teachers’ ability to differentiate learning for students through targeted professional development and coaching.

- Develop systematic processes and tools for curriculum planning and delivery of differentiation for student learning, which includes the use of data to inform curriculum delivery, teaching practice and intervention support at all levels.

- Develop an instructional leadership model which builds a collaborative planning, assessment and moderation culture with school staff.

- Engage Regional support to provide support for the curriculum leadership team.