School Improvement Unit
Report

Mount Isa State Special School

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Mount Isa State Special School** from **30 to 31 August 2016**.

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

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

The principal will meet with their Principal Supervisor to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information about the SIU and the new reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the Department of Education and Training (DET) website.

1.1 School context

Location:	Marian Street, Mount Isa
Education region:	North Queensland Region
The school opened in:	1974
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12
Current school enrolment:	26
Indigenous enrolments:	65.4 per cent
Students with disability enrolments:	100 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	N/A
Year principal appointed:	Term 3 2015 (acting)
Number of teachers:	7.8 (full-time equivalent)
Nearby schools:	Townview State School, Sunset State School, Spinifex State College - senior campus, Technical and Further Education

	(TAFE), St Kieran's Catholic Primary School
Significant community partnerships:	Good Shepard Catholic College, Police-Citizens Youth Club (PCYC), Community-based work experience providers: Best & Less, Red Oasis Kindergarten, Spinifex State College - Residential, Cootharinga
Significant school programs:	Senior Café

1.2 Review team

Wayne Wilkinson   Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)

Patricia Thiedeman   Peer reviewer, SIU

1.3 Contributing Stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School Community:

- Principal, Head of Curriculum (HOC)/master teacher, six teachers, six teacher aides, Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) secretary, three parents, four students, Indigenous Liaison Officer (ILO) and school chaplain

Government and departmental representatives:

- Assistant Regional Director (ARD) North Queensland Region

- Assistant Regional Director (ARD) Statewide Special Schools

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2016	School Improvement Priorities 2016
Investing for Success 2016	Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016
Curriculum planning documents	School Data Profile 2016
OneSchool Individual Curriculum Plans and Student Reports	School budget overview
School Opinion Survey	Whole Curriculum and Assessment Plan 2016
Positive Behaviour for Learning materials	School newsletters and website
School Pedagogical Framework	School data plan and Student Data Profile

Teacher Curriculum and Planning Folio	School moderation templates
Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope Plan	Alignment of Pedagogical Framework
Whole School Professional Learning Plan	North Queensland Region Improving Classroom Instruction Observation Record

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The school is well respected within the local community.

The school recognises parents and families as integral members of the school community and works strategically to strengthen their participation in their child's education.

The school places a high priority on collaboration and on nurturing positive and caring relationships amongst staff members, students and parents.

A Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) program is documented under the school rules of *'Being Respectful, Being Safe and Being a Learner'*. An expectation matrix outlining positive behaviours across various school settings is developed. Knowledge of the school's PB4L is limited throughout the school community. Strengthening of school-wide PB4L is identified by staff members as a requirement and will be a school-wide priority for 2017.

All staff members are committed to the improvement of learning outcomes for all learners.

The school leadership team and staff members identify the need to implement a whole-school approach to improve student communication outcomes and build staff member capacity to meet the needs of non-verbal students with complex communication needs. Some staff members have received training in the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and the Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD).

The leadership team is aware of the importance of school-wide models for supporting staff members and providing feedback.

The leadership team has high expectations for all staff members and a professional learning plan is developed to build staff member capacity across the school's explicit improvement agenda. The implementation of a regular school-wide feedback model is yet to be formalised. Understanding of various school-wide feedback models including peer observations, classroom learning walks, videos of practice, classroom profiling, mentoring and coaching is emerging.

The school leadership team articulates the belief that the collection and analysis of data is crucial to the teaching and learning cycle and the school's improvement agenda.

The school has developed an assessment and data schedule identifying the systematic collection of a range of student data. Teachers have varying levels of data literacy. Some teachers are analysing data and utilising the findings to inform decisions regarding teaching and learning.

A number of formal and informal community partnerships provide additional learning and work experience opportunities to support learning programs for senior students.

School-based programs including budgeting and money management, café, gardening, tuckshop, car washing and lawn mowing provide the structure to implement student-centred goals and to enhance functional life skills and build independence. Staff members identify the need to implement a Senior Education Transition (SET) plan for each student and alignment with the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) plan, Guidelines for Individual Learning (GIL) and the Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA) curriculum processes.

Parents indicate great support for the school and speak highly of the learning support students receive.

Parents have an obvious sense of belonging and report they are kept well informed by the school. A small and enthusiastic Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) manages fundraising activities and works closely with the leadership team. The school community is positive regarding recent facility improvements to rooms, perimeter fencing and an undercover shade structure above the playground.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop and embed the PB4L approach throughout the school and identify professional learning needs of staff members regarding supporting the complex behaviour needs of students.

Research and implement a whole-school evidence-based approach to improve functional communication outcomes for students with complex communication needs.

Implement teacher feedback, mentoring and coaching processes to enhance effective teaching and learning practices across the school.

Develop teacher skills in data literacy and build capacity in data analysis to inform teaching and learning practice.

Build teacher capacity in senior schooling and develop a locally relevant senior school curriculum informed by the GIL, SET, PATH and QCIA planning processes.