Emu Creek State School

Executive Summary

School Improvement Unit

Queensland Government

Contents

1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Emu Creek State School** from **28** to **29 August, 2017**.

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

Garry Lacey   Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)

Vanessa Koina   Peer reviewer

1.2 School context

Location:	New England Highway, East Greenmount
Education region:	Darling Downs South West Region
Year opened:	1875
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Enrolment:	28
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	10 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	7 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	1019
Year principal appointed:	2014 (acting)
Full-time equivalent staff:	2
Significant partner schools:	Greenmount State School, Nobby State School, Pilton State School
Significant community partnerships:	Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C)
Significant school programs:	You Can Do It! (YCDI) program

1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, classroom teacher, two teacher aides, ancillary staff member, eight parents and 28 students.

Community and business groups:

- P&C secretary.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Playgroup coordinator.

Government and departmental representatives:

- Deputy Mayor of Toowoomba Regional Council and ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2017	School Opinion Survey
Investing for Success 2017	Strategic Plan 2014-2017
Headline Indicators (2016 release)	School Data Profile (Semester 2, 2017)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Pupil-free day program	Curriculum planning documents
School pedagogical framework	Professional development plans
School data plan	School newsletters and website
Responsible Behaviour Plan	

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The professional culture at the school is positive with many staff members exhibiting high levels of professional energy for the work they do in the school.

Staff members are able to relate anecdotes of the ongoing support they receive from their colleagues and from the school's principal. Teacher aides report they have good working relationships with their teacher colleagues. Staff morale is very positive with 100.0 per cent of staff registering satisfaction through the 2016 School Opinion Survey (SOS).

School staff members and parents express positive comments on the close and family-like relationships that exist within the school.

All staff members are committed to building caring relationships with students and are united in their belief regarding the benefits of the small school, multi-age setting in fostering a supportive learning environment. Interactions between staff members, students and parents are respectful and inclusive. Parents acknowledge the work done by the staff to promote a caring learning environment at the school.

All staff members express the belief that while students may be at different stages and rates of learning, all students are capable of learning successfully.

Student learning needs are catered for through a range of differentiation strategies including ability grouping, individualised teaching and adjusted programming. The principal and colleague teacher work to identify and address the learning needs of individual students within the classroom. The school's multi-age structure requires school staff members to be adept at providing relevant and individualised learning opportunities and support for a range of student needs and abilities.

The school's principal and teaching staff members are committed to improving learning outcomes for all students with a clear vision established for the school.

The specific emphasis for the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) in 2017 is on developing and documenting the school's approach to the teaching of writing. The principal and teaching colleague implement daily writing activities in their classrooms. The principal expresses a desire to develop a whole-school writing program that details expectations for embedded practice in the teaching of writing across the school. Processes for the teaching staff to monitor progress towards established targets and embed the use of agreed teaching practices relating to the EIA are emerging practices.

The principal views reliable student learning data as important in shaping classroom programs for all students and intervention processes for individual students.

The principal and teacher colleague regularly monitor school-wide achievement and individual student progress. A five-week data cycle is established for the collection of a range of student outcome data, with an emphasis on reading. There is some evidence formative assessment is utilised to identify starting points for improvement and to monitor progress over time at an individual student level. The principal recognises the need to continue to build the culture of self-evaluation and reflection across the school.

The principal views the development of staff members into an expert teaching team as central to improving student learning outcomes.

The teaching staff members at the school are continually developing their skills and knowledge in curriculum, teaching and learning. Involvement in data conversations, collaborative planning processes and contribution to cluster activities are assisting staff members to develop their capacity and enable deeper understandings of how students learn. A targeted professional learning plan, aligned to the school's priority areas and Annual Performance Development Plans (APDP), detailing the range of professional learning opportunities available to staff members to enhance their professional capacity is yet to be established.

The principal and teaching staff members express a commitment to implementing curriculum plans relating to learning areas aligned to the Australian Curriculum (AC).

In the learning area of English teachers report consideration of the achievement standard and content descriptions is undertaken during the planning process to ensure alignment with the AC is maintained. In learning areas other than English, teachers predominantly use the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) units and assessment tasks to guide their curriculum planning and implementation. There are varying levels of reference to the AC when planning these units. The principal expresses a desire to continue the process of developing curriculum units in other learning areas that maintain a strong alignment to the AC.

There is a strong belief across the school that improvements in teaching lead to improvements in student learning.

The school has a documented pedagogical framework that references the Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (DoTL). The sixteen elements of Explicit Instruction (EI) based on the work of Archer and Hughes[1] are used as key pedagogies in scaffolding classroom learning experiences for students. A comprehensive handbook on EI is developed. A whole-school reading program is developed to guide the teaching of reading across the school. The principal is in the process of documenting a whole-school writing framework to guide the consistent teaching of writing across the school. The principal recognises the need to review the school's pedagogical framework to ensure it reflects agreed teaching practices, is considered in curriculum planning, and is consistently implemented in all classrooms.

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[1] Archer, A. L., & Hughes, C. A. (2011). *Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching.* Guilford Press

Members of the community, parents, staff members, and students display enormous pride in the school.

Parents indicate they are extremely happy with the education and support their child receives at the school. Partnerships with parents are strengthened through school events and celebrations that are held regularly. It is acknowledged by the wider community that the school is a centre for community celebrations. Annual school events are eagerly anticipated and well supported by large sections of the community.

The school is an active member and plays a proactive role in the Clifton cluster of schools.

Cluster staff members undertake collegial Professional Development (PD) activities on school professional development days and during regular cluster collaboration days. Key features of these networks include participation in sports days, enrichment days, moderation and professional learning opportunities. Principal-to-principal mentoring and support are features of the cluster.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

Support teachers to implement agreed teaching practices aligned to the EIA, utilise data to monitor the effectiveness of their efforts, and measure success against specific school targets.

Embed data analysis processes to build a culture of self-evaluation and reflection across the school.

Develop and implement a targeted professional learning plan, aligned to the school's priority areas and APDPs, that continually enhances the professional capacity of all staff members.

Develop and implement curriculum units aligned to the AC that are quality assured for consistency, balance, and coverage against content descriptions and achievement standards.

Ensure the school's pedagogical framework reflects agreed teaching practices, is considered in curriculum planning, and is consistently implemented in all classrooms.