



School Improvement Unit Report

Mackay District Special School Executive Summary





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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Mackay District Special School from 1 to 3 August 2016. 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

Location:	Mansfield Drive, Beaconsfield
Education region:	Central Queensland Region
The school opened in:	1987
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12
Current school enrolment:	98
Indigenous enrolments:	10.2 per cent
Students with disability enrolments:	100 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	n/a
Year principal appointed:	2010
Number of teachers:	22.2 (full time equivalent)
Nearby schools:	Beaconsfield State School
Significant community partnerships:	Regional non-government organisations (NGO's), Disability Services Queensland, Thiess, Rio Tinto
Significant school programs:	Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), Integrated Support Service Delivery



1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of three reviewers.

The review consisted of:

- a pre-review audit of the school's performance data and other school information
- consultation with the school's Principal Supervisor
- a school visit of three days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
 - Principal and deputy principal
 - Head of Curriculum (HOC)
 - 14 teachers and toolkit teams
 - 12 teacher aides
 - Occupational therapist
 - Music therapist
 - Business Services Manager (BSM)
 - Administration officer and schools officer
 - Cleaner
 - Parents & Citizen's Association President, school council representative and three community representatives
 - Early Childhood Development Centre (ECDP) teacher
 - 25 Students and 12 Parents

1.4 Review team

Jenny Hart	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Wayne Wilkinson	Internal reviewer, SIU
Neil Pryor	External reviewer



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The school leadership team are united and committed to school improvement articulating their improvement agenda through a range of plans and processes.

The 2016 Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) has been narrowed to two core priority areas, reading and communication aligning to the Australian Curriculum (AC) and numeracy. Some staff members are able to speak to the narrowed improvement agenda, and several classrooms demonstrate specific student goals aligned to the improvement agenda.

- All staff members communicate a deep commitment to providing quality learning opportunities for students.

Staff members are positive regarding their students and the working relationships within their year level phases. Staff work to meet the needs of their students. The leadership team has great pride in the school, and work to promote the school with various community and business partners.

- The leadership team places a high importance on promoting plans and processes regarding how staff members and students will engage with the school priorities.

Most staff members express opportunities to influence strategic planning processes and to influence change, and to engage with other students and staff across the school is as yet limited. Staff express that school-wide systems to build team spirit and staff wellbeing require further development.

- An AC alignment framework which teachers use to plan learning programs in the extended general capabilities is developed.

The use of this alignment framework is used by teachers to inform classroom and student curriculum decisions. This plan is overarching in nature and is a guide to what the curriculum plans are to include. A whole-school plan, with a detailed sequenced plan to deliver the AC, is yet to be developed.

- The school undertakes a range of professional learning activities to enhance the capabilities of staff members.

A range of optional professional learning activities occur throughout the year. These provide staff members with the opportunity to refresh in professional practices. Staff meetings provide some opportunities for the sharing of teaching and learning expectations. Teachers would appreciate planned opportunities to share professional learning with colleagues.



- The collection of data on student learning is based on the school's checklist. The checklist provides a comprehensive overview of student learning, skills and abilities.

Most teachers are positive regarding the use of the school's checklist and how it supports the curriculum decisions for students. An agreed assessment schedule for the school is yet to be developed. Analysis of school data by the leadership team is developed; systematic analysis is yet to be developed.

- The school leadership team is committed to exploring a range of evidence-based practices. The school has a wide range of teaching practices and models.

A range of display items to support pedagogical practices are demonstrated in classrooms. Staff members participate in a range of professional learning opportunities. Opportunities provided to share practice with their peers or to receive feedback from colleagues or members of the leadership team are not yet developed. Consistent pedagogical practices are yet to be embedded across the school.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Collaboratively develop and regularly communicate a narrow and sharp explicit improvement agenda to staff members and the wider community.
- Prioritise the development of working relationships to build staff morale and collaborative decision making processes that will develop a strong, positive and supportive school community.
- Develop a whole of school curriculum plan aligned to the delivery of the AC to enable the development and tracking of units, align assessment and moderation processes and enable resource sharing.
- Build a culture of collaborative practice in the school including regular released opportunities for teacher release to engage in developing curriculum and share pedagogical practice.
- Collaboratively develop a priority of whole-school assessment and data collection, including building staff members' assessment and data literacy skills.
- Determine the signature pedagogies for the school to meet the needs of students. Embed an observation and feedback process to support teacher practice.