1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Blair State School from 12 to 16 November 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Cribb Street, Sadliers Crossing Ipswich</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education region:</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school opened in:</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year levels:</td>
<td>Prep to Year 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current school enrolment:</td>
<td>381</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indigenous enrolments:</td>
<td>16 per cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students with disability enrolments:</td>
<td>7.3 per cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</td>
<td>953</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year principal appointed:</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of teachers:</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Significant community partnerships:</td>
<td>Evolve Interagency Services: children in care (stakeholder group and used to train school staff), Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), Creche and Kindergarten (C&amp;K) preschool, Bunnings, gardening and NAIDOC artist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unique school programs:</td>
<td>The ARTS specialists – Visual Arts/Music and Drama</td>
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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 Assistant Regional Director
- a school visit of three days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - School principal and leadership team
  - 20 class teachers and specialists
  - Seven teacher aides
  - 37 students
  - Business Services Manager (BSM) and two administration officers
  - Parent and Citizens’ Association representatives and 11 parents
  - Tuckshop convenor and after school hours care representatives
  - High school representatives
  - Representatives of community organisations
  - Ipswich Councillor, Andrew Antoniolli
  - Federal Member for Blair, Shayne Neumann
  - YMCA breakfast program manager

1.4 Review team

Lyal Giles  Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Ian Hall  External reviewer
Peter Grainger  External reviewer
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The school is conscious of developing caring and supportive relationships with students and their families.

  School leadership and staff identify that caring relationships with students are an important school focus. Students and parents speak highly of their teachers and identify this as a major positive aspect of the school.

- The school has identified an improvement agenda.

  The school leadership team has developed a school improvement agenda. This agenda is recognised as improving pedagogy in reading. The school has invested significant professional development and resources aligned to the school improvement agenda.

  Most teachers could identify elements of the priority area but were unclear of how the targets and timelines were linked to the improvement agenda and the direct impact on their day-to-day work in the classroom. The school is developing strategies to ensure decision making practices are clear and understood by the school community.

- Staff demonstrate a keen desire to build a strong culture of collaboration and teamwork to drive school improvement.

  It is evident that there is a level of enthusiasm from staff to improve student learning outcomes. Many teachers work informally in teams and describe the way in which they discuss planning and resourcing at times convenient to them. A number of staff express a desire for more opportunities for collaboration and teamwork both within and across cohorts.

- The leadership team and teaching staff identify the need to develop a school curriculum responsive to the needs of their students.

  The school has a curriculum overview plan that utilises Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) materials to map teaching and learning episodes. There are links to the Australian Curriculum. Many teachers were unaware of this document and identified that C2C as the basis of their planning.

- The teaching of reading has been a focus of improvement for the school.

  Most teachers are able to explain the practices expected by the school to deliver the teaching of reading in their classroom as documented in the school reading program. The master teacher focuses on the teaching of reading by providing support and guidance to teachers. Gains in student learning are identified in school data and the 2015 National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results.
The school is implementing Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) and staff, students and parents comment that there has been improvement in the levels of student behaviour.

The school has adopted PB4L as a foundation to develop a supportive learning and teaching environment. The leadership team has reviewed behaviour management responses across the school and subsequently introduced new processes. There is evidence of some inconsistency to implement the agreed processes and procedures amongst staff or a clear understanding of how consequences are applied at this stage.

Student attendance is seen as a matter of concern for the school and an area that is identified as needing further improvement.

The school acknowledges that attendance is an issue and has a school wide approach in place to follow up on student absences. At the time of the review student attendance stands at 91.4 per cent. In 2014, 20.7 per cent of students attended for less than 85 per cent of the school year. This process has not yet had the desired impact on improving attendance.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Quality assure school practices and programs, led by the leadership team, to ensure targets and timelines are achieved.

- Promote teacher capacity by implementing moderation practices, coaching and mentoring.

- Develop systematic approaches to engage staff and community in the development and implementation of the school plans, programs and practices.

- Create whole school community understanding of school direction. Refine the communication processes to ensure decision making practices are clearly understood.