School Improvement Unit
Report

Wallaville State School
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Wallaville State School from 28 to 29 May, 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

| Location: | 7 Grey Street, Wallaville |
| Education region: | North Coast |
| The school opened in: | 1909 |
| Year levels: | Prep to Year 6 |
| Current school enrolment: | 60 |
| Indigenous enrolments: | 5 per cent |
| Students with disability enrolments: | 1 per cent |
| Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value: | 939 |
| Year principal appointed: | 2012 |
| Number of teachers: | 4 |
| Nearby schools: | Gin Gin State School, Maroondan State School, McIlwraith State School, Bullyard State School, Booyal Central State School |
| Significant community partnerships: | Gin Gin small businesses |
| Unique school programs: | Green School, Breakfast Club |
1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of two 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 two days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal
  - Five teachers
  - Three teacher aides
  - Administrative officer
  - Seven parents
  - Cleaner
  - High school principal
  - Community partner
  - 25 students

1.4 Review team

Michelle D’Netto Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)

Lesley Vogan Peer reviewer

1.5 Reading the report

The executive summary outlines key findings from the review. The key improvement strategies prioritise future direction for improvement. The executive summary should be read along with the findings and improvement strategies outlined in the nine domains which provide a strategic view for improvement.
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- Positive Behaviour for Learning has positively impacted on the culture of the school.
  
  The school has clear strategies for expected student behaviour. Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) is being successfully implemented and embedded across the school. Staff, parents and students report positive outcomes of the program. Student behaviour is well managed and students are ready to learn.

- A high priority is given to building and maintaining caring and positive relationships.
  
  Interactions between staff, students, parents and families are caring, polite and inclusive. High priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships. Parents are encouraged to partner with the school and are welcomed into classrooms.

- The school’s curriculum plan presently lacks a degree of cohesiveness.
  
  The Australian Curriculum is delivered through the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resource. It is adapted to suit the local context. There is no school overview for the delivery of units. The principal tracks units completed each year to inform the delivery for the next year and teachers are encouraged to track the content descriptors. The process for planning at this stage lacks consistency.

- The school is implementing the Art and Science of Teaching (ASoT) as a key component of its pedagogical framework.
  
  The school pedagogical framework is based on ASoT. In 2015, New Knowledge and Relationships are the targeted questions. The explicit teaching model is based on the gradual release of responsibility. The frameworks are yet to be embedded. Artefacts of explicit teaching are in all classrooms but at present are inconsistently implemented.

- Coaching and feedback are an integral part of the school culture.
  
  The school has a detailed and systematic plan for coaching and providing feedback to teachers in regards to the teaching of reading. There are plans to extend this approach to the teaching numeracy. Sustained commitment to the improvement and consistency in pedagogy is recognised by the principal as the key to student progress.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Formally document improvement strategies including timelines and targets and monitor progress towards set targets.

- Develop an explicit and sequenced curriculum plan, with clear alignment to the Australian Curriculum.

- Establish processes to monitor and track the delivery of the documented curriculum to enable an aligned vertical curriculum.

- Collaboratively strengthen the pedagogical framework and establish clear expectations in relation to the practice within the classrooms.

- Streamline coaching, mentoring and feedback loops to strengthen teachers’ commitment to the school priorities.
3. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains

3.1 An explicit improvement agenda

Findings
The school expects all students to learn successfully and have high expectations for student attendance, engagement and achievement.

The principal has identified an agenda for improvement and has communicated the priorities to the school community through staff meetings, newsletters and Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) meetings. This agenda is not yet documented.

The school agenda of reading, Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) and numeracy is embedded in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) for 2015. There are some articulated strategies for improving levels of student achievement and wellbeing. The principal recognises that further clarity around strategic direction is required.

Analysis of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) has informed the school’s improvement agenda. Reading has been the focus with a school-wide reading framework introduced and supported by regional and local resources. In 2015, numeracy has also become a priority.

There is evidence of a school-wide commitment to improve student learning, with artefacts and some meta-language associated with the improvement agenda visible in all classrooms. Staff are at different stages in their implementation of the improvement initiatives.

There are long term targets for improvement.

The school has a positive culture for learning. The implementation of PB4L has had direct impact on the school culture. Student attendance is monitored.

Supporting data
Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Great Results Guarantee 2015, School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, school improvement targets, professional development program 2015, school newsletters, pedagogical framework, staff, student and leadership team interviews.

Improvement strategies
Formally document improvement strategies including timelines and targets.

Continue to embed the improvement agenda across the school by monitoring progress towards targets.
3.2 Analysis and discussion of data

Findings

The principal places a priority on the systematic collection of data and its analysis to inform teaching and learning. There is a documented school plan for the annual and semester collection of data. This is accompanied by associated targets for reading for the end of the year. Short-term targets and timelines have not been established.

Data sets collected include PM Benchmarks, Probe, PAT-R, PAT-M and the regional diagnostic testing. There is some evidence that time is set aside for the discussion and analysis of this data. The principal leads these discussions.

Some teachers are using data to group students and inform their teaching and learning plans. Standardised data sets are entered on to OneSchool and some data is entered on to the school’s G Drive. Pre and post testing using the regional diagnostic testing in numeracy is an embedded practice.

Data is collected on attendance. A teacher aide collects, enters and analyses data on behaviour.

Data indicates that the school is close to Queensland similar schools in all strands assessed by the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Student relative gain in reading in Year 3 to Year 5 is below similar state schools in Queensland but is similar to those schools in numeracy. Relative gain in Years 5 to Year 7 for numeracy and reading shows improvement. National minimum standards results in all strands are similar to the nation. The data also indicates that six of ten strands in the upper two bands (U2B) are relative to the nation.

There is some inconsistency between school reporting data and NAPLAN data.

Supporting data

Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Great Results Guarantee 2015, School Data Profile, school improvement targets, professional development program 2015, pedagogical, assessment & reporting framework, staff interviews, OneSchool.

Improvement strategies

Develop short term timelines and targets for data collection to inform planning and teaching and enable relevant response to student needs.

Build the capacity of teachers to collect, analyse and use data to improve student outcomes.
3.3 A culture that promotes learning

Findings

The principal and staff promote and maintain an environment reflective of high expectations that all children will learn successfully.

Interactions between staff, students, parents and families are caring, polite and inclusive. High priority is given to building and maintaining positive and caring relationships. Parents are encouraged to partner with the school and are welcomed into classrooms.

The school has clear strategies for expected student behaviour. PB4L is being successfully implemented and embedded across the school. Staff, parents and students report positive outcomes since its implementation.

The principal actively promotes regular attendance and implements departmental processes as required. Currently student attendance is 93.1 per cent.

The school works to create an attractive and stimulating physical environment that supports and encourages learning. Spaces are well planned, organized and offer flexibility for different learning styles.

Student and staff satisfaction as indicated in the 2014 School Opinion Survey is consistent with the state comparisons. The survey also indicates there are some concerns from parents regarding the behaviour of students at the school and the overall parent satisfaction rating has decreased from 2013. It should be noted that the response size of parents was small. Interviews with parents provided evidence of high satisfaction levels with behaviour management and overall school culture.

The school values cultural diversity and places a high priority on student and staff wellbeing.

There is an inconsistent application of investigative and innovative independent learning across the school.

Supporting data

Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Great Results Guarantee 2015, School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, school website, school newsletters, pedagogical framework, classroom and school artefacts, staff, student and leadership team interviews.

Improvement strategies

Continue to revisit PB4L strategies to ensure the culture of high expectations remains a priority.
3.4 Targeted use of school resources

Findings
The school applies its resources to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of the students.

Student needs are identified through routine testing. Teachers discuss student needs at weekly staff meetings. Referral forms are completed if students require guidance officer or speech language pathologist support.

Teacher aides are key personnel used in the delivery of programs such as the speech language program for six children and the support for students where English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). Access to I-connect services has also been sourced to support the language needs of students. A teacher aide coordinates the data for PB4L.

Teacher aides are valued members of the staff team and are trained in the teaching of reading and PBL.

Identification of school needs from various data sets has informed the improvement agenda. Staff are deployed in ways that best address the agenda, needs of the students and staff expertise. A staff member trained in First Steps in Maths will be allocated release time to coordinate and implement a numeracy intervention program. Roles and responsibilities of school personnel are still to be developed.

Programs have been reviewed and changed based on the effectiveness in meeting the needs of the students. The school has allocated funds to employ a casual employee to maintain the grounds once a week.

At the time of the review the bank balance is $103,997. This is inclusive of the Great Results Guarantee (GRG) funds of $15,250.

There are interactive whiteboards and computers in all classrooms.

Classrooms are inviting and conducive to learning. The school’s physical environment is attractive and maximises the learning of students.

The school has a chaplain who supports the wellbeing of students and their families. The school tuckshop provides a breakfast club at a minimal cost to students and there are plans in place to offer this as a free service.

Supporting data
Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Great Results Guarantee 2015, School Data Profile, school improvement targets, school website, school newsletters, budget overview, staff, student and parent interviews.

Improvement strategies
Review staffing allocations and funds available to create and sustain a pedagogical and curriculum leadership position within the school.
3.5 An expert teaching team

Findings

The principal has strategies in place to assist teachers to continue to develop and share deep understanding of how children learn. The regional Principal Education Advisor-Australian Curriculum (PEA-AC) supports teachers in the teaching of reading. The principal also provides feedback to teachers regarding the teaching of reading.

There are plans to introduce a literacy coach in term three. A trained teacher in *First Steps in Maths* is employed to provide additional numeracy support. Roles and responsibilities of the coaches and key teachers are still to be developed.

There is a documented professional learning plan and the school has systems in place for mentoring, coaching and feedback.

Teachers are open to constructive feedback from the principal and regional PEA-AC. There is no system in place to monitor the impact of teacher feedback on pedagogical change and improvement in student outcomes.

Teachers have professional learning plans. Not all plans are aligned to the school improvement agenda. Teacher aides are still to develop their plans for 2015.

Teacher aides are valued staff members and contribute to the support services and in-class learning of students. They are involved in professional development opportunities.

Weekly staff meeting are the forums for professional discussions aligned to the improvement agenda.

Supporting data

Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Great Results Guarantee 2015, School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, school website, school newsletters, pedagogical framework, Modelled Reading – co-verification template, classroom and school artefacts, staff, student and leadership team interviews.

Improvement strategies

Continue to streamline coaching, mentoring and feedback loops to confirm and strengthen teacher commitment to school priorities.

Ensure that personal performance development plans are reflective and aligned to school priorities with clear targets for professional learning.

Clearly define roles and responsibilities for coaches and mentors working with staff.
3.6 Systematic curriculum delivery

Findings

The Australian Curriculum is delivered through Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C). It is adapted to suit the local context of the school. There is no school overview for the delivery of units. Essential learnings for the non-C2C subjects are documented.

The curriculum framework is aligned to ASoT and structured at a school, class and individual level. This does not clarify what is taught from year to year.

Teachers backward map from the assessment pieces in C2C. Teachers are encouraged to use the guide to making judgements for the appropriate year level when assessing student work.

The principal tracks delivery of units each year to inform the delivery for the next year. Teachers are encouraged to track the content descriptors that have been delivered in the classrooms. There is no consistent model of planning and cross-checking the curriculum against the Australian Curriculum.

The reading program in the classroom is based on Sheena Cameron’s strategies and the regional framework for the teaching of reading. Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) is used to develop the comprehension skills of students. Some teachers have introduced programs that they are familiar with from past experiences. Some teachers use modelled, shared and guided reading practices.

Teachers moderate once a term with other small schools in the cluster.

In some classrooms, group work and independent learning is encouraged. The school does not have an overview for the embedding of higher order thinking across the curriculum.

Supporting data

Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Great Results Guarantee 2015, Regional Framework for the Teaching of Reading, Arts, Health and Technology program 2012-2013, Wallaville State School curriculum framework, professional development program 2015, school website, school newsletters, pedagogical, assessment & reporting framework, staff and interviews.

Improvement strategies

Develop an explicit, coherent and sequenced curriculum plan, with clear alignment to the Australian Curriculum.

Establish processes to monitor and track the delivery of units of work to enable a well-aligned vertical curriculum.

Develop a school-based template for planning to ensure consistency of planning practices across the school.
3.7 Differentiated teaching and learning

Findings
All classes at Wallaville State School are composite classes with students from different year levels in the same class group. The importance of differentiated teaching strategies is embedded in some classrooms.

The school team is committed to assessing, identifying and catering for the needs of all students. An assessment schedule informs school and classroom practice in respond to individual needs.

Small group and individual instruction in reading and numeracy is provided across the school, based on student achievement data. Students’ progress is reviewed regularly and groupings altered in response to student needs.

The Support Teacher Literacy and Numeracy (STLaN) works with students identified as having additional learning needs in literacy. Teacher aides work with individual students requiring speech language support, EAL/D and literacy support.

The speech language pathologist visits once per term to work with identified students and provide programs for teacher aides to implement.

Diagnostic numeracy tests provide pre and post test data to inform differentiation in the classroom.

Learning goals are used in classrooms. In some classrooms, goals are used purposefully. There is inconsistent understanding among teachers about the purpose and use of learning goals. There is no evidence of success criteria used to help students to reach their targets.

The Before school reading club provides opportunities for students to read with parents or buddies.

Supporting data
Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Great Results Guarantee 2015, School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, assessment overview, classroom learning goals, pedagogical framework, classroom and school artefacts, staff, student and leadership team interviews, classroom observations.

Improvement strategies
Broaden all staff members’ knowledge and understanding of differentiation to ensure classroom activities are designed to respond appropriately to student learning needs.

Further develop student learning goals that are personalised, based on data and reviewed regularly.
3.8 Effective pedagogical practices

Findings

The school principal recognises that effective teaching is the key to improving student outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to use research-based teaching practices.

The school is implementing the Art and Science of Teaching (ASoT) framework. In 2015, *New Knowledge and Relationships* are the targeted questions. Documentation reflects the organisation of school structures around these selected questions. However, this is not consistently evident across all classrooms.

Explicit teaching is guided by *I do, We do, You do* and the gradual release model of responsibility. Artefacts of the framework are seen in all classrooms but practice is inconsistent. Students in some classrooms are using the language of the framework.

The principal and other key external personnel spend time supporting teachers with their pedagogy in the priority areas of reading and numeracy. The regional PEAAC has visited the school fortnightly and modelled pedagogical strategies to teachers and followed up with observations and feedback, using a co-verification checklist.

The school has a detailed and systematic plan for coaching and giving feedback to teachers. There are plans to extend this model to the teaching of numeracy. A teacher has been employed to assist teachers in their classrooms and to help model evidence based practices.

A coach has been employed by the school cluster and will work with teachers fortnightly, to further strengthen the teaching practices.

Students indicated that their work was *just right* for them but could be more challenging. Feedback to students is not embedded practice.

Supporting data

Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Great Results Guarantee 2015, School Data Profile, school improvement targets, professional development program 2015, budget overview, pedagogical, assessment & reporting framework, staff, student and leadership team interviews.

Improvement strategies

Collaboratively, strengthen the pedagogical framework the school has adopted and establish clear expectations in relation to the practice in classrooms.

Establish high expectations for student’s learning and closely monitor their progress towards targets.
3.9 School and community partnerships

Findings
The school actively seeks partnerships to enhance student learning and wellbeing. Parents and families are recognised as integral partners in their child’s education.

The school staff have built partnerships with parents and families by regularly communicating with them and providing some opportunities for parents to develop skills in helping their children read. Volunteers help each day with before school reading and some help in the classrooms.

The principal has identified a potential business partner who will sponsor the morning breakfast club twice a week.

The school Parents and Citizens’ Association and tuckshop assist with the Breakfast club and subsidise the cost.

Parents and community members speak highly of the school and its staff. Those interviewed indicated that the behaviour of students has improved and that staff were friendly and welcoming.

The school has a connection with the local kindergarten. There is communication regarding the transition of students to the prep years. In 2105, the pre-prep children visit the school library once a fortnight, are read to by the teacher aide and borrow books.

Students exiting the school for high school are well positioned to make this transition and the secondary school principal commented on the positive behaviour and learning of students from Wallaville.

Supporting data
Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Explicit Improvement Agenda 2015, School Data Profile, school website, school newsletters, community, staff, student interviews, interviews with the high school principal.

Improvement strategies
Formalise the partnerships and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the partners, particularly in the early years.

Review partnerships on a regular basis to measure the success of the partnership in terms of their effectiveness in enhancing student learning and wellbeing.
4. Follow-up timelines

- School to publish the executive summary on their website within two weeks.
- School to meet with Assistant Regional Director to discuss review findings and improvement strategies.