School Improvement Unit
Report

Westmar State School
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1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at Westmar State School from 13 to 14 September 2016.

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 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 Assistant Regional Director (ARD) to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information about the SIU and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SIU website.

1.1 Review team

Louise Wilkinson Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)

Jedda McNeill Peer reviewer
## 1.2 School context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Moonie Highway, Moonie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education region:</td>
<td>Darling Downs South West Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year opened:</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year levels:</td>
<td>Prep to Year 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment:</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</td>
<td>14 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disability enrolment percentage:</td>
<td>7 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</td>
<td>986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year principal appointed:</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time equivalent staff:</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant partner schools:</td>
<td>Moonie State School, Glenmorgan State School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant school programs:</td>
<td>MINI &amp; MAC Lit, You Can Do It (YCDI), Daily 5, Reading Tutor, Math Intervention, Reading Enrichment (Words their Way), Seven Steps, First Steps, Tara Public Speaking Competition, Sporting Schools After School Get Active Program, Kindy to Prep Transition Program, Macintyre Young Writers’ Competition and Camp, Tara and District Cross Country Carnival and Ball Games and the annual school Christmas Party (whole community event)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, three teachers, administration officer, three teacher aides, cleaner, schools officer, 26 students, three members of the Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) executive, seven parents and school sports coach
Community and business groups:

- Local business owner, director local Crèche and Kindergarten (C&K) and assistant from local C&K

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal of neighbouring state school

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Implementation Plan 2016</td>
<td>2016 Improvement Agenda Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investing for Success 2016</td>
<td>Strategic Plan 2012-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Results Guarantee 2015</td>
<td>School data profile (Semester 2, 2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headline Indicators (25/05/2016 release)</td>
<td>School budget overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OneSchool</td>
<td>2015 School annual report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading enrichment program 2016</td>
<td>2016 assessment schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmar State School Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Plan P–6 2016</td>
<td>Darling Downs South West Region, Regional Benchmarks 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 pedagogical framework</td>
<td>School newsletters and website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Opinion Survey 2015</td>
<td>Student progress on literacy continuum data wall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student assessment results data wall</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

A school-wide, professional staff team works enthusiastically and collaboratively together for student learning success and they comment this is a key feature of the school.

The principal leads and models professional learning in the school. There is a range of expertise of staff members in the school including beginning teachers and teacher aides. Teachers comment they feel highly supported and appropriately challenged by the principal to expand their professional knowledge, practice and engagement. Teacher aides report they feel valued, included by teachers and are supportive of each other. All staff members are open to constructive feedback and provide informal professional support to colleagues.

A culture of supportive, authentic and caring relationships is a key feature of the school and a sense of belonging and mutual respect is demonstrated between school and community members.

The 2015 School Opinion Survey (SOS) indicates 100 per cent of parents agree that ‘this is a good school’. All respondents have high satisfaction across all domains. The school communicates and engages proactively with the community. Classrooms are calm, orderly and focused on learning. All members of the school community speak positively regarding the school and the direction being taken by the principal. They are appreciative of the stability and professionalism of leadership.

The school has a comprehensive, documented whole-school curriculum plan for each subject across all year levels which clearly identifies what teachers should teach and students should learn.

This school plan is directly taken from the Australian Curriculum (AC). Units of work and assessment are adopted and adapted from the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resource. Teachers make further adaptations as required to meet the needs of students in multi-age classes, including students with learning differences. This work is led and monitored by the principal.

The principal has established a clear vision to improve levels of student achievement and wellbeing. This is inspired by the school motto ‘Success Crowns Effort’.

The vision shows recognition of systemic plans for improvement and is informed by analysis of school performance data over time. All staff members are united and committed to implementing this vision. The Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) for 2016 has, as its first priority, writing. Improving numeracy, reading and spelling, community relationships and student behaviour feature as four other priorities in the school EIA documentation. Staff members can clearly articulate their part in the priority of writing.

The school is viewed positively and parents openly communicate their pride in the school and comment on the great work the principal and staff members are doing.
After a number of school leadership changes, members of the school community express gratitude for the stability provided to the school over the past three years by the current principal. An active Parent and Citizens’ Association (P&C) works in close partnership with the school and funds a number of events, activities and initiatives. The principal communicates extensively with parents regarding student progress and school business. Parents express a desire for less detailed information to be provided and for acronyms to be removed from communications.

**The school has a range of strategic plans that document the school’s improvement intentions in differing ways.**

The school's Annual Implementation Plan 2016 (AIP) lists writing, numeracy and literacy as priorities in that order. The Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Plan P–6 provides a comprehensive overview of the why, what and when of teaching and learning that occurs at the school. A reading enrichment program encapsulates expectations, practices and programs for the teaching of reading and includes writing. There is a documented pedagogical framework explaining the school's preferred ways of teaching across the school. A number of other new strategic documents have been developed by the principal over time. Clear alignment of these plans is not yet apparent.

**The principal and teachers indicate shared intent to further develop critical and creative thinking across subjects.**

Through the teaching of writing and implementing inquiry learning the school has articulated strengthening their curriculum implementation of the subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM), starting with science. The school is exploring how to make the curriculum locally relevant to all students. An alignment of these intentions with the current curriculum plan for delivery is yet to occur.

**The principal has established high expectations regarding teaching and learning in the school.**

Highly effective teaching is recognised as key to improving student learning. Classroom visits show students are engaged, challenged, feel safe to take risks and are supported to learn. The principal has developed a pedagogical teaching framework. A collegially devised rationale for, and explicit reference to, the research base for the signature school teaching practices with accompanying Professional Development (PD) is yet to occur.

**Students speak positively regarding their teachers, with many saying the teachers are the best thing about the school.**

Some students comment they 'learn a lot' and 'it’s a good place to be'. Student ownership of goals and knowing the next steps for their learning is growing. Feedback to students varies across classrooms in range and depth. Moving beyond checking for understanding, to providing regular, timely, descriptive and explicit feedback for correction and next steps for student learning is yet to be embedded in teacher practice.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

Liaise with the parent body to determine the quantity and type of information they require at home and in meetings.

Collaboratively review the school’s strategic plans and other key documents to ensure clarity and alignment with what is written, discussed and actioned.

Refine the school's curriculum plan to ensure: systemic changes, alignment to the school’s EIA, progress towards development of critical and creative thinking, and inclusion of locally relevant curriculum.

Provide a rationale for, and make explicit reference to, the research base for the signature school pedagogies with accompanying PD.

Provide opportunities for teachers to develop knowledge and practice in providing systematic, regular and descriptive feedback for student learning improvement.