School Improvement Unit
Report

Toowoomba East State School

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Toowoomba East State School from 2 to 4 March 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:	Arthur and Mary Streets, East Toowoomba
Education region:	Darling Downs and South West
The school opened in:	1887
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Current school enrolment:	827
Indigenous enrolments:	6.5 per cent
Students with disability enrolments:	3.7 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	1056
Year principal appointed:	2005
Number of teachers:	33 (full-time equivalent)
Nearby schools:	Harlaxton State School, Rangeville State School, Fairholme College, Toowoomba Grammar School, Toowoomba Anglican College and Preparatory School, Mater Dei Primary School
Significant community partnerships:	Chaplaincy – Scripture Union, Camp Australia – Before and After School Care, USQ – Robotics and Imagineering, Amaroo Environmental Education Centre, Department of Sport and Recreation Regional Sport Development
Unique school programs:	Special Education Program Prep Transition Sports Expo

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:

    o Principal and three deputy principals

    o Head of Curriculum (HOC), data leader

    o 40 teachers, including specialist teachers and advisory visiting teacher

    o 10 teacher aides

    o Business Services Manager (BSM)

    o 3 ancillary staff members

    o Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president,

    o School chaplain

    o 30 parents

    o 16 student leaders

    o 45 students

1.4 Review team

Alan Whitfield	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Kylie Smith	Peer reviewer
Norman Hunter	External reviewer

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The school is highly regarded in the community for academic, sporting and cultural excellence.

  There is a strong sense of belonging and pride in the school and appreciation for a rich tradition of high expectations for behaviour, effort and academic achievement in staff members, parents and students. School community members speak with pride of long-term connection with the school.

- The school leadership team and teaching staff members are united and explicit about their commitment to successful student learning and achievement for all students in the school.

  Staff members publicly express a strong belief that every student is capable of successful learning, and high expectations are conveyed. It is evident that there is a strong and optimistic commitment by most teachers to continuing academic improvement by students, with an accompanying belief that further improvement is possible and desirable.

- There is an acknowledgement from school leaders and staff members that the diversity of the school community is increasing.

  The school leaders and staff acknowledge that there is a need to explore strategies to build the competence and strategies within the school to cater to students with varying backgrounds and needs.

- It is clear that the school leaders give high priority to understanding and addressing the learning needs of all students at the school, and that significant thought is given to the way human and physical resources are allocated.

  Staff members are deployed to maximize student needs, making the best use of staff members' expertise and interests. Staff members report that they are well-resourced and valued as professionals with a key role in student learning.

- School leaders and most staff members recognise the need for greater consistency in the pedagogy used in priority areas of reading, spelling and numeracy.

  An emerging focus on instructional leadership and explicit teaching is evident. A collegial supervision model is emerging which supports reflection on practice and pedagogy, data analysis and performance development planning to support consistent whole-school practice in priority areas.

- It is clear that the school works to maintain a learning environment that is safe, respectful, tolerant and inclusive.

  The school's behavior expectations are widely understood by students and consistently implemented by staff members. School leaders clearly articulate a link between attendance and achievement and communicate this message to students and parents regularly.

- Every effort is made to identify students requiring additional support early in their time at the school.

  Resourcing of these students' needs is deployed appropriately. Teachers and support staff described a range of interventions including in-class support and withdrawal intervention and extension programs to support individual student needs.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Develop and implement a change process to build commitment from all teachers to a culture of continuing improved academic achievement for all students.

- Develop and embed expectations of consistent practice in priority areas of reading, spelling and numeracy and implement frameworks for ensuring these standards of pedagogical practice are enacted with integrity across the school.

- Refine and implement inclusive programs that integrate supportive strategies and processes to build positive behaviours for learning.

- Review current school intervention and extension programs in light of relevant inclusivity research linked to student achievement.

- Implement a range of classroom strategies to ensure a sharp focus on the engagement and appropriate cognitive challenge for every student, particularly high achieving students.