School Improvement Unit
Report

Blenheim State School

Executive Summary

Queensland Government

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Blenheim State School from 3 to 4 September 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:	Blenheim Road, Blenheim
Education region:	Darling Downs South West
The school opened in:	1879
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Current school enrolment:	84
Indigenous enrolments:	1 per cent
Students with disability enrolments:	6 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	974
Year principal appointed:	2009
Number of teachers:	4.7 full-time equivalent
Nearby schools:	Forest Hill State School, Laidley District State School, Laidley High School
Significant community partnerships:	Chaplaincy program, Adopt-a-cop, Pre-prep
Unique school programs:	Radiance girls

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 two days

- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:

    - Principal

    - Five classroom and support teachers

    - Five teacher aides

    - Four student leaders and five other students

    - Parent and Citizens' Association (P&C) president and six parents

    - Principal of a local high school

    - Community partner

1.4 Review team

Michelle D'Netto	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Jim McGowan	External reviewer
Peter Tanzer	Internal reviewer, SIU

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The principal has identified and communicated an agenda for improvement.

  The school agenda is extensive. Some of the priorities documented are - reading, numeracy, attendance, implementing the Australian Curriculum and staff development and performance.

  Within the priority of literacy, reading is known by teaching and support staff and by the parent community. The principal identifies reading as the main priority.

- Data is collected and analysis of data occurs in most classrooms.

  The school's improvement priority of reading aligns with regional expectations. Some teachers and teacher aides are using diagnostic information to inform their reading program and to make adjustments. The school is yet to develop a systematic, whole-school approach for the analysis of data to inform the effectiveness of the school reading program and the approaches being taken across the school.

- Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) forms the basis of the curriculum.

  Most teachers' curriculum planning is systematic and meets the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and departmental requirements. The lessons undertaken by students are adapted to suit the multi-age classroom context. There is evidence of a simple curriculum overview aligned to C2C. The principal recognises that the curriculum overview is not current and needs reviewing.

- There is a high level of commitment and enthusiasm from all staff to improve student learning outcomes.

  The school is described as a *good school* as indicated in the 2014 School Opinion Survey (SOS). In the survey, 92 per cent of students and 100 per cent of the staff and parents report being satisfied with the school. Students report that they feel supported. A student-centred approach is evident in school programs and classrooms.

  Students are open to assistance and value their teachers and teacher aides.

- The appointment of a pedagogical coach will strengthen the school's processes to provide feedback to staff.

  Staff have identified that they are receiving informal feedback about how they are performing within their different roles.

  There is no formal observation and feedback process in place within the school to monitor the implementation of the key improvement agendas. There are plans to implement this strategy in the near future through the work of the pedagogical coach.

- Support systems are in place for students working below benchmarks.

  There are comprehensive programs in classrooms and across the school for students requiring support to meet benchmarks. There is limited evidence of a strategy that is designed to direct school resources to programs of identification and appropriate support for higher performing students in all classrooms.

- The school presents as calm, orderly and well maintained.

  The classrooms are inviting and conducive to learning. There are clear routines for the entry and exit of students from classrooms and from the school. Students and staff are welcoming.

  There are a range of attractive spaces both indoor and outdoor that are well utilised. School buildings and the extensive grounds are well maintained.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Sharpen the explicit improvement agenda including agreed timelines and targets for improvement. Monitor progress and regularly articulate this agenda to the whole school community.

- Revise the school data plan with clear school targets and benchmarks linked to the identified priority areas to build the systemic collection, analysis and reporting of student data and to inform school practices.

- Collaboratively review the school curriculum overview and supporting frameworks to ensure that they are locally responsive and clearly describe what teachers are to teach and students are to learn.

- Implement a coaching and feedback process for all staff that aligns to the school's pedagogical framework.

- Refine school-wide processes that identify and allocate resources to programs that will differentiate for and challenge high performing students.