

Cairns State High School

Executive Summary





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1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **Cairns State High School** from **19 to 22 October 2020**

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 implement in consultation with its regional office and school community.

The report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies that prioritise future directions for improvement.

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 regarding the EIB and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the EIB [website](#).

1.1 Review team

Cameron Hodges	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Kathleen Janacek	Peer reviewer
Kyrra Mickelborough	Peer reviewer
Ken Rogers	External reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	Cnr Sheridan and Upward Streets, Cairns North	
Education region:	Far North Queensland Region	
Year levels:	Year 7 to Year 12	
Enrolment:	1691	
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	11.7 per cent	
Students with disability:	Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:	4 per cent
	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:	8.8 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	1032	
Year principal appointed:	2016	



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Executive principal, four deputy principals, Business Manager (BM), 13 Heads of Department (HOD), Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), director of music, student coach, 54 teachers, two guidance officers, seven administrative officers, school engagement officer, Community Education Counsellor (CEC), two Clontarf Foundation support workers, Diamond Spirit coordinator, tuckshop convenor, seven teacher aides, three cleaners, two computer technicians, four other non-teaching staff, 84 students, 19 parents, Parents & Citizens' Association (P&C) member, school council chair and three school council members.

Community and business groups:

- CQUniversity (CQUni) associate vice chancellor and Advance Cairns executive chairman.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Parramatta State School deputy principal, Machans Beach State School Head of Department (HOD) and Edge Hill State School deputy principal.

Government and departmental representatives:

- State Member for Cairns and Regional Director.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2020	School pedagogical framework
Investing for Success 2020	Strategic Plan 2017-2020
OneSchool	School Data Profile (Semester 1 2020)
Professional learning plan 2020	School budget overview
Professional development plans	Headline Indicators (May 2020 release)
School data plan	Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students
School newsletters and website	School Opinion Survey
School SharePoint Site	Curriculum planning documents



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The tone of the school is warm, calm and inviting.

The school community is welcoming, confident and respectful to all. The executive principal, school leaders and staff are committed to the development of an environment reflective of high expectations that all students will learn successfully. Students value the efforts of their teachers in supporting all aspects of school life. They appreciate the extensive opportunities available to them in co-curricular and extracurricular activities due to the voluntary time given by so many staff members. All teachers speak highly of the strength of collegial relationships in the school. They value the willingness of their colleagues to share resources and the professional and personal support provided in all workspaces.

School leaders give priority to understanding and addressing the needs of students and source and deploy available resources to meet these needs.


The school allocates human, financial and physical resources to meet the identified teaching, learning and wellbeing needs of all students. The school is located in the heart of the central business district and is a mixture of heritage-listed buildings and newly developed learning spaces. The school community expresses excitement regarding the new multi-purpose hall currently being constructed and the opportunities it will present. The attractive school grounds are a credit to the facility and cleaning staff members. Resources are allocated to provide students with all of the opportunities they need to be *'the best we can be'*.

The leadership team is a cohesive team united in the belief that all students can succeed when provided with a caring and supportive environment with high expectations, a challenging curriculum and individualised support.

Line management responsibilities are allocated amongst the executive team and other school leaders. Line management schedules vary amongst the school leadership team and school leaders meet with members of their faculties to discuss school priorities. Agreed line management protocols at all levels are yet to be documented. School leaders express a willingness to engage in calibration of line management protocols to develop greater levels of consistency. Staff express high levels of confidence in the executive principal leading the strategic direction of the school. There is a strong sense of collegiality apparent amongst staff members.

The executive principal accepts responsibility for driving improvement in teaching through the documented school pedagogical expectations to *'know your student, know the curriculum, structure the teaching, vary the pathway and build your capability'*.

The leadership team keeps informed of research-based strategies and effective teaching approaches. This research has informed the school's pedagogical practice of High Impact Teaching (HIT) strategies and effective teaching approaches to support writing, eLearning



and student wellbeing. Staff members describe varying levels of competency in effectively utilising these strategies and many teachers express a willingness to participate in an observation and feedback process to enhance their capabilities in utilising HIT strategies and other school-agreed pedagogical practices. School leaders acknowledge the value of providing opportunities for teachers to learn from each other to enhance teaching capabilities.

School leaders are united in the belief that the systematic use of data is a key driver for student improvement.

Leaders recognise that the systematic analysis, monitoring and sharing of student academic, engagement, attendance, behaviour and wellbeing data are essential to informing all school improvement priorities. All strategic programs, initiatives and decisions are informed by data. School leaders express a willingness to build the capability of teachers to ensure that all teachers are able to utilise data to differentiate for the learning needs of all students in the classroom. The introduction of personalised learning plans is viewed as the next step in building data capability for teachers in regards to differentiation. The student support services team systematically monitors student attendance data, School Disciplinary Absences (SDAs) and behavioural data to assess student engagement and wellbeing.


School leaders and staff members express a strong commitment to success for all students.

An explicit whole-school expectation exists that differentiation of teaching and learning will be used across the school to support the learning of all students. The leadership team acknowledges the importance of teachers using accurate, fullest and latest data to assist them to make judgements regarding individual needs in order to identify appropriate starting points for teaching, and to individualise teaching and learning activities. Professional learning is being provided to assist all staff members to contribute to the vision of quality inclusive practices. Many staff express a growing confidence that the inclusion of all students including students with disability and those with diverse needs can be successful with the appropriate levels of support. The executive principal and other school leaders acknowledge the importance of developing and documenting a whole-school inclusive framework.

The school has a published explicit, coherent and sequenced plan for Years 7 to 12 curriculum delivery for all subject areas.

The school has worked extensively on embedding school-wide approaches to the development of curriculum planning documents in alignment with the Australian Curriculum (AC) and the new Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) senior syllabuses. Many teachers report that systematic moderation processes occur in the senior school. Some faculties implement moderation processes in the junior school to review assessment and plan for unit implementation. A consistent, quality assured whole-school process for moderation of student work to ensure the consistency of judgements and effective use of the standards is yet to be apparent.

There are extensive specialist offerings in the school's Centres of Excellence (COE) including music, performing arts, visual arts, sports excellence and engineering and



aerospace. In addition there are additional programs of excellence in a range of academic pursuits.

School leaders lead and model professional learning within the school community.

Leaders place a high priority on the development of an expert teaching team and value the importance of ongoing professional learning for all teachers. Staff members acknowledge the role the executive principal plays as an instructional leader and the focus on curriculum and targeted teaching strategies. Teachers express a willingness to receive regular feedback on their teaching practices. There is evidence of a Mentoring Beginning Teachers (MBT) program and an induction program for new staff. Support is provided for beginning teachers, by formal and informal check-ins and additional planning time. The school has many committed professional staff members who are passionate regarding achieving quality learning outcomes for students, and a collective commitment for staff and students to be 'the best we can be'.

School leaders actively seek opportunities and partnerships within and outside of the school to support student learning, student wellbeing and the future aspirations of students.

There are active connections with local businesses, community support agencies, sporting organisations, local music groups, local universities and other education and private Registered Training Organisations (RTO). The school engages with a wide range of local employers that support students in undertaking work experience, traineeships and school-based apprenticeships. The school has a strong focus on providing students with a global perspective and has an established International Student Program (ISP) through Education Queensland International (EQI). School leaders express a willingness to pursue additional partnerships to enhance connection for students outside of state and national borders.

Parents speak positively of the effectiveness of the school's wellbeing and social-emotional support and praise the wide range of opportunities and programs that the school provides for their child. Parents refer to the school as the 'school of choice'.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Collaboratively develop, document and implement line management practices for all school leaders with an inbuilt Quality Assurance (QA) process.

Refine and embed collegial engagement practices for school leaders to work with teachers to implement a process of feedback, observation and mentoring to promote agreed pedagogical practices to improve learning outcomes for all students.

Build teacher capability in the use of data to inform teaching and learning.

Provide professional learning opportunities for all teachers to enhance their repertoire of differentiation strategies to cater for all students informed by best practice.

Develop and embed consistent agreed school-wide practices for moderation and QA practices to ensure the intended curriculum is the enacted curriculum in all year levels.