

Gympie Special School

Executive Summary



School
Improvement
Unit



Queensland
Government



Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Review team.....	3
1.2 School context.....	4
1.3 Contributing stakeholders	5
1.4 Supporting documentary evidence.....	5
2. Executive summary.....	6
2.1 Key findings.....	6
2.2 Key improvement strategies	8



1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Gympie Special School** from **27 February** to **1 March 2018**.

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 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.

An action plan will be developed and submitted to the SIU and region within six weeks of the school receiving the report.

For more information regarding the SIU and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SIU [website](#).

1.1 Review team

Kate Russ	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Bert Barbe	Internal reviewer
David Manttan	External reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	Cootharaba Road, Gympie
Education region:	North Coast Region
Year opened:	1972
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12
Enrolment:	60
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	8 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	100 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	n/a
Year principal appointed:	September 2017
Full-time equivalent staff:	13.9 (teaching staff)
Significant partner schools:	Gympie West State School Special Education Program (SEP), Gympie South State School SEP
Significant community partnerships:	State member for Gympie, Federal member for Wide Bay, Weeroona Association Inc., HELP Enterprises, Technical and Further Education (TAFE), Just Better Care, Adopt-a-cop, Riding for the Disabled, Vison Australia, Sunshine Linus, Family and Child Connect, Children's Therapy Service, Sunshine Butterflies, Endeavour Foundation, Avenues, Bravo Disability Support Network, Queensland Association of Special Education Leaders Inc. (QASEL), North Coast Special School Alliance, Gympie State Schools Administrators Alliance
Significant school programs:	The Four Blocks Literacy framework, Building Blocks for Literacy, Augmentative and Alternative Communication - Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display, (AAC-PODD), Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL), Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH), Development of Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), Vocational and Educational Training (VET) for senior school



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, deputy principal, lead teacher – literacy, master teacher, 13 teachers, 15 teacher aides, Business Manager (BM), two administration officers, eight parents, Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president and vice president, 20 students, Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), occupational therapist, school chaplain, schools officer and cleaner.

Community and business groups:

- Vision Australia, HELP Enterprises, Adopt-a-Cop and Sunshine Coast Technical and Further Education (TAFE).

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD and Lead Principal Statewide Special Schools.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2017/2018	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2018
Investing for Success 2018	Strategic Plan 2015-2018
Headline Indicators (Semester 2, 2017)	School Data Profile (Semester 2, 2017)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2018	Teaching and Learning Handbook
School pedagogical framework	Curriculum planning documents
Responsible Behaviour Plan	School Opinion Survey 2017
Health and Wellbeing Framework	School newsletters and website
Parent and Community Engagement Framework	Curriculum Decision Making Framework
Samples of Individual Curriculum Plans (ICP), Senior Education Training (SET) plans and end of semester reports.	



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

All staff members uphold the belief that they need to provide a safe and supportive learning environment whereby every student can experience success every day.

Staff members are committed to this belief as their core objective to improving the learning outcomes of all students. Parents commend the inclusive and personalised nature of support provided and the open communication that exists between home and school. Parents and visitors to the school articulate that they are welcomed into the school and are appreciative of the cooperative and caring manner in which staff members interact with them and their child. They indicate that they feel included in their child's education and are confident in the school's ability to address their child's learning needs in a respectful, caring and challenging way.

The school demonstrates a strong commitment to developing and delivering a locally relevant curriculum, aligned to the Australian Curriculum (AC).

The school is in the early stages of implementing a newly developed teaching and learning plan based on the needs of students in a special education setting. All elements of the plan are aligned with the AC. Protocols that aim for consistent teaching and learning expectations are apparent. The teaching and learning plan is currently being unpacked with teachers to build common understandings of the expected planning processes. A whole-school curriculum framework showing clear alignment between all elements of the plan is yet to be documented and shared with staff members.

School leaders clearly articulate that improved teaching is pivotal to improved student outcomes.

The principal has communicated clear expectations for the implementation of the Four Blocks Literacy Model, Building Blocks for Literacy and Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD) as key teaching practices. Teachers and teacher aides speak highly of the quality Professional Development (PD) sessions and resources that have been provided to support them to confidently utilise these consistent teaching practices. School leaders identify that the documented pedagogical framework is yet to drive observed teaching practices in classrooms.

School leaders accept personal responsibility for driving improvements in teaching practices across the school.

School leaders identify that there have been informal observation and feedback processes undertaken. School leaders currently undertake walkthroughs and spend time in classrooms modelling teaching practices as required. School leaders identify they are yet to establish a formal whole-school process for coaching, observation and feedback that is implemented consistently.



The school places high importance on the analysis and discussion of reliable and timely student data as essential to their effective leadership of the school.

Staff members collect a range of data. The curriculum decision-making framework illustrates the 'what' and 'why' of data collection for students identified as accessing the extended general capabilities or the AC at foundation level or above. Teachers are developing their skills in the use of these tools. A comprehensive data plan outlining assessment tool types, a collection schedule, and how and where to apply data in the learning continuum is yet to be developed.

School leaders view the development of staff members into an expert school-wide teaching team as pivotal to improved student learning outcomes.

The leadership team highlights the need for targeted recruitment and retention of teaching staff to provide expertise in enacting the AC, and research-based pedagogical practices within a highly individualised special school setting. The principal is actively working with aspiring leaders in the school to build their capacity and confidence to work in coaching and mentoring roles that support the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA).

Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) is a valued practice in the school to build a safe and orderly learning environment.

Staff members articulate the understanding that effective and consistent implementation of PBL is important to the behaviour support and success of their learners. *Ardy* the giraffe is used as the school mascot and plays a significant role in supporting the school's three behaviour rules of *'I am safe, I am respectful, and I am a learner'*. Students demonstrate a positive connection with the mascot and are motivated by the rewards they receive on parade.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop and implement a whole-school curriculum framework aligned to the implementation of the full AC as stated in the P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework (P-12 CARF).

Collaboratively review and redevelop the pedagogical framework that informs and underpins the signature teaching practices across the school.

Formalise and implement differentiated coaching, observation and feedback processes to further develop the capability of all staff members.

Review the appropriateness of current data collection tools to inform the development of a whole-school data plan.

Develop a workforce plan with key regional personnel to further build an expert teaching team to deliver the school's improvement agenda.