School Improvement Unit
Report

The Gums State School
Executive Summary
1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at The Gums State School from 5 to 6 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 School context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Coomrith Road, The Gums</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education region:</td>
<td>Darling Downs South West Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year opened:</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year levels:</td>
<td>Prep – Year 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment:</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous enrolment percentage:</td>
<td>7.4 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disability enrolment percentage:</td>
<td>7.4 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</td>
<td>1013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year principal appointed:</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time equivalent staff:</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant partner schools:</td>
<td>Hannaford State School, Tara State College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant community partnerships:</td>
<td>Hannaford Campdraft committee, Save the Children, Westearth Contracting, O'Connor’s Rural Earthmoving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant school programs:</td>
<td>Mental Maths, Raz Kids, Tara State Collage Open Days, Playgroup, Year 6 Leadership Camp: Coolumboola Outdoor Education Centre, Tara and District Cross Country Carnival and Ball Games, Arts Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 Review team

Louise Wilkinson  
Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)

Leanne Jones  
Peer reviewer

1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, four teachers, one administration officer, three teacher aides, one cleaner, one schools officer, 25 students, three members of the Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) executive and one parent

Community and business groups:

- One local community volunteer and one local sports club representative

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Deputy principal of local state college and principal of neighbouring state school

Government and departmental representatives:

- Assistant Regional Director (ARD)

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

- Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2016  
  Improvement Agenda 2016

- Investing for Success (I4S) 2016  
  Strategic Plan 2013-2016

- Headline Indicators (25/05/2016 release)  
  School Data Profile (Semester 2, 2016)

- Great Results Guarantee (GRG) 2015  
  School budget overview

- OneSchool  
  Whole-school Curriculum Plan P-6 2016

- Assessment and Monitoring Schedule 2016  
  Darling Downs South West Region, Regional Benchmarks 2016

- School pedagogical framework 2016  
  School budget overview
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The principal, staff members and parents speak positively about the school and state it has a highly positive, nurturing and family-like atmosphere.

Staff members demonstrate a real ethic of care in their interactions with students. A sense of safety and inclusiveness is apparent in the school. The school views parents as an integral part of the school community and partners in student learning and school-community relationships are mutually respectful. Staff members believe that every student is capable of learning and state their role is to help students achieve to their potential. Parents comment that the needs of students are well catered for. Students articulate that their classwork is appropriate and that teachers make lessons interesting.

The school consistently implements a Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students (RBPS) and emphasises the values of the ‘4Bs’: ‘Be a learner, Be respectful, Be responsible and Be safe’.

Information regarding SWPBL is regularly communicated in the school newsletter, ‘The Gums Gleaner’. Parents, staff members and students can articulate the school rules and the consequences for any inappropriate behaviour. Students and staff members state inappropriate behaviour is responded to fairly. Staff members comment the RBPS is followed consistently and they feel supported to uphold the rules. There are minimal instances of behaviour incidents recorded in OneSchool and no short or long suspensions or exclusions have occurred in the period 2011 to 2016.

The school staff members and Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) have a strong partnership and actively collaborate to improve the school for student learning and wellbeing.

The school's P&C is committed to supporting the school and works in a range of ways including fundraising to purchase resources and improve facilities. Funds are raised by P&C members volunteering as workers at community events. Staff members, students and parents display a sense of pride in the school and attention is given to the ongoing maintenance and development of the grounds and facilities with dedicated work by a number of staff members.
The school has a ‘Whole-school Curriculum Plan P-6 2016’ aligned to the Australian Curriculum (AC) and has developed and implemented an assessment and monitoring schedule.

The principal identifies the need for an updated plan for the delivery of curriculum within the school. Consideration is being given to work at a cluster level to collaboratively develop a shared, coherent sequenced curriculum plan that can be adapted and adopted for each school’s local context. The assessment and monitoring schedule timetables the collection of a range of data and references benchmarks determined by the region. A rationale for the purpose, selection, type and quantity of assessment data and links for this to targets in the school’s improvement agenda is not apparent.

The school has recently developed a new pedagogical framework through collaboration with a local school.

The document references a range of teaching approaches, including Explicit Instruction\(^1\) (EI), Direct, Indirect, Interactive and Experimental Teaching, 16 elements from Archer and Hughes\(^2\) and a Symphony of Teaching and Learning. Teaching staff members demonstrate an awareness of the school’s EI practices. There are varying displays of application of this approach in classrooms and agreed consistent pedagogies are yet to be enacted across the school.

The process of providing and receiving feedback to and from students to assist them in understanding their own learning varies across the school.

Some feedback is provided to students in a range of ways including immediate verbal feedback, brief comments or numerical scores in work books and on summative assessment tasks, with longer comments on semester report cards. Students are not able to clearly articulate what actions they can undertake to make further learning progress.

Teachers take personal responsibility for improving their practice to enable every student to succeed in learning.

The principal provides informal feedback to staff members to inform their teaching and support strategies. Formal opportunities for ongoing observation and detailed feedback regarding teaching practices and engagement with students are yet to be developed.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

Collaboratively review and refine the whole-school curriculum plan and assessment schedule for alignment to the AC, systemic requirements, usefulness of purpose and future school priorities.


Collaboratively refine the school's pedagogical framework to clearly articulate the school's signature pedagogies and support this with Professional Development (PD).

Establish processes to provide regular, timely and descriptive feedback to students that makes clear what actions they can undertake to further learning progress.

Collaboratively develop a formal observation and feedback process to provide timely support and advice regarding classroom practices enacted for the school's future improvement agenda and in areas for individual development.