

Clifford Park Special School

Executive Summary



School
Improvement
Unit



Queensland
Government



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1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Clifford Park Special School** from **14 to 16 August 2017**.

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) and Lead Principal to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

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)
David Rogers	Peer Reviewer
Frank Schoonderbeek	External reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	Rob Street, Newtown
Education region:	Darling Downs South West Region
Year opened:	1991
Year levels:	Year 7 to Year 12
Enrolment:	120
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	22 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	100 per cent
Students in the care of the State	16 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	n/a
Year principal appointed:	2016
Full-time equivalent staff:	27.30
Significant partner schools:	Toowoomba West Special School
Significant community partnerships:	Disability Service Providers, Work Experience providers, Department of Communities Child Safety and Disability Services, Centenary Heights State High School, Other high schools: Toowoomba Christian College; St Mary's College Toowoomba; Toowoomba Grammar School
Significant school programs:	PATH (Planning Alternate Tomorrows with Hope) planning process and subsequent aligned programs



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, deputy principal, Head of Curriculum (HOC) - junior secondary, HOC-senior secondary, HOC-PATH , master teacher, 18 classroom teachers, 16 teacher aides, guidance officer, nurse, Business Manager (BM), Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president and secretary and two parents.

Community and business groups:

- Holistic Community Care, Child Safety Representative, KBH Enterprises and a work experience provider – landscaper.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Toowoomba West Special School and Centenary Heights High School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD and Lead Principal.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2017	Strategic Plan 2017-2020
Investing for Success 2017	School Data Profile (Semester 1, 2017)
Headline Indicators (2016 release)	School budget overview
OneSchool	School Opinion Survey
Professional learning plan 2017	Curriculum planning documents
Evidence of Learning (data) plan	Individual Curriculum Plans
School pedagogical framework	Responsible Behaviour Plan
Wellbeing Committee Action Plan	School newsletters and website
School-based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework	Report cards



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

A common belief in high expectations is articulated by all parents and staff members, and a shared commitment to establish and maintain mutually respectful relationships across the school community.

School leaders are driving the school's expectation that every student can learn and achieve. Significant importance is placed on positive and caring relationships as a foundation for successful learning. Parents articulate they feel valued as part of their child's educational team, and express they have the utmost respect and trust in the staff members of the school.

School leaders believe that successful application of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) is central to the delivery of teaching and learning programs.

The school has a set of school-wide student expectations, articulated in the four school rules of *'Be respectful, Be responsible, Be safe and Be resilient'*, that are clearly articulated in a school flyer that is shared with the school community. Staff members are supportive of the PBL approach and express their appreciation of the hands-on support of the principal and deputy principal. They report that students relate to the strategies utilised across the school and that they are having a positive impact on student engagement.

The leadership team provides a range of strategies including modelling, one-on-one mentoring and discussion groups to develop teachers' practice and share deep understandings of how students learn.

Teachers are actively committed to the continuous improvement of their own teaching and are focused on the development of knowledge and skills required to improve student learning. The school encourages all teachers to be highly committed to the continuous improvement of their own teaching. The previous process of feedback included 'positives and polishers'. Some teachers report the strategy was beneficial in providing more direct feedback regarding their classroom practice.

The curriculum intent is focused on age equivalent content.

Tailored programs and teaching practices provide for different stages in each student's learning across the school. Teachers fully embrace that each student is able to learn and progress at different rates. The focus on age equivalent mathematics content in the planning documents has made determining starting points for students more challenging, particularly for students that are identified as highly individualised curriculum learners. Teachers and leaders indicate that further work is required to become more precise in determining and achieving goals.



The leadership team has clearly outlined actions that are required to be undertaken within each priority area, and aligned these with targets, timelines and responsibilities.

A sharp and narrow improvement agenda is being implemented. Two priorities for improvement are identified in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2017. The first priority area focuses on students achieving their reading expectation or literacy learning expectations. The second priority states that students will engage in age equivalent mathematics contexts through specialised and explicit pedagogies. Specific targets to reflect improvement in student outcomes and processes to monitor and track improvement are emerging.

The school leadership team and staff members are committed to their core objective to improve learning outcomes for all students in the school.

The leadership team acknowledges that in order to align the school's current philosophy and approach to student learning, a review of their mission statement, including vision and values, is a priority.

A data wall is utilised to display individual learning expectations in literacy or reading for all students at the school.

A conferencing process is utilised to determine the next step for every student in their reading and/or literacy journey. The data wall is an integral resource within this process to facilitate discussions regarding reading improvement and goal achievement. Teachers articulate that they value this process and most would like to see this extended into numeracy.

The use of effective teaching pedagogies including Explicit Instruction (EI), Pearson's¹ Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) and Intensive Interaction form the basis for teaching strategies that maximise student learning.

School staff members utilise elements of these three pedagogical approaches to promote deep learning through practice, repetition and maintaining high standards of student behaviour. Some staff members express a need for better understanding of the links between these three pedagogies.

The school has established extensive and highly valued partnerships with families, local businesses and community organisations.

The range of partnerships with local businesses and organisations is having the intended impact of improving learning outcomes for students through the provision of work experience placements, school-based traineeships and sampling programs. A reflection of the success of these partnerships is the resulting ongoing employment for students following completion of Year 12.

¹ Pearson, P. D., & Gallagher, G. (1983). The gradual release of responsibility model of instruction. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 8(3), 112-123.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop a clear mission statement, including vision and values, to ensure it reflects the school's identity and drives its learning culture.

Develop clear monitoring and tracking processes for the explicit targets aligned to the achievement of the improvement agenda.

Implement a structured and school-wide process for observation, feedback and coaching to improve teaching expertise.

Refine the planning process and support teachers to ensure age equivalent content in mathematics is meeting the needs of highly individualised curriculum learners.

Develop a cohesive school-based pedagogical framework that is research based and relates specifically to the school.

Continue the development of the data walls and their utilisation in teacher conversations and monitoring student progress to include other curriculum areas.