School Improvement Unit
Report

Talwood State School

Executive Summary
1. Introduction

1.1 Background
This report is a product of a review carried out at Talwood State School from 9 to 10 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Location:</strong></th>
<th>Recreation Street, North Talwood</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education region:</strong></td>
<td>Darling Downs South West</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The school opened in:</strong></td>
<td>1918</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Year levels:</strong></td>
<td>Prep to Year 6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current school enrolment:</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Indigenous enrolments:</strong></td>
<td>&lt; 1 per cent</td>
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<td><strong>Students with disability enrolments:</strong></td>
<td>Nil</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</strong></td>
<td>1028</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Year principal appointed:</strong></td>
<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of teachers:</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nearby schools:</strong></td>
<td>McIntyre school’s cluster</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Significant community partnerships:</strong></td>
<td>Police, Kindergartens, ANZAC Day Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unique school programs:</strong></td>
<td>Inter-House Sports Competition, Academic, Behaviour</td>
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1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of two 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
  - Two class teachers and cluster pedagogy coach
  - Administration officer
  - Cleaner
  - Three teacher-aides
  - 12 students
  - Parent and Citizens’ Association (P&C) president and parents
  - Toobeah Kindy
  - David McMahon, Local Councillor, Goondiwindi Regional Council
  - Two cluster principals and deputy principal of feeder high school

1.4 Review team

Leon Proud  Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Roslyn Bougoure  Peer reviewer
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The school is regarded positively by the community.

  Parents and community members comment on the numerous positive aspects of the school and see it as a valued component of the local community.

- An increased focus on high expectations is seen as integral to the school culture.

  A whole-school goal-setting process is embedded across the school with students reviewing individual goals each term encouraging them to take responsibility for and reflect upon their learning and progress. Staff and parents highlighted the greater focus on academic outcomes.

- The school has developed an agenda for improvement in partnership with parents and the community and the principal can describe the desired improvements in student behaviours and outcomes.

  The improvement agenda has been narrowed in focus to three key priorities - numeracy, writing, and reading and comprehension. The narrow focus on these priorities has been effective in focusing the whole school's attention on core learning priorities. Explicit school targets and associated timelines are yet to be established according to these benchmarks or the explicit improvement agenda.

- The principal sees the development of staff into an expert and coherent school-wide teaching team as central to improving outcomes for all students.

  Formal lesson observations with post lesson feedback are conducted for all teachers. Informal conversations tend to focus on the improvement agenda priorities rather than the preferred pedagogical approach explicit instruction. Formal coaching processes by the principal and pedagogy coach are yet to be systematically embedded.

- Explicit teaching is recognised as a central feature of the school’s pedagogical approach, and all staff have an awareness of this approach.

  Staff have worked on embedding some of the 16 Elements of Explicit Instruction (Archer and Hughes\(^1\)) and recognise that there needs to be a continued focus for the remaining elements. A plan for the implementation of this agenda is yet to be developed.

\(^1\) Archer, AL and Hughes, CA 2011, *Explicit Instruction: Effective and Efficient Teaching*, Guilford Press, New York, USA.
The principal focuses staff and community attention and energy on the priority curriculum areas of literacy (reading comprehension and writing) and numeracy.

Staff members construct and deliver learning experiences that are engaging and provide an appropriate level of challenge for a range of students. Teacher aides are involved in the classroom, supporting the teachers in the delivery of the curriculum. Their engagement assists with the implementation of focused instruction for individual students.

Differentiation is evident in the school and a component of classroom practice.

Regular data on individual student progress is used to drive future learning. Staff know their students well and low class sizes enable that individual student needs are accommodated. There is some evidence of school-wide programs to extend and challenge students though there is no formalised gifted and talented program.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Collaboratively establish clear targets for improvement and accompanying timelines.
- Implement a coaching and feedback process for all staff.
- Develop a strategic approach for the implementation of the planned pedagogical approach to ensure continuity and consistency throughout the school.
- Maintain the current focus of high expectations for learning and achievement and optimise opportunities in pursuing academic excellence.
- Further provide a range of strategies to challenge high achieving students and engage reluctant learners.