

Walkamin State 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 **Walkamin State School** from **14 to 15 September 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) 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

Garry Lacey

Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)

Daniel Broadfoot

Peer reviewer



1.2 School context

Location:	Wattle Street, Walkamin
Education region:	Far North Queensland Region
Year opened:	1958
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Enrolment:	49
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	20 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	2 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	991
Year principal appointed:	2014
Full-time equivalent staff:	2.6
Significant partner schools:	Mareeba State School, Tolga State School
Significant community partnerships:	Walkamin Corner Store, Walkamin Community and Sports Club
Significant school programs:	Think Mentals program, English Skills Program, Reading programs (Springboard, Rainbow readers and CARS & STARS), gardening and cooking program



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, classroom teacher, three teacher aides, Business Manager (BM), Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president, five parents and 15 students.

Community and business groups:

- Proprietor local corner store and school chaplain.

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2017	School based curriculum framework
Investing for Success 2017	Strategic Plan 2014-2017
Headline Indicators (2016 release)	School Data Profile (Semester 2, 2017)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Responsible Behaviour Plan	Curriculum planning documents
School improvement targets	School Opinion Survey
School pedagogical framework	Professional development plans
School data plan	School newsletters and website



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The tone of the school reflects a school-wide commitment to successful learning for all students.

Staff members demonstrate an understanding and commitment to the importance of positive and caring relationships for successful learning and work to build mutually respectful relationships across the school community. Interactions between staff members, students and families are caring, polite and inclusive. Parents speak positively of the school and students strongly value the interest that their teachers take in them and their learning.

Classroom teachers work hard to create and maintain classroom environments that are supportive of students and conducive to learning.

Staff members are enthusiastic and positive regarding their role. They take pride in accepting, supporting and encouraging the learning, social and emotional development of students. Behavioural expectations, school and classroom rules are visible and known by most staff members and students. The school rules of *'be safe, be respectful and be a learner'* are further developed through a range of expectations, each of which becomes a weekly focus through a responsive approach to current behaviours apparent in the school.

The principal has established an improvement agenda that is focused on improving teaching practices at the school.

The specific focus for enhanced pedagogical practices in 2017 is on the delivery of a whole-school grammar, punctuation and spelling program. All members of staff are able to articulate the specific focus for the school's improvement agenda. The implementation of the *English Skills Program* and the use of warm-ups are apparent in all classrooms. It is less apparent that improved teaching practices are occurring in all classrooms. A school improvement agenda that has a narrow and sharp focus and promotes the use of collaboratively agreed, high-yield teaching strategies in the repertoire of practice of all teachers is yet to be developed.

The principal has recently developed a spreadsheet to monitor a range of student learning data.

This includes PAT-R, PAT-M, Far North Queensland (FNQ) Assessment Tool, sight words, PM Benchmarks and PROBE. The data is presented utilising a traffic light system to identify how students are progressing against set benchmarks. This data profile is provided to all teachers and there is an emerging practice of data analysis. Provision of time for teams of teachers to have regular, in-depth discussions to interrogate systemic and school-based achievement data is yet to occur.



The principal is committed to leading teaching and learning across the school and undertakes to enhance professional knowledge relating to curriculum, teaching and learning.

The principal is continually developing collegial relationships with colleague principals in the local cluster and acknowledges the need to continue to build further networked relationships that support leadership development, including more formal principal to principal mentoring relationships. There is a desire to further develop instructional leadership capabilities through online learning, regular feedback loops and undertaking other personal professional learning activities to enable enhanced leadership of curriculum, teaching and learning at the school.

The principal believes the development of an expert teaching team is central to improving learning outcomes for students.

Teachers' knowledge of the Australian Curriculum (AC) is emerging with curriculum units aligned to Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) being developed. The teaching team currently utilises informal opportunities to discuss planning and exchange ideas regarding teaching practices with some staff meetings providing a forum to share practice and discuss curriculum matters. Opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge of the AC through planned professional learning sessions and collaborative planning processes are recognised as a next step in this process at the school.

Teacher aides are viewed as valuable members of the teaching team at the school.

Teacher aides provide ongoing support to teaching staff and students to enhance the teaching and learning process, particularly through literacy and numeracy blocks. A significant amount of responsibility is given to these teacher aides to plan for, support and monitor the learning of students. A review of the roles of teacher aides in the school to ensure more formalised, collaborative planning and feedback processes are established and led by the classroom teacher, is yet to be implemented.

A small, but active Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) supports the school through the enhancement of educational and physical resources.

P&C meetings are attended by a regular group and they coordinate a number of community fundraising events, including cent sales and movie nights. Working bees are held to assist with the maintenance of the school grounds and facilities. An active student council is well established in the school. These students fundraise through events, including discos, 'wheels' days, free dress days and the sale of icy cups. These funds have supported the purchase of school equipment, including soccer goals.

Each year students are involved in a range of co-curricular learning experiences.

Activities, including Sporting Schools program offered after school in a range of sports, school athletics carnivals, an annual camping program, Under 8's day, gala sports days and school excursions are provided. A recent addition to these learning experiences is a school-wide gardening and cooking program. Students report they value the co-curricular learning experiences offered at the school and the time school staff members take to support them.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop a school improvement agenda that has a narrow and sharp focus and promotes the use of collaboratively agreed, high-yield teaching strategies in the repertoire of practice of all teachers.

Provide time for teams of teachers to have regular, in-depth discussions to interrogate systemic and school-based achievement data.

Provide opportunities for the principal to further develop capacity and ability as an instructional leader in the school.

Schedule regular curriculum planning meetings for the teaching team to build understanding of the AC, and to consider consistent practices for curriculum development and implementation of pedagogical strategies.

Review the roles of teacher aides in the school to ensure they are suitably supported to enhance learning outcomes for students.