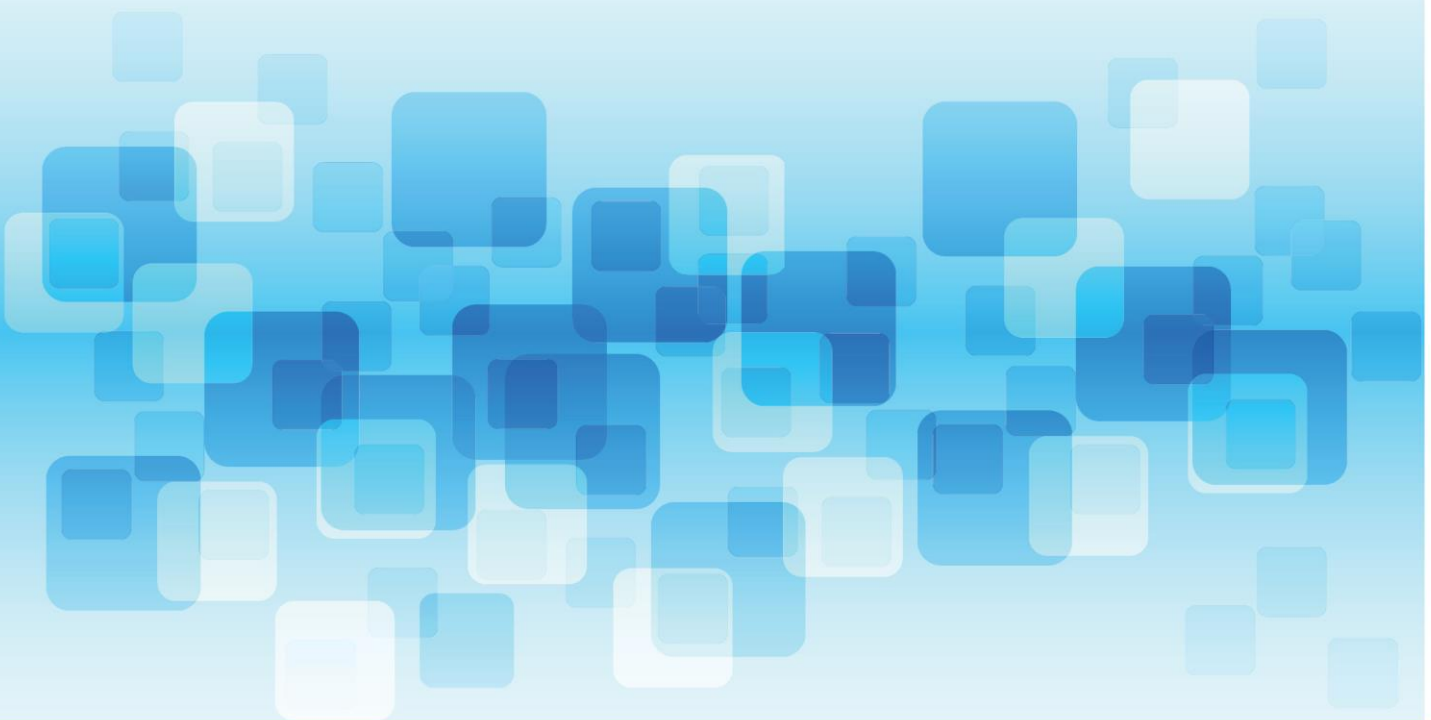




# School Improvement Unit Report

## Isabella State School Executive Summary



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at **Isabella State School** from **16 to 18 August 2016**. 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

<b>Location:</b>	Walker Road, Edmonton
<b>Education region:</b>	Far North Queensland Region
<b>The school opened in:</b>	2007
<b>Year levels:</b>	Prep to Year 6
<b>Current school enrolment:</b>	627
<b>Indigenous enrolments:</b>	30.7 per cent
<b>Students with disability enrolments:</b>	6.8 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	914
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2010
<b>Number of teachers:</b>	42.1 (full-time equivalent)
<b>Nearby schools:</b>	Hambledon State School, Bentley Park College, St Therese's School, White Rock State School
<b>Significant community partnerships:</b>	Police-Citizens Youth Club (PCYC), Out School Hours Care (OSHC), Family and Communities Engaging in Schooling (FaCES), Hambledon House Community Centre, Mission Australia, Benevolent Society, Rhee Taekwondo, Bentley Park College Junior-Secondary program, School Chaplaincy program, Religious Education program supported by local churches, Queensland Police Service Adopt-a-Cop program
<b>Significant school programs:</b>	Prime Maths, Spelling Mastery, Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies (CARS) and Strategies to Achieve Reading Success (STARS), Junior Elementary Maths Mastery (JEMM), Elementary Maths Mastery (EMM), Jolly Phonics



### 1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of three 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 three days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal and deputy principal
  - Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), Head of Curriculum (HOC), Support Teacher Literacy and Numeracy teacher (STLaN), two behaviour support teachers, guidance officer
  - 24 teachers and 22 support staff
  - Business Services Manager (BSM) and two administration staff
  - Ten student leaders and 21 students
  - Parents & Citizen's Association (P&C) president and 17 parents
  - School chaplain, Elder of the local Indigenous group, tuckshop convenor and cleaner
  - Coordinator Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) program and coordinator local transition to school program
  - Executive principal of local state secondary school, director local early learning centre and Cairns City Council member

### 1.4 Review team

Louise Wilkinson	SIU (review chair)
Russell Thompson	Peer reviewer
Ian Hall	External reviewer



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

- The principal has established a school ethos of high expectations for student learning.

This is recognised by the various members of the school community who commented that the behaviour of students has significantly improved over the past five years. The school has embedded a School Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning (SWPBL) program. Staff members, students and parents have a clear understanding of the school's rules: 'we learn, we show respect, we are safe'.

- Staff members and parents articulate that the school's 2016 priorities are reading, explicit teaching and attendance.

Significant effort is devoted to improving reading and noticeable gains have been achieved in student results. Teachers and teacher aides work together in classes to deliver the school's reading instruction program. Levels of Achievement (LOA) for all students in English achieving a 'C' or higher is improving.

- All teachers are provided with Professional Development (PD) and resources to develop their understanding and capacity to use the school's pedagogical framework which is based on the explicit teaching model<sup>1</sup>.


Explicit teaching underpins classroom practice and all teachers are using the 'I do, We do, You do', explicit teaching methodology. Warm ups and consolidations, where teachers use daily Top 10s to reinforce taught concepts in literacy and numeracy, are utilised. A range of artefacts related to explicit teaching is apparent in classrooms and contributes to student engagement.

- Systematic strategies to identify and respond to student needs are established.

There are creative school-wide strategies for mitigating the impact of disadvantage on student learning and wellbeing. There is subsidised provision of resources and texts, excursions and activities to assist in reducing barriers to student learning. Strategies to successfully increase student engagement include: a school chaplaincy program, behaviour support teachers, Indigenous teacher aides, school uniform loan scheme, provision of breakfast and emergency lunches.

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<sup>1</sup> Flemming, J., and Klienhenz, E. (2007) Towards a Moving School: Developing a Professional Learning and Performance Culture. ACER Press, Camberwell, Victoria

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- The school is viewed positively by parents and members of the wider community. Parents openly communicate their pride in the school and comment on the great work the principal and staff members are doing.

The school actively seeks ways to enhance student learning and wellbeing by partnering with parents, families, other education and training institutions, local businesses and community organisations. The school's Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) has a group of dedicated members who meet regularly to support and fundraise for the school. They operate a successful school tuckshop and uniform shop.

- Year level meetings are providing the opportunity for teachers to share good practice.

Some teachers are visiting other teachers' classrooms to learn from each other and to share successful strategies. Collegial engagement within the school to develop a shared commitment to improve practice for all staff members is emerging.

- The position of year level coordinators is in place and a role description is developed.

Opportunities for staff members to take on leadership roles in the school are developing. A program to support aspiring leaders and school leaders is yet to be implemented.

- Feedback is recognised as a key component of a high performing school.

Forms of feedback are documented in the school's pedagogical framework and school leaders articulate that feedback is necessary to help students learn and for teachers to improve their teaching practice. The enacting of a feedback culture in the school is developing. There are bi-annual formalised learning goal meetings where teachers communicate student progress to parents. Student ownership of goals and their understanding of the next steps for learning is growing.



## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Enhance collegial engagement to promote a school culture of mutual trust and shared commitment.
- Develop a leadership program to promote leadership density across the school.
- Enhance the school's pedagogical framework to enact a whole-school feedback culture.