Withcott State School

Executive Summary

Education Improvement Branch

Queensland Government

Contents

1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **Withcott State School** from **1** to **3 September 2020**.

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 implement 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 EIB and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the EIB website.

1.1 Review team

Sandra Perrett	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Craig Pearen	Peer reviewer
Peter Doyle	External reviewer

1.2 School context

Location:	Biggs Road, Withcott
Education region:	Darling Downs South West Region
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Enrolment:	220
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	5 per cent
Students with disability:	**Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:** 5 per cent
	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage: 21 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	1020
Year principal appointed:	2017

1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, curriculum coordinator, Special Education Program (SEP) teacher, cluster Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), 15 teachers, Business Manager (BM), administration officer, seven teacher aides, facilities officer, three cleaners, 42 students and 18 parents.

Community and business groups:

- President of the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C), crossing supervisor, tuckshop convenor and Camp Australia Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) coordinator.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal of Centenary Heights State High School and NCC Early Learners Withcott childcare centre director.

Government and departmental representatives:

- Councillor for Lockyer Valley Regional Council, State Member for Lockyer, Queensland Police Service (QPS) Helidon Station police officer and ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2020	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2020
Investing for Success 2020	Strategic Plan 2017-2020
Headline Indicators (May 2020 release)	School Data Profile (Semester 1 2020)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2020	Reading plans
School's SharePoint site	School's edStudio site
School pedagogical framework	Draft Inclusive Education Policy
School assessment schedule	School newsletters and website
School Opinion Survey	Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students
Draft Student Support Services Guidelines	School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The whole-school Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Plan (CARP) 2020 and online platforms support teachers to implement the Australian Curriculum (AC).

Students and staff members express appreciation for the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) lessons that occur weekly. A STEM teacher has been employed to work with classroom teachers and support teachers to develop their understanding of how STEM is able to be integrated across a range of learning areas. The Japanese teacher provides lessons to students in Years 3 and 4. Students are exposed to basic everyday language utilising Hiragana. This early exposure to Japanese has resulted in greater positive engagement in the Japanese language by students when they commence more formal languages learning in Years 5 and 6.

The principal encourages and supports staff members to maintain a student-centred approach in all aspects of school life.

Staff members demonstrate an understanding of the importance of positive and caring relationships to successful learning and work to build respectful relationships with students. Most students have an obvious sense of belonging to the school and speak highly of their teachers and teacher aides. They appreciate the interest staff members show towards them and their learning. Parents articulate that the leadership team and staff members are caring and responsive to their child's needs.

The school has developed an explicit, coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery.

The CARP 2020 identifies that unit plans are developed by the cohort. The curriculum coordinator works with teachers to develop the unit plans and teachers express their appreciation of this support. Unit plans are currently stored and maintained by classroom teachers. Some teachers articulate the benefit of establishing a shared location for all unit plans to ensure they are available for all teachers in the future. The leadership team and some teachers articulate the benefits of utilising a standard unit planning template.

The leadership team and staff members are committed to the learning success of every student.

Teachers discuss how they differentiate for students and respond to the data gathered using PM Benchmark and PROBE. The leadership team and some teachers identify that an opportunity exists to use the literacy continuum to develop individualised reading goals for students. Individualised learning goals are yet to be apparent in classrooms. Some students articulate that individualised goals would help them improve their learning. The use of feedback to students to explain the next steps to take to make further learning progress varies across the school.

The leadership team articulates that highly effective teaching is key to improving student learning.

The principal keeps informed of research regarding high impact teaching pedagogies and shares this with teachers. The pedagogical framework has recently been redeveloped and references five research influences. The pedagogical framework is unpacked on the school's edStudio and a range of information, including professional reading, is provided for each of the five main research influences. The pedagogical framework overview and edStudio are yet to articulate specific high impact teaching strategies that all teachers are required to use.

The leadership team has established and is driving a clear Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA).

The EIA is focused on reading and grounded in evidence from research and practice. Teachers support this focus and articulate varying ways it is being implemented in their classrooms, depending on the year level they are teaching. The Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) is directly linked to the 2017–2020 strategic plan. Strong alignment between the EIA, AIP and strategic plan is yet to occur. The leadership team articulates the importance of establishing agreed consistent school-wide practices, recognising the opportunity the new planning cycle brings in increasing consistency in teaching and learning.

Staff members demonstrate an understanding of the importance of positive and caring relationships to successful learning.

As a Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) school, the three values that are followed are *'Respect, Responsibility and Resilience'.* Artefacts reinforcing these expectations are displayed throughout the school. The school's Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students (RBPS) outlines clear strategies to promote appropriate student behaviour including implementing PBL practices. Some staff members articulate a desire to see a consistent approach to the management of inappropriate behaviours. The PBL team articulates the importance of a continuing focus on reviewing and refining the processes responding to both positive and inappropriate student behaviour.

The school effectively utilises its physical environment and facilities to maximise learning.

Classrooms are vibrant learning spaces where students are supported to take risks and are engaged in their learning. The physical environment of the school is appealing and well maintained. The school grounds have been recently enhanced through the installation of age-appropriate nature-based play spaces. The school's Environmental Management Team has contributed positively to the school grounds. The facilities officer is a valued staff member and undertakes a range of activities to build positive relationships with students and parents. Students display great respect for the school grounds and take pride in its appearance.

The school is highly respected within the community.

Members of the wider community reference the positive tone, the community feel, high standards and the learning opportunities provided to students. Parents appreciate the level of support provided by staff members to their child to meet their needs. A community opinion forum was held in 2019 to help match the school's practices with community expectations. As a result of the forum, the principal is planning for future activities to meet the requirements of the parent community.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

Collaboratively review unit planning processes, implementing a consistent template and supporting teachers to develop, implement, review and share units of work.

Implement consistent school-wide processes for the development of individualised student learning goals and provide explicit feedback to support students to achieve their goals.

Collaboratively review and refine the pedagogical framework and supporting documents, identifying agreed key signature practices.

Establish a systematic and transferrable strategic planning process to lead school-wide improvement, engaging all stakeholders and including staff responsibilities, actions, targets, timelines, and mid-point and end-point observables.

Embed the whole-school approaches to effectively manage student behaviour, ensuring they are known and supported by all staff members and the school community.