



School Improvement Unit Report

McDonnell Creek State School Executive Summary



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at McDonnell Creek State School from 27 to 28 April 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

Location:	69273 Bruce Highway Fishery Falls
Education region:	Far North Queensland
The school opened in:	1913
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Current school enrolment:	21
Indigenous enrolments:	9.5 per cent
Students with disability enrolments:	4.7 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	976
Year principal appointed:	2015
Number of teachers:	1
Nearby schools:	Aloomba State School, Babinda State School , Bellenden Kerr State School , Gordonvale State School , Mt Bartle Frere State School, Mirriwinni State School
Significant community partnerships:	
Unique school programs:	



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/Principal Supervisor
- a school visit of two days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
 - Assistant Regional Director
 - Principal and eight school staff
 - 15 students
 - Four parents and community members
 - One neighbouring school principal

1.4 Review team

Patrick Murphy	Internal Reviewer, SIU (review chair)
David Curran	External Reviewer



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The school has no stated improvement agenda.

The school has experienced a period of significant change in leadership and teaching staff in recent years (three principals in the last four years). Many staff members indicate that this has impacted on the continuity of curriculum planning and delivery and the consistency of implementation of key programs and strategies. A focus for school improvement is unclear for staff and parents.

- Student data is not being utilised to inform, adapt and adjust curriculum and pedagogy to meet the needs of individual students.

The school has a data base that records individual student data using a limited range of assessment tools. There is no alignment between data collection and adjustment of pedagogy and curriculum to meet the full range of students. There was no evidence of the targeting of more able students with specific learning goals.

- Feedback is not a regular or consistent practice in the school for students.

Some students were able to show or give examples of feedback. Students reported that feedback is not consistent or regular and was not always purposeful for the benefit of focusing students learning.

- School staff are willing to engage in the feedback process to improve their practice.

Staff work together and learn from each other's practices, mainly via staff meetings. The school does not have in place a systematic manner to improve teaching practices that involves modelling, coaching or providing feedback to one another.

- A need has been identified by staff to develop a curriculum overview including an assessment framework.

Overarching curriculum frameworks, a school pedagogical framework and whole school curriculum programs and planning processes have been set aside through changes in leadership, despite the best efforts by former staff to maintain a focus on building continuity of teaching and learning practices.

- Communication with parents and the broader community largely occurs through the newsletter.

There has been little attention to building strategic partnerships with the community and the wider community to benefit the school standing in the community and school programs.



- The school has a responsible school behaviour plan and student behaviour was observed as being conducive to learning.

The school promotes behavioural and learning expectations through the implementation of the responsible school behaviour plan and to some extent this program has been maintained despite significant staff turnover.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Articulate a clear, precise and explicit action plan relating to the improvement agenda including timelines, milestones and targets. Ensure a narrow and sharp improvement agenda is developed that is widely communicated and understood across the school. Restore pride in the school and high expectations for the future.
- Establish a feedback culture in the school that encourages and assists students to monitor their own learning and set goals for future learning.
- Develop a supervision, mentoring and coaching mechanism over time that will provide the feedback to enhance teaching practice of all staff and drive the improvement agenda.
- Re-establish whole school curriculum programs, assessment framework and pedagogical framework. Review school processes for curriculum planning and delivery, including the use of data to inform intervention support at all levels. There is an urgent need to review all resourcing to provide optimal responses to classroom teaching and support needs.
- Ensure that all staff have a depth of knowledge and understanding to plan and implement a differentiated curriculum with particular focus on potentially high achieving students.
- Prioritise communication with parents and the broader community in order to build the educational partnership that is essential to the achievement of positive student learning outcomes.