School Improvement Unit
Report

Redlynch State College

1. Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Redlynch State College from 17-19 February 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:	Jungara Road Redlynch, Cairns
Education region:	Far North Queensland Region
The school opened in:	2007
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12
Current school enrolment:	1764
Indigenous enrolments:	7.8 per cent
Students with disability enrolments:	6.8 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	1018
Year principal appointed:	2013.
Number of teachers:	150
Nearby schools:	Freshwater State School, Caravonica State School, Trinity Beach State School, Holloways Beach State School, Yorkey's Knob State School, Machans Beach State School, St. Andrews Catholic College, Smithfield State High School, Cairns State High School, Trinity Bay State High School, Woree State High School.
Significant community partnerships:	MOU with JCU, Beacon, Binnacle, Club Training, Blue Dog, Music industry links, Industry links white-water rafting, Sustainability programs – Bunnings, Boral, Limberlost, Early Childhood Centre

Unique school programs:	Stymie anti-bullying program, Excellence programs in Art, Music Performance, Science Drama, White-water rafting,

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:

    - College Principal and two Associate Principals

    - Five Deputy Principals

    - Ten Heads of Department (HODs), Head of Curriculum (HOC), Head of Special Education (HOSES)

    - Two Business Services Managers (BSMs)

    - Numeracy coach and primary literacy coaches

    - Student Services team – Guidance Officer (GO), HOD – Student Services, school-based wellbeing officer

    - Principals from two local schools and early childhood provider

    - Primary learning support team

    - P&C President and 14 other parents

    - Student leaders

    - 39 classroom teachers, 7 teacher-aides and 48 students

1.4 Review team

Valerie Hadgelias	Internal Reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Peter James	Peer Reviewer
Stephen Auer	External Reviewer

1.5 Reading the Report

The executive summary outlines key findings of the review of this school. The key improvement strategies prioritise future direction for improvement. The executive summary should be read along with the findings and improvement strategies outlined in the nine domains which provide a strategic view for improvement.

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- Across the college there is evidence of a drive for improved student outcomes.

  School leaders have developed a strategic direction for school improvement and school staff demonstrate a strong and optimistic commitment to the improvement strategy.

- The importance of data on student's outcomes is clearly recognised.

  Strong data collection processes are in place and the development of teacher skills in using data to inform their planning has been a priority. However, the effective use of student data is not fully embedded.

- Staff and student wellbeing is a priority of the college.

  A student wellbeing officer is a well established role and there is a range of intervention programs to support student wellbeing and learning.

- Professional development of staff is seen as a priority.

  Teachers have embraced the opportunity to participate in the new performance review process as an opportunity to reflect on their progress and set future goals. They have also welcomed coaching opportunities in the areas of explicit teaching, reading, and classroom profiling.

- Differentiated teaching practice is identified as a key tenant of the Pedagogical Framework.

  Structural differentiation is evidenced in the establishment of core, foundation and extension classes. Some teachers are skilled at differentiating within the classroom but this is not a universal practice.

- Extensive partnerships have been developed to further opportunities for students.

  The college has taken a strategic approach to forming partnerships with local businesses, community and educational organisations to access physical, intellectual and other resources not available within the school for the purpose of improving student outcomes.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Sharpen the focus of the improvement agenda so that all staff can readily identify the key priorities and operationalise these in their settings.

- Continue to focus professional development activities on developing teachers' data literacy, skilled use of differentiated practice and deep understanding of the pedagogical framework. Embed these foundations consistently across the college.

- Continue to support staff in the Positive Behaviour System (PB4L) program to ensure consistent implementation across whole college.

- Further develop the coaching program so that it encompasses an instructional feedback model for all teachers. Ensure effective tracking processes are in place.

- Further develop the capacity of all classified school leaders to operate as instructional leaders.

- Ensure greater collaboration between the Prep to Year 6 and Year 7 to Year 12 campuses to ensure a seamless vertical alignment of curriculum planning and delivery.

3. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains

3.1 An explicit improvement agenda

Findings

The volume of work in developing the strategic direction for school improvement must be acknowledged and celebrated.

This improvement agenda has been developed after a comprehensive internal review and school leaders can describe the desired improvements in terms of student outcomes. This agenda is communicated in staff meetings, school newsletters, parent-teacher meetings and on the school's website.

When articulating the college's explicit teaching agenda, teachers refer to the focus on quality teaching, improvements in student reading and attendance. Writing is not specifically mentioned as part of the improvement agenda by teaching staff.

Targets have been set as part of the improvement agenda, although teachers do not speak of specific targets or timelines when describing the improvement agenda.

Across the campus there is evidence of a drive for improved student outcomes and this focus is informing the work of both the school leaders and teachers.

There is a strong and optimistic commitment by staff to the college improvement strategy and a clear belief that further improvement is possible. There is evidence of a school-wide commitment to every student's success.

Supporting data

Annual implementation Plan 2015, Strategic Plan 2012-2015, internal review documents 2014, Great Results Guarantee strategy, pedagogical framework, professional plan 2015, School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, staff, community and student interviews, college website

Improvement strategies

Consider sharpening the focus of the improvement agenda so that all staff can readily identify the key priorities and targets and operationalise these in their settings.

Continue to support and supervise staff through the further development and implementation of these key priorities to ensure consistently embedded practice across the college.

3.2 Analysis and discussion of data

Findings

College leaders clearly articulate the belief that reliable data on student outcomes is crucial to the school's improvement agenda. There is a consistent plan for systematic collection, analysis and use of a range of student achievement data.

Building teacher capacity in the analysis and use of student data is a priority and significant progress has been made. However, the effective use of student data is not yet universal or fully embedded.

A broad range of data is collected including Levels of Achievement (LOA), National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), standardised tests such as PAT-R, PAT-M, PAT-S and PAT-V, PROBE, Early Start, behaviour data including profiling, attendance data and wellbeing data. There is strong evidence that One School, class dashboard in particular, is the central point for student data collection.

The school can illustrate how data is used to identify priorities, take action and monitor progress.

One Note is an emerging tool on the senior campus to centralise records to further inform strategic planning.

The student support staff regularly use data to inform their planning and implementation of learning and wellbeing programs.

The college internal review process collated and analysed a broad and comprehensive range of quality data to inform strategic planning. The community was engaged in this process.

NAPLAN results indicate the college is performing close to similar schools in the nation. The school has used this data source to prioritise the teaching of reading, writing and increasing the number of students in the upper two bands of achievement.

Supporting data

Annual implementation Plan 2015, Strategic Plan 2012-2015, internal review documents 2014, Great Results Guarantee strategy, pedagogical framework, professional plan 2015, School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, staff, community and student interviews, college website

Improvement strategies

Continue to focus professional development on ensuring that all teachers have a high level of data literacy and can effectively use data to inform their planning.

Focus on tracking processes and intervention strategies to support senior students to attain the QCE.

3.3 A culture that promotes learning

Findings

The college leadership team have accepted personal responsibility for ensuring a safe, supportive and disciplined learning environment. They demonstrate a strong conviction that student engagement and regular attendance are keys to improved student outcomes.

The college demonstrates a positive culture and provides a supportive environment for students. Classrooms are generally well ordered and purposeful.

A high priority is given to staff and student wellbeing. A range of quality programs are embedded.

The college Positive Behaviour System (PB4L) provides a strong platform for building positive relationships, managing student behaviour and data analysis at cohort and individual level.

Considerable emphasis has been placed on acknowledging positive behaviour and the school has invested in the Vivo program, a web-based student rewards program, to strengthen the positive reward system.

The school welcomes parent involvement. This has been demonstrated in the Coffee Conversation program in the early primary years. Parents speak highly of this opportunity to interact with the school staff. Teachers are encouraged to make regular contact with parents through emails. A Facebook page has been established.

Attendance is an issue for some students. 16.7 per cent of students attained an attendance rate of less than 85 per cent attendance in 2014. College leaders have identified this concern and have instigated strategies to improve student attendance.

The college has a well-structured student support services team. There is an extensive range of targeted intervention programs to support student learning and wellbeing.

Students with disabilities are included in all aspects of school life. They are strongly supported to enable high levels of student learning and engagement.

Students across the college express appreciation of their teachers' willingness to assist them in their learning. Many members of staff commented on the strong collegial culture that permeates the college. Staff morale is high.

Supporting data

Annual implementation Plan 2015, Strategic Plan 2012-2015, internal review documents 2014, Great Results Guarantee strategy, pedagogical framework; professional plan 2015; School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, staff, community and student interviews college website, School Opinion Survey 2014

Improvement strategies

Continue to embed the high quality signature programs which are a distinctive feature of the college.

Continue to support staff in the PB4L program to ensure consistent implementation by all teachers.

3.4 Targeted use of school resources

Findings

The college leadership team have given priority to understanding and addressing the needs of students and are sourcing and applying available resources to meet those needs. The creation of the positions of HOD of Student Services and HOD Pathways and the creation of an additional HOSES position on the primary campus evidences this approach.

Systematic strategies are in place to identify student learning and wellbeing needs. Programs to meet student needs are prioritised in the school budget. The direction of funding towards literacy and numeracy coaching, explicit teaching coaches (Regional Program), classroom profiling mentors and the student wellbeing officer are evidence of the school's priority.

Great Results Guarantee funding has clearly targeted reading from Prep to Year 2 and from Year 7 to Year 12, learning support from Prep to Year 9 and literacy from Year 7 to Year 9. Teacher-aide time has been significantly increased and the professional development of teacher aides has been prioritised.

Writing is identified as a whole of campus priority. There is a clear plan for this to progress in 2015.

Extension classes exist in Years 7 to Year 10. Excellence programs operate in Sport and Science and a program is being developed in the Arts.

There are numerous examples of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and Individual Curriculum Plans (ICPs) that strongly direct student learning.

The current bank balance is $1,199,814.

Supporting data

Annual Implementation Plan 2015, Strategic Plan 2012-2015, internal review documents 2014, Great Results Guarantee strategy, professional plan 2015, School Data Profile, staff, community and student interviews, college website

Improvement strategies

Continue to focus on building opportunities for students by expanding excellence programs and aligning these across the whole campus.

Monitor programs to ensure their effectiveness in terms of student outcomes and sustainability.

3.5 An expert teaching team

Findings

There is evidence that school leaders see the development of staff into an expert and coherent school-wide teaching team as central to improving outcomes for all students.

There is a documented professional development plan. The 2014 School Opinion Survey shows that 95.3 per cent of staff responded positively to the statement, 'the school encourages staff to undertake professional development activities.'

There is evidence of local expertise being extensively utilised to build teacher capacity through training teachers to become coaches in reading, class profiling and explicit teaching.

The college has trialled and embraced the new teacher performance review process. Staff members speak positively of the opportunity to reflect on their practice and set personal goals for further growth.

There is a commitment to building consistency of practice across the campus.

The college has a clearly documented induction program that operates throughout the year.

The college has arrangements in place for mentoring and coaching in the areas of reading, numeracy, explicit teaching and classroom profiling.

Attention is paid to strengths and weaknesses in the school-wide team, with strategies in place to recruit staff with particular expertise, for example, outdoor education.

The school provides opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles outside the classroom.

Supporting data

Annual implementation Plan 2015, Strategic Plan 2012-2015, internal review documents 2014, pedagogical framework, professional plan 2015, staff, community and student interviews, college website, School Opinion Survey

Improvement strategies

Further develop the coaching program so that it encompasses an instructional feedback model for all teachers, focused specifically on the 12 identified practices in the pedagogical framework. Ensure the program incorporates a systematic tracking process.

Further develop the capacity of all classified school leaders to operate as instructional leaders.

3.6 Systematic curriculum delivery

Findings

The college's curriculum plans identify curriculum, teaching and learning priorities and requirements. These are closely aligned with the Australian Curriculum (AC), Queensland Curriculum Assessment Authority (QCAA) syllabus requirements.

Curriculum time allocations give priority to English, Mathematics and Science, and to embed the fundamental skills of literacy and numeracy in all school subjects. A numeracy coach has recently been appointed with the intention of aligning the numeracy focus across the whole campus.

There is evidence of a consistent approach to teaching reading comprehension from Prep to Year 6. Additionally the specific use of agreed reading strategies is clearly identifiable in early years classes. Identified strategies for teaching reading have been developed across the secondary campus but consistent implementation is not as evident.

Curriculum delivery is designed to meet the needs of the range of students within each year level, as well as those with disabilities and other particular needs.

Moderation is a well-established process on the two separate campuses.

The school places a priority on making the curriculum locally relevant.

Curriculum planning for student with a disability is of a high standard.

There is considerable evidence of front-ended assessment and useful feedback is provided to students. "A" level exemplars and task criteria sheets are routinely used and assessment planners are sent home to the secondary school students.

Outside providers extend significant learning opportunities to senior school students.

Supporting data

Annual implementation Plan 2015, Strategic Plan 2012-2015, internal review documents 2014, Great Results Guarantee strategy, pedagogical framework, professional plan 2015, School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, staff, community and student interviews, college website

Improvement strategies

Ensure greater collaboration between the Prep to Year 6 and Year 7 to Year 12 campuses to ensure a seamless vertical alignment of curriculum planning and delivery.

Ensure the newly developed curriculum programs in English, Maths and Science from Prep to Year 6 are consistently implemented.

3.7 Differentiated teaching and learning

Findings

Differentiation is articulated as part of the pedagogical framework.

Extension, core and consolidation classes have been established to better meet student learning needs

College leaders explicitly encourage teachers to tailor their teaching to student needs and readiness. This includes the systematic use of assessment instruments (standardised assessment tasks and teacher developed assessment tools) to establish where individuals are in their learning and to identify skill gaps and misunderstandings.

Planning shows how the different needs of students are addressed, and how multiple opportunities to learn are provided.

Many teachers express confidence in differentiating for their students however this is not universal. Some teachers identify this as an area needing further development.

Teachers identify the use of student data as a valuable tool for differentiating. Class dashboard and class profiles are generally well used across the school. However, there is some variation in the levels of teacher expertise to use data effectively to differentiate for students.

Reports to parents show progress over time and include suggestions for ways in which parents can support their children's learning.

Students with disabilities are generally mainstreamed with adjustments to their learning and assessment programs implemented through collaboration between Special Education Program (SEP) case managers and mainstream teachers. Individual Support Plans (ISPs) in multiple formats are evident for numerous students.

Indigenous students are well supported and their progress is monitored through Individual Education Plans.

Supporting data

Annual implementation Plan 2015, Strategic Plan 2012-2015, internal review documents 2014, Great Results Guarantee strategy, pedagogical framework, professional plan 2015, School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, staff, community and student interviews, college website

Improvement strategies

Investigate professional development opportunities for staff to further understand and utilise differentiation within classrooms and like-ability groupings.

3.8 Effective pedagogical practices

Findings

The pedagogical framework is a considered research-based document identifying 12 practices which are evident throughout the college. The document is readily accessible on site with numerous support materials hyperlinked.

College leaders are committed to continuous improvement in teaching practices throughout the school and to further develop the academic culture.

There is a particular focus on improved teaching methods in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and professional learning activities are focused on building teachers' understandings of highly effective teaching strategies in these areas.

Clarity about what students are expected to learn and be able to do, high expectations of every student's learning, explicit teaching of skills and content, individualised attention as required, and timely feedback to guide student action are key elements of the school's push for improved teaching and learning.

Walk-throughs and line management structures are in place.

Classroom profiles in the behaviour area assist teachers to reflect on their practice.

Some teachers use data walls (primary campus) and achievement ladders (secondary campus) to inform students on their progress. Students are encouraged to reflect on their achievements and to set goals for future learning. The feed-forward process is used on the senior campus to assist students in this process. Three-way conferences are used on the junior campus.

Supporting data

Annual implementation Plan 2015, Strategic Plan 2012-2015, internal review documents 2014, pedagogical framework, professional plan 2015, staff, community and student interviews

Improvement strategies

Continue professional development for all 12 practices of the pedagogical framework to ensure it is consistently embedded across the college.

Further develop and consolidate the focus on building and improving the positive academic culture throughout the college to position the school as a leading provider of high quality education in the region.

3.9 School and community partnerships

Findings

The college leadership team makes deliberate and strategic use of partnerships with families, local businesses and community organisations to access intellectual, physical and/or other resources not available within the school for the purposes of improving student outcomes.

There is a range of current partnerships, each carefully planned and designed to enhance student outcomes (for example, to broaden student knowledge, build new skills, develop more positive attitudes, increase engagement levels, create applied learning opportunities for students, facilitate successful transitions to work, further education or training).

Partnerships have been established in response to an identified need. Considerable effort is put into understanding students' needs, identifying appropriate partners to address those needs and planning the details for community partner engagement.

Careful consideration is given to the benefits of the partnership to each participating partner.

The school's partnerships are being successfully implemented and appear to be adequately resourced and sustainable. There is evidence that partnerships are having their intended impact.

Supporting data

Annual implementation Plan 2015, Strategic Plan 2012-2015, internal review documents 2014, staff, community and student interviews, college website

Improvement strategies

Continue the consolidation of the existing programs and ensure outcomes are regularly monitored to ensure they are providing the intended outcomes.

Continue to expand the partnership relationships to provide innovative opportunities for students to gain additional opportunities and skills.

4. Follow-up timelines

- College to publish the executive summary of this report on their website within two weeks.

- College Principal to meet with the assistant regional director to discuss findings and improvement strategies.