

Alexandra Hills State School

School Review Report



School
Improvement
Unit



Queensland
Government



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1.2 School context

Location:	Princeton Avenue, Alexandra Hills
Education region:	South East Region
Year opened:	1975
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Enrolment:	185
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	12 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	9.7 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	991
Year principal appointed:	2014
Full-time equivalent staff:	14
Significant partner schools:	Alexandra Hills State High School
Significant community partnerships:	Smith Family, Rose Rainbow, Rock Church, Redland City Council, Indigiscapes, Scripture Union, Brisbane Broncos
Significant school programs:	Lizard Lounge, Coding lessons (<i>Scope IT</i>), Broncos Mentor Program



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, inclusion teacher, Business Manager (BM) – small schools, administration officer, Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) team leader, 10 classroom teachers, four teacher aides, Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president, vice president and secretary, six parents and 38 students.

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2017	Strategic Plan 2016-2019
Investing for Success 2017	School Data Profile (Semester 1, 2017)
OneSchool	School budget overview
School assessment schedule	School newsletters and website
School improvement targets	School differentiation framework
Responsible Behaviour Plan	Support, Growth and Improvement Plans
School Opinion Survey	Explicit teaching of the Big 6
Headline Indicators (Semester 1, 2017 release)	Reading Action Plan
Instructional reading routines and practices placemat	



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

Staff members are committed to improving student performance.

There is a belief that, given structured opportunities and targeted support, all students are capable of learning. All staff members demonstrate an understanding of the need to nurture positive and caring relationships to build mutually respectful interactions across the school community. Parents talk positively about the school and acknowledge the impact of positive teacher-student relationships on learning outcomes.

The principal and staff members describe an emerging school culture that values professional behaviour and continuous learning.

Staff members articulate that priority has been given to the rebuilding of a professional culture that supports strong collegial networks based on trust and mutual support. The principal and staff members indicate that there is willingness within the staff to work in teams and engage in discussions that impact on whole-school practice. Teachers express an appreciation for the opportunity to work in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) that focus on the further development of classroom pedagogy in reading.

The school's Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) is reflected in the 2017 Annual Implementation Plan (AIP).

The AIP focuses on the priorities of improved communication, building a positive school culture and a whole-school focus on English including strategies, actions, targets and timelines, and details the responsible officers for the identified areas of improvement. All staff members report that a strategic reading focus is present in the school with consistency building across expectations and practice within this identified improvement agenda.

Staff members recognise that quality teaching is the key to improving student outcomes, and are focused on improvements in pedagogy in the areas of reading.

School leaders and teachers have identified the need to develop a research-based pedagogical framework. Some teachers articulate the need to review the whole-school reading framework to ensure consistency of expectations and processes in classroom practice ensuring alignment with the school's pedagogical framework.

The school has developed and is implementing a new assessment schedule for the systematic collection of a range of student outcome data including diagnostic test data.

School leaders and teachers articulate different levels of understanding in utilising the collected data to inform planning for differentiation. Teachers are yet to be involved in data conversations as drivers for evaluating and informing pedagogical practice. Some teachers indicate that regular cycles of analysing and monitoring student improvement would be beneficial.



School leaders recognise the need to build engagement with parents to encourage active parent participation and support in student engagement and teaching and learning.

The school values parent engagement and seeks to connect through a range of processes and events including newsletters, school website, community events and targeted parent workshops. The school has formed a number of productive partnerships with local organisations and groups to benefit students and families.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

Sustain the narrow and sharp focus of the EIA on reading to embed a school-wide understanding of, and commitment to, identified priorities and targets and communicate these to the community.

Collaboratively develop an agreed pedagogical framework to ensure all teachers have a clear understanding of agreed high-yield strategies for consistent implementation in all classrooms.

Schedule regular focused data analysis meetings aligned to the EIA to enable in-depth discussions to inform teaching practice and to develop collective responsibility for student improvement.



3. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains

An explicit improvement agenda with analysis and discussion of data

Findings

The school's EIA is reflected in the 2017 AIP. The AIP focuses on the priorities of improved communication, building a positive school culture and a whole-school focus on English including strategies, actions, targets and timelines, and details the responsible officers for the identified areas of improvement.

The principal and staff members are committed to implementing an EIA that is focused on reading. All staff members report that a strategic reading focus is present in the school with consistency building across expectations and practice within this identified improvement agenda. Some parents are aware of the school's priority of reading.

The school's Support, Growth and Improvement Plans in reading and instructional leadership provide some scaffolding for the development of the school. Some of the indicators of success are achieved and it is acknowledged that the school requires further support to embed the developing practices.

A Local Consultative Committee (LCC) is formed to provide an avenue for staff members' engagement in school decision-making processes. The LCC is viewed by staff members as a positive approach to providing a voice for all staff members as the school works through changes in expected practice.

A school *Point of Contact* document is developed that identifies a list of topics managed by key personnel. Teachers are able to articulate confidently that they know who to contact when seeking support and advice on key operational and strategic matters. Specific roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for the leadership team, key personnel and all staff members to lead the implementation of the improvement agenda, curriculum, teaching and learning across the school are yet to be developed and communicated.

A school-based document *Quality Standards in Action* is in draft form to guide the school's progress in further implementation of the improvement agenda including delivering the Australian Curriculum (AC) and utilising key reading strategies including the Big 6. Some teachers are able to articulate their understanding of the planned direction of the school in utilising these strategies in daily classroom activities.

The evolution of a pedagogy and evidence-based practices to inform the teaching approaches in reading has been altered at several steps during the process. Teachers articulate that this has been challenging and appreciate the need to have more clarity regarding the expectations of consistent language and practices required across the school.



The approach to improve reading is implementing differentiated reading groups, identified from individual student data, and focusing on the development of reading strategies and behaviours, including comprehension and decoding skills. Most teachers are able to report how they are engaging their students in modelled, guided, shared and independent reading activities. A whole-school documented framework for the teaching of reading is yet to be consistently implemented.

Some internal monitoring processes are developed to track individual student achievement against the area of reading. Observation and feedback are yet to be formally provided for all teachers to assist in improving the teaching practices aligned to the EIA of reading.

The School Opinion Survey (SOS) indicates a declining trend in staff satisfaction rates in 2016. Staff members registered concerns over the levels of morale, celebration of achievements, consideration of their opinions, levels of communication and being well informed. Various forms of communication are utilised to inform staff members and community members of matters relating to the school. The team OnePortal site is established to keep staff members informed of matters relating to curriculum, teaching and learning, school events and meetings.

Communication strategies including the Skoolbag App, school sign, emailing and texting are regularly utilised as access points for communication. Some parents articulate the need for more consistent parent teacher communication strategies across the school. School leaders articulate a commitment to continue to develop strategies to improve communication with staff members, parents and the school community.

The school has developed and is implementing a new assessment schedule for the systematic collection of a range of student outcome data including diagnostic test data.

Assessment tools are predominantly formative or diagnostic in nature. Some teachers utilise diagnostic data to identify starting points for improvement to learning.

The leadership team has analysed school performance data over a period of time and is aware of school trends in National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). The assignment of resources and programs to meet student needs based on data is yet to be fully developed.

Information regarding school performance in NAPLAN is communicated in staff meetings.

Data from student learning progress is recorded and retained by each classroom teacher in a range of formats. The principal and staff members acknowledge that there are benefits to storing and sharing data in a central location. The school is yet to develop a system for summarising, displaying and communicating student data to staff members, parents and the school community.

Teachers and school leaders articulate different levels of understanding in utilising the collected data to inform planning for differentiation.



Teaching staff members articulate varying degrees of confidence and expertise in analysing and responding to the range of student data. All teachers utilise the students' outcome data in the process of establishing the structure of differentiated reading. Teachers are yet to be involved in data conversations as drivers for evaluating and informing pedagogical practice. Some teachers indicate that regular cycles of analysing and monitoring student improvement would be beneficial.

Some data relating to student behaviour is entered on OneSchool. The Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) team is beginning to monitor behaviour data to inform school processes. The principal acknowledges the importance of analysing behaviour data to influence the scheduled outline for PBL lessons. A weekly behaviour expectation is acknowledged on the Monday assembly and in classrooms.

A school target is established regarding attendance. Attendance data is monitored at the school and class level and some strategies are developed to follow up on student attendance.

Improvement strategies

Sustain the narrow and sharp focus of the EIA on reading to embed a school-wide understanding of, and commitment to, identified priorities and targets and communicate these to the community.

Schedule regular focused data analysis meetings aligned to the EIA to enable in-depth discussions to inform teaching practice and to develop collective responsibility for student improvement.

Review the *Point of Contact* document to include clear roles, responsibilities, expectations, accountabilities, key actions and implementation timelines for all staff members and ensure that these are effectively communicated to, and understood by all staff members.



A culture that promotes learning and school-community partnerships

Findings

Staff members are committed to improving student performance. There is a belief that, given structured opportunities and targeted support, all students are capable of learning.

The teaching team demonstrates an understanding of the need to nurture positive and caring relationships to build mutually respectful interactions across the school community. Staff members articulate that priority has been given to the rebuilding of a professional culture that supports strong collegial networks based on trust and mutual support. Parents talk positively about the school and acknowledge the impact of positive teacher-student relationships on learning outcomes.

School leaders and teaching staff members are working towards the renewal of a learning culture within a caring, supportive learning environment. Teachers describe the displaying of school behaviour expectations in classrooms to support the teaching of behaviour expectations.

The Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students (RBPS) has been reviewed to reflect current school practice. School leaders acknowledge the increasing challenge of some student behaviours and the need for consistency of practice in the implementation of the RBPS.

The school's expectations of '*Be a Learner, Be Respectful and Be Safe*' are visible in most classrooms with expected behaviours taught during weekly focus lessons. An agreed six step process to respond to inappropriate behaviour has been developed and implemented through a range of approaches in classrooms.

School leaders and teachers are committed to the re-development of the PBL processes. A PBL team has been formed and is in process of implementing the PBL action plan.

Teachers describe a range of PBL processes utilised to support student re-engagement with learning. There is an expectation that the weekly behaviour focus is reinforced daily in classrooms. Staff members indicate that the application of PBL processes is not yet consistent and is yet to produce the intended results.

Teachers and students articulate that the recent introduction of *Captain Coupons* as a system to recognise positive behaviour is well received and supports other school positive recognition options.

Students describe classrooms as predominantly calm and focused on learning. They acknowledge that the behaviour of some students distracts from opportunities to learn. Parents and students report that the consistency of expectations and consequences varies across the school.

The SOS 2016 indicates that 76.0 per cent of parents, 57.9 per cent of staff and 80.5 per cent of students agree that behaviour is well managed at the school.



Teacher aides indicate a willingness to engage in professional learning to develop their skills to support positive student behaviour.

The school provides a range of staff member led optional activities to support student wellbeing including the Lizard Lounge and lunchtime student clubs.

Various forms of communication including regular school newsletters, OnePortal Team site, Skoolbag App, improved school noticeboard and emails are utilised to inform staff members and community members of matters relating to the school. The principal indicates that parents are responding positively to information provided via digital and social media platforms. There is a belief that more timely communication is required for some school operations and events enabling greater lead times for planning and responses.

School leaders monitor student attendance. Processes are enacted to follow up on student absences. The principal acknowledges the need for tighter processes to support the monitoring and follow up of student non-attendance.

The current student attendance rate is 89.6 per cent with 23.4 per cent of students attending for less than 85 per cent of the school year. 41.9 per cent of students attend for greater than 95 per cent of the school year.

The school has formed a number of productive partnerships with local organisations and groups to benefit students and families. These include the Smith Family, Rose Rainbow, Rock Church, Redland City Council, Indigiscapes, Scripture Union and Brisbane Broncos.

Strong links are established with the South East Regional teaching and learning team. Teachers indicate that engagement with this team has strengthened their understanding of collaborative processes and further enhanced pedagogical practice in the teaching of reading.

An Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) facility is operated in partnership with the school and provides valuable support for parents.

The school and local community provides support for the employment of a school chaplain. The chaplain is a key driver in supporting students with alternate recess period activities in the Lizard Lounge.

The school values parent engagement and seeks to connect through a range of processes and events including newsletters, school website, community events and targeted parent workshops. School leaders recognise the need to build engagement with parents to encourage active parent participation and support in student engagement and teaching and learning.

A Parent and Community Engagement (PaCE) framework is yet to be developed to clarify community links and the roles and responsibilities for staff, parents and community members.



The school engages with a range of childcare centres to promote links with the school's Prep program. School leaders spend time with early childhood coordinators to build partnerships that support the transition of students to school. A planned program including student exchanges and principal information sessions is conducted annually.

The school has a close association with Alexandra State High School to support the transition of Year 6 students to secondary school. The principal describes a range of information sessions provided by secondary staff members and opportunities for Year 6 students to visit high schools prior to enrolment. Closer links have been discussed and are yet to be established.

The school is linked to the local cluster of schools. Networks with cluster schools to support the development of teacher capacity including the EIA agenda of reading are yet to be firmly established.

Improvement strategies

Build teacher capacity to consistently implement the PBL process focusing on greater consistency in the recognition of students' positive behaviour and implementation of agreed responses and consequences for inappropriate behaviour.

Develop and implement effective school and community communication strategies.



Targeted use of school resources

Findings

School leaders work to ensure that school resources are aligned to the delivery of the improvement agenda. Priority is given to understanding and addressing the needs of students and sourcing and applying available resources to meet those needs. Support programs are designed to address student diversity and to foster student engagement.

Budget priorities are determined after reviewing costs and the allocation of discretionary funds through a process that aligns school and system priorities. The principal makes strategic and operational decisions relating to the allocation of funds for curriculum and teaching and learning.

The principal acknowledges the need for a structured budget process in line with departmental expectations to ensure high levels of transparency and accountability. The Business Manager (BM) has a role in the allocation and regular review of budget expenditure.

Staff members are deployed in ways that make use of their expertise and are supported through PLCs to develop their capacity in the school focus area of reading.

The Professional Development (PD) budget is utilised to target developing staff members' skills in areas relating to the EIA. In 2017 the PD budget of \$6 252 has been allocated to further develop staff capacity.

Many teachers indicate their satisfaction with the level of resources available to support learning in classrooms. Some teachers outline the need for improved infrastructure that supports digital delivery of the curriculum and increased student interaction with digital technologies as learning tools.

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a tool for teaching and learning in the school is supported by teacher and student access to classroom computer banks, laboratories and tablet devices.

Investing for Success (I4S) funding is utilised to achieve school targets. The I4S funding of \$61 497 is aligned with the key improvement priority. Funds are allocated to providing PD linked to explicit teaching practices, additional teacher aide hours for students with disability, time for teachers to engage in coaching and data analysis conversations, and additional administrative support to assist in the monitoring of student attendance.

The school bank balance at the time of the review is \$136 375.

Improvement strategies

Strengthen school-wide monitoring processes to measure the effectiveness of targeted resources to ensure the delivery of intended student outcomes.



An expert teaching team with effective pedagogical practices providing differentiated teaching and learning

Findings

There is an emerging sense of collegial engagement. Consultative mechanisms are beginning to be established to allow staff member collaboration and a renewed focus on the core business of teaching and learning. The LCC provides an avenue for staff member engagement in school decision-making processes.

The school has been supported by the region to establish a predominantly new staff of classroom teachers. There are informal and formal practices to help mentor and guide the newly appointed staff members. This has provided the school with a platform to commence the development of the required processes and practices to meet the needs of staff members. The principal reports the need to work with regional Human Resources (HR) to develop a workforce plan.

The principal and staff members describe an emerging school culture that values professional behaviour and continuous learning. The principal and staff members indicate that there is willingness within the staff to work in teams and engage in discussions that impact on whole-school practice. Teachers express an appreciation for the opportunity to work in PLCs that focus on the further development of classroom pedagogy in reading. 'Champions' have been appointed to lead these PLCs.

Teaching staff members participate in the Annual Performance Development Plan (APDP) process. Some teachers are able to articulate APDP goals linked to school priority areas. Teacher aides are yet to fully participate in the APDP requirement. A whole-school PD plan aligned to the EIA, other school priorities, the school budget and to the PD needs determined by personal development plans is yet to be developed.

Staff members recognise that quality teaching is the key to improving student outcomes, and are focused on improvements in pedagogy in the areas of reading. A coaching model to allow all staff members to be involved in regular, timetabled observations, modelling, peer coaching and mentoring processes is yet to be developed.

There is limited evidence of an understanding and application of consistent pedagogical practices across the school. School leaders and teachers have identified the need to develop a research-based pedagogical framework to align with the current improvement agenda of the school.

School leaders identify the need to develop a whole-school explicit reading framework that documents expectations and processes aligned to the school's pedagogical framework regarding the teaching of reading, including monitoring and assessment, reading targets, intervention, specialist support and home-school partnerships.



There is evidence that some teachers are utilising Explicit Instruction (EI) with use of the 'I do, We do, You do' methodology and some reference to 'warm ups'. In addition, some teachers use 'We Are Learning To' (WALT). Some teachers reference their EI learning from other settings.

A whole-school reading action plan is developed to support teachers and school leaders in implementing instructional reading routines and practices. Teachers have engaged in PD activities including the *Daily 5*, *Big 6*, building knowledge and understanding of PLC protocols and practices, and understanding of the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR). Teacher aides report a need for PD in supporting teachers in the EIA of reading.

Teachers use of the *Big 6* focuses on oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. The classroom use of this language of instruction is developing.

At this stage of implementation, teachers are becoming familiar with the language of teaching reading. Quality Assurance (QA) processes to ensure that the reading practices are implemented consistently and with rigour are yet to be fully established. Teachers identify the need to continue to embed the teaching pedagogy of reading across the school. There is limited evidence of agreed reading strategies being utilised across all learning areas.

Teaching staff identify the learning needs of their students and predominantly acknowledge that, although students are at different stages in their learning and may be progressing at different rates, all students are capable of learning.

The capacity of teachers to understand class data to inform teaching and learning practice and respond to the implications for differentiation is in the early stages of development across the school.

A whole-school differentiation framework is developed. Teachers demonstrate an understanding of evidence-based current student achievement and utilise intervention strategies. Modifications to the learning environment including, individual, small group and whole-class instruction are used to differentiate for the needs of the students. Some teachers document individual student needs using the content, process, product and learning environment differentiation placemat in curriculum planning. The use of this placemat varies across the school.

The Student Provisions Committee (SPC) meets fortnightly and is utilised to inform planning and intervention services to address the needs of identified students.

It is recognised that some students require significant adjustments to their learning programs and documentation of these adjustments has commenced for students with verified disabilities. Individual Curriculum Plans (ICP) are developed for identified students with additional needs. School leaders and staff members acknowledge the need to build on this work. Some staff members acknowledge the need for the school to seek clarity and understanding of the ICP process.



Classroom teachers have established reading goals. These goals vary from classroom to classroom. A consistent process for utilising and communicating individual student reading goals throughout the school and with the parent community is yet to be fully developed.

Improvement strategies

Collaboratively develop an agreed pedagogical framework to ensure all teachers have a clear understanding of agreed high-yield strategies for consistent implementation in all classrooms.

Develop and implement a coaching model so all staff members can be involved in regular, timetabled observations, modelling, peer coaching and mentoring processes.

Develop a whole-school PD plan aligned to the school's EIA and informed by staff members' APDPs.

Build greater teacher understanding of the process to develop and implement ICP in line with departmental guidelines.



Systematic curriculum delivery

Findings

The school is yet to develop and implement a sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that ensures consistent teaching and learning experiences and a clear reference to monitoring across the year levels.

Elements of a curriculum plan are developed. The Whole School Assessment Framework 2017 has recently been developed and outlines the whole-school approach to the purposeful and meaningful use of data at school and classroom levels. Processes for developing and implementing data conversations that assist teachers to identify the next steps in teaching are yet to be collaboratively developed.

Teachers indicate that the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) is a major resource for the development of learning units and assessment tasks. Some attention is given to mapping learning and assessment to the requirements of the Australian Curriculum (AC) for each year level. This mapping process is yet to be consistently conducted as a whole-school process that ensures all students have access to the full range of learning outlined in the AC.

Teachers acknowledge that collegial working relationships continue to support curriculum development. Teachers articulate their desire for further support to build skills in curriculum planning and unit development. Teaching staff members indicate that supported collaborative planning that provides opportunities for discussing the horizontal and vertical alignment of curriculum units is an area for continuing development.

Teachers articulate that a range of individual planning formats are employed to prepare units of work. They indicate that a focus on cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities are implicit in C2C units. Explicit reference to these priorities and capabilities is yet to be a feature in the planning of many teachers.

Teachers indicate that C2C assessment tasks are predominantly adopted as written and utilised to assess learning outcomes. Efforts to build local relevance into curriculum planning is dependent on the expertise and experience of individual teachers.

Processes to moderate student assessment tasks vary across year levels. Teachers describe informal internal moderation processes to affirm teacher Levels of Achievement (LOA) allocations. Clarity and rigour in the internal moderation process is yet to be developed to affirm consistency of teacher judgement.

School leaders and teachers acknowledge the need to further develop learning experiences that engage, challenge and extend high achieving students within units of work. Planned differentiation strategies are an emerging practice.

Most parents indicate satisfaction with reporting processes, identifying that they are well informed regarding their child's progress and areas where they can support learning. They indicate that school leaders and most teachers readily provide opportunities to informally and formally discuss student progress.



Improvement strategies

Develop and implement a whole-school curriculum, assessment and reporting framework.

Develop teacher expertise in the development and moderation of assessment tasks aligned to AC achievement standards to ensure consistency of teacher judgement.