School Improvement Unit
Report

Gracemere State School
Executive Summary
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Gracemere State School from 22 to 24 February 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>O’Shanesy Street, Gracemere</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education region:</td>
<td>Central Queensland</td>
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<td>The school opened in:</td>
<td>1871</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year levels:</td>
<td>Prep to Year 6</td>
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<td>Current school enrolment:</td>
<td>293</td>
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<td>Indigenous enrolments:</td>
<td>17 per cent</td>
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<td>Students with disability enrolments:</td>
<td>6 per cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</td>
<td>925</td>
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<td>Year principal appointed:</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of teachers:</td>
<td>22 (full-time equivalent)</td>
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<td>Nearby schools:</td>
<td>Waraburra State School, St Pauls Catholic Primary School</td>
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<td>Significant community partnerships:</td>
<td>Returned Services League, Scripture Union, Smith Family, Men’s Shed, Sporting Schools, Rockhampton Regional Council</td>
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<td>Unique school programs:</td>
<td>Step Up Into Prep (SIUP) Transition, Gracemere Gladiators, Men’s Shed Program, STAR (Safe, Team, A Learner, Respect) program, principal’s afternoon tea, peer skills, Kagan Cooperative Learning, R2L (Reading to Learn)</td>
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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
  - Head of Curriculum (HOC)
  - Support Teacher Literacy and Numeracy (STLaN)
  - Seven classroom teachers
  - Teacher librarian/Information Technology
  - Guidance officer
  - Business Services Manager (BSM)
  - Chaplain
  - Four teacher aides
  - Police liaison
  - Rockhampton Regional Councillor
  - Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) vice-president, secretary and treasurer
  - 15 students
  - Five parents

1.4 Review team

Rod Kettle | Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Bert Barb  | Internal reviewer, SIU
Bob Cole   | External reviewer
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

• The improvement agenda is focussed on the improvement of writing across the school, positive classrooms and high expectations in the early years.

The school’s focus on improving writing outcomes is widely known by staff, students and most parents. The principal has directed human and financial resources to support the explicit improvement agenda. The leadership team has been expanded to guide the focus on writing improvement. The other priorities are known to a lesser degree by most staff members, students and parents.

• Whole-school data is analysed to review student progress in writing, behaviour and attendance.

Teaching staff members work in pods to review student writing data every five weeks to formulate individual writing goals for students. Processes are in place for regular monitoring of behaviour and attendance data. Teachers have varying data literacy skills.

• The school is driven by a belief that every student is capable of successful learning.

Teachers are using data to improve learning outcomes for all students. Extension of higher achieving students by teachers is inconsistent.

• Priorities in the budget align with the explicit improvement agenda.

Teaching pods, lead teachers and curriculum leaders are used effectively to enact the writing agenda. Professional learning linked to the improvement agenda is provided to all staff members. A Step Up Into Prep (SUIP) coordinator is employed to develop productive relationships with local early childhood centres to improve transition to Prep.

• School leaders view that developing the capacity of teachers is central to improved student outcomes.

School leaders have recently commenced informal modelling and positive feedback processes. Procedures are in place to encourage shared responsibility for student learning and promote a culture of continual professional capability development. Formal, routine coaching, modelling and constructive feedback processes are yet to be developed.

• The school has a documented, sequenced curriculum plan referenced to the Australian Curriculum (AC).

The school is developing a two-year cycle of curriculum delivery aligned with multi-age class groupings. Clear processes for school leaders to monitor that the intended curriculum is enacted across the year levels are yet to be developed.
• School leaders acknowledge the need to support the wellbeing of staff members, students and families.

A wellbeing teacher aide has been employed to support students and families. The principal is working with regional staff to develop a health and wellbeing framework. Data collection and monitoring processes, and role statements for key stakeholders are yet to be formalised.

• Parents and community members express a positive view of the school.

The school has developed productive partnerships with a range of community organisations that support learning and wellbeing activities. Parents engage with cultural and celebratory events.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Implement processes for all school leaders to ensure that the intended curriculum is enacted in all classrooms.

- Collaboratively develop and implement a systematic whole-school approach to modelling, coaching, observation, and verbal and written feedback for all teaching staff members.

- Scaffold explicit teaching practice to establish, enact and monitor high expectations for all students.

- Collaboratively develop a whole-school wellbeing framework including role statements for key stakeholders and data collection processes for monitoring the success of this initiative.