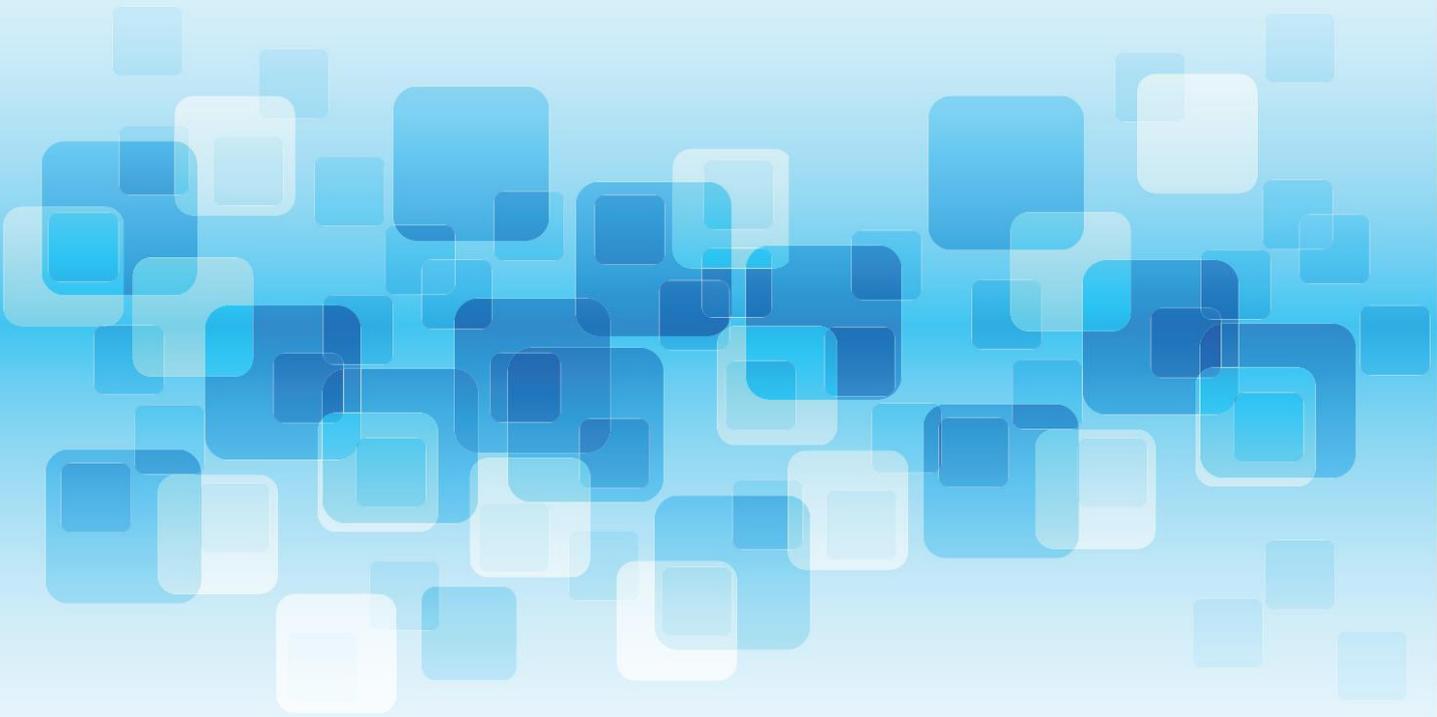




School Improvement Unit Report

Springsure State School





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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Springsure from 23 to 25 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:	55 Eclipse Street, Springsure
Education region:	Central Queensland Region
The school opened in:	1870
Year levels:	Prep to Year 10
Current school enrolment:	136
Indigenous enrolments:	8 per cent
Students with disability enrolments:	7 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	953
Year principal appointed:	2009
Number of teachers:	15
Nearby schools:	Tresswell State School, Orion State School, Lochington State School, St Patrick's School
Significant community partnerships:	C&K Springsure Community Kindergarten, Rolleston Coal, Springsure Workers Camp, Minerva Mine, Rolleston Bus Conveyancing Committee, Springsure Show Society
Unique school programs:	Catering students provide meals to the aged care residents in hospital.

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 and Head of Curriculum (HOC)
 - Classroom and specialist teachers
 - Four teacher-aides
 - Five non-teaching staff
 - Three P&C executive members
 - Three community partners
 - Crossing supervisor
 - Student leaders
 - Students in the playground and classroom
 - Bus drivers
 - Parents

1.4 Review team

Michelle D'Netto Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)

Dale Magner Peer reviewer

Adam Matheson 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

- The school has a strong supportive culture.

There is a culture of respect, collaboration, and unity across the school. Learning environments are inviting, well-ordered and promote learning. There is a sense of school pride and passion for maintaining traditions.

- There is a strong commitment to the school improvement agenda.

The leadership team is driving a school-wide explicit improvement agenda which is evidenced by the teaching practice in all classrooms. However, there are varying levels of proficiency and consistency in pedagogical practice between the primary and junior secondary sectors.

- There are clear and consistent school structures in regards to the teaching of reading and spelling.

These explicit structures are embedded in all primary classrooms. The program is supported by the Head of Curriculum (HOC) and the teacher-aides.

- There is a formal process of data collection and analysis.

School leaders engage all teachers in data conversations in regards to student performance and achievement. Key staff have been identified as having strong knowledge of school-wide data. Teachers use student achievement data to inform differentiated teaching practice.

- Staff turnover hinders the implementation of the school-wide pedagogical agenda.

There has been a significant turnover of staff from 2014 to 2015, which has impeded the consistent approach of school-wide teaching practices in explicit teaching, reading and spelling. There is a clear formal process for the induction of new staff to the school.

- There is limited evidence of the extension of student learning outcomes.

School leaders and staff are committed to individual student learning success. Teacher-aides and key support personnel provide support for targeted students. There is limited evidence that high achieving students are challenged and stretched in their learning.

- The use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in classroom practice is a concern for teachers across the school.



Bandwidth, technical support issues and the limited number of ICTs devices has impeded the embedding of ICTs across the curriculum, especially in the primary school setting.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Develop the explicit focus on data led differentiation to build productive pedagogical practice across the school. Use a wide range of student achievement data to inform curriculum delivery, assessment and reporting.
- Broaden the repertoire of teaching practices within the explicit instruction model to develop higher order thinking and differentiate teaching and learning for students.
- Engage regional support to prioritise the allocation of a pedagogical coach to model and enhance school-wide mentoring, coaching and feedback.
- Review and refine current timetables to maximise teaching and learning outcomes in order to create flexibility to build leadership capacity.
- Investigate a course of action to embed the strategic use of ICTs for learning across all curriculum areas.

3. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains

3.1 An explicit improvement agenda

Findings

School leaders are leading the school's explicit improvement agenda. The school priorities are evidenced in school pedagogical documents and the instructional leadership strategies that have been used to engage all staff in the agenda. However, these clearly articulated strategies have not been implemented consistently across the school. School-wide pedagogical practices are more developed in the primary classrooms than the secondary classrooms.

Explicit improvement agenda targets are monitored, however, turnover of staff this year have impacted on the level of consistency achieved. Every classroom has a class-specific improvement agenda that adds value to the whole-school strategic direction.

There are targets for improvement, particularly in regards to the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data. Teachers have made an effort to understand NAPLAN trends and the relationship with student achievement. Progress towards these targets are closely tracked by the principal. The leaders conduct data conversations with the teachers, but there is limited triangulation of data. There is a range data literacy expertise across the teaching staff.

There are strong optimistic commitment from all staff and a clear belief that all students can learn. There is recognition that some students can achieve at higher levels, but programs to raise their performance have not been fully implemented.

There is a high expectation for attendance and behaviour, particularly in the primary school. Well established routines are in place and these have enhanced the positive tone of the school. Students are engaged in their learning.

Supporting data

School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, interviews with principal, Head of Curriculum (HOC) and staff, classroom observations, classroom artefacts, school documents, OneSchool, newsletters, interviews with community members and parents, interviews with students

Improvement strategies

Embed the explicit improvement agenda particularly for beginning teachers and teachers newly appointed at the school.

Ensure that the explicit agenda provides challenging learning opportunities for higher achieving students. Develop high learning expectations for all students.

Sharpen the focus of how classroom improvement agendas contribute to the whole-school agenda.



3.2 Analysis and discussion of data

Findings

There is systematic data collection practice at the school. NAPLAN practice test data is collected and analysed several times a year to measure student learning progress. Teachers have access to the NAPLAN data and use the data to identify the strengths and weaknesses in students' performance.

The school leaders conduct data discussions with all teachers, in regards to student performance of NAPLAN tests. Triangulation of data was limited to the school leaders. There was minimal evidence that teachers engage with a wide range of data.

Student achievement in NAPLAN, Mean Scale Score (MSS) has improved against the Nation and Queensland State Schools from 2008 to 2014, however some results in 2014 have shown regression from 2013 achievement.

Data is used to provide appropriate and timely intervention.

Weekly, short-cycled data is collated and distributed to parents. Parents appreciate the communication and feedback, however, some parents expressed concern on the over-emphasis on NAPLAN testing.

The leadership team have identified staff with expertise in data analysis.

Supporting data

Interviews with school staff and parents, school assessment data collection framework, classroom artefacts, differentiation surfboards, teacher-planning documents, OneSchool, School Data Profile.

Improvement strategies

Prioritise further professional development in regards to the purposeful use of school-wide diagnostic tools and student achievement data.

Use NAPLAN practice test data in conjunction with other school data collected. Embed the triangulation of all student achievement data in teacher practice.

Continue the practice of differentiation surfboards to inform classroom practice. Establish timelines for review of the surfboards to ensure the student information on the tool is current and relevant.



3.3 A culture that promotes learning

Findings

The school leadership team has established a strong culture across the school. Primary classrooms are inviting, well presented and orderly with a focus on classroom displays and positive environments best suited to learning, however this is not yet fully replicated across the secondary department.

There is mutual respect among the staff, students and school community. There is a strong sense of belonging. There is a detailed pastoral care program embedded across the secondary department and a strong emphasis on school-wide well-being. Clearly articulated processes are in place to proactively support student engagement and behaviour management.

Students, parents and the wider community are complimentary of the school. There are school-wide processes embedded to support student learning and the role of the school within the community.

Attendance at the school improved in 2014. 21.3 per cent of students attended less than 85 per cent in 2013, as compared with only 6.8 per cent of students in 2014.

Supporting data

Interviews with the leadership team, staff, student leaders, parents and community members, classroom artefacts, School Data Profile, School Opinion Surveys, classroom and playground observations, and school disciplinary absences

Improvement strategies

Enhance the high levels of collegial support and high expectations for student attendance and behaviour.

Expand the explicit improvement agenda to enhance the classroom environments across the secondary department and ensure all learning environments are reflective of high quality rigorous teaching and learning.

Embed school-wide processes to celebrate success and academic achievement across the school and wider community.

3.4 Targeted use of school resources

Findings

The school has processes in place to address individual needs as identified from the collection of both systemic and school-based data. The allocation of teacher-aides to support student literacy and numeracy learning is evident in the primary school.

The school has established tailored programs to address the needs of the identified learners requiring additional support. These programs are staffed by teachers who work with the HOC and classroom teacher to ensure that these students access to the school curriculum.

The use of Great Results Guarantee (GRG) funding has been allocated for an additional teacher and teacher-aide time to further support the school's explicit improvement agenda of reading.

Accessing external professionals to support students with verified learning needs is difficult and inconsistent in its delivery.

Additional resources are required to ensure the continued effectiveness of the school reading program. As evidenced in the budget report, extensive funds are allocated to school utilities.

Bandwidth and technical support issues and the limited number of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) devices has impeded the embedding of ICTs across the curriculum, especially in the primary school setting.

The current bank balance is \$80, 630.

Supporting data

Discussion with administration, teachers and teacher aides, observations of the physical environment, timetables, budget overview report

Improvement strategies

Consider flexible curriculum and timetabling arrangements to maximise the use of the existing school resources.

Purchase additional resources to support the school reading program.

Review the secondary timetable, and the allocation of secondary staffing to target intervention and build staff capacity to implement pedagogical reform.

Review the current ICT Plan to enhance resources and embed technology across the whole school. Consider creative ways for the school to access technology support.

Engage regional support to maximise support and staff allocated to the school. Seek innovative ways to address the unique learning needs of students in a rural setting.



3.5 An expert teaching team

Findings

The school leadership team see the development of staff as central to improvement in student outcomes. The leadership team leads strongly from the front.

School leaders work closely together to embed the school priorities and engage all staff in the agenda. Key teachers with leadership capacity have been identified, however limited staffing flexibility has hindered the use of these teachers as mentors and coaches.

A turnover of teaching staff in 2015 has created gaps in some teaching teams. The school leaders have addressed the change and used the teaching expertise of the HOC to maintain teaching and pedagogical integrity, particularly in the Junior Secondary school.

The teacher-aides are trained to implement the school reading strategy and are integral members of the teaching teams.

All teachers develop their performance plans with the principal and align them to the school improvement agenda. There is a thorough and well documented process of teacher supervision and instructional leadership.

Supporting data

Interviews with principal, HOC and staff, timetables, School Opinion Survey, teacher individual performance plans, school documents.

Improvement strategies

Engage regional support to prioritise the allocation of a pedagogical coach to model and enhance school-wide mentoring, coaching and feedback.

Continue to work on developing leadership density by reviewing current internal systems to provide greater flexibility for staff, in order to move the mentoring and coaching agenda forward.

Prioritise professional development using local and external expertise to embed ICTs across the curriculum.

3.6 Systematic curriculum delivery

Findings

The school has a comprehensive curriculum plan based on Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) curriculum and the Australian Curriculum (AC) scope and sequence.

Teachers plan with the HOC and adjust and adapt the unit plans and the assessments to suit the local context. This process provides consistency and ensures the vertical alignment of the curriculum. Evidence of unit planning indicates a limited focus on cross curriculum priorities and general capabilities.

Programs and structures are developed to respond to student needs. Alternative programs are developed for specific students by class teachers and support personnel. Flexible learning pathways are established for Junior Secondary students.

There is strong evidence of explicit reading and spelling models in place in all primary classrooms. The C2C curriculum plan and the reading and spelling structure, provide teachers with a very succinct model of curriculum delivery. This delivery model sometimes impedes flexible responses to immediate student needs and the ability to differentiate.

Supporting data

Interviews with staff and HOC, classrooms observations, school curriculum documents, OneSchool planning.

Improvement strategies

Continue planning with HOC to ensure alignment and consistency of curriculum delivery.

Embed the practice of developing individual plans for students with needs to ensure differentiation of the curriculum.

Adjust and adapt C2C units to allow for flexible curriculum delivery, in order to differentiate teaching practice and the reading and spelling structure.

Develop programs to embed and enhance high order thinking, particularly for extending high achieving students.



3.7 Differentiated teaching and learning

Findings

School leaders and staff are committed to individual student success. NAPLAN data is used to identify student needs and to group students to differentiate curriculum delivery.

There are structures in place to provide clear focus on reading and spelling, however, these structures sometimes impede differentiation. Observations made in classrooms provided little evidence of varied and adjusted curriculum pathways to address individual student needs.

Teachers use differentiation surfboards at the planning level.

Teacher-aides and key support personnel provide support for targeted students.

Learning intentions are clearly visible. Some classrooms have personal learning goals for students, however some learning goals lacked clarity.

There was little evidence that high achieving students are challenged and stretched in their learning.

Supporting data

Classroom observations, interviews with staff, community members and partners, classroom planning, individual performance plans, professional development framework, OneSchool.

Improvement strategies

Investigate professional learning opportunities for staff to further develop differentiated teaching and learning practices.

Develop strategic and deliberate processes to enhance student achievement for higher achieving students.

Closely monitor student progress and the use of differentiation surfboards.

Provide clarity for students in regards to their individual learning goals to ensure that they are measurable, achievable and specific.



3.8 Effective pedagogical practices

Findings

The school leadership team clearly articulate their vision for strategically enhancing pedagogical practices across the school. There is a strong emphasis on explicit instruction, the use of learning intent and success criteria. The extent to which these structures are embedded is inconsistent as a result of recent staff turnover.

The principal and HOC have developed clear school-wide processes for the timetabling of reading and spelling.

The leadership team have a deliberate and focused commitment to the timetabling of classroom observations, instructional walk-throughs and the modelling of best practice.

The school leadership team and staff are implementing the regional pedagogical framework. There is evidence of the implementation of the framework, particularly in the primary school setting. However, the embedding of consistent practice across the school and level of teacher expertise has been hindered as a result of recent staff changes.

Supporting data

Regional pedagogical framework, school timetables, documentation and school artefacts, classroom observations, interviews with the leadership team, school staff and students.

Improvement strategies

Prioritise school-wide professional development for new and beginning staff with a detailed focus on quality pedagogical practices.

Sharpen feedback strategies to students to ensure that feedback is linked to success criteria.

Sharpen and enhance school-wide processes for coaching, mentoring and feedback to ensure that all staff are engaged in the collegial and professional practices of the school.

3.9 School and community partnerships

Findings

The school has established strong, positive relationships with many stakeholders. Established partnerships are reciprocal in nature, and are focused on improving the academic success and wellbeing of the students.

All partners have an understanding of their role and their involvement in the school. The partnerships are varied, and support both the primary and secondary sectors. All stakeholders are committed to the success of the partnership, and have a strong sense of responsibility and belonging to the school community.

Partnerships with local businesses are strategically selected to assist students' transition to their chosen pathways of employment.

A strong Prep transition program has been established. This is an evolving partnership. There has been a positive response in the community to school's explicit early years' philosophy and the transition program, which has resulted in an increase of Prep enrolment in 2015.

No formal documentation of the purpose and outcomes of each partnership is evident. It is unclear as to how the partnerships are evaluated and whether the partnerships achieve their intended purpose.

Few parent volunteers work within classrooms to support student learning. Attempts have been made to seek further parental support, and to skill parents in the teaching of reading, writing, spelling and number.

Parents and community members have expressed their satisfaction with the school administration team. They are supportive of the school improvement agenda and the reform work achieved in recent years. The stability of school leaders has enhanced the growth and development of school community partnerships over time.

Supporting data

Interviews with community members, interviews with administration staff, teachers and teacher-aides, School Data Profile, School Opinion Survey

Improvement strategies

Formalise the school community partnerships. Establish the purpose of each partnership and the role and responsibility of the participants.

Explore new ways to encourage parents to support their child's learning by welcoming parents into the classroom, and providing them with a skill set to help support student learning beyond the school setting.

Strengthen the relationship with the local C&K kindergarten and parent groups to enhance and build upon the success of the Prep transition program.



4. Follow-up timelines

- School to publish this report on their website within two weeks.
- School to meet with the assistant regional director to discuss review findings and improvement strategies.