School Improvement Unit
Report

Vincent State School
Executive Summary
1. Introduction

1.1 Background
This report is a product of a review carried out at Vincent State School from 10 to 12 June 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: | 280 Palmerston St, Vincent, Townsville |
| Education region: | North Queensland |
| The school opened in: | 1968 |
| Year levels: | Prep to Year 6 including an Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP) |
| Current school enrolment: | 111 full-time (Prep to Year 6) and 120 part-time (ECDP) |
| Indigenous enrolments: | 57 per cent (Prep to Year 6) and 15 per cent (ECDP) |
| Students with disability enrolments: | 9 per cent |
| Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value: | 836 |
| Year principal appointed: | 2015 (acting) |
| Number of teachers: | 24.31 FTE, including school and ECDP staff |
| Nearby schools: | Currajong State School, Heatley State School, Aitkenvale State School, Heatley Secondary College |
| Significant community partnerships: | Good Beginnings, The Smith Family, Paluma Environmental Education Centre, Charters Towers School of Education (mini-campus), Vincent Community Hub, Queensland Police Service, Vincent Community Health (Dr Nicole Mohajer’s clinic on Thursdays on site), Churches of Christ and SU Chaplaincy, Act for kids (ACT) |
Unique school programs: Daily 2 hour Individual Curriculum Plan (ICP) classes for Juniors and Seniors, Auslan, Signing choir, Art Club, Semi-professional footballer teacher aides

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:
  - the principal, pedagogy coach, Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), HOSES (ECDP) and Connectedness officer
  - 18 teachers
  - Guidance Officer
  - 10 students
  - 14 teacher-aides, five facilities staff and five administration officers
  - Parents and Citizens’ (P&C) Association president and four parents
  - Eight community partners, including staff from local schools
  - Local councillor

1.4 Review team

Gary Austen Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Allan Morgan External reviewer
Andrew Cummings Peer reviewer
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- School leaders and staff are working effectively to build a positive school culture for learning

Staff, students, parents and community members speak favourably about the way in which school leaders are working to build a school culture for learning. High expectations for student behaviour and engagement in the academic program are evident in the daily routine and generally characterise interactions between staff and students.

Classrooms are generally orderly and the school is a safe place for students and staff. Students speak very highly of their teachers. The school is continuing to target improved attendance. Student disciplinary absences remain high.

- The school is committed to improved student achievement and has a broad range of improvement initiatives being implemented concurrently.

A significant number of improvement initiatives are being implemented. Whilst well intentioned, the broad focus has the potential to hinder the success of the school in driving improvement in student achievement and teacher effectiveness.

Some teachers express concern with their capacity to successfully embed a large number of initiatives into classroom practice at the one time.

- School leaders have a well-developed appreciation of the relationship between teacher effectiveness and improved student achievement.

There is a wide ranging focus for observation of classroom practice and the provision of feedback to teachers. The focus is broad and is not tightly aligned with a narrow improvement agenda. The school is working to address issues of staff performance.

Staff turnover is identified by staff and parents as an issue impacting upon the successful operation of the school.

- While the school has a curriculum plan in place, it is unclear how the plan provides clarity across the school for teachers and a cohesive progression of learning experiences from Prep to Year 6.

School leaders meet regularly with individual teachers to support curriculum planning. Collaborative planning involving teams of teachers does not occur. The school is giving consideration to how a more locally responsive curriculum program can be developed.
School resources are directed towards key improvement initiatives; however, the systematic monitoring of the effectiveness in how resources are deployed to drive enhanced learning is not evident.

The school has significant funds available at its disposal and uses its staff flexibly. Expenditure is not monitored closely to ensure the school budget is used as a key driver for improved learning.

A significant number of valuable partnerships are evident between the school and community.

A broad number of community partners are fully committed to working with the school to address disadvantage. These partnerships are of significant support and deliver positive outcomes for student wellbeing.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Narrow and sharpen the school improvement agenda to ensure clear strategies, targets, timelines and milestones. Embed a range of drivers and processes within the agenda to ensure a measurable improvement in student achievement.

- Continue to develop and rigorously action high expectations for a positive learning culture through the communication of focused expectations for student behaviour, safety and attendance.

- Develop, with regional support, a workforce plan to attract, retain and develop the best possible teachers for the school.

- Create stronger collaborative processes to engage all teachers in the sharing expertise to build teacher capacity, the delivery of quality curriculum and the monitoring of student achievement.

- Develop a coherent, whole-school curriculum plan for curriculum delivery that provides clarity for teachers in regards to what (and when) should be taught, aligns with the Australian Curriculum and provides locally responsive learning experiences for students.

- Regularly monitor the deployment of financial and human resources to ensure their effectiveness in driving improved student achievement and that they are targeted towards measurable improvements for specific students and cohorts of students.