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Geham State School

Executive Summary

**School
Improvement
Unit**

Queensland
Government

Contents

1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Geham State School** from **4** to **6 September 2017**.

The report presents 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 report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies that prioritise future directions for improvement.

Schools will publish the executive summary on the school website within two weeks of receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their Assistant Regional Director (ARD) to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information regarding the SIU and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SIU website.

1.1 Review team

Stephen Bobby	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Ruth Machen	Peer reviewer
David Hinton	External reviewer

1.2 School context

Location:	New England Highway, Geham
Education region:	Darling Downs South West Region
Year opened:	1871
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Enrolment:	140
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	7 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	6 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	997
Year principal appointed:	1999
Full-time equivalent staff:	14.2
Significant partner schools:	Sixes and Sevens Cluster Schools (Band 6 and 7 Like Schools) Meringandan State School, Goombungee State School, Kingsthorpe State School, Gowrie State School, Toowoomba North State School, Rockville State School, Harlaxton State School
Significant community partnerships:	Goodstart Early Learning Highfields, Leading Learning Collaborative
Significant school programs:	Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL), Student Support, Playgroup

1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, Support Teacher Literacy and Numeracy (STLaN), six teachers, Business Manager (BM), administration officer, five Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) representatives, 28 parents and 30 students.

Community and business groups:

- Goodstart Early Learning Highfields director, Geham Playgroup coordinator and Lecturer (curriculum and pedagogy) University of Southern Queensland (USQ).

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal of Meringandan State School, principal of Goombungee State School and Head of Special Education Services (HOSES) of Highfields State Secondary College.

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2017	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2017
Investing for Success 2017	Strategic Plan 2014-2017
School data plan	School Data Profile (Semester 2, 2017)
OneSchool	School budget overview
School newsletters and website	Curriculum planning documents
School improvement targets	School Opinion Survey
School pedagogical framework	Supporting Diverse Learners Documentation
Headline Indicators (Semester 2, 2016 release)	Professional and Learning Sharing Agenda 2017
School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework	Planning Checklist and Feedback Sheet 2017

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

The school vision of 'To *nurture all shades of learning through – Opportunities, Aspirations, Knowledge'* underpins the school's outlook for improvement and change.

The leadership team and staff are committed to improving the learning outcomes for all students. An Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) is developed for the school that is described as the 'consistent, explicit and targeted teaching of writing'. School staff members are united and committed to the improvement agenda and are supportive of the implementation processes established by the leadership team. The school leadership team and staff members expect all students to learn successfully and have high expectations for student attendance, engagement and outcomes.

There is clear indication that the leadership team views reliable and relevant data as essential to school leadership and to progressing the school's improvement agenda.

The leadership team has analysed school performance data over a period of time. The school implements a whole-school data plan for the collection of student and staff data. Data discussions are held with all teachers, twice each term, to review class data trends to identify specific intervention strategies for case conferenced individuals and negotiated foci for student individual learning goals. The Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) committee is aware of the need to systematically collect and analyse behaviour data. School performance in writing relative gain 2015-2017, identifies that improvement from Year 3 to Year 5 is above Similar Queensland State Schools (SQSS).

The principal endeavours to utilise staff expertise and physical resources in ways that best address the learning needs of all students.

School leaders give a high priority to understanding and addressing the learning needs of all students. The school applies its resources in a targeted manner to meet these needs. The principal is proactive in meeting with the Business Manager (BM), the school staff and the Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) executive on a regular basis to review the budget and the allocation of staff members and resources. Targeted use of personnel is apparent. Flexible curriculum delivery arrangements are established to enable staff to better target improvements in student learning.

Staff members communicate a deep commitment to providing quality learning opportunities for their students.

All school staff members comment that knowing the learner is essential to individual improvement. Staff demonstrate the importance of establishing and nurturing positive and caring relationships with students and colleagues. The leadership team espouses high expectations for students, staff members and parents. There is a strong commitment to positive behaviour throughout the school. The school's commitment to the embedding of the PBL strategy across the school is reflected in the low number of School Disciplinary

Absences (SDAs). Some staff members speak of some inconsistent application and agreement regarding PBL expectations, specifically for managing inappropriate student behaviour.

The principal places a priority on the development of an expert and coherent school-wide teaching team.

Teachers are encouraged to take responsibility for the decision-making processes relating to pedagogy and curriculum implementation. Staff members are confident in their teaching fields and are growing in professional ownership of the classroom learning platform. They are keen to expand their knowledge on how to improve on their current teaching practice. Learning walks and talks are conducted each term and are linked to the term focuses as outlined in the Professional and Learning Sharing Agenda 2017. Staff meetings place an emphasis on the building of staff professional capacity through the use of high quality professional learning opportunities to introduce new initiatives and programs. Teacher curriculum planning is comprehensively reviewed by the school principal to ensure consistency of preparation of curriculum content is achieved.

The school utilises Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) units as the resource to implement the Australian Curriculum (AC).

An explicit, sequenced curriculum, assessment and reporting plan has been developed. Assessment processes are aligned with curriculum. Teachers are using C2C assessment tasks and Guides to Making Judgements (GTMJ). Some teachers express a desire to engage more directly with the AC in order to develop and plan units of work that offer increased engagement for students. Teachers are allocated half a day curriculum planning time twice per term during which teachers document unit critical content and identify differentiation strategies for individuals and groups. Identification of appropriate support, personal requirements and the development/sourcing of assessment task exemplars are completed. At the beginning of each unit of work, teachers work with students to co-construct the learning intention and success criteria for the unit content.

Staff members indicate a strong belief that all students are capable of learning successfully if motivated and given appropriate learning opportunities and necessary support.

Teachers are supported to closely monitor individual student performance. Dedicated release time is timetabled for each classroom teacher to spend time with school leaders to discuss classroom data and specific student needs. There is evidence that teachers' understanding of the differentiation elements of content, process, product and environment and associated strategies is consolidating. The principal undertakes learning walks and talks to gain evidence of student thinking and growth based on Sharratt's[1] five questions. The principal has acknowledged that the next phase for expanding teachers' understanding of the impact and effectiveness of their teaching is by applying the Sharratt five questions to teachers.

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[1] Sharratt, L., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Putting faces on the data: What great leaders do!*. Corwin Press.

The school liaises with local early childcare providers and a local high school to support the smooth transition of students and their families through formal schooling.

The school has begun to develop a relationship with the Highfields Goodstart Early Learning and is beginning to engage with them to ensure a smooth transition for students. The school has expanded their transition to Prep in 2017 due to a rise in enrolment numbers. Early childcare centre providers indicate they would welcome any further initiatives in the area of transitions to Prep. The Highfields State Secondary College transition program offers an orientation day for Year 6 students. The principal acknowledges that a more in-depth high school and early years transition program would be desirable.

The leadership team recognises that highly effective teaching is the key to improving student learning outcomes.

The leadership team acknowledges the development of school-wide consistent practice in delivering the effective pedagogy is essential in further improving student learning outcomes. The principal has been explicit about the expected pedagogical practices in the school. The Explicit Instruction (EI) model, Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) framework and the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) have been identified and utilised to organise school-expected classroom practices.

Members of the community, parents, staff members and students show enormous pride in the school.

Parents indicate they are extremely happy with the caring and supportive school environment. Staff members demonstrate the importance of establishing and nurturing positive and caring relationships with students and colleagues, and the way this links with successful learning outcomes. Parents speak frequently of the caring and community nature of the school and hold this feature in high regard. All students interviewed indicate that they like their school and its community feel, feel safe at school, develop good friendships and enjoy coming to school.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

Further embed PBL processes and strategies to ensure consistent practices are adhered to when responding to and supporting student behaviour.

Continue to develop and implement processes to support teachers in differentiating for the full range of students in their classrooms including high achieving students.

Expand the walk and talk focus from students to include a teacher focus on the impact and effectiveness of their teaching to meet individual learning needs.

Investigate further Professional Development (PD) opportunities to deepen understanding of the AC.

Expand the current relationship with local high school and early childhood providers to include curriculum, pedagogy and social capital to strengthen positive transitions for students and families.