School Improvement Unit Report

Howard State School

Executive Summary
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Howard State School from 2 to 4 November 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>108 William Street, Howard</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education region:</td>
<td>North Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school opened in:</td>
<td>1879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year levels:</td>
<td>Prep to Year 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current school enrolment:</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous enrolments:</td>
<td>10 per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disability enrolments:</td>
<td>One student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</td>
<td>923</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year principal appointed:</td>
<td>2007 (substantive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 2015 (acting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of teachers:</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearby schools:</td>
<td>Torbanlea State School, Aldridge State High School, Isis District State High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant community partnerships:</td>
<td>Howard Progress Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique school programs:</td>
<td>nil</td>
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</table>
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 acting principal
  - Master teacher
  - Guidance officer
  - Chaplain
  - Six classroom teacher
  - Two specialist teachers
  - Student leaders
  - Parent and Citizens’ Association (P&C) president
  - 19 parents
  - Students from across the school
  - Four local principals
  - Five community members

.4 Review team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esta Thiris</td>
<td>Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy Dale</td>
<td>Internal reviewer, SIU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare Grant</td>
<td>External reviewer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The school presents as a calm and attractive learning environment and classes are generally orderly and purposeful.

Students speak highly of the school and value its small school culture. There is a positive, caring relationship between staff and students which is evidenced by the manner in which staff and students interrelate across the school. The school endeavours to utilise its human and physical resources to address student needs and provide resources to meet these needs.

- There is a school plan and timetable for the annual collection of student achievement data.

Teachers have recently undertaken professional development in administering running records with an expectation that all class teachers will regularly assess student reading using this methodology.

- The school’s improvement agenda as identified in the Annual Implementation Plan for 2015 includes data literacy, attendance, student needs, Upper Two Bands (U2B), National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) strategy, Australian Curriculum and literacy.

The school has refined its priorities to focus on reading. Staff and parents are aware of and engaged in the improvement agenda in varying degrees.

- The school offers professional learning activities and visits beyond its own campus.

The recent focus for professional development includes reading and mathematics. A number of staff spoke positively of these opportunities and indicated a desire for the continuation of regular professional development and networking with other schools. The school is yet to develop a whole school professional learning plan to support individual staff needs and local and system priorities.

- Teachers use Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) as a resource to deliver curriculum requirements in English, Maths, Science, History and Geography.

The leadership team has identified school priorities of reading and numeracy. Some school-wide strategies are in place to drive improvement in these areas. The school has adopted a balanced reading program and is in the early phase of implementation with a current focus on modelled and guided reading. There is an opportunity for the school to collaboratively develop a whole school curriculum plan for curriculum delivery that makes explicit teaching and learning expectations.
The leadership team recognises that quality teaching is the key to improving student outcomes, and has identified improvements in pedagogy, particularly in reading.

The school has adopted a whole school approach to guided reading. Frameworks to provide teachers with clear direction regarding teaching strategies in priority areas are being considered.

The school has introduced a process for teacher modelling, observation and feedback led by the master teacher.

The lessons modelled for teachers by the master teacher aim to build consistent practice for the teaching of reading across the school. Staff and community members tell stories of significant improvement of student engagement in reading.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Build a strong sense of team commitment to support the school’s improvement agenda.

- Strengthen the school’s communication strategies to ensure that all staff and parents have a clear understanding of and commitment to the strategic direction of the school.

- Ensure a clearly articulated whole school improvement agenda is accompanied by appropriate and collaboratively determined targets, timelines, appropriate resourcing and professional development for all school personnel.

- Develop the school data plan and ensure it is aligned to the school’s improvement agenda and is interrogated, analysed and applied in a timely manner.

- Collaboratively develop a whole school curriculum plan informed by the Australian and Queensland curriculums for all key learning areas, that clearly identifies what is to be taught, when it will be taught and what students need to learn.

- Collaboratively develop an agreed, clear and explicit, research-based pedagogical framework to establish clear expectations of teaching practices in all classrooms.

- Develop and document the whole school professional learning plan which is aligned with local and system priorities and includes staff’s Annual Performance Development Plans, to effectively support and build the capacity of staff to deliver consistently high quality instruction.

- Develop a systematic whole school approach to building teacher capacity.