School Improvement Unit
Report

Thuringowa State High School

Executive Summary
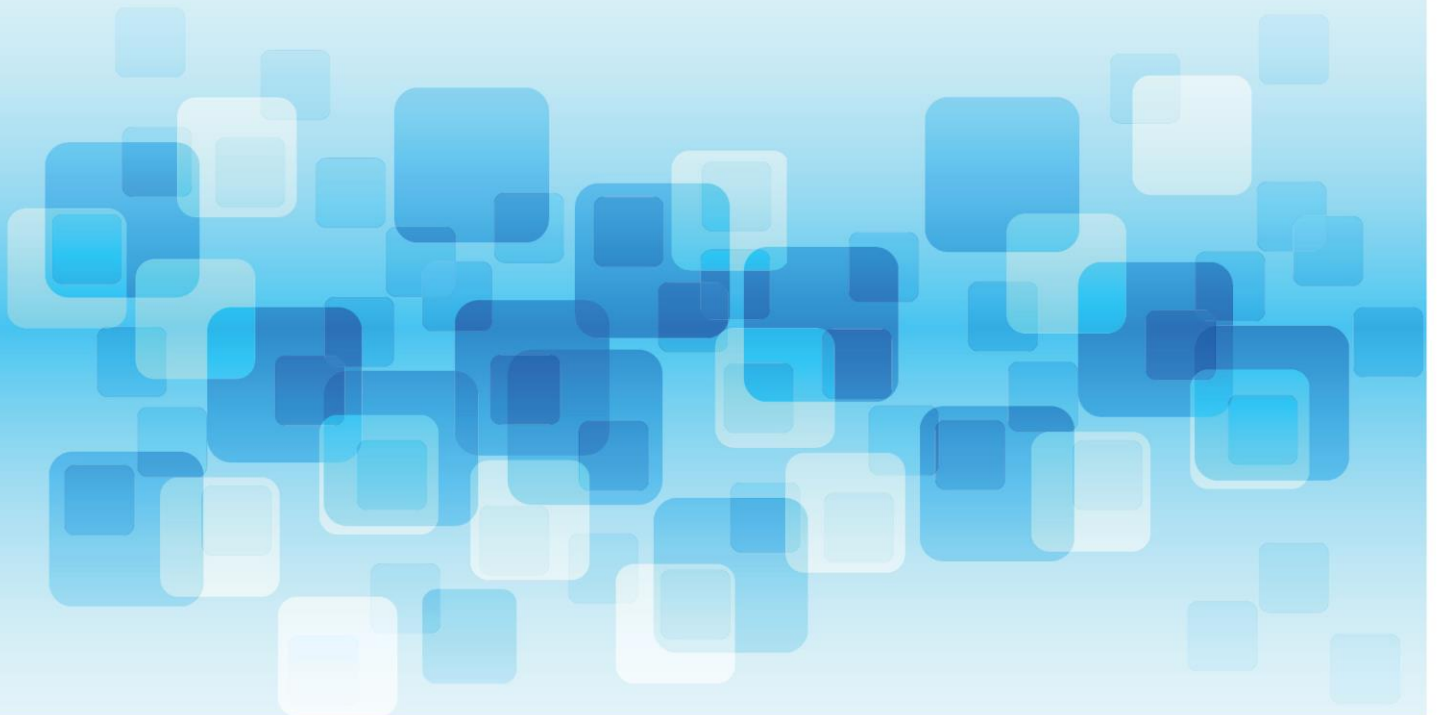
Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Thuringowa State High School from 25 to 27 July 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

Location:	Vickers Road South, Condon
Education region:	North Queensland Region
The school opened in:	1987
Year levels:	Year 7 to Year 12
Current school enrolment:	698
Indigenous enrolments:	33 per cent
Students with disability enrolments:	8 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	854
Year principal appointed:	2013
Number of teachers:	59.96 (full-time equivalent)
Nearby schools:	Rasmussen State School, Kelso State School, Good Shepherd Catholic Community School, Kirwan State High School
Significant community partnerships:	James Cook University (JCU), Upper Ross Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC), The Salvation Army Thuringowa
Significant school programs:	Global Tropics Futures project, Digital Launch School.

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:

  o Principal and three deputy principals, six Heads of Department (HOD), Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), master teacher, beginning teacher mentor and two reading coaches

  o 26 teachers and three teacher aides

  o 48 students

  o Business Services Manager (BSM) and office staff

  o Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president, tuckshop convenor and 12 parents

  o Principal of Rasmussen State School and deputy principal of Global Tropics Futures project

  o State Member for Thuringowa

  o School chaplain, school based youth health nurse, school-based police officer, guidance officer, two community education counsellors and two youth support coordinators

1.4 Review team

Kate MacDonald   Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)

Mark Farwell   Internal reviewer, SIU

Allan Morgan   External reviewer

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- Teachers work hard to create warm and supportive classroom environments, where students feel safe and are supported to learn.

  Teachers work to build students' beliefs in their own capacity to learn. Positive relationships characterised by mutual trust and respect exist between staff members and students. The school gives attention to student care and wellbeing. Strong collegial support is apparent. Parents and families are valued as partners in student learning. A number of parents and staff members describe an attachment and loyalty to the school and what it is aiming to achieve within the community.

- The school leadership team has developed a strategic improvement agenda.

  The improvement agenda priorities include elements of quality teaching and learning, including Explicit Instruction (EI), classroom artefacts, alignment, classroom observations, reading, writing and numeracy, and learning environment including attainment, attendance and behaviour.

- The school leadership team recognises the importance of consistent, research-based teaching in all classrooms to ensure that every student learns successfully.

  Teaching staff express that they understand the 'classroom expectations' identified in the 'Teaching and Learning Handbook'. Teaching staff identify that the full range of school identified practices underpinning the school's pedagogical approach is not yet fully understood, especially in regard to how the various frameworks and strategies fit together.

- The school has a team of highly capable staff who plan and implement well aligned curriculum and assessment programs.

  The school leadership team recognises the importance of consistent, research-based teaching in all classrooms to ensure that every student learns successfully. Practices associated with implementation of school expectations vary across the school.

- Year 7 and Year 8 teachers of English plan and implement class-based literacy lessons supported by teacher aides or a co-teacher.

  Co-teaching is recognised by teachers as an effective strategy to target the range of student needs. Consistently implemented school-wide approaches to target the literacy needs of students are not yet established.

- The school is using the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) framework as a means to improve the behaviour of students.

  Within the framework, the school defines behaviours, explicitly teaches expected behaviours, defines consequences for inappropriate behaviours, and celebrates appropriate positive responses from students. As yet, PB4L strategies are not thoroughly and consistently applied in all classrooms.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Narrow and sharpen the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) and determine the priorities and associated school-wide strategies based on a thorough and collaborative investigation of the school data regarding student academic achievement, attendance and behaviour.

- Initiate collaborative school leadership team planning processes to identify a sharp focus for the consistent implementation of school pedagogical approaches.

- Develop a plan for the staged implementation of key school pedagogical approaches across the school to include structured and focused professional learning opportunities to ensure consistent practice as identified in the 'Teaching and Learning Handbook'.

- Identify, apply and monitor explicit and consistent approaches to existing literacy intervention programs.

- Implement and monitor high expectations for consistent, school-wide implementation of PB4L.