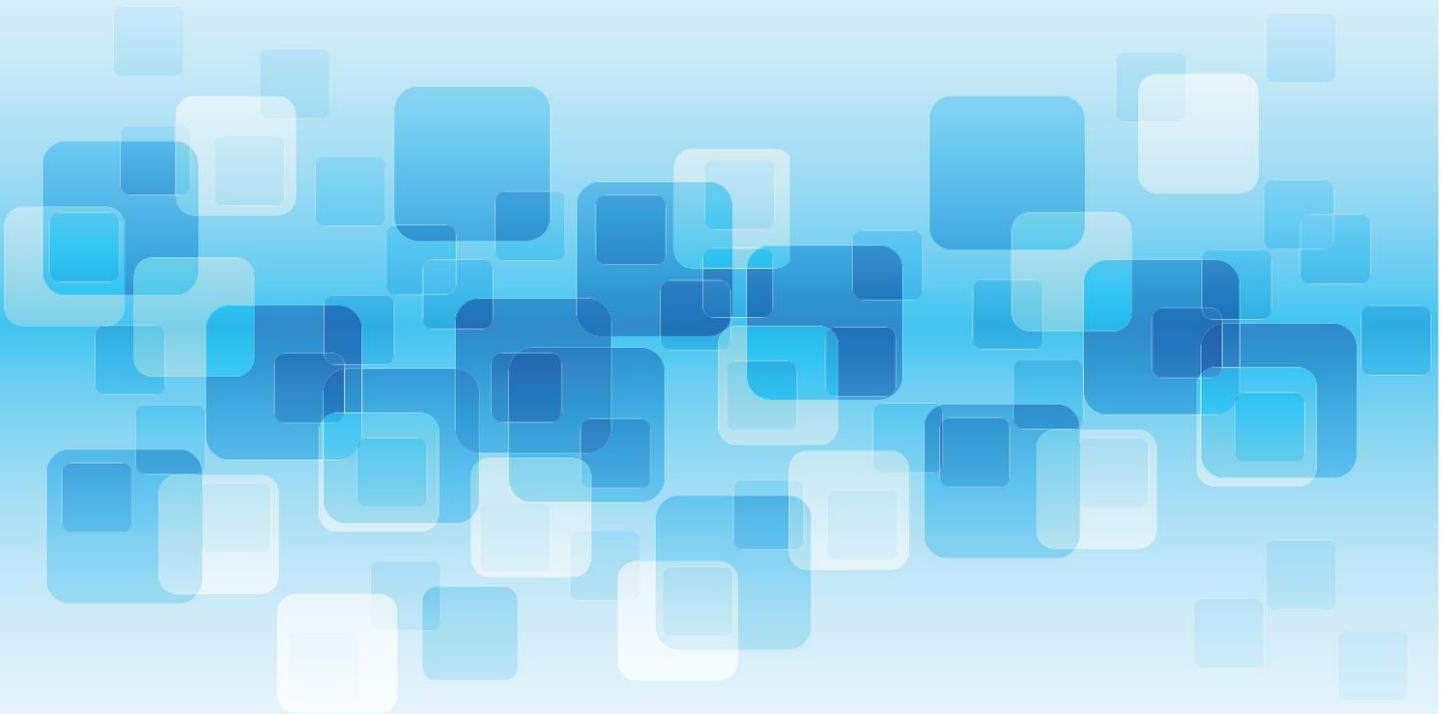




School Improvement Unit Report

Highfields State School Executive Summary



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Highfields State School from 31 March to 2 April 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:	10459 New England Highway, Highfields
Education region:	Darling Downs South West
The school opened in:	1870
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Current school enrolment:	754
Indigenous enrolments:	5 per cent
Students with disability enrolments:	6 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	1045
Year principal appointed:	2009
Number of teachers:	43.7 full time equivalent
Nearby schools:	Highfields State High School
Significant community partnerships:	University Southern Qld Leadership Research Institute, Highfields C&K Kindergarten, Fresh Hope- Family Support, Australian Defence Force- Pastoral Care Program
Unique school programs:	Speech and Drama Program, Strings, Brass and Woodwind Programs, Chess Club, Opti- Minds, Cows Create Careers Program.



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, Deputy Principals, Head of Curriculum (HOC) and Head of Special Education Services (HOSES)
 - Business services manager (BSM)
 - 37 class teachers
 - 18 students including student leaders
 - President Highfields State School Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) and a selection of other parents
 - Eight teacher-aides
 - Community partners including principals of neighbouring schools and Highfields kindergarten

1.4 Review team

Gary Austen	Internal Reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Gayle Alessio	Peer Reviewer
Beth Everill	Peer Reviewer



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The school has a stated improvement agenda with a clear focus on reading, and an emerging emphasis on number and inclusivity.

The current school improvement agenda provides a broad framework for action. School leaders, staff and parents are committed to improvement and indicate an awareness of the work the school is undertaking to improve literacy and numeracy.

- School leaders work with individual staff members and teams to build improved student outcomes, however additional clarity regarding the roles and relationships is required.

School leaders and teams are united in their commitment to school improvement. Further clarity and cohesion about the interrelated roles and relationships between school leaders and teams will enhance whole-school effectiveness.

- Teachers use effective pedagogical practices in all year levels.

Teachers use a range of effective classroom practices. Further consistency of practice across all year levels will drive sustainable improvements in student achievement.

- School leaders value the importance of classroom observation, feedback, coaching and mentoring.

School leaders have implemented formal classroom observation, feedback and coaching processes in previous years. Plans are in place for these processes to be re-enacted in 2015.

- Teachers work to differentiate instruction for students, however a deliberate strategy to develop and track the performance of high-achieving students is not apparent.

The school is targeting an improvement in relative gains for students across different junctures in learning. A deliberate and strategic approach to drive improvement is emerging, with a particular focus on the achievement of more able students.

- School leaders and teachers discuss a range of data sources that inform classroom teaching programs.

School leaders and teachers use and discuss a range of systemic and school data sources to analyse and monitor student achievement. The school is targeting the development of enhanced data literacy for teachers.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Sharpen the school's improvement agenda to include specific strategies, targets and milestones for improvement that directly relate to student learning gains. Ensure that the agenda is widely communicated and understood across the school.
- Embed a strategic approach regarding the development of a feedback culture across the school. Align the provision of formalised feedback, coaching and mentoring to the school improvement agenda.
- Refine the alignment of the school curriculum plan and pedagogical framework to enable the consistent delivery and monitoring of learning across the whole school.
- Build the differentiation practices of teachers, with a key focus on assuring the progress of high-achieving students. Enact a deliberate, school-wide strategy, for the teaching of higher-order and creative thinking. Carefully track and respond to the progress of more able students.
- Review and clarify the roles of school and instructional leaders, within and beyond teams. Ensure clear communication of key expectations for teaching and learning across the whole school.