



School Improvement Unit Report

Ferny Hills State School Executive Summary



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Ferny Hills State School from 5 to 9 May 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:	Illuta Avenue, Ferny Hills
Education region:	Metropolitan
The school opened in:	1970
Year levels:	Prep to Year 6
Current school enrolment:	346
Indigenous enrolments:	4.6 per cent
Students with disability enrolments:	5.49 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	1033
Year principal appointed:	April 2011
Number of teachers:	21.75 (full-time equivalent)
Nearby schools:	Ferny Grove State School, Ferny Grove State High School, Patricks Road State School, Samford State School, Grovely State School, Mitchelton State School, Mitchelton State High School, Everton Park State School
Significant community partnerships:	Kids Hope Aus
Unique school programs:	Story Dogs



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 deputy principal
 - Master teacher/Curriculum co-ordinator and Intensive Intervention teacher
 - Support Teacher Literacy and Numeracy (STLaN), Special Education Program (SEP) teacher, Head of Special Education Services (HOSES) and guidance officer
 - 13 classroom teachers and three specialist teachers
 - Business Services Manager (BSM) and two administration officers
 - Five teacher aides and chaplain
 - 20 parents and 28 students
 - Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) president and administrator
 - Deputy principal, Ferny Grove State High School
 - Local Councillor for Moreton Bay Regional Council, Mr Matt Constance
 - Five community members

1.4 Review team

Ian Rathmell	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Stephen Bobby	Internal reviewer, SIU
Jenny Nayler	External reviewer



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- The tone of the school reflects a school-wide commitment to successful learning.

Staff members demonstrate an understanding of the importance of positive and caring relationships to successful learning, and work to build mutually respectful relationships across the school community.

- The school has undergone significant change in the school's leadership team.

Staff commented that in recent times there has been more clarity in messages from the leadership team. Roles and responsibilities for driving the improvement agenda are continuing to evolve.

- The school's improvement agenda as identified in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) includes three key priorities of reading, feedback and implementing behaviour management and social skills programs.

All teaching staff and teacher aides can identify the priority areas of reading and behaviour management. The targets and timelines for these improvements are as yet unclear. The understanding of feedback and the social skills programs as improvement priorities are yet to be fully established. There is some parent understanding of the school's improvement priorities.

- Full implementation of the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) is a recent initiative to support students' wellbeing and behaviour.

There are clearly defined behaviour management strategies that all students are able to articulate. All staff members and parents speak positively of the noticeable improvements in student behaviour and increased consistency of responses to appropriate and challenging behaviour.

- The school is enacting the Australian Curriculum (AC) in all year levels via modified Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resource units.

School-specific planning is occurring in relation to the English units. The school has term curriculum overviews that identify each learning area's C2C resource units, a snapshot of the focus of each unit and its summative assessment.

- The school has a pedagogical framework that cites the need for identification of curriculum intent, sequencing of teaching and learning, making judgements, and feedback.

There is a focus on the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model in the guided reading program and in the enactment of English units. Classrooms artefacts of We are learning to (WALT) and What I'm looking for (WILF) are used in lesson delivery. This practice is embedded as part of the Explicit Instruction (EI) lesson structure.



The documented pedagogical framework influencing current practice is yet to be developed.

- The Professional Learning Plan (PDP) 2015–2016 identifies regional, school and staff priorities.

There is a commitment to building a school-wide professional team. Teaching staff report growing capacity in relation to the skills required to implement the key improvement agendas of reading and behaviour management. The use of formal observation and feedback to improve teaching and learning is yet to be developed.

- The school offers orientation evenings to support the transition of students and their families into Prep and formal schooling.

Staff members expressed a need to extend and build on the present transition arrangements. The school identifies the need to build stronger partnerships with local child-care centres.

- There is a strong ethos of community ownership of the school.

Students, staff, parents and community members speak highly of the school and the sense of belonging. The principal places a high priority on establishing beneficial and strategic partnerships with parents, families, individuals, local businesses and community organisations to support student learning and well-being.



2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Review, re-align and communicate to the whole-school community the roles and responsibilities of the school leadership team in leading and actioning the school's improvement agenda.
- Narrow and sharpen the Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA) so that staff members can embed strategies and teaching practices consistently across the school.
- Develop explicit, measureable targets and timelines that inform the narrow and sharp improvement agenda. Ensure that targets and timelines are communicated to all school stakeholders.
- Develop a whole-school curriculum, assessment and reporting framework that provides clarity and detail.
- Collaboratively develop a whole-school pedagogical framework.
- Develop a formal approach to providing observation and feedback to teaching staff on the agreed pedagogical framework.
- Build and formalise partnerships with local early childhood providers to strengthen transition programs across this phase of learning.