School Improvement Unit
Report

Murray River Upper State School
Executive Summary
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Murray River Upper State School from 30 to 31 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>1 Middle Murray Road, Murray Upper</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education region:</td>
<td>Far North Queensland Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school opened in:</td>
<td>1904</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year levels:</td>
<td>Prep to Year 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current school enrolment:</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Indigenous enrolments:</td>
<td>62 per cent</td>
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<td>Students with disability enrolments:</td>
<td>4.4 per cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</td>
<td>823</td>
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<td>Year principal appointed:</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of teachers:</td>
<td>3.16 (full-time equivalent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Significant community partnerships:</td>
<td>Girringun Rangers, Jumbun Medical Centre and CEO, Australian Hearing Services, Ulysses Cluster</td>
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<tr>
<td>Significant school programs:</td>
<td>Bush Tucker and vegetable gardens, Cultural Day with Elders</td>
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1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of two 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 two days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal
  - Two principals from the cluster
  - Three classroom teachers
  - Local relief teacher
  - Three teacher aides
  - Guidance officer
  - Local State Member
  - Three Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) representatives
  - Two parents
  - Nine students

1.4 Review team

Bert Barbe Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Richard Nash Internal reviewer, SIU
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- Parents are encouraged to be partners in their student’s learning.

  Staff members focus on developing positive, caring relationships with other staff members, students and the community. Interactions observed between staff members, students and parents are respectful and inclusive.

- The Australian Curriculum (AC) is delivered using the AC achievement standards.

  The school is working with the local cluster schools to develop curriculum units tailored to the needs of small schools in the local area. A whole-school curriculum framework to meet the unique needs of small, rural multi-age and diverse classes is yet to be developed.

- The principal is driving a narrow, sharp improvement agenda in reading, attendance and mathematics, with reading being the predominant focus.

  Teaching staff routinely review and update the data wall in the staff room and discuss ways to ensure improvement for every student and reduce obstacles to learning. School-wide expectations for the teaching of reading and other key programs are yet to be documented. Explicit targets and timelines are yet to be developed. Staff are united and committed to the improvement in reading for all students.

- Teaching staff have high levels of confidence in teaching and are eager to expand their knowledge to learn how to improve on current teaching practices.

  There is a documented process for the observation of teaching practice. The provision of suitable written feedback is under review.

- All staff work collaboratively to identify and respond to the individual learning needs of every student in the small rural, multi-age context.

  The innovative class structure has strategically provided additional support for students with learning needs and an improved learning environment for all students.

- The school has developed mutually respectful partnerships with parents, families, local businesses and community organisations to enhance learning opportunities and outcomes for students.

  The school has brought together the Girringun Rangers, the Local State Member and a local business to produce and display signs for the names of the bush tucker trees in the school garden.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Collaboratively develop and document the school’s curriculum plan to meet systemic priorities that is locally relevant and engaging for all students.

- Progressively document and communicate key program expectations to maintain consistent teaching practices.

- Develop and action explicit targets and timelines for student achievement in priority areas.

- Further develop and implement a framework of instructional leadership to progress the culture of observation, feedback and reflective practice across the school.

- Monitor the school’s programs and initiatives to ensure the effectiveness of targeted strategies in driving improved student achievement.