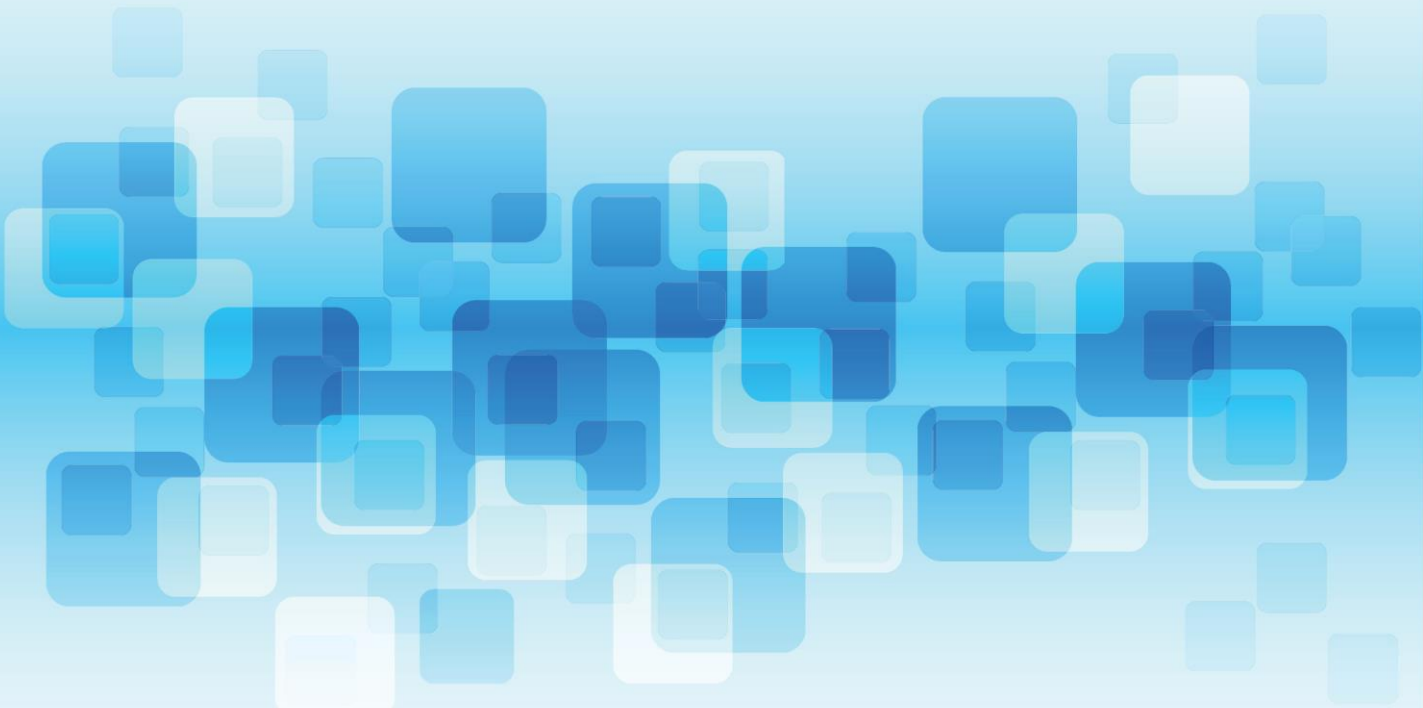




School Improvement Unit Report

Cairns School of Distance Education Executive Summary





1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the School Improvement Unit (SIU) at **Cairns School of Distance Education** from **7 to 10 November 2016**.

The report presents 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 report's executive summary outlines key findings from the review and key improvement strategies which prioritise future directions for improvement.

The schools will publish the executive summary on the school website within two weeks of receiving the report.

The principal will meet with their Assistant Regional Director (ARD) to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information about the SIU and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the SIU [website](#).

1.1 Review team

Alan Sampson	Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Robin Sprott	Peer reviewer
Judi Hanke	External reviewer

1.2 School context

Location:	Hoare Street, Manunda
Education region:	Far North Queensland Region
Year opened:	1972
Year levels:	Prep to Year 12
Enrolment:	671
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	23 per cent
Students with disability enrolment percentage:	20 per cent
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	960
Year principal appointed:	2011
Full-time equivalent staff:	84.2
Significant partner schools:	Cooktown State School, Innisfail State High School
Significant community partnerships:	Technical and Further Education (TAFE) North, Australian Defence Force (ADF), James Cook University (JCU) and Cairns Queensland University (CQU), Skills 360, Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS), Q-Site, My Little Free Library, Eco-schools, Child & Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) – Ed-link, Aurukun



1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, two deputy principals, 60 teachers including Heads of Department (HOD), ten students, president Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C), Business Services Manager (BSM), 20 teacher aides and support staff, guidance officer and Head of Campus - open learning centre.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Supervisors Cooktown State School and Innisfail State High School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- ARD

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2016	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2016
Investing for Success 2015	Strategic Plan 2013-2016
Headline Indicators (October release)	School Data Profile (2016)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2016	Curriculum planning documents
School improvement targets	School Opinion Survey
School pedagogical framework	Professional development plans
School data plan	School newsletters and website
Responsible Behaviour Plan	Curriculum, assessment and reporting framework



2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

Staff, students, home tutors and parents are proud of the reputation the school has established for responding to the diverse client groups with a clear commitment to the welfare and achievements of all students.

The school provides the broader school community with a range of differentiated programs to cater for academic extension, disadvantaged youth, Students with Disability (SWD), geographically isolated, and school-based, subject extension programs.

Students and parents value the interest that teaching staff members take in their learning and speak highly of the school's efforts to meet their needs

Students demonstrate a strong sense of pride and belonging in the school. Staff members tell of instances of improvements in levels of engagement in learning of individual students and speak with pride of student achievements. The school has developed and is beginning to implement an explicit, pastoral care/student, wellbeing program (GROWTH) in the junior secondary area.

The student enrolment has grown rapidly over the last two years.

This rapid growth has presented challenges and potential advantages in human resource management. The principal has redesigned the leadership and middle management roles to respond to this growth and to action the priorities of the school. Interviews with representatives from client schools suggest the quality of service has been a factor in increased enrolments with the school's responsiveness to school needs being applauded.

The leadership team has established an improvement agenda.

Conversations with teaching staff identify varied responses regarding the 2016 improvement agenda with some being unclear as to their roles and required actions in supporting the agenda. Explicit whole-of-school targets are set. Understanding, actioning and tracking of targets by some leaders and teachers is not yet established. Some key planning documents, including a data plan and Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) are not yet used by leaders or teachers in guiding an improvement agenda.

The school leadership team sees the development of an expert teaching team as central to improving student outcomes.

The principal has reshaped the role of the Heads of Department (HOD) to include care (explicit student wellbeing), curriculum currency and pedagogy. A clear set of roles and responsibilities of school leaders in line with the improvement agenda is not yet developed. A clear and consistent process of instructional leadership including monitoring, mentoring, coaching and feedback to teachers regarding school priorities is yet to be embedded.



Teaching staff members articulate an emerging understanding of the school's processes for data collection.

There is a range in the levels of teachers' data literacy. The school's data plan was developed in Semester 2, 2014 to provide a framework for improving teachers' data literacy. Teaching staff and school curriculum leaders are yet to meet regularly to discuss data as a basis to reflect on and inform pedagogical practice.

The school has a published pedagogical framework.

Teaching strategies such as e-Learn are implemented at the school. An action research team explores the effectiveness of different pedagogical practices in the distance education mode. The Standards of Practice provides detailed guidelines for effective teaching in the distance context. A systematic process for the school leaders to provide feedback on teaching and to promote a broad range of evidence-based teaching strategies is yet to be embedded.

The Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resource is used extensively for lesson plans, resources and assessment with consideration to the distance mode of learning.

The mapping of units of work to the Australian Curriculum (AC) in some key learning areas is developed. It is not clear that all teachers and curriculum leaders are confident with the use of system-wide curriculum documents. The levels of adaption of C2C resource materials, varies across departments. Vocational and academic curriculum offerings are apparent in the senior school.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop a collaborative, data-driven strategic planning process, and update and align key planning documents to the roles and responsibilities of school leaders.

Develop a clear plan of instructional leadership for all leaders aligned to school priorities including data analysis, Professional Development (PD), coaching and monitoring.

Develop a shared understanding of data literacy and support teachers and leadership teams to effectively use data to inform teaching and strategic planning.

Conduct school-wide consultation to refine the school's pedagogical framework identifying current exemplary practices in the engagement of students, and develop an aligned explicit process of feedback, coaching and PD.

Review the plan for curriculum delivery across all years of the school defining the extent of adaption to the C2C resource, and the regular and timely reporting of data to the school community connected to what and when teachers should teach and students should learn.