Woody Point Special School

Executive Summary

Education Improvement Branch

Queensland Government

Contents

1. Introduction

This report is a product of a review carried out by a review team from the Education Improvement Branch (EIB) at **Woody Point Special School** from **5** to **7 October 2021**.

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 implement in consultation with its regional office and school community.

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

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

The principal will meet with their Lead Principal to discuss the review findings and improvement strategies.

For more information regarding the EIB and reviews for Queensland state schools please visit the EIB website.

1.1 Review team

Lesley Vogan	Internal reviewer, EIB (review chair)
Richard Fisher	Peer reviewer
Jo Diessel	External reviewer

1.2 School context

Location:	Georgina Street, Woody Point
Education region:	North Coast Region
Year levels:	Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP) to Year 6
Enrolment:	99 – Prep to Year 6 85 – ECDP
Indigenous enrolment percentage:	10 per cent

Students with disability:	**Education Adjustment Program (EAP) percentage:**	100 per cent
	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD) percentage:	100 per cent

Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:	1005
Year principal appointed:	2021

1.3 Contributing stakeholders

The following stakeholders contributed to the review:

School community:

- Principal, deputy principal, Head of Special Education Services (HOSES) ECDP, Head of Teaching and Learning (HOTL), Business Manager (BM), Education Program Officer (EPO), guidance officer, 24 teachers, 17 teacher aides, chaplain, two administration officers, two cleaners, three therapists, grounds and facilities officer, 14 parents and eight students.

Community and business groups:

- Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C) treasurer, Indigenous Elder, chair of Local Consultative Committee (LCC), representative of Complex Care, representative of The Fathering Project and five volunteers.

Partner schools and other educational providers:

- Principal of Redcliffe Special School.

Government and departmental representatives:

- State Member for Redcliffe and Minister for Health, Federal Member for Petrie and Lead Principal.

1.4 Supporting documentary evidence

Annual Implementation Plan 2021	Explicit Improvement Agenda 2021
Investing for Success 2021	Strategic Plan 2018–2021
School data plan	School Data Profile (Semester 1, 2021)
OneSchool	School budget overview
Professional learning plan 2021	Curriculum planning documents
Literacy Pathway	School pedagogical framework
School newsletters and website and Facebook Page	School based curriculum, assessment and reporting framework
Woody Point Special School Communication Guidelines	School Opinion Survey

2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

A student-centred philosophy is clearly articulated by the leadership team and this is reflected across all learning environments.

The tone of the school is welcoming with a commitment to purposeful, successful learning and caring relationships between staff and students. A strong sense of mutual trust and support amongst teachers and teacher aides within and across classrooms is apparent. Consultation and collaboration with parents, staff and the wider community support the development of a learning environment that is safe and supportive with a strong focus on individual student achievement.

Staff at the school express a commitment to '*offering a student-centred learning environment, where everything we do is driven by the individual needs of all learners*'.

In consultation with the community a new vision statement, values and logo were developed to underpin the work of the school moving forward. 'Pel-I-Can' (Pelican) dominates school signage, and the school values of *'Learning, Belonging, Respecting and Celebrating'* inform strategic planning considerations documented in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) and Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA). Staff members express support for the school's improvement journey and clearly understand the school's priorities and expectations of continually striving to improve the quality of teaching and learning in all classrooms.

The school has built strong foundations for continuing improvement over the past four years.

Foundations include the development of a Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Plan (CARP), pedagogical approaches, communication guidelines, pathways for literacy development, Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) practices and mutually beneficial partnerships with the community. An end-of-year data review process is undertaken by leaders to determine progress towards targets and next steps to consider. The principal articulates the importance of a shared, ongoing drive for precision in school improvement that will involve fewer targeted priorities and a sharpening of practice in some areas.

Leaders are united and articulate a cohesive direction and clear vision for the school.

Leadership team members have the responsibility of facilitating school organisational and collaborative teams aligned to the EIA and school governance. Teachers articulate valuing the opportunity to participate in, and lead teams. Leaders identify the development of some teams is the direct result of teachers' interests and passions. The school team structure includes 20 teams aligned to priority agendas and school organisation. Members of the leadership team identify the need to refine and rationalise school structures that enable intentional collaboration and support school decision making aligned to the developing strategic plan and AIP.

Teachers express appreciation for the expertise and availability of curriculum leaders and the time provided to work with peers to build understanding of the Australian Curriculum (AC) and expectations of the school's CARP.

Curriculum expectations, planning processes and resources continue to be refined as the school moves through the first three-year planning cycle. Staff identify finding some curriculum resources useful for developing classroom curriculum programs. Some staff have developed personalised planning resources and processes to meet specific needs within classrooms. Some teachers identify the ongoing changes to curriculum and assessment expectations has, at times, impacted on the continuity of their work. The Head of Teaching and Learning (HOTL) identifies the importance of continuing to align curriculum development and planning processes with teachers' understanding of the AC and student learning outcome data.

Staff members express commitment to developing positive and caring relationships with students and this is apparent across the school.

A PB4L approach is established and has a strong focus on the proactive teaching of positive behaviours and building positive relationships between students and adults. The PB4L framework provides staff with a suite of resources to support the development of an inclusive, safe and supportive environment. Students respond positively when they are recognised for working within school expectations. School leaders and some staff indicate PB4L strategies and explicit delivery of PB4L lessons are yet to be implemented consistently across all classrooms.

The school is implementing an agreed school-wide approach to communication.

The WPSS Communication Guidelines 2017 were collaboratively developed and outline the belief that *'communication is fundamental to all areas of curriculum and learning, daily living, behaviour and personal wellbeing, and that all students have the capability and right to communicate'*. Teachers and school leaders indicate a range of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems have recently been introduced. Implementation of the guidelines has been supported through Professional Development (PD) and support from the Speech Language Pathologist (SLP). Staff confidence and capability in their use are developing. Consistent use of AAC systems across school environments, particularly outside the classroom, is developing.

A culture of continuous professional improvement has been established and is visible across the school.

Staff members display a strong commitment to ongoing professional learning. The school has established processes for staff members to identify professional learning needs and aspirations and they are supported through a range of PD opportunities. Teachers are developing knowledge of AC content and pedagogical practices across the school. Teachers and teacher aides describe positive, collaborative working relationships built on mutual trust and a shared commitment for student-centred learning. School leaders take personal and collective responsibility to undertake professional learning and data analysis to ensure that they are developing and showcasing innovative and research-based school-wide processes.

Teachers articulate a consistent and deep understanding of aspects of the school's pedagogical approaches.

Leaders articulate that they are striving to build a strong focus on student-centred approaches to teaching and learning in which staff members feel confident in using a range of research-based signature pedagogical approaches. A pedagogical framework is developed and outlines the expected core systemic principles of pedagogical practices. Leaders indicate teachers use a suite of pedagogical approaches as a toolkit in differentiating the curriculum and assessment to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.

A range of community partners has been identified to improve student outcomes and engagement, utilising resources that are not available within the school.

Partnerships have been developed with universities and Registered Training Organisations (RTO). These mutually beneficial partnerships provide the opportunity for university students and trainees from a range of courses to undertake community engagement experiences whilst providing additional support for students in the school setting. The school has a strong and committed group of volunteers. Other partnerships include, a SHARE Reading Dogs Program that supports student engagement and promotes wellbeing and communication skills through students reading aloud to Lewis, a therapy dog. The Fathering Project recognises the important role that fathers and father figures play in supporting their child's education. The school's Indigenous Perspectives committee has partnered with a local Aboriginal Elder who supports the school in planning and delivering cultural events.

2.2 Key improvement strategies

Develop precise and targeted actions in identified priority areas to sharpen school practices and consolidate and embed the foundation work of the school.

Refine and rationalise school structures that enable intentional collaboration and support school decision making aligned to the developing strategic plan and AIPs.

Review and refine curriculum development and planning processes, taking into consideration teachers' current understanding and level of expertise, timing for implementation of any changes, and impact on teachers' planning and practice.

Establish and implement with fidelity, consistent and systematic PB4L agreed expectations, including a classroom-based acknowledgement system across the phases of the school.

Build confidence and capability of staff in a range of AAC systems to promote consistency of use across environments and the school, and to meet the diverse communication needs of all students.