



# School Improvement Unit Report

## Sarina State School





## 1. Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
1.1 Background.....	3
1.2 School context.....	3
1.3 Review methodology.....	4
1.4 Review team .....	4
1.5 Reading the report .....	4
2. Executive summary .....	5
2.1 Key findings .....	5
2.2 Key improvement strategies.....	7
3. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains.....	8
3.1 An explicit improvement agenda .....	8
3.2 Analysis and discussion of data .....	10
3.3 A culture that promotes learning.....	11
3.4 Targeted use of school resources .....	12
3.5 An expert teaching team .....	14
3.6 Systematic curriculum delivery .....	16
3.7 Differentiated teaching and learning.....	17
3.8 Effective pedagogical practices .....	18
3.9 School and community partnerships.....	19
4. Follow-up timelines.....	20

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Sarina State School from 20 to 22 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

<b>Location:</b>	Broad Street, Sarina
<b>Education region:</b>	Central Queensland
<b>The school opened in:</b>	1897
<b>Year levels:</b>	Prep to Year 6
<b>Current school enrolment:</b>	448
<b>Indigenous enrolments:</b>	13 per cent
<b>Students with disability enrolments:</b>	4 per cent
<b>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</b>	914
<b>Year principal appointed:</b>	2014
<b>Number of teachers:</b>	19 classroom teachers
<b>Nearby schools:</b>	Sarina State High School, Alligator State School, Swayneville State School, St Anne's Catholic School
<b>Significant community partnerships:</b>	Miller House, three kindergartens, News Express, George Street Neighbourhood
<b>Unique school programs:</b>	Accelerated Learning Program, Big Write and Vocabulary Connectives Openers and Punctuation (VCOP)



### 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/Principal Supervisor
- a school visit of three days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal and Leadership team
  - Business Services Manager (BSM)
  - 33 teachers and teacher-aides
  - Nine parents and tuckshop convenor
  - Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) president
  - 12 student leaders
  - Principals of a local high school and primary school
  - Three Indigenous community members
  - Two kindergarten providers

### 1.4 Review team

Michelle D'Netto	Internal Reviewer, SIU (review chair)
John Wessler	External Reviewer
Mike Townsend	Peer reviewer

### 1.5 Reading the report

The executive summary outlines key findings from the review. The key improvement strategies prioritise future direction for improvement. The executive summary should be read along with the findings and improvement strategies outlined in the nine domains which provide a strategic view for improvement.



## 2. Executive summary

### 2.1 Key findings

- The school's improvement agenda is a powerful driving force for change.

The school principal and leadership team bring high levels of energy, commitment and expertise to their roles and responsibilities. The staff have responded positively and are engaged in bringing about the improvement of student outcomes. There are 13 improvement priorities.

- The Consolidation Model of Explicit Instruction is consistently implemented across the school.

There is clear evidence of a whole school approach to the implementation of the Consolidation Model of Explicit Instruction. This model evolved from a revision of the existing Explicit Instruction (EI) model in 2014 and has been adopted by all teachers. Teachers put considerable effort into the preparation of resources for the effective delivery of the lessons.

- There is a strong focus on improving student behaviour and the school promotes high behavioural expectations through the implementation of the You Can Do It (YCDI) program and some elements of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L).

There is some evidence to support an improvement of disruptive student behaviours. However staff, students and parents express some concern in regards to the behaviour of students and the impact that student behaviour is having on learning outcomes. Though efforts are in place to reinforce positive behaviours, there is lack of consistency of practice across the school. Key personnel spend much time managing student behaviour.

- The provision of programs for students with specific needs and the associated roles and responsibilities of teachers remains unclear.

The change and transition of personnel has caused gaps in the delivery and case management process of support for students with special needs. There remains lack of clarity around the co-ordination of wrap-around services. The school is endeavouring to provide differentiated classroom practices for all students including students with disabilities.

- The school has developed and is implementing a localised curriculum aligned to the Australian Curriculum and the Curriculum into the Classroom resource.

The school has developed a strong curriculum program informed by the Australian Curriculum (AC) and Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) resource. Its planning and implementation is supported by key personnel. The school has developed a significant range of key curriculum and pedagogy policy documents which support



teaching and learning on a daily basis. These provide a basis for consistency of explicit practice across the school.

- The school has implemented an Accelerated Learning Program for students performing below the National Minimum Standards (NMS) in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

The school has implemented an Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) for students in Years 2, 3 and 4, falling below NMS. The collaborative decision process to implement the program, support its implementation and communicate its successes has met with wide acclaim from the community.



## 2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Review the timelines for new initiatives and allow consolidation time to fully embed these practices.
- Embed a systematic and strategic approach to a school-wide positive behaviour strategy.
- Pursue a planned, collaborative and strategic process to review the implementation of support for students with disabilities, which provides clarity in regards to the roles and responsibilities for staff.
- Allow additional planning and collaborative time for teachers to work with the curriculum leaders.



### 3. Findings and improvement strategies against the domains

#### 3.1 An explicit improvement agenda

##### Findings

The school leadership team is committed and united in their pursuit of improved learning outcomes for all students. The leadership team has articulated and implemented the strategies for student improvement. This work is evident in teachers' pedagogy.

There is a united and optimistic commitment by staff to the school improvement strategy and a clear belief that improvement is possible. There is evidence of a school-wide commitment to every student's success.

The school improvement agenda is extensive, consisting of 13 priorities. The main priorities are reading, writing, numeracy, attendance, behaviour and community engagement.

The agenda is evidence based and is expressed in terms of improvements in measurable student outcomes with direct links to associated timelines. The Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) and Great Results Guarantee (GRG) plan clearly aligns with the strategies outlined in the school improvement agenda.

The school is united in their commitment to improve the quality of teaching and learning with a clear focus on individual students, cohorts and whole school performance. The newly established Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) is an initiative that targets students not meeting benchmarks. High-yield strategies are delivering the desired outcomes specific to student learning and performance.

Comprehensive analysis of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) has informed the school's improvement agenda and plays a significant role in the school's decision making processes. *Big Write* has been introduced this year in response to results in writing in 2014.

Some reading practices have been successfully embedded especially across the early years.

Explicit teaching strategies and consolidation are consistently implemented across the school.

There is a comprehensive range of whole school plans, which have recently been refined and put in place to provide staff with a clear direction in regards to curriculum and pedagogical processes.

##### Supporting data

School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, 2015 Annual Implementation Plan, pedagogical framework, P-6 curriculum framework, assessment and data collection framework, explicit



improvement agenda 2015, explicit teaching: teacher guidelines, quality classroom policy, school website, interviews with staff.

### **Improvement strategies**

Narrow the explicit improvement agenda.

Review the timelines for new initiatives and allow consolidation time to fully embed these practices.



## 3.2 Analysis and discussion of data

### Findings

The school leadership team articulates that reliable and timely student data is essential to the school improvement agenda. There is a clearly documented assessment plan that identifies targets and timelines for students in each year level and reflects regional benchmarks.

Members of the school leadership team analyse the full range of school data (NAPLAN, PAT-M, PAT-R, PM Benchmark, PROBE, Words Their Way, Strive, Big Write) summarising, displaying and communicating data to staff. Some class teachers analyse their class data to check starting points for teaching, identify needs for individual students and make adjustments to their planning.

Some teachers enter class data into OneSchool class dashboard. Diagnostic data was used to develop classes for the ALP.

OneSchool is used to track data on attendance. This application is under utilised for the entering, tracking and reviewing of behaviour processes and progress.

The leadership team lead discussions on data at whole school staff meetings. Staff data literacy is varied.

NAPLAN 2014 Mean Scale Score (MSS) for achievement in Years 3 and 5 across all strands is below the nation. Data for achievement in the Upper Two Bands (U2B) reflects that Years 3 and 5 are similar to the nation in five strands and below the nation in ten strands. The school is performing similar to like schools in all strands in Years 3 and 5.

### Supporting data

2015 Annual Implementation Plan, assessment plan, staff interviews, Headline Indicators, School Data Profile, Great Results Guarantee 2015, OneSchool, interviews with staff.

### Improvement strategies

Develop data literacy training to further build teacher capacity.

Consider using OneSchool as a central point for all data entry and analysis.



### 3.3 A culture that promotes learning

#### Findings

The school has high expectations for all students and staff are committed to improved student learning.

School Opinion Survey data identifies high levels of confidence in the school by parents and students. Parents and community members speak highly of the school and the staff. Staff indicated that they work hard on producing resources for lessons.

Staff are committed to the improvement agenda and improved student outcomes but some staff express change fatigue.

The school is mostly inclusive in its practices, however, the needs of some students were being met within a withdrawal model. Clarity in regards to the case management of high risk and high need students is unclear.

The tone of the school is calm and friendly and there is a strong focus on improving student behaviour. Strategies to promote appropriate behaviour are evident. You Can Do It (YCDI) and elements of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) drive the expectations of behaviour at the school, however, these strategies are not fully embedded.

Staff, students and parents express some concern with the behaviour of students but acknowledge that this has improved in recent times.

Parents are welcomed as partners in their children's learning and view the school positively.

In 2014 attendance overall was 91 per cent with 88.2 per cent for Indigenous students. The current 2015 attendance overall is 92.9 per cent with 90.4 per cent for Indigenous students. Initiatives such as the Friday Clubs have generated enthusiasm and have improved the attendance of students on a Friday.

#### Supporting data

Interviews with staff, students, parents and community, classroom observations, Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students, School Opinion Survey, 2015 Annual Implementation Plan.

#### Improvement strategies

Fully embed a systematic and strategic approach to a school-wide positive behaviour strategy.

Provide professional development on inclusive practices and managing students with specific needs.

Monitor the change process and effects on staff welfare, allowing time for staff to consolidate new initiatives.



### 3.4 Targeted use of school resources

#### Findings

The school has developed school-wide processes for identifying a range of support programs to address student learning and behavioural needs through the collaboration of staff led by the Social Justice Committee.

The ALP has been well resourced and well supported.

Processes and systems for managing students with disabilities (SWD) are not clear.

Teacher-aides consider themselves as significant partners in the teaching and learning programs. The provision of teacher-aides for key programs including Prep and ALP has enabled the school to successfully deliver a range of targeted programs that respond to the needs of students.

Most teacher-aides play a part in supporting teachers drive the literacy improvement agenda across the school, particularly in the area of reading. Some indicated ongoing professional support would enable them to contribute further in key areas such as behaviour management and the writing program *Big Write*.

Targeted programs such as IMPACT and UNIFY, ALP and the purchase of the full-time curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment leader is supported with GRG funds.

The school has developed and implemented a budget process with most of the responsibility for this in the hands of the principal. The budget balance is \$164 000.

An extensive range of resources are prepared and organised to support teachers in their daily delivery of programs including the Curriculum to Classroom (C2C) units. Resources to support the future implementation of the remaining curriculum learning areas of Health and Physical Education and the Arts have been identified.

The school utilises a range of Information and communications technology (ICT) resources including computer labs and class sets of iPads to support teaching and learning programs across the school. Teachers are making extensive use of the Interactive White Boards (IWB) to enable and enhance current classroom pedagogical practices.

#### Supporting data

2015 Annual Implementation Plan, School Strategic Plan, Great Results Guarantee, budget overview report, school curriculum policy folder, staff, student and community interviews, School Data Profile.

#### Improvement strategies

Review resources given to supporting the needs of teachers and their curriculum requirements.



Ensure a balanced approach to resource management that extends to addressing the Upper Two Bands (U2B) strategy.



### 3.5 An expert teaching team

#### Findings

A clearly defined leadership structure has been developed and this has enabled the school to identify specific role descriptions and responsibilities. This structure has formalised many existing leadership roles including those of the principal and deputy principal, head of behaviour and learning support, head of curriculum, teaching and learning and assessment and head of special education services.

There was a collaborative process undertaken in 2014 to match personal areas of expertise and current school improvement priorities to the leadership of the school improvement agenda. As this structure is relatively new in 2015, school leaders recognise that there is further communication necessary across the school community to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities and that they become fully understood and embedded in the school practices.

There is clear evidence that the school leadership over the past three years has identified staff development and staff capability development as fundamental to enabling the school improvement agenda to drive improvement in student learning.

The staff professional learning agenda including both essential and optional opportunities, is aligned to the improvement priorities of reading, writing, as well as data literacy and the use of ICTs. While acknowledging the array of professional learning opportunities, there is some evidence that some staff are unclear of the purpose of the agenda.

The implementation of a revised approach to classroom pedagogy since 2014 has seen the development of the *Consolidation Model of Explicit Instruction*. This model for teaching has been supported by ongoing observation, feedback and coaching episodes for all teaching staff.

There is a culture of high expectations being developed in regards to classroom teaching practices and there is strong commitment by teachers to continuous improvement, especially in their use of the *Consolidation Model of Explicit Instruction*.

The addition of a master teacher (0.3 full-time equivalent) in 2015 is an additional resource to strengthen coaching and feedback processes within the school.

There has been staff turnover and some consideration has been given to induction programs.

All teaching staff have current professional development and performance plans. These plans have been aligned with the Australian Institute for Teachers and School Leaders (AITSL) standards. Formal processes and conversations are linked to individual observations and coaching sessions.



### **Supporting data**

Professional development framework, staff professional development and performance plans, Annual Implementation Plan 2015, roles and responsibilities documents, interviews with staff.

### **Improvement strategies**

Ensure a strategic and sustainable approach that enables the school to consolidate the gains made in key improvement priorities.

Provide the *gift of time* for teaching staff to work collaboratively in year levels with the curriculum leader in order to build data informed teaching and year level curriculum planning.

Ensure the leadership structure is regularly reviewed, refined and communicated and that it is consistent with the principles of change management.

Develop a measured approach to ensure the sustainable growth and development of staff capability through the professional learning undertaken.



### 3.6 Systematic curriculum delivery

#### Findings

The school has developed and implemented a highly systematic and strategic school curriculum overview and unit plans based on the Australian Curriculum (AC).

Teachers plan their daily classroom delivery of curriculum content using the C2C overviews. The leadership role of the head of curriculum, teaching and learning and assessment is fully acknowledged as a vital conduit and support person in designing, planning and supporting staff through this process.

The school curriculum overviews, based on C2C, also feature a strong sequential element ensuring that curriculum continuity for multi-age classes has been closely considered.

There is extensive individual teacher planning of lessons and preparation of curriculum resources.

There exists a whole school approach to the teaching of reading which includes key aspects of phonics in the early years, the teaching of comprehension using Question Answer Response (QAR) and underpinned by the use of explicit instruction. The narrow, sharp focus on reading is delivering a sustainable model for improving student achievements in other aspects of literacy and numeracy.

There was limited evidence of a whole school curriculum approach to higher-order thinking, reasoning and problem-solving.

#### Supporting data

2015 Annual Implementation Plan, school curriculum overview, school assessment and data plan, other related school curriculum documents, interviews with staff, OneSchool, School Data Profile, Headline Indicators, samples of student work.

#### Improvement strategies

Allocate *in-school* time for teachers to plan collaboratively with the curriculum leader.

Ensure time and resources are strategically positioned to roll out *Big Write* and the maths problem solving initiatives.

Clarify the role of the master teacher.

Develop a whole-school approach to the teaching of higher-order thinking strategies, that include problem solving, investigative and creative thinking strategies.



### 3.7 Differentiated teaching and learning

#### Findings

The use of differentiated teaching as a strategy for ensuring that every student is engaged and learning successfully is actively promoted by the school leadership team. The Maker Model<sup>1</sup> is promoted but not fully known by teachers.

A variety of data, drawn from a range of assessments which includes standardised testing, scope and sequence monitoring and benchmarking is used by teachers to identify where students are in their learning, and to some extent personalise teaching and learning.

There is some evidence in teachers' planning and practice that adjustments are being made by teachers to respond to and cater for individual learning needs. A variety of strategies are being used in classrooms to cater for student needs including goal setting and ability groups. Some use of differentiated assessment is evident.

An effective targeted intervention program, ALP, is in place for students identified as requiring additional support in the Years 2, 3 and 4. The ALP is supported through the strategic use of resources and expertise. Parents of these students are actively engaged to participate in the referral process. All students in this program have an Individual Curriculum Plan.

Reporting to parents about what their child is learning and their child's progress is provided through formal and informal processes. Written reports are provided each semester.

All student needs were considered but there was varied understanding by teachers of managing students with some specific needs.

#### Supporting data

Interviews with staff, students and parents, classroom observations, school curriculum documents, differentiation policy, OneSchool.

#### Improvement strategies

Embed the differentiation practices to ensure improved student outcomes.

---

<sup>1</sup> Maker, C.J. 1982, *Curriculum development for the gifted*. Pro-Ed, Austin, Texas.



### 3.8 Effective pedagogical practices

#### Findings

There is a widely shared belief throughout the school that highly effective teaching is central to improving student learning outcomes.

The school leadership team have drawn on data analysis, current research, staff expertise, and best practice models to establish clear expectations concerning the use of evidence-based teaching strategies throughout the school. These are outlined in the school's policies and procedures and are actively promoted through professional development and staff meetings.

The school leadership team spends time working with teachers and providing feedback on teaching.

All teachers are proficient in the Consolidation Model of Explicit Instruction and apply this method consistently as a sound foundation for classroom practice. The model includes strategies such as *recite, check and apply* and the gradual release of responsibility model of *I do, We do, and You do*.

The school leadership team actively identifies effective practice and draws upon teacher leadership to model effective pedagogy. A series of professional development workshops are offered to staff to build individual capacity.

The school has current data to reflect improvement in whole school reading proficiency.

The school has sourced commercial expertise to assist in building the capacity of student writing standards.

#### Supporting data

Pedagogical framework 2015 – 2016, 2015 Annual Implementation Plan, classroom observations, interviews with staff and students, School Data Profile.

#### Improvement strategies

Offer ongoing coaching and feedback to attain consistency in whole school teaching strategies.

Continue the timely rollout of *Big Write* with professional development and moderation opportunities for staff to build their own capacity.



### 3.9 School and community partnerships

#### Findings

The school is developing productive partnerships with parents and school families as evidenced by the increased parental presence for weekly school parades.

The school has strong kindergarten-initiated transition programs for new students entering Prep from existing pre-Prep programs such as Grandma's Place.

The P&C is relatively small in terms of parents attendance at meetings, however there is an innovative strategy in place that is actively seeking to improve attendance numbers. The P&C co-ordinates a number of fundraising activities and provides a consultative forum for dialogue between parents and the school.

The school leadership team is an active participant in the local state schools' cluster and works with these colleagues to achieve common state schooling goals.

The school welcomes all families and community members and is held in high regard. Indigenous community support personnel and other key Indigenous members of the community speak highly of the school. The school has also allocated a space for Indigenous families to meet.

Feedback from students and parents indicates that the enrichment activities offered by the school which includes the school band, Friday Clubs and student leader opportunities were seen as enhancing student learning opportunities.

There are discussions and plans to re-establish a homework club.

Local businesses support the school in their attendance strategies by providing incentives.

#### Supporting data

Interviews with staff and community members, school website, newsletters, 2015 Annual Implementation Plan, School Strategic Plan 2012-2015, Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students.

#### Improvement strategies

Develop and formalise a collaborative pre-Prep to Prep transitional program with local providers.

Strengthen the transitional programs aligned with the high school for students exiting at the end of each year.

Align with local businesses and industry to develop relevant memorandum of understandings that ensure the purpose of the partnership is understood, agreed upon and reviewed.



#### **4. Follow-up timelines**

- School to publish the executive summary on their website within two weeks.
- School to meet with Assistant Regional Director/Principal Supervisor to discuss review findings and improvement strategies.