School Improvement Unit
Report

Tropical North Learning Academy
Smithfield State High School

Executive Summary
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Tropical North Learning Academy Smithfield State High School from 18 to 20 May 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>O’Brien Road Smithfield</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education region:</td>
<td>Far North Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school opened in:</td>
<td>1983</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year levels:</td>
<td>Year 7 to Year 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current school enrolment:</td>
<td>1066</td>
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<td>Indigenous enrolments:</td>
<td>10 per cent</td>
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<td>Students with disability enrolments:</td>
<td>3 per cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value:</td>
<td>983</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year principal appointed:</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of teachers:</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nearby schools:</td>
<td>Yorkeys Knob State School, Caravonica State School, Trinity Beach State School, Holy Cross Primary School</td>
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<td>Significant community partnerships:</td>
<td>Northern Learning Academy - Trinity Beach Primary and James Cook University, Cairns Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC), Little Athletics</td>
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<td>Unique school programs:</td>
<td>Northern Learning Academy, Duke of Edinburgh’s Award through Cairns PCYC, Jazz Academy, Soccer Academy, Baseball Academy</td>
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1.3 Review methodology

The review was conducted by a team of four reviewers.

The review consisted of:

- a pre-review audit of the school's performance data and other school information
- a school visit of three days
- interviews with staff, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal and two Deputy Principals
  - Representatives from the School Council – School Council chair, Parents and Citizens' (P&C) association president, past School Council chair
  - Two Guidance Officers
  - Business Services Manager (BSM)
  - 70 teachers
  - 4 teacher aides
  - Student leaders and other students
  - Canteen convenor and groundsman
  - Eight parents
  - Principal from one of the partner schools
  - Two councillors from Division 8 and Division 9
  - Community representative from James Cook University (JCU)

1.4 Review team

Karyn Hart  Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Russell Pollock  Internal reviewer, SIU
Ross Wallace  Internal reviewer, SIU
Suzanne Innes  External reviewer, SIU
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- Strong and positive relationships are a key feature of the school and are central to the growing reputation that Smithfield State High School enjoys in the community.

Positive caring relationships using the school wide positive behaviour support process has seen a decrease in the behaviour management issues at the school and an increase in staff morale.

- School leaders are committed to improving student outcomes for all students.

This improvement agenda contains many areas for improvement with teachers sometimes feeling overwhelmed with the many agendas present. The narrow and sharper agendas focus on the teaching of reading, classroom management, explicit teaching and differentiation and inclusivity. Coaching for staff is clearly aligned to the improvement of these areas.

- Understanding of and commitment to the renewed school vision and values is emerging across the school.

The key drivers captured in the school motto, ‘aspiration, belief, motivation and success’ are understood and articulated by some students. The school articulates high expectations of students regarding attendance, behaviour and performance.

- Smithfield State High School is strongly connected to its community and is part of the Tropical North Learning Academy. Students benefit from the productive partnerships that are in place.

Strong partnerships exist with Trinity Beach Primary and James Cook University. This has allowed a continuous strength to grow within the community.

- There is inconsistency in regards to a school-wide focus to quality assure programs and practices.

There are many pockets of good practice across the school but consistency of practice across all faculties is not apparent.

- Although there is a clear commitment to the use of student performance data there is uncertainty around how it should be used to improve student learning outcomes.

The school has a data plan that includes responsibilities and timelines for collection of information however, engagement with the agenda outlined in this document appears to be sporadic. School expectations regarding the analysis, interpretation and use of student performance data are not clear to all teachers.
A dedicated differentiation/inclusivity coach works with school staff to embed a whole school approach to differentiated teaching and learning.

School documents clearly outline a step-by-step process to deliver and enhance differentiation on a purpose-developed placement. The coach works with individual teachers and Heads of Department (HODs) in a ‘train the trainer’ capacity to raise knowledge and teach skills and strategies to enable a school-wide and consistent practice for differentiation.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Narrow and prioritise the improvement agenda in each year of the planning cycle. Prioritise what could be beginning, emerging and embedded throughout the year. Continue to skill key personnel to assist in driving the improvement agenda.

- Develop an accountability framework for each priority that identifies key drivers, defines roles and responsibilities for key personnel, establishes expected outcomes and reviews measures for success.

- Continue to develop teachers’ data analysis skills to develop a deep understanding of data and how to self-reflect on teaching practices in meeting the school targets.

- Clearly identify and articulate a vision and associated values or mission statement that would enhance clarity about what it means to be a member of the Smithfield State High School community.

- Develop a school-wide process to quality assure and routinely evaluate the effectiveness of programs and practices to deliver improved student outcomes.