School Improvement Unit
Report

Veresdale Scrub State School
Executive Summary
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report is a product of a review carried out at Veresdale Scrub State School from 21 to 23 March 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

| Location: | 354 Veresdale Scrub School Road, Veresdale Scrub |
| Education region: | South East Region |
| The school opened in: | 1899 |
| Year levels: | Prep to Year 6 |
| Current school enrolment: | 125 |
| Indigenous enrolments: | 6 per cent |
| Students with disability enrolments: | 5 per cent |
| Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value: | 979 |
| Year principal appointed: | 2014 |
| Number of teachers: | 6.27 (full-time equivalent) |
| Significant community partnerships: | nil |
| Unique school programs: | nil |
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 three days
- interviews with staff members, students, parents and community representatives, including:
  - Principal
  - Six teachers and three teacher aides
  - Administration officer (AO2)
  - Cleaner
  - 52 students from Prep to Year 6
  - Guidance officer
  - Parents and Citizens’ Association (P&C) president
  - Year level coordinator – Beaudesert State High School
  - 21 parents

1.4 Review team

Andrew Helton    Internal reviewer, SIU (review chair)
Ian Rathmell    Internal reviewer, SIU
2. Executive summary

2.1 Key findings

- A culture of collaboration and teamwork is evident.

Teachers and teacher aides appreciate each other’s efforts to contribute to the team. Teachers within the school take an active leadership role outside of the classroom to provide a range of learning activities for students.

- Interactions show that staff members promote caring and polite relationships with students.

Students, parents and community members acknowledge the openness of staff members and identify this as a positive aspect of the school. The school takes steps to engage with parents as partners in the progress of the school and to encourage student learning. The school welcomes parents to informally discuss student progress.

- The school focuses on student wellbeing.

There is clear evidence across the school that staff members prioritise the individual learning and wellbeing needs of all students. Staff members acknowledge that although students are at different stages in their learning and progressing at different rates all students can learn effectively. The school supports classroom teachers to identify and address the learning needs of individual students.

- The school improvement agenda focuses on three broad priorities of reading, numbers and curriculum implementation.

The improvement agenda is reflected in the Annual Implementation Plan 2016. It contains timelines and some broad targets for improvement to teaching practices. The principal has further refined these priorities to reading, spelling and number facts as the 2016 explicit improvement agenda.

- The school has a plan for curriculum delivery.

It provides classroom teachers with an overview of the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) units adapted to suit the multi-age setting. The school has taken steps to provide yearly and term overviews of curriculum areas. The importance of ongoing monitoring of whole-school unit planning to ensure that the mandated curriculum is being delivered has been identified.
• Teachers use a range of assessment tools to monitor student learning.

The assessment tools place an emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Teachers use diagnostic data to identify starting points for improvements to learning. The ability of teachers to understand class data, and respond to the implications for differentiation, is developing across the school.

• The school has strategies to promote positive behaviour.

The school responsible behaviour plan includes clear systems and consequences for inappropriate behaviour. The school has created a detailed tracking and reporting system that is understood by students and staff members. Staff members acknowledge there needs to be a more consistent approach to the application of these behavioural strategies.

• The principal adapts staffing arrangements to make best use of the available staff expertise.

The staffing allocation for the Support Teacher Literacy and Numeracy (STLaN) and Students with Disability (SWD) is being reviewed to provide teaching support in classrooms across the school. The region is supporting the school by providing a Head of Curriculum (HOC) position shared across a number of small schools in the area. The use of these resources linked to the provision of flexible teaching arrangements is being planned.

• Informal feedback processes to inform teaching practice are evident.

Teachers and teacher aides take opportunities to discuss teaching strategies and student learning. Formal observation and feedback arrangements are not yet fully established.

• The school has established partnerships with families and local community organisations.

The school liaises with outside groups with the purpose of improving the opportunities for students and the school’s physical learning environment. The school has established and developed beneficial informal partnerships with local government and community organisations to improve learning opportunities and outcomes for students.
2.2 Key improvement strategies

- Collaboratively review the explicit improvement agenda to provide a sharp and narrow focus on the required elements to include targets linked to student outcomes and term by term timelines.

- Collaboratively design and implement a process to quality assure tracking of curriculum content descriptors, the classroom unit plans and assessment tasks.

- Provide professional development to build staff members’ confidence and ability to analyse, interpret and use data to inform pedagogical practice.

- Collaboratively review and refine the processes in relation to the school’s Responsible Behaviour Plan to ensure a consistent understanding among all staff members of the reporting processes of behavioural incidents.

- Design and operationalise the staffing strategy to clarify the roles, responsibilities and expectations and support flexible teaching arrangements across the school.

- Establish formal observation and feedback arrangements.